

Tyrmiss crouched on the side of a high hill, listening. She could hear the goblins on night patrol coming toward her, their thoughts jangling in their small skulls. Nonsense about their narrow lives in the barracks of Dragonja City. Poor little dears, their sergeants were mean to them. As their thoughts grew louder, Tyrmiss lifted a black wing to cover her body from view. She knew the purple scales on her throat and chest caught the moonlight, and she didn't want to give away her position.

When the goblin soldiers were close enough, Tyrmiss took a few steps, spread her wings and leaped into the air. She looked down and saw the soldiers marching, making enough noise so even the bandits they were chasing could hear them a league away.

Tyrmiss was trying something new tonight. She usually flew on moonless nights, coming down on her human or goblin prey without warning, silent as Death itself. But tonight, she would swoop down with the moon behind her, and in that moment when the soldiers could see her coming, she would hear their last thoughts. Tyrmiss wanted to take those precious thoughts from them, make them mourn their own lives. This was her revenge for a goblin having taken everything from her.

In her ten thousand years on earth, she had never killed for revenge until now -- this summer of death she was creating, like an artist painting a mural. In fact, she had never known of any dragon who killed out of revenge, not that there were any dragons left, other than her, now that Rilla was gone. How many times had Tyrmiss told her wife not to sleep outside? It's too dangerous, Tyrmiss had said. Someone will see you. But Rilla often grew tired of staying in the

dank cave all day, and she would go outside to sleep in the pleasant meadow and listen to the birds and the singing stream.

Men, goblins, witches, mages, wizards – to Tyrmiss, they were all the same. They tried to control everything, and what they couldn't control, they destroyed. Why would a soldier murder sweet Rilla, a spear through her generous heart?

Tyrmiss turned in the air, and with the moon behind her swooped down upon the goblin soldiers. Their screams were like music to her.