

#9a

Stone Crusher

All of the rocks of the clan were rushing around Rock City, as fast as they could. Which was not very fast, but the effort was there. A crushed rock lay in the middle of the city. Everyone knew that the psychotic Stone Crusher crushed this rock, but they didn't exactly know who the rock murderer was. They all suspected Rock for no reason. **Poor Charlie...** Rock thought **He was the nicest rock here...**

After Charlie's burial, the town gathered for dinner. Whenever the clan looked at Rock, they made an angry face. Soon enough, the Stone Leader, Rebecca, scanned the room, nodded at her Second-In-Command, Cardboard, then stared firmly at Rock. **If looks could kill...**

"The clan has decided. You've been exiled to the Lonely Forest. You will leave immediately, Rock. Or should I say, Stone Crusher?" Rock could not believe his ears, which were never visible. Rock hopped along sadly into the Lonely Forest. **It's not just lonely, it's-it's-it's... deserted!** Rock didn't think it was fair, he thought he'd been a good Clan-Rock, but maybe he'd done something wrong? **Maybe I'm not athletic enough. Maybe I-** His thoughts were interrupted by a loud rustle behind him. Then, a voice rang from the bushes.

"I've heard so much about you, Rock! I've never met you, until now, but our families have been enemies for generations!" Rock was scared. Rock sucked in a nervous breath, then tried to sound brave.

“Who goes there?! Show yourself, you, coward!” Then another voice spoke up, full of rage and fury.

“You think you’re so cool?” It said. Rock felt surprised by the response.

“Um.. no? Just tell me who you are,” Rock demanded.

“As you wish. But just know, in a fight, I ALWAYS win,” The second voice responded. Rock squeezed his eyes shut. His anxiety heightened as he heard them approaching. He couldn’t take the suspense any longer! Rock opened his eyes, and to his surprise, a piece of paper and a pair of scissors burst out into the open, making Rock scream. Then, they began laughing hysterically.

“We got him! We got him *good!*”

After long moments of hysterical laughter, and pure confusion, the piece of paper wobbled toward Rock. Then, she said, “Hi! I am Paper, and this is my friend Scissors! Want to be our friend, too?” Rock made an effort to nod. “Cool!” she exclaimed.

It had been three months since the trio became friends, but Rock found himself thinking about his clan more, and more, by the minute. He wondered if he could find out who that Stone Crusher was, then maybe he would be welcomed back into the clan. Rock got an idea, ***What if Paper and Scissors could help me?!*** Rock found the idea intriguing, so he went over to his friends, who were playing tag.

“Hey, Rock! Where’ve you been?” Paper greeted happily.

“Well, I was just wondering if you guys wanted to help me figure out who the Stone Crusher is,” Rock said. Fear filled Scissor’s eyes, and Paper frowned.

“Sorry, but we can’t.” She replied, “Scissors can’t go there. Not again.”

“Why?” Rock asked.

Paper looked at Scissors, and he nodded,

“That’s how his brother was crushed. By the Stone Crusher, and she threatened to flatten him too, if she ever saw him again.”

Rock looked at Scissors, his eyes were still full of horror from the memory. Rock sighed.

“I’m sorry. I just- I am going to have to figure out who it is by myself,” he said, as suddenly Scissors became angry.

“Why do you care so much?! Why do you *want* to find the Stone Crusher? Are you two friends or something?”

Rock looked at him,

“I want to help my Rock Clan! If I find this Stone Crusher, I’ll be invited back in!”

Paper held her breath, and looked at Scissors, who was more furious than before.

“I should’ve known.” he said, “You *are* friends with the Stone Crusher, aren’t you?! You need her to help you get back into your clan. You don’t care about how we feel about it.” At that comment, Rock furiously hopped away as Scissors continued to shout at him.

“You still haven’t answered me! What are you hiding?”

In the distance, he could hear Paper pleading,

“Wait! Rock! Come back!”

Scissors turned away from Rock’s direction.

