



Incense

By

The

Irises

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work would not have been possible without the entirety of our Engage the Arts Group. It wouldn't be the same without our wonderful artists, Kate Radwanski and Claire Hale, our invaluable editor Lillian Chesak, and to pat ourselves on the back, our lovely writers Rosaline Lyle, Drea Chalfan, and Melbanie Scott.

Nor would *Incense by the Irises* exist in any form without Ohio State University Arts Scholars program manager Roman Suer and graduate teaching assistant, Hannah Lewis.

Finally, we would like to give credit where credit is due. We took (rather loose) inspiration for the original concept of our story to William Shakespeare's *Romeo & Juliet*, and we drew artistic inspiration from John Everett Millais' *Ophelia*. Finally, we must acknowledge the Arts Scholars First-Year Seminar course for helping us develop as artists, with this short story as our evidence.

As the sun neared the horizon, a cloaked rider trotted into a small village. With plans to stop for the night at the local inn, she had other plans in mind before settling in. Steeling her nerves, the rider dismounted and led her horse on foot as she searched for a particular home.

After a few minutes of searching, the rider found exactly what she was looking for. The paint had faded with time, but she recognized it at a glance. Tying the horse to a nearby post, she walked to the door, and taking a steadying breath, she gave a hesitant but firm knock.

A moment passed. She thought to turn back and move on. Then there was a voice. "Yes? Who is it?" it called, muffled by distance and the door. It was... different from what she remembered, but there was no mistaking that voice. This was the person she was here to see.

Her heart was fluttering then, and no amount of breathing would calm it as she began to reply. "It's... It's me," she said softly, reserved but clear enough for the person on the other side of the door to hear.

This time there was no moment of silence. It felt to the rider that the second the words left her mouth, the door was flung open, soft candlelight spilling into the darkening street around her. Where the door had just been stood a wide-eyed human. Yes, those were the eyes she remembered. The human's shoulder-length golden curls reflected the flicker of the candlelights, colors shifting as the human looked up at her. Without a thought, as they both stood and stared at one another, she slowly drew her hands up and cast back the hood of her cloak, revealing the long, straight hair and pointed ears of her people.

After what felt like an eternity, the human spoke. “Tala?” they asked, simply.

Tala nodded. “It’s me, Hollis,” she breathed.

Without a word, Hollis threw themselves at her, wrapping their arms tightly around her. The two held each other there for some time before speaking again. “But why? After you stopped showing up, and after all these years, why are you here? No,” they stopped and shook their head slightly. “Don’t answer that right now. Come in! Please. It’s getting dark, and it’s warm inside.”

They took her hand hesitantly and led her inside, helping her settle down in their living room, a small fire flickering on the side keeping the room lit and warmed. A moment ticked by slowly, and they let out a held breath, sitting in a chair across from her.

“Alright,” Hollis said, glancing up at her. “Can I ask why you’re here? You stopped showing up back then, but you’re here now. Why?”

“What do you mean?” Tala replied. “You’re right, I stopped meeting with you, but I explained that in the last letter. I told you I wouldn’t be able to.”

“What letter? I know I gave you my address, and even showed you my home when I brought you here last, but there were never any letters.”

“Never any letters?” Tala exclaimed. “I sent you so many!” Her brow furrowed as she thought. “Wait. Let’s start from the beginning: why don’t you tell me how you remember everything? From the start.”

“Sure, sure, I can do that. But it’ll be a long story. Walk with me?” Hollis stood and offered Tala their hand.

“Of course.”

The two prepared to step outside, dressing warmly to ward off the chill. As they held the door for Tala, Hollis quickly doubled back, calling into the house. “I’ll be back in a bit, I’m going for a walk!”

“Do you have company?” Tala asked with a surprised glance at Hollis.

“No. Well, not until you arrived! But my parents still live here; I take care of them.”

“Ah. Well, why don’t you start your grand tale?” she joked, still tense but beginning to warm up.

“Right. Here we go:

“I was going for a walk. I did that a lot, those days. Still do, but not as often. That’s all it was: a typical walk through the forest, enjoying nature and getting away from everyone for a bit. It hadn’t been long since I discovered that place of ours; I thought I was the only one who knew about it. I still go back there, but not often. The water was always so peaceful, and the way the wind blew through the trees there made it feel magical.

