

Twin Fires

The time had finally come for you to end this once and for all. The reach of the Dark Overlord had spread far and wide. While they'd never been seen in person, their presence was felt everywhere. Monsters and Dragons raiding villages and causing chaos, strange curses befalling random people, corrupting them towards evil, or causing them to join their ever increasing collection of 'pets'. But that would change right at this moment. You'd finally managed to track them down, finding their lair. Regardless of what you found, or what lied within, you had no doubt you'd find them here. No doubt at all. You'd then defeat them, and the land would finally find peace, and you would be praised as the hero of the land!

Confident, you finally arrive at where their lair should be. Carved into the side of a mountain far above the clouds, the twin steel doors stood tall in your path. The journey had been precarious, having to fight against nature itself as you trekked your way to get here, battling the numbing frost, blinding snow, and the surprise blizzards that threatened to rip you off the side of the mountain to a frosty grave. Even with your enchanted gear it had still been a difficult ascension. No wonder getting this information had been so hard. You'd have to either be brave, or a fool. You hoped you were the prior. You'd step up to the two monoliths of metal, frozen over in a thin layer of ice from the subzero conditions. You took out your skeleton key, slipping it into the lock, and turning it slowly...

'Click'

You'd push down on one of the doors as it slowly creaked open, ice and snow crumbling off its surface as you staggered inside to get out of the storm, feeling warmth slowly seep into your body. Dim light flickers around you from torches set in the wall, but you could tell the real source of the warmth was emanating from further down the corridor. Drawing your sword, you prepared yourself for what lied ahead. There was only one way forward now...

Deeper and deeper you went through the lair, dodging traps and easily dispatching any monsters or guards you came across, silencing them before they could raise the alarm about your intrusion. This was easy... almost too easy. Had they not expected someone to make it this far? It was hard to say. Eventually, you would come across the source of the heat: A large conical room with boiling magma bubbling away within a large moat, painting the area in an atmospheric orange hue. A long stone bridge stretched across it, leading to the other side where stood the final bastion of your foe, another set of massive oversized metallic doors, guarded by a pair of large Draconic statu... no, there was only one statue, positioned on the right. Lava would pool from its obsidian jaws as it stared lifelessly across to the other side of the room.

You'd eye the statue cautiously, never turning your back on it as you slowly advanced towards the doorway, making your way across the bridge. If experience served, it could come to life any second now and you'd be forced to face it. As you cross its line of sight you'd tense up, ready for a trap, for it to shoot fire or lava at you... but nothing. No fight. It stays in place, lifelessly, unmoving, it's eyes staring across towards you... wait... wasn't it...? But it was too late, you'd already fallen for the trap. It's eyes would glow orange, flickering and shimmering like the magma spewing from it's mouth, it was mesmerising... you couldn't look away now. Those fiery orbs drawing you in further and further...

You'd barely notice as you dropped your sword, the clattering of the blade against the stone floor echoing faintly in your mind, as you were dimly aware of your body moving on it's own, backing up onto the empty pedestal while keeping eye contact with the dragon across you. Fire and molten rock roared around you, the heat almost too much to bear but... *it was so nice... so relaxing...* you couldn't draw your gaze away from those alluring eyes staring back into your own.

And stare into them you did, unaware as your clothing finally gave into the heat and ignited, starting to burn, beginning with your shoes, which would quickly melt and turn to charred ash in the face of such powerful heat. But even if they hadn't they wouldn't have lasted long, as from within the pile of ash your feet began to change, ebony scales flowing across them as they cracked and creaked, toes fusing together and expanding into powerful talons, clacking against the stone satisfyingly as the scales continued to climb up your legs, even as they started to expand and grow in size, straining your flame-ridden pants. Your spine cricked as it started to expand as well, the beginnings of a tail began to push out from your backside, decorated with small spines as it slowly grew longer and longer, swishing back and forth.

At last, a particularly large burst of magma would erupt from the pool right next to you, the shower of molten rock being enough to finally snap you out of the trance, but it was too late. Attempting to escape from the pedestal was useless, and glancing down the reason was obvious. What you had first thought to merely be darkened scales was in fact obsidian! Your clawed feet had already succumbed, now nothing more than ornate rock, fused with the stone platform below! And that black crystal was spreading upwards quickly, already you felt your legs starting to tremble as the changes consumed them. You had to hurry! Where was your sword... perhaps you could pry yourself loose from this cursed slab. You'd barely even notice the fact that the shower of magma had left not a single mark upon your body, even as the still molten liquid dripped off your skin, leaving nothing but a pleasant warmth in it's wake.

Even with the trance broken, the changes had not slowed down in the slightest. You spied your sword lying discarded on the stone bridge between you and *your twin...* The statue! Not your twin! What was going on with your head... you could feel the statue calling out to you, calling out to it's sibling, *it's other half*. It felt enticing, welcoming, but you managed to block it out as you reached out for your sword.

