A Torn Mind Short Story

Rage the Wolf

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Quib the Bat lapped the blood off a creature that he murdered with his narrow, slivery tongue. His pointed beak was half the length of his arm. He poked the warm flesh and skinned off slices of the meat. The blood steamed like dry ice. The hot copper taste slid down Quib's throat in greedy gulps. His fur-covered stomach was round and full, protruding firmly.

The land was frigid cold. The Netherlands' forest had seen many harsh blizzards. Humans hadn't entered the region, for the cruel elements wouldn't allow. The forest lay white with snow, deceivingly like a peaceful-looking state. The trees had been battered by storms and were left standing as gnarled nightmares. The branches twisted and sharp, their shapes were unlike one another, each a horror.

Five moons prior, the rabies disease had entered the Netherlands, contaminating every animal species. The effects were short-lived and dangerous like no other disease. The number of animals was cut to an endangered count. The remaining were last survivors of their kind.

Rage the Wolf staggered through the winter nightmare in search of food. His sense of smell had dulled from the cold. He hadn't a memory of when he last ate. Each time he fell asleep, his head became foggier, his steps wobblier, and his sanity less prevalent. Rage the Wolf trudged through the snow with his saliva drooling – a beard of icicles which pulled his head down. Most irritating to him were his eyes freezing. The corners of his lids were turning to chunks of ice. The constant pain of his eyes infuriated him.

Veronica the Deer was a graceful, green-furred creature. Her family had moved their habitat to a grand cave for warmth, yet all froze to death except her. They covered her in their own hides, blanketing her with their skin. Veronica, a gentle creature, was mystified by the stars. She was happy beyond reason. She would watch the stars dance with sparkling eyes. Her family coat hung on her shoulders; she would turn her head to the side and speak to them, exquisitely explaining to them her adventures of the night and all the beauty of nature that her eyes had absorbed.

Quib the Bat flew high in the grey sky. Looking for travelers, meat, and blood, he had the sky's transportation to his vantage. The brown-tailed bats were well off; they had claimed the skies, killing off all the other flyers in haste -- such haste, that it wasn't to their benefit in terms of available fresh meat and blood to warm them. Yet the dominion of the sky was a just accomplishment.

Quib stuck out his tongue, catching the falling snow, loosening the dried blood in his mouth and throat, and cleansing his palette.

A sister of his was swinging round on a branch in circles.

"Well, well, well, how are we this fine, lovely day?" Quib asked.

“Oh goodness Quib, I haven’t seen you in half a moon. You must help me, little brother. My left wing has been punctured and I keep losing balance midflight. Please bring me some food, I’m famished,” she said.

She pointed to her belly; it was smaller than a regular brown-tails. Quib had the largest, round belly. He poked her stomach.

“Yes, yes, sister, we must fatten you up. Oh how you must be cold,” Quib said. Laughter escaped his mouth.

“Why do you laugh, brother? Always you taunted and laughed at the others. Are we not one and the same?” She asked.

“Apparently, we are not,” Quib nodded to her wing. “But I know a way to fix that. Why the old Leo had plenty of holes in his flapping wings.”

“Oh thank you, brother. What must I do?”

“I’ll set the preparations,” Quib said, “you keep your blood circulating by swinging round as you are. Then, we’ll fill your belly.”

“I can’t thank you enough, Quib.”

“Now, now, sister, don’t tear, your eyes will freeze.”

“Please hurry, Quib,” she said.

Quib flew off towards a hill over the pass. The land had become more and more hellish, the trees more gnarled. The ground was cracking and pulling the surrounding nature downwards into black abysses. He stopped his flight and landed on an open sheet of snow. He lay with his back on the earth and his head tilted up. Lazily sticking out his tongue, closing his eyes, he lay. Quib figured he’d wait for the clouds to pass through his vision, twice, before heading back to his sister.

Rage was burrowing through the snow. The last of his strength having passed, he traveled unconsciously, paw after paw. The pit in his stomach screamed pain through his whole. He had fallen to the snow; his tongue slowly lapped the snow by his face. A wolf should be

stronger, he thought. His family dead, Rage knew he mustn't let the others down. He rolled his head on the snow, trying to maintain some control over his weakened body. Cold and hungry, he laid with snow on his back and trees in his upside-down vision. They moved. The gnarled nightmares twisted in front of his eyes. They performed a sick dance with their claws, slicing through the air and beckoning for him. He was afraid. He knew his state and had heard of others having hallucinations. The clouds sank from the grey skies and skewered themselves in impalement on the trees. The bark of the trees imploded and scratched the clouds, breaking their bodily state and devouring them. Rage could not shut his eyes.

