

AUTUMN'S FABLE

Written by

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EXT. AUTUMNAL FOREST - NIGHT

MOSSFIENDS, humongous, scaly, bipedal, bear-like race of monsters with trees and moss sprouting throughout their body. A glowing cherry blossom flower grows from their scalps.

A herd of Mossfiends sprint through a dark forest, chasing after FORTEN, male, 27, dirty-blond hair, leather armor, arm in a sling.

FORTEN
Monsters! Monsters everywhere!

A giant, stone-walled enclosed village lies just outside the border of the forest.

EXT. SORON VILLAGE GUARD TOWER - NIGHT

GARMIN, male, 57, missing a leg, chain mail, looks over the wall and sees Forten and Mossfiends. He hops over to a large church bell and RINGS it three times.

GARMIN
To arms brothers! To arms sisters!

EXT. SORON VILLAGE - NIGHT

SORON WARRIORS, 20's - 30's, leather/metal armor, flock from their houses wielding swords, shields, bows, axes, etc. Each villager is missing some limb, appendage or body part.

GARMIN (O.S.)
The Mossfiends are upon us!

EXT. SORON VILLAGE GATE - NIGHT

The Mossfiends clear the woods and crush FORTEN against the village's giant wooden gate. The monsters tear, smash and maul their way past the entrance, SNARLING all the while.

GARMIN (O.S.)
Scalp their blood-soaked flowers!

EXT. SORON VILLAGE - NIGHT

The Mossfiends breach the town and launch their siege. The Soron Warriors meet the monsters halfway and counterattack.

Moss Fiends, crunch, rip and devour Soron Warriors. Soron Warriors cut, slice, and stab Mossfiends. Red and blue blood collect in purple puddles amongst the village.

Amidst the battle, YOUNG MOSSFIEND, scuddles around the battlefield awkwardly. THERIA, female, 34, eye-patch, leather armor, wielding a bow, leaps from a burning hut.

THERIA

I bequeath to you... inferno!

Theria dips her arrow into the fire, catching it ablaze. She knocks it and launches it at the creature's knee. Young Mossfiend screams in pain dashes into the forest.

The SOUNDS OF BATTLE drown out underneath the ROAR OF FIRE.

YOUNG GIRL'S VOICE (PRE-LAP)

Ahhhhhh!

EXT. AUTUMNAL FOREST - DAY

CASSIDY, 19, blonde curly hair, wearing loose-fitting leather armor, stands underneath a large tree, screaming loudly. She carries two small daggers on her satchel.

SAZZ, 22, brown wavy hair, wearing fitted-metal armor, covers her ears. Sazz carries a large axe on her back. Attached to her waist is a bouquet of Mossfiend Scalp-Flowers.

SAZZ

Cease, harpy! Cease!

CASSIDY

What's the trouble, Sazz? Am I bothering you?

SAZZ

Infinitely so, dear sister.

Cassidy spins around to face Sazz and crosses her arms.

CASSIDY

You might as well return home then.
I enjoy a good yell whenever I'm
being stalked like a snow-rabbit.

SAZZ

Father told me explicitly to not
let you out of my sight, Cassidy.

Cassidy blows a few pieces of hair out of her face and walks away from Sazz, deeper into the woods.

CASSIDY

Gardias should know better. It's my right as a Huntress to hunt my first monster alone.

Sazz scoffs and catches up to her sister.

SAZZ

I would hardly call a Healer, a Huntress.

Cassidy stops and jabs her forefinger into Sazz's chest.

CASSIDY

A trophy can be collected without the need to slay --

Sazz grabs Cassidy's wrist and puts her into a chokehold.

SAZZ

What would you have done? Bandaged the monster's wounds and ask for its flower in return?

Cassidy elbows Sazz a few times and pushes her back.

CASSIDY

Is it such a problem that I don't enjoy bathing in the blood of innocent --

SAZZ

Innocent? Hah! Cassidy, you act the fool as if you were born to do so.

Cassidy halts and takes in a breath.

CASSIDY

Ahhhhh!

SAZZ

Cassidy Folken, you cease this instant! As of today, you are a child no longer!

Cassidy walks into a shadowed section of the woods, still screaming.

SAZZ (CONT'D)

Father is not here to quell your screams with rhymes and lullabies!

INT./EXT. STONE CAVE ENTRANCE - DAY

CASSIDY
What? I can't hear --

Cassidy bumps into the sleeping Young Mossfiend.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
You?

Young Mossfiend awakens then rises quickly to its feet. It's pupils expand and it shrieks. Cassidy covers her ears.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
Mossfiend!

