

The Season of Autumn

I.

In a galaxy that rests a magnitude of miles away from our world exists the planet of Oran. On this planet, women exist on their own terms and their own rules, as there is not a single living man. Generations of warriors have protected Oran from the male species and raised daughters to live free from toxic masculinity and degrading societal expectations.

Every year, selected women are tasked to travel to different universes to find a planet to convert. Much like a copy of Oran. Hopping from one galaxy to the next, searching through planets, the selected few search for a host to raise more warriors and rid the existence of men.

Marcella, a fierce yet stubborn personality gifted with the ability to fly, turn invisible, mind control, and super strength is tasked with converting Earth 0205. She spends her first six months blending in with the crowd, determining whether this planet was worthy to witness and experience the Conversion of Oran. She disguises herself as a locally well-known and respected realtor. Through her clients, she is also able to get a better sense of this planet and the people who inhabit it. The more she learns about them, the more she questions her mission and its true intentions.

She meets a man, Mark, who changes her perspective. She learns the joy of human life between men and woman and the beautiful life that is created when the two species are together. She spends more of her free time with this man and slowly begins to lose sight of the mission at hand. She trusts him to the point where she has revealed to him that she has abilities and where she comes from, but chooses not to reveal her mission.

Within three years, she marries and has a daughter with Mark, who they name, Autumn. From the moment she was born, Autumn had an electrifying spark in her eyes that told Marcella that she was going to be just as strong and powerful as the women of Oran. Autumn triggered something in Marcella that redirected her focus on the mission. She knew that she had to continue

with the Conversion of Oran and she knew that this planet was worthy. Once Autumn receives her full powers come her seventeenth birthday, the Conversion shall then shortly commence.

II.

Autumn hops out the bed and crosses off the 15th of February on her calendar. Today is the day. She will find out her special powers and can finally feel connected to her mom and feel free. She gets ready for work at the galleria.

She slides open her double mirrored closet door and lazily searches for her dreadful grey and brown uniform.

Her dad yells from down the hall, “Autumn you’re gonna go to work hungry if you don’t hurry up!”

Since when do I even eat in the morning? Wait, since when does he even cook? Autumn anxiously heads down the hallway and is greeted by a cloud of ghostly smoke.

“Wow, what did you burn this time?” Autumn jokes.

“Nothing, actually,” responds her dad, “Today is a big day which calls for a big breakfast, and an even bigger beverage to go along with it.”

At the table is smoked maple sausage links, powdery french toast, eggs perfectly cooked sunny side up, a fruit spread, and “a glass of a handcrafted strawberry-mango cloud” as her dad calls it. The drink is a sunset cotton candy color with dry ice for a cloudy effect.

“So that’s what all the smoke is about,” Autumn responds amazed, “Where’d you cater from hahaha.”

“Very funny, while you’ve been daydreaming about flying I’ve actually been practicing my culinary skills and learned a thing or two. I wanted to do something special... after all, it is your seventeenth birthday.”

“Thanks, dad, it really looks good...”

“C’mon where’s the ‘but?’ Give it to me straight.”

“Nothing, it’s just a big day. Do you think I’m actually going to be gifted flying abilities? Could you imagine?! Me flying around!! I’d be so high up you’d look like a tiny itty bitty little ant.”

Marcella flies in and joins in on the conversation, “uh-uh-uh no superpower talk at the table, you know the rules”

“C’mon honey it’s her big day, we can bend the rules just for the day,” her dad responds, trying to be supportive.

“Mark, it’s important for her to stay grounded. This life is a privilege and comes with a lot of responsibilities. Abusing this power can get too much to her head and will end up like Kronos.”

“Okay mom, now that’s a bit extreme. First of all, I’m not having kids any time soon, and second of all, I will never ever ever eat another person no matter what influence I’m under,” Autumn is slightly offended her mom would even entertain the thought that something like that could happen to her.

“Autumn, I know you’re excited. Trust me I’ve been there. I’m telling you this *because* I’ve *been* there. You also need to be mentally ready and worthy of these abilities. You may not even get your powers today, it could be a week from now or even months from now.”

“Okay, I’ve heard enough, thanks for the support and such warming words. I gotta get to work,” Autumn embraces Mark, “bye dad, I love you and thank you for such an amazing *birthday* morning,” Autumn scolds Marcella side-eyeing as she walks out the door.

As Autumn goes about her shift at work. She starts to contemplate what her mom told her before she left. She thinks to herself maybe she is right. She also does not want to prolong the anticipation of her powers any longer so she focuses on work and decides to not think about it anymore.

It’s almost midnight and Autumn approaches her house trying to not think about how she still hasn’t gotten her powers. She lays in an orange and red hammock her dad had built her on

her birthday last year. She closes her eyes and attempts to relax. Deep breath in, and release. Deep breath in, and release. Deep breath in, and release. She's fighting back the tears, but trying to stay focused. Her heart rate begins to increase. The hammock starts to shake. The ground begins to rumble. *It's an earthquake!* She falls off the hammock and catches her landing with her hands. Vividly green vines begin to twirl and swirl around her limbs. Patches of green, red, and pink nature sprouts out the earth. A meadow forms and arch around her. Flowers and leaves dress her dull grey and brown uniform giving Autumn a new appearance. Autumn is confused but aroused by what is happening around her. Her heart rate begins to calm, the earth has also calmed, and that is when Autumn realizes, "I HAVE POWERS!"

III.

