



AQUA Scans & Icarus Bride present:

## **Sugar Apple Fairy Tale vol. 2**

*“The Silver Sugar Master and the Blue Duke”*

Story by Mikawa Miri

Illustrations by Aki

Scans: Public

Translation: Raincraft

Proofread: Fallingwind & Mizuouji

**Visit us at <http://aquascans.wordpress.com/> &  
<http://icarusbride.blogspot.com/>**

## **Chapter 4 - A False Goodbye**

A bell rang downstairs.

The night Ann transferred to the tower room, Jonas rang his bell. Perhaps he was in a hurry because Ann arrived. She heard someone immediately come to his room and then leave.

What would she do if Duke Philax acknowledged Jonas's sculpture that was completed first? She was anxious. But morning came with no further movement downstairs, and the order for Ann to cease working and leave in light of Jonas's sculpture being acknowledged didn't come.

So Ann continued working since morning, and by then, the sun was already high up in the sky. While working together with Mythrill, the sound of a bell coming from downstairs surprised her, and she raised her head.

"That's Jonas's bell, right? He's ringing it again after he completed his work and rang it last night? Is it that he fixed some parts that were pointed out to him or something? Or maybe he just got ahead of himself..."

At that point, Ann was considering ringing the bell to signal her work's completion soon. Naturally, she was in a hurry.

Seeing Ann so anxious, Mythrill stood up.

"Alright! I'll help out!"

"What will you do?"

"I'm going to go peep."

***Visit us at <http://aquascans.wordpress.com/> &  
<http://icarusbride.blogspot.com/>***

Contrary to gallantry, Mythrill tied a handkerchief he took out of his pocket around his head, and sneakily left the room.

Ann wondered how it would turn out. Wanting to know soon, she was impatiently waiting for Mythrill when Shall returned from taking a walk. In his right hand dangled a violently wriggling Mythrill.

"Let me go! Let go! Shall Fen Shall!"

"Shall, why are you holding Mythrill...?"

Ann stared wide-eyed as Shall released the nape of Mythrill's neck. Mythrill fell to the floor with a flump, letting out a screech.

"When I returned from my walk, I came across this guy trying to sneak into Jonas's room. He looked like he was going to do something weird and cause trouble, so I caught him."

"I wasn't thinking of doing anything weird! I just thought I'd pull a little prank by ringing the signal bell!"

Mythrill snorted and looked away from Shall while sitting cross-armed on the floor.

"When you said you were going to peep, you were going to go play pranks!?"

She raised her voice. Jonas may be a despicable person, but she didn't agree with getting back at him. Mythrill stood up somewhat in a hurry.

"No, wait, Ann! Don't get the wrong idea! I really was just going to peep, but I got happy seeing that guy so depressed, I thought I'd just give him the final blow."

"Got happy, 'final blow'... That's even worse, isn't it..."

As Ann murmured, Shall spoke from behind her.

"Right. Rather than such a prank, if you're gonna do something, you should be more aggressive."

"What do you mean 'be more aggressive'!? Though the same goes for pranks, as people, isn't being more aggressive an even greater wrong?!"

Mythrill and Shall exchanged looks. "We're not people," they said simultaneously.

Heartbroken, Ann held her hand against her forehead.

"Ah, that's right... That's enough..."

She gave up on admonishing the two fairies.

"But Jonas being depressed means the Duke must have not liked his sugar sculpture," said Ann, to which Mythrill nodded with folded arms.

"I'm positive that's what happened. Also, that guy had a bruise showing on his face. Guess he had a lover's quarrel with Kathy or something. That's quite the wonderful situation."

Hearing Mythrill's words, Shall made a dubious expression. Ann too, tilted her head.

"Would Kathy do something like that?"

She didn't think Kathy, who considered Jonas her number one priority, would lay a hand on him. Perhaps he'd fallen down the stairs or bumped into

something in the room.

"So, is your sugar sculpture finished?" asked Shall. Ann looked at the sculpture behind her.

"Yeah. I think it's good enough."

"Shall I ring the signal?" Mythrill grabbed the string cheerfully.

Truth was, she felt that she didn't quite understand the meaning of the Duke's words when he said, 'Increase the accuracy.' She was captured by the notion of making the workmanship more detailed, and increased the drape of the fairy's dress, and added a watermark pattern to the hem.

