

The Price of Survival

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Highly Commended in the 12-17 Age Category

In the high mountains of Nepal, tonight is stubbornly mute
A family of 5 sleeps, peacefully,
enveloped by thin walls,
but protected together.

The midnight air soars around the house relentlessly
yet today, a great shadow emerges.
And at once, the roars of the once mighty wind
are sliced into nothing-
to be blended with the concrete dust,
lingering as only a forgotten power.

Now, amber eyes flicker-
so bright, like they make the house glow with brightness.
It is the one who holds its title of strength and glory.
Yet, her cubs soft whimpers echo through the peaks,
small mouths-which wait to be filled.

She scents the goats through the heavy air.
Then through the darkness she sees something:
a family of 5 sleeps, peacefully.
Next to the goats,
A mother cradles her young child.
Then she realises-
without these goats, this child will also suffer.
The same protective love she shields for her own cubs.
Is the price of survival worth it, to hurt others?

No kill is made,
and the family sleeps soundly.

She steps back quietly into the cold,
her orange coat turning pale like snow.
The weight of gold and black marks is lifted.
No food, yet she feels free.
Its like the mountains have called her name.

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