[PFT] the final story, as told to kino

so terrence was banished from the castle and he grew up with his grandfather and met freya, who's a young girl and has the scary talent of life magic (though.. seidr is a sexual form of magic so take that as you will) and she came to him and asked to run away with him because she didn't want to do the things the men in the village wanted her to do to harness that magic -- and terrence who grew up in relative safety from his family who wants him dead said yes, and they went to go to the nearest city together. the old man who raised him had never come back after a run to the city so he thought maybe it was time to go after him and find out where he went. they're in a different country from the one terrence was born in, and when they got to the city they heard there were stirrings of war but they were happy not to get involved. that was until they came across a band of soldiers that was under one of terrence's evil grandfather's henchmen, and that was when terrence well and truly transformed like a magical girl for the first time, with the costume and the sword and all. he got injured though and freya felt really useless and miserable because she had a crush on him but couldn't protect him >//< oh and they found out the old man had been killed.

when they went to get him healed the healer recognized freya's talent and mentioned they should go look for this witch who lived in the far east so freya decided she needed to take him there because they had nowhere else to go. since freya was the daughter of the village healers, she did a bunch of small healing and she recognized she was well and truly neck deep in her crush because she could use those feelings to perform magic to help the more serious injuries she encountered along the way. but she never confesses to him ): just pulls moves that terrence the oblivious 15 year old boy doesn't recognize at all.

anyway they got to the witch to find out that she was actually a thousand year old dragon looking for a protegee and freya happens to fit the bill. she asks freya if she wants to be stronger and freya looks at terrence and says yes. they spend 2 years there and terrence goes to take care of all the domestic labor and he gets a lot better at cooking (and cooking the books, since the witch didn't exactly run the most legal operation) and becomes housewife extraordinaire, and freya is a proud husband jkjk and the witch gradually grows to accept terrence because at the very beginning she didn't like him since magic didn't work on him and she felt there was this really strange energy in him blocking out his natural life signals and she could sense it was outright malicious, though she never commented on it, and his happy attitude grew on her.

but why 2 years? the war had been waged and won and spread farther and farther, under the lead of the most talented upcoming general the kingdom had ever seen. and terrence only found out it was gideon after gideon came to the city and asked for terrence to come back with him -- and how could terrence not go? a long, long time ago they'd promised to be together through everything.. and he had always felt guilty about leaving gideon behind in the worst place he could think to grow up in, especially since they were each other's first and best friend. they were raised practically as brothers, and they were extremely close, and gideon had always been the one to bring terrence back from a catatonic state after their grandfathers had made them kill, stood up for him when the beatings were particularly bad, took on more training to make up for what terrence couldn’t stand. gideon was the one person he spent 12 years of his life waking up next to, who was so bright and bold and was the one who dragged him out of his shell.

gideon also promised to leave the eastern front alone if terrence went with him. so terrence went. and the witch let him go, because the moment gideon walked in her domain, she recognized the magic signature of her old mistress, the one who had raised her from a hatchling and apprenticed her and taught her how to be one of the oldest and most powerful witches in the world. and she wanted to see her mistress come back. terrence's soul was a small price to pay for that.

terrence left a note apologizing to freya and explaining to her he had family business to take care of -- and freya was super confused and mad and heartbroken that he could just leave her so easily, and she cried because she never got the chance to confess to him properly. she got convinced by the witch to stay with her though, since terrence promised he would come back. and she waited. and she waited. but he never did.

the truth was that gideon's soul was already extremely unstable since it had begun to disintegrate a while back so that emilie could come back and take her place back in the world. gideon's grandfather had forced him to undergo the last inheritance rites alone, and without terrence around, the process was fucked, especially since terrence and gideon were actually the fated vessels for roselia and emilie to come back from the dead. it's been going for so long that the elders thought it was just some random traditional coming of age ceremony, but it's not. and terrence found this out by working as hard as he possibly could to figure out what was wrong with gideon and at the same time helped him win battles all across the world by being his aide (actually housewife cum secretary) and also being his prized knight. especially since gideon had killed all the elders in the family after his last inheritance rites so that terrence would be allowed in the family home again.