"Please."

Mythrill pulled the string and the sound of a bell rang in conjunction inside Ann's room, out in the corridor, and then somewhere far away.

Soon after, they heard hard footsteps climbing up the stairs.

Without a knock, the door to the room opened.

"Your grace...?"

It was Alban, Duke of Philax, in the flesh. Though a page came following behind him, she never thought the man himself would suddenly come to such a sorry room. Normally, that would be impossible.

Ann quickly knelt on the floor and bowed her head, but her figure didn't seem to penetrate Alban's eyes. He advanced straight towards the worktable and looked at the sugar sculpture.

Trying to see his reaction, Ann slightly raised her eyes while keeping her head low.

She saw the Duke's hands; they were tightly clenched, as if holding back anger.

"It hasn't changed," Alban murmured.

"Eh..."

Ann raised her head, unable to comprehend his words.

Alban was looking at her with a hint of anger in his eyes.

"Were you not listening to me? I ordered you to give form to the fairy in the portrait. And yesterday, I ordered you to increase the accuracy. This is the same as yesterday. Nothing's changed. Both you and the craftsman downstairs understand nothing," he said, and with that, quickly turned on his heel and left. Ann was dumbfounded.

"What does that mean?"

---

*—What is he not satisfied with?*

Shall Fen Shall leaned against the wall, gazing at the sugar sculpture Ann made.

Ann was worrying over what was wrong with her sculpture and had been sitting in front of it since noon without moving. After barely having any

***Visit us at <http://aquascans.wordpress.com/> &  
<http://icarusbride.blogspot.com/>***

dinner, she once again sat down in front of it, and only seemed to come to when Mythrill turned on a lamp for her when it became dark. She thanked him, but then immediately returned to gazing at the sculpture.

Shall understood Ann's bafflement.

As far as he could tell, the first sugar sculpture Ann finished was of near perfect workmanship. Its accuracy couldn't go any higher. It had a perfect form. If you added or took anything from it, its balance would collapse.

He didn't understand what Alban was unhappy with.

Mythrill too, had been sitting on the windowsill with a serious expression, patiently waiting for Ann to gather her thoughts. But it seemed he couldn't win against his drowsiness and dozed off.

"Maybe I should try a different approach..."

It was past midnight when Ann murmured and stood straight up.

"Tinkering with this will make the whole thing break, meaning I can't increase its accuracy. So making something else... Something more realistic..." she muttered while grabbing a lamp from the table, and was about to leave through the door.

"Do you want to get lost?"

He called out to her, and as though startled back into her senses, she turned towards him.

"Where are you going?"

"I'm going to go look at the portrait of that fairy again. If I remember

***Visit us at <http://aquascans.wordpress.com/> &  
<http://icarusbride.blogspot.com/>***

correctly, there should be one in the hall. So I'm going to go look at it again, and then I'll make the sculpture in a more realistic approach."

"So, you can reach the hall safely?" he asked, and after looking surprised, Ann hung her head.

"Right... I forgot..."

She looked at Shall apologetically.

"Though it's the middle of the night, will you go with me? Is it okay?"

"I'll go."

He pulled his back away from the wall and took up the lamp from Ann's hand. Taking the lead, he headed towards the hall.

Naturally, the hall was pitch black, so he held the lamp's light over the portrait.

The air was so cold; Ann embraced her shoulders in her arms and her breath turned white.

As Shall gazed at the gently smiling fairy in the portrait, a thought occurred to him.

"Maybe Duke Philax isn't looking for something extraordinary in a sugar sculpture?" he said, and Ann looked up at him in wonder.

"What do you mean?"

"If he just wanted an extraordinary sugar sculpture, your sculpture should've been enough to satisfy him."



"But the Duke isn't satisfied. What I made isn't what he wants."

Ann returned her gaze to the portrait, staring at it fixedly as if it were challenging her. The profile of her face right then looked more mature than usual.

---

Starting the next day, and for the next five days, she made a new sugar sculpture.

Though the size was the same as the previous one, the representation changed drastically.

