

1 EXT. CLIFF - MIDNIGHT

A quiet cliff overlooking the land, shines brightly in the moonlight. AZU, an owl god similar to a barn owl but giant in size, moves in the darkness towards a dark temple with a flap of wings.

2 INT. DILAPIDATED TEMPLE - MIDNIGHT

A MALE VILLAGER (28) dressed in his cleanest outfit, approaches the temple atop the cliffs warily. It is ominous and the Male Villager trembles with a bowl in his arms. The villager steps into the doorway of the temple, he appears scared by something. He then drops the BOWL on the ground and runs away.

3 EXT. MOUNTAIN PATH - DAY

A young girl NORA (14), in tattered clothes barely on her skinny frame, climbs a rocky path using her feet to navigate the ground. In her hands are THREE YELLOW TULIPS. Nora reaches the top of the path and enters the dilapidated temple. She almost trips over a BOWL strewn in her path.

4 INT. DILAPIDATED TEMPLE - DAY

Nora enters the temple with her TULIPS and approaches an altar near the back of the room. It has a mini statue of an owl upon it. She bows and feels for the altar's edge. Nora touches the statue and feels her way down it to place the TULIPS on the altar.

NORA

Great Owl God, my name is Nora. I seek
your wisdom.

Behind her, the entrance to the temple closes abruptly.

NORA

I don't have much, but I pray it's
enough. May your brilliance guide me -

A shuffle sound is heard before Azu appears in front of Nora's face, but she only tilts her head towards the sound heard in a different direction.

NORA

Who is there?

He peers deeply in her eyes and tilts his head in confusion. Nora reaches her hand out but misses Azu's head.

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NORA
May your brilliance guide me and I
pray that I find peace amidst these
times. I offer these flowers as
penance. Amen.

She bows and starts to turn back to the entrance. Azu observes as she taps the ground with her foot as she leaves the altar.

5 INT. DILAPIDATED TEMPLE - DAY

The next day, Azu stands beside the entrance of the temple. Nora passes by Azu and enters the temple again with more TULIPS, Azu follows closely behind. When she stops to place down her TULIPS, Azu bumps into her by accident.

NORA
Hello? Who are you?

Nora turns around and pats Azu's body but then pets his feathers. Azu jumps back quickly and Nora giggles at his disappearance.

NORA
I won't hurt you. My name is Nora,
what's yours?

Azu stares at Nora's smiling face. His feathers slowly are no longer raised. He tilts his head.

NORA
Hello? Where are you?

Nora reaches out to him again. Azu leans away from her touch.

AZU
You may call me Azu.

NORA
Nice to meet you Great Owl God Azu!

Nora waves at Azu instead.

6 EXT. CLIFF - DAY (START OF MONTAGE)

Nora carefully climbs to the edge of the cliff, which overlooks the land below dotted with villages and the ocean far in the distance.

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NORA
Hi Lord Azu!

Nora waves at the wrong place with a wide grin. Azu is seen at the other side of Nora but he shuffles to be closer to her.

7 INT. DILAPIDATED TEMPLE - EVENING

Nora approaches Azu cautiously, taking care to not place her foot in the wrong spot. Nora feels for Azu's head and places a FLOWER CROWN made up of chrysanthemums and pink everlasting flowers on Azu as he sleeps. Nora leans too far onto Azu. He wakes up startled and the flower crown tilts on his head.

NORA
I made this for you! Do you like it?

Azu shakes his head groggily and the FLOWER CROWN falls to the ground. He stares at it and his expression lightens up. He carefully puts it back on his head.

AZU
I will treasure this gift till the end
of time.

8 EXT. TEMPLE ENTRANCE - MORNING

Nora grins widely and hugs Azu, almost concealed in his body from how strong she hugs him. His feathers are ruffled and he appears confused.

9 INT. DILAPIDATED TEMPLE - MORNING (END OF MONTAGE)

Nora rests against Azu's body and suddenly brightens up. Azu peers down at her confused.

NORA
I know what! Let's go to the village.

AZU
No thank you.

NORA
Please! Once people meet you, they'll
come here to pray. You're the best
god!

AZU
Child, it doesn't work like that.

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NORA

Why not? As soon as they see how sweet
you are, they'll be happy to pray
here.

