

ENTRY ONE : The Nature of Ecrid

I left home at the age of seventeen, and to this day, I still struggle to understand whether or not I regret such a decision. My mother and father were supportive, and though they warned me of such brash decisions, they allowed me to go with their blessing. I find that I miss them dearly. Yes, I could have returned, but my pride told me that such a thing was not doable. Some say that it is the temerity of Ecrid that led me to this decision. We are a people of freedom, and any kind of constraint finds us choking, suffering, and death looming on the fringes.

In my journey, I have found that, above all, we are a solitary species. Compare us to species such as the Phaizarn or the Kren, two races who find strength in community. Even the stubborn Dreold and proud Uqanan have a wish to be surrounded by others. I rarely come across members of these species that have chosen seclusion. Of course, some individuals seek it, but generally, it is not a notably shared trait. The same cannot be said for Ecrid. I have found very few who seek out others. We live on the outskirts of communities, for when we disappear, we rather not have others mourn our exit.

Perhaps it is the empathy that we feel for others that force us to isolate ourselves. Their emotions, in addition to our own, pound on our psyches. We admire the silence, and when others are near, that silence is impossible. Even after I learned how to control mine, strong emotions still managed to get through, and rarely could I focus. This reminds me of a time I walked past a graveyard on my travels, wondering if perhaps I would savor the company of death more than life. The short answer is no. They speak and feel as much as we do, if not more. Their residual energies are so much. Perhaps a poorly trained or low empath Ecrid will feel at home in such an environment. But an Ecrid who possesses a deep understanding of their inherent power will see what I mean.

The dead that linger cling to you, less like clothes and more like skin. Their emotions seep into you before you can even begin the process of blocking it. The only creatures that are worse than them are spirits, and that is due to being made out of pure emotion and energy. Nothing is worse than entering a ruin. The first I entered happened to be my last, barely past the first hall before I dashed out, gasping for air.

Plants and animals, I have found their companies are admirable. It is a humorous thing when one says that plants feel no pain or joy. That they simply exist and therefore live, and that is it.

I ventured deep within the old forests and met with the Kren to disprove that. I have never had too much trouble with their people, and their emotions are mild and tolerant. They feel, but they do not feel excessively like the Alyrians or the Maji. Under their tutelage, I listened and felt the trees and the grass, the plants, and the fungi. The most peaceful and beautiful hum travels from their roots and breathes a sense of life to which I find myself very much 'rooted' to ... Yes, perhaps I shall keep jokes out of this ... It is in their company that enlightenment has reached me, and I learned that Ecrid are solitary creatures, but they are so remarkably alone.

I do not believe that every beating heart is paired with another. Such a thought is preposterous to me, and I admit that I have embraced ignorance even when faced with a species that seem to be genetically indoctrinated with such an ideal. Neither do I believe that we will find multiple souls that match ours. To speak openly and honestly, I am not sure what I believe. I began my journey with a purpose, and I felt my goal grow along with that journey. But listening to the plants and reflection has caused me to drift.

To crave a life of loneliness, should one not lose the right to feel lonely? What right do you have to feel the consequential emotion when you thoroughly seek the cause? And yet all the Ecrid I have come across seem to say the same. We live alone, but we wish for another. I feel this would make more sense if we seek out partners or groups and stay within them, but we do not. At most, we take them with us on this journey of solitude. I think of my mother and father and how they sought one another, but both knew what awaited them. I believe the silver lining is that neither of my parents ever cared to embrace their empathy, perhaps a smart move.

Is our defining trait, our empathy, a curse? A curse that we must bear to live with until our death, a thousand years later?

There are charms and even spells to reduce an Ecrid's empathy awareness. I have even heard of some that will null them completely. Such a thing has always disgusted me, though I do not judge those who partake. To me, it is like blocking a Phaizarn's ability to shift or binding the wings of a Sairs. Perhaps I will never learn the one secret of my kind that seems to haunt us. What do we truly want? Once I believed the answer was travel. Now, I am not so sure. The Kre wish to learn and foster, the Phaizarn are those of freedom, the Uqanan to live gloriously and die proud. Even the Dreold desire the act of leaving a very specific mark, whether that is to be remembered or to leave something behind that is memorable.