At that moment your legs finally gave out under the weight, cracking forward into a digitigrade position, even as your hips shifted, widening as you fell to all fours, catching yourself on your hands. With all this extra heat and pressure your pants quickly joined the ash pile beneath you to reveal nothing but a smooth scaly underbelly, large draconic legs attached either side of a equally large reptilian torso. A torso that only continued to lengthen and expand as your spine stretched further and further out, giving it a long, serpentine look as spines spread all the way up your back. You only realised how strange it truly was as you reached out to grab your blade, feeling your body just keep moving forward, stretching out to it's full length, far beyond what a human body should do, and more concerningly.... It felt... *good*, right even.

You were so distracted by these new sensations the warm tingly feeling of scales spreading up your hand was overlooked, having accidentally contracted it from your fall onto the podium. Even as your fingers fused and swelled to inhuman proportions, your nails overtaking the tips and sharpening into dangerous points, you didn't even glance over, focus entirely on the sword that you were slowly inching towards. Meanwhile, your legs had fully completed their transition into their new form, a perfect pair of hindlegs for a dragon such as yourself, something the obsidian was more than happy to solidify in place, greedily swallowing them up, before making its way down your tail and up your spine, as it slowly twisted and curled into a mirror image of that of the dragon before you. Again, you'd feel a sense of... belonging. *You belonged here, with your twin, majestic guardians of magma and rock...* You'd mentally protest against the voice. You weren't their twin! No... You were... a human! But it was hard to fight back, the soothing call of the statue did not cease, wrapping around your panicked mind like a warm blanket, the warmth becoming a bit more literal as a pair of mighty gleaming horns would jut out of your head, shimmering in the fiery glow.

Your sword was within reach, barely within your grasp... and then... nothing. You couldn't move, the obsidian finally having finished it's journey up your long torso, freezing you in place. You could do nothing but watch as your shoulders were pulled back, sinking into your sides and you struggled to reach, straining your arm even as you watched the scales overtake it before your very eyes, seeing it swell up as the heat permeated all the way down to the tips of your rapidly expanding talons, even as you felt your thumb wrench around to properly match the other claws, and that of the dragon opposing you. By the time you managed to snag a hold of it, you realised you could barely even grasp it between two of your claws, the once mighty blade seeming like a toothpick in comparison to the massive appendages, even as you lifted it up in front of you.

It was at this point you'd finally realise the strange disproportionate nature of your body, seeing it in the glassy reflection of your scales. Such a tiny head mounted on a massive fearsome draconic body. It felt *wrong*. You knew you weren't supposed to look like this. You were supposed to be... *'a mighty dragon'* the soothing voice whispered. Your mind felt hazy, as you realised too late the pale shimmering glow just out of focus, behind your outstretched arm. You'd been staring right at them this whole time, and it was hard not to look back into their beautiful glowing eyes... *'But do not worry, that will soon be fixed. We'll be together again, as twin guardians, watching over each other, over everything. Can you not feel the flame within you, begging to be let out?'*

As your *Sibling* spoke, their words finally clear to you, you felt warm. Not the warmth cloaking your body, but... inside. You felt your *statue* body start to heat up, starting with your feet. But more importantly, you feel the warm embrace of your scales finally reach your head. It felt... gratifying, a sense of pride filling you as your head began to enlarge and stretch, nose elongating forward and dragging your mouth along with it as it lengthened into a powerful snout. The magma around you would flare up, giving you another light coating of warm molten rock, your hair catching alight and burning away as far more *suitable* spines would replace them, spreading all the way down to the tip of your snout. Your horns would lengthen further, branching out into short blunt points, *just like your twin's!* You barely even noticed you'd lowered your arm, staring deeper into their amber eyes, the swirling flames within drawing you in just as you were sure yours were doing the same back. *Your twin. Your friend. Guarding this castle with you since you were both sculpted. They had never left your gaze, nor you theirs... Right? No... No you were here to... To guard... guard one another...*

You'd feel a building pressure within you, something forming inside as you felt a strange warmth slowly creep through your body, starting from your foot, going all the way up to your chest, and continuing to climb up towards your long *majestic* neck, chasing after the rapidly spreading obsidian. As you continued to gaze into those shimmering orb, you'd feel your body start to move, and adjust, *your beloved sibling* helping you *get into position*. Your upper torso would retract back, winding up and around the podium on which you were placed, and just as their claw was stretched out to grab something, yours was too, *fearsome and intimidating, burning hot* and completely immobile, *but why would you need to move currently?* The black rock spread up over your shoulders and began to engulf your head, taking over your neck and skull, fangs being replaced by gleaming crystal as you felt your jaw open up into a *powerful* roar. You were *perfect, a flawless mirror of your twin*. You could feel your *sibling's* joy and happiness at your return, a sense of pride welling up within you... but that was not the only thing you felt welling up from your body. you could sense it, the heat, the power, growing... boiling... the pressure within reaching a critical level! You felt a need, a desire. To let it all out, just like your *twin* was! *What fearsome beasts you were!*

