

Prologue

Two days ago

It was a beautiful sunny day, a perfect day to fly. Well, at least, it had been during the morning. The rest of the day had been spoiled by the rain who kept pouring down. Silt began to regret not staying an other day at Possible-Town. On the other hand, if she had stayed a little longer, she might have been late.

Silt sighted the Diamond Spray Delta.

“Not far away,” she thought. “Let’s do a break.”

She dived downward, looking for a place to land. She landed next to the river. Silt laid on the floor for a moment, then checked if the bag attached to her paw was still here. It was. Fortunately! Otherwise, why would she have left the Mud kingdom?

“Probably to hear from him - Stop thinking about him!” a second voice in her head stopped her, “You know very well he doesn’t want to see you! - Nonsense! It’s just... he’s very busy right now...”

Silt didn't like getting lost in this kind of thinking. She knew full well what he was doing, and especially, for who. But it didn't stop her from fearing the worst.

The young dragon was getting ready to take off when she heard wing flapping. She turned to its source and saw a Skywing approaching her. She landed in front of Silt.

"Hel... Hello," she said to the Mud dragon.

"Hello," Silt answered.

A long silence ensued. The Skywing was wavering to speak, like if she was seeking her words.

"I'm sorry," Silt disrupted, "but we're waiting for me. I have to take off."

"I understand, but..."

"..."

"Well, it's a bit embarrassing, but I suck at geography! I remember no map, not even my town's one! And because of that, I just get lost every time I go somewhere. I've been charged to deliver a message to queen Moorhen, but I'm never gonna make it because I don't even know where her palace is!"

"A message? From queen Ruby?"

“Queen what?” The Skywing wondered.

Silt stepped back. This dragon was shady. Not knowing the name of your own queen?! Impossible. She must hide something. Was she planning to do an attack?

Yet, this dragon didn't look like a killer at all. She seemed really terrified that she had got lost. A true killer wouldn't panic so easily, would he?

“Well, what's your name?” Silt asked.

“Pulse,” she answered, “I'm Pulse.”

“Pulse, How could I lead you to my queen if you don't even know the identity of yours?”

“What? That's not true! I know I struggle with maps, but I remember perfectly names. There had never been a Ruby on the Skywings' throne. The current queen's Tornado.”

Now, both of them were looking each other with a wary look. Pulse took a step back. Silt examined her to see if she was holding a bag that could contain a weapon or a scroll. If the rumors were to be believed, an animus would have bewitched some scroll pieces to turn into other dragons. Witnesses would have sighted him at queen

Ruby's palace. It sounded ridiculous, but, what if those scrolls really exist?

In any case, Silt wouldn't have the answer right now because the Sky dragon wasn't wearing anything, no bag, no weapon.

Finally, it was Pulse who broke the silence.

"It doesn't matter that you don't know the queens' names or whatever else. I have a critically important message to deliver to queen Moorhen. The future of the world is at stake, so will you take me to her?"

"I accept, but I warn you, any suspicious behavior, I'll alert the royal guard."

Everything looked suspicious with this dragon. She would warn the guard at the slightest sign of hostility.

Pulse's face lit up. The two dragons took off towards the Mudwings' queen's palace. It was not very far from her original destination. Silt might arrive on time despite the detour. However, she couldn't help but worry about the Skywing. There was something strange about her. Silt didn't pay attention to it before, but now she noticed there

was something different about this dragon compared to the other dragons she had met.

After some time flying, they saw the palace. As they approached, Silt noted that there were more guards than usual at each entrance to the palace. They landed in front of the main entrance, where a soldier had signaled them to land. Before the soldier had time to say anything, Pulse spoke.

“Hello, I need to see your queen urgently.”

“The queen’s busy,” the soldier answered. “She has asked that no one disturb her until further notice.”

“Tell her it's urgent and...”

“Why has the guard been reinforced?” Silt interrupted.

“I don't know,” he replied, “but the order was given at the same time as the order forbidding access to the palace.”

