

Cholganna was so often a fair weathered planet, that when it started to rain without end, no one had known what to do. Sure, rain itself wasn't particular in any way. When it rained, Malice and the pack of Nexu sought shelter under denser trees. Water couldn't hurt them, right?

However, when the rain didn't stop, that's when concerns arose. Ponds that had once been flat and dry became lakes, quickly eating up fields until it threatened the edge of the forest, the water only held at bay by the slightly risen terrain. Malice eyed the water, dipping a foot into it before quickly pulling it back. Cold. Cold and rising quickly. The pack needed to do something. They couldn't nest where they usually did if it continued to rain as it was. There was little shelter up into the limbs of the trees themselves, and the group was quickly running out of options.

Making their way back over to the group, Malice and Aiya reported on the growing tide.

"It's rising quickly. At this point, we'll need to make for higher ground if we want to keep from having the little ones drown."

Cats weren't known to love water in any way, but Nexu were decent swimmers and didn't mind it. Not when it was staying still, at least. The cubs, still only a few weeks old, hadn't learned to jump or climb much less swim. They'd be at risk of death if they didn't act fast. The spring had been good to the pack, bringing new life in cubs and plenty of food. Losing all of that would be devastating to their numbers.

Malice's thoughts were interrupted as the matriarch of their pack, and she and Aiya's mother finally came to a decision.

"Move to mountain. To cliffs. Safe there."

Malice had climbed the cliffs before. It was definitely high enough to stay safe, but would the others be able to climb such sheer stone? She had fingers to grip and pull herself up. Razor sharp claws didn't seem like the most appropriate climbing tools, but if Mother had suggested it, she must know something that Malice didn't. She often did. They pack trusted her to a fault, so there was little if any complain as they all started marching through the high water.

When they reached the cliffs, the water had begun to sink over the forest, now standing mid leg to the Nexu that Malice walked beside. She watched in awe as cat after cat easily scaled the walls, some with cubs in their mouths, some without. She'd never seen them climb anything but the trees that their home sheltered them with.

However, her thoughts were cut short as a sudden gush of water rushed over the side of the hill, hitting to Malice's hips. The current was stronger than she'd ever felt, wanting so desperately to pull her away from her family and drown her as it likely had so many other creatures. Luckily, the rest of the pack was already up or nearly to the top of the structure. That is, except for one. One adolescent cub, not newborn but not fully grown, seemed to have insisted on scaling the

cliff himself. Such arrogance wasn't anything unheard of, especially in their 'teenage' years. But now, the water was beginning to lick the end of his double tipped tail, and instead of moving faster, he'd stopped in fear.

Climbing up cliffs was a lot easier than climbing down them, but Malice knew for the others it would be almost impossible. Not with the water that high. Groaning, she stopped her own progression and started retracing her footing, slipping only once or twice. Once or twice was far more than enough, her life flashing before her eyes on every occasion. Finally, she reached the cub, nudging him with her foot. She was unable to carry him, and couldn't hold him in her mouth as a mother might, but instead, she allowed him to dig into her back, claws a little tighter than she would have preferred.

Blood dripped slowly from her body to the water below, only staining the aggressive and crashing liquid for a few seconds before it was consumed, much as they would be if she couldn't continue climbing. Malice could feel her breathing becoming more labored, the strength from climbing back up, mixed with carrying a semi-large cat that was also causing her to lose blood, was a greater burden than she'd anticipated. But she was almost there. So close, she could almost feel it. She could almost feel her hand reaching the top.

A sudden surge of energy pushed through her, gifted by someone yet unknown source. Fingernails and toes dug into the cliffside as she finally finished the ascent, the cub jumping off as soon as the coast was clear. Malice collapsed on her stomach, breathing harshly for a few moments. Wet and cold and bleeding, she laid there, trying to focus on her breathing. She'd be able to patch herself up just fine, concluding that she'd had worse. Glancing down, the waves seemed to have calmed somewhat, no longer trying to reach higher. Perhaps that was why they so angrily crashed against the cliff. For now, it was time to start over.