Amongst the haze what remained of your human mind was sent spiralling. Twin Dragons. *Such majestic creatures... we... were?* No... you *were*... you came here for... their gaze was too strong, the *twin* fires drawing in every drop of your attention, even as you felt your body stiffen into burning hot crystal, *striking a intimidating and majestic pose suitable for a creature such as yourself...* as it... no, you weren't a statue, right? But... that feeling of something welling up within you, it was *real*, that invisible connection you shared with your *twin*, *your bond*, that was real too. even as the obsidian finished converting the last of your body, your head. It... you need to... you needed to what? Why couldn't you remember, remember your *purpose*?!

The Pressure finally gave way as the heat breached through into what was once the interior of your throat, swiftly climbing up your neck as it reached the opening at the back of your mouth. Within a instant, fiery hot magma burst out from your jaw, burning what few signs of humanity had remained as the liquid fire dripped from your muzzle down into the moat below, even as you watched the obsidian finish claiming your body, the tip of your snout turning hard and black as you felt the magma, the heat, flow through your body, your tubing, a rudimentary circulatory system of molten earth. Now you were truly *mirror images of each other*, a fact that made you feel nothing but joy.

Their gaze grew, drawing the last of your resisting mind in, as that calm soothing voice called out to you once more. *You had a purpose! It was to stand guard here! To be mighty and imposing, an incredible backdrop to the mighty duel that would eventually occur between hero and villain! You were here to keep watch! To watch over the gate, your twin too, and they in turn watched over you. It was what you had always been here for. The reason for your existence. It had to be! You had always been a statue after all!*

Memories began to blur away, sinking into the flowing lava that made up your twin's eyes, melting away in the soothing warmth. Memories of... *Of what? You had always been a statue after all. There were never any other memories! You were just being silly. You had always been here alongside your sibling... a mighty sculpture of a dragon... designed solely to act as a guardian... a display piece... and a companion to your equally majestic twin... right? For what did you need anything else? A statue had no need for memories... no need for weaponry or silly tools, no need to move about. All they needed to do was stay still obediently and look intimidating... you couldn't help but feel your gaze turn inwards, feeling that sensation of the magma flowing through you and out your jaw, not noticing as the changes finally consumed the last of your humanity, your eyes, as they glazed over into the same fiery amber that your twin had. Your will faded away, melting into the magma, as your consciousness fused with that of your sibling. Now you'd never be alone ever again, forever kept company by your other half, and for that, you were happy.*

The knight made his way deeper into the lair, finding himself mere moments away from finally getting his revenge on the Dark Overlord. He just had to overcome this last trial. The magma would bubble and spew up from within the large moat separating him from his goal, nothing but a long ornate stone bridge spanning the length of the pool, each column stylised with a uniquely sculpted kobold statue, each in a different pose, dressed in different outfits, and carrying different weapons. Across the Bridge were the large metallic doors that held the Overlord behind them, massive twin dragon statues standing guard in front of it. Lava poured from their mouths down into the pool below, and each was posed as though they were about to reach out to snatch the intruder as he crossed. The two stared into each other's eyes, their gaze trapped permanently in an endless staring contest.

It wasn't until the knight was halfway across that he felt something was wrong, why was it so hot? Even with the temperature resistance charms engraved into his armor, he felt a pervasive warmth flooding his body. And why did he feel like he was being watched...? Gazing up at the statues, he'd breathe a sigh of relief as he noticed they had not moved. And yet... the feeling never faded. Those amber eyes... how did he know for sure they weren't staring right at him? Their gaze... he'd feel numb, frozen in place as he stared deeply into those twin orbs, watching the fire and magma swirling within...

The knight would barely notice his body shrinking, his armor and weaponry doing the same, as they all turned a dull grey, his face pulling out into a stubby reptilian muzzle, a cute little tail poking out from behind. Hands being sculpted into paws, as the other dragon statue would bend down to gently pick up the new kobold sculpture, placing them down on a new column, and posing them, their tiny sword raised high as though they were challenging an invisible foe. As their clawed feet touched the stone, they'd fuse to it, becoming one steady, uniform mass, as the dragons nodded in sync happily at their craftsmanship. They'd had a lot more intruders as information on the location of their master's lair became more widespread, but that just meant more friends to join them! Secretly they hoped that one of them would be the one, the hero to survive until the end, to finally bring that duel to life, the final clash between good and evil, a battle the two statues would watch to the very end. After all, that was their purpose.