“I...” intervened Pulse.

“All right,” resumed Silt, “we’ll come back later.”

“But we have to see...” replied Pulse when she saw Silt leaving and completely ignored her.

She walked until she was out of sight of the guard, then turned around to make sure that Pulse had

followed her. That was the case. She was there, furious. The look in her eyes showed that she was waiting for an explanation.

“Look,” Silt began, “there's no point in trying to get into the palace when the queen has ordered it sealed off. And even if you managed to reach the queen, she certainly wouldn't appreciate you disturbing her by carrying a message from someone who doesn't exist.”

“But why do you say queen Tornado doesn't exist?” Pulse asked.

“Because it is!” She lost her temper. “I haven't learned the genealogy of your queens, but I know it well enough to be able to name the queens of all Pyrrhia since my hatching day: Scarlet, Ruby. For Sandwings... uh, yeah... too complicated.”

“Pulse was staring at her with big eyes. Her fury had vanished, or else astonishment had taken over her. Finally, she looked really shocked at what she had just heard. Yet, Silt had taught her nothing extraordinary.

“Ruby... Scarlet... Pyrrhia...” Pulse muttered.

The thunder rumbled, which surprised Silt. She had completely forgotten about the rain that fell on her without respite.

“Could you show me on a map where we are?” Pulse asked.

“You didn't take any with you? One really wonders why you get lost so easily...” added Silt, putting hers on the ground.

It's a good thing she had to buy one to go to Possible-Town. The dragon put a claw on the map and described a small circle located slightly north of the palace of the Mudwings' queen.

“We're about this way,” Silt announced.

Pulse looked at the map and examined it from every angle. After several minutes, she dropped the map.

“I... I need to...” she sputtered.

She suddenly took off. Silt flew away to try to catch up with her, but she was flying faster than she was. The more time passed, the farther away Pulse went. Silt was forced to stop chasing her. Questions were racing through his head. Who was really that dragon? Why was she troubled? Was she crazy? Did she imagine she existed?

Impossible, the soldier who spoke to her would have had a different reaction otherwise.

One possibility remained in Silt's mind. Well, several that actually came back to much the same thing. She hoped both that it was and that it wasn't. What if... No, it couldn't be.

For the time being, Silt decided to content herself with going to see her brothers and sisters, to bring them what she had gone to get before meeting the mysterious Skywing. The young dragon saw one swamp after another before she saw the sea.

That's where they were, that's where Pico, Pine, Bistre and Alder were. That was where they had settled, about ten minutes flight from the sea.

Suddenly, a reflection dazzled her. Decidedly, some dragonets had nothing better to do than playing with mirrors to blind the dragons passing by.

Silt did not stop however. She continued, and then started to descend when she recognized the place she had left a few days earlier. She landed with great speed, lifting a pile of dust in the process. When the fog had disappeared. The Mudwing noticed that the ground was vibrating very slightly.

It was probably a sign that someone was running. She turned to this person whose footsteps she could now hear. She recognized Pico flying away to jump on her. She didn't dodge him.

But when she felt his paws land on her snout and wings to forcefully press her to the ground, she realized that something was wrong. Pico's paws were colder and harder than usual. His body was heavier too. It wasn't Pico.

"Halt!" Shouted the dragon who was sitting on her.

"Mmff Mmf..." She sputtered.

She couldn't see her attacker's face. He let go of her snout and grabbed her neck instead.

"Who are you?" Her attacker threw.

"You first," She added.

"Very funny, don't play that game with me. Haven't you ever been taught to do what the person holding you hostage asks you to do?"

"I'm Silt," she grumbled.

"What are you doing around here?"

"Well, this is my home."

Her attacker burst out laughing.

“This is the best, he continued. Well, I don't know what you came here for, but I give you a minute to go away.”

Silt felt vibrations in the ground again. The stranger loosened his grip and stepped aside. The Mudwing rose again. She glanced at its attacker, but to her surprise, she found Pico instead of him.