Quib swung his head around in circles. He was more glutton than he'd ever been, more so than any other brown-tail he knew. He developed an aching for blood – warm, salty blood flowing on the sides of his faces, borrowing his body inside their corpses. Quib's eyes flicked on sharp and his grin enveloped his face. He stood up and flapped his wings, heading back to his sister.

He took a current in the air, allowing him to focus his mind on the blood, rather than the flight. The wind was strong – a blizzard would hit soon. He glided down to his sister who was swinging on the tree branch.

"Oh, Quib, I…" She said.

Quib darted his aim straight towards her. His speed unwavering, he rushed her, just in coordination of when she was on top of the branch. Their bodies flew through the air, tumbling, the snow cushioning their fall. His sister's face turned to horror as Quib sank his beak into her neck. She shrieked. He shook his pointed beak and lifted his head back and swung again, drilling her neck open and ripping side to side. The blood he so desired splattered forth.

His beak slivered out and slowly he thrust his tongue into her neck, immersing it into the blood. He dug and dug into her, forcing his body into hers. He lay atop her with her stomach and neck flapped open, covering him in her remains. He squirmed in the blood, enjoying his bath. He twisted his head and snaked back and forth, dropping his tongue and gulping the blood hard. He laid his face next to hers, untouched, he had avoided her face with his beak. His grin ever present, he licked her face, up and down.

"Poor Sis'. All will be fine. Yes, yes."

He approved with a nod. Dragging her by her feet, her entrails spilled out on the way. He dragged her far off towards the ocean. It was covered in ice; he had walked far out by the edge of water and left her body. Taking flight to the grey skies, he flew at the level of having the puffy, long clouds on his back. The tingling, cooling sensation, cleansed him. Lapping up snow as he had before, he wiggled the blood off his body. His round, firm stomach was sticking out farther. A knot in his stomach hit him fast and forced the blood up his throat the. Spraying blood into the cloud-filled night, he had gorged too much for his small body.

He continued his flight, maneuvering through the thickening winds, his stomach deflating slightly. Blood on his mind, he searched for more meat.

Rage lay in his beaten state, still slightly conscious. His smell already driven from his senses, his ears were freezing, yet still he could hear. Flapping wings were above his head, coming closer, he knew it to be a bat.

“Welly, welly, welly, well. How are you, Mister Wolf? You look quite hungry, yes, yes, you do.”

Rage could see the hooked feet of Quib. Quib’s head bent down in an agile move, his neck turning, twisting, and out came the bat’s tongue. Quib lapped at Rage’s iced-over eyes, drinking up the shards which so irritated Rage. He began to blink and was comforted at last, yet still ravenous for food. He growled.

“Hungry, yes?” Quib asked.

Rage breathed heavily, he attempted to speak, but couldn’t. His words were drawn out growls and roars, choking on spit.

“Now, now, get up, Wolf. You’ll die by just laying there. I have something for you, yes I do. There’s food I’ve spotted not far from here. Food for you, my friend. I’ve became so lonely these past moons. All I ask is for your companionship.”

Rage roared, sliding his teeth side to side.

“Not me, friend. Come now, follow your pally, Quib the Bat. I’ll bring you to the meat.” Quib said. He savored the word meat and let his eyes shine for a moment to indulge in the thought.

Rage hesitantly nodded, agreeing to the bat.

“Up, up.” Quib said, pushing at Rage’s backside. Leaning his weight and lifting him. Rage inhaled and sucked in the air, his thin chest inflating like the size of a beast. The notion of fresh meat so close gave him more wind in his lungs. Rage stood on all-fours. Quib smiled broad and hopped onto Rage’s back. He clang his talon feet into Rage’s fur and crossed his arms on his chest, enfolding himself in his wings. Quib bent his neck over, in front of Rage’s hungry eyes and smiled with his devious grin.

“Bop, bop bop, yes, yes, yes. March on, Wolf, this way.” Quib pointed with his winged arm in the north direction.

Veronica lay asleep in her cave, her family coat covering her in warmness and nostalgia. She dreamed deep dreams, envisioning the nature she loved, prancing around with her family in warm, forgiving weather.

Quib and Rage traveled on. Clouds passed above, the gnarled nightmares stood as their obstacles. The wind began howling louder, giving the snow a quickened speed. Quib kept padding Rage, ensuring him of the fresh meat ahead. He sang nonsense songs.