She visited the portrait time and again, driving the face shape into her head until she'd attained every detail, and sculpted it in a realistic representation as though to solidify the portrait as it was.

She felt that, unlike the previous sculpture, the atmosphere had diminished somewhat. Instead, she emphasized the vivid color scheme and the sharpness of the lines as befitting a realistic representation. Otherwise, as a sugar sculpture, it would just give a vague impression with no determined focus.

With that, she felt it was perfect. But in order to confirm one more time, she decided to go see the portrait.

The past five days, she made round trips from the hall to the room dozens of times. Thanks to that, she was able to come and go on that one path even without Shall's escort.

***Visit us at <http://aquascans.wordpress.com/> &  
<http://icarusbride.blogspot.com/>***

"I'm going to go look at the picture for a bit," she said to Mythrill, who was cleaning up the table, and left the room.

Shall was out on a walk as always.

It was evening. There was a small window by the spiral-shaped stairway circling the interior of the tower. From there, the sea breeze blew in, along with the light of the setting sun and the smell of the tide.

As soon as she left the room, the chilly air stroked the nape of her neck and she sneezed. Shivering, she began climbing up the stairs.

Then, as if predicting the moment Ann would pass by, the door to Jonas's room opened.

Jonas's face peeked out with an exhausted expression.

She hasn't heard the sound of a bell coming from downstairs for the past five days, so Ann assumed Jonas was busy fixing his sculpture as well.

"Ann."

He hailed her and she halted. Being hailed by him was surprising.

"What?"

"What are you doing?"

"What am I doing? I'm going to go see the portrait of that fairy."

At that, Jonas made an unbelieving expression.

"Are you perhaps making a sugar sculpture?"

"Of course I am. Aren't you?"

***Visit us at <http://aquascans.wordpress.com/> &  
<http://icarusbride.blogspot.com/>***

"I can't make one. I don't understand a single thing that guy says. I want to quit already..."

Jonas's complaining surprised her.

"What are you saying? Well, it would help me if you quit though."

"You can only say that now!" he suddenly yelled in anger and shut the door. The moment he did, she saw the blue bruise on his left cheek.

"Jonas?"

Jonas's cornered behavior concerned her. To purposely hail Ann as she walked by despite her being hostile towards him and complain like that... Something must have happened.

Was he perhaps turning to Ann for help? If that was the case, should she try to hear him out and consult him? She thought to herself for a while.

But after remembering what he did to her in Lewiston, she thought herself to be a complete softhearted fool. And with that, she headed towards the hall.

After confirming with the portrait one more time, she returned to the room and rang the signal. The one who appeared was, as expected, Alban himself.

He scrutinized the sugar sculpture for a while, then glared at Ann.

"What is this you made?"

"It's the fairy painted in the picture."

"Wrong. This is completely wrong."

Those words surprised her. She never thought he'd go as far as saying it was

***Visit us at <http://aquascans.wordpress.com/> &  
<http://icarusbride.blogspot.com/>***

‘completely wrong.’

She made it more realistic than the previous sculpture. It couldn't be wrong.

—*It can't be. I made it a spitting image of her. What are you saying is wrong?*

She was baffled. Reflexively, she asked, "Then, what is wrong? Please tell me."

"Everything."

"What do you mean? I confirmed with the painting over and over and made it exactly the same. I increased the accuracy with fine workmanship while adjusting its balance as a sugar sculpture."

"There is no meaning nor nothing! Everything is just wrong! This is just a fake look-alike! I don't even want to look at something like this!" Alban shouted, and all of a sudden, he beat the sugar sculpture off its stand to the ground.

For a moment, she stopped breathing. The sugar sculpture shattered on the floor.

Ann couldn't move. She was frozen by the shock of having the sculpture she spent five days making break, and the terror of having caused Alban to burst with anger.

"Give her form. You will give her form!"

Alban spoke as if spitting out the words, and with that, he left the room.

Fatigued, Ann sank to the floor on the spot. The stone floor must have been cold, but she couldn't feel it.

Mythrill quickly ran up to her and hit the dumbfounded girl's cheek.

"Ann, Ann! Are you alright? Pull yourself together, Ann!"

"...The sugar sculpture..."

Tears gradually welled in her eyes.

"What happened here?"

