Centuries after Creation, Swishing Gust is a corrupted Earth Elemental living under Creaking Rumble’s spell of dreams. By chance, he wanders outside the village walls and trips on a root. After tumbling down a hill, he awakes from Creaking Rumble’s spell, having moved out of range. He feels it pulling on him still, but his mind is his own. After wandering for a while, he grows hungry. His energy being sapped by his plant corruption, he gets the scent of a very powerful object. In a cave near a stream he finds the stone Relnor gifted Creaking Rumble. Not thinking clearly, Swishing Gust eats the stone.

Swishing Gust returns to the village after more wandering, and finds himself more in control of himself. The other corrupted Elementals continue to dream, though. He walks to the large central building with a tree sticking out of it, and finds Creaking Rumble, greatly weakened. Creaking Rumble accuses him of stealing the stone, and demanding he give it back. Swishing Gust isn’t sure what’s going on. Creaking Rumble attempts to strengthen his song, focusing it on Swishing Gust. Swishing Gust falls to the floor and grips his head as he resists the pull. Unknowingly, Swishing Gust creates his own song to resist, chanting “no'' over and over. Soon, Creaking Rumble’s power wanes without the stone. His song quiets down, then stops. The rustle of the leaves from the tree trapping Creaking Rumble fills the room as Swishing Gust looks up. The imprisoned Elemental sits inert.

Swishing Gust walks out of the hut to see almost two dozen corrupted Elementals standing in a crowd around him. Fully aware without Creaking Rumble keeping up the spell, they cheer and celebrate. Swishing Gust remains in his dreamlike trance, the stone’s power residually soaking into him. The corrupted Elementals charge out of the village entrance, carrying a confused Swishing Gust. Unfortunately, a band of Water Elementals was in the process of escorting newly corrupted Elementals to the village. They organize their troops and trap the corrupted Elementals, killing many in the process. The Water Elementals investigate the village and see Creaking Rumble dead, and conclude the corruption must have taken him. They begin traveling back towards the coast, a dozen corrupted Elementals carried in boxes on a platform.

A Water Elemental that has no plantlife on them, but is a strange brown-honey color, argues with the guards. It’s unclear what about. A Water Elemental with lily pads on her form and a mossy Earth Elemental talk quietly. They see Swishing Gust staring, and try to call out to him. With no response, they go back to quietly conversing. Another Earth Elemental, this one wrapped in vines, sits still as stone. One other Elemental is seen, a smallish Earth Elemental covered in pollen from the flowering weeds, quietly picking at their form.

During one night as the Water Elementals rest, Swishing Gust tries shaking his cage. One of the Elementals that is awake to guard approaches him, and the two try to communicate. The guard feels sorry for the corrupted Elementals, and tries to teach Swishing Gust some of their language. Swishing Gust struggles to recreate the sounds they use, but he is able to glean her name: Jun. Swishing Gust repeats the name over and over, trying to get the sounds right. This chanting activates the stone once more, and his hyperfocus accidentally empowers the nearby corrupted Elementals. Their natural parts grow wildly and they burst from their cages. The Earth Elemental with pollen covering their form goes berserk, and begins slashing Water Elementals apart with writhing vines. Swishing Gust’s cage smashes on the ground and he runs. A few of the Elementals that did not go berserk follow him, while the rest stay and slaughter the Water Elementals.

After fleeing, the group of Elementals stop and talk. The lily pad Elemental is named Hissing Rush, the mossy one Whispering Crush, the vined one Snapping Thump, the honey-brown one Bubbling Splash. Another Elemental not seen before also followed, and shares his name, Rustling Snip. Hissing Rush clashes with Bubbling Splash and Snapping Thump, the latter duo wishing to be rid of corruption, while the former doesn’t mind the corruption, and just wishes for revenge upon the Water tribe. Bubbling Splash is especially struck by Hissing Rush’s anti-Water tribe goals, as he sees himself as a temporarily embarrassed Water Elemental. Rustling Snip joins in and fights against Bubbling Splash’s clear hatred of nature corruption. Whispering Crush approaches Swishing Gust and asks what they should do, and Swishing Gust is able to utter a sound. Everyone looks at him, and Rustling Snip begins examining the stoic Elemental. Rustling Snip proclaims that Swishing Gust should lead them, as he was the one that broke them out in the first place. Clearly he has some sort of power they don’t. The others agree, and look to Swishing Gust.

Swishing Gust looks back, and tilts his head at Hissing Rush. After a pause, Hissing Rush says her name, and gestures to herself. Swishing Gust repeats it, then looks at Whispering Crush. This repeats for each individual. Swishing Gust looks down and quietly begins chanting the names. Hissing Rush touches his head while Whispering Crush grabs an arm, and they tell him to stop. Swishing Gust looks confused, and his eyes unfocus. Vacant, Swishing Gust motions west. After a pause, Swishing Gust begins walking that way, and one by one the others follow.

