

On a hill in autumn, a man became more than mortal.

This had been no accident. Everything from the location of the rite to the hour of the exaltation had been carefully planned, the efforts of a lifetime culminating in a single instant of pure glory. All of it had been orchestrated by a brilliant, mad will, one who now supped on the fruit of labors that made men into gods.

Ventrus had sought power since the day he was born. Ever since he was a boy he had been furtive and dour, struggling against every limit that man and nature alike seemed to impose upon him. This may have seemed in contradiction to his seemingly endless religiosity, but in truth, the two were inseparably tied. Ventrus learned to read and write before he began schooling, and continued with his education long after common men would have stopped. Ventrus spent many days in the woods, finding weapons in words and runes. It was a kindly priest who noticed his aptitude, and secured him a position at a university. When the time came to send him off, his mother and father could not help but feel like a great weight had been lifted off of their shoulders.

Ventrus studied all of the liberal arts. It had been no secret that he had been interested in magic long before then, but it was at the university that Ventrus had finally been able to hone his powers. The stars gave up their secrets. All of nature's hidden laws – and the means by which men could bypass them – were unveiled before his eyes. The more time that passed, the more Ventrus learned of obscure lore, and the more his professors despaired. When he graduated, many of his professors thought that he would go on to become some derelict academic, the kind which nobles hired to teach and entertain their children. Instead, the man retired to a small cottage in the woods, where he promptly spent the next twenty years in utter seclusion.

Ventrus became known as an eccentric after the first year, and by the time the second decade had passed, he had become known as the Necromancer of the Glen. He sold charms and told fortunes to fund his research, but in truth, his greatest experiment did not require much money. Over the years, Ventrus began to engage in a variety of strange asceticisms, purifying his body and spirit for his planned elevation to divinity.

The day upon which Ventrus finally became a god had been the capstone of a lifetime's work. Ventrus had sat there motionless atop the hill, mustering all of his will to render the terrestrial into the celestial. At the end of the hour, for just a moment, Heaven touched Earth. That was when Ventrus transposed himself, that he would remain on the right side of the universe once the connection broke. Ventrus' soul was cleaved from his earthly frame. As it rushed to the heavens, it shed off the raiment that it had donned in incarnation. In its flight, it acquired a new vehicle, a glittering, astral form, one forever beyond the pains of age, illness, and death.

In that moment of liberation, Ventrus felt nothing but ecstasy.

Ventrus held in the feeling for a long, long time. The reasoning mind that had brought him there lay still. Ventrus had no perception of time.

Eventually, Ventrus came to. He realized that something was before his eyes.

Ventrus stood in an endless expanse of celestial woodland. Everything was almost incomprehensibly fine. Ventrus thought that fairyland itself must have paled in comparison to its majesty.

All of this, however, was interrupted by a thought that came unbidden to his mind.

What now?

Ventrus held there for a while, his divine ecstasy quickly becoming replaced by a strange reverie. It was very bizarre, like disappointment and boundless curiosity wrapped into one. After spending some time in this state, Ventrus almost absentmindedly took a step forward, his eyes scanning the environment. That was when he noticed something else.

He was naked.

Ventrus had not expected the matter of the body to be relevant. He was also not one who was given unto vanity. But he still found it odd. His body was just sort of...exposed. It was glittering and shining to be sure, possessed of the divine beauty of the gods, but he was still naked, all things considered. And as Ventrus looked upon it more, he realized something else.

That shade of green was too light.

That was when Ventrus hastily examined the rest of his body, especially the limbs. His brow grew somewhat furrowed as he came to his realization.

He was a child.

By the proportions, Ventrus guessed that his body was that of a child of middling age. Past young childhood, but not yet on the cusp of adolescence. Ventrus just sort of stood there in a subdued state of shock, trying to process things in his mind. He had not imagined that this would happen. To be frank, he was almost a bit disappointed that he still possessed a body, even if it was an astral one. He was on relatively untrod ground, of course, but Ventrus still thought that something was off. His gaze turned upward once more, and with the vigor that characterized his mortal life, he went on into the forest.

The woods were truly marvelous. It was not the outward form of the land that impressed Ventrus so, but rather the character behind it all. It felt like an invisible presence dwelled just behind every shrub and branch, radiating majesty that Ventrus had only grasped at in life. Every moment was its own little wonder, and Ventrus almost thought that he would be overwhelmed by the ecstasy. But Ventrus maintained his composure. Some of this he could attribute to this training, of course, but there was another element to his resilience that felt tied to his apotheosis. Ventrus simply did not feel like a profane man touching the sacred domain of the gods. Instead, he quietly but beautifully fit into the environment. Ventrus basked in the feeling for a good while, as it reminded him of what he had achieved. He was a god now.

