

Submission Type: story

Text: Silian Sourion was just your average thirteen-year-old girl who lived in Douran Village with her brother Somin and his wife Rilian. They were nice people and treated her fairly, but she always felt like they were keeping something from her.

Silian didn't make herself known to any of the boys her age for one reason, and one reason only: they were all idiots. She didn't have any friends because she simply couldn't care.

She'd tried to make friends during the first of her Trials, actions to determine if she was ready to become a member of the society and find her Calling, but everyone just brushed her aside like a bug. After that, she just gave up.

That was about four years ago and she was still a nobody as that very first day. Every year she was forced to partake in the wretched Trials, and though she had been the oldest for the last two years, she still had not found what she'd been Called to do.

To Silian, the Trials were the same. She would walk to the Elder's house, give her name, and then show the council her talents. Not that she had any. Then she would walk out and wait for the next participants to show off their skills. On the fifth day of the Trials, passing children would be given their Callings and sent to start their apprenticeships. A feast would be held for them while those who failed would be given a pat on the back and an "I'm sure you'll do better next year" from the council.

Silian was to turn fourteen the day before the Trials, but she was still unsure about her future. By the age of thirteen, all of the village's citizens had received their Calling. Little did she know, the council was also determining her fate.

Elder Mayble was a kind and gentle citizen and it was for that reason that she had been appointed Elder. "This year's Trials will be different. We have a unique case in Silian, as I'm sure you're all aware." The council members nodded their agreement. "In response to last year's failure, I consulted the Book, which has been passed down. "The Trials had started before the reign of Lilly and Aorin and have continued every year since then, though the Trials have altered greatly. I believe that we have not had a case such as Silian, for we do not know what power she may hold, but know this; she is not aware of what power she holds."

Meanwhile, Silian was at Somin's kitchen table, having a discussion with Rilian about what she would be doing for the Trials he came in. "Leave her alone Rilian. You know that she can't!" Rilian just smiled at him and left the table.

"It's getting late Silian. Tomorrow's a big day and then it's the start of the Trials!"

Silian dutifully walked up the hall to her bedroom. "Don't remind me." She muttered.

Silian woke up to a large group of people, Somin and Rilian among them. "Happy birthday!" they cried over and over again as she got up, had breakfast and went to the Elder's house as one must always do on their birthday.

There were the usual greetings and presents were exchanged, nothing out of the ordinary. But she was too busy worrying about what the next day would bring to notice anything.

Silian was up before Somin could come in, all smiles and laughs. On such a dreaded day, Silian knew that she would not be able to take his enthusiasm.

As was required of her, Silian did not eat breakfast but went straight to the Elder's house where all of the day's Trials' participants were going. Strangely, when Silian knocked on the door she was shown right inside instead of being told what time they would be dining.

Silian was shown to the room where the Trials were held and the doors were shut behind her. She was still staring at the door when there was a hand on her shoulder. The body it was attached to was none other than the Elder herself.

"My dear, I'm sorry if I startled you, but we needed to see you immediately." It was only then that Silian looked around and saw the rest of the council seated.

The Elder sat down and addressed Silian. "Young lady, we regret to inform you that you will not be participating in the Trials in the usual way. Instead, we would like you to try your hand at fighting."

"Wait, wha-" Silian was interrupted as one of the council members, a grizzled old man named Yiting, threw a long wooden staff at her.

"You will try to defend yourself as best as possible. If you're able to match me, you will no longer have to enter the Trials. If not... let's just say that you don't want to find out."

There was no starting line, no Hey! Defend yourself! Yiting just came at her. Silian was too caught up blocking, attacking, and dodging to wonder why she knew how to fight. There were no weapons allowed in Douran, and fighting was highly frowned upon.

Ten minutes later, Yiting had sweat dripping down his forehead, but Silian was still as limber and strong as when she had started. Yiting was soon at Silian's mercy.

Her face twisted with concern. "I'm so sorry Yiting! Are you alright?" Silian dropped the staff and held out her hand.

Yiting gratefully took her hand and stood up, smiling ruefully the entire time. "Nothing but pride is hurt. Much. I haven't taken such a beating in a while. Now, let us tell you why we are on the council."

Maybe started to speak. "Silian, there is a reason why we were chosen to be on the council. Our Callings, or Skills, as they are known on the council, are stronger than any you have seen in the village. Yiting fights, and I garden. Therany has her potions and Garent cooks. Linik is skilled in communications and summoning. Now you know of the twins, Kilny and Kalny, but they are never seen, for they are skilled in the white and black arts, thus physically unstable. Together we keep the balance of Douran."

It was all Silian could do to not to let her jaw drop in amazement. As children, the people of Douran had been told that magic did not exist. She was starting to question the ways of the village. "May I speak, Elder?" Maybe nodded. "Why are you telling me all this? I have no Calling. I have been in the Trials for so long that I will be the oldest to ever have taken part in them. Why me, of all people?"

“It is for that reason that you are being told, Silian. You are special. Never doubt that. Besides, you bettered me in a match. You do not have to enter the Trials any more.

“You will be facing the other council members. I will be next.” Mayble said.

And with that, the first of the true Trials in a thousand years began. “Now, we are going to grow grapevines in those pots over there.” Mayble gestured to two empty pots in a corner. “You will have two minutes to show what you can produce. Starting, now!” Silian scrambled to her pot and started to look for seeds to plant.

That is not necessary. Just think and focus your thoughts on what you want. We will take care of the rest. Do not worry.

Silian’s time was half gone, so she knew that she had to trust the voice or she would lose. She closed her eyes and thought about the most magnificent grapevine she could imagine.

“Time!”

Silian cringed slightly as she opened her eyes but was shocked. The grapevine she had imagined paled next to what stood before her. It reached to the ceiling as it crawled up the wall.

She heard Mayble’s intake of breath and she turned to see a small vine that barely reached a foot from Mayble’s pot. “Well, needless to say, your vine is better than mine. Tomorrow we will continue the Trials and Therany will test your skills in potions.” Mayble bowed respectfully as she returned to her seat.

Linik leaned over to Mayble. “I was not expecting her to make it past Yiting, much less you. I have never seen either of you bested. Do you really think she might...”

Mayble shrugged. “I don’t know Linik, but I sincerely hope that she doesn’t. She just turned fourteen and I never expected that it would be so young! I know that it is the reason Douran’s still here, but why her? She’s still so innocent and doesn’t have a clue!”

“I know Mayble. I would not have wished it upon hereither, but there are some things that we cannot change. The only thing we can do is prepare her the best we can.”

Name: Brianna P

School: Golden West Middle School

Branch: Vacaville Cultural Center