

The Bird and the Bug  
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Crow could sense them coming. She could feel their boots on the soil, as well as each hair on their exposed skin as the wind moved through it. She could taste their sweat and smell the gunpowder in their rifles. She stopped dead in her tracks.

In every direction, she saw only the endless stretches of nothingness across the badlands. She could neither hear nor see any sign of life outside of her and her two companions, who were now a few paces ahead on each side of her.

To her left was Treeroot, a short and weak man – if you could call him a man, he was only roughly nineteen winters old – with dirty blond hair that fell in front of his soot-covered face. His bones protruded out every angle of his body so much that they'd slowly worn through his dust-covered clothing. He looked like the runt he was, but Treeroot had an unconventional way of seeing the world that some had come to call insane. Had he been born a thousand winters earlier, he indeed would have been cast out and locked up. A world where time moved as predictably as a tree grows toward the sun would have no use for him.

On Crow's right was Mudslide; a stark contrast to Treeroot, he was a tall, muscular man of about thirty winters, which put him dangerously close to being the oldest man alive. He wore a metal plate across his back and chest beneath his long, light brown jacket and carried a battle axe that he'd named Widowmaker and spoke to on occasion. Sometimes, he claimed, it spoke back, but this was simply an attempt to hide his wits. He found that battles were easier if people assumed he was an unpredictable loon.

Crow had hired Mudslide to protect her and Treeroot on this trip. Though normally she felt confident in escorting someone through the badlands alone, she understood that Treeroot's secret was far too valuable to risk on a business-as-usual level of protection. She wouldn't even tell Mudslide why it was she needed his aid – a man such as him was only as loyal as the coins in his pocket.

She also neglected to tell Mudslide about the way the world spoke to her. It was strange enough that she'd begun to develop such senses so late in her life, but what scared her the most was exactly how much of a connection she felt. No witch had ever, as far as she knew, been able to feel each and every groove in the sole of someone's boot on their fingertips without even touching it, and they certainly couldn't taste the dust inside of it at the same time.

Crow had only let on that she was a fierce opponent with a bow. She carried with her a woodland-camouflaged compound bow with a 100 lbs draw weight – a rare weapon to behold so long after the fall. An arrow shot from it could travel as quickly as 370 feet per second, and an arrow shot by her could travel even faster. She'd discovered it perfectly preserved in a steel case, complete with fifty matching aluminum arrows. Stumbling upon such a well-kept ancient weapon was unheard of, but for Crow it was par for the course; things always seemed to go her way.

Crow had lived through twenty-four winters. She was tall with a healthy, strong figure which she'd acquired from the brawls she'd frequently gotten into since she was a child. Beneath her wide-brimmed leather hat she had long, dark brown hair that ran down her shoulders with reckless abandon, save for when she put it into a tail to prepare for a fight. Normally she would have chopped it off at the length of her jaw or higher to keep her head cool in the southwestern heat, but she had been

letting it grow in preparation for the journey. She'd heard that any cover you could manage would benefit her in the winter up north, and winter was approaching.

Mudslide was the first to notice her not at his side. He stopped and glanced back behind his broad shoulder. She stood completely still, eyes wide and staring out into the nothingness ahead of them. "What's wrong?" he asked; his voice dryly coming out as a crackle on the first word and then sounding like a deep cavern on the second. He cleared his throat.

Treeroot turned around but continued walking backwards away from her. His skin clung to his skull like a wet rag covered in stubble. "Gone out for a bucket in the middle of the night, ay?" he said, sun beating down on him from the south. Then he stepped on the foot of his pant legs, which ran past his toes, and fell backward to the ground, "daisies!" he shouted. His revolver, which was the only firearm the three of them had and contained only two bullets, fell out of his baggy pocket into the dirt.

Ignoring him, Crow lifted her hand, index finger extended from her clenched fist, and pointed north, although her eyes remained fixed to the northeast. "Three," she said.

"Men?" Mudslide asked, stepping towards her and looking north. His left hand unconsciously found its way inside his jacket and to the handle of Widowmaker which hung at his side. He squinted his eyes and tried to search for shapes somewhere in the endless stretch of flat, dying land.

