

# “Fire and Ash”

*By: Brianna*

Winter had ended; a new year began. Ice melted and new grass grew. The cycle would repeat itself, just as it had for countless years.

A dormant volcano concealed an egg from the world. As leaves began to pepper the trees, cracks formed spider web patterns across the egg's dark shell. In two weeks time, at the height of spring, a phoenix was born.

As any new bird is when it leaves its seclusion, the phoenix was disoriented. Its first steps were unsteady. After a day or so of stumbling, the chick could finally walk, albeit slowly.

Spring turned to summer; the pastel colors that covered the earth grew darker. Feathers appeared on the phoenix, their hues the glorious reds and yellows of a bonfire's flames.

Most phoenixes are proud birds, and this one was especially narcissistic. It loved the way its feathers glowed in the summer sun and would fly around the earth showing off its stunning plumage.

Throughout the summer, the earth was witness to the firebird's joy. Elated, the bird flew around Earth, orbiting like the brilliant sun. In three months the phoenix had circled the Earth as many as ninety times. These flights were taken in the bird's attempt to live the remainder of its life to the fullest; the bird was aware of its own mortality after all.

Soon the air grew colder. Plants dried to husks and leaves imitated the phoenix's feathers.

The firebird grew older, but even age could not diminish the bird's beauty. The once glowing feathers had attained a luster that they only do in the final stages of the mythical bird's life.

Knowing it was at the end of its life, the phoenix was determined to have one last flight. As the final days of fall approached, the firebird once again took to the skies. The bird flew up, and up, never faltering in its ascent.

Modern-day birds are incapable of flying as high as mythical birds could in those days. Feathers began to shimmer, then spark, and finally ignite. The phoenix became a blazing inferno of fire careening upwards into the atmosphere.

Beauty of that grandeur can only last so long though. The firebird's performance had cost it dearly. Expended, the mythical bird's charred corpse fell to Earth.

Fall became winter and icicles hung from the trees. The air was bitter and cold. Fields that once bore food became frigid, barren, wastelands. The deepest rivers froze solid.

In a dormant volcano an egg lay in the ashen remains of a cremated bird. After one month cracks formed across the egg; in two, the egg hatched.

One more month passed and a phoenix learned to walk. Spring began again.