

Fading Sun

“Why oh why did I agree to vacation with you” Soren complained as he stepped in a pile of poop.

“Stop your complaining. It’s just halistag poo... I think. Besides, you had nothing better to do anyway” Tayna defended herself.

“Flat countryside, animal droppings everywhere, and sunlight from all three sun’s bearing down on us – what could be better?”

“Shut up and help me with this telescope, would you?”

Soren rolled his eyes. “A smart person like you should know that sun gazing is bad for your eyes.”

“That’s why a smart person like me built a special lens to protect my eyes.”

“Do you have an answer for everything all of the time?”

“Yes, I’m smart like that” Tayna teased. “Soren relax. There’s nothing more enjoyable than sun gazing and if you do it right, it’s perfectly safe. It’s like watching a fire dance; so beautiful.”

Soren reluctantly helped Tayna with the telescope. Once it was all set up, Tayna took the first look. He really didn’t know what the big hype was about sun gazing.

“Take a look” said Tayna. She was beaming with excitement. “On your left is the Earth’s sun, in the middle is ours, and to the far right is Morstarga’s sun. Bebokia’s sun is especially lovely today.”

Soren looked through the telescope and was impressed. The movement in the sun was like an elegantly choreographed dance and it was somehow hypnotizing. Bebokia and the Earth’s sun was energetic and full of fire but Morstarga’s sun danced slowly like it was tired.

“Why is Morstarga’s sun dancing so slowly compared to the other two? Is that normal?”

Tayna was astonished at such a clever observation. “You noticed that too? Most people think that it’s just the nature of Morstargan sun but I’ve been tracking it. Today, the dance is the slowest I’ve ever seen. That’s why I came out here.”

“Are you saying that the Morstargan sun is dying?”

“If you would have asked me that a year ago I would have said no, but today I have to say yes.”

“Did you inform Naja?”

“I thought about it, but I doubt she would listen.”

“Well, you at least have to try. Come on lets go; I’ll go with.”

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My planet is dying, my people are starving, and the sun has forsaken us. Where to turn for help? Is there anything anyone can do? Earth knows not of us and relations between Morstarga and Bebokia has long been cold.

High noon, the sun once strong and nourishing fails to feed us. We stretch our wings towards the sky in vain to receive what little sunlight there is. The stronger of us wrongfully fight the weak for their sun lit territory. Morstarga has never been so dark.

“Are you going to just stand there, looking out the window, watching while that poor fellow is beaten for his own feeding ground.”

“I don’t see you hurrying to help him either, Kirkus.”

“You’re right, what’s happened to us? Our people are hungry when food is right next door and you’re still reluctant. Croy, if we don’t act now our species will die.”

Croy looked at Kirkus but gave him no answer. He turned his attention to the red mark on his index finger and gazed back into the past when sunlight was plentiful.

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The council was sitting on Croy’s delightful feeding ground. The flowers were in full bloom. The sunshine was strong and filling. The fresh smell of the garden wonderfully complemented their nourishment. Everyone was in a good mood and this heightened their talks of stratagem.

“The Bebokians are wingless barbarians” General Platt warned.

“They eat with their mouths killing the vegetables that clean the air -- a stupid species.” Croy responded.

“The tests went well. We’re ready for the elimination. There will be no war and no casualties on our side. It will be like an act of God” boasted Brass, the science engineer.

“Then the only thing left to do is set a date. Well done” said Croy.

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“I am reluctant because the last time we tried attacking Bebokia things went amiss or do you not remember the horror that was our own doing?”

“I have that red mark on my finger too Croy” said Kirkus. “I was there, I watched, and it was like... an act of God.”

“You’re right, an act of God who chose to protect the Bebokians.”

“No, I meant there was no way for us to predict what was going to happen, Croy” Kirkus sighed. He rubbed the red mark on his index finger. He tried so often to wash it off but it was a permanent stain. The events of that day played over and over in his head.

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The Morstargan common people were unaware of the council’s plans. All members voted unanimously to keep them in the dark. In doing so, they would avoid any resistance that may have shown itself among their people.

When the task was done and victory secured, the announcement would be grand. The commoners, rendered into a state of pleasurable shock, would revere the council as Morstarga’s biggest heroes. Such were the thoughts of Croy and his followers as they secretly met to execute their plan.

“This is the best water I’ve ever tasted” commented Kirkus as his fingertips absorbed the liquid from the fancy glass.

“Yes, purified twice with an added hint of zorpkusfly dust. Expensive, but today is a special occasion” Croy bragged.