Nora jumps up and feels for his wing. She then tugs gently on
his feather.

NORA

Come on Azu! Just for one day.

AZU

... Alright.

Nora grins at him and he stands up. Azu shakes his feathers
once before he follows after Nora. Nora quickly runs to the
wall, and tracks the walls to the entrance with her hand.

NORA

Faster Azu! We don't have all day!

AZU

Be careful, child.

10 EXT. DILAPIDATED TEMPLE - MORNING

As they walk down the rocky mountain, Azu uses his wings and
head to ensure she doesn't fall due to her lack of sight. She
guides him down the mountain, stumbling at every step.

11 EXT. VILLAGE - MIDDAY

Azu and Nora approach the village. Azu glances at the
villagers who are close to Nora and Azu, but they hurry away.

AZU

Why do they run?

Nora looks teary eyed and a stone hits the side of her face.
She flinches. Azu quickly turns his head around to find who
threw it, but no one is near them.

AZU

Are you okay?

Nora nods her head.

AZU

... I hope this isn't how everyone
acts...

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A man, VILLAGE HEAD (42), dressed in attire of a pompous bright red headdress and a gold-sequined long overcoat, approaches Nora and Azu. He looks down his nose at the pair. Village Head points behind the two back towards the path they just came.

VILLAGE HEAD

You need to leave.

AZU

Pardon?

VILLAGE HEAD

Venerable God, you must heed my request and turn back at once.

The Village Head glances down at Nora and shoots a glare in her direction. He then shifts his body to face Azu only. Azu glances down at Nora to see she has moved to hide behind his body at the voice of the Village Head.

AZU

We're just looking around.

VILLAGE HEAD

I simply must insist you go back to your temple. You're not welcome here. Your gaze... your presence frightens the children.

AZU

Is your village not at the base of my temple? Why must you chase me away? Do you not worship me?

VILLAGE HEAD

Venerable God, I beseech you. Please, leave with... please retire to your abode. We will bring boons in recompense.

Azu leans his head forward to directly gaze into the Village Head's eyes. Sweat builds on the Village Head's forehead, but he stands still despite a small quiver with his facial features.

AZU

... very well.

Azu turns around with some resistance. Nora trembles and has a bunch of his feathers tight in her grasp. He carefully

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leads her back along the path to his temple.

12 EXT. DILAPIDATED TEMPLE - AFTERNOON

Azu and Nora enter the temple. Dirt covers Nora's knees and she removes her hand from holding Azu's wing. His feathers are in disarray.

AZU

Why do the villagers not like you?

Nora's lip quivers and she looks at the ground. Azu nudges against her gently.

NORA

... It's difficult when you're an orphan. They don't like me. Being unable to see is a curse.

AZU

It's no curse.

NORA

No one cares for me. It's hard enough each day on my own. I'm sorry for troubling you earlier. I was wrong.

AZU

Don't worry child. You take great care of me.

NORA

Thanks for being my friend.

Nora turns to Azu and wraps her arms around him as much as she can. Azu brings his wings around her.

13 INT. DILAPIDATED TEMPLE - MORNING

The next day, Azu waits at the door, but Nora does not arrive.

14 EXT. CLIFF - NOON

The next day, Azu searches the cliff side but still cannot find Nora.

15 INT. DILAPIDATED TEMPLE - MORNING

The next day, Azu's feathers are ruffled and he paces in his temple. He flaps his wings and flies out of the door.

16 EXT. VILLAGE - NOON

Azu lands on a nearby tree.

VILLAGE WOMAN 1
It really happened!

VILLAGE WOMAN 2
So glad that street rat is gone.
(Giggles)
Wish I did the honours.

VILLAGE WOMAN 1
The village head wouldn't allow that.
Honour was all his to kill her.

VILLAGE WOMAN 2
I wish I was allowed to take part.

VILLAGE WOMAN 1
Ah, but he only let a couple folks to
chuck a rock. Thank god that orphan
dog is gone though. No more filth
filling the roads.

VILLAGE WOMAN 2
I won't have a sore sight in the
morning setting up my stalls.

VILLAGE WOMAN 1
You're telling me! We got justice for
the damage she caused us living here.

