

Seph

Monica Flory

Dramatic

NAV: 14, a boy

SEPH: 13, a girl

SEPH has been stolen by HADES to become Queen of the Underworld. She is bewildered. NAV enters and whispers to her.

NAV: Are you okay?

SEPH: What?

NAV: He's a heavy sleeper.

SEPH: How do you know?

NAV: I live here. Are you okay?

SEPH: I think so.

NAV: Good. You're not dead, are you?

SEPH: I don't think so. You?

NAV: Dead.

SEPH: You're so young.

NAV: It was an accident. It's not so bad.

SEPH: Oh. Do you know how I got here?

NAV: Stolen, I guess. From the Aboveworld.

SEPH: Yes.

NAV: There's no sun here.

SEPH: I'll miss it.

NAV: But there are other things. You'll see.

SEPH: You have something on your arm.

[She reaches to brush it off.]

NAV: Don't!

[HADES stirs. NAV hides until HADES sleeps again.]

SEPH: I'm sorry.

NAV: You can't touch here. You can't laugh. It's the only way you'll ever leave.

SEPH: What's on your arm?

NAV: Moss. I can scrape it off again, but it will be back by morning.

SEPH: Oh.

NAV: I'm starting to get it everywhere. You have to keep yourself from turning back into earth, you know?

SEPH: I've never heard of that.

NAV: You'll hear a lot of things if you stick around long enough.

SEPH: How do I get out of here?

NAV: Don't eat anything, no matter how hungry you get. Don't cry, even if you think you can't help it. Observers are everywhere, and if they catch you doing anything human, you're stuck here forever.

SEPH: I'll get hungry.

NAV: Everyone does. You get pretty desperate. I'd gladly take a kick to the face if I could cry about it afterwards.

SEPH: You're funny.

NAV: Sometimes I just pretend I'm a tree. A tree can feel things, in the roots, in the centermost circle of their trunk. In the core. But there are so many circles and branches and leaves that to us it just looks like a tree. You can't even tell it's feeling something, you know?

SEPH: Yeah. I'm a tree.

NAV: You have to try to remember as much as you can. Keep it tucked away, in your core—but keep it.

SEPH: Remember.

NAV: Can you think of anything from home right now?

SEPH: My birthday. I turned thirteen. And I was picking a daffodil for my mother. Red.

NAV: When you lie in bed at night, try to remember as much as you can before you fall asleep. It's the only way. And then we can talk about it the next day. I'll help you.

SEPH: What do you remember?

NAV: One thing. I was little. My mom had her branches wrapped around me. Her arms. And she was singing.

SEPH: What song?

NAV: I can't remember. [*Pause.*] Trees need sleep here. You should try to get some.

SEPH: Next to him?

NAV: [*Nodding.*] If you get scared, touch the ground.

SEPH: I'm a tree.

NAV: Same roots. Sweet dreams.