“So, on that day, I went back. I needed to relax a bit, and that was the perfect place. Except, as I got closer, I heard something. Ethereal, refined, nostalgic. A single melody flitting among the trees, much more beautifully than the wind ever had.

“I had to get closer. And get closer I did. I followed the sound, more and more certain as time went on that it led to my place. Our place. And when I reached the treeline, when I saw you there, I froze. It’s

still embarrassing to admit, but the mere sight of you made my heart flutter and my cheeks flush.

“There I stood, entranced by your music and your beauty alike, for some time. I don’t remember how long, but I know that time didn’t matter to me then. I saw your ears, too, but I never really did understand the problem some people have with them.

“But as much as it may have felt like it, that moment didn’t last forever. Eventually, you saw me there, watching and listening on the side, and it startled you. You jumped a fair bit, and I might’ve had to have a quick laugh at that were it not for the dismay of seeing you go.”

Tala’s face flushed a bit at that comment, but as Hollis gave a soft giggle she joined in. A shared moment passed, and they continued. “I didn’t know exactly how I would make it happen, but I knew then that I had to see you again.

“I ran, faster than I ever had before, back home to sneak a piece of parchment and scrawl a quick note to you. I had no thought of my poor handwriting then, though I shudder at the thought of the impression it must’ve given. I told you the basics in that note; my home village, a brief explanation of my lack of manners, and a desperate request for you to meet me there again at a specific time a few days later.

“After I ran back and pinned the note clearly for you to see, I waited. You’re well aware of how bad I am at that. Between then and our second meeting, I was restless beyond compare. And when the day came that I had asked of you, I was there hours earlier than was required of me.

“When you stepped so quietly towards me, and I saw you for the second time, I was no less stunned than

the first time. It was a very awkward meeting, all things considered, but we talked, and it became clear that we both were interested in continuing to do so. I, for one, did so eagerly wish to be good friends, for reasons unrelated to my infatuation.

“Unfortunately, we couldn’t stay forever, so we went our separate ways after some time. But we began to meet there once a week, sharing in the details of our lives. I told you of my family’s problem with my identity, and you told me of your family’s prejudice against humans.

“We bonded, as time passed; at least I thought so, and I thought you had felt the same. It might’ve taken the passing of a few years and enough conversation to let us understand each other better than anyone else, but I even convinced you to let me sneak you into my village.

“I brought you that ratty cloak to hide your hair away as much as your ears. It was the Winter Solstice Festival, that’s why the day was important. With all the activity in the streets, I was able to show you around everywhere. We had gotten to know each other so well, and yet before this neither of us had seen the home of the other. I had shared most of my soul with you already, but I wanted you to have that part as well.

“But I got carried away in that desire. I kept you too long; showed you too much. It was before midday when I brought you there, and by the time you got home yourself it must have been well past dark. Your parents realized that something was happening. And somehow, they figured out that you were seeing me.”

“I never did share their distaste for humans,” Tala cut in. “And I’m not a great liar. I don’t think they *knew* you were human, or even that I was meeting anyone, but they certainly suspected it, and that was

enough for them.” Her face bore a sour expression as she thought of her parents.

Hollis took on a slight smile, amused and sympathetic, and looked at her with soft eyes. “They told you to stop, but you never were one to listen to them. That was one of the things I loved about you. You kept sneaking out to meet me like we always did, just with a bit of extra caution. Despite that complication, I wanted to see your home, like you had seen mine.

“I wanted to see elven customs and architecture and technology like I never could in my village. But most importantly, I wanted to see the place that was responsible for my luck in meeting you. And I suppose I was persuasive, because before long you were teaching me your customs. I found the lessons kind of boring, to be honest with you, but I did try hard, and I did learn!

“It took about a year for me to reach a level that you were confident in. I had learned what I needed to blend in well enough, as long as nobody realized I wasn’t actually an elf. Conveniently enough, it was about time for seasonal celebrations again.

