Isabella’s Visions

The world closes in around you, darkness enveloping your vision. The dimly lit stone room fades, and the last thing you see is the broad smile on Fairfox's illusionary face as he lounges on his throne, his gold eyes glinting through the bangs white hair.

*You open your eyes... but they don't feel like your eyes. You look up, and the stars greet you, twinkling and smiling in the dark night. The cool air kisses your skin and rustles the leaves of the trees around you. You step through the impossibly soft grass to a pool of water. The water, still and pure, glittered, and reflected the stars above. You kneel in the grass and dip your hand in the pond, the ripples reflecting your white hair and golden eyes.*

*You open your eyes to the sight of a crimson valley, the mountains on each side of you are bathed in the light of the great fires. All around you the trees burn, and the air fills with ash and gusts through the valley... but you don't see the trees or the mountains wreathed in flame. You see the setting sun in front of you framed by the peaks of the mountains, lowering itself into the distant ocean. You see the lines of spears entering the valley, marching towards you, marching to kill you. You see the wave on the horizon--the wave summoned in anger and hatred, the wave raised to destroy the hearts of men, the wave that will win you the war--and you smile, your white hair whipping in front of your golden eyes.*

*You open your eyes. Your bare feet leave light imprints in the wet sand, only to be washed away by the smooth blue tide. You look out over the dark, calm sea, and feel the warm sea breeze on your face. You stop, and look down at the new bodies, gently laying in the sand, their eyes never before beholding the grandeur of the sky, the mountains, and the grass. You run your hand along the body's smooth white skin, and stand up. You lift your head and sing, gently, the ancient song that you've always known. The notes dance off your tongue and along the beach and into the hearts of the bodies lying at your feet. You sing, and the world hears you. You sing with the beauty of life and you feel the cold water wash upon your feet. Your song gives breath to those at your feet, and they open their eyes, beholding the stars above them. You look down at them, and in their clear, untouched minds you know they are happy, and you share their happiness. The sit up and behold the sea as it tickles their toes. They stand and behold the earth, the mountains, and the trees. They turn, and behold your golden eyes.*

*You open your eyes and look at her. She, dressed in a white coat and white hat so humbly rowing the gondola. She hums softly, but you hear it. Her song brings you memories, memories of a music long ago, and you look at her again, seeing her beauty. She was born under the light of Uuranor and Isilme, and she manifests their light and grace. You see how lightly she stands upon the boat, her feet gracing the smooth wood with their touch. You pull your crisp red cloak tighter around you and look away from the girl as you remember why you are here. Soon, you will forget about the girl, as will all others. Feet pad quietly along the rooftops beside the thin watery channel. Soon. A knife grasped by a wrapped hand unsheathes, sneering in the cold night. Soon. She is poor, you know. Poor, but blissful, undeserving of such a death. The killer jumps from the rooftop, knife poised. Soon...but...No. You feel yourself move without thinking. No. You lift your hand. No. You clench your fist—and the man is gone. I refuse. You look up at the girl. She stops humming and looks down at you, and asks your name. You do not answer. You cannot answer, knowing that she should be dead, that she needs to be dead. You stare up at the underside of a bridge as you pass under it, and pull back your hood, letting your white hair out into the night. "Alright, if you will not tell me your name, I shall be forced to name you. Fairfox. Fairfox shall be your name." She voice echoes, bouncing off the close stone walls.*

*You open your eyes, and raise your head as the hot air rushes, whipping, through your hair. You stand in the maelstrom of flame that has engulfed the field. Swords ring and shields splinter around you as you stand amidst the battle, casting your gaze over the fields. The sky is burnt green by the falling star, ripping the horizon apart in its wake. Magic arcs across the sky in unforgiving bolts, and you look down at the two eggs, shining like mirrors in the night, prismatic in their reflections. The time has come, come for the waking of dragons. You smile and laugh, and the eggs crack, the fissures cutting lines through the reflection of your golden eyes.*