Ventrus meandered on through the woods. Truthfully, he did not quite know why he was even walking into the woodland. It was to figure out what to do next, he supposed, but his reason still felt very loose, provisional. In truth, he was not really sure what he wanted now. He had got what he wanted.

A small breeze blew, caressing Ventrus' body gently. He did not feel cold, however. In fact, he had not really felt cold this entire time, even though he was naked in the wilderness. Ventrus supposed that this must have been due to his divine form; the gods were beyond the petty aches that concerned mortal men. He just continued in his walk, his mind once again drifting back toward the matter of his nudity. A part of him thought that he would have overcome his shame at his nakedness as a part of his

apotheosis, but it still remained. Not that Ventrus had cared much about the matter at all; he mostly just held the normal preference for clothing that many individuals had. Still, even if he did not have social standards to meet, he thought he would still liked to be clothed, if only for his own sake.

Just then, on the horizon, Ventrus saw something.

A silhouette stood amidst the trees in the distance. It definitely seemed like the silhouette of a person, but Ventrus could not make out much beyond that. It was like the outline of an individual that had been filled with pure blackness. The shadows were not those that could be cast by the environment, Ventrus knew.

Ventrus halted in his tracks and stared at the figure. It began to move then – stuttering towards him, like the world when one blinks their eyes. Ventrus held his ground as the figure approached. His expression was blank, and his gaze had force behind it. Ventrus steeled his mind most of all, for he knew not the capabilities that this being possessed. But for the most part, though, Ventrus just stood. He had attained divinity, after all. What did he have to fear?

It only took a little while for the figure to reach him. The entity almost seemed to flicker, then. The darkness would flash momentarily. And then, all of a sudden, Ventrus saw what rested beneath.

There was a *goddess*.

Detached eyes began to rest on the boy. The color of the iris flowed like quicksilver. The face was perfect. The woman scanned the fledgling divinity before her. Something flickered in her eyes.

Then, she spoke.

“I hereby adopt you, child.” her voice drifted like the breeze. Ventrus felt like he could become lost in the words. “Come along, now.”

Ventrus just stood there for a few moments. Then, he recovered.

“What do you say?!”

“I said that I adopt you.” the goddess replied nonchalantly, her eyes narrowing. “What are you waiting for? Time is a precious commodity...”

“By what right do you adopt me? And why would you even want to do that?!” Ventrus spoke quickly.

“You have only recently ascended to divinity. You should be grateful that we are even inviting you into our pantheon, child...” the woman spoke, sighing under her breath. “Now, as I said, come along. We need to get you dressed.”

“...No!” Ventrus shouted. The child-god look up at the woman, staring hard at her. The eyes had fire behind them.

“...What?” the goddess spoke quietly, taking a moment to process the words. Ventrus responded soon after.

“I said no! I know your identity. You are Ceryl, a goddess of fertility. The people of the land in which I formerly resided would petition you for bountiful harvests. I have invoked you in my magic, and I have bound you to my very will in the past! I will not submit to you.” Ventrus shouted with fervor. His eyes were glistening, mad. A few seconds after he finished his speech, he added in something else.

“Also, I am not even sure why you would be so concerned about my nudity. You are a fertility goddess, after all...”

Ceryl stood blankly for a moment.

Then her eyes narrowed.

“...You are a very, *very* foolish child.” she spoke quietly. That was when Ventrus noticed something about her, and his brow furrowed.

The woman of the woods began to walk toward him.

“You may have commanded us when you were mortal, but now you are on our level. You can no longer command us so, and in this world, child, you are weak.” Ceryl continued in her speech. Ventrus saw the world around her face fade into shadow.

“Of course, you are a child. I cannot expect you to have perfect manners. And, of course, you did not truly understand how...inappropriate the comment you made earlier was. Of course you did not...”

A strange grin began to develop on Ceryl's face. Ventrus faltered ever so slightly.

Just then, something unexpected happened.

Ventrus began to pee.

Of course, Ventrus was not wearing anything, and so for a little while, the child urinated upon the forest floor.

Ceryl blinked. Ventrus was too startled to even react.

Both stood quietly in the forest, staring at one another. Neither party moved.

