



**N is for Nyx: An Eikasia Prelude**  
By Illise Montoya

**Copyright 2013 Amanda French**  
**Smashwords Edition**

**Smashwords Edition, License Notes**

Thank you for downloading this free ebook. You are welcome to share it with your friends. This book may be reproduced, copied and distributed for non-commercial purposes, provided the book remains in its complete original form. If you enjoyed this book, please return to Smashwords.com to discover other works by this author. Thank you for your support.

**Table of Contents**

[N is for Nyx: An Eikasia Prelude](#)

[Lexicon](#)

[About the Author – Illise Montoya](#)

[Connect with the Author](#)

[Other Books and Stories by Illise Montoya](#)

**N is for Nyx**

## *An Eikasia Prelude*

[Back to top](#)

Nyx was in the middle of practicing her Common alphabet when her little brother, Atalo, shoved a banana in her ear.

“*Koen!*” she screamed, standing up so fast that her chair was knocked back onto the floor. Mushy banana bits clung to her hair and she tried to wipe these away, but she only managed to get her palms and the side of her face covered in sticky slime. “Ugh, you little monster, what’s wrong with you!?”

Atalo, meanwhile was laughing so hard his face was beet-red. Thaddeus, Nyx’s older brother, was also laughing from his place in the hallway entrance. “He got you good!” he chortled out.

“This isn’t funny!” Nyx shouted, tears in her eyes. “Why doesn’t he do these things to *you?*?”

Thaddeus shrugged. “Because I don’t react to him like you do.”

Nyx bared her teeth and whirled on Atalo, her hands before her like claws. “Well let’s see if he likes *this* reaction!”

Atalo screamed, his eyes wide, but he was still smiling as he scrambled to dodge his sister’s violent lunge. They ran around the kitchen table, displacing chairs. Fotini came through the door just as Atalo ran for it. He collided into his mother, and Nyx just managed to slide to a halt. With his new refuge found, the little boy clung to the woman’s leg. Their mother stared at them all, a basket of leeks on her arm.

“Sweet Aelurus, can my house not be the host of chaos every time I step away?”

“It’s like this even when you’re here,” Thaddeus mumbled with a smirk.

“And after dinner, when you’re arrogance comes running like water from your ass, do not ask you’re A-ma to help you wipe it, Thaddeus,” her mother said with a sharp look.

“A-ma! You would poison your own son?”

“Poison? Gods no! I was only referring to your tendency to eat like a *pregnant pig.*”

Nyx laughed as her mother moved around her, the older woman grunting as she dragged Atalo along. The boy, in his stubborn refusal to let go, had wrapped his legs around hers. Thaddeus just held up his hands and backed into the hall, where he was no doubt going to retire to his room until supper. Fotini glanced at her daughter over her shoulder as she set her basket on the counter.

“Now what was the commotion about?” She gave a weary sigh. “I *imagine* it has something to do with the slime all over the side of your face?”

Nyx pointed at her little brother, who only stuck his tongue in response. “He smashed a banana into my ear!” A thought occurred to her, and she returned to her place at the table, where her Common alphabet book still lay open. Large chunks of banana were on the pages. The girl’s eyes teared up as she stomped a foot. “He got it on my book!”

Fotini massaged her brow with one hand. “Atalo, apologize.”

“Sorry, *Koah.*” But the boy’s face was lit with an impish smile as he ran off to his room.

“That’s all you’re going to do?” Nyx whined. “Some of the words on my book are even ruined!”

Fotini looked at the girl over her shoulder. “Really? Which ones?”

The girl sniffled back more tears as she pointed at the page. “*These* ones! The first letters of the Common alphabet and some of the other *vowels* too!”

“*Vow-els*? Are those really so important?”

“This book translates Common to Ailuran, of *course* it’s important A-ma!”

Fotini closed her eyes with a suffering expression. “All right, *all right* my little night shard.” She fished into her apron pocket for some coins, then held them out to the girl.

“Here. Why not go buy a new book at the market?”

Nyx scowled. “But they only sell *Ailuran* books!”

The woman let out a sharp hiss and grabbed the girl’s hand. She forced the coins into her palm. “Nyx, *enough*. A-ma’s head hurts and she’d like to get started on dinner before the next *disaster* strikes!”

Nyx’s face crumpled and she slammed her fist onto the table. “This isn’t *fair*! This book was *A-pa*’s, and you don’t even care that Atalo ruined it! You *never* care!”

