

## **EPISODE 5 - The Slide - Fairies and Dragons, Ponies and Knights**

Performed Live April 4th, 2021

Podcast released April 10th, 2021

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### **Episode 5 - THE SLIDE**

*Lyle was born for this. He was ready. Lyle and Edwine had been put in charge of the final task of the Dragon Games, and Lyle had known what it should be immediately.*

*Last year Petra had taken Lyle up to the top of their mountain for a fun experiment. It was early springtime, before all the snow and ice had melted, and Petra had had an amazing idea. She figured that if they got some chunks of ice and held onto them tightly they could slide down the rocky parts of the mountain. She said Lyle should be the first to try because he had the best balance, and if it worked they could all try it! The rule was, no wings.*

*They had found a long, smooth rock face, and Lyle had stood at the top, gripping huge chunks of ice in his talons. He could barely hold still, it was so slippery, but then Petra had given him a push. Man, he shot down that mountain like crazy! The first time he hit a bump, he lost his balance. He started to correct himself with his wings but he remembered he wasn't supposed to, and he fell*

*hard. Then he basically just rolled down the rest of the mountain, bouncing off the bigger rocks and trees, until he slid off a small cliff and landed in a big thorny bush. It hurt pretty bad, but he knew he was okay because Petra wasn't worried. She was flying above him, laughing, and told him it had been pretty great to watch. At one point she said she was worried that he was going to die! And also, that he was definitely the bravest of them all.*

*For the next run, Petra said he could use his wings just to help with his balance. That had worked pretty well! He made it way further down the mountain before he crashed, and it was pretty fun! After, they went and got the other dragons and they all did it for a while, even though no one made it as far as Lyle could before they crashed.*

*Anyway, Lyle thought this would be an amazing task for the humans, to see who could get the furthest down the mountain, sliding, with ice strapped to their feet! Unfortunately they had had to make some changes: the head knights didn't think this plan would exactly work for the humans, since it would almost definitely kill them. But! They had helped Lyle and Edwine come up with something that sounded just as fun.*

*The knights took them to the top of Mount Durga and showed them something amazing. It was two great big slides, starting near the very crest of the mountain and curving down its side like huge snakes, running nearly parallel to each other as they wound downwards. They were all smooth and slippery, made of polished rock. They had been built by the giants a long time ago, and the knights said they went all the way to the foot of the mountain and would be perfect for the humans to slide down on. They explained that since humans were warm-blooded (Lyle didn't know what that was but it sounded awesome) ice on their feet would melt before they made it to the bottom. Instead, they suggested*

*big blocks of soap that they would wrap around the contestants' feet. They would then race down the mountain to see who could do it the fastest.*

*This was a very good plan, except for the fact that Lyle and Edwine were still feeling pretty left out. Smudge and Azrael and Petra had all gotten to do really fun things with the humans in the other tasks, and Lyle and Edwine wanted to be part of this one, like their siblings! But then Edwine had the best idea! She said they could set booby traps along the slide, slowing the humans down with obstacles and projectiles! Lyle was crazy about projectiles.*

*Ever since then, Lyle and Edwine had been preparing the track. They'd loaded it up with some real doozies, and Lyle couldn't wait! It was almost time to get into position. Petra and Azrael's challenge had just ended and there were only four contestants left who would do the mountain slide. [cue: deep horn]*

*At the top of the mountain, Talora, Tom the stable boy, and the other two remaining contestants- Knight Jorah Strong, who still looked dazed, and Knight Mary Turbin (Talora's chemistry instructor, of all people) - had been resting after finishing The Scream.*

*"Thank you knights and non-knights for your incredible bravery. I think we're all happy to see The Scream come to an end, and with 21 contestants eliminated, we come into the final round with only four remaining. Which one of them will conquer this final task to become the dragon's champion?"*

*They could hear the announcer's voice clearly through a metal pipe that was coming out of the ground. It looked as if it were connected to a tube that snaked off and out of sight. Talora must have looked a little alarmed at the proximity of the announcer's voice, because Knight Jorah spoke.*

*“That goes all the way down to Giant’s Field, that does,” he grunted, gesturing at the tube. “Allows for fast communication between top and bottom.”*

*Talora nodded nervously and the four contestants gathered around the pipe to listen to the instructions for the final task.*