Then, Ventrus' maw opened.

“...I did not mean to do that, I swear!” the child blurted out. He was beginning to tear up.

“I...understand that, child...” Ceryl spoke. The woman mostly held back.

“I, I did not feel it coming...I...” Ventrus drifted off.

“It, it is alright, child.” Ceryl spoke quietly, almost awkwardly. How was one supposed to handle this sort of situation?

Ventrus stood still, wiping away tears from his eyes. Ceryl stood pensively for a few moments, before

she decided upon a course of action.

Ceryl grabbed one of Ventrus' hands. Still in shock, the child did not try to escape. Slowly, Ceryl began to walk further into the forest, pulling Ventrus along behind her.

Ventrus began to recover around halfway through the journey to the manor. That actually annoyed Ceryl, as the boy quickly returned to his usual willful self. Ventrus did not try to argue too much with Ceryl, though. It is difficult to assert your authority after you pee yourself in front of a stranger.

“So...I know that we are heading to your home and all of that, but can you not just let me go after you give me some clothes? I am sure that I can find my through this world alone...” Ventrus mumbled.

“Absolutely not.” Ceryl said with finality. “You are a child. I cannot exactly leave you to the mercy of the heavens.”

“But I am an adult!” Ventrus shouted.

“You *were* an adult. And after seeing your behavior out there, I am not sure if you deserve the privilege of being treated like one...” Ceryl shook her head.

Ventrus just grumbled. A few moments later, his voice returned.

“Why did I get the body of a child anyhow?” he asked.

“I am guessing that you messed up the process of exaltation, somehow. My brother could probably be the one to figure out why you ended up with the form of a child. And why you peed yourself...” Ceryl spoke.

Ventrus just sighed and remained silent for the rest of the journey.

The journey to the manor was short, all things considered. The place was not really as imposing as Ventrus had thought it might have been. The structure was made out of smooth wood, and measured two stories in height. It reminded Ventrus of some of the small estates that minor noble families had. The building rested in a foggy section of the woods. The environment was much like that which he had resided in as a hermit, Ventrus thought. Numinosity dwelled in the place.

Ceryl took Ventrus into the estate. The inside felt like another world. The interior was composed of dark wood, and the whole building was lit by flickering torchlight. Ventrus was reminded of the academy that he had studied at. The interior matched the exterior, Ventrus thought. The furnishings were fine, but only to a degree. The place seemed appropriate for minor nobles. The hallways were long, and it was difficult to see to them end of them. Ventrus also noticed that the air was rather musty. Ventrus liked that smell. The whole place seemed homely.

Ceryl took Ventrus through the dizzying maze of the interior, and brought him into a small room. Standing inside was a man garbed in a simple green robe, though the hood was down. It only took a single look for Ventrus to determine that the man was a god. Ceryl brought Ventrus before the man, and began to speak.

“Ah, sister, it is good to see you. It appears as though you have brought us a guest?” the man asked. His

voice was tranquil, and Ventrus was almost disturbed by how calm he seemed.

“Indeed I have. I have found the one whose presence we felt. He has only recently attained divinity, so be careful with him.” Ceryl spoke.

“Of course.” the man nodded, his gaze flickering towards Ventrus. “I take it that you have already come to a decision as to what to do with him?”

“Indeed. He is not merely a guest.” Ceryl nodded. The man simply nodded back.

Ventrus looked on at all of these events in a strange state. They were, talking about him, obviously. And not asking for his say in any of it. And yet, he did not really feel angry. He felt quite calm, in fact. This somewhat disturbed Ventrus, but he said nothing.

“In any case, I have come to you for a reason. I was hoping that you could gaze upon his astral form. Evidently, he was a man before he attained divinity, and a certain...event has led me to wonder about the integrity of his form.” Ceryl spoke.

“I can do that easily, good sister.” the man spoke, smiling for a moment at his sibling.

The man looked down at Ventrus.

“Hello, child. I am Yeni. It is a pleasure to meet you.” the god bowed.

Ventrus could not actually recognize that name. Though he was an astute occultist, it was not like he memorized the name of every divinity.

“Hello little guy?” Yeni spoke, tilting his head.

“...Hello.” Ventrus spoke quietly. “I am Ventrus. I am merely acquiescing to your sibling's requests.”

“I understand.” Yeni spoke, nodding for a little while. A small smile still remained plastered on his face. The man seemed impossible to perturb.

“In any case, I will just conduct a brief examination.” Yeni said.

