

# Origin

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*A wolf sets pawprint into my soul, but also exist within my imagination, my reality. Her name is Fire Blaze.*

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# 1 - Pawprints of Living

A slight whisper of wind had lifted up the my fur of umber-red and told me that it's direction shifted and now I stood against it, it power coming from the canyon that stood before me. With my ears pinned back and my head down, I walked back to the den.

I heard my little pup crying to me, wandering out from the mouth of the cave. I couldn't retain my smile and I scooped him up in my mouth and entered the den, laying down on my side as far back as I could, allowing him to feed.

I could feel his little nose pushing into my flesh and the tiny notch above his muzzle into my skin.

I lifted my head to see him struggling to receive his milk and smiled once more. My Son. My Arcane. How much he looked like his father. I could see the pattern of a tiny mane forming into his fur; just like his father. And the little notch, soon to be a horn on his upper muzzle, just like his father. I only wish I could see what color his eyes would be. Perhaps they would be like the color of his father's as well. Only thing different, Arcane is albino; not by means of white fur.

I pinned my ears back once more in thought of my mate. How I missed him so dearly. I missed the warmth of his fur against my body and the comfort of his licks upon my forehead. I loved the way he used to groom my fur and his compassion! Yet, he was strong and very protective of all that belonged to him.

I remember watching him at night standing just outside the cave, scouting the area with his sensitive nose, the light of a full moon falling upon his form, revealing and reminding me who he really was and my heart turned against him. How could he do this to me? How? Shatori, my mate, would just disappear and return the next morning. I would wake up and he would be laying there next to me. The 1st time this has happened, I had thought his disappearance was merely a dream. But on the revealing of the next rise of the full moon, had proved me wrong and I could never find a trace of him as if he never existed. After our 1st mating season, he bore me a son, His son. I remember watching him cuddle and bathe him with his tongue. But the next night had landed on a full moon. And he disappeared like he always had. By now, I got use to it and fell into a deep sleep, my body wrapped around my little Arcane and waited eagerly for the morning.

The first sign of light had me fluttering my eyes open, I stretched and quietly yawned, looking over my side. He wasn't there. I got up and looked around the den, sniffing the air, not a trace of him could be detected either. Panicked, I quickly left the den in search for him and I allowed a single howl to carry the message `I'm looking for you' but got no response. I waited for him for six night falls, hoping for his return but my time and hope had been wasted in vain. By now, I have decided it was time to move on. In depression, I picked up Arcane and carried him out of the den. After a few steps out, I dared to look back; perhaps I would find him waiting by the outside of the den. But my head sank and slowly, carried

off into the woods.

Tired and weak, I had to find some place to rest. I soon came upon what looked like a tiny abandoned cave dripping wet from who knows what. But at least the inside was dry. I entered layed down on the driest part of the cave and allowed my little one to feed once again. Tired from my travels, I fell into a deep sleep.

I was awoken that night by the most unusual sound and I got up to explore. I didn't want to wander too far; I had to stay close to Arcane. But the sound had made me curious and I went out just a little more. In the distance, I could smell the cloud which arose from fire and shadows danced upon an orange boulder. Chanting filled the brisk nightly air and the rhythm of drums beat against my chest and immediately, I fell in love. It reminded me of home! And so I decided. This is where we stay; At lease for a little while. And I walked back to the cave.

As time would have it, we stayed until Arcane grew into a young adult. His thick fur, tracing colors of both of his parents, flowed with his graceful steps that carried his form sleek and smooth. His eyes were a beautiful smoky gray and the unusual visible horn on his muzzle had made him uniquely attractive. I saw so much of his father in him, even in his personality. He was quiet for the most part, which allowed him to the time observe his surroundings and get a chance to feel the world around him before he would make any move. My son would protect me as I did him and we both found joy hunting together. And what a beautiful hunter he was! I was so proud to be his mother.

One afternoon, we left our home for a quick hunt. But it would be one I will never be able to forget. It was the night my son was taken from me. Our hunting went on as usual; we had the most perfect catch right in front of us, But we were not the only ones who had our eyes on this meal.

As we signaled to each other with our eyes when we should attack, a loud crack of thunder and us both stalling and our prey fell over, lifeless in the grass it feasted on. I saw Arcane shoot a quick glance over to me and back over towards the deer as a group of hunters approached it. Arcane was in rage. That was our meal! But before could stop him, he leaped out of his cover and attacked one of the men and stood, guarding the body with his hackles raised. I quickly leaped out to his rescue, and that's when I heard it; another crack of thunder. I stopped dead in my tracks and glanced up in horror as Arcane's body collapsed on top of the deer, the leaking of his blood covering it's golden pelt. I cried out and thought about attacking. But I knew how that would turn out. There were just too many of them! I hid back in the bushes and watched the men drag both of the bodies out into the forest and staying low and out of sight, I followed them, still in shock what had happened.