Differences in opinion begin to drive a wedge between the group. Hissing Rush, Whispering Crush, and Rustling Snip wish to embrace their corruption, or at least deal with it for the time being while completing other tasks. Bubbling Splash and Snapping Thump are decidedly against keeping their corruption, and believe they should beseech the Water tribe to cure them. Hissing Rush is adamant the ‘cure’ is death, while Whispering Crush is quiet and somewhat understanding and Rustling Snip is incredulous. This culminates in the group splitting. Hissing Rush, Whispering Crush, and Rustling Snip stay with Swishing Gust as he single-mindedly walks west. Bubbling Splash and Snapping Thump travel north, hoping to find the path the Water Elementals usually take to get to Creaking Rumble’s village. Soon after, a massive storm begins brewing. Massive herds of Wind and Lightning Elementals race across the sky, blowing clouds at breakneck speeds and striking the ground with electricity. Swishing Gust’s group takes refuge in a cave at the base of the mountain range, and soon Bubbling Splash and Snapping Thump arrive there too. They’re pursued by madly gleeful Wind and Lightning Elementals, and Swishing Gust’s group helps fend them off.

While the group weathers the storm in the small cave, they’re forced to work out their issues somewhat. Bubbling Splash has learned how to speak somewhat in a language the corrupted Earth Elementals can understand from Snapping Thump. Hissing Rush breaks an awkward silence by asking Bubbling Splash about his past. Bubbling Splash regales about single handedly chopping down a forest for the Water tribe, but finding algae growing on him soon after. He was then sent to Creaking Rumble’s village, where the algae bloom died off. He was then left with tree resin stuck in his form, and no plantlife could take hold. Bubbling Splash quietly, sadly, notes that he tried, before looking up and quickly asking Hissing Rush to share her past. Hissing Rush shares her past as well, and the similarities of being betrayed by the Water tribe. Rustling Snip interrupts the following silence with evangelization of corruption. How it was a gift unto him, that he went willingly from the Earth tribe and purposely disfigured his body, disturbing the compacted mud into dirt for more flowers to gain hold. Whispering Crush brings up that it does seem like they can’t fit into either tribe. Swishing Gust turns his head at Whispering Crush’s quiet observation that they should form their own tribe. Snapping Thump rudely interjects that corruption is known to kill, if it progresses too far. Whispering Crush shuts down at this, afraid of conflict as well as unsure how to deal with that fact. Another silence. This time interrupted by Swishing Gust. He slowly struggles out each of his companions’ names. A pause. Swishing Gust pronounces the word for “tribe” surprisingly well. The storm has begun to clear, and Swishing Gust walks outside and begins heading north. The others follow, a bit shocked.

The group heads north aWhispering Crushg the mountain range, hoping to find a path to sneak through. They happen upon a Water tribe outpost, and have to make an escape. Some fighting occurs. Not sure if any Water Elementals are killed. If they are, Hissing Rush probably would do it. Bubbling Splash would be pissed off, while Whispering Crush would be terrified. Rustling Snip would see it as necessary, and Snapping Thump would be exasperated. Bubbling Splash attempts to communicate with them, but they still see him as a corrupted Elemental. This deeply disturbs Bubbling Splash, and he quietly begins re-examining his views on corruption.

After adding some distance between the pursuing Water Elementals, Swishing Gust’s company launches into the mountains. They trek across them as swiftly as they can. As they’re coming down the other side, during a pitch black night two Water Elementals appear and attack the group, fleeing with a captured Swishing Gust. The group bickers as to what to do next. Hissing Rush insists that they go after him, but Bubbling Splash reminds her another Water tribe outpost is just north, so they’ll surely have backup. In fact, the Water forces may head south towards them soon, so they should continue on. Hissing Rush, Whispering Crush, and Rustling Snip assert that Swishing Gust is a special corrupted Elemental, and that he may be able to heal them at the ritual site. Bubbling Splash gives in and heads north under cover of darkness, the rest staying behind in hiding.

Bubbling Splash is able to somewhat pass as a Water Elemental guard, staying just in the corners of other Water Elementals’ vision. He locates Swishing Gust, but is approached by a guard. In the dim light, Bubbling Splash’s honey-brown color is difficult to view, and the guard questions Bubbling Splash, unsure of who he is. Bubbling Splash takes a moment to weigh his chances. He could reveal that he is a cured corrupted Elemental, and show that plantlife cannot spread on him, and be welcomed back into Water tribe society, possibly. But that could easily go south, and he could be captured at best and killed at worst. On the other hand, he could make a hasty escape with Swishing Gust. As Bubbling Splash stammers, trying to decide, Swishing Gust begins shaking the bars. Bubbling Splash turns his attention to Swishing Gust, and begins scolding him. He turns back to the guard and explains he was trying to extract information from this prisoner, and requests that he be left aWhispering Crushe to focus on that. The guard huffs and goes back to patrolling. Once aWhispering Crushe, Bubbling Splash looks at Swishing Gust, who stares blankly back. Bubbling Splash looks around one more time, then unlocks Swishing Gust’s cage, whispering his thanks. Bubbling Splash carries Swishing Gust away from the camp, back south to the corrupted Elemental group.

