

## 0 - PRELUDE

On the 29th of January, reality was divided.

Like a knife cleaving through the fabric of space, sparks split the winds of an overlook above Cherize City. A man-sized rift opened, and something leapt out. It did not seem in haste, rather quickly giving in to the mesmerizing view.

"Well then, here you are. You truly are exceptional, child of man. I wish to meet you again someplace, sometime," spoke something from inside the rift.

"Yeah! Thanks again!" replied the figure on the overlook in earnest. A male voice, befitting of a late teenager.

The two figures stood on opposing sides. An extravagantly dressed humanoid dwelled inside the gleaming blue abyss, while the exited, hooded male perched on the grassy hill. He waved his cloaked arm, to which the being beamed a minimal smile. And then, the rift shut. Or rather, it ceased existing, like a zipper reconnecting the dimensional wall.

And it was silent again. The only noise brought by the wind flowing gently.

It took a little for the cloaked figure to react. He'd been wholly captivated by the scenery's beauty. The breeze caressing his face felt sentimental, nostalgic, like a long-awaited welcome.

Lifting his gaze from the horizon, he bent down to the dimly dancing grass. Then, he simply clutched the green in his palms. He desired nothing more than to touch his unusual environment. Graze the damp kiss of moisture on each straw, feel their rubbery texture, tug them to their limits - even rip some out after tugging too hard. Hands full with watery blades of green, the figure started laughing. He laughed to himself, little more than joyous breaths of disbelief.

*'I can't believe it! I'm-I'm actually back!'*

Then, an inevitable realization hit the celebrating figure. He had to try it. He absolutely needed to. But the thought of it made his heart flutter, anxious of the results. There was a substantial chance that rules were different over here; that he'd given up everything just to be back, he remembered. Maybe intentionally, he never asked his travel guide about it. If he went, he could not return - so in any case, he would have to be certain about it.

The boy's heart spiked as he readied himself. He planted his feet atop the hill's edge, arms stretched out and fingers spread to the sky. The ideal position, according to what he was taught.

All that was left to do...

A sudden, strong rupture of wind emerged, shooting forward to the sky. It slipped off the figure's hood, revealing his light skin and ruffled, marine hair. A mere second later, it cut through a cloud, decimating it to thin haze. And the boy's jade eyes flared in euphoria. His heart broke free from all chains of doubt, jumping up and down. It was impossible to hold his happiness any further.

All birds vanished from the pine-filled grove behind, sent flying by a sudden shout. Not one of pain, or fear. One of nothing but the most crystal form of joy. Relief.

On the 29th of January, at 5:22PM, Shimon Astrai returned to the Human Realm.