Rock had finally reached Stone City. He was going to find the Stone Crusher, and get invited back into the clan. Just then, as he walked up a cliff, he overheard the Stone leader talking to Second-In-Command, Cardboard.

“Cardboard, I love my life! I am the Stone Leader *and* the Stone Crusher! And no rock even knows it!” She said to him. But Rock felt a sudden fear rise within him, ***I have to fight them alone! And my clan still thinks that I am the Stone Crusher! I need...Paper and Scissors.***

But it was too late to go back now, Rebecca noticed Rock listening.

“Hey! I thought you’ve been exiled! But you’ve come back to smash more rocks, haven’t you?” she declared. Rock glared at her.

“I know you did it!” Rock shouted. “I know *you* were the one who crushed all those innocent rocks! And that pair of scissors...” His voice trailed off, remembering his friends in the forest. He wished he could go back...

“Ha! But *they* won’t believe you!” Rock looked hopelessly at the ground. She was right. Who *would* believe him?

Rebecca leaped for him again. She knocked him over, but this time, there was a loud crack. ***Ouch! My Spine!***

Then, Cardboard, watching from behind them, pointed toward the forest and shouted.

“Look! There is someone coming!”

As Rebecca was off guard, Rock knocked her off of him and pinned her against the cliff’s face.

“Hey!” the cliff shouted.

“Sorry, Cliff! Just defeating the Stone Crusher!” Rock said.

“Hahahaha! Now, nobody will ever know who the *real* Stone Crusher is, once I’m finished with you!” Rebecca declared. Rock flinched, then she screamed as she heard a voice shouting at her.

“Stop right there, Stone Crusher!”

Rock recognized this voice! It was...Scissors?! His friends were here!

Rebecca turned and furrowed her brows and said.

“So we meet again, Scissors... time to say bye bye.”

She leaped toward Scissors, but was met by Paper in mid-air. Paper covered Rebecca’s eyes.

“Get off!! I can’t see!” Rebecca exclaimed.

Paper ignored her, as Scissors was battling Cardboard. It wasn’t long before the Second-In-Command was nothing but millions of shredded pieces. But Rock hopped to Paper’s side, and was ready to kick that Stone Crusher, but she escaped Paper’s grasp...

“Lookout!” Paper screamed.

Rock finally realized what was wrong, the Stone Crusher was rolling right toward Scissors. The moment went too fast, Rebecca barely hit him, but the damage was done, he gave out a cry of pain, as Rebecca rolled right off the cliff, and shattered when she hit the rock-hard earth. Rock shuddered at the sight.

“Scissors! Are you alright?!” Paper asked frantically. His left blade looked like a notebook ring, so Rock guessed he wasn’t.

“Are you okay?” Paper asked firmly.

“Why wouldn’t I be?” Scissor smiled, as Rock exhaled all of his worries into the air, “she barely hit me.”

“I’m so sorry, Scissors,” Rock sighed.

“It wasn’t your fault,” Scissors replied, “Besides, you helped me overcome my fear of the Stone Crusher.”

Then a crowd of big old boulders said,

“Do you accept being the Stone Leader?” Paper and Scissors frowned, and exchanged sad glances. They didn’t want Rock to leave them, but it was his decision.

Rock didn’t want to leave his friends. He looked at his friends, then back at the clan.

Paper smiled and nodded at the boulders.

“I accept,” Rock said. Everyone cheered. Well, almost everyone...

Then Paper and Scissors said their farewells.

“Rock, you are one of a kind. We’ll miss you.” Paper said.

“Bye. I’ll miss you guys, too,” Rock said, “Bye Scissors. Hope you feel better.”

Scissors gave him a quick, fake smile, then the two of them left.

After a while, the old boulders approached Rock to prepare him for leadership.

“The clan wants some fresh new scenery to lay their eyes upon,” they said. “We think it’s time to move. Do you have any idea where we should re-locate?”

Rock knew JUST the place.