“Once more that cloak came with us, this time obscuring me as we explored your hometown. I know you still had reservations about bringing me there, but it was *gorgeous*! It was larger than I was used to, and everything seemed so elegant. Though you may not have been a great example of the average of your people, I could tell that the town fit you well.

“But again, I was too excited. I was so eager to see the place where you grew up, that I had trouble following through with all your lessons. I knew how important they were, but sometimes when I had to act quickly, like when interacting with others, I would forget them for a moment.”

Tala chuckled softly. “It was mortifying, you know... Not that I’m surprised, now; I might be a bad liar, but you have the memory of a shrub,” she joked.

Hollis shared a smile with her, but it was overtaken by a slight frown as they returned to their story. “And that’s where I messed up. Although it shouldn’t have been surprising, we eventually ran into your parents. I was nervous, but you introduced me cautiously. And then I blanked; I failed to greet them properly. They had already been suspicious, but that’s when they realized who I was.

“It was too late to salvage the situation, but humans weren’t supposed to be in your town; that wasn’t just a familial thing. So we ran, before your parents could do anything that would be dangerous for me. Hand in hand, we ran back to our place by the irises.

“I felt awful. I apologized frantically when we finally stopped, and couldn’t stop apologizing until my voice was ragged. You told me that it was okay, and that we would figure something out, and even though I trusted you, I felt like you were just trying to make me calm down.

“We talked for a few more minutes, but I think we were both rattled a bit, and you decided that you should go back and try to talk to your parents. I hugged you tightly, wishing you good luck, and then you were gone. I lay there in the grass for some time, until my heart calmed, and eventually I returned home myself.

“When the time came for our next meeting, I got to our spot hours earlier than normal. I was too anxious to think of anything else. But even when it was actually time, you weren’t there. I stayed for hours, but you never showed up.

“I came back every single week, hoping to see you one more time. But it was like you had vanished from my life completely when you left that day. It took me years to lose hope, you know; every week for years, I would sit in that clearing for hours and pray that one more time I would hear a rustling in the undergrowth and catch sight of you stepping towards me with a smile on your face.

“But you never came back.”

As they walked, Tala couldn't help but wonder what happened to the letters. Did she pour her heart and soul into them just for Hollis to miss them? It sounded like they didn't know what she meant, so at least it wasn't a wilful neglect. But still, it hurt.

“What about the letters?” Tala asked, shakily, “I explained everything to you. Why would you wait for me after I told you I was never going to be allowed back in the alcove?”

Hollis looked at her, face scrunched in pure confusion. They put out a hand, stopping the both of them in their tracks. “You keep mentioning these letters. What letters? I never got any!”

“I sent all kinds of letters! From when we met, to after I could no longer see you. Is that not why you left your address on the first note?”

“A few times I hoped that you would, but I never expected you to send me any.” Hollis was perplexed. If they didn't receive them, but Tala had them delivered to their house, where were the letters going?

Standing there, in each other's presence, their sheer confusion was palpable.

“I’m sorry,” Tala finally choked out, voice breaking as unwilling tears escaped her eyes.

“You have nothing to be sorry for, Tala. You could never have known that I wasn’t getting your letters.”

“I know, I know... But how? I was stealthy enough to slip them in along with the other documents being carried between the two villages. Unless there was a mistake in th—”

“Oh... It must have... My family.” Hollis said, their voice dropping in defeat. They knew that if their parents saw a note from an elf, they would never have been told. That did make them wonder: What happened to the letters?

“I see.” Tala knew that Hollis’ family was also weary of elves. After all the history between the species, it would be bizarre for them not to be.

“Follow me,” said Hollis, tersely.

Without need for further instructions, Tala quickened her feet, trailing behind them hastily. Hollis’ face set in determination; it was clear that they intended to discover the fate of these letters Tala had so thoughtfully written. For them.

They couldn’t help but wonder what could be written in these letters for Tala to care so deeply about them. Although she didn’t show much emotion outwardly, Tala displayed how she was feeling in ways only those close to her could understand. Hollis could tell she was hurt knowing they never received the letters.

