

A Court of Woven Songs

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A Court of Woven Songs

by [theknifeandword](#)

Summary

"Perhaps some souls were destined to walk alone, to remain in the shadows of others' stories, the silent guardians of those who lived in the light. And maybe... maybe he was one of those souls."

During the quiet beauty of dusk, the Night Court's Spymaster is gifted a brief moment of peace in which he finally accepts his soul is not meant to entwine with another—destiny has dictated he must walk alone.

But the Shadowsinger should know better than to assume to know the will of the Mother and Cauldron.

Azriel will soon discover that fate has plans for the him after all. And the path that leads to his light is about to be revealed.

Notes

Whilst this piece has initially been written as a OneShot, it may be developed further if there is enough interest.

Timeline: Set post-ACOSF/ACOTAR 6 and pre-HOFAS.

Spoilers: May contain spoilers for the ACOTAR and Cresecent City series by Sarah J. Maas.

The sun hung low over Velaris, bathing the city in a wash of deep purples, soft pinks and shimmering golds as it dipped towards the horizon. The air, cool and heavy with mist, stirred the trees that lined the garden of the River House, their leaves sighing softly in the breeze.

A solitary figure sat on the lawn, utterly still except for the knife twisting and spinning between his scarred fingers in a deadly dance, the blade occasionally catching the golden light of the setting sun.

The rhythmic motion of the dagger was soothing to the shadowsinger, the familiar weight a comfort, grounding him as he allowed his thoughts to drift. His shadows drifted serenely along his shoulders, as though they sensed his need for calm.

This was a rare moment of peace for Azriel, a sliver of time where the world seemed to pause, allowing him to reflect on all that had happened over the last few weeks...and all that had not.

Elain was gone.

The thought echoed through him, a dull ache and quiet relief.

She had left with Lucien for the Day Court just that morning, the sunrise casting a glow over the newly mated couple as they had said farewell to their friends at the Night Court.

Azriel had watched from the shadows of the River House as Elain had grasped her mate's hand, gazing up at him with flushed cheeks and glittering eyes. Lucien had gazed back down at her with an answering reverence.

There had been a time when the sight of Elain with Lucien would have filled him with jealousy, and the sharp sting of longing. And he had felt...something as he watched them.

But it had been nothing but a sort of bittersweet relief that Elain was finally content. Accompanied, perhaps, by a final pang of sorrow for what might have been. For that time he had believed that he and Elain could have had something more. The time when he'd believed that maybe, just maybe, fate had made a mistake.

As Elain had hugged her sisters goodbye just hours earlier, he'd remembered the first time he had caught her staring at him with those wide, doe-brown eyes, as if she could see past the shadows and the scars and find the man beneath. It had shaken him, that look, because he wasn't used to being seen. Not like that. Not with kindness. Not with such overwhelming acceptance.

She had brought a soft glow of hope into his dark world, her presence a balm to his weary soul.

But the Mother and the Cauldron did not make mistakes. The decision had been made, the path set long before any of them realized. Elain had never been meant for him. Not in the way he'd thought he'd wanted.

The shadows whispered around him, as if in agreement, and Azriel closed his eyes, allowing himself to feel the truth of it.

He wasn't certain when exactly his feelings towards Elain had shifted. But he had seen when it changed for Elain, had watched her grow closer to Lucien amidst the chaos and horrors surrounding them, seen the soul binding connection form between them, in spite of all they'd faced in the last month.

At some point during their time on the continent, Elain had found her home in Lucien, and afterwards, once the truth of his... heritage came to light, they'd both found their place within the Day Court.

The gentle seer had finally found someone who could love her without reservations, unconditionally, and without the shadows that clung to Azriel's soul. And Lucien... Lucien was good for her. He was the bright, burning sun that she could bask in, the warmth she needed to grow and bloom in the soft, gentle way she craved. The one-eyed fae balanced Elain in a way that the Spymaster knew he never could.

Azriel leaned back, tilting his head upwards.

He watched as a lone star winked into existence in the sky, bright and twinkling in the velvet expanse, and allowed himself to finally, and honestly let the last of those longing thoughts for Elain go.

He allowed his happiness for her and her mate to flow through him freely, breathing deep into the knowledge that she was no longer just another lost love, but a friend—perhaps his closest—and a member of his family. They were kindred spirits, and Elain would always hold a special place within him, a place full of quiet affection and tender memories.

His shadows seemed to sigh and soften around his shoulders, as Truth-Teller came to a stop between his scarred palms, his thought's turning away from Elain and to the deeper reason she and her mate had haunted him since coming into his life.

For so long, he had wondered why the Cauldron, why the Mother, had not gifted him a mate. He had watched as Rhys found Feyre, as Cassian found Nesta, and now Lucien and Elain. And he had wondered... why not him? Had he not suffered alone for long enough? Had he not given enough? Atoned enough for his sins, taking on the unspeakable things he did in the darkness, so that others didn't have to?