A voice came from the entrance of the room. She slowly turned her head to see Shall, back from his walk. Seeing Ann slumped on the floor and the shattered sugar sculpture, his expression turned grave.

"Did Duke Philax do this?" Shall asked Mythrill, and Mythrill nodded. From that, he seemed to infer the situation.

He slowly walked up to Ann and got down on one knee.

"Did he lay a hand on you?"

His voice was monotonous, but his concern came across perfectly.

"...No."

"Duke Philax wasn't satisfied with that, was he?"

***Visit us at <http://aquascans.wordpress.com/> &  
<http://icarusbride.blogspot.com/>***

Ann nodded, and Shall heaved a light sigh. He began speaking quietly, "What Duke Philax is looking for is likely something not you nor anyone can understand. I don't think he can be pleased by having a sugar sculpture made. You should withdraw."

"...Eh?"

"There's no need to obtain that one thousand Cress and the honor. You should withdraw and leave this place."

"You mean, to quit this job midway?"

"Yes."

"But, I... I accepted it. I said I can do it."

"There are things you can't do."

Mythrill then agreed as well.

"That's right, Ann. I also think you should quit this job. It's a shame about the one thousand Cress though..."

—*Quit the job?*

Saying she couldn't do it and abandoning the job she'd accepted—that was basically saying, 'I can't complete the sculpture because I don't really understand what you're asking for, so it's your fault.'

—*I don't want to.*

Deep in her heart, contrary to reason, moaned something like obstinacy.

—*I don't want to say I can't do it.*

***Visit us at <http://aquascans.wordpress.com/> &  
<http://icarusbride.blogspot.com/>***

"I'm the one at fault for not being able to do it. I'm the one at fault for not understanding what the Duke is looking for. It's only natural to make what the client desires after all. I'm being spoiled by not understanding that."

Strongly influenced by the shock, her voice was tearful.

"His wish may be something abnormal. It may be something that can't be made into a sugar sculpture."

*—Does he really desire something that can't be made?*

She recalled Alban's words and expressions thus far. As she thought, her feelings of agitation subsided, and for just a moment, Ann remembered an expression Alban showed her.

"It can't be something that can't be made."

She suddenly raised her head.

"It has to be something that can be made into a sugar sculpture. Because when the Duke first saw my sculpture, for just a moment, he looked happy. But after looking at it closely, he said it was wrong. I don't think he would've have made that face if it weren't something that could be represented in the extent of a sugar sculpture."

Hearing those words, Mythrill said in amazement, "In short, you're saying you'll keep working?"

"I don't want to quit. I know the two of you are worried about me... But..."

"You're the one making it. You're the one to decide," Shall said curtly while standing up.

"I'm sorry Shall, Mythrill Reed Pod, for making you tag along."

"You're the only one entertaining enough to kill time with by tagging along, so I don't mind."

All the while saying hateful things, he took Ann's hand and pulled her to her feet.

"Well, I know that Ann is an idiot, so I'm not surprised."

Mythrill too, nodded with an amazed expression.

She didn't want to abandon the job.

It was obstinacy. She didn't want to voluntarily raise a white flag and run away. To Ann, there was nothing she wanted to do other than to make sugar sculptures, nor did anything else have any value to her. For that reason, she felt that if she abandoned something even just once, her weapon would slip right out of her hand.

However, even if she decided to obstinately continue working this way, what sort of sugar sculpture should she make? The fact that she didn't know still had not changed.

For that night at least, she decided to get a good rest.

Her hands didn't touch the silver sugar. It was preparation for calming her mind and grasping something new.

Having finished her supper, she sat by the table and drank some hot tea to warm up her body before going to sleep.

She gave Shall some tea as well. With his one hand resting on the table, he

***Visit us at <http://aquascans.wordpress.com/> &  
<http://icarusbride.blogspot.com/>***



placed his palm over the steaming cup to enjoy his tea. Shall seemed to like the aroma of matured tea floating in the room. Occasionally, he'd partly close his eyes, and at the same time, his wing would shine a light green color.

As for Mythrill, it seemed his exhaustion from working these past few days had piled up. After dinner, he immediately crawled into bed. Seeing him breathing so loudly in his sleep made her feel bad. She was so immersed in her work that she didn't notice how tired he was.

