

## Restoring the balance

Orion knew it wasn't all right with the world that morning. There was too much on one side, and not enough on the other. Not all things were in accordance with nature. The things that ought to be whole have splintered, and what ought to be full were empty and left wanting.

The phoenix was hungry, and he felt every groan coming out of his stomach. A good creature like him should never be hungry, but after a light dinner of a family of rabbits last night he had to go for a proper meal. He stepped out of his cave, spread his bright red wings wide, and flew over his domain.

Many creatures wanted to live in Orion's glorious domain. There were squirrels and birds in the trees, rabbits and foxes under ground, and bears and wolves in the caves. Orion didn't care about them, not today. He needed to go for the big beasts that ruled the skies. They tried their hardest to hide when Orion was out hunting, but he can easily see them. There were dragons lying low in their mountains, griffons all stayed close to their nests, and a pegasus was trying his best to hide his wings while grazing in the field.

Orion was spoiled for choice, and if he wasn't absolutely starving he could have flown high above, considering all the terrified food below him. But he had to choose, and finally he settled on a small nest belonging to a very unfortunate family of griffons. The head of the family already stepped outside, his head bowed as if resigned to his fate.

"What may I do for you my lord?", the griffon seemed so tiny compared to Orion, and he tried to look even smaller when he heard the firebird's stomach growl: "You can eat me if you'd like, just leave my family alone".

"Yeah sure, Sabre", Orion opened his beak wide, and through the griffon into it. The griffon was too confused to fly away, and when Orion made his first swallow it was too late. He could only let out a confused "H-how did you guess?!" before he started to scream as he got pulled into the inferno that was a phoenix's stomach.

"*grllk sluoorp*" Orion turned towards the rest of Sabre's terrified family, who were all looking at him fearfully, tears streaming down their face. His stomach only rumbled loudly at the sight.

"You said...you were only going to eat him...", the mother said as Orion

approached them.

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“Aaah, *buooaooorp*”, Orion lay back in the now empty nest, having to wrap his wings around his bulging squirming stomach so that he could comfortably fit inside. He closed his eyes and listened to the tortured screams of the family he ate. He loved every squirm, every struggle, the pleads he could hear and the ones that got drowned out by the gurgles of his stomach. He lived for thousands of years, he experienced many things in that time, and none of them could compare to the pleasure he got from digesting other, lesser creatures.

“*uooorp*, that’s what you get for being griffons, a bunch of raiding village-destroying chickens”, his insults got him just what he wanted, more struggling and crying. He closed his eyes in pure bliss, occasionally letting out a content murr. The griffons being cooked alive inside of his gizzard no longer interested him.

As time past, he saw that the clouds in the sky parted and the sun could shine right over his gurgling gut. The day turned out to be much better than its morning, in no small part thanks to what he did. There must have been to much griffon for nature’s liking.

“A phoenix is full, all is right with the world”, Orion mused, slowly turning over and getting ready to fly back to his bigger, more comfortable nest.