“Zorpkusfly dust is rare, owe did you it?” Brass asked. “I’ve only seen the zorpkusfly in books and have always wondered if they were indeed real.”

“You are right, it is very rare but I have my sources. Makes you feel good doesn’t it?”

“It makes you feel fantastic!” Here’s to your sources.” Brass held up his glass and the other council members followed. “To Croy, this wonder drink, and this special day.”

“Strength be to Morstargan Wings!” The Council shouted.

“My dear friends it’s time. Chief engineer Brass please begin” said Croy.

“The moment we’ve all been waiting for” Brass began. He was now the center of attention, but with the touch of a button he quickly had all eyes focused to the screen that was slowly scrolling down at the back of the room.

“This is a satellite image, in real time, of the circle of suns. The Bebokian sun indirectly nourishes them; remove it and our threat and fear disappears with the extinction of their species.” Brass took a short pause before continuing.

“You were all handed a small circular device when you came in. That device contains the activation switch for the rocket that will extinguish the flames of the Bebokian sun. In order to launch the rocket we must all turn the switch at approximately the same time. Is everyone ready?”

The quiet room was suddenly abuzz with chatter. It was unexpected that they all would get a chance to directly participate. Brass patiently waited for the room to be still. When everyone was ready each gave a signal. Some just nodded while others made eye contact with Brass and whispered the word ready.

All eyes were again on the screen and the room was now completely quiet. Brass took his queue and began, "On my Mark. Three, two, one... Mark!" The switch left a permanent mark on everyone's finger; a feature cleverly thought of by the general himself to honor all participants.

The council successfully launched the rocket and everyone watched with fervor as the rocket traveled to its destination. It almost reached the Bebokian sun when, for no apparent reason, it boomeranged toward the Morstargan sun with twice the speed. Gasp of horror escaped from the members. They watched breathlessly as the rocket injected their own sun with poison. There was no spectacular show of devastation, just the disappearance of the rocket into the sun's core.

The effects were felt soon after. Their sun dimmed a little more each day and the temperature cooled.

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"We can't undo what was done" said Kirkus to Croy "But we can try again and provide our people with nourishment."

"The Bebokians are witches and warlocks. That's the only explanation for what happened. How can we fight magic?"

"There is no such thing as magic, Croy. There has to be a scientific explanation for the cause of the boomerang."

Croy looked out the window at the destruction that he caused. He truly did believe that the Bebokians knew magic. Every inch of his body told him not to give Kirkus the order to continue with the attack, but he had to do something. He had to help his people.

"Do it" he reluctantly said.

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Empress Najakia. These were the words written on her majesty's door. The same door which Soren and Tayna now nervously stood in front of.

"Are you sure this is a good idea?" Tayna asked Soren.

"No" he answered before he quickly laid his hand on the scanner before they could change their minds.

"Requested entry submitted" the scanner, next to the door, confirmed with a high pitched computer voice.

"Oh hell" Tayna interjected.

"Scared?" Soren asked.

Tayna gave him an icy look. "Mister, it is courage that overturned my brain's order to run away and leave you to face Naja by yourself."

“Entry granted” the scanner announced before the door slid open.

Fake smiles were plastered on both their faces as they entered Naja’s domain. She was sitting at her desk with her head buried in paper work.

“Please excuse our disturbance, Empress” said Soren trying to get her attention. Naja didn’t reward his effort with eye contact.

“I thought I sent you and Tayna on holiday” Naja said with her eyes still on her work.

“Yes, my Empress. We were in the country sun gazing when Tayna noticed that the Morstargan Sun is fading” Soren explained.

“I’ve been measuring their sun’s brightness for a while now and today the sun is the darkest it’s ever been” Tayna elaborated.

“So what does that have to do with me?” Naja finally made eye contact with both of them.

They were shocked at the question. She was not known for short sightedness; quite the opposite.

“Empress, we believe that the Morstargan’s will have no choice but to seek out sunlight elsewhere and Bebokia will be their closest target” Tayna bravely explained.

Naja looked at her with a cold, empty stare that sent chills up and down her spine making her legs weak. The Empress was deep inside her own head deliberating what to say next but her phone rang before she spoke. Tayna was relieved when her eyes focused on the phone instead of her. She could feel energy return to her legs and the struggle to stand upright ended.

“Naja” the Empress identified herself.

“Birds of Prey have landed and are waiting for further instructions” the raspy voice from the phone informed.

Soren and Tayna tried their best not to look shocked at overhearing the message.

“I don’t mean to be rude” said Naja “but, I have more pertinent matters to attend to. We shall cross the Morstargan river when or if we get there. Good day to you both.”