Cassidy fumbles for her daggers. Young Mossfiend bends down and knocks Cassidy back a few yards. She lands before Sazz.

SAZZ
Cassidy! What in the seven --

Young Mossfiend exits the shadows, standing tall. The arrow in it's knee is still there, the flesh is swelled and coated in dry blue blood.

SAZZ (CONT'D)
Ah.

Sazz draws her axe and charges. Young Mossfiend roars and slams its claw down to crush Sazz. She rolls past the claw and swings upward, slashing up Young Mossfiend's wrist.

SAZZ (CONT'D)
Submit to me your flower, fiend.

Young Mossfiend roars and slams both of its fists down, shaking the ground. Sazz slides between its legs and chops into the back of its mossy heel. Blue blood gushes.

Cassidy slowly rises her feet, shaking off her pain. She looks up to Sazz slashing away at the monster. Young Mossfiend trips and falls with a thump.

CASSIDY
Sazz, no! You're killing it!

SAZZ
Quite!

Sazz leans back, putting her weight into a big swing. Cassidy sprints past the fallen monster and tackles her sister.

SAZZ (CONT'D)
Cassidy! Remove yourself from my
body immediately before --

CASSIDY
Sazz! He's already wounded! Didn't
you see the arrow? He's frightened.

Young Mossfiend is on its feet. It rips a small tree from its back and slams it down. The two sisters gasp and roll apart. Cassidy escapes the slam, but Sazz's leg is clipped.

SAZZ
Agh! Creators be damned!

Sazz attempts to curl up in pain but her crushed leg prevents her from moving. Young Mossfiend turns around and raises its claws but stumbles. Blue blood is pooling beneath it.

Sazz reaches for a tomahawk on her belt and steadies her aim. Cassidy races between Sazz and Young Mossfiend. She spreads her arms apart, confronting the monster.

CASSIDY
Stop! Halt! Please! You're spewing
too much blood!

SAZZ
Cassidy, you fool! Desist or --

The Mossfiend ceases its strike midair.

SAZZ (CONT'D)
For the love of...

CASSIDY
I can aid you! I'm a healer! I heal
people... and monsters too!

Young Mossfiend gives a low guttural grunt and falls to his knees. Cassidy excitedly looks to her sister.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
Sazz! Sazz! Look!

Cassidy looks back Young Mossfiend.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
Can you understand me?

Young Mossfiend nods and sighs slowly. Cassidy claps and hops up and down.

SAZZ

Cassidy...

CASSIDY

Sazz... look at him. He's wounded and frightened. No thanks to you.

SAZZ

He struck first! I was attempting to protect you. Now look at me!

Sazz winces in pain, her crushed leg has begun to bleed.

CASSIDY

Agh! Sorry! I'll heal you and our new comrade, too. We'll fix up camp and rest until the sun breaks.

SAZZ

This is on you. Let that be known.

CASSIDY

Yes, yes, as always. Now come close, let me see that leg.

EXT. AUTUMNAL FOREST CAMP SITE - NIGHT

Cassidy squats by a campfire, stirring stew in a pot. Her satchel lies open, containing cooking and medical supplies.

Sazz is propped up against a tree with a splint on her broken leg. Young Mossfiend sits cross-legged, quietly. Everyone's wounds have been treated, except Young Mossfiend's arrow.

CASSIDY

Nothing says, "Sorry about trying to kill you", like Berry Stew!

Absolute silence.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

Well, alright, enjoy... I suppose.

Cassidy pours two bowls and slides the pot to the monster. The sisters eat in uncomfortable silence while Young Mossfiend remains still. Cassidy turns to it.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry we frightened and attacked you.

SAZZ

Cassidy, Hunters and Huntresses
never apologize. We are a proud --

CASSIDY

May I ask you something? Why were
you alone? Gardias always says
monsters travel in packs.

SAZZ

You expect this beast to --

Young Mossfiend makes a low, sorrowful 'cooing' sound. It
begins to draw in the dirt by the fire. It draws a small
doodle of itself next to bigger versions of the doodle.

It then draws a line between them.

CASSIDY

You too, huh? May I ask what
happened?

It draws stick figures and points to Sazz.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

I see. I'm... very sorry.

Cassidy shuffles back towards Sazz. Sazz crosses her arms.

SAZZ

It's a threat.

CASSIDY

He's a victim.

SAZZ

How can you be so naive!

CASSIDY

How can you be so insensitive!

Young Mossfiend turns away from the two and rests on its
side. It begins to snore loudly.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

That poor creature was separated
from it's pack -- its family, Sazz!
He and I are one in the --

Sazz slaps Cassidy across the face.