*You open your eyes and peer out over the field. You see the elves, the men, the dwarves, and you know them to be wrong. You see the cities and towns and farms and know them to be wrong. You see the fates of all, and their lives are wrong. You know what is right, and you know what you must do. You step out onto the dead grass and you judge those in front of you to be unworthy. You walk forward and show them their fates. You step over them and you show them order. You cleave them and you show them right. You pull your blade from the chest of the fallen boy and wipe from it his blood, and in the shining steel, for a moment, you see your golden eyes. You drive the sword into another heart.*

*You open your eyes and look down at the rose. You think of her, her hair, her eyes... and you bend down and caress the soft blue petals. You think of her, and you remember dancing with her. You think of her, and you remember her words. You think of her, and you think of what she is. You think of her, and wonder what she sees in the mirror.*

*You close your eyes.*

*You open your eyes. The dull tide washes against the stone of the intricately carved dock. The sailors of the white swan boat quietly and quickly work in front of you, preparing for departure. The breeze ruffles the silken sails embroidered with the flower of the queen turned grey by the darkness of the night. You stand at a distance, watching. She will come soon, you know. You step forward towards the boat, your soft shoes barely touching the cobblestones of the wharf. She is there, then, cloaked in grey, flanked by solemn knights against the clouded colorless sky. You walk towards her and lay your hand upon her shoulder from behind as she steps upon the boat. In her ear you whisper words of prophecy to lead her towards the future. The young queen turns then, her grey hood falling to her shoulders, releasing her beautiful white hair, like the calm waves of the sea laying upon her shoulders. Her gaze meets yours, her eyes two brilliant blue gemstones shining forth into the night. The clouds part then, and the stars shine upon her. Her eyes, bright, widen in confusion and reflect yours, as golden as the morning sun. “Fairfox?”*

*You open your eyes. The rain patters softly down onto the huge stone dais. You raise your head to the two dragons in front of you, wrapped around each other with their mighty heads lifted towards the stars. Their grief was palpable, emanating into the night and seeping into the souls of all those gathered. Elves stand on the rim of the dais, each with a small candle in hand in remembrance for their lost prince and princess. The dragons cry their woes to the sky then in two great fires, each carrying the life-fire of the giver. You sing then, you sing the song you've always known, and the prismatic fires burn through the sky, dancing with the clouds and stars and moon and leaping across the solemn eyes of the watchers. The fires spin and spiral to the sounds, and they take form in the skies. From the breaths of fire are created winged drakes. You smile as you sing the song of life, and you turn your golden eyes upward at the bodies formed of flame, breathing into the night, alighting the sky with the fires of dragons.*

*You open your eyes. You step onto the soft grass of a forest, the wind billowing your cloak and rustling the leaves of the trees. You walk lightly through the undergrowth, running your hands on the leaves of the bushes and on the barks of the trees. You smile to yourself and spin, looking up at the canopies and bringing your arms in culmination above your head. You stand still for a moment, and take a deep breath, feeling the smooth cool air fill your chest. You drop low and spin, letting your arms fall and fly out in a great dance. The trees around you twist and blossom; their branches spiral and change, and their leaves pulse with chaos. The plants of the undergrowth burst forth into untold shapes and forms, and the ground itself shades in a moss as soft as a cloud. Your eyes face the ground at the end of your spin, and as you look up, great color is given to the leaves and barks and mosses and plants. Colors untold and unknown beat through the forest like thoughts in a brain. Your smile widens, and you move through the forest, bringing forth beauties unprecedented in the world. Imagination is your palette and the world is your painting, as chaotic as the storms of the maelstrom and as mysterious as the swirling gold of your eyes.*