*“At this very moment, our final four contestants are at the peak of Mount Durga, only a short distance from Durga’s world famous Slides of the Giants: two perfectly formed slides shaped by the hands of Giants from the mountainside itself! They run from the summit of Mount Durga, down the mountain, and finish at the mountain’s base, here at Giant’s Field. Each contestant will travel down the slide, and whoever has the fastest time will become the dragon’s champion!”*

*Talora released the breath she’d been holding. This didn’t sound so bad.*

*“That is not all,” said the announcer.*

*Talora held her breath again.*

*“Contestants, nearby you will find a tall pole with a green flag. Walk to the pole and open the bundles you will find at the pole’s base,” said the announcer.*

*The four contestants located the pole and followed the instructions. Talora reached inside her bundle and pulled out two heavy, waxy blocks with straps attached to them. “What in the name of Durga are these?” she thought, turning them over in her hands.*

*"Inside the red bundles you will find two large blocks of soap." said the announcer.*

*Talora leaned close and sniffed. Definitely soap.*

*"Use the attached straps," continued the announcer, "to secure the soap to your feet."*

*"Oh no..." thought Talora.*

*"You may travel down the slide however you wish, but the soap must stay attached to your feet at all times. Inside the bundles, you should also find sets of body padding and helmets. These are optional, but you should know, it may be a rough ride down."*

*"Okay," Talora whispered to herself, "I can do this."*

*"That is not all," the announcer said.*

*"Good grief!" thought Talora. "There's more?"*

*"You will encounter certain... obstacles and...distractions on your way down the mountain. This task is meant not just to prove your speed and balance, but also to determine your focus, ability to think on your feet, and your problem solving skills."*

*"Oh, is that all?" grumbled Knight Jorah, rubbing his face tiredly.*

*“Let’s get started! There are two slides, so two contestants may race at one time. First up will be knight-in-training Talora Shamsa and Knight Mary Turbin. Talora and Knight Mary, please follow the blue flags to the top of the slide. You have ten minutes to prepare. When there is one minute left, you will hear two blasts from the horn. When you hear one final blast from the horn, please begin your descent down our final challenge...The Slide!!”*

*Talora looked around at Knight Mary, giving her a nervous smile. She couldn’t get over her surprise that Knight Mary had made it this far. She taught chemistry with such care and devotion that you’d never think she had other interests, let alone a sense of adventure. You just never know about people, Talora thought. Probably no one thought she or that stable boy had it in them, either.*

*“Hello, Talora. Ready for this?” Knight Mary grinned at her.*

*“Yes,” Talora forced herself to say firmly.*

*Talora and Knight Mary started pulling the pads out of the sack and putting them on: elbow pads, knee pads, some kind of padded shorts with suspenders - butt pads? Pads for their shoulders, large black gloves, and a thick helmet made of leather completed their outfitting. When they were both finished, Mary looked Talora over, checking that her straps were secure.*

*“You look good. Check me,” she said.*

*Talora did. “You look good too,” she said.*

*“Want some help?” Tom asked Knight Jorah as they too struggled into their padding.*

*“Don’t touch me, kid.”*

*Tom turned to Talora and Knight Mary. “You guys are going to do great!” he exclaimed.*

*Gripping their soap blocks, Talora and Knight Mary followed the blue flags through a dense stand of young trees, before emerging into the open air. And there they were. Two enormous slides. Big enough for a giant, and open to the sky. They were about ten feet wide, with smooth sides that curved up into low walls, so that once on the slide, Talora knew she wouldn’t be able to see over the edge unless she stood on tiptoe. There were people who came up here to slide down on sleds for fun, but Talora had never tried it. She squinted intently down the curve of the slide. She couldn’t see any obstacles, and the walls on either side made her feel slightly more secure.*

*After wrestling the blocks of soap onto their feet, Talora and Knight Mary waited tensley, each at the mouth of a slide. [cue: fade forest + 2 horns] Then they heard it: two horn blasts- one minute left. Talora rechecked her soap boots and pads nervously, just to give herself something to do. Suddenly, as if by magic, two huge wooden barrels at the top of each slide toppled over. She watched the water sloshing down each slide.*

*“What was that all about?” she asked Knight Mary.*

*“Make our soap feet more slippery, is my guess,” her teacher responded.*

*“Oh right... that makes sense. Have you ever been down these before?”*

*“Yes, several times,” said Mary. “Though I doubt that does me much good now. Who knows what’s about to happen.”*

