

Lick My Tears, Baby

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15 A.D.

The kingdom of Ashronia lays beneath a labyrinthine range of canyons rooted deep within the Southern Sahara. In most recent times, the empire has become a blazing hell on earth. With mere droplets of rain gracing these lands once upon an ultramarine moon, water has overtaken the value of silver, and perhaps even gold. Ashronia sails ever-so precariously towards the sun, its hope dissipating like ashes from a bonfire.

Yilerow Glaph resides in the empire's countryside. For as long as history permits, his bloodline has survived by means of selling produce. In light of shifting climates, the Glaphs can accommodate no more than a quarter of their crops, a fraction dangerously insufficient for even a family of three. As an eminently concerning matter of fact, the collective yields from all two thousand rural Ashronians fall below the kingdom's minimal quota. Should no fruitful solution promptly arise, famine would mercilessly infest these lands.

In the beginning of July, for the first time ever, Yilerow accompanies his family to the eastern well. He pillars a pair of empty buckets one step at a time, one foot after another. As the roaring wind assaults his eyes, the scorching sun ignites his face. Desperate for any ounce of hydration, Yilerow extends his tongue up and up, licking the sweat and tears off his scaly cheeks.

The emaciated boy floods himself in cheery thoughts, visualizing that palace of water as if it's another step away. In spite of his perseverance, he caves onto a dune of searing sands just five into a seventeen kilometer march, losing every trace of will and desire by the blink of an eye. With no room for hesitation, the boy's father elects to retrieve two additional buckets of water, leaving his mother to escort him home at once.

Come morning, the Glaphs remain separated. Come lunchtime, mother sets three rolls of bread and three bowls of soup, leaving an open door for father's return. Come evening, she can afford to sit in wait no longer, so she sends her boy to bed and marches eastward, thrusting herself against the night's ferocious gale.

Yilerow rises early to the ringings of a distant gathering. Stamping down his pitchfork as a makeshift walking stick, he reluctantly fights off the urge to pass out once more, stiffly limping

his way to the center of town. Along the muddy trails of rural Ashronia, each and every bystanding villager glues their eyes upon him, murmuring incessantly amongst each other.

Yilerow senses grievous turbulence heading his way, but hasn't got the slightest piece of mind to prepare himself. Like the day prior, he paces one step after another, but this time through a clustered tunnel of people acting terrifically bizarre. As Yilerow finally arrives at town square, the district chief greets him with a lengthy bow, an unprecedented act which shakes him right out of his lingering trance.

“Dearest child, I am... deeply sorry for your loss.”

“Loss?”

“Oh, my goodness! You have not heard? It is your parents, Yilerow...”

“Wh-wh-wh-what are you talking about?”

“We found them this morning, far east. Joseph was curled up in the arms of Maria. We assume she tried to carry him home through the darkness of the night, but-”

Yilerow freezes, then trembles from head to toe. He fixates his eyes on the sun burning away his youthful gaze. His soul departs instantly from his body, leaving behind a lifeless composition of zombie flesh.

“Please, go rest. I shall take care of everything from here.”

Yilerow does as instructed, dragging his feet and bowing his head along the way home. He walks past his family's cottage into an arid field housing rows upon rows of withering crops. Yilerow drops to his knees, then sits on his heels. Having escaped the village assembly, the boy frees himself, incessantly sobbing in rectifying solitude. His sapphire tears ripple between crop to crop, row to row, field to field. In a matter of seconds, Ashronia transforms from a torrid wasteland to a waterlogged paradise.

The king leads his citizens in a march towards the nation's edges where Yilerow lies.

“Make no mistake, everyone! It is him, the divine child!”

“Aye aye! All hail Yilerow! Yilerow, ‘The Weeper’! Let us bow!”

The king erects a gargantuan statue in Yilerow's name. He establishes a new religion named ‘Yilrian’, then proceeds to proselytize the entire continent within just a couple of years. The kingdom flourished, its posterity's prosperity guaranteed by the abundance of water gifted from a celestial boy, perhaps the son of God, or God himself...

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“... and that’s the story! He’s like my ‘Jesus’, I guess.”

“Hah! Babe, that sounds retarded.”

“Oi! You said to get married in my country, so deal with it.”

“Ugh. What do I gotta do, a goddamn ritual or somethin’?”

“Kinda, yeah... We’ll hafta lick each other’s tears.”

“What?! The fuck you mean-”

“Honey, I’m sorry! My dad’s gonna reject our marriage if we don’t do it! Can we practice tonight? Please?”

“Yer outta yer fuckin’ mind! I ain’t lickin’ yer face in front o’ everybody! Hell no!”

“It’s just for good luck! We cry and drink each other’s tears for Yilerow’s blessings!”

“Wait, so you actually believe that shit? It’s just some stupid fuckin’ fairy tale, ya know!”

“God, shut up! Do you wanna marry me or not?!”

“Hhhhhhhhhh... Fine! Goddamn it!”