

## A Rabbit's tale

The journey was long and arduous. I brushed past the Black Rabbit of Inle hrait times. I left everything I had ever known behind. Although I speak truthfully, this tale might be so wild that you think me insane.

It began with a cry of terror and a vision of doom. Fiver, a scrawny fellow outskirter, foresaw the end of our lives as we knew it. The warren, our home, would be engulfed in a sea of blood. Thus, he and his brother Hazel desperately attempted to persuade any and every rabbit to leave. As they would recount later, they first visited the Threarah, the chief rabbit of our warren. The old fool was cynical and turned them away. Hence, the two resolved to persuade other outskirters, including yours truly. After fu inle, a motley crew of bucks assembled at the edge of the warren along with a surprise guest: Bigwig and Silver, two bulking members of the Owsla. What luck! They were dissatisfied with their lives and wanted to come with us. Bigwig immediately proved his worth when he made quick work of Captain Holly, who attempted to arrest us for baseless accusations. Knowing the farewell was upon us, I glanced back one more time at the place I considered home. The primroses were wilting, and the quiet of the night cradled the warren. To leave my birthplace and follow strangers into the unknown... was it courage or stupidity? Nonetheless, with Bigwig for protection and Fiver as our guide, we ran into the night. It was only later that we learned that the old warren had been exterminated while the last vestiges of our homeland were buried 6 feet under. From that moment on, I never doubted Fiver again.

After a few misadventures, we settled down on a nicely situated down with Strawberry, a buck who wanted to leave his dangerous life at another warren, joining us. We began to make do and dig a magnificent burrow. We made new friends, Kehaar the seagull and a lone

mouse. Lunacy, isn't it? Rabbits making friends with a bird and a mouse? Even so, they would soon become the reason why I live to tell this tale. We reunited with Holly-- the very same one that tried to apprehend us-- and Bluebell, the last two survivors of our old home. These were some of my happiest memories. Alas, this life could not continue, for we had no does. With Kehaar as our eyes, we searched for a warren with does before sending an embassy to visit. We could do nothing while we impatiently waited for the embassy to return. They returned under the cover of night some time later with a grim expression etched into their faces and fresh injuries. The warren, Efrafa was its name, was not friendly to outsiders. To avoid human detection, they suppressed their own citizens. None knew more that what was good for them. My eyes widened as I heard what had happened. However, we were desperate, and we had no choice. We set off for Efrafa with a plan that could make even El-ahraiah proud. After narrowly escaping a homba, we made camp near a river while Bigwig underwent his dangerous mission-- infiltrating Efrafa. Meanwhile, we prepared our end of the plan, finishing it by discovering something that could float on water. Now I sound like I'm lying, don't I? The days passed with only scarce messages from Bigwig sent by Kehaar and the growing scent of rain. From what we would later know, Bigwig had managed to become an officer of the warren and used that to his advantage. He made allies with Hyzenthlay, a local doe, who helped him organize the entire affair. He sent a message that he would escape, but it never happened. Worry started to form in our minds. Did something happen to Bigwig? Even so, we waited. Then, on one gloomy night, it happened. A stampede of does ran from Efrafa with Bigwig at the forefront. The rain poured down heavily, drenching everything. Thunder cracked. Hulking rabbits pursued us, surely being Efracan officers. We herded the does toward the strange floating object as Kehaar and Bigwig fought them off. As soon as everyone boarded, we left and floated downstream, escaping the Efracans by a hair. It wouldn't be the last of them though.

We lost two does on the trek back, but eventually we returned. Frith's light was harsh, almost burning. The leaves were still. Something stuck to the back of my mind. Suddenly, the mouse we had befriended came and informed us of a convoy of rabbits at the foot of the downs-- the Efracans. Diplomatic relations fell through as they came, seeking retribution. Their eyes glinted with malice and vengeance. There was no stopping them. We hastily blocked the entrances and evacuated the does deep into the burrow. I was stationed to protect them, so I did not see much of the fighting. However, not seeing might've been scarier than fighting. An unnatural cry echoed through the warren, followed by Hazel's sudden departure. The Efracan's frantic digging mirrored my heartbeat. The walls seemed to close in. Every hair on my body stood on edge as the terrible rip of flesh came to my ears. Bigwig was fighting. Then, a voice rang true through the warren. "I'm sorry for your death." It was Fiver. Then, as if right on cue, the earth trembled as the previous chilling cry came closer and closer. This was no rabbit. It was a dog. Cries of terror from the invaders rang out as they ran from their doom. Their leader was never seen again after that. The dog left on its accord soon after it was satisfied. The siege was over, but Hazel was nowhere to be seen. The word was that Hazel had been left at the mercy of a cat after luring the dog to the warren, explaining his departure. There was no sign of Hazel. The air was heavy with grief as we mourned the loss of our chief rabbit. Then, praise great Frith above, Hazel returned! On top of a hrududu no less! Truly a miracle from Frith himself. With everyone accounted for, life became busy and cheerful. All was well.

After everything that happened, I felt glad that I left the warren that night. Though we were nearly killed hrait times and frequently ventured into the unknown, we can finally settle down in a place we call home. I have learnt the importance of my companions; without them, we would surely be in the stomach of an elil, especially Hazel. His decision to leave the warren was exceptional. If only the Threarah had listened. Other than that, although the mission was

dangerous, our infiltration of Efrafa was necessary for our survival. However, I must question his decision to nearly sacrifice himself to save everyone. If all rabbits were like him, we would surely be dead by now. Now, as the seasons are changing, kits are running around, and autumn leaves fall without reason, life has become peaceful once more. Good for me! I've had enough trouble for a lifetime anyway.