

# QUEEN OF THE MEADOW

## *Survival of the Unfittest*

(New album - June 4th, 2021)



For four years now, **Queen of the Meadow** has been enchanting us with their delicate folk songs which have often been compared with the works of **Nick Drake**, **Vashti Bunyan**, **Elliott Smith** or **Judee Sill**. But it is high time we move away from those tutelary figures to recognize the fair value of the acoustic cathedrals erected by the discreet yet passionate duettists, as well as acknowledge the almost child-like joy experienced while hearing them sing in harmony.

**Helen Ferguson** is a late bloomer who started writing a few years ago, driven by a profound impulse to depict her inner demons through radiant melodies.

On the other hand, **Julien Pras** has been known for almost 25 years as one of the deftest craftsmen when it comes to sensitive song writing. Together, they adorn of the finest fabric the songs that she prefers to compose in her native language. They overstretch the instruments, the sound of which he meticulously works on until a refined and elegant gown is obtained, meant to stand the test of time. The challenge was successfully met from the beginning with their debut album *Aligned With Juniper* (Tiny Room Rds, 2016) and more particularly with *A Room to Store Happiness* released in 2018 on **Only Lovers Records** which allowed them to tour and win the hearts of a wider audience beyond the scope of their original hometown Bordeaux, France.

All the subtleties of the 10 songs of their third album *Survival of the Unfittest* resulting from an asserted maturity and the obvious complicity of the duo, cannot be translated here. But right from the very first song "Smother", we are charmed by the agile intertwining of the guitars, the flight of vocals gliding above the clouds dripping crystalline notes of piano, the aptness of the rhythmic beats paving the space until a tidal wave of panting voices bring the song to its climax to finally end in a peaceful acoustic arpeggio.

From a few dark-red drops in the snow, Helen observes, imagines, builds connexions with the blood shed by wild animals driven out of their territories ("La Louve"), the fear aroused by the heavy step of a familiar man one does not dare rebuff ("One More Chance"), the tormenting hunger on the path of exodus ("Rose of Sharon") or the irreversible power of an electroshock ("Dishonorable Discharge").

Thereby, the title *Survival of the Unfittest* was inspired by biologist **Hebert Spencer's** expression referring to the natural selection which condemns the ones who were not born with the same chances to remain at the bottom of the ladder. But if we dig a little deeper into Helen's lyrics, we see that she expands the definition to all marginals and other whipping boys. Or if we dare say « whipping girls » since women are another claimed source of inspiration : women who fight in their own ways to be heard and respected. Womanhood is explored through the themes of reverie ("Moonchild"), violence ("Princess Pride"), manipulation ("The King and the Hoe"), sensuality ("Modesta") or dancing (illustrated by the superimposition of the collodion photograph on the cover). Adopting an intimate point of view, **Helen** does not hesitate to call her own family at the witness stand to reconcile substance and form in an ode to the strength of intergenerational bonds ("Honey"). And when the lyrics reveal too little, the sound effects chosen by Julien take over, drawing the missing words, building enchanting or menacing worlds but never imposing any unilateral interpretation.

*Survival of the Unfittest* is a new stone in **Queen of the Meadow's** Garden of Delights which will hopefully serve as a talisman to repel depression and light the path for those who will have the curiosity to visit it.

### TRACKLISTING

1. Smother (4:15)
2. Moonchild (3:32)
3. Dishonorable Discharge (3:57)
4. Honey (5:10)
5. La Louve (2:30)
6. Rose of Sharon (2:43)
7. Princess Pride (3:38)
8. One More Chance (4:00)
9. The King and the Hoe (3:35)
10. Modesta (2:37)

### FORMAT

Album (CD, LP, numérique)

### LABEL

Only Lovers Records

### BAND LINKS

[facebook.com/queenofthefieldmusic](https://facebook.com/queenofthefieldmusic)  
[instagram.com/queenofthefieldband](https://instagram.com/queenofthefieldband)

### LABEL LINKS

[www.onlyloversrecords.com](http://www.onlyloversrecords.com)  
[facebook.com/onlyloversrecords](https://facebook.com/onlyloversrecords)  
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