*“Yeah.” Talora couldn’t get over how different Knight Mary seemed from the sweet and slightly plodding person she was used to in her classes. She seemed so...cool. But she didn’t have any more time to think about it, because--*

*[cue: horn]*

*“Off we go!” said Knight Mary cheerfully, jumping onto her slide. As soon as her soap feet hit the wet slide, they shot out from under her and she landed in a heap, “ooof” sliding several feet before scrambling upright again.*

*“Thank goodness for these butt pads!” she yelled as she slipped and slid around a bend in the slide and out of sight.*

*Talora looked at her own slide. She inched her soap boots closer to the edge and did her best to brace her body for whatever was going to happen next. “Here we go,” [cue: adventure 1 into adventure loop long] she thought, and she shifted her balance forward and onto the slide. “Fwaaaaghhhhh!” She took off in an instant. She maintained her balance for a good ten feet before crashing just like Knight Mary had. “Ooof” She got up to try again, making it another ten feet or so before crashing. Gradually, her upright stretches increased until she was spending more time on her feet than on her bottom. She wished she could see over the edges of her slide so she could check her rival’s progress. Hopefully Knight Mary was having as much trouble as she was, or Talora had no chance of winning.*

*She had just found a position that gave her the best balance- one leg in front of the other with both knees bent and arms straight out- and was picking up speed, when something red and round streaked across the sky above her head, [cue: tomato 1 (1 splat)] hitting the slide behind her with a squishy thud. “What was that?” Talora thought, knowing she couldn’t look behind her to see or she’d fall over. She tried to focus... then there was another one, [cue: tomato 2 (2 splats)] which landed closer to her, and another, which almost hit her - she ducked, lost her balance, and slam! Over she went. She looked up just in time to see another red object coming straight at her and before she could roll out of the way, [cue: tomato 3 (1 splat)] it hit her squarely in the face, seeming to burst on contact. She thought she could hear the distinct sound of dragon laughter nearby. Edwine? She wiped her face off, and looked at her hands, which were dripping with seeds and pulp. Tomato. [cue: tomato 4 - (3 splats)] One hit her on the shoulder, and there was more laughter. Lyle! She looked up, trying to find the dragons, but all she saw was another tomato headed straight for her! This time she rolled out of the way and got to her feet. [cue: tomato 5 - 3 splats] She needed to move! They were just tomatoes, but her balance was so precarious it took almost nothing for her to lose it. She pushed off, sliding unbothered for only a few seconds before another tomato hit her in the hip [cue: splat 6] and she went down. Ughhh! She felt blasts of wind above her. She looked up and saw Edwine and Lyle flying, both with bulging sacks of tomatoes around their necks. [cue: Barrage of Tomatoes] Suddenly she was being pummeled! Talora knew she needed to get in front of them, keep moving, make herself a more difficult target.*

*She picked up a tomato that hadn’t completely squished, and she hurled it at Lyle as hard as she could. Talora had incredible aim, and Lyle hadn’t been expecting this. [cue: Lyle Tomato] Direct hit.*

*“Aaaggh!” he cried, trying to dodge while in mid-throw, which resulted in his tomato flying through the air and hitting Edwine in the neck. [cue: Edwine Tomato]*

*“Hey! Lyle! You big beluga face!” yelled Edwine. She immediately flung a tomato at Lyle, and it hit him in the eye. [cue: Lyle Tomato - 2]*

*“Aaaugggh!! I’m blind!” screamed Lyle, flapping around in circles.*

*Talora seized her chance for escape. She got up, crouching as low as possible, and started making her way down the slide again.*

*“Lyle! She’s getting away!” yelled Edwine.*

*“I don’t know where I am!” yelled Lyle. He flew directly into a tree and there was a loud, smooshy, squishing sound as his tomatoes burst against its trunk. “My babies!” he cried.*

*“Lyle!” yelled Edwine. “Pull yourself together, we have to go get the other knight!”*

*Their voices receded and Talora relaxed a bit. Without Edwine and Lyle and their tomato missiles, she could get some speed. No sooner had she had this thought than she went around a bend and her ankles connected with something. It swept her feet out from under her and she flew forward at top speed, landing on her stomach and sliding. Talora struggled to pull herself up to her hands and knees. “What now?” she thought. She looked behind her to see what had tripped her. There was a tree branch draped right across the slide. She looked ahead. There was another branch about fifteen feet in front of her, this*