*You open your eyes. You walk through the straight cobbled streets of the town towards the mansion. You pass the empty fish stands and closed shops as you pass over the bridge. All the shutters are closed, and there is no one in the streets. You don't look around, however. You stare at your high black boots and dark crimson coat, within whose pockets you place your hands. A great pillar of fire licks into the sky from ahead followed by the howling and yelping of wolves. You continue walking, without any hesitation. The sun shines brightly above you as it nears its setting. The wintery air is crisp and cold, but dry. Dead leaves blow along the stones and under your feet, and they crackle as you step on them. You turn the corner and stop as you look up at the mansion in front of you. The sides are bleak, illuminated only by the golden light of the sun as it sets behind you. Swords clash inside, and wood splinters. One of the large wooden doors of the mansion is thrown open, letting the golden light flood in. You step over the smoldering bodies of wolves at the gated entrance and push open the creaking wrought-iron gate. You move up the cobbled walk, towards the large doors. Someone inside throws open the red curtains, and you see the town reflected off the clean glass windows. You quietly step under the door frame and stop. You lean against the frame and look at her, laying in a pool of blood on the white marble floor. You see only her—you care not about the others around her, fighting the one already dead. The room smells of magic and blood and death. You look back at her—at her blue hair and ripped dress and closed eyes. You look at her, and you feel her anger and her strength. You look at her, and see that you can do nothing for her. You look at her, and then you turn around. You walk back towards the sun, setting just as golden as your eyes.*

*You open your eyes. The energy had burst around you from his body, and it had pulsed through the cracks of the bricks and the breezes of the air. It had shattered the stone buttresses, the marble floors, the wooden shelves, and the glass mirrors. You stand now midst the ruin of the palace again: midst the ruined hall and the broken library and the deserted laboratories. Each still roiled with the energy of destruction, still felt of hatred and love. She would be waking soon, you know, back in her bed. He would be back, you know, back to these halls. You weave with your hands and fingers a past and a future, a place eternally apart. A reality outside of reality, an illusion apart from other illusions. She, too, would be back. This would be your message to her, if she had the wisdom to use it. You sew the final string, and you begin to leave. You stop, however, and you bend down. From the ground you pick up a shard of silver glass. You hold it in your hand and you look into it. You see your golden eyes, clouded with the misfortune behind you. You look into the mirror long. You wonder why he awoke in pain as he looked into the mirror. You wonder what she sees in the mirror, and you wonder when she will wake in front of it. You let the glass fall from your hands.*

*You close your eyes.*

**AFTER HELL:**

*You open your eyes. You’re standing in the bustling streets of Nenril, outside of a lively bakery. You see your reflection in the window, your white hair ruffled by the breeze and golden eyes flashing in the light. A handsome young elven male steps outside, the bell chiming a cheery tune to match the outgoing lad’s personality. He runs straight into you, his smile faltering momentarily into surprise before the flash of white teeth returns for a sincere apologetic smile. You slip a piece of parchment into their hand unbeknownst to them and simply smile before turning away. From a distance you watch as that same young man walks across the street to stop in the middle, noticing the note you slipped them. The young man froze, their expression a dance between surprise and confusion, a tinge of fear following closely behind. He didn’t notice the carriage rushing towards him. Not even when it hit him. You saw her running frantically, her blue hair streaming behind her as she ran. You could feel her denial, her fear, as she fought through the gathered crowd. You watched as she stopped at the center of the scene, tears of horror and sadness streaming down her face before she fell to her knees next to the already dead body. Suddenly a ghastly night hag was behind the blue haired girl, grinning and showing a mouthful of vile teeth as she seemed to rip apart the very air with her long jagged nails…*

**On the training grounds at the Guildhouse:**

*The one-eyed bard climbs into a dark cave carved from the black glass of volcanoes. The cave opened to a grand sanctum, the walls and domed ceiling more ornate than anything you have ever seen. Along the walls are small coves, each holding a sarcophagus. A thin bridge arches towards an island at the center of the room, the rest of the area drops into nothingness. A stairway spirals downwards, hugging the walls. Downwards, into an untold number of chambers. But those chambers do not interest the one-eyed bard. The floor is smooth and reflective, and his footsteps echo in the dark. He reaches the island in the center of the room. On it are two sleek black sarcophagi. The vision blurs and crackles and cuts—the one eyed bard leans over an open tomb and grabs a huge black sword.*