A growing anger and concern drove Hollis back to their parents’ house, breaking into a near-run. Upon

reaching the house, the duo nearly burst through the door, their steps hurried as they rushed through the house. They raced up the stairs, Tala trailing to keep up with Hollis as they rounded the top of the staircase and slammed open the door to a bedroom. There sat an elderly couple in rocking chairs; one crocheting a blanket, the other reading a newspaper.

“What did you do to the letters?” Hollis yelled. Everyone looked shocked at the unexpected outburst, except for Hollis, who was trying their best to reign in their emotions. Holding back angry tears, Hollis yelled, “Answer me!”

“Listen, we can talk about th—” the old lady started, trying to avoid an argument.

“No! We can’t. I—I’m sorry but...” Hollis cried. A single tear escaped, delicately and slowly dropping down their soft, pale face, now wrinkled in distress. “I understand your hatred for the elven kind. And... And I even understand you keeping the letters from me when I was young. You didn’t want me to continue meeting with Tala.

“But I am an adult and I have been one for a while, so trying to keep the truth from me will only hurt me more than you already have. So tell me—what did you do with the letters?”

They couldn’t hold it back anymore. Hollis’ vision slowly blurred as tears escaped, their face wet with not just sadness but betrayal and worry over their parent’s response. Hollis’ parents looked softly at them, trying to decode the thoughts behind their eyes.

“You’re right—we can’t hide it forever. But just know, our intentions were good. There are reasons our races aren’t the kindest to each other and tensions were worse when the two of you were younger. If people

knew we let you befriend each other and you were sending letters; we would have been outcast by the village. We knew about your secret meetings in the grove, and yet your father and I never stopped you. But it wasn't just about us, it was about keeping you—about keeping our family safe. But we knew you were being careful, so we still let you go.”

“There's a box tied in a purple ribbon, tucked away in the corner of the basement. Near your other childhood memories in storage,” their dad said gently. “The letters we kept are there. We had to burn some, when others saw them.”

Hollis grabbed Tala by the hand and rushed down the stairs of the quaint little cottage that they called home. By the time they got to the basement and found the letters, Tala had started crying too.

“I'm sorry for yelling; I just—I got emotional. I never told you—I was too nervous to ruin our friendship, but I... I...” Hollis could feel more tears coming.

“Hollis. Trust me—I understand what you're trying to say, but right now I think we should read these first.”

“I just... okay,” Hollis could barely manage those words without a rush of even more tears. They had never been able to share their true feelings for Tala. They had longed for her between every meeting and if they had had these letters, they would have been able to know that much more of her than they already did. Hollis briefly imagined their adolescent self clinging to these letters—not letting a single word of them go by without leaving a mark on their heart.

The two took the box, steps thumping against the earth as they walked to the alcove. A place full of so

many memories that brought them back to the years spent crying, singing, laughing, and smiling. Being in each other's presence simply filled them with all the joy in the world.

They found a spot just under a tree. "Isn't this where you sat the first time I saw you?" Hollis asked. Tala simply smiled and nodded—mute from nerves at the thought that these letters that she wrote nearly two decades ago were going to be read.

Out loud.

By the person she had been yearning for all those years ago.

As they read the letters together, one by one, they shared the same laughs and smiles from their youth. They relived all of those memories that Hollis retold to Tala earlier that day. Something was different this time. They finally learned of the feelings that Tala had buried deep during all of their previous meetings. Things that she could only express in these letters. Things that she thought they knew and simply hadn't acknowledged.

As the pair got to the last letter, Tala knew what was coming. "Read this one in your head... Please," she pleaded.

So they did. They read it all internally while Tala stared at them, nervously watching their eyes flit across the page. Eyes full of emotions in a turmoil before her. As they finished reading the letter, another tear fell from their eyes. Hollis had stopped their earlier crying a while into reading the letters with Tala, but the tears started again. This time, however, they were tears of joy.

These tears represented the decades of love they had hidden from each other. These tears caught the light of the falling sun in a way that made the world disappear. These tears represented all of those years apart.

As Hollis set down the parchment, Tala brought them close into the longest, strongest hug the two ever could have shared.

“I... I didn’t know. I’m sorry I ne—”

“It’s okay, Hollis. I never told you but... We know now,” Tala said, not knowing what that meant for them.

