

**McKenzie motto:** Luceo non uro. *I shine not burn.*

Maisri's mother burned in the fires set by those who refused to starve when the world turned to ice around them. She'd been a slave before, a bride taken by one of the men who'd raided and killed all she knew and loved. While treated well, loved even, she was never truly free. She loathed each of her children, a new shackle binding her to the north. The people who'd taken her family and her life.

The only reason she never poisoned or drove the knife across her children's throats; she'd never bore a male. Her husband and captor, he'd never sire a son. It was enough to keep his daughters alive as a reminder. The only thing that at times brought her happiness. And, in turn this was the reason each of his girls were taught as men. No matter how harsh, no matter if their bones broke under his hands. It didn't matter how much he loved them, they pained him with their existence. And, at the same time were also his greatest joy.

Maisri, the oldest, held everyone together with sheer stubborn grit. She took the most beatings, worked harder to compensate for what her sisters lacked. She refused to allow them a life without happiness. And it worked, they knew it. They laughed and lived. More so after their mother perished, after their fathers chains were broken by that wretched woman's death. He'd finally let down those walls he'd built and become the father they needed.

As that happened, Maisri had borne too much of the pain from her parents' silent war. She'd smile, had been agreeable as she could be, given she had her fathers temperament.

But ultimately, she'd found a way and a reason to leave on her terms. To live by her own hand and make her own way. And since, she has. She came from the forge tempered and strong, always ready for whatever came next.

Whenever she closes her eyes though... she sees it. Her mother screaming, that horrid mix of pleasure and pain. Terror and triumph. Maisri's nostrils and lungs filled with smoke from those fires, choking on the taste of burning flesh. Even though she'd survived that hate for so long... Maisri still called for her mother. The only one of them, until the world grew dim around her.... where she saw it even clearer. The bodies, the gnarled and twisted remains of the people who perished within. Those who'd tried to crawl free who'd regretted their decisions as the flames licked up their clothing and started to burn their skin.

Some notes:

100% stolen and twisted from this show into what could have happened when Coerthas froze over. Along with keeping in line how the Coerthean Highlanders were like Vikings.

Her mother was always meant to be a prize from a raid. Left alive only to be wed to a Highlander. She wasn't ever meant to be happy either, why Maisri has that wish to have a happily ever after. To show her father and sisters that she did this with her own hands. That she was capable of doing this; and that they could too.

She's a Cilo base, stubborn as hell and her pride is a badge and a curse. She'll persevere, but this one has scars. She's earned her strength, and has a reason why she's not got the best handle on her temper and pushes people away. She fears that she's her mother's daughter too, no matter her goals and aspirations. She intends to work through all of it but is her own worst enemy.

Her mother was drowning in silence.

There was no love, between mother and daughters. The children were only tools of spite.