Fotini stared at her daughter, taken aback. “Nyx! That isn’t--”

But the girl snatched the book off the table and was running out the door.

~~~~~

“Well, you can say goodbye to your ears, then.”

Nyx stared at her friend, mortified. Her mother’s favorite form of punishment was pinching the ears. “You’re *not* helping Taila. Why would you say something like that?”

“Because it’s true?” Taila gave an unconcerned shrug.

They were sitting on a rock near Taila’s home, the hum of bees comforting in the mild weather. The three suns peered around large white fluffy clouds and the breeze was gentle. There were no *erduk* lessons that day, and they were all glad to be free for a variety of reasons.

“Maybe...maybe she won’t pinch your ears?” Ampelos said, twirling a long piece of grass between his fingers.

The girl smiled at him gratefully. “Thanks, Amp.”

He looked at Nyx shyly before ducking his gaze with a blush. “M-Maybe she’ll just give you extra chores instead?”

At this, Nyx’s face fell.

Taila threw her arm over the girl’s shoulder. “Aw, c’mon Nyx! Your A-ma tried!” The older girl gestured at her friend’s hand, which still gripped the coins Fotini had forced unto her. “You can get a *new* book with the money she gave you!”

Nyx scowled and slid off the rock. “You can’t replace this book. It was *special*...” She looked at her book in one hand—the cover was a dull sea-green, the faded title a tired wine-red that said in Ailuran, “Common Alphabet”—and the coins in her other hand. Baring her teeth, Nyx pulled the coins back, ready to throw them out into the high grass when something shiny out of the corner of her eye caught her attention.

Blinking, she turned her head to see Marq the merchant elf coming down the trails from the northwestern hills, his large pack on his back, jingling with trinkets. As he neared, the girl saw his slim face break into his usual haggard smile.

“Kitten! It’s good to see you again!” he said in Ailuran. “Have you been practicing your Common as usual?” this he said in Common.

The girl swallowed and held out her book, tears pricking her eyes again. “Hullo Marq. Yes. I try, but stupid brother got food on alpha-bet book. Made ink bad. Can not read some words anymore...”

The elf frowned. “Must’ve been cheap ink to get so easily fouled up! What did he get on your pages?”

“A...how do you say? *Anade?*”

“Ah. A banana,” the elf chuckled. “Your Atalo I take it.”

“Yes!” Nyx snarled as her friends joined her at her sides, their eyes curious. “He is a *cajeck!*”

“Nyx,” Ampelos whispered. When the girl looked at him, he mumbled, “Maybe ask the elf if he can help?”

Her eyes widened. “Good idea, Amp!” Returning her eyes to Marq, she asked. “Can you fix?”

The elf merchant blinked down at her. “Ah, I don’t know kitten.”

She held out the coins. “I have money!”

The man bit his lip at the outstretched hand. Then he gave a small shrug and said, “Okay. Give it here.”

Nyx handed him the money and book eagerly, turning the latter to the page where the banana had fallen. Marq looked over it shrewdly, scratching at the paper. After a minute, he snapped it shut and handed the item back. “Nope. Nothing I can do.”

Taila hissed at him, not understanding Common but understanding enough to know the merchant’s meaning. “If he can’t fix it, then he should return your coin, Nyx!”

Nyx looked at the elf imploringly. “Marq can no do anything?”

The man rubbed the back of his head, “Uh. No. No, I can’t, Kitten. I’m sorry.” He thumbed eagerly at his backpack. “But I have more books in my backpack if you’d like to see!”

Taila kicked him in the leg, but Nyx was already walking away, her heart sunk.

~~~~~

Nyx pushed her food around her plate at supper, and though Thaddeus, Fotini, and Atalo conversed animatedly, she did not come out of her shell, not even when her little brother moved Thaddeus’s plate of curds beneath his elbow. Quietly, she cleared the table, then retired to her room. Her mother watched her go with a sigh.

Later, Fotini appeared at Nyx’s bedroom entrance. “Little night shard?”

Nyx didn’t answer. She lay on her bed, staring up at the ceiling.

She heard her mother slip past her bead curtain and felt her sit on the bed. “Sweet Aelurus...I didn’t have to deal with such behavior from Thad until he turned *fourteen* at the latest! But then again, I forget how much more mature you already are when compared to him at eleven, so...” she trailed off. A few moments passed, and the woman took a deep breath. “Nyx.” The name came with a great rush of air, and Fotini shook her head. “I’m sorry I was insensitive about your A-pa’s books. I know they mean a lot to you. I’ve talked to Atalo about it, and he won’t be allowed near any food unless it’s mealtime and I’m there to watch him *eat* it.” The woman rolled her eyes. “Gods, that I was born such a wild child.”

Nyx rolled onto her side, facing away from her mother. Fotini looked at her, pained.

Touching her daughter's little foot, she said quietly. "Yes, Atalo is wild, but I love him for his antics, as I love you for yours, my little night shard. I love that you love books and that you are so capable of learning so much. I want you to know that I *do* care for you and the things you find important, but sometimes we must compromise, yes? It'll be an exercise for the both of us, kitten."