Since moving to this room, Mythrill and Ann had been using the bed. Shall would sleep on a leather mat on the floor, using a sheet for a blanket. That bothered Ann as well.

"Shall, use the bed tonight. I'll sleep on the floor over there."

"Alright, but I'm kicking Mythrill Reed Pod off. His teeth-grinding is annoying."

"That's horrible! Don't do that!"

"Then I'll sleep on the floor. It's fine that way."

Ann went limp. In the end, Shall just didn't feel like using the bed. Yet by strangely choosing to avoid saying so, she was the one getting tired from having to properly respond to every single thing.

"Shall, when on earth did you become so twisted?"

"If there's someone who's lived over a hundred years and isn't the least bit twisted, I'd like to congratulate them."

He looked at Ann over the table, then grinned maliciously. "Though even if

you lived a hundred years, I doubt you'd change inside."

"What do you mean by that? Really, how un-cute... Though a hundred years ago, perhaps even you were cute~"

"A hundred years ago, perhaps."

"You were cute!?"

She couldn't imagine it. But like Ann had her time as a baby, Shall must have had such a time as well. What kind of expression did Shall have when he was born? Did he smile innocently like a child? She wanted to see it. Liz must've seen it.

—*Liz.*

The jealousy resembling feeling once again reared its head. Wanting to swallow it down, she gulped on her tea that had begun to cool. The tea passed through her throat, but the unpleasant feeling she wanted to swallow remained.

Seeing the calm profile of Shall's face, the urge to ask about Liz welled in her throat.

"How about going to sleep?"

It seemed as if Shall mistook her silence for sleepiness.

However, far from being sleepy, her feelings had cooled down and her head became clear.

"Liz..."

At last, that name came out of her mouth. That was a mistake, she thought to herself.

But she couldn't stop her next words.

"What kind of girl was she? Was she pretty?"

"Pretty?"

Shall didn't even seem to question why Ann was asking something like that. Perhaps he thought they were just continuing their small talk.

And as if seeing Liz's figure there, he stared into empty space.

"She was pretty, I think."

"What color were her eyes? Was her hair long? Was she gentle?"

"She had blue eyes. Her hair was long, because she hadn't cut it since she was five. As for gentle... Rather, I'd say she was mature. She was quiet and thoughtful."

*—A pretty, mature, quiet and thoughtful young woman.*

As for herself, she wasn't pretty. She was childlike and noisy, and many other things that weren't worth mentioning—such abject thoughts sprung to her mind one after another.

*—I'm jealous...*

She was so, so jealous that she couldn't stand it. Surely, ever remaining beyond the gaze of Shall's black eyes, was Liz. Seeing the profile of his beautiful face, that thought ate into her chest.

**Visit us at <http://aquascans.wordpress.com/> &  
<http://icarusbride.blogspot.com/>**

Shall suddenly looked Ann's way, and his eyes widened slightly.

"What's wrong?" he asked. She didn't understand what it was he was surprised by.

Drip.

A drop of water fell on her fingers and she realized. She touched her cheek—she was crying.

"Ah... What's this, I..."

Though she tried, she couldn't stop the overflowing matter.

Shall was looking at her with an unusually perplexed expression.

These past few days, she had been constantly worrying over her sugar sculpture, and that day, Alban shattered it.

Is that why? Though she was determined to continue working, her feelings had become unstable due to fatigue and shock. Normally, she wouldn't cry over something like this. To begin with, she wouldn't do something as foolish as ask about Liz. Her own tears made her finally realize the extent of her foolishness.

Not wanting to show her face, she turned her back to Shall and remained this way without moving.

What would she do if he asked the reason for her tears?

"Did I say something that offended you?"

"No..."

She shook her head, but she couldn't raise her face. As he spoke to her, her tears overflowed even more.

After a while, she sensed Shall getting up and, likely out of consideration towards her, he left the room.

Ann intensely regretted what a fool she was. She wiped the tears that had finally subsided with the sleeve of her dress. No doubt she made Shall feel unpleasant. Those tears weren't Shall's fault. She had to tell him that. Then, she would return to her room and get some rest—sleeping would also make her feel better—and starting tomorrow, she would once again get down to work.

