

Warmth.

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That is all I can remember of home. Just the pure warmth that I felt. I always felt loved, happy, and alive. But that is all I can remember. Am I sad that the warmth is my only memory? No, not really. I am just glad that I can remember anything at all. There are those who were born here, into the cold, with no memory home. Some of the elder ponies claim to remember lush fields, endless rolling hills of flowers and food so sweet it could make you smile. I don't know how much of that is real memory and how much is fabricated by their desire to return home. I would be happy with just the warmth.

Like the others, I am awake. My straw bedroll tries its best to capture my warmth but fails. At least it provides something against the chilled rock beneath me. The air reeks of foul ooze and algae. I can tell that it rained while we slept, for the streams of water are still rushing down the cliff face and making the vertical fall from the cave roof. Half of the fluid continues its journey to the barren swamp beneath, the other half splatters into the cave mouth, dampening the air and the straw rolls of those on their watch shift. Our cave is far from the ground below but we still keep watch.

The red sun has just broken the horizon, it's tinted light does little to mask the deep greens of the jiggered mushroom shaped mountains that sit like giants across the land. Between the pillars, lies a winding swampy river that boasts shades of green that rival the alien moss that creeps along the rocks.

As uninviting as it is to go for a swim, one glance at the sharp bladed rocks that form a dense network of spikes across the entire floor aren't enough to slow down the things that hide beneath the sludge.

If we weren't able to use our magic to gather hanging vines from the cliff faces, to get us to higher ground, I doubt we would ever have lasted as long. My father tells me that they tried to grant wings to us, so that we could fly to safety, but they couldn't. He tells me that they tried to summon a gateway, but they couldn't find home. I think it has something to do with the disconnection from magic. He tells me that home is where we were strong, and now that we have lost our bond with it, our magic has faded. My father tells me that we were able to use our intelligence to craft a thin vine ladder. That was all we needed to ascend to our wind carved cavern.

Hushed whispers fill the cave. They are not panicked, that means it's time for breakfast. Carefully, I lift myself out of my itchy bedroll and place my hardened hooves on the cool stone floor. A cold chill runs down my spine as my body heat escaped through the pads of my hooves. I silently creep over the still frames of other sleeping mares and move towards the designated meal allocator. She uses her mouth to open a woven sack to reveal a chiselled rock bowl containing lush green moss. She then marks a crudely crafted note pad and leaves me to enjoy my meal to the sounds of the others waking from their light sleep.

I take my seat on the damp cave mouth and dangle my hooves over lip. It may be a cold barren world but it is hard not to admire the beauty of such a strange, alien world. Mushroom shaped rock pillars stretch as far as the eye can see. The deep red star now casts its rich red hue over the landscape, but it doesn't bring any warmth with it. I think it's too far away from this forsaken planet. The sun teases me with the promise of warmth but grants only weak light, not even strong enough to penetrate the permanent fog that clings to the ground.

It is so quiet. Only the breathing from my clan behind me breaks the silence. On some days I can hear the wind whistle through the canyons and on others, I can hear the muffled roar of monstrosities from lands far away.

Small vines run the distance from pillar to pillar. We were lucky enough to find a pony-sized one running from our cave mouth to a smaller cave on the pillar facing us. I wouldn't call us too lucky though, a smaller cave isn't worth the risk of being separated. That's what could happen if the vine broke while you weren't on it. If I broke while you were trusting it with your life, if the fall didn't kill you and you somehow managed to avoid being impaled on the spikes, you would probably fall into the maw of some foul beast.

We tried hunting once. A long time ago, a small party of us descended to the floor. They were going to hunt for fish in the river. They hadn't seen any before, but they were getting desperate. Eating moss every meal does tend to grind away at your sanity. We never heard from, or saw them again.

That is why we still eat moss.

Just as easily as it had come, the sun slowly faded behind another pillar. The days here were around ten minutes long. It's just enough time to get a glimpse of where you are stranded before you are forced back into another freezing night. They are only a few hours long, but it feels like you are plunged into darkness for days on end.

I like to think of the day time here as a drink of water. It's rare but it's refreshing. If you go too long without one, either your own insanity or what lurks in the shadows will end you.

Ponies have leapt from the cave mouth on more than one occasion. I hope that won't be me.