THE PRINCE AND THE PRANKSTER
GOOD MORNING, PRINCE!

MORNIN', MISSUS— UH...

NAAJA, JUST NAAJA DEAR!

HI PRINCE PHOENIX!!

HI KIDS! HI WRATH!

IT'S THE WEEKEND, RIGHT? YOU'VE GOT NO CLASSES?

UM, YEP...

HOW IS YOUR STUDY COMING ALONG?

ER, GOOD, YEAH GOOD, GOIN' WELL...

REMEMBER, THE SOONER YOU FINISH HERE, THE SOONER WE GO BACK TO REI!

ER, YEP, THA'S RIGH'. I STILL GOT LOTS T' LEARN FIRST I RECK'N...

WELL! GOTTA GO... STUDY! SEE YA LATER.

THAT'S RIGHT, PRINCE! STUDY HARD AND WE CAN ALL GO HOME!

DARLING, I THINK YOU NEED TO BE MORE DIRECT. FOR THE PRINCESS'S SAKE!

YOU THINK I'M TOO SUBTLE? HAHA.

TCH, PAIGE! Y' NEV'R WARN'D ME BEIN' PRINCE WAS SUCH A HASSL! PEOL' WANTIN' Y' T' DO THINGS... CHECKIN' UP ON YA...

AN' I AIN'T EVEN HAD T' DO ANYTHIN' PROPER PRINCELY YET...

I NEED A BREAK...

...MAYBE I C'N SNEAK OFF INT' TOWN... BE AROLIN' PEOL' WHO DON'T KNOW I'M A PRINCE F'R A DAY. BE ALL... NON-PRINCELY.
Right, let's sneak out! Step one, I gotta sneak back into my room without the reinans noticing.

Shh!

Made it!

Now, I gotta have some old clothes 'round here somewhere...

...An' somethin' t' go with t' hide me neck.

Mm... jus' in case I do get sprung, bett'r keep up th' charade of bein' a dude...

Got it! This'll be fun, it's good t' be in prop'r comfy clothes again.

An' it'll be good t' be somewhere nobdy's hasslin' me f'r a change.

Hey cuz! What are you up to this weekend? Catching up on homework?

Nah, I got plans.

Well, have fun!

See you later.

And one... two...

Heh, I knew it... people should know better than to talk to themselves out loud where anybody can hear.

Hey prince! Where are you going?

Wha? Huh?

...Oh, ain't yer tha' trickst'r studen'? Pleyon Mannula, nice to meet you!
THAT'S AN INTERESTING GETUP YOU'RE WEARING, AND NO CROWN TODAY?

LUMMM...

I'M JUS' HEADED T' TOWN F' R'A BIT. SEE YA.

OH, SOUNDS FUN! I'LL COME TOO.

I'D RATH'R Y' DIDN'T.

OH NO, I INSIST!

BYE.

HA! TRY AND LOSE ME!

I AM.

...UGH FINE.

YOU C'N COME IN'T TOWN WITH ME... JUS' DON'T CALL ME PRINCE WHILE WE'RE THERE.

SURE, SURE!

WHAT SHOULD I CALL YOU THEN?

PHOENIX? NICK?

WELL-

...CLAAAAAW?

WHAAAA-

HEY DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, NICK! WE CAN TALK ABOUT IT OVER LUNCH. MY TREAT!

...I GUESS I CAN'T SAY NO T' THA'.

HEY THAT'S THE SPIRIT, LET'S GO!
Wha' sort'a place is this?
Uh, it's a café?
That's not wha' I meant—
Honestly Nick, I know you're not from around here, but sheesh.
I lived around here for a bit, this place is very good.

Can we get two hot chocolates and some of those great tiny sandwiches?
Sure thing!

So... wha' d'yer know, an' who told ya?

There's a trickster in my year... was it them? Wha' did they say?

Pffft no.
Then wh—
My turn for questions!
How's your friend Talon?

Tal'n? Me broth'r? ...I dunno, I ain't seen him.

No, not... Ceraph Talon. The oversized idiot with the oversized wings.

Like I said, I've been living around here. I saw you two... galavanting about.