Hollis held Tala’s face and looked deeply into her eyes. Deeper than they ever had before, like they were searching for that something in her eyes that had gone unnoticed for years. She pulled them in close, gently touching their foreheads together as their eyes fluttered shut.

“I—I love you Tala,” Hollis whispered, barely audible. Tala pulled them in before either of them could spare a thought for the sentiment that they just confessed. She delicately planted a kiss on their lips, the same lips that just admitted how she had felt for the entirety of knowing Hollis.

When an elven traveler stops to spend the night in a small village, she pays a visit to her childhood friend and secret love. But when she learns that her many unreciprocated letters were never even received, the two revisit the story of their childhood, bringing their understanding of each other to new heights.





Letters

To

You

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10 April 569 P.W.

Dear Hollis,

I'm so sorry for running away so abruptly. I thought that I was alone; you startled me. I'm sure my ears leave it no surprise what my family thinks of your kind. I was taught to stay far away from humans. I do not believe that you are the type of human that will hurt anyone though—you seem close to my age as well. Maybe I am foolish for being so trusting of you—especially considering that I only saw your face for a few moments before I fled—but not a single part of me can fathom someone with as gentle a face as yours to be dangerous. Please do not take offense to this next statement, as I mean this kindly, but I have seen sheep more intimidating than you.

I am quite surprised that we share a common place to find sanctuary from the troubles of life. In all fairness, I only discovered that spot about six months ago, but I'm still surprised we did not run into each other earlier. Thank you for complimenting my playing. I can play a lot of instruments—my parents made me learn—but the ocarina is my favorite. People think it's simple because it's small, but it's a deceptively complex instrument—that's what makes it so beautiful to me. I will be sure to bring my ocarina to our next meeting so I can play the entire song for you.

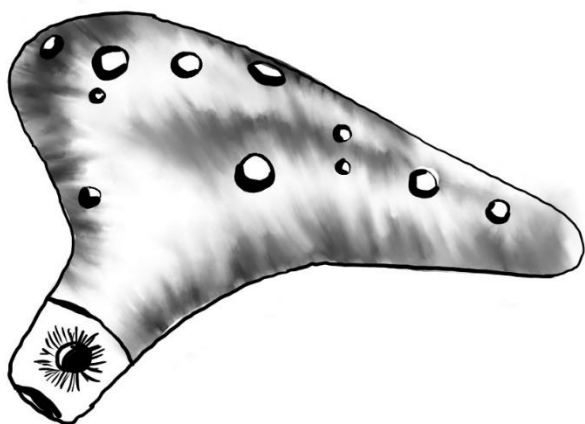
Once again, I am sorry for fleeing so fast. I hope I did not offend you too deeply, and that we can get to know each other better. Honestly, because you can appreciate the beauty of music and the beauty of

such secluded natural areas, I believe that we will be fast friends! If you want to be friends, of course.

Best wishes,

Tala

P.S. I've enclosed a sketch of the ocarina, for your consideration!



22 December 572 P.W.

Dear Hollis,

Thank you so much for taking me to the Winter Solstice Festival! It was beautiful in a way I have never experienced before. In my village, the elves hold elaborate celebrations on our holidays, but everyone is so formal. In your village, people are laughing, dancing, cheering—it's loud and, frankly, chaotic. The place you have been raised in is just as invigorating as you are, Hollis. I had never experienced something so fun before, but I should not be surprised—you always give me the most thrilling adventures.

My parents didn't find this trip as amusing as I did. When I got home late that evening, they brought me inside and interrogated me. I could tell they were angry, but they were also scared. My mother was pacing frantically in the office while my father was all but screaming his questions. Even with all their questions, we all knew what had happened without any words being said. I wasn't sure what the punishment would be, but before I could conjure my own fate in my mind, they let me off with a warning. That was nearly unheard of in my family, but I was grateful.

They told me that I was to never see you again—of course, they don't know about you except for the prediction they made that you are indeed human—I would be confined to my home for the rest of my youth. I am willing to take that risk, for you.

I don't usually discuss my family matters with you in person. It's not because I don't trust you, but because the subject is difficult for me to talk about.