*The image changes.*

*You open your eyes—and they’re your eyes, your own blue eyes. Your blue hair whips in front of your face as the horrible energy swirls around him, the raw force of it moving the air like a storm. Dust and glass and bits of rock from your once-beautiful mansion fly through the air, but none of it hits you. An arm robed in soft grey holds you tightly around the waist, another is held high, creating a perfect white shield to keep you from harm. You could hear him yelling over the wind—cursing you, crying at you, pleading you. Just yesterday he had been fine, sitting in his chambers surrounded by mirrors—but that was before. Your wrist still throbbed with pain where he had left his mark just a few hours before. His beautiful golden eyes now shone like suns, almost blinding you, and his neat white hair moving like a fire, untamed and unpredictable. You hold your arm up to shield your eyes—and you’re gone. You’re back at home, in your room. Your savior lays you down in your bed and looks at you, one last time with his kind golden eyes before you close yours.*

*The image flashes.*

*A town in the midst of a dry mountain valley. The buildings are run down, barely houses at all. The people stagger through the streets, hungry, poor, anguished. In the center of the town rises a castle of luxury, parapets rising high over the gloom below them. The image flashes a glimpse of a lonely road through a valley, then a glimpse of an archway higher than the mountains it guards.*

**In the Living Memory after meeting Kane:**

*The water is heavy and dark, swirling in infinite currents below the white crested waves on the surface. The One-Eyed Bard walked along the bottom of the waves, harboring himself in a swirling orb of air. The vision shifted away from the pirate, like a fish swimming away from a shark. The bard walked through a city under the waves, its spires like mithril needles stuck into the sand. The city was dark, and tall sea plants tickled at its walls. The heart of the city glowed with a soft light, a cold, blue light. The vision swam inwards, towards the light. It swam through the kelp, through the ancient walls, under the dark figures circling the city. The One-Eyed Bard pushed through the kelp to the clearing at the city’s heart. His face lit with a smile as he approached the tree. Its leaves pulsed with a dancing light, and its trunk was lucent and webbed as he ran his hand over the smooth bark. The bard sat and crossed his legs beneath the whispering water, meditating. The vision blinked away.*

*A circular stone tablet, carved with a language more ancient than any, rests overgrown with dry vines and prickly shrubs adapted to the harsh winds of the desert. The tablet stands vertically, set deep into the sandstone wall of the cave, immovable to all but those who’s need is truest. The image flashes and shifts. Tall pine trees, calm and silent, stand watch over the thick forest. The undergrowth is thin, and tame. The grass is soft, so impossibly soft, and the water is clear and serene. The image jumps. A small ruined temple stands as testament to those who walked through the doors, and those who stood here, here by the pool. The pool that stood before anything, the pool where all things spread from. The water is shallow and unmoving, yet untouched by any contamination. It is the water that feeds the world. The image swirls.*

*You open your eyes, and you’re looking at the ground in front of you. The muscles in your legs feel tight as you sit cross-legged in the grass, your soft, baggy pants rippling in the breeze. Your feet are bare against the green blades, and your forearms rest easily in your lap. You take in a deep breath. The air smells fresh and pleasant, but it bitters as you remember why you’re here. You await him. Elea’roilmani told you he’d find you here. He said that there was no point in leaving or avoiding it. Even Hera’rombar agreed. He would find you, wherever you went. So you await him, here in the open bluff overlooking the rolling, treeless plains. He who will take you away from Isabella. You meditate as you wait, thinking back to memories long buried. When you open your eyes again, he is standing in front of you, the runed chain in his hand and a wide smile on his face. He, who will take you away from Isabella. He, who was your greatest mistake. He, who you created with your own face, your own golden eyes, your own white hair. The clouds pass over the sun.*