Yeni's eyes began to fix themselves on Ventrus, and for just a moment, the child saw something in them. But then, just like that it was gone.

“Ah, well well! That is the situation at hand...” Yeni spoke, laughing a little bit to himself.

“What did you discern, brother?” Ceryl asked.

“It appears as though our little friend here messed up the procedure of apotheosis a little bit. He did not quite have the spiritual strength to pierce the heavens correctly. He was only able to manifest an astral body of limited power. That is why he is a child.” Yeni spoke with confidence. “It will take him some time to improve the strength of his astral body.”

Yeni went quiet for a few moments, before he spoke again.

“Oh, I forgot to mention that he is incontinent.”

Ventrus and Ceryl just stood blankly at Yeni.

“His astral body is weak enough that it cannot even control its own bodily functions. This is a lasting sort of impairment, I am afraid. Ventrus will have to learn how to manipulate the substance of his astral body in order to rectify the error.” Yeni spoke simply.

Ventrus was the first to speak after Yeni.

“What?!” Ventrus shouted.

“I apologize. I am sure that you will be able to fix that problem in due time...” Yeni spoke, turning back towards his sister.

“In any case, it has been a pleasure to meet the little godling, good sister.

“...And it has been...good to hear your insights, dear brother.” Ceryl spoke. It looked almost as though she was coming to, Ventrus thought. The goddess smiled at Yeni, and the two hugged for a brief moment.

After that, Yeni simply left the room.

What a strange, strange god, Ventrus thought.

Ventrus looked back up at Ceryl. He noticed a smile.

Ventrus did not like that.

“It is time to get you dressed, Ventrus. Come along, now.” Ceryl spoke.

Ventrus just sighed and took her hand.

Ceryl led Ventrus further around the estate. The child thought that he was getting a better idea of the layout of the building, now. Soon enough, the two arrived at a wooden door. Ceryl opened the door, bringing Ventrus into the room beyond it. The boy was rather confused. It appeared to be a small room, almost like a supply closet. There were various fabrics resting upon racks, but none of them really appeared to be finished articles of clothing. They were here to get him clothes, right?

“Ah, there it is.” Ventrus heard Ceryl speak. He turned around. The godling saw Ceryl with a thick, folded piece of white cloth in her hand.

Ventrus realized what it was a moment later.

Before Ventrus could speak, Ceryl's voice sounded.

“This is not a point of debate, child. Lay down.” Ceryl spoke. Her face was radiant yet terrifying. Again, the world around her visage seemed to vanish before Ventrus' eyes. The child suddenly felt

very, very small.

“B-Bu-” Ventrus was cut off.

“Shh. No words.” Ceryl said softly. A light smile was creeping its way onto her face.

Ventrus did not speak. He did not really know why. In life, he had been a magician of great power. He had commanded gods! And yet here, he felt...small. Weak. He, he felt like a child.

Ventrus slowly began to rest upon the ground. His eyes still rested upon Ceryl. It was difficult to concentrate on anything else. It, it was really strange. Part of him was frightened by her. Part of him was angry at her. But another part of him, louder than any of the others, was comforted by her.

Ventrus sheepishly raised his legs when Ceryl bid him to do so. The woman rested the piece of cloth beneath his butt, folding it over to cover his privates. She folded over the wings of the diaper in short order and tied up two knots. After that, she helped Ventrus to his feet. The child began to escape from his previous stupor. Ceryl led him further down the room, towards the...door? Wait...

“Umm...” Ventrus mumbled as Ceryl opened the door, beginning to step outside.

“Hmm? Yes?” Ceryl looked down at Ventrus, her head tilting.

“...The rest of my clothes?” Ventrus mumbled.

Ceryl's expression changed a little, then. There was still that warmth that Ventrus had known before. But something else edged into it. The edges of the woman's maw curled upwards.

“...You are fully dressed, little boy.” Ceryl spoke, and for a moment, her smile looked eerie. “I have not forgotten your behavior from earlier. Hopefully this will teach you a lesson.” her eyes narrowed for a second. “Besides, you look cute in just a diaper...”

Ventrus sighed, but continued following Ceryl.

The godling and the goddess walked down yet another hallway of the estate. Ventrus looked around the hallway while he walked. He was somewhat bored, and not even really sure where Ceryl planned on taking him. But then he noticed a figure at the hallway's end. There was a woman – an impossibly gorgeous woman – standing there. She looked young, and she was dressed lightly. The woman's eyes caught onto Ventrus just as he noticed her, and a smile grew on her face. The woman began to jog down the hallway, her expression sparkling. Ventrus sort of hid himself behind Ceryl. It only took a few moments for the woman to reach the two divinities.