That way she'd be able to immediately forget these unpleasant feelings.

With a lamp in hand, she left the room and headed towards the stairway.

Lighting the top and bottom of the stairs, she tried calling, "Shall? Shall, are you there?"

But there was no answer.

Whenever he'd go wandering on his own, he'd often be on the roof of the tower. She climbed all the way to the rooftop, but with only the strong wind blowing through the dark, there was no sign of him. Just in case, she tried the hall as well, but he wasn't there either.

If she tried going anywhere else on her own, she'd get lost. Reluctantly, she returned to her room.

When she came up to the room's entrance, the door was slightly open. She was certain she closed it properly. Thinking *maybe*, she opened the door in a hurry.

***Visit us at <http://aquascans.wordpress.com/> &  
<http://icarusbride.blogspot.com/>***

"Shall!?"

The one there was someone else.

"Jonas?"

"Hey there, Ann."

He had an unusually nervous expression.

"Why are you in my room?"

"Just got something to take care of. Hey, do you know what this is?" he said, raising his right hand to show what he was holding.

It was a fairy's wing the size of a palm.

"That wing—"

Taken aback, she looked at the bed, and saw Mythrill sitting there with his head hanging low.

Apparently noticing Ann's gaze, Mythrill raised his head, looking like he was about to cry.

"Ann, I'm sorry. While I was fast asleep... That guy stole my wing..."

Mythrill had a single wing on his back. Ann returned to him his other wing that had been taken away by fairy hunters, but it could not return to his back. That's why Mythrill would coil his wing around his neck and wear it as a scarf. That wing he wore around his neck was gone.

"Jonas, why are you doing this? Return his wing. If you don't like me, you should just do whatever you want to me directly."

***Visit us at <http://aquascans.wordpress.com/> &  
<http://icarusbride.blogspot.com/>***

Her voice trembled with anger.

"I wasn't thinking of doing anything to you. But there is something I want you to do," said Jonas, lacking the composure of someone who had the upper hand. His eyes looked desperate, like he was cornered by something as well.

"Me?"

"Yes, you. Right now, you're going to make a request from Shall. You're going to say, 'I no longer want to be with you, so leave this castle.' And, 'Don't ever show your face to me again.'"

"Why!? Something like that—!?"

"Can't do it? That can't be right..."

Jonas tightly gripped Mythrill's wing with both hands.

Mythrill screamed and rolled off the bed.

"Stop it!!"

She tried jumping him, but he nimbly dodged her and held the wing up high.

"I'm going to take Mythrill with me and return to my room. I'll be leaving Kathy here. If you properly do as I told you and drive Shall out of the castle, I'll give the wing back. But if you tell anyone about this, Kathy will hear it. She'll immediately come to let me know, and I'll tear this wing up."

"Jonas, you..."

"Come now, Mythrill."

With a side-glance at Ann who was glaring at him, Jonas hurriedly left the

***Visit us at <http://aquascans.wordpress.com/> &  
<http://icarusbride.blogspot.com/>***

room.

When Mythrill passed by her as he was leaving, he apologized by saying, "I'm sorry."

She didn't understand why Jonas was doing such a thing. Her eyes were blinded with rage. Taking Mythrill hostage was too cowardly.

"I'm watching you, Ann."

A voice came from the window's direction. Kathy was sitting cross-legged on the windowsill and looking at Ann with a faint smile.

"If you say anything unnecessary, I'll immediately report it to Jonas-sama," she said and, starting at the tips of her feet, the color began to fade from her. She gradually became transparent until she could no longer be seen—making herself disappear was her special ability.

"Why, something like this..."

She was intoxicated with rage. But at the moment, she had to do as Jonas said. That much she understood.

---

Why did Ann start crying? He didn't really understand it.

He thought all he did was answer plainly according to her questions when she asked about Liz.

Yet Ann started crying.

***Visit us at <http://aquascans.wordpress.com/> &  
<http://icarusbride.blogspot.com/>***



Thinking about it, of the fifteen years he spent with Liz, there were about five years from when she was fifteen until she died when at times he couldn't understand what she was thinking. Like Ann, Liz would suddenly start crying or get angry. Back then, Liz definitely said, 'It's because I love you.'