*one arched to that if she slid directly into it, it would hit her in the face. While she couldn't see past it, she could guess that there were more where this one came from.*

*"You've got this," Talora told herself.*

*She leapt to her feet, found a solid stance on her soap blocks, and took off instantly. She was getting good at this. Talora easily ducked her head and passed beneath the branch in front. As soon as she was past it, she looked for the next one. It was low. She could clear it if she jumped high enough. She crouched, preparing herself. Here it comeeeesssss....Talora leapt into the air and pulled her feet as high as they would go, just barely clearing it. But as she landed, her feet shot out in different directions and as she struggled to keep them together, she failed to notice the next tree branch.*

*CRUNCH!! This tree was about waist height, and she hit it straight on. Gasping for breath, she scrambled through the smaller branches beneath it, and kept going. Now she was determined. She could imagine Knight Mary at the bottom of the mountain - surrounded by the cheering crowd, having beaten Talora handily.*

*"Keep going, Talora!" she told herself aloud. "Keep going!" There was another branch. She leapt, clearing it easily. She landed back on the track, wobbled, but kept her balance.*

*"YES! TALORA, YOU ARE THE BEST!!" she yelled. There was another branch coming, this one waist-high again. She wouldn't be able to get her feet over it. Instead she threw her legs forward and lay flat, using her momentum to slide under the branch. "HA!" she yelled, and hopped back on her feet. Another*

*waist-high branch approached, but this time there were too many twigs and leaves and there was no room below to slide under. Instead she dove over it - leaping head first into the air with all her might. She cleared the branch easily, but now she was heading down and her face was about to connect with the slide. "Roll," she told her body, and her body obeyed; she ducked her head, curled into a ball, and rolled. And rolled. And kept rolling, until she slammed into the next branch.*

*"Get out of my way, branch!" she yelled at it as she scrambled free, getting herself back on track.*

*"HA! HA! HAAAAAAA!!! You can't stop me!" Talora had become possessed by a kind of determination she had never felt before. It seemed fueled by every emotion she was capable of feeling: love for the dragons, fear that she might lose this competition, anger at the difficulty of this task, the physical pain that she felt all over her body, and pride in her own perseverance. "I AM THE DRAGON GIRL!!" she yelled, "RRRRRRRAAAAAAAAAAAGHHH!!!"*

*Then, up ahead, was more than a branch. "Is that a whole tree?" she thought. Yes, it was. A whole tree. Right on the track.*

*"You can't stop me, TREE!" she yelled, and slid, [cue: tree sounds] landing against the tree feet first. Then she scrambled up it as best she could. Climbing a tree with blocks of soap strapped to your feet is not an easy thing to do, but Talora didn't let herself think about it too much. She just kept clawing her way through, pulling herself past and over branches, scratching every inch of her exposed skin.*

*“UGGGGGGGHHHHHH” [cue: tree crash] with a final burst of energy she made it over the tree, fell through the last branches, and landed on the track, her feet sturdy under her.*

*“GO GO GO TALORA, GO GO GO!!” she cheered for herself.*

*There were no more branches now, and she was cooking. Suddenly she had become an expert at this. And it was awesome. Just as she started wondering what was coming next, she saw it. Up ahead, there was a jumble of something blocking the slide. Whatever it was, she would have to climb over it, which shouldn't be too hard, after that tree.*

*Now she was upon the obstacle and could see that it was pile after pile of fluffy, scratchy, hay, heaped almost as high as the slide walls. She began to slog through the hay, clumps of it clinging to her soapy shoes and tomato-moistened skin. This was definitely going to slow her down. Then, after a moment or so, the most incredible combination of smells she had ever experienced hit her.*

*At first it was just the scent of fresh bread, but this was soon followed by the tangy aromas of sausage, garlic, rosemary. She hadn't eaten anything since this morning, and she'd thrown up what she had eaten during The Scream. She scrambled forward with renewed energy through the hay, hoping to find the source of these enticing smells. She turned a corner, and found a platform attached to the side of the slide. Situated directly in front of Talora's nose was the most delicious array of food you could possibly imagine. Breads, muffins, danishes, eggs, sausage, bacon, tofu scramble, orange juice, apple juice....*