“Pico?” She wondered. “Where did he go?”

Pico was one of her brothers. He was a little smaller than her, had darker scales and brown eyes. It looked like there were a few blue rings around his pupils, although Vase was still not sure after all these years whether this was the case.

“Who?” He asked.

« The dragon that immobilized me, he just left”
She answered.

“No one has immobilized you,” Pico replied with a puzzled look in his eyes. “You've just landed.”

“Really? But I'm sure I was attacked.”

“You must have dreamed.”

“Well...” She replied unconvinced. “Where are the others?”

“They're over there,” he replied, pointing to a rock with the end of his tail.

They headed for that rock. The sun was setting. Silt then heard screams. Nothing dramatic. When she arrived, she saw Alder and Pine fighting as Bistre looked on. It was either a practice or a game. Alder was the smallest of the siblings. Her scales were very light brown and her eyes were dark brown. In fact, all five of them had dark brown eyes. Pine, the Bigwing, had some golden scales. Bistre had scales halfway between the color of Pine and Alder and had hatched from the same egg as Silt.

When they noticed the presence of their sister, they stopped their fight and rushed towards her.

“You’re back!” Gloated Bistre.

There was a long family hug. Silt was reassured to be with her family again, even though not knowing where the Skywing had gone made her itchy. She would see her again later, she was sure, but for now, all that mattered was that she had found them back.

“Have you... have you found it?” Pine asked.

Silt nodded. She untied her bag and opened it. She dropped its contents on the ground: a scroll. Alder picked it up..

“Liana - Book 3: The sealed door” She read.

“Finally!” Pico and Bistre cried out at the same time.

Alder was the only one of the siblings who could read and write. Some time ago, she had found the first volume of this series of books on the floor, abandoned. She had begun to read it alone, but inevitably her siblings discovered that she could read and wanted to know what the scroll was about. They liked the story and wanted to know what happened next. If Silt remembered correctly, the book was written by a dragon named Abyss during her permissions, during the war of succession of the Sandwings. That's why the different volumes came out so quickly.

It was then that Silt's belly reminded her that perhaps it was time to think about looking for food.

Noticing this, Pin told her that they had reserved a portion of the meal for her. She thanked them and began to eat.

While she was eating her fill, she told them about her journey, in particular the encounter with a certain disturbed-looking Skywing. Like her, they

found it troubling, but, in reality, the story of a dragon who comes to deliver a message from her queen that she doesn't even know made them laugh out loud.

Finally, after much laughter, Silt fell asleep.

That night, she had a happy dream. She dreamed that she was racing with her brothers and sisters. Of course, she dreamed that she was winning the race, taking tight turns between two big rocks. She noticed that other tribes were participating in this race, and she was first! She saw the finish line, which was actually a series of colored leaves on the ground. She passed it and a trophy appeared in front of her. She reached out her paws to grab it.

The moment she touched it, everything disappeared and everything went black. The only thing Silt could see was her own paws. What happened to the music? Victory? Who would dare interrupt this dream? Silt tried to go back to his previous dream, but she couldn't.

Instead, two eyes were staring at her in the middle of her field of vision. No muzzle, no dragon, just two green eyes glaring at her.

Silt closed her eyes, but even so, she still saw the other two.

A voice resonated inside her head.

“Do not disappoint me.”

The voice resounded again, but in a much scarier tone this time.

Ufgnpe ucroj owx cjtneex rw mzsrg
Ee jguajjn fe yj dcs wjg eoykpcdcj

Ewewvig cstgg dp uzws awchoyi ewe wf jke
Xjbccpwo ne utmcu oj rkaxfbf

Dpx zqrd, qsu fctbvipwsu dtxdcrlnhtoyy
Sp flaswr oj zc Czstwsttb.

Gt tq ggrrl yfqp efff pzzf crcjhgr w'jthoyifgmpsh
Oexj gk lp xoxotw opttvig edy fgtctixe.

And Silt plunged back into the depths of sleep.