I followed the men to an old shack and they threw Arcane's body upon a woodpile, carrying the deer in another direction. I was ready to run out to him, but two of the men came back, retrieving the body and sticking a sharp object into his flesh. I couldn't stand it! Not my son! My eyes welled up and my heart pounded. I was thinking about running off but decided to stay just to see what their plans for him were. With two hours of torturous horror, I watch them run a sheer blade over him separating him into two major pieces! Terror swept over me. Then when they were done, they took him through a back door, and

the men left once again.

As soon as I knew it was safe, I crept forward, not knowing what to expect. My eyes were fixed on that blackened door and shock waved over me. Slowly I stepped inside and stared up at one wall, my eyes drawn to the beautiful pelt that once layed upon my son, now covering simple wooden planks.

I heard another crack of thunder and in sudden terror; I bolted for the door, only to find a man shooting at me! In anger, I leaped up upon him, my claws tearing at his face and I snapped at his neck. Leaving him barely living, and a chance to live the rest of his life and his wounds in remembrance of what he'd done to Arcane. Not once did I look back and I quickly ran back to the forest, my paws racing over the darkened forest bed and slowed to a stop at a rocky cliff, hearing distant drumming in the background. And silently in darkness, I cried.

I never did return to the cave. It was too painful just to even think about it. But I continued to live my life, searching for a reason and traveled away from the human clan; that was too painful of a memory, anyway.

I found myself afraid at night. Unable to hunt big game for meals, I became hunted in my sleep. Sharp fangs buried themselves deep in my flesh, crippling my body. But I still had no reason to fight back. No will left. I lost everything, so the dark haunted me and taunted my night's rest. It kept jeering me to give myself to it, but for a last strain of hope, ironically heard at night, kept me from that commitment. I woke up that morning after the first attack, finding puncture wounds in my side and blood leaking from between the pads of my paws. I rested that entire day and over time, I had to learn to prone myself against the pain and to heal quickly from my nightly wounds, still unknown by their cause. A dream is a dream, so what was attacking me at night?

For days, I traveled over the earth, even as the first snow revealed itself for the final seasonal cloaking, following that beautiful sound that could be heard for miles through the canyon. But just when I had thought I had gotten close, whoever was there had also continued on their journey. Saddened, I had decided to head the other direction in rebellion and not once after that night, had I heard that harmonic cry that echoes deep in my own species. I wanted a pack.

I spent the night under rotting brush. Though spoiled, at least it was dry and warm. For the first time in many moon passing, had I felt comfort in my temporary home. I curled up safely and fell asleep; only then to be attacked by 'the eyes' once again. No. I'm fighting to live! Its profound-red eyes and glistening teeth had put a face on the dark that tried to claim me, but I would not give in.

A howl broke me of the curse from that night and I immediately stepped out of my den in search of the maker of that harmonic cry. I quickly dashed towards the haunted cry with the nightly air tearing in and out from my lungs but I soon lost its direction, so I stopped in an opening that was cleared of towering firs and listened intensively. Then I noticed something after standing still for a few moments. I lifted my head towards the full moon of the sky, keeping my eyes half close so not to get the white rain in my eyes. It was snowing, nothing new. But I could not feel. Strange. I watched as the burning of my exhales

blew cloudy impression into the sky. I have learned that breath could only be seen on exceedingly cold nights, but the cold didn't exist for me. I couldn't feel it. Not the cold, not the slight tingles are only felt as snow melts at the tip of the muzzle. Why? Was I dreaming again? But in the far back of my mind, I was fully aware not a dream was present.

Puzzled, I decided to take step forward to continue on my way but a slight stumble had caused me to glance down. Then that's when I noticed my paws were dimly blue and opaque. I quickly ran over the earthly grounds until I came to the edge of a shallow lake and stared at my reflection; and just stared for quite sometime. Who have I become? I have seen this in my mate; and now I have it.

I pulled away from the beach and slowly walked back to the comfort of my den, the only comfort in my world. I knew by morning, I'd be back to normal. But as of right now, I was a spirit; barely even visible in darkness. I watched my paws change its invisibility as I crossed small patches of moon-pools trying to pour onto the forest floor. I knew what I'd look like, because of how my mate had looked like on this type of night. Tawny fur had faded to a translucent slate, lambent by only the ghostly moonlight and fur-patched wings laid lightly upon the ethereal reflections my coat had emitted. So this is who I am. Who I was. Just like him. So will my fate one day set me to be extinct from this world, Just like `he' had disappeared?

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