Crow shook her head. "Not men. Guns," she spoke with perfect clarity. A wind suddenly picked up from the south and whipped her hair across her face. Each brown strand pointed just as decisively as her finger. Mudslide's eyes remained fixed on the horizon. He hadn't heard any gunshots and he saw nothing in the distance, but guns were not to be gambled with. Guns usually meant that their operators were not skilled at combat, which was good, if you could get in close, but guns also had a way of keeping you at a distance, which was very, very bad when the landscape provided no cover to safely close the gap.

Trusting Crow's words, Mudslide said "I don't see them yet which means they don't see us yet. We can continue east and keep our distance. If we're lucky, they'll never get close enough to notice us."

"Too late," Crow said; her eyes now focused on Mudslide. She fetched a string from her pocket, held it in her teeth, and began to gather her hair together. "They're coming."

Starlight, River, and Cricket were headed south. The three sisters were from a village to the north known as Calfsden, and had drawn the short straws when the hunting duty was selected that morning. None of the three girls looked anything like the other, due to them each being born of a different father, though that was normal where they'd come from.

Starlight, the oldest by two winters, was short with a freckled face and bright blond hair. She had a slender figure that made her light on her toes, which came of use when she would steal trinkets for her collection. Her father had been alive for her first seven winters, and if she closed her eyes she could still feel his thick beard tickle her nose as he kissed her on the forehead. After all of the other memories of him had begun to fade, that was the one that remained. She held onto it dearly, knowing that if she met her end on patrol, his loving kiss would be the last thing she thought of.

River, the middle child of sixteen winters, was slightly taller than both her sisters and had beautiful sparkling green eyes and a song voice that could soothe the sickest hearts. She spent much of her time dreaming about the day she would have her own son or daughter, and would often imagine holding them in her arms while she rocked and sang them to sleep at night. She'd already picked out names; Marsh for a son, and Raindrop for a daughter.

Cricket was four winters younger than River. She was as short as her oldest sister, but had a rounder face that implied that she was better fed than she actually was. She was a witch of the water, and though her abilities had yet to reach their potential, they made her uniquely suited to be away from the safety of Calfsdén. Cricket's abilities allowed her to sense the location of any large body of water and smell whether it was clean or not from miles away. She could also extract the life-giving liquid itself from the ground, even if it were several feet deep. She was the one who'd chosen to head south, sensing clean water in that direction.

Starlight and River each carried semi-automatic assault rifles, and though they'd had access to a third, they gave Cricket a pistol, fearing that anything larger might knock her over or wear her down to carry. They'd each been granted one full ammunition clip by the elders of Calfsdén, which was more than they suspected they would need, but the elders took no chances. The reason for the patrol was too important to risk not providing enough protection.

Calfsdén was suffering from a scarcity of men, so each night a lottery would randomly select three females of the village to participate in a hunt the following morning to find more men, preferably able-bodied – though that was not necessary, even weak men could provide children – and to bring them back to Calfsdén by any means necessary. Cricket's name had been drawn, and after begging with her sisters, they volunteered to join her in place of the two other lottery winners.

For the moment they were resting. Starlight lay on her back, staring up at the cloudless sky and River sat cross-legged looking off to the distance. Cricket knelt with her head lowered to the earth, her hands cupping each other, palms facing down, focusing on the spot of moisture she sensed three feet below the surface and willing it to come up to them.

"Hey Star," River said, "hand me the binoculars."

Starlight sat up, "why? Do you see something?"

"Just give them to me," River replied. Cricket heard both of them but remained focused on the water below her. It was almost close enough to touch.

Starlight opened the bag they had been given with a meager supply of food and tools, and searched for the binoculars. She handed them to River and asked "which direction?"

River put the binoculars up to her eyes, rotated her head, and adjusted the focus. "Be quiet," she said, focusing on a figure to the south that she could just barely make out in the distance. From where she sat it looked only like a speck of dust, and had she seen it from a different angle she might have missed it entirely; but as it was, the sun shone from slightly south of them, creating a dark silhouette against the otherwise empty sky.

Starlight squinted looking south, "I don't see anything. Cricket, are you almost done?"

"Another minute," Cricket said, her words getting muffled against the dirt.

"There's someone out there," River said. "Maybe more than one."

"Hand me those," Starlight said, reaching for the binoculars. She looked through the lenses, focusing hard on the distance. "I think you're right."