My parents are well-intentioned, and I do love them, but they are extremely closed-minded. They believe all humans are evil, and I understand why, but it's such a frustrating thing to deal with. On top of that, they are extremely strict. Elven culture is a lot more rigid compared to human culture, but my parents are even more strict than normal. Since I was a child, I've woken up before the sun rises to engage in classes until the sun sets. They want me to be the best of the best, so they desire for me to be fluent in fifteen languages, master five instruments but be able to play ten, know the history of each nation, and master mathematics, all before the age of 20. My parents say they love me, but sometimes I feel like they only love this expectation they have of me, rather than me.

I do understand how privileged I am, and I am grateful that I have access to such a rich education. However, I just wanted to be a kid. I was jealous of other children who were able to play with each other. I never experienced the laughter and joy that I heard outside my bedroom window. Then, I met you.

Hollis, you were the first friend I've ever made, and you are currently my only friend. That's why I was very socially inept when we first met (and I still am, to be honest). I was able to experience joy for the first time after you came into my life. If it weren't for you, I would have gone insane long ago.

Your friendship is so dear to me that I will continue to meet you. I may need to take some

precautions so please, do not be surprised if I am later than normal for our meetings. I am doing everything I can to keep everything with us as constant as possible. You truly are my rock and I am not sure what I would do if it were no longer possible for me to see you.

My parents will never stop me from seeing you. I promise that I will fight every day if I have to.

See you soon,

Tala

23 February 573 P.W.

Dear Hollis,

As always, I loved seeing you today. I am glad that the hypervigilance of my family hasn't prevented our meetings. I will say that I have definitely become craftier in the art of escape. Oh, the adrenaline of adolescent rebellion!

Today, you mentioned your desire to visit Makalangit na Buwan, but, unfortunately, I do not see that as a realistic expedition. I would love to show you around, but the Elven people are much more vigilant than humans; there are a lot of elders in our village, and it is not difficult to spot an outsider. There are so many aspects of Elven culture that are hard to teach and explain to a person who was not raised in it. I know you are a quick learner, but you're a very social person. I love that about you, but I think it could bring unwanted attention.

Please do not take offense to my hesitancy. I would love it if you could come, I just think it would be dangerous for both of us. I can't risk anything happening, especially since my parents are so strict. It's not easy to justify your visiting with their extreme caution over me since our first outing to your village.

I am still grateful that you let me visit your home. Obviously, we still need to be careful, seeing as our last trip alerted my parents to me spending time with you. I will show you my home! I am completely determined to blend you in. It's only fair, as you did so for me. Just, please don't expect it to be anytime soon.

When you have lived in the same place for hundreds of years, spotting outsiders is easier than spotting wine stains on silk sheets, so we have a lot of work to do.

Don't fret—I do not doubt that you will adjust to our customs just fine. You are one of the craftiest people I've ever met and are more intelligent than you give yourself credit for. Without your fresh perspectives and the lessons your friendship has taught me, I never would be as determined, adventurous, or confident as I am now.

So, by our next meeting, we will be starting lessons on Elven culture, society, and etiquette. Be ready!

See you soon,

Tala

P.S. Here is a drawing of one of the flowers from our little place, to tide you over until our next meeting there!



20 October 573 P.W.

Dear Hollis,

I am so sorry. My parents have completely locked me down. They are supervising me constantly. I am currently writing this letter in the dead of night, and I have no idea when it will get to you.

Please don't feel upset, because despite everything, having you in my village was thrilling. I loved showing you the culture I grew up in. I know it's quite a bit more formal than where you were raised, but I'm glad you were able to admire it for its differences.

Now, since this is the last time I will ever be able to talk to you, I must tell you this:

I love you, Hollis. I love you more than I've loved anyone on this Earth. You are my dearest friend, my most trusted companion, and the only person who truly knows my soul. You, and you alone, have been more of a family to me than any elf has ever been. I'm so sorry that I didn't tell you this earlier. I thought I would have years and years to have you in my life, that I'd be able to tell you one day. I regret thinking that way, and gods how I wish that I had told you. Now I'm going to live the rest of my life regretting not telling you my true feelings sooner.