Or rather... spending all day trying to murder somebody.

Wh'...

It was you!

Wait what
Yer tha' trickst'r with th' mask! From tha' day with Ceraph Talin!

...No?

That's so completely wrong that I'm sure if you thought about it for even a second you'd realise that.

...Hrrrmм.

I was merely around to see it all.

Here's your order!

Thanks!

So... wha' d'yer want?


Well, you might have noticed I'm no fan of elemental clanners.

But what I really hate is people who hurt my friends.

It's pretty despicable for an immortal to chase someone down to murder them.

I hope you don't intend to do that again.

Who was in tha' mask, then?

Please. Even if I could tell you, I wouldn't. Knowledge can be dangerous.

Don't you agree, Cla--...

That is, don't you agree, Nick?
So while we're having this nice chat... why do you keep your clan a secret?

I—uh.....

Why d'you not hide wha' y'are?

It's a part of who I am, so if I have no reason to hide it I'd rather not.

Ain'tcha afraid of yer honesty gettin' y' in trouble?

I'm aware of the risk, but I feel safe at DHS.

...aren't y' afraid t' die at all?

I'm more afraid to live.

Huh? Y' mean as a trickster, or—?

I mean lots of things! I bet life and death mean something different to immortals, though.

...I dunno.

Um... wha' would y' do if the wrong person found out yer a trickster?

Been there, done that. I was lucky to have someone there to save my skin.

Yer might be safe...ish... at DHS, but ain' no such protection in Mylenor.

Wh—wha'?! No! I just mean, since yer out at school, someone could have yer taken out by outin' y' here. Ain't you worried about that?

Why Nick, are you threatening me?

Suppose that's possible, but it seems unlikely. Nobody's bothered me yet.
Well, I think I learned a lot about you just now.

From what? I didn’t answer your questions.

No, but I learned from what sorts of questions you asked back.

Uh...

I understand you’re definitely afraid I’ll tell everyone your secret.

There’s some consequence from that which you’re trying to avoid.

Th—that’s not it.

How about a deal?

Huh? If anyone who shouldn’t know finds out your secret, I can use my magic to make them forget.

...What d’yer want in return?

Well, what would be really nice is a written apology for my friend that you tried to kill, a sincere one.

...Are y’er joking?

Why would I joke about that?

Well, I dunno with you people!

“Y’er people”? HAHA WOW.

F—Fine... Wha’ name should I be addressin’ this apology to?

Ha, you elementals are terrible at tricks.

I’ll take tha’ as a compliment.
THA’ WAN’T QUITE TH’ REST’L’ DAY I WAS TRYIN’ F’R.

PFFFFT...

...LEAST IT WAS A BETTER DAY THAN WHEN I MET CERAPH TAL’N.

-GSIGH-

Gah!

B-O-O-O-O!

WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!

I COULD ASK YOU THE SAME.

THIS IS AN OUT-OF-THE-WAY PLACE TO SNEAK A NAP IN... HIDING IN THE FOREST OUT BACK OF THE SCHOOL?

Y-YEAH, AWAY FROM ALL THE CROWDS...

SOUNDS FAIR. ANYWAY, WON’T BE LONG, WE PROBABLY SHOULDN’T BE SEEN TOGETHER, COUSIN. HERE!

A LETTER? AN APOLOGY FROM THE GOOD PRINCE JERKWAD.

WH-Huh?

YOU’RE WELCOME.

BUT I-THAT’S NOT...

UM... THANKS-?

GOTTA GO! DON’T WANT ANYONE WONDERING WHY YOU’RE SO CHILL TALKING TO A TRICKSTER!

BUT-

SEE YA!
Hey Cat, you're a nature power, right?

Yeah.

That's weird, isn't it?

Uh... I guess?

You lot are all named after plants, ain'tcha?

Yeah? I'm Nettle, my predecessor was Saffron. I've met two others, Lavender and Clover.

So do any of you have um, bad plant names?

...I don't understand the question.

Y'know, like Pigface! Or Dill! Or Knobweed!

Huh, well... I certainly hope so.