Today, my mother was pronounced dead. My old father must select an heir to succeed him before he succumbs to heartbreak.

My father has ruled this kingdom for as long as I can remember. His palace is a massive, medieval-like structure adorned with reds that exude power and status. It's the crown jewel of his expansive domain. My brother and I are being sent to the three different elite groups to have our capabilities as heirs evaluated.

"Come on!" My older brother, Rutledge said.

Rutledge and I marched down the hall into the quarters of the Fairy. The Fairy are the elitist group most fixated on one's spirit, therefore, that is what is being measured in us. They exuded purity and status that even humbled the king's children. The eldest member spoke up.

"Potential princess, Calista Royale and potential prince, Rutledge Royale, a powerful ruler rules with emotional maturity and an unshakeable spirit. We shall look deep into your souls to determine which one of you is more spiritually suited to succeed our majesty".

The elder looked no older than fifty. She signaled one of her contemporaries to rise up for a demonstration. The elder then proceeded to close her eyes, place her hand on her heart, and release it all into a ball of energy composed of gentle breezes which she then forcefully blew at her fellow elitist. I learned something about her spirit: despite her stoic demeanor, she is a storm, waiting to be awakened.

"Look into your spirits and use them to help as many palacefolk as you can, we shall evaluate you two based on that".

With that, they dismissed us. Rutledge and I walked over to the neediest area of the palace: the domain of the Commons. The Commons are the most populous class of the palace. They consist mostly of laborers that do the palace's dirty work. Rutledge looked into his spirit and pulled out a sphere of embers which he then used to light a man's smoke.

"Beat that tight-lip!", he boasted as I made my way to an overworked farmer. I looked into my soul and pulled out an aqueous sphere which I expanded into streams of water which I used to irrigate and water the farmers' crops. The farmer bowed and thanked me profusely. I smugly smirk at my dumbfounded brother who waddles away in defeat.

I continue to assist the farmers as Rutledge helps around the military sector, probably just to flex his strength by lifting gunpowder barrels or something. I've got this in the bag!

I return to the Fairy after a job well-done. It appears like Rutledge is still scrambling as he hasn't come back yet.

A panicking soldier comes running into the room. "Fire! Fire in the military section!" We all run to see the commotion. A panicking Rutledge is seen putting out the fire. "This was Calista's doing! She ignited these gunpowder kegs using the raging inferno of emotions hidden within her soul!".

The Fairy looked upon me in disappointment. I wanted to curse Rutledge out. I wanted to tell the Fairy that I had nothing to do with this. I wanted to tell them that it was Rutledge that started the fire. But I couldn't, I was powerless to say anything, after all, I never told the Fairy one thing: I'm mute.

Rutledge was promptly written a letter of endorsement while I was left to be scolded by the Fairy. The elder spoke up, "Foolish child! You've committed a sin you could be banished for and yet you lack the gall to even defend yourself? Your father is dealing with enough he does not need this!".

On the verge of tears, I withdrew into myself. Thankfully, it appeared like one of the women in the room realized my predicament.

"This child does not appear to be capable of speech and no witnesses have claimed her responsible for this act of arson. We shouldn't take any drastic measures just yet."

The woman that defended me was Carmine. Miss Carmine became my guardian-angel. She saved me from becoming the kingdom's disgrace. "Fine, we will not speak of this incident" said the elder, to my pleasure. I was seen out of the room by Carmine, her hand grasping mine. Although I know I wasn't responsible for the fire, I still feel bad about it as not only were several people injured, but it could also become a problem if the incident is never explained.

In the following days, Miss Carmine and I visited each other. We bonded over our mutual love for reading. She really made me feel like my lack of speech did not affect my communication skills at all. She became my mentor who taught me many things. One day, Carmine and I were walking together through the quarters of the commons and we encountered a political protest. The protesters organized against the lack of explanation for the gunpowder explosion that happened last week. They were setting flame to flags and burning banners all in dissent against my father's lack of action towards something he could never know. I reached into my spirit to conjure up a ball of water which I used to douse the flames but the protesters just directed their anger towards us. However, Miss Carmine's presence kept them from being violent toward us.

She then calmed the crowd down further with her words, extinguishing the flames of hatred with her serene voice of reason.
The day after was my physical examination. Rutledge and I made our way down to the quarters of the second elitist group, the Military. Rutledge taunted me as soon as we entered the room. The stern general bleated commands to us: we were instructed to perform labor with the Commons. I assume this is to show us how the less fortunate live before we rise to power.

Rutledge hurried to the gunpowder kegs to flex his strength by lifting them. He boasted power in front of Commons that feigned respect as they do not have any right to question their majesty's future heir.

I tried to get Miss Carmine for help but she just ignored me which upset me. I went to go help the smiths work on weapons instead. I noticed that the men appeared dehydrated, so I created water which they happily quenched their thirsts with. By coincidence, these men were the protesters and they recognized me. Their leader, Poncho, explained to me their motives for protesting. I established an influential connection within the military. Nevertheless, Rutledge's menial labor appeared superior to community and conversation, so he was endorsed again, but that is not what I am worried about right now.

As I walked back to my quarters, Carmine waved to me but I ignored her in the same fashion she did to me. This is what I believed would be her final teaching. Later that day, I heard a knock on the door, it was Carmine.

"Hey, Calista", she said in a dreary, weak voice. She was on the verge of tears. "I'm afraid I haven't been honest with you and want to explain my situation". I gave her my full attention.

"When I was a kid, I was just like you: mute. However, after a few years in the Fairy, I built up enough spiritual magic to cure my muteness temporarily. This must be maintained regularly though, and I upkeep it using the power source of the spirit: communication. That is why I go out of my way to help people like you. But I am struck with guilt, which was why I ignored you today. I'm so sorry for being such a horrible person that I can only help people to benefit myself."

I gave Carmine a big hug. Despite everything, I still liked Carmine and I was glad she could communicate what was wrong with me.

A few days later, Rutledge and I were evaluated by the third group: the Oracles. However, political tensions had erupted all over the palace grounds, so we were tasked with diffusing tensions. I had no point in trying but did anyway.

I encountered Poncho who told me that his group was protesting against the unsolved assasination of Sera Royale, the queen and my mom. The situation had gotten so rough that neighboring kingdoms began to scorn us for it. After hearing that my father had caught wind of all this, I scurried to his bedroom while Rutledge went to receive his third endorsement.

I saw my father, Rex Royale, as a mere sickly man, lying in his bed. He used the last of his spirit to communicate with me.

“Calista, your mother was never satisfied with her share of power over this kingdom. I learned that from reading her diary after she died. I wish she had communicated this with me before it was too late”.

I placed a comforting hand on my father’s shoulder.

“Calista, I’m afraid I haven’t been honest with you about something. I know who killed your mother. It was me. She left me no choice, attempting to strangle me in my sleep, I panicked and killed her. It was decided it would be blamed on assasination. Calista, I love you, you have always been destined to succeed me.”

Rex took his last breath. With that Rutledge was made king of a crumbling kingdom.

I told everything to Carmine. She had a brilliant idea. She made me write down everything I said and made it into a book which would be published and widely distributed in just a few days. *The King’s Children* became so popular that it spread to the other kingdoms. The book became a manifesto for revolutionaries.

In just a couple of days Rutledge was overthrown and banished in disgrace. I was instated as the kingdom's new ruler. The kingdom remained relatively peaceful after that. Despite being mute, I finally felt like I had a say. Thanks to endless effort and unconventional communication, I finally felt like I belonged in my own kingdom.