Autumn has had a normal life, as long as you ignore all the weird things that have happened to her. Like how she can make all sorts of nature grow simply by touching the earth with her hands. Or when she helped her dad's garden completely bloom in the span of a day. She's always had a deep and profound connection with the Earth. Despite this, she struggles and longs to have this same connection with her mother, Marcella. Autumn constantly feels the need to perform to her mother's ability but falls short each time.

Ever since Autumn got her powers, she can also feel the world around her changing. The spirit of the Earth feels like it is dying. She is not as vibrant and joyous as she usually is. She is quiet and its bleak nature is protruding. Autumn questions if her emotions are the cause of these changes and know there is only one other person who may understand.

While searching for her mom, Autumn overhears Marcella is in a digital holographic meeting with the leaders of Oran, "Marcella, we tasked you with examining Earth 0205 and determining whether or not they would be a good host," there is a brief pause, "this was 21 years ago! What have you been up to and tell us why we shouldn't eliminate you right now" the leaders are furious.

“I needed time to make sure that this planet was the right host,” Marcella explains, “I spent years talking to as many people as I could, traveling the different parts that this world have to offer and-”

“And?” the leaders interrupt Marcella.

“And I gave birth to a girl” the leaders all gasp, “but before you judge, she just turned seventeen and her powers have come. Ever since then, this Earth has commenced the Conversion of Oran. My years on this Earth have led to this very day. This Earth presented itself worthy on its own. It is as if Oran chose this planet. Men will soon cease to exist”

After a long debrief amongst the leaders of Oran, they conclude, “Very well then, although you have betrayed the long traditional standings of Oran by engaging in relations with a male specimen, you have proven that you are willing to do anything and go to any lengths to fulfill the mission of Oran. We will be on Earth 0205 at a moment’s notice.” The call ends and Marcella lets out an audible sigh of relief.

Autumn is shocked by what she has heard. She can’t believe that her mom has been using her and living a double life all these years. She can’t help but feel at fault. What does this mean for her dad, who has also been her best friend and her biggest supporter since she could remember.

A storm begins to form outside. The sky turns grey and the ground black. Autumn knows that she needs to get a hold of herself. She needs to find a balance. Along the lines, she discovers that she is the answer. She is the key to stopping the Conversion. The less in control she is of her emotions, the less control she is of her powers, thus expediting the Conversion.

Marcella calls Autumn into her room, “Autumn, there is something I need to tell you about who I really am and where I come from.”

Autumn interrupts, “No need, I heard everything and I can’t let you do this.”

“It’s too late. Can’t you see, you are a part of Oran. Oran chose this Earth. Oran chose you. You have a duty to protect-”

“No, you have a duty! I never asked for this! What about dad, does he not mean anything to you?!” Autumn’s emotions begin to flare as she defies gravity and begins to levitate in the air, a spark of electricity appearing in her eyes.

“Your father was merely a pet. He is a man and nothing more. Why can’t you understand.”

“Oh, I understand. And I won’t let you do this to this Earth, my home.”

“This is not your home!” Marcella lunges at Autumn, “if you won’t cooperate, then I’ll make you.” Marcella and Autumn break through the roof in an intense battle. Autumn extends an arm and attacks Marcella with a fistful of vines. Marcella loses her balance but quickly regains the upper hand and controls Autumn, making her suffocate herself in branches covered in spikes. Autumn loses her breath, she can feel herself losing control. People who are witnessing the chaos begin to disintegrate into the air. The sky breaks in half and three godlike women descend from the sky and approach Marcella who hovers over a suffocating Autumn.

“Is this the daughter you speak of?” asks the leaders of Oran.

“Yes, she is the key to the Conversion. As you can see it has already commenced,” Marcella responds. All around them people are running manically looking for an escape from this nightmare. Men being separated from their families, chaos ensuing all throughout the city. Autumn knows she has to do something, but if she is the key to it all, what is there that she can do?

Autumn begins to breathe and tap into her spiritual self. She controls her emotions and the storm slowly calms.

“No, what are you doing? Make her stop!” the leaders insist.

Marcella pounces at Autumn. She tries to get in her head but Autumn has blocked out all influences. Autumn is not present for she has gone to another place. She lays on a bed of flowers reliving every memory she has. She thinks about her dad and all he has done for her. She thinks of

her friends, her neighborhood, and even her stupid job at the galleria. She thinks of all the things that encompass her humanity.

“NOOO!!!!” Marcella exclaims as she continues to attack Autumn in hopes that Autumn will lose control and the Conversion will continue.

Autumn can not hear nor can she conceive any thoughts. She begins to sprout flowers of all kinds from her pores to the point where Marcella can no longer reach her. She fills the space with life and color. Autumn sheds a tear and smiles. *Poof!* Autumn explodes into a grand display of nature and the Earth slowly begins to heal. The sky turns blue and the Earth reveals its natural green color once again. Families are reunited and men begin to reappear.

The leaders of Oran look down at Marcella in shame for having wasted countless hours and years on a man and a planet not worthy of their Conversion. They move Marcella into the sky as the Earth splits and they drag her with them.

People gather around the remains of Autumn and take a moment of silence for the heroine who saved them and restored balance. She sacrificed herself for humanity. The world owed her a debt it could never repay.

And in her honor, a festival is held to praise Autumns' courageous actions. The trees turn orange and the ground red. The air is cool and the spirit of Autumn fills each room.

Decades pass and the festival soon becomes a memory. But the season of Autumn remains. And those who know the story and the meaning of the season remember the true heroine of Earth

0205, Autumn.