Shall felt the same. That growing child was so lovely and wholeheartedly dear to him.

That was why he'd often think of the best way to make her happy. Even if as a result they'd have to be separated, it couldn't be helped. Rather than being unhappy with him, he'd rather entrust her to someone who'd definitely grant her happiness. That way he'd be at ease. He was satisfied with that.

However, Liz cried. As she repeatedly said, "It's because I love you," he answered that he did as well. But Liz had said, 'Your love and my love are different.'

He didn't understand. And during his confusion, Liz was killed.

For twenty years after she died, relying on his hatred and anger, he carried out his revenge.

However, once that was over with, he fell into a state of lethargy.

His anger and hatred towards humans smoldered deep in his chest, but nothing mattered anymore. And so, in that empty state, nearly eighty years had passed.

Thinking carefully, other than the fifteen years he spent with Liz, he had no experience communicating with neither humans nor fairies. It was likely the same as the fifteen-year-old Ann, or perhaps even less.

He knew hatred, anger, and resignation well.

***Visit us at <http://aquascans.wordpress.com/> &  
<http://icarusbride.blogspot.com/>***

But anything other than that, he didn't quite understand. That was why inferring Ann's feelings was difficult for him.

He remained atop the rampart's passageway till after midnight. In the pitch black space, the strong wind carrying the smell of the tide kept blowing incessantly. It was perfect for cooling one's head.

The stars were high in the sky, shining bright like in midwinter. Estimating the time by the stars' position, he figured Ann would be asleep by then, and headed towards the room.

In spite of everything, after Ann got a full night's sleep, it would be like nothing happened. Even if something like before happened again, once Ann slept and morning came, everything would work out.

He entered the room to find Ann, surprisingly awake. She was sitting still in a chair with a lamp placed on the table. Noticing Shall's presence enter the room, she raised her head with a start, looking stiff.

As he approached her, she cast her eyes downward, seeming eager to run away.

"Shall... Please, I... want you to leave."

"You want me to sleep in a different room?" He returned the question, to which Ann shook her head.

"No. I want you to leave the castle. And... Don't ever return, to where I am."

The meaning of those words didn't enter his head immediately, but slowly, it sank in.

***Visit us at <http://aquascans.wordpress.com/> &  
<http://icarusbride.blogspot.com/>***

"You're saying you don't want me to stay with you?"

Without raising her head, Ann nodded deeply.

—*What is she saying all of a sudden?*

Something like anger welled inside him. But unlike anger, without turning into excitement, it simply grew bigger and pressed against his chest. It was irritating.

"Your reason?"

He had to ask, for he felt the irritation would not stop otherwise.

But Ann only shook her head.

"Your reason," he asked again, to which she then answered in bits and pieces.

"It's not your fault... It's mine. I'm sorry. So, don't ask."

That seemed to be the best she was capable of, and with her head still hanging low, she stopped moving. Her shoulders trembled in fits.

It was the same as when she started crying before. He didn't understand it in the slightest, but no doubt she had her own reason.

Suddenly, something cold pierced straight through his chest, like wind blowing in through a crack.

—*Is there a need for me to stay when I'm not needed?*

The feeling of lethargy he'd gotten used to for eighty years returned. In two and a half months, he'd completely forgotten it.

—*Perhaps this is how everything is, abruptly ending.*

**Visit us at <http://aquascans.wordpress.com/> &  
<http://icarusbride.blogspot.com/>**

He thought it was useless to try and ask Ann any more questions, and he saw no reason to keep asking stubbornly.

When he swore he'd go together with Ann, he definitely felt he was needed. Because he had that, he went with her. That was all.

If he was clearly told otherwise, whatever he asked was unnecessary.

Shall turned his back to Ann and started walking. The lethargy returned, but inside his chest amassed the irritating feeling of having swallowed a foreign object. That uncomfortable feeling was a first for him.

Shall left the castle.

---

Hearing Shall's footsteps as he left, she couldn't hold back her tears.

With her head still lowered, the tears dripped onto her knees.

"Looks like you did well."

The reappeared Kathy jumped down from the windowsill, then up the table.

"Are you crying?"

Ann wiped the tears with her cuff and turned her face away from Kathy.