I won't be mad if you don't feel the same, and it's not as if it matters if you do now anyways. I just hope I can see you again one day.

I'm sorry, Hollis. I love you dearly, more than you will ever know. I wish we lived in a world where

Elves and Humans could be together—where we could love each other freely.

You are bright and beautiful. You are the sun in the sky, giving warmth and light to every life you touch. I have no idea how I will live without your light in my life. I will keep going, though, because I know you would want me to.

Never stop shining, my sunlight.

Until we meet again,

Tala

1 June 576 P.W.

Hello Hollis,

I know it's been years, and I have not received any letters from you, but you are always on my mind. Every time that I see anything from a few years ago, I am reminded of you. Every time I see a new natural phenomenon, I see you in it. I can't help but think about you at nearly every waking moment.

A few months ago, I decided to leave Makalangit na Buwan. It took a long time to finally escape from the watch of my parents, but I am now far away from my former home.

You have inspired me, Hollis. There is so much beauty outside of Buwan, and I was able to see just a fraction of it when you took me to the Winter Solstice Festival when we were sixteen. I am going to continue to travel the world and live my life the way I want to. Thank you, so much.


I have been exploring the world a little bit already. I told my parents that I wanted to see what other parts of the world had to offer and that I wanted to learn more about their cultures. It was difficult for them to accept—I mean, if you think you have the best anywhere could offer, why would you ever want to leave? They were scared and confused but I stood my ground. I told them that I was an adult now and they couldn't control my life anymore. Whether or not they supported me, I was going to make my own decisions. So, here I am now, doing just that.

If I had never met you, I would have never had the courage to stand up to my parents, or even leave

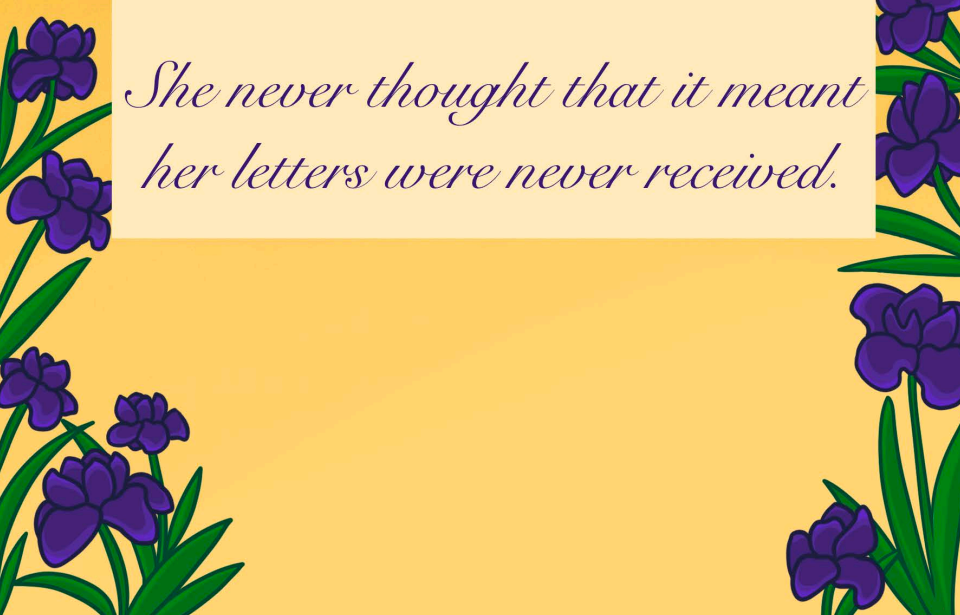
in general. I would have never known the beauty of this world without you, Hollis. Even if I never see you again, you are and will always be the most important person I've ever known. I don't know if I'm as special to you as you are to me, but that doesn't matter. It doesn't change how your presence in my life has changed me forever.

Thank you for everything,

Tala



A young Elven girl shared her deepest thoughts with her best friend through letters. She poured out the parts of her soul she couldn't say aloud. They never responded to or even mentioned them, but she didn't find this odd.



She never thought that it meant her letters were never received.