

I'll Follow You

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EXT. THE VILLAGE - NIGHT

In a village of bird winged-people, a celebration is occurring in a beautiful display of feathers and dancing light from a bonfire.

Two of the bird-women, PHOENIX (24) and EVELYN (22) are sitting together, laughing and sharing a large, roasted rodent on a stick.

PHOENIX

Listen, I swear, he really thought he could throw his feathers in my face and then ask me out on a date.

EVELYN

(laughing) I do NOT believe he actually gave you a bouquet of feathers.

PHOENIX

That he ripped out of his wings! I swear! Here-

Phoenix digs in her animal-skin sack for a moment.

PHOENIX (cont'd)

Here! See, it's his dyed feather. Look at him.

The women look over in the distance to the offender. He is smoothing down patches in his orange and blue wings.

PHOENIX (cont'd)

Idiot.

EVELYN

(laughing) Don't be so mean, Phee. He tried.

Phoenix scoffs and chomps into her rat.

PHOENIX

I am NOT interested.

(pause)

Are you ready? It's late.

EVELYN

Yeah, let's go. I'm full.

Phoenix tosses what remains of her meal into the fire. They both shuffle the wings on their back open, and others make room as they spring into the air.

EXT. THE SKY - MINUTES LATER

Under the clear, starry sky, only the whistling of wind is heard as Evelyn and Phoenix glide through the air. Evelyn's white feathers shine in the moonlight.

PHOENIX

Ugh, you're so pretty at night, stop it.

EVELYN

(laughing) Thanks. White feathers are hard to keep white, though. Maybe I'll dye mine, too.

PHOENIX

No! Never, don't you dare!

They both laugh, and suddenly Phoenix whips her golden wings down, propelling her higher into the night sky. The party below is only seen as a pinprick of orange light.

Evelyn follows her, and they both swirl around in the air playfully, doing loops and dives.

They join hands, folding in their wings and letting themselves free-fall.

They pull each other close, the wind screaming as they plummet to the world below.

Phoenix gives Evelyn a quick kiss before they release each other, opening their wings to stop their harsh descent.

EVELYN

Okay, for real, let's go home. I'm tired.

PHOENIX

Fine. I've got to be in town early tomorrow anyways.

They glide towards the land, leaving the beautiful moon behind them.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. THE VILLAGE - THE NEXT MORNING

The village is in shambles. Blood, wings, and corpses are everywhere. Stray feathers litter the ground, and there is not a sound heard.

Phoenix lands near the bonfire from the night before, still smoldering. Her face is pale in horror.

Trembling, she searches around, taking small, quiet steps. She comes to a corpse, crying, and sees that their wings have been cut out of their backs. Others have theirs ripped out, or mutilated.

Phoenix starts to hyperventilate, whipping her head around, opening her wings in preparation to fly.

A groan makes her pause, and she spins around to see a bird-person, MANU (36), on the ground, breathing shallowly. He is reaching out to Phoenix with a bloody hand.

PHOENIX  
(gasping) Manu!

Phoenix runs to him, crying, and kneels down trying to prop him up. One of his black wings remains attached but mangled, the other is missing.

MANU  
(weakly) Shape-shifters... attacked.  
Run... Find others... save them...

PHOENIX  
(sobbing) Okay, come on, stand-up,  
Manu. Can you walk? Manu. Look at me.  
(pause)  
Manu?

Manu's eyes are glazed over.

Phoenix sobs, and gently sets Manu's head on the ground, closing his eyes. She helplessly looks around the clearing, stands, her hands now bloody.

EVELYN  
(shouting) PHEE?!

Phoenix whips around to see Evelyn gliding towards her, her face registering the horror of the village. She's carrying Phoenix's satchel from the night before. Evelyn lands, crying.

EVELYN (cont'd)  
Wh-what happened?!

Phoenix interrupts Evelyn by hugging her. They both tremble in each others arms. They part.

PHOENIX

I-I don't know, but we have to go.  
Someone attacked, I- What are you  
doing here?!

Evelyn is looking at the carnage before her as Phoenix speaks, she absent-mindedly holds up Phoenix's bag.

EVELYN

You forgot--

KA-CHINK--a weapon is fired off-screen, and a net with weights on it flies through the air. The bird-women cry out and Evelyn is hit and immediately taken down.

Phoenix runs to her, whipping her head around to look for the attacker. Both start scrambling with the net.

A shape-shifter in her half-tiger form bursts from the treeline.

NIM

Got one! Go get the other!

Phoenix and Evelyn start panting as they struggle with the net. Foot steps are heard, but they ignore them.

PHOENIX

C'mon! C'mon!

Finally tossing off the net, Phoenix hauls Evelyn to her feet and starts running. They spread their wings.

NIM

Oh, no you don't! NOW!

Phoenix and Evelyn leap, flapping their wings. The net-guns fire.

The nets catch them and bring them to the ground.

EXT. THE CLIFF - HOURS LATER

On the cliff of a ravine, corpses of the bird-people are piled near the edge. Evelyn and Phoenix are tied up and shoved along by two shape-shifters. Other bird-people are still alive but bound.

Every one of their wings are shredded, or burned, or snapped off.

Evelyn sobs quietly as the crippled bird-people are thrown from the cliff along with the bodies, one by one.

Phoenix and Evelyn look at each other in horror. They near the front of the line.

A different bird-person is attempting to break free from two shape-shifter's hold. He digs his heels into the edge of the cliff, his shriveled wings flapping in vain.

BIRD #1

Why are you doing this?! Let us go!  
You can't! You can't do this!

He is shoved from the cliff, his screams ripping through the air until they are abruptly cut off.

Evelyn breaks into loud sobs of horror, her knees buckling in her captor's grasp. They yank her back to her feet.

PHOENIX

Eve, Eve, look at me.

Phoenix's voice trembles. Evelyn meets her eyes.

PHOENIX (cont'd)

Eve, I love you. I love you.

They are at the front of the line.

Evelyn opens her mouth to speak, when she is pushed from the cliff. Her screams tear through the air.

PHOENIX (cont'd)

NO!

Phoenix suddenly RIPS from the grasp of her captor. Her pitiful wings flap instinctively as she leaps from the cliff.

She reaches down to Evelyn, the air whipping their hair and tattered wings. Both are screaming in terror.

Phoenix grabs her arm, pulls her close in mid-air. They hold each other, tears streaming from their eyes.

They sob into each other as they fall, holding each other as tight as they can.

They near the ground. They kiss.

CUT TO BLACK