*Talora fell upon the table like a starving jaguar. She couldn't decide what to eat first so she decided to eat many different things at once. Oh sweet stars*

*above, this was good. While she was working on stuffing five different things onto an english muffin to make a sandwich, it occurred to her. THIS IS AN OBSTACLE!! THEY'RE TRYING TO SLOW YOU DOWN!*

*She spit the food out of her mouth, took the biggest drink of water she could manage, stuffed a hard boiled egg into each of her pockets for later, and ducked under the table, beginning to wade through the hay again.*

*Suddenly, she emerged out of the hay and onto open slide, but could see that about fifteen feet ahead, the hay began again. As she was pondering why there would be this short break between piles, Lyle's head popped up over the edge of the slide.*

*"BOO!!!" He yelled gleefully.*

*"AAAAAH, Lyle! What the hey!" Talora yelled, her heart racing from the shock.*

*"Ha! You're the Hey! ... cause you know... you're covered in hey. Did I scare you?" asked Lyle*

*"YES!" yelled Talora, as she started to cross the open space between hay piles.*

*"Haha! Good!" he yelled, leaping into the air. "Told you I could scare her, Edwine!" Lyle flew over the slide, and then, to Talora's horror, he swooped down low, opened his mouth, and [cue: stream of fire + flames] released a furious stream of fire over one side of the hay in front of Talora. It ignited instantly, blazing a path down the left-hand side of the slide.*

*Talora saw that if she moved quickly, she should be able to get past the flames by keeping close to the right side of the slide, but she didn't have much time. As she began to dart forward, however, she saw Edwine flying up ahead, over the flames, and she seemed to be gently releasing something - or several somethings? Into the hay on the right hand side that wasn't yet aflame. Talora squinted. Whatever Edwine had dropped was small, fuzzy, and...[cue: kittens ] was that a teeny, tiny meow she could hear over the crackling of the flames?*

*"Seriously, Edwine? KITTENS?" Talora yelled, her stomach knotting in horror. She could just see six tiny forms clambering awkwardly over the surface of the hay, too light to sink in, and definitely about to get burned up if Talora didn't save them immediately. She thought quickly. She could either scramble by, ignoring the kittens but avoid getting burned herself, OR she could stop and rescue the kittens and almost definitely get burned herself.*

*Well, it wasn't much of a choice. With a frustrated roar, Talor threw herself forward into the flaming pile of hay, trying to stay as far to the right as possible. Even so, the heat from the flames brought out beads of sweat on her face as she lunged through the hay towards the first kitten she could reach. It was very small, black and white, with impossibly large ears. It was standing on its hind legs on the hay with its paws up on the lip of the wall. All Talora had to do was reach up, cup its fuzzy bottom in the palm of her hand, and give it a gentle nudge over the side of the slide. She knew it wasn't too far for a cat to fall, and anyway, better a little tumble than becoming kindling for Lyle's blaze. "One down, five to go," Talora muttered to herself. She held her arms out in front of her, scooping hay out of her path, until she reached two more kittens. Each time she tried to grab them, they sank further down into the hay, their tiny paws flailing. The flames seemed impossibly close now, and Talora was beginning to panic. She swiped blindly*

*around for the kittens until she finally managed to grab them, one in each hand, and tip them carefully over the slide's edge to join their friend. She plunged blindly forward to where she could see another two, both sitting and grooming their faces happily, with no idea of the danger they were in. Talora frantically stuck her arms under them and tossed them up and over the edge of the slide. She slipped and fell briefly into the fire, getting singed. She rushed to her feet. One kitten left. But where was it? After another minute or two of sweaty thrashing through the hay, [cue: fade fire + kittens] Talora emerged into a clear, flame-less expanse of slide. She gasped and looked behind her frantically at the inferno. Was a kitten left behind?*

*But then she heard a tiny mew and whipped back around to see a fluffy orange kitten toddling down the slide far ahead of her, having made it through the flames with no help from her. "Okay," Talora told herself. "Kittens all accounted for. Nobody burned to death. Keep moving!"*

*She took off down the slide again. Her soap blocks were so coated in hay that they weren't as slippery as they had been at the start of the race, so she was forced to use a somewhat ungainly combination of running and sliding. In a minute she passed the waddling kitten, and waved to it as she tumbled by.*