“Hello good sister! I apologize if I startled you, but I could not help but notice that you had a little guest with you...”

“You are fine, Ramiah.” Ceryl nodded, looking back at her sister with a more composed expression. Nevertheless, the goddess did retain a certain smile. “As for the little guy beside me, he is Ventrus. He is the divinity whose presence we felt earlier.”

“Of course, of course...” Ramiah spoke. Her gaze was now mostly focused on Ventrus now. She gave a



smile and a little wave. Ventrus just sort of blushed. She was treating him like a little kid...

"I have chosen to adopt him into the family. He is very new to the heavens, you see." Ceryl spoke.

"Ah, a former mortal I am wagering?" Ramiah asked.

"Indeed." Ceryl nodded. "He is very weak; I cannot imagine leaving the child to his own devices."

"That is very kind of you, Ceryl! Just the kind of sister I know..." Ramiah smiled.

"It is what anyone would do." Ceryl shrugged.

"Fair enough." Ramiah smiled, shaking her head and laughing a little. After a little while, the woman began to look down towards Ventrus. Her smile was softer now, but somehow, Ventrus liked it like that. It felt more legitimate.

"If I may ask, dear sister..." Ramiah began to speak. "...is there any reason why Ventrus is...dressed so? I mean, given his age and all." Ramiah spoke, and Ventrus blushed.

"Oh, he is incontinent." Ceryl said simply. Ventrus somehow blushed even more.

"Aww...poor little guy..." Ramiah spoke, beginning to look back down toward Ventrus. As soon as her gaze fixed onto Ventrus, she began to smile once more, patting the leaves of his head.

"Do not worry though, little guy! We do not mind..."

Ventrus just grumbled and said nothing.

While Ramiah fussed over Ventrus and Ceryl delighted in her recently adopted child, Ventrus looked toward the window to the left. Ventrus noted a figure beyond the window. A strange, hunched figure shrouded by ragged grey cloth was walking further into the forest, Ventrus noted. And yet there was something behind the appearance. There was a presence, a depthless numinosity. Ventrus thought that he was growing used to the presence of gods, but the numinosity of this figure was something else.

"Who is that?" Ventrus asked, pointing towards the window.

Ramiah only look toward the window once, before she turned back towards Ventrus with a smile.

"Oh, it looks like Taluz is heading into the woods. He is...well...he is the kind of person who you will understand one day, dear." Ramiah spoke. Ventrus noticed something about her tone.

Ventrus looked toward Ceryl, and then he spoke again.

"...Ceryl?" Ventrus asked.

"...He governs primal things, Ventrus. Mysteries. Sacred things." Ceryl spoke.

"...I see." Ventrus said.

For a little while, Ventrus just stared at the figure.

For a little while, he remembered.

And then, Taluz vanished into the mist.

Ventrus kept looking on for a little while. After around a minute, he came back to. The child realized that the women had not been chattering amongst themselves, for once.

“You can meet Taluz yourself, later on.” Ceryl spoke quietly after a few moments of silence. “Though I trust that you understand that communicating with him is not something that one should do lightly.”

“I understand.” Ventrus nodded. For once, Ceryl was not an enemy.

Ventrus just held for a little while, then. Ceryl and Ramiah started up a small conversation, and the godling in their midst thought to himself.

He had known that attaining this lesser sort of divinity was only a single step, of course. He had yet to realize his ultimacy.

Ventrus smiled, for he now had a goal.

The two goddesses kept in their conversation for a few minutes. As they did so, Ventrus' thoughts deepened. He had begun planning, the kind of planning that he had once engaged in when he was a child in his mortal life.

This planning was interrupted, however.

All of a sudden, Ventrus felt himself urinate. The cloth around his loins grew wet and warm. Before he could properly react to that, however, Ventrus felt something else. There was a strange feeling down below, he noticed.

Ventrus only realized that he was pooping after a few seconds.

Ventrus was silent. He could scarcely even react.

After a few seconds, Ventrus finished relieving himself into his diaper. The back of the diaper was warm and mushy, now. It felt so weird...

It was after several seconds that Ceryl detected a scent in the air. She looked down toward the child at her side, and noticed that he was paralyzed. The woman leaned back a little bit. Though she did not actually pull back the waistband of his diaper, she could tell from the discoloration of the diaper and the way in which it drooped what had happened.