Azu's eyes widen and he flies from his branch to scour the village. He spots a TRAIL OF TRAMPLED CHRYSANTHEMUMS AND EVERLASTING FLOWERS leading to a back alley.

17 EXT. BACK ALLEY - AFTERNOON

Azu lands in the back alley. He follows the TRAIL OF FLOWERS to Nora's dead body. He coos to her and nudges her arm. No response. A BAKER'S BOY (17) wearing a blue shirt steps into the back alley with a BUNDLE OF LOAVES.

BAKER'S BOY
- so lucky that they let me - me! -
take part. Wait till I tell my friends
all about it! They'll be so jealous.
(Laughs to himself)
Look Tom! This here is the rock that
did it.

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Baker's Boy raises a BLOODIED ROCK over his head and shakes it high in the air with pride.

BAKER'S BOY

He can't say it's a lie now. I threw a rock and he didn't.

Azu perks his head up as he hears the Baker's Boy speak. He glares at Baker's Boy. A sliver of light is seen heading to the Baker's Boy's blue shirt from his eyes. The sleeve of Baker's Boy's shirt starts to smoke.

BAKER'S BOY

(Panics)

Ow! What? Go out, go out, don't burn me!

Azu's eyes widen at the sight of the shirt on fire. The Baker's Boy drops his LOAVES and the ROCK and scrambles to put out the smoke. Azu's feathers raise and he flies away.

18 INT. DILAPIDATED TEMPLE - AFTERNOON

Two days later, Azu crouches in the back corner of his temple. He is slouched over the FLOWER CROWN he was given. He pecks sadly at its wilted petals. The Baker's Boy enters his temple with a HARE. He appears uncertain.

BAKER'S BOY

Venerable God, I seek out your blessing. May you accept this boon and grant me your wisdom.

The Baker's Boy approaches the altar where the owl statue stands proud. He bows, raising the HARE above his head. Azu comes out of the shadows and notices at the burnt sleeve of the boy's shirt.

Azu hides back into the shadows and the sound of a rock hitting the floor echoes through the temple. The Baker's Boy turns his head around.

BAKER'S BOY

H-hello?

He puts down the HARE and stands up.

BAKER'S BOY

Is someone there?

Azu slowly steps out of the shadows behind altar.

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AZU
 (Disguised voice echoes from
 temple entrance)
 Help me!

The Baker's Boy turns towards the temple entrance.

BAKER'S BOY
 Is everything alright?

The Baker's Boy takes a step forward but a shadow quickly
 flies in front of him and he stops in his tracks. A sharp
 beak pecks at the back of his knees.

BAKER'S BOY
 Ow! Who's there?!

The Baker's Boy turns around to see what is behind him. He
 locks gazes with Azu and a bright beam shoots out of Azu's
 eyes, leaving behind a smoking pile of dust. The Baker's Boy
 is no more.

19 EXT. CLIFF - NIGHT

Azu stares at the moon mournfully. His eyes glow in the
 moonlight.

AZU
 What did Nora ever do to them?

Azu glances back towards the direction of the village.

AZU
 ... Humanity will pay for what they
 have done.

20 INT. DILAPIDATED TEMPLE - MIDDAY

Two days later, a VILLAGER (20) approaches the raised altar
 with an offering.

VILLAGER VOICE
 Hey, I need help!

VILLAGER
 Mary, is that you? Why are you inside
 the temple?

The Villager walks in deeper to the temple, past the owl
 statue altar into a darker area of the chamber.

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VILLAGER

Where are you?

VILLAGER VOICE

I'm over here!

The voice sounds even further into the temple. The Villager walks into the back edges of the temple. Azu lands behind him, acting as a block from the door. The Villager turns around and locks gazes with Azu's glowing eyes. Another smoking pile appears on the ground.

21 EXT. DILAPIDATED TEMPLE - LATE AFTERNOON

Azu breathes heavily. Behind him are numerous piles of dust, scattered all over the temple's grounds. Some even at the start of the path back to the village. He looks at what he has done.

AZU

It's over.

He re-focuses himself and heads back towards the cliff. A lone yellow tulip sits near the edge of the cliff. It sways in the wind. A petal lands in front of him. Azu approaches the flower slowly. He nudges it with his beak gently. He curls up around it protectively.

AZU

Your eternal rest is treasured Nora.
No one will bother you here.