

Soup

Warmth filled the air of the dining hall, soothing scents of soup drifted between the rooms. Faians arrived supporting various regional ingredients in their wings and paws. The large pot sat in the centre of the hall, bubbling away generously as the flames below it flickered. Horizon was last in line, observing all of the selections the strangers had brought, the different themed items from previous feasts and home-grown in gardens, they selected the best scraps for the existing taste profile and tossed them in. Lanterns levitated above them, sending warm rays of light down, warming the corners that the giant flames did not touch.

Chattering filled the air as Faians from different regions came together to share soup with one another, their discussions of different homes and cultures entered Horizon's ears in snippets, the odd mention of local dishes or their grandparents' favourite recipes. Anxiety bubbled in his belly much like the soup, he had no particular stories of interest to share, nor was he particularly good at socialising — he knew his way around a kitchen and that was about it. As the queue became smaller, his worry grew larger, his wings trembling slightly as he finally came face to face with the pot. He gently drifted upwards, opening his wings to drop in a variety of colours and shapes, watching them disappear beneath the depths of the soup.

As he came back down, he sheepishly made his way over to the Faians grouped together, waiting for the soup to be served. Horizon made no effort to approach anyone and instead kept to himself, watching the pot as a small group gathered to assist in extracting the soup into small bowls. Laughter and joy lit up the room, but Horizon felt awfully cold.

Bowls were lowered from the pot, served to each patient Faian. Horizon gratefully accepted his, murmuring an appreciative "Thanks." as he brought the bowl up to his nose, taking a deep inhale of its warm scent. It felt like autumn embodied into a bowl, the orange hues on top and chunks of various earthy foods came together to produce a dish that was as autumnal as the orange and brown trees outside.

Horizon tucked into the bowl, savouring the spices and vegetables. He was so engrossed into the bowl that he failed to notice the other tortuvina eating next to him, until they spoke. "Not much of a social butterfly either, huh?"

Preventing himself from launching upwards and ejecting his own skeleton from his flesh, Horizon choked on his soup and swallowed hard, suppressing a cough. "Not really," he answered, almost unsurely.

The other tort shrugged and nodded in understanding. "I don't carry any stories anyone would find exciting, I'm not sure why I came, really."

"For the soup, I'd imagine." Horizon responded. In an effort to sound less snarky, he added: "I think the atmosphere is nice as it is, the conversation and warmth around me is enough, I don't need to be part of the fire to enjoy its heat."

Tab 2