“Apologies, good sister, but I am afraid that I will have to depart at the moment. We can continue this conversation later on.” Ceryl spoke, looking back up towards Ramiah.

“Oh, has something happened?” Ramiah asked.

“Ventrus needs to get his diaper changed.” Ceryl said simply. She gazed at the boy quietly.

“Oh, heh, well that is understandable.” Ramiah nodded, smiling lightly. She looked down at Ventrus, giving him a warm smile. Of course, that just rendered Ventrus even more embarrassed.

“Indeed. In any case, I should probably get going quickly. I would not want the child to get a rash...” Ceryl spoke.

“Just as I would have expected from my sister...” Ramiah shook her head, smiling. “Not that that is a bad thing, of course. I will leave you two be for now. Take care, little Ventrus!” Ramiah spoke, giving Ventrus a little wave. The goddess departed shortly after.

“Alright, then. Come along now, Ventrus.” Ceryl spoke, looking down at the child by her side. Ventrus finally managed to look up at the woman. He had not been looking forward to this moment.

And yet, when it came, it was not as bad as he had expected.

Her eyes were deep, and he fell into them.

When Ceryl began to walk a moment later, tightly gripping onto Ventrus' hand, he did not resist.

The pair reached the second floor in short order. From there, Ceryl moved down a long hall. At the far end of the hall, Ventrus spied a hint of a stairwell on the right. Ventrus was still coming to grips with the layout of the place, but he thought that that was odd. They were already on the second floor after all.

It was when Ceryl began to take him up the stairwell that Ventrus began to realize where it led. The stairs led to a small attic. To his left, Ventrus spied a small bed, one fit for a child. Just past it rested a wooden table with a cloth cushion upon it. A few pillows dotted the room, and Ventrus spied some toys on the ground. A small wooden chest rested next to the bed. Windows rested on both sides of the room. One rested close to the bed, letting in a modicum of light from the misty forest beyond. It looked like this was going to be his home, Ventrus realized.

Ceryl swiftly took Ventrus to the changing table and rested him upon it. Ventrus, for his part, remained very still, and did not resist. He did actually want to get a diaper change, after all...

Ceryl swiftly untied the sides of Ventrus' diaper, getting to work at cleaning his privates soon after. Once she was done, Ceryl tossed the old diaper into a wicker basket that rested by the changing table. Then, she procured a thick bolt of cloth from the changing table, beginning to wrap it around Ventrus' unmentionables. She folded the diaper up swiftly, and then tied both ends of it. Ventrus wriggled his legs a little bit, somewhat morbidly curious as to its fit. He found it to be rather tight, all things considered. Ceryl certainly seemed skilled, he had to admit...

“Alright then, you are done.” Ceryl spoke quietly, picking Ventrus up and carefully setting him back down upon the floor. The child stood there for a few moments then, unsure of what to do. The world felt strange, but not necessarily in a bad way. It felt like the day after a storm. Ventrus looked back up toward Ceryl.

“...I feel weird.” Ventrus said.

“That is understandable.” Ceryl nodded slowly. Ventrus noticed something about her voice then. It felt like the vitality from it had vanished. It was difficult to describe why, but Ventrus liked that.

Ventrus just sort of held there in silence for a little while. He felt his eyelids grow heavier, and he began to look toward the window. Below him rested the forest.

“I am probably going to be here for a while.” Ventrus admitted. His eyes were lost in the woods.

“Indeed so.” Ceryl said quietly. She began to look down at the forest as well.

“I have a lot to do. I am not going to stop at godhood, you know.” Ventrus spoke. Despite the content of his words, the tone of his voice was utterly simple. Sincere.

“That is exactly what I would have expected from you.” Ceryl said.

The goddess looked upon him then for a moment. When Ventrus met her gaze, part of his heart gave way.

For the moment that they shared was real.

In that moment, the last of Ventrus' hesitations dissipated.

“I am sleepy...” Ventrus mumbled. The boy yawned a little.

“That is understandable. It has been a long day.” Ceryl said, and smiled.

Ventrus walked over towards the bed and began to climb onto it. Ceryl helped him get under the sheets, and caressed the leaves of his head for a good, long while.

Eventually, Ceryl left. As Ventrus slowly drifted off into sleep, he thought of all of the feats that he would accomplish. Of all the power that he would attain.

And of the day when he would have nothing left to attain at all.

Ventrus entered sleep with a smile.