the thought of seeing terrence again was literally the only reason gideon didn't kill himself, since their household was super fucking toxic and a lot of old traditions were psychological torture designed as training exercises that would break and strengthen their minds in the right way - but they were always designed for two people who could support each other and help each other heal, but since terrence was banished, gideon went through all of it alone.

before the war, there were 3 major empires and a handful of independent nations. 4 years after terrence joined gideon, the empire terrence and gideon were fighting for had destroyed one other empire and were working on either conquering the independent nations or at least making an alliance with them to get the last empire and unite the whole world for the final peace. meanwhile, freya had been training with the witch and the witch was bemused at how freya learned everything she had to teach her so fast - the rest freya had to come into on her own. and the witch was called upon by the king since the empire had started crawling its way across the eastern front after having left it alone for so long, and he wanted her to help with the war efforts. and she did. because she remembered her mistress, a war heroine, and wanted to make her at least a little bit proud before she returned to the land of the living.

interlude: who is roselia and emilie? well a thousand years ago roselia was from a noble line and emilie was her maidservant and they grew up together. funnily enough emilie made full use of all the spellbooks they had lying around in the castle that roselia was supposed to read but had no patience for. also she happened to be a once-in-millenia spellmaking genius and basically pioneered the very beginnings of life magic as a scientifically studied (albeit highly forbidden) branch of sorcery. but she mostly used it to make dead flowers bloom and roselia was crushing on her big time. then war came and roselia signed up to help the kingdom win a war against an empire trying to conquer them, and then war after war until the kingdom became an empire in its own right, and were considered legendary war heroines. but you don't win war without sacrifice. and emilie got really fucking twisted in the necromancy aspect of life magic but she never figured out how to bring someone's soul back, though she could reanimate the bodies.

so she figured out the best possible way after a shitton of human experimentation and cursed both herself and roselia, so that when they were back they could finish what they started and do something like mass genocide or something like that, idk. or that's a byproduct of the magic, like homunculus kinda magic, the kind that's needed to bring a soul back to the world of the living. because emilie just wanted to see roselia again. interlude end.

the final war yadda yadda gideon terrence on opposite side of freya, freya terrence angst, terrence finding out from the witch what had happened and being so infuriated that he slayed her because she essentially was speeding the process of gideon and terrence disappearing forever and terrence didn't want gideon to disappear. but freya misunderstood and had her heart broken when she found out terrence killed her beloved teacher who'd taught her to be confident about herself. And who she had um. Sexytimes with. also i should mention that by now freya has huge bazongas and is super sexy and powerful.

and now i can't decide what the final ending will be like, whether:

1) gideon asks terrence to stay by his side because even he realizes he himself is dying, terrence does the inheritance rites, gideon and terrence disappear, emilie and roselia take their bodies, roselia believes its not right and stops emilie, and freya takes them both down after a long battle. Emilie and roselia emerge as blurry golden figures from gideon and terrence’s bodies, and they walk into the light and shatter into shards of light, and not long after gideon and terrence come out too and wave bye to freya and hug her and thank her, and go the same way. Freya, eyes bright with tears but her smile brighter, waves bye back to her beloved friend, and lives the rest of her life content as an independent advisor to the king and a very powerful sorceress.

2) terrence doesn't do the rites, gideon gets possessed, freya ends up learning about terrence and gideon’s condition, forgives terrence and takes him in, he and freya work together to kill emilie in gideon's body (along with gideon in the process) and terrence leaves after the battle. Years later after freya becomes mega successful she visits the village she comes from and sees a cottage in the middle of the forest with its lights on, smoke from its chimney, and smiles. freya and terrence get to know each other again and find love.

3) freya figures out a way to stop the ritual completely without gideon or terrence dying, the war is turned on its head, gideon and terrence become fugitives and settle in the countryside though they sleep a lot because parts of their soul are missing, but they are together and with each other and that's what's important. They are the only ones who know what each other have been through and the last remaining members of their family and its long traditions, and with them, the curse will die. freya visits them sometimes though she's now the great sorceress of the eastern front and she's busy a lot.

which ending is best? Or a different ending, maybe, where they all live together and are happy, and love each other. You decide.