SAZZ

That "poor" creature's family
destroyed three villages in the
past moon cycle alone!

Cassidy tears up.

CASSIDY

Because we insist on needlessly
hunting them! We're obsessed with
these "trophies"!

Cassidy rips Sazz's flower bouquet away from her. Sazz attempts to grab them back. Cassidy pulls back and Sazz lurches in pain.

SAZZ

I cannot fathom a reason why my
father took you in. You are no
Huntress. And you are certainly no
sister of mine.

Cassidy quickly gets up, hiding her tears.

SAZZ (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

CASSIDY

Away from the real monster.

Cassidy throws the bouquet into the campfire and runs away.

SAZZ

Cassidy! Do not leave me here alone
with that -- that thing! Cassidy!

Sazz looks panicked. She reaches for her axe.

EXT. AUTUMNAL FOREST - NIGHT

Cassidy walks quickly through the woods mumbling to herself. She walks into a tall tree and bangs her head.

CASSIDY

Ahhhhh!

Cassidy takes her daggers from her belt and stabs the tree multiple times. She slides to her knees and cries.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry... I didn't mean to...

Cassidy removes the daggers from the tree and throws them aside.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

Wretched, Sazz. Disgusting Hunters.
I don't belong with them. I'm
better off here with the monsters.

SAZZ (O.S.)
Gaaahhhhh!

CASSIDY
Sazz?

Cassidy stumbles to her feet and trips as she runs back.

EXT. AUTUMNAL FOREST CAMP SITE - NIGHT

Cassidy enters camp, breathless and sweating.

CASSIDY
Sazz! What's the trouble? I heard --

Cassidy freezes. Young Mossfiend is eating Sazz from the bottom up. Sazz is halfway between the monster's maw, bleeding and screaming in agony, clutching to its flower.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
Oh... oh my... Sazz...

Cassidy reaches for her daggers which she left back in the woods. She panics and runs at the monster and grabs hold of Sazz.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
Sazz! I have you! Don't worry sis!

SAZZ
Cassidy... you...

Sazz coughs up blood, her eyes roll back into her head. Still holding on to her, Cassidy eyes the arrow in the monster's knee and kicks it inwards.

Young Mossfiend screams in pain and clamps its fangs shut, severing Sazz in half and tearing off Cassidy's right arm. Cassidy falls limp in horror, making no sound.

Young Mossfiend howls, with Cassidy's arm in the corner of its mouth, and dashes into the woods.

Cassidy vomits. She rolls over and crawls to Sazz who's quickly fading. Cassidy cradles what's left of Sazz.

CASSIDY
Hold on, Sazz. I'll fix you up.
Like always... okay? Just hold on!

SAZZ
Cass... you... your...

CASSIDY
What, Sazz? What is it, sister?

SAZZ
Your... fault...

Sazz's last breath leaves her body. Cassidy, still holding her deceased sister, breaks down crying.

CASSIDY
I'm sorry, Sazz -- I'm so sorry.
You were right. I'm sorry. I'm so
sorry, Sazz. You were always right.

EXT. AUTUMNAL FOREST - NIGHT

Young Mossfiend sprints through the woods with a blood covered maw and Cassidy's arm sticking out of its mouth.

CASSIDY (V.O.)
How did the rhyme go again? The one
father would sing to us before bed?

EXT. AUTUMNAL FOREST CAMP SITE - NIGHT

Cassidy finishes bandaging her severed arm.

CASSIDY (V.O.)
Monsters, monsters everywhere. In
the woods and at the fair.

INT. DANK CAVE - NIGHT

The Mossfiend slowly crawls through a dark cave until he reaches a bright exit.

CASSIDY
Great, big teeth. And long, dark
hair.

EXT. AUTUMNAL FOREST CAMP SITE - NIGHT

Cassidy prays before Sazz, who has been placed in a makeshift funeral pyre.

CASSIDY (V.O.)
Blood-smacked lips. And a demon's
stare.

INT. MOSSFIEND CITY - NIGHT

Young Mossfiend enters a stone city filled with hundreds of Mossfiends. A large Mossfiend approaches Young Mossfiend, who bows and spits out Cassidy's arm.

CASSIDY (V.O.)
Which one's which? Man or bear?

All the Mossfiends roar and cheer in celebration. Two Mossfiends put Young Mossfiend on their back into the air.

EXT. AUTUMNAL FOREST CAMP SITE - NIGHT

CASSIDY (V.O.)
Monsters, monsters everywhere.

Cassidy turns her back to the fire, her face is contorted with blood, zealous determination and rage. She wields her sister's axe.

CASSIDY
Now I'm one... say your prayer.

THE END.