

From lushes forest to ashy shore.

The flare of the midday sun scatters on the surface tension as wavering color-bands. A huff of air escapes Oril's snout, rippling on the pond.

With stagnant breath burning all but literal fire in her chest, she bursts into the sun in a gasping heave for breath.

The sun is cast nice and warm on her young dragon back in the heart of the Soilver Forest. Here everything is silent, only the trees sigh in the gust.

Her green and elder brother spares her no more than a lazy glance and a puff of black smoke from the shade.

Shaking the residual water from her navy scales, she leaps like a scaly bouncy ball to her brother. Still panting for breath, she declares loud and clear that she is in fact board.

His shoulders lift only from the ground to announce how little he cares.

When nuzzling her forehead against his side, she is only shoved to the ground by his hindleg. "You are no fun anymore," she hisses, and he shrugs.

Sharpening her black and ultra-slender claws on the elder oak where its bark has been worn thin, she stares into the cathedral of leaves above. The living, breathing mosaic sways gently. Where the

crowns part, sparks of blinding light shimmers in and out of existence.

Among the crowns of elder trees is the head of her mother. Her massive yellow eyes are ever vigilant; her elongated lemur like ears are sonars, searching for any threat to her young.

Oril finds her favorite spot in the fold of her mother's hindleg. Resting on her white coating, the shade of their grove is filtered purple through her mother's wing.

The leathery membrane blankets her against the harshness of the world. Aril's purr stems from deep within her chest, it quivers her in her massive entirety. To Oril it is a tremble.

Sleep takes hold, she lets the darkness cradle her, like it always has. She too awakens to a tremble, but now the ground itself is shaken.

Slouched over as not to prop up above the trees, arrives Zagaron. Her father is nearly one and a half megatons of bulging muscles. He pushes into the grove with utmost care and a deer wrapped in each set of claws.

A strong scent of iron fills the air, her heart beats more ferociously, and the red in her vision dominates.

"You should eat," Aril says, as Kaltron and Oril growl and hiss at each other.

"I already have." Zagaron's voice booms. He lays to watch his children fight over their dinner, knowing that there is plenty to feed them both.

Setting teeth in the already skinned deer, deep satisfaction flows through her. Like water on the parched throat or on burned skin a sensation of relief streams through her veins. An audible pop echoes through the clearing, as Aril severs the hind leg of her meal by her teeth alone.

There is a loaf on either side of the spine so tender and juicy that it is worth fighting for. Though Oril knows the song and dance, she tries for a bite before being swiped from her feet.

With a shriek like a catfight past midnight, Oril thrashes under the weight of her elder brother. His teeth shut around her throat, playfully.

Smiling ear to ear, he watches her carry herself to the pond. In the rippling reflection, she sees blood caked into her mane. The patch of hair from her forehead to the tip of her tail, which she solely carries, is smudged.

Punching her head into the clear pond to rinse, it happens. Light, bright with the intensity to wash out the underwater view, explodes all around her. Though the sound was muted underwater her sensitive ears hurt.

They are howling, squirming, covering their eyes. "Mom?" escapes her breathlessly, as their roof of leaves breaks open. Turbines roar and blow out her ears.

Oril lays eyes on the hindlegged for the first time, wearing skintight black, the only color is the green of their goggles. A Chain-link-net drops. It brings down elder redwoods and her guardians without asking questions.

Blindingly, Aril spews her flames with white intensity. The ground tears open; the forest sets ablaze.

A loud bang rings out twice. Only the roar of the raging flames fills the air. They are still, not breathing; taken from her so easily.

One of the hindlegged removes her hood to let her silver hair down. She opens her mouth but can say nothing before she is hurled out of the way.

A major redwood crumbles in an earsplitting crash next to Oril, bringing its flames down all around her. In a jolt to escape certain death, the membrane of her wing is punctured into the ground between her third and fourth wing arm.

Oril chokes her scream, but Kaltron whimpers. The female aims and takes his life on reflex.

“There was another,” she says. The other demon grabs her arm and says in a gruff voice. “We’ll be next if we stay.” He forces her to leap, to burst through the flames.

Oril finds the cold eyes of her mother, as the flames start licking at her side. It is getting harder to breathe. In a fateful jerk she rips her wing open. White pain reverberates through her, as she remembers her father’s words.

‘Hold your breath, never stop’. The raging inferno bares down on her unbearably. Her wing droops limply after, the wound dragged through the forest underbrush. Breaching the wall of fire, she collapses into the pond with a sizzle.

Her mangled wing she clutches to her chest, red bleeds into the ash covered surface. Coated in ash and hardly breathing, she watches the boot, which lands next to her head.

“Now, Anda!” He grabs her onto the extension ladder, zooming up through the flames.

Oril coughs and weeps to herself, as the forest parishes around her.