*[cue: crowd] The way ahead seemed clear, and soon she could hear the cheers from the crowd in Giant's Field. She was almost done! One more bend in the slide and there it was: the end. The slide straightened out and left the side of the mountain, sloping gently towards the field and thousands of spectators. As soon as they saw Talora, the crowd erupted in cheers and whistles. Talora swelled with pride. She had earned this. Then without any warning at all, her foot slipped. She tried to catch herself with her other foot, but it slipped, too. She found herself doing a wild chicken dance, windmilling her arms and legs in order*

*to keep her balance, but then... slam. Face first onto the slide. As she pulled herself to her hands and knees, she realized that the remaining expanse of slide was covered in a thick layer of slippery grease.*

*“Those overgrown flaming turkeys!” Talora growled to herself, preparing for one final embarrassment before the whole crowd. She tried to stand up, but only succeeded in another spectacular faceplant. She could feel the heat in her face as the crowd laughed. She stood up and started taking teeny, tiny baby steps. Ughhh, this was going to take forever! [cue: crowd fade ]*

*Then the crowd erupted in cheers again. The walls of the slide were lower here and she could see over the rim. She turned her head to look behind her. Just appearing down the other slide was Knight Mary. Talora was in the lead! Even from this distance, Talora could see that Knight Mary had had a rough time. She was moving slowly, limping, and she looked like some kind of poorly constructed scarecrow, with hay sticking to her whole body.*

*“Is that what I look like?” thought Talora. She glanced down at herself. “No. I look worse.” But none of that mattered, because she was ahead! Now the pressure was really on. She carefully pointed herself in the right direction and resumed her baby steps. Faster. Good. Faster. Whooooaaaoo. Okay, too fast. She found the right speed, pumping her legs as fast as she could in the eensiest steps she could manage. This was going to take forever! She risked a glance behind her. Knight Mary was struggling to her feet, and doing the same chicken dance that Talora had done - she must have just reached the grease.*

*Slipping and sliding, with her tiny steps and pumping arms, Talora had never felt so humiliated in her life. She motivated herself to keep moving by*

*cursing the dragons. “Stinking bird-butts, flying no-haired squirrels, bat-winged porridge brains.”*

*Someone in the crowd started cheering Talora’s name. Someone else started cheering for Knight Mary. Others joined and soon the crowd was a roar of names. Talora was nearing the end. She tried to block them out. “Keeeeeep goiiinnggg” she thought. If she got too rushed, she would slip. “Alllmmmmmmooooost theeeeerrree. Oh you rotten, flaming stink-breaths!” She was almost at the finish line when she fell again. She looked behind. Knight Mary was gaining on her. Before Talora realized what she was doing, her arms and legs began to work at once, propelling her smoothly forward on her stomach. This was much faster!*

*Someone from the crowd shouted, “Look she’s swimming!” And then someone else added, “She’s a fish! Swim! Swim! Swim fish, swim!!” It became a chant, with more and more people joining in: “Swim! Swim! Swim fish, swim!”*

*And Talora swam. She swam the final length of that slide like a thirsty turtle who’d just caught sight of water at long last. All the while the crowd was yelling “Fish! Fish!” and Talora was imagining herself with a fish in each hand, smacking the faces off of Edwine and Lyle.*

*Then finally, sliding on her belly, she crossed the finish line. [cue: horn + crowd fade + adventure fade] The slide was over. She struggled to her feet. [cue: Talora theme] Dazed. Bruised. Burnt. Sticky. Bloody, covered in tomato and hay. The crowd was going wild for her. She hardly heard them anymore. She turned to look at the other slide. There was Knight Mary, still inching along her slide. Talora had won! Well... she had beaten Knight Mary at least. She just had to hope that*

*Knight Jorah and Tom the Stable Boy wouldn't be any faster than she'd been. She'd know soon enough.*

*But in the meantime.... she was finished. This had been the most difficult day of her life. She could feel an avalanche of emotions waiting to bury her, but at the moment she just felt grateful that she was done. Talora felt her legs buckle and decided she didn't need to try to stand up anymore. She was vaguely aware of someone guiding her to a nice soft spot in the grass, helping her remove her padding, then handing her a cup of water. After drinking, she fell back in the grass. She didn't fall asleep exactly, she just stared at the sky for a while, slowly reliving the events of the day.*