

The Librarian, by Horea

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The elf capital had the same name as in the times when it was situated near the big, white mountain. It was called Whitestone. But now the city was built inside a huge tree. All the houses were suspended and together they formed a spiral around the tree. The house of the most respected family in town was situated at the top of the spiral. Every town had a librarian and the one in Whitestone was the greatest in the land.

In the elf culture, the Librarian was considered to be the spiritual leader of the community, the owner of Truth and Keeper of the Traditions; so the Librarian's family was well-respected, even by the royal family. Since knowledge was passed down from generation to generation, it was the Librarian's duty to teach his son everything he knew. The Whitestone Librarian's son, Rohae, was quickly becoming a man. When he turned 17 his father told him:

"Son, the time has come for you to start learning. From now on you will come with me to the Library. Every day you will spend 6 hours learning what you need to know to become the next Librarian."

Rohae was a tall dark-haired boy, a blue-eyed dreamer. He had been waiting for a long time to start on his way to becoming a librarian so he was very anxious. He went for a walk around the huge tree city, trying to imagine how the next day would be.

He lay down at the base of the tree and closed his eyes dreaming of the time he would become the next Librarian. He heard a girl singing and he couldn't quite make up his mind if he was dreaming or not. But the voice became stronger and stronger. He opened his eyes and saw an elf girl standing right in front of him, smiling. His heart started beating faster and faster. He jumped to his feet and took a few steps backwards.

"Who are you?" asked the girl, laughing. "You look like the Librarian's son. Are you Rohae?"

The boy couldn't open his mouth. He stared at the girl's big brown calm eyes looking at him.

"Why don't you saying anything?" asked the girl sweetly. "My name is Ada, what's your name?"

“Rohae. Yes, I am the Librarian’s son. Who are you?”

“Aha, so I was right! I am the daughter of the Royal Butterflies’ caretaker.”

The two spent all day together and talked until the sun went down. When the night came, they both had to go home. But from that moment, not one day passed without them seeing each other. After a while, Rohae realized that Ada was just as smart and just as eager to learn as he was, so they started learning together at the base of the tree.

One day, while Rohae was learning in the Library, his father came up to him.

“Rohae, it is time for you to get married. I found you a good girl, the Librarian’s daughter in Littleleaf.”

“But father...” Rohae didn’t know what to say.

He knew that according to tradition a member of the Librarian’s family could only marry a member of another Librarian family, and could never marry a simple elf worker. That day time passed very slowly for Rohae; he couldn’t wait to finish his learning. When his father let him go home, he went straight to his mother and told her everything.

“Mother, father wants me to marry the Librarian’s daughter in Littleleaf,” the boy cried.

“I know boy, she’s a very sweet young girl,” his mother replied.

“Yes mother, but I love another. I can’t even think of marrying someone else, someone I haven’t even met.”

After a long talk, Rohae’s mother reached the conclusion that indeed Ada was the best choice for her boy. They both decided that the Librarian should meet Ada.

The girl was very scared when she arrived at the Librarian’s house the next day. The Librarian marveled at her beauty as he saw Ada, but quickly came to his senses.

“Ada, I am delighted to meet such a beautiful girl like yourself. However, due to the present circumstances, you are not welcome in our house. My son cannot marry the daughter of a simple worker. It is forbidden and

furthermore, this marriage that you speak of would be a shame to our family.”

Ada didn't wait for the Librarian to throw her out of the house. Sad and hurt, she ran out the door crying.

“How can you be so cruel?” shouted Rohae after the girl left. “I can't believe you just said that. I love Ada, don't you understand? Why do I have to follow a stupid tradition?”

“Silence! I will not have this in my house. It is our tradition, it is who we are. I will not be the one to break the rules; I will not be the one responsible for your mistakes,” said Rohae's father sternly.

“You'd never break the rules because you're a coward!” replied the boy. “Aren't the elves the ones that praise love? That sing it? That write about it? And aren't you the keeper of all traditions? How dare you teach me about love when you forbid it in your own home?”

“How will a common elf like her rise to our standards? Don't you understand that you have to marry someone who knows the traditions, someone smart, and someone who is worthy of being the Librarian's wife? You cannot marry a simpleton.”

“You are so unfair. She is not a simpleton. Ada is very intelligent. She knows as much about the elf culture as I do. How can you talk like that when you don't even know her?”

Rohae was angry and so was his father.

“Stop this, boys! You're acting like two children who pretend to be men,” said Rohae's mother. “A man must never fight, especially a Librarian. You should think of a way to solve this, a way that will make you both happy.”

“There will be no more discussions. My son is going to marry the Librarian's daughter in Littleleaf and that's the end of it. You will go to your room right now!” said the Librarian, pounding his fist on the table.

Rohae didn't even look at his father. His eyes were burning, he wanted to cry but he couldn't be weak in front of his father... his enemy.

“Why are you acting like this?” asked his mother after the boy left. “He’s just a kid. Don’t you remember what you were like when you were his age?”

“I can’t let him marry that girl! He’ll ruin his life... and mine too.”

“His? Or yours? What’s more important to you? Don’t you want him to be happy?”

“He is going to be happy. He’ll learn to be happy!” replied the Librarian.

“Would you have been happy if you hadn’t married me?” asked his wife.

“What do you mean? What are you talking about? Of course I wouldn’t.”

“Do you remember when we met? Your father wanted you to marry that other girl. But you loved me. You loved me. How can you forget how it is to be in love? We were lucky because my father was also a Librarian. But Rohae isn’t that lucky. What would you have done if my father wasn’t a Librarian? Would you have married that other girl? Do the right thing, my love. At least meet the girl again, give her a chance, you don’t even know her.”

The Librarian was defeated... by his own wife. Indeed, she was right. He wouldn’t have married anyone else but her. Why should he make his son do something that even he wouldn’t have done?

The next day he went to the Royal Butterflies’ stable to look for Ada. It was a great honor for her father, who was amazed that the Librarian himself was in his stables.

“No, she’s not here. I haven’t seen her all day. Why? Is something wrong? Did she do something bad?”

“Yes, she did,” the Librarian mumbled to himself. “He stole something very important for me.”

“What? Ada? She would never do such a thing. I am going to go look for her. I am sure it is just a big misunderstanding,” said the Ada’s father as the Librarian was leaving.

“He stole my son’s heart,” said the Librarian to himself after Ada’s father had left. “She stole my son’s heart. And Rohae stole hers. And justice must be done. They must be married.”

The Librarian went to look for the girl at the tree where he knew Rohae spent most of his spare time.

“I knew I’d find you here,” he said.

He found the girl crying.

“Sir, excuse me. I must go, my father must be worried.”

“Yes he is. He found out you stole something that didn’t belong to you.”

“I didn’t steal anything sir.”

“You stole my son’s heart.”

“I didn’t steal it. He gave it to me.”

“Indeed, he did. And you gave yours to him. I cannot stay in the way of your love. You will marry my son two weeks from now.”

“Oh sir, is it true? Do we really have your blessing?”

“You do, child. Go to him now. I’m sure he is looking for you.”

“Oh, thank you sir, thank you,” said the girl as she happily ran off.

“I must be getting old,” the Librarian said to himself. “Love is the only thing that keeps me young.”