The group reaches a cliff overlooking a massive stone circle populated with hundreds of corrupted Elementals. Water Elementals surround the pit, and channel energy through their bodies towards a nexus underneath the cliff. The group pauses, and weighs their actions. Bubbling Splash insists they join the ritual, as it’s obviously built to try and cure the Elementals. Hissing Rush refuses outright, saying it’s most likely to cleanse them by killing them. Snapping Thump insists they take the chance, while Rustling Snip is unusually quiet and contemplative. Whispering Crush is quiet, sitting near Swishing Gust, who stares blankly. Hissing Rush approaches Swishing Gust and beseeches him to use his power on the corrupted Elementals below. They could end the ritual and save all of the Elementals’ lives. Swishing Gust slowly gets up and begins walking towards the cliff. Bubbling Splash fumes while Snapping Thump looks on. Swishing Gust stands atop the cliff and begins raising his arms, a muttering chant forming.

A yell is heard as Water Elementals realize corrupted Elementals are on the cliff. They begin running towards the group. Bubbling Splash panics, and as the Water Elementals near, he rushes up behind Swishing Gust and stabs him through with his arm. He hopes to be seen killing a corrupted Elemental, and possibly save himself from the Water Elementals’ ire. Swishing Gust falls, the stone shattering inside him. Hissing Rush, Whispering Crush, and Rustling Snip dive after Swishing Gust as Snapping Thump flees and Bubbling Splash hails the Water Elementals.

Swishing Gust awakes, for the first time since the beginning of the story, as the stone’s power dissipates. Things move in slow motion as Swishing Gust’s perception slows and he examines the world around him. He sees many corrupted Elementals below, looking up with dead eyes. He sees the Elementals from his band above, desperately reaching out to him. His first thought as he becomes aware is something vague. He unconsciously taps into the shattering stone’s power, and a bright flash envelopes him. The glow spreads outwards, and the entire ritual is covered in blinding light.

As the flash fades, Swishing Gust lies on the ground, crumpled. He’s terrified and lost, and begs for the Elementals not to hurt him. He jumps as a grassy hand touches him, and looks up. All of the corrupted Elementals have had their vegetation growth accelerated all at once. Their bodies are fully made up of plants, their essence having been bonded to it as well. Slowly everyone begins to realize what this means. They no Whispering Crushger have to fear death, they can exist as Elementals on their own.

In a flash, Nn appears. The first time in eons; the Elementals are stunned. Nn reaches a limb out, and directly connects Swishing Gust’s essence to his own. Flashing with colors and lights, his head conveys something akin to “You are a new tribe, on the same level as Relnor, Mezo, and Vilnis”. The Water Elementals at the ritual flee, and Swishing Gust returns to Creaking Rumble’s village with the few dozen Nature Elementals. Creaking Rumble and the other Elementals that succumbed to corruption are laid to rest, and the village is rebuilt and expanded. Swishing Gust leads efforts, stepping into a much more robust leadership position. His personality evolves, and he becomes joyful and benevolent to his people.

Hissing Rush, Whispering Crush, and Rustling Snip stay close to Swishing Gust, now fully transformed into Nature Elementals. Hissing Rush has ever-blooming lotus flowers overlapping, while Whispering Crush’s moss allows him to morph his body into small holes. Rustling Snip flourishes with flowers, cultivating even more species. Hissing Rush is entrusted with military movements of the Nature tribe by Swishing Gust. Whispering Crush performs reconnaissance for the tribes, developing high levels of stealth. Rustling Snip leads cultural movements, and embarks on pilgrimages to the other tribes to guide the corrupted Elementals back to the Nature tribe. Bubbling Splash and Snapping Thump are not seen again, the former most likely killed by Water Elementals and the latter going missing.

Swishing Gust establishes communication with the Earth tribe, and using them as a proxy, the Water tribe. Relnor accepts them as a new tribe, and Mezo quietly tolerates their existence. The alliance is necessary, argues Relnor, due to Vilnis’ recent expansion in the north. As Elementals in the Earth and Water tribes become corrupted, they are sent to Swishing Gust to be transformed fully into Nature Elementals. The tribes grow closer through shared citizens and efforts.