But sitting here now, in the stillness of twilight, Azriel found that those questions no longer came with the crushing sense of loneliness they once might have.

Instead, they brought a strange sort of peace.

Perhaps some souls were destined to walk alone, to remain in the shadows of others' stories, the silent guardians of those who lived in the light.

And maybe... maybe he was one of those souls. Maybe this was his lot in life.

To be the friend, the brother, the protector.

He had, after all, been blessed in other ways—he had a family, one forged not by blood, but by choice. Rhysand, Cassian, Mor, and Amren had been his reason to exist for centuries, before the Mother had brought Feyre, her sisters, the Valkyries and Nyx into their lives, growing their wonderfully strange family further. Their inner circle had given him more love and purpose than he had ever thought possible, had pulled him from the darkness and given him a place to belong.

They had all become his anchor in the storm.

He had always known he was different to his chosen family, had always known that the shadows clung to him because they recognized a kindred spirit. He was a creature of darkness, of secrets, and perhaps that was why the Mother had not seen fit to grant him a mate.

Not all souls can be destined for the rare and sacred bond of a mate, a connection that went beyond mere love. And if the Mother and Cauldron had another path in mind for him, he would accept whatever way they paved, without question, without regret. They had already given him more than he deserved and had hoped for in those dark years of his youth, and for that, he would trust in their wisdom, in their plan, and be grateful for the life he had been given.

He had a place in this world, beside his family. And that was enough.

It would have to be.

With a soft sigh, Azriel sheathed Truth-Teller in a fluid motion, the blade sliding home with a soft click. He stood, wings rustling as they unfurled behind him and he let his eyes wander across the river, to the shining city before him. The world was quiet, and he took a moment to simply breathe it in, to let the silence seep into his bones before he bent, preparing to take flight.

But as he spread his wings, the soft breeze suddenly died, and his shadows, who had been murmuring softly, froze in place, as if the very world held its breath.

Azriel stilled and the garden was swallowed by an unnatural silence. His hand instinctively hovered over the hilt of his dagger, fingers brushing the familiar coolness of the blade as he held his breath, scanning his surroundings.

In the next heartbeat, his shadows erupted into a frenzy, whipping around him like a tempest. They tugged at his clothes, his hair, swirling in tight, frantic circles as they pulled his attention toward the horizon.

Coming, coming, coming, they seemed to chant.

Azriel's pulse quickened, his warrior instincts pricking up as the air around him crackled with tension.

What? What's coming? he silently breathed back.

Light! Light! they answered frantically. *LIGHT!*

Their whispers grew urgent, insistent, a cacophony of voices all urging him to act, to move, to prepare.

Whatever it was, it was close—and getting closer still. He tightened his grip on Truth-Teller, every sense on high alert as his shadows continued to spin around him, their warning clear. Something was coming, something powerful, and he had mere moments to brace himself before it arrived.

And then he heard it.

It started as a low hum, a single note that sank deep into his bones and resonated there. It was a sound he could have sworn he had never heard before, yet it was achingly familiar, like a song long forgotten but suddenly remembered. The note grew, building into a melody that thrummed through him, weaving itself into his very soul, filling the silence with its haunting, beautiful sound.

And the shadows, still a teeming, hectic mass of darkness, answered in kind, adding their own song into the fray.

It was unlike anything he had ever heard before. It spoke to him of ancient power, of destiny, the transcending of time and space, the lost and the found. The sound grew louder still, overwhelming him, swelling until it was all he could hear, all he could feel – so tangible he could almost see it, taste it.

Azriel sucked in a breath, his skin erupting into gooseflesh, hair standing on end as he felt the air thicken and vibrate along his skin.

But it wasn't painful—no, it was something else. It felt like a pull and something... warm. It hummed, washing over him in a caress, spreading across every inch of skin and, coating him, like the first rays of dawn creeping across the ground on a winters morn, banishing the frost.

His heart pounded in his chest, his breath coming in short bursts.

A flash of light, a blazing golden tear in the fabric of reality itself, burst into existence and then winked out, extinguished as quickly as it was born, taking the haunting melody with it.

At the same moment, he gasped. Lightening shot through his chest, where it flared, before settling deep. That gentle, vibrating pull became an insistent tug.

It demanded his attention, refused to be ignored, it yanked, guiding him, begging him to turn, to look, to see.

The shadowsinger whirled towards where the light had come from, the movement sharp, instinctive, Truth-Teller suddenly back in his grip. The shadows ceased their writhing song and simply hovered, as though they too were unsure, but eager to see what happened next.

Azriel's senses sharpened, cold hazel eyes scanning the garden, searching, hunting for... something.

No, not something.

Someone.

His gaze landed on a crumpled figure lying on the ground a few yards away, facing away from him.

He blinked. It was a female.

Red-haired, bloodied, and utterly still.

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