

The Day of Departure

by Autumn Leathers



In a field next to a wood, a lonesome Wizard lived. Though, I shouldn't say he was lonesome at all. In fact, he had many neighbors. Rabbits, birds, foxes, and mice... even the flowers he called friends. He was the great Wizard of green nature and life. He could tell you everything about nature, and all about life. He would often say they go hand in hand. His magic could heal and make things grow... or it would go off on its own and make the lily frogs dance during the night. Life, such a silly thing! It's full of adventures and triumphs. Dancing, laughter, all the little things, too. But there is something that usually goes underappreciated. All things come to an end, whether we like it or not. And we call that very thing, "death". Death, it's no stranger to the Wizard who lived in the field, next to the wood. He knew it all too well, more than any human. Now, something you may or may not know about Magicians is that they nearly live forever. Just nearly.

The Wizard learned to know that his dear friend had passed when he saw the flock of ravens in his field. He and the Wizard of the East Island, of tranquility and peace, had been close friends. Long ago, they had settled the East Island together, before the humans renamed it "*Hummingbird Island*". The life of a Mage ending is rare. It is so rare that there is a mystical ceremony dedicated to the occasion. It's nothing ritualistic or cultish, good grief, among those who use magic, it's called the Day of Departure. The day of which a magical being leaves this world and goes on to another, presumably... At this gathering, it's said that all the Magicians of the land travel to where it is held: at the highest mountain, during the latest hour, when the moon shines bright, and the stars guide accordingly.

The next morning, the Wizard left, dressed kindly for the gathering, with nothing but a staff in hand. The staff holds the magic he is unable to embody, all Magicians have a vessel of the liking. Perhaps a ring or a necklace, a crystal that never gets lost, or maybe another staff. There was even a live toad used as a vessel, once. Anyway, the not-so-lonesome Wizard continued his way to the mountain. He passed by towns, rivers, villages. Fairies that lived in the Enchanted Valley. Now, the Enchanted Valley was a mistake made by a Great Sorceress. She cast a spell, intending to turn mushrooms in the barren valley into birchwood trees but instead caused a

terrible spell leak. It cursed all that lived there, turning the butterflies into fairies, and all others into monstrous creatures. But the spell did in fact, turn those mushrooms into birchwood trees! The Wizard wanted no part in it. There wasn't a point in trying to save that valley, it was too far gone.

As he approached the mountain realm, he saw something only magical eyes can, the Secret bridge. It was built to keep non-magical beings out. Because Magicians aren't fond of man nor woman, or other identities, and *certainly* not the dwarves. There is a belief held among them that dwarves are hoarders who will steal anything that interests them. And it has not been unheard of for a dwarf to have stolen a Mage's vessel. The Wizard passed the bridge with a raise of his staff. Soon after, he started to feel the hurling winds coming from the mountain. They whispered and cried, mourning. Magicians were the first and only beings to wield magic. The land has known them much longer than it's known the humans or dwarves.

Memories from the Wizard's field flushed his mind, and he remembered how calm the winds were back home. He didn't like Departures, in fact, he didn't like most other Magicians. But this one he would dread more than others. As he made his way up the path to where the ceremony is held, the winds only got stronger. So much magic in one place... it takes a toll on the environment and creates such an aura that everything around it becomes imbued with magical qualities. The Wizard started to sense something well too known to him, almost as if the mountain itself was taking on life. He wondered if it was because of all of the Magicians gathering, or if it was just the disruption from the thinning of the heavens.

Upon his arrival, he ran into a familiar group of Magicians: 2 Wizards and a Sorceress. They conversed with kind eyes, but he could still see the same sadness as he felt within himself. After all the magicians have gathered, about 50 in number, they moved to the grand ceremonial hall. It was a big building, made of stone, that had an open roof that allowed the dead's soul to pass into the sky. The clouds crackled with lightning as the divide between this world and another began to split open. Despite all

the death the Wizard had seen before, he held his breath. And at last, the Departure began.

End Note

To me, writing is like stepping into a scene and retelling it like an old memory. In conclusion, I want to daydream for a living.