The girl looked at her mother. Slowly she sat up. "A-ma. I'm sorry I ran away."

"You were frustrated and hurt, my love," Fotini said, smiling as she hugged her daughter. "I will try to be a better mother. I will *try*, so please forgive me when I fail?"

Nyx turned her face into the woman's neck. "Okay..."

The next day after breakfast, Thaddeus opened the front door, intent on checking a squeaky window from the outside, when he came across something on the front step. Frowning he picked it up and came back inside. "Nyx?" he called.

The girl was practicing her Common handwriting from the good pages of her alphabet book. "Yes?" she said, blinking up at him.

Thaddeus held out a small scroll to her, which was attached to a leather pouch. "This is for you."

Nyx blinked and took the items from him. Opening the pouch first, she was surprised to find it was filled with the same coins her mother had given her the day before. Turning next to the note, she unfurled it and read the shaky Ailuran,

*Dear Nyx,*

*You're friend was right. I shouldn't treat my best customer with such shoddy service. I had no right to take your coin when I couldn't perform the task you wished of me, so here is a once-in-a-lifetime refund! But you know, I went poring over my personal collection of books, and I realized that maybe all it took was a bit more effort from me. So here is a list of the words ruined in your book, alphabetized, with examples in both Common and Ailuran. You're lucky, kitten, that there was only one page that saw your brother's terror! Otherwise, I would have had to give you something else for free...perish the thought!*

*Your Trusty Provider,*

*Marq*

Following this was a short list of words and examples in both languages, as the elf had promised. Nyx was grinning so hard, her face ached.

"What was it?" Thaddeus asked, pulling a chair out next to his sister.

The girl slipped the note into her alphabet book and took up her leather pouch.

"Nothing! I'm going shopping!" the girl exclaimed, still smiling.

He watched her go with wide eyes. "Damn, what's the rush?" Then he sat up straighter in his chair just as his sister ran out the door. "Oh! Hey! You aren't going to see that filthy elf are y--!" he was cut off as the door slammed shut behind Nyx. Thaddeus let out a hissing breath, his eyes turning onto the note that his sister had slipped into her book. Pulling it close to him, the man opened it, and his eyes were drawn to one thing...

*A is for Always, as in, "Nyx will always love her family, and will always be loved in return."*

###

**Lexicon**  
[Back to top](#)

Aelurus – The Goddess of the Night. Also the progenitor of Ailurans. Her symbol is the black leopard. She represents inner strength, the passion of the beast, and cunning.

Ailuran – A specific race of therians that can shapeshift into feline forms.

Anade – Ailuran word meaning “banana.”

Cajeck – Ailuran word meaning, “idiot.”

Erduk – Ailuran word meaning, “school.”

Koen – Ailuran word meaning, “brother.”

Koah – Ailuran word meaning, “sister.”

Therian – A species of mortal beings capable of shapeshifting into beast-like forms. While at a glance, therians seem to resemble humans, the difference lies in proportion and certain subtle qualities that hint to the spiritual force lying dormant beneath.

**About the Author – Illise Montoya**  
[Back to top](#)

Illise Montoya was born and raised in California. She’s married to an incredible Air Force soldier and owns three cats: Freya, Xena, and Captain Nathaniel Garro. Her interests include video gaming, film and animation, comic books, and of course, literature. When she’s not shooting feral ghouls or watching her favorite drama show, she’s either studying, spending time with her family, or writing either one of her ongoing free web serials: Eikasia and Akumu Love Panic! Her zodiacs are the Dragon and the Sagittarius. She’s a proud brony (or pegasister if you prefer), she’s openly bisexual, her favorite color is red, and the Uncanny X-men are her absolute favorite superheroes. Did we mention she’s a geek?

**Connect with the Author**  
[Back to top](#)

Eikasia's Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Eikasia-A-Free-Fantasy-Serial/131333536739>

Eikasia's YouTube Page: <http://www.youtube.com/user/EikasiaNovel/featured>

Eikasia's Official Website: <http://www.eikasia-novel.com/>

Akumu Love Panic! Official Website: <http://www.eighthcirclestudios.com/alp/>

Illise's Smashwords Profile: <https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/cajeck>

Illise's blog: <http://illisemontoya.wordpress.com/>

Illise's Deviant Art Profile: <http://majiknine.deviantart.com>

Illise's Twitter: <http://twitter.com/cajeck>

### **Other Books and Stories by Illise Montoya**

[Back to top](#)

Tooth and Nail: An Eikasia Prelude

Reflections: An Eikasia Prelude

Tributaries (Eikasia #1)

In Sight, In Mind (Eikasia #2)

Blackwood (Eikasia #3)

Akumu Love Panic!