

# The Song of The High Above

Once, long ago, in a corner of that faraway land we know as the I Magi Nation, there dwelt a happy people, the People of the Forest, living in harmony with their world, expressing their love of nature and receiving her bounties in return.

To the trees, they would bring nourishing water from the rivers, and the trees would give them fruits. To the birds, they played music, with their flutes and by singing songs, and the birds would sing back to them, teaching them songs and making music, together as one.

Their flutes were made in a neighboring land, where dwelt a great Wizard who could listen to a birdsongs and bring it magically to life within his musical creations. His instruments made their way far and wide across I Magi Nation, until every person, young and old, knew the songs of the birds, and harmony between the air and the earth was maintained.

But it is known that all places in this universe are created with mighty forces, and like our own land, the I Magi Nation is woven with the forces of Creation and Structure, but also with the forces of Change and De-Structure, all together forming the Great Being of Transformation within which we all dwell. Thus came a time when the People, and the Birds, and even the forest itself, would undergo a great change, losing something of their old beauty to becoming something far greater than before.

The catalyst of this change began when the great and ancient mountain at the heart of the forest, whom they called Old Smokey, was over-pressured from years upon years of boiling heat from within, never letting go of its pent-up energy; within Old Smokey was boiling that that union of Structure and Change which we call hot lava. Old Smokey held this energy back for millennia, for it greatly loved Structure, never wanting to destroy what had been made, but the time finally came when the mountain could not hold back the torrent of hot, bubbling lava that was preparing to burst forth.

On that day, the earth rumbled and tumbled, and with one mighty BOOM, the mountain blew its top right off and it flew high up into the sky! Out from the fissures of the blast came pouring years upon years of collected lava, which melted anything that stood in its path, bringing all that it touched into its great, unrelenting force of total de-struction.

The People who dwelt in the Forest beneath the mountain were aghast with fear for their lives and their homes. All that they had created there, all that they had cherished, and every part of the Forest they had loved would be broken and brought into the lava's powerful forces. As a twisting plume of smoke rose up from the mountain, hiding the beautiful sky with dark ash, the people of the forest went out from their homeland, escaping the calamity that had befallen.

This event was affecting all the lives of the Forest, not only the People. The birds too were in grave danger, for their homes were in the boughs and branches of the trees, and mighty wildfires were spreading throughout the woods and swallowing up all of their beloved woods. The Birds sent messengers to every corner of the Forest and called together all of their kind in their ancient meeting place, within the trunk of The Great Tree, and together the wisest among them discussed what to do.

The People traveled for some time below the shadows and gloom, wiping fallen ash from their faces while seeking shelter in caves of old stone. Upon the mountain, the lava was creating barrier walls through the rivers and streams, diverting the courses, then drying them up with its intense heat. The People watched as the river slowly sank, disappearing, until the riverbed was stony and dry. The very air was drying up from the heat of the mountain. The Forest that once was overflowing with bountiful fruits and waters was now becoming parched, dried up, burnt out, and decaying. The People now were growing thirsty, and their fear grew steadily, and many began to lose hope.

The birds sent out scouts in all directions, hoping to find parts of the Forest that were safe and could withstand the calamity. But alas, when the scouts had returned, they found that all the Forest was burning, and the mountain continued to pour out long tendrils of bubbling hot lava. Soon, even The Great Tree would be surrounded in flame. They were grieved, for their kind had lived in the Forest since time out of memory, and they knew no home beyond it, nor believed that such a place could truly exist; there were none among them who had ever been out from the Forest.

One scout had returned and spoke of seeing the march of the People of the Forest, and the Birds remembered that they were not alone in this doom. Unanimously, the Birds decided then that they would fly to meet the People of the Forest, and unite with them in one great march, even if it be to the ends of all the earth.

The People of the Forest sat beside the rocky riverbank, underneath the gloom of the sky, their hearts filled with sadness. They had only a little water more, and none had ever been so far away from their homes, and many began to lose hope. There they sat, thinking of their doom, beneath the clouds of the gloomy sky. But just then, in their darkest hour, a little boy brought out one of the magic bird flutes, and began to play a song. It was a song that the People played when the night was upon them, when the children sometimes feared that the day would never come again. Those who heard his song lifted their heads, and their shaky voices rose to meet the flute in chorus, and they felt their sadness begin to melt away. Many openly wept with the marriage of their grief with the joy of times long past, like the coming of springlight in the coldest of winterfrost, and soon all the People of the Forest were dancing and singing and playing their flutes, right there among the dry stones, underneath the darkened skies, united together with music and mirth.

At this very moment, high in the sky, the great migration of the Birds covered the darkness above. Hearing the music below, the Birds were moved with joy, and too began to sing their ancestral songs, and in the airs above the People of the Forest, the birds began to dance. Together, the People and the Birds made great music, as they had for generations before, forgetting their grief and thoughts of any doom, raising themselves beyond the challenges of life to rejoice in their connections as living beings. Their energetic celebration created a vortex of Harmony that remains still in that place.

In the ecstatic heights of their dancing, some of the birds were overcome with Spirit and flew higher into the sky than any had ever gone before! Up and up and up they went, piercing through the clouds of ash, coming out upon the other side. From that vista they could see all across I Magi Nation, and they saw for the first time that their Forest and the Mountain were just a little land, a tiny little place being covered by smoke and ash. In every direction, there there were other places for them to go explore and settle. In the even-greater ecstasy of this discovery, out from the birds poured a brand new song, and their dances grew wild and filled with excitement, dazzling to behold as the sunlight glittered upon their feathers. But most importantly, the High Flyers were overcome with joy for the knowledge that their people could venture in any direction out from that covered land and be rescued. Quickly, they plunged back down into the ash-covered land to tell the others.

To the People and the Birds down below, who had not taken the journey out of the gloom, the High Flyers now sang the song and danced the dance inspired by their vision. But in the dried-up land, the song did not carry the same air, so to speak, and in the darkness the dance did not look so majestic, its brilliance being most when the sun glistens on the feathers of the dancer. There were very few of either kindred who actually believed the words of the song, most of them thinking that the world began and ended with the Forest, and nearly all of them were unwilling to leave the place of past safety behind. But to a few who heard the songs came hope, and they leapt with joy at the discovery, and wanted to set out that moment to seek new lands. The non-believers, however, shunned all hope of new life out from the Realm of Possibility, and accepted their fate as dwellers of the ash, forever more.

The greatest grief of all was held by those High Flyers who knew truly that there were other lands they all could venture to and be happy and free again, if only those within the gloom could trust in such a vision.

It now fell to each of the Flyers whether they would stay here with the others who would not leave, forsaking a life renewed to dwell among the ashes, or depart from this forsaken land and seek a better existence. The Flyers gathered round in a circle and sang again the song, to clearly remember the feeling of the inspiration which birthed it forth. Those who believed but had not seen stood around them, forming a second circle, and sang the song along with them; though it did not carry the same brilliance of those who had been above the clouds, it gave hope that they could see such a vision someday. Together they sang, and kindled their vision, and became united by the hope of what lays beyond.

Then those Flyers who wished to stay, out of love for the others who chose not to depart from the gloom, said their goodbyes to their fellow visionaries, giving them great blessings for the journey ahead. They departed the circle, to join those who were still dancing among the dry, lifeless rocks.

Then each of those Flyers, and the Believers who chose to begin a life renewed, picked a direction to set out, each making their own path with the knowledge that any way would lead them to a new life out from under the ashes.

Thus began

The March of The Singers of

The Song of The High Above

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