The ground beneath River had become damp, and she felt the moisture seep through her pants to her skin. For a moment she forgot all about the strangers in the distance and thought only of how proud she was of her little sister, who had willed up more water than ever before. The damp area stretched several feet in every direction from the spot where Cricket's hands cupped the ground. It didn't seem so long ago that she could only call up a single drop, and it seemed like it might not be long before she could make the air thick with fog.

“Get up, both of you,” Starlight said, still peering through the binoculars.

“I’m almost done,” Cricket said.

“Doesn’t matter. We’ve got to go,” Starlight tossed the binoculars into River’s lap, “right now.” She kicked Cricket’s boot to break her concentration. Cricket looked to River for support, but found none. Her middle sister was obediently returning the binoculars to her bag and getting up.

Cricket let out a sigh, looking around at how much of the earth around her was now a dark muddy brown. She knew that her oldest sister was right, they had to move immediately, but she had been so close that it pained her to stop short.

“Keep your guns holstered,” Starlight said, standing up “we don’t want to threaten them before we’re close enough to shoot if we have to.”

River nodded, then helped Cricket stand up. “Would you sing us a song?” she asked River. Immediately as she did, a wind picked up from the south, kicking the dirt up with it.

“Not now. Come on, let’s go,” Starlight commanded. She was beginning to feel braver than she expected to in such a situation. For one thing, it was comforting to be with people she knew. She didn’t exactly trust either of her sisters with a gun, but she trusted them to obey her, which was good. For another thing, they had guns with plenty of ammunition, and it was likely that their foes to the south did not. No matter what happened, Starlight was confident that she would return home safely that night.

Neither River nor Cricket felt so confident, Cricket especially felt unease with the way in which the wind had suddenly picked up. It wasn’t too windy to walk against, and it didn’t kick up enough dust to blind them or make it hard to breathe, but it felt odd to her nonetheless.

Each group of three made their way towards each other. If one group meant harm to the other it was best to get it settled sooner than later, and while neither had their backs were turned. Eventually the two groups were within speaking distance of each other, though not quite close enough to open fire. Neither displayed their weapons.

“How y’all doing?” Starlight shouted across the distance. The strangers seemed pathetic; aside from the large man they’d first spotted in the distance, there was a woman with a wide-brimmed hat on and her hair gathered into a tail, and a scrawny man with dirt caked all over his body. The woman had a bow and quiver strapped to her back, and River noticed something menacing hiding beneath the large man’s coat, but the smaller man seemed to have no weapons, or sense, whatsoever. What was better was that it was obvious that none of them had any guns, while the sisters’ were just an arm’s reach away.

“We mean no trouble,” Crow said, “but don’t test us.”

Obviously a bluff, Starlight thought. “Well you won’t get any,” she said, “y’all look famished. We come from a village to the north, and we’d be happy to give you food and a night’s rest if that pleases you.” Cricket knew her oldest sister’s voice well; it was soft, warm, and honest, but this was most certainly not her sister’s voice she was hearing, for it contained none of those qualities.

Crow spoke again, confirming her status as the leader of the group. Starlight took this to meaning that the large man with her was hired to protect her, and the small one was perhaps her retarded brother. “That’s very kind of you to offer housing to three strangers, but I’m afraid we must decline. What are you all doing out here, anyway?”

River's heart skipped a beat and she bit her lip. In her mind's eye she traced exactly how far her rifle was from her reach, and predicted how long it would take to aim and fire if needed.

Starlight took a confident step forward, and her sisters followed. "Just taking a stroll," she said, "yourselves?"

"We're flying to the moon!" Treeroot shouted. Crow smiled.

The sisters continued forward, closing the gap. "Sounds like quite the adventure. How do you intend to do that?" Starlight asked.

"We'll find a way," Crow smirked.

The sisters stopped only a handful of steps away from their opposites. "My name's Starlight and these are my sisters, River and Cricket, and who might you three be?"

"Enough of this bullshit," Mudslide spoke up, his voice deep and menacing, "turn around and walk back to wherever you came from."

"I'm afraid that's no longer an option, seeing as we have no guarantees that your employer right there won't shoot us in the back with that pretty little bow the minute we do," Starlight said, her natural voice returning to her. "Besides, we're not going back empty handed."

"We're not giving you anything," Crow said.

"Shut up you cunt, we weren't talking to you," River said, her fingers seemingly trying to leave her hand to grasp her gun.