Kathy snorted, looking unamused, and left to call Jonas.

She rejected Shall. With that, everything—including her anger towards Jonas—left her body, and weariness took over. She senselessly leaned against the back of the chair.

*—How Shall must see me now... He definitely thinks I'm selfish.*

And he must have been relieved to be away from her. With that, he was truly free.

To begin with, she didn't really understand his reason for staying with her. He probably felt obligated to her for returning his wing. But after being rejected by her this way, he must be leaving gladly. Surely, he left the castle feeling refreshed.

Thinking that, tears once again welled in her eyes.

"Good job, Ann."

As Jonas entered the room, Ann forcefully held back her tears.

She didn't want him to see her cry. She stood up and drew closer to him.

"Now, return Mythrill Reed Pod's wing."

"Not yet. Tomorrow, you and I are going to meet Duke Philax. You mustn't oppose anything I say. All you have to do is agree with everything."

"What are you planning to do?"

"Anyway, just do as you're told. I'll let that Mythrill come back to this room. Just having that annoying fairy's wing is enough," said Jonas, and with that he left the room.

*What is Jonas trying to do?* No doubt he was trying to do something to his advantage like when he stole Ann's sugar sculpture two months ago.

But unlike last time, there was not a hint of joy in him. However gaudy the means, when doing something beneficial for himself, he couldn't hide his joy. This time, she couldn't detect anything like that joy.

After a while, Mythrill returned to the room with his head lowered dejectedly.

"...Ann. I'm sorry, I..."

"Mythrill Reed Pod!"

Overjoyed with seeing that figure, she ran up to him to take him in her arms, and embraced him.

"Are you alright? Did he do anything to you?"

"Ann, you did what Jonas told you? Shall Fen Shall left? I'm sorry, it's my fault. That you were forced to do something like that..."

"It's not your fault. Jonas is to blame."

"But, even though you like Shall Fen Shall, telling him to leave... It must have been incredibly painful, right?"

Being told that so suddenly, Ann blushed. But even while blushing, the pain of seeing Shall's back once again filled up her chest. Tears were about to fall out, but she held them back.

"What are you saying? Something like me liking Shall, that's..."

"Even if you try to hide it, I can tell, Ann. Who do you think I am? I'm the

great Mythrill Reed Pod. I'd be bothered if you lumped me together with a potato head like Shall Fen Shall."

Though her eyes were still teary, Ann snickered upon hearing Mythrill call Shall a potato head.

"Shall would get mad if he heard you call him a potato head."

"But he is, isn't he? Even though it's so obvious, why doesn't he understand how you feel?"

Now that he mentioned it, perhaps it was true. She was blushing, running away, and crying at his behavior. A normal man would at least think 'maybe.'

If it were Jonas, he'd be convinced she'd taken an interest in him ages ago.

"You like him, don't you?"

Having her obvious behavior pointed out to her, Ann gave up on trying to hide it and nodded honestly.

"Yeah. I guess so."

Mythrill briskly rubbed the bottom of his nose and, somewhat regretfully, laughed with a 'heh heh.'

"Ah. Yeah, well. That's right, huh. I knew it after all."

"But it's no use. Because Shall left..."

Ann sat down on the bed with Mythrill still in her arms.

"What is Jonas planning to do by separating us from Shall?"

Her anxiety grew bigger. With Shall gone, she was all the more anxious. She

***Visit us at <http://aquascans.wordpress.com/> &  
<http://icarusbride.blogspot.com/>***

felt as helpless as though she'd been forced out naked into the cold.

That's when she noticed her lavishness of shedding tears over hearing about Liz.

*—I'm a fool.*

It didn't matter whether or not Shall was always gazing at memories of the past. The fact that in reality he was with her was the most important thing that she should be happy about.

Forgetting that, she thought more and more.

Hugh said it before, didn't he?

That 'it's hard for humans to adjust to severe conditions, but they get immediately used to comfortable ones.'

Without realizing it, Ann had gotten used to having Shall by her side.

*—I want us to be together. Just that is enough. Whatever Shall may be gazing at, just having him by my side is enough. Shall. Shall.*

There was no way he could hear her, but she couldn't keep herself from calling his name over and over in her heart.

END OF CHAPTER