

The Path of Butterflies

By Pabbit_da_Rabbit

Submitted: April 18, 2007

Updated: April 18, 2007

An introductory chapter, written for a writing contest in the forums. We had to write a first chapter using one of the quotes provided, and I used: "Follow the butterflies!"

Provided by Fanart Central.

http://www.fanart-central.net/stories/user/Pabbit_da_Rabbit/45092/The-Path-of-Butterflies

Chapter 0 - Preface

2

0 - Preface

I always thought it funny when I'd walk outside and see grass. Not brown, not wilting, not dead. Alive and green grass, freshly cut – usually – with the carefully picked trees and bushes and flowers growing from between the blades. Of course, why would it be funny? It was a gorgeous landscape surrounding my house, a place where I could breathe in order and sanctuary.

But it wasn't always like this.

We – me and my brothers and my sister – used to know nothing better than the dirt and weeds that bore their way through cracked concrete. The concrete really wasn't anything like what we have now. It was probably large slabs of stone that were mindlessly thrown on the floor to make it seem like we were "civilized." Funny. I thought that being civilized meant having the knowledge to read and think and not having to starve and having technology. But I guess it was an improvement. People came to try and help, but their efforts never seemed anything more than half-hearted.

Oh, I'm sorry. I never introduced myself. I am Pruidjak Kinahssa, from Walwaia, south of the Zsenfals. When I lived in my home village, me and my siblings scrapped for food. We struggled; we survived. But missionaries came one day, long, long ago, with the knowledge from the north. They saw the way we lived and pitied us. At least, that is how my great-grandmother told it.

Those North-men, she used to chide, *they hold nothing but trouble*. I remember the first time I saw them. Only nine, I think it was. But they came in, wearing what crazy clothes they had. Acting all superior and horrified by us. But, na! We are as human as they, and they looked down their sharp noses – I bet they could pierce lions with those things – and looked down upon us! Now, look at what's become.

I did look. I was perhaps nine, when I really did look at what became. Men and women came – not like a flood, no. They came in like wandering coyotes that have become lost. Then, they'd leave again. We'd watch them go. They went in a mass of colors. Then, they'd disappear into the wavering heat in the distance.

When they were so far away, with the heat waves rippling our vision – or was it twisting them? –, the colors melted together. My brother, the youngest, would squint and stare after them, right up until you could see no more. I remember him pulling on my loose shirt and motioning for me to come closer.

"The butterflies have gone," he had whispered sadly in my ear. "Where have they gone?"

I took a moment to think. Yes, yes. They did look like butterflies. "To a better life," I had replied, "to much food, to much health, and to much happiness, my brother."

He quieted for a moment. What came next was a mere murmur:

"Then we should follow."

I made him repeat it, for I could not hear.

"Follow the butterflies!"

And do so we did. But the path of butterflies is not an easy one...