All at once, the wind died down, and silence filled the air; somehow giving insight into where this was headed. Cricket didn't like it, but her sisters didn't notice.

"We're here for the boys," Starlight said. "They're coming with us one way or another. Whether you join them is up to you."

"I'm not going anywhere with you," Mudslide growled, and reached into his coat.

"Not so fast!" River shouted. With speed, she reached for her rifle, grabbing the muzzle and pulling it over her shoulder. She held the butt against her shoulder and squeezed the trigger three times, each shot landing its mark square in Mudslide's chest. His eyes went wide and his arm fell from his coat, along with the rest of him, face-first into the dirt.

The sound of the blasts didn't so much echo as they did roll into the distance like a wave of thunder warning distant life of an approaching storm.

All at once Starlight and Cricket had their guns out and aimed at Crow and Treeroot. Crow already had an arrow pulled back and pointed at the space between River's eyes, which were fixed on Mudslide as if in a trance. Treeroot had reached into his pocket and pulled out his fist with the thumb up and index finger extended towards Starlight.

"What's that supposed to be?" Starlight asked Treeroot.

"Don't!" was all Cricket managed to shout to Crow. Both of her small hands firmly grasped the handgun, and yet she couldn't keep it from shaking.

"Root, what happened to your gun?" Crow asked, eyes locked onto River.

The sound of the word "gun" snapped River back to the situation at hand, and she raised hers to Crow.

"Looks like we've got you beat," Starlight said, now fixing her aim on the one and only threat in front of her. Treeroot kept his finger and thumb extended, knees bent as if waiting for the recoil of his imaginary gun.

"You shoot me, and it's lights out for your sister," Crow warned.

“But we’re not going to shoot you, and you’re not going to shoot her,” Starlight said. “You’re going to slowly disarm the arrow, and stay right there and watch as he leaves with us.”

“Why would I do that?” Crow asked.

“Does it look like you’ve got a fucking choice, cocksucker?” River said, overcome with adrenaline as her heart beat wildly in her chest.

Crow eyed the three girls. Each one was younger and in worse shape than her, and yet they clearly had the advantage. After a hesitant moment, she disarmed the arrow. “Okay, now what?”

“Take off your quiver, put that arrow in it, and hand them to my little sister. Slowly,” Starlight said.

Crow did exactly as she was told.

“You can keep the bow. Maybe you can use it to strangle someone if you get cornered,” Starlight said. “You,” she pointed to Treeroot, “come with us.”

Treeroot lowered his hand and looked to Crow, who nodded at him. He walked to River “You’re mine you little fuck,” She whispered to him as she grabbed his shoulder and pushed the hot muzzle of her gun against his cheek. Even as it burned a circle into his skin, he didn’t make a sound.

“We’ll be on our way now, good luck to you,” Starlight said to Crow, and then to River she said: “make sure that one you shot is dead.”

Mudslide regained consciousness just in time to hear this. The three shots had landed their mark, but none had penetrated his flesh thanks to the metal plate he wore across his chest. They’d only knocked the wind out of him.

For a moment, he thought he’d had just enough time to react; that the girl who’d shot him would come in close, and he could grasp his axe and plunge it into her pretty little face before she pulled the trigger. That moment lasted only until he realized that his body was in shock, and his muscles wouldn’t do as his mind told.

Mudslide was paralyzed, and he’d regained consciousness just soon enough to realize it. If he’d had time to, he would curse the fact that he’d almost been given a peaceful, unconscious death. But Mudslide had no more time than could allow him a single, pure panicked thought:

“I don’t want to die.”

Then, with another thunderous roll in every direction, Mudslide ceased to exist.

“Why did you let her live?” Cricket asked, looking over her shoulder as she followed her two sisters north. The three of them had been walking for so long that she could only make out Crow’s silhouette in the distance, which hadn’t moved an inch from where they’d left her.

“Because,” Starlight said, “we girls have to watch out for each other, no matter what side we’re on.”

Cricket considered this, and then discarded it as a foolish sentiment not fit for the present situation. When you were from a town with ten females per every one male, a few less girls might be exactly what they needed. “But something about that didn’t feel right,” she argued.

“Seemed right to me,” River said, “we got this one,” she nudged Treeroot with the barrel of her gun, “we’re all in one piece, and without her friends or any arrows, it won’t be long before that bitch bites the dust.”

“It’s just nerves. Try to focus on something else,” Starlight suggested.

"Like what?" Cricket asked.

"Like, how high can you count?" Starlight asked, "why don't you count the arrows in that quiver for me, and tell me how many there are?"

"How dumb do you think I am?" Cricket asked, but then she rolled her eyes and started counting them anyway. "One, two, three, four..."

"If you can count that high I'll finally sing you a song," River said. "We should be home before nightfall."

"...eighteen, nineteen, twenty..."

"Looking into a black hole, are we?" Treeroot asked.

"Shut up, you," River demanded, nudging him with her gun again. "What the hell is wrong with this one? Will the elders even want him?"

"...thirty seven, thirty eight, thirty nine, what comes after thirty nine?" Cricket asked.

"Forty," Starlight said.

"Do either of you hear that?" River asked, looking to the sky.

"...forty eight, forty nine," Cricket counted, then stopped.

"Fifty. Fifty comes next," Starlight said, annoyed.

What River heard sounded like wind, though she felt none at all.

"No. There are only forty nine arrows, not fifty," Cricket said.

River put her hand up to her brow and looked to the south, shielding the sun from her eyes as best as she could. She tried to fix her eyes on what sound her ears had picked up, but saw nothing against the bright afternoon sun.

Then, in the blink of an eye, something dark fell from the sky and River felt an intense burning in her throat. First she tried to look downward to see what it was, but the slightest motion sent even more pain through her throat and neck. Then she tried to say something, anything, to get her sisters to turn around and look at her. But when she tried to speak she could only manage an airy gurgle, and she immediately felt as though she were drowning.

She lifted a hand up to her throat and felt a slender pole in her neck. Gasping for air, she followed the pole to its end, where she felt three plastic fins.

Treeroot walked around to her front, and looked down at her throat. Her mouth opened and closed as if trying to cry for help, but no sound came from it. He reached down and took her rifle as delicately as if he were picking up a crying baby. River's hand gave the gun up without a fight, then her legs gave out and she collapsed to the ground as blood continued to seep out of her throat and mouth.

Lying on her back, totally helpless, she watched Treeroot raise the rifle to his shoulder and take aim at her sisters.

Starlight and Cricket had their backs to all of this, and did not hear the sound of the arrow, nor their middle sister ask if anyone else had heard it, nor the sound of her falling to the earth.

"Only forty nine? Well keep on counting anyway. It will keep you busy until we get," were the last words Starlight spoke before a bullet pierced her brain from the back of her head. Her last thought was not of her father's thick beard tickling her nose as he kissed her on the forehead.

Upon seeing what appeared to be tomato juice burst out from her eldest sister's forehead, Cricket stopped dead in her tracks, confused. It was only after Starlight's lifeless body hit the ground that she registered the sound of a gunshot rolling across the badlands. She dropped the quiver, fell to her knees, and crawled to her sister's corpse. Turning Starlight over onto her back, Cricket held the body of her oldest sister in her arms, staring at the lifeless eyes and feeling the blood pour through her hair.

Whimpering, but not yet crying, Cricket kissed her sister on the cheek, then lifted her head to the sky and cried out with all of her might. She grinded her teeth together. Snot and tears began to cover her face when she heard someone behind her and turned to look for her other sister. She found River on her back, still barely alive, with an arrow sticking out of her throat. Cricket moved to run to River's side until she noticed Treeroot, who had a rifle pointed at her. The barrel still produced a fine strand of smoke.

Thinking only of her sisters, Cricket dug into her pocket and pulled out the loaded pistol. Her vision blurry with tears and her lips covered in snot, she squeezed the trigger.

Nothing happened.

She squeezed again. Nothing. The trigger wouldn't budge.

She'd forgotten to release the safety.

Treeroot gently pulled the gun out of her hand. She gave it to him as willingly as her sister had, and then crawled over to be with River.

River felt someone grasp her shoulder, and saw that it was her youngest sister, who, thank the gods, seemed to not have a scratch on her. If she could, River would have breathed a sigh of relief. Instead she continued to choking on blood as she gasped for air; getting just enough into her lungs to prolong her death. Her eyes darted from Cricket to look for Starlight, but she could not find her. She hoped her oldest sister was only wounded, but worried she was likely dead.

Cricket shook her head. "Star is," she started to say but could not find the words. "You're going to be okay," she lied.

As gently as she could, Cricket grasped the arrow with one hand and cupped the skin around it with the other. "Three, two, one!" she yanked out the arrow. Blood bubbled and spurting out of the hole, but River smiled for a moment.

Treeroot snatched the arrow from Cricket, wiped the blood off onto his pants, and placed it into the quiver with the others. He yanked up at her collar.

"No!" she shouted and held her sister as close as she could, "I'm not leaving her! You can't leave her like this! Just shoot us both!"

Treeroot ripped Cricket from her sister and threw her to the ground. Then, flatly repeating River's own words, he said "it won't be long before that bitch bites the dust."

He pulled Cricket up, who sobbed uncontrollably with her eyes fixed on River's, which still, for now, sparkled green. River tried to focus on Cricket, but her vision was becoming blurry with every second that passed. Her remaining breaths were small and full of blood. Her body convulsed. She knew she would die either from lack of oxygen or blood soon.

River thought; "No, I can't die. Not now. Not yet." She closed her eyes and imagined the faces of her unborn children; Marsh and Raindrop.

It felt like only a second, but when she opened her eyes again Cricket was gone from sight. In a panic she tried to find her again, but saw nothing but blurry shapes in the distance.

River arched her head back as far as it would go until the world turned upside-down. She focused hard on the blurry figure that she knew to be the body of her eldest sister. With every bit of strength in her right arm, she pushed against the dirt, wanting to cry out in pain but unable to do so, until she rolled onto her left side. Her convulsions worsened, and with every breath she took the world seemed to grow darker and less focused, yet her eyes locked on Starlight. She threw her right arm ahead of her, dug her blood-stained fingers into the dirt, and pulled it closer, wriggling her body as much as she could to help pull herself forward. She did this again, and again, and again. By the time she had dragged herself to Starlight's body, her eyes were nearly useless; the world had become a small, blurry circle surrounded by a black foreboding void.

All warmth left her body. Her muscles continued to spasm. With her final, blood-soaked breaths, River clutched Starlight's limp body tightly against herself. "Not yet. Not yet. Not yet. Not yet. Not yet," she thought until the cold, dark nothingness swallowed her.

Crow heard a gunshot not long after she released the arrow that she'd kept strapped to her leg. On the ground the air was still, but above her it moved north with haste. She'd used this air current to give the arrow the speed it needed to cover the huge distance between her and the sisters. She'd barely aimed; she only placed it on the arrow rest, tilted toward the sky, trusted the wind, and released.

Now she stood patiently, watching Treeroot walk back with the youngest sister at his side. He held a rifle but he didn't bother pointing at the girl; she seemed too broken-hearted to care. Crow wondered how long that would last.

"Good job," Crow said, "Cricket, right? Your sister said your name was Cricket."

She nodded. Her eyes were swollen and red, but she did not cry.

"You're a witch, aren't you?" Crow asked. "Which element speaks to you? The sun, air, ocean, or earth?"

"The ocean," Cricket whispered. Then it came to her; why things had seemed so wrong about their encounter. "And the wind speaks to you," she guessed.

Crow took her arrows back from Treeroot, then asked "why do you say that?"

"It's why you use a bow. It's how you shot my sister from so far away. It's why it got so windy when we first saw you," Cricket replied. "It was warning us to stay away."

"Perhaps it was, but I didn't do that myself," Crow said. "I'm sorry about your sisters."

Cricket said nothing in reply. She kept her head down and tried to make herself as small as possible.

Crow squatted down and lifted Cricket's chin so their eyes met. "I really am sorry. It shouldn't have come to that. But you're not with them anymore. You're alive," she looked up at Treeroot, who nodded, then back at Cricket, "and you're with us now."

Crow stood back up, "do you like that gun, Root?"

Treeroot nodded.

"It's yours now. Don't lose this one," she put a hand on his shoulder. "Do you need anything of his?" she asked, pointing to Mudslide, who still laid face-down in the dirt, just as the sisters had left him. Treeroot walked over to him and removed his coat, revealing the blood-covered axe at his hip. He put on the coat, which was much too large for him, and smiled at Crow. "That's yours now, too," she said.

"Where are you taking me?" Cricket spoke up.

Crow looked northeast, and then said "far away from all of this."