

# A Twisted Tale

By **Ariana Fais** (Spirit Stories Days 1 & 2)

## **Character Profile:**

**Name:** Twist

**Ability:** Steal

How steal would work in the game: Steal allows you to use any other Spirit Lord's ability for one turn. For example, you could choose to use the Fox of the Hollow's ability, Peeping Fae, or any other Spirit Lord's ability that you choose. Even though it is called Steal, the Spirit Lord will still keep their ability. You can only use one Spirit Lord's ability per turn.

**Backstory:** Twist has only ever known evil humans ("Forest Cutters") and when Twist's family is killed by Forest Cutters that is the final straw. Twist is determined to avenge his family with the help of some despicable demons.

## **Character profile:**

**Name:** Glacier

**Ability:** Spirit Wings

How it would work in the game: Once per turn Glacier can use her Spirit Wings to fly out of range of another Spirit Lord's action. This means she can choose one Spirit Lord whose lantern or Spirit Lord power (not both) will not be effective against her that turn. For example, if the Fox of the Hollow was playing against her, she could use her power so that it could not use its Spirit Lord ability on her, but it might have the Shadow lantern, meaning it could still steal a card from her.

**Backstory:** Glacier has been around for millennia. She has seen multiple civilisations rise and fall. She has observed how human/Changer's behaviours and attitudes have evolved. She believes everyone can choose to be good that if they do, one day the world could be completely happy and at peace.

# A Twisted Tale

## 1 Twist

A gunshot sounded; birds took to the crimson sky as the shrill yelp of a cub pierced the air. Drawn to the yelp like metal to a magnet, the fox sped towards the sound. Blood-scent filled his nostrils, and glancing down, he saw that his scabbed bent paw had once again opened up. Pushing through the pain, he ran on - he was going to make it! Then he saw the trench: too far to jump; too far for the end to be seen. His desperately kindled hope flickering like a fire in the rain, piercing grey eyes darted around, taking in his surroundings. He spotted an old tree, torn down by a past storm. It stretched across the trench. Hurriedly he padded over to it. Tentatively, he crept along the branch, hearing the creaking of ancient wood under his paws. The fox crept further, only a tail's length away from the other side. A loud groan, and the first crack appeared, causing a chain reaction of multiple fractures. Frozen in fear, he stood, completely paralysed. Another gunshot, and he woke in a cold sweat. Eyes wide open, staring into the cave that was home. He thought he heard the slithering of snakes before scenes started flooding his mind - cubs and mate filled with not-life, the faint scent of Forest Cutter. At that moment everything clicked into place. It was them! They had done it, and Twist would do whatever it took to avenge his family, they would pay. The Forest Cutters would pay! No longer just a fox with a twisted paw, now Twist was the fox with a twisted heart.

## 2 The Spirit Wolf

Cars rushed past, filling the air with their toxic gases. As always, the Changers were unpredictable. One day, they were driving around, polluting the air, the next they were creating noiseless vehicles that gave off no foul smell. Glacier should have hated them, despised them beyond all imagining. After all, the Changers were the ones melting her home, polluting her skies, but every time the vengeful hate began to fill her, the winged spirit wolf would remember... Metal jaws clamped around her mortal form, cutting into her paw, the Changer that had freed her, healing her paw, and instead of keeping her captive, releasing her.

Such were the Changers that she longed for, that she knew all their kind could choose to be, and to those Changers, she would be forever in debt. She knew she could forgive them. She had to, because punishment and vengeance were not the same as justice.

She padded back, climbing up the steep slope that led to her home. The air began to chill as she entered the den. Ears pricked, she heard the crunch of snow under paw. A flash of red fur and the familiar scent of a confused young male. As always, Puzzle had come when the sun blazed directly overhead, increasing the temperature by the few degrees it could in such a cold climate. Puzzle ran into the den in his usual panic, asking the same question over and over - "Where are my kin? Where are my kin!?" The cave began echoing back the question, multiplying the sound. Glacier let out one sharp howl, silencing the fox's complaints. Placing her paws on top of his, she closed her mortal eyes, spirit senses tuning into the eyes of the trees, the mountains and other wolves, searching for the fox that would match Puzzle's scent. A scene flashed before her - glowing orange eyes, snarling teeth, the slither of ancient scales, fangs dripping with venom, screams of fear.

Slowly she opened her eyes, and two words came into her mind - Venom Virus. If a single drop got into your bloodstream it would be over, you would become the mindless pawn of the spirit demons which her kind called the Crimson Cobras; their voices whispering in your mind, their thoughts becoming your actions, their desires dressed as yours. Glacier had hoped the virus was extinct, but evil always returns, and as always, she would stand against it.

### 3 Twist

It was perfect! Why had he not thought of it before? This scheme would finally end the Forest Cutters! Ever since he had first heard the brush of scales in the darkness of the empty den, things had changed. He could feel their wisdom all around him, helping him make decisions and sharpening his plans. They were in his mind, they had found the scheme and thanks to them, the Forest Cutters' reign would finally be over! On the blood moon, three days from now, he would strike. They had said that then he would be strongest, invincible! Although... why couldn't he do it this night, after all, what difference would three days make? Yes! It would be tonight, that's when he would strike. Suddenly, two hissing voices pierced his thoughts, their words sliding into his mind like daggers. "No! It must be on the blood moon, only then can the plan bear fruit!"

"Okay, okay!" Twist yelped in pain, "I'll do it on the blood moon!"

“Good.” They whispered as they receded into the darkness of his dreams. Twist lay there, panting, but still childishly excited for the blood moon and the downfall of the Forest Cutters.

#### 4 Glacier

With the ancient wisdom of her kind, Glacier knew whatever the Crimson Cobras planned must be done on a blood moon. That meant she only had three days to stop it. “Where are my kin?” interrupted Puzzle.

“We have no time for that now, we have to find out who find who is carrying the Venom Virus and stop whatever the Crimson Cobras have planned!”

“What are Crimson Cobras?” asked a confused Puzzle.

As Glacier was about to explain, a realisation struck her. She had seen the vision while she was looking for Puzzle’s kin, so perhaps he was the key to finding the virus carrier. But by the time she had finished explaining, Puzzle was just staring straight past her, unresponsive. Maybe, she thought, it was just too much for the young fox. Suddenly his eyes began glowing a dazzling green and he bolted down the side of the mountain with Glacier in hot pursuit. They ran through the vale of ice for many lopes. The sun set, rose, set and rose again, bringing them to the day of the blood moon and the edge of a ravine.

#### 5 Twist

The time had finally come, and as the blood moon rose, the Forest Cutters would fall! The Crimson Cobras had explained everything - they would lend him their venom. All he had to do was bite one Forest Cutter. When they too carried the venom, it would spread like fire through the bush. Once everyone had the virus, they would be under his control and the possibilities of what to do with them would be endless.

Finally, he would have vengeance for his family, at last he would have justice, and a world that once again knew happiness and peace. Carefully placing his footing, Twist began the steep climb to the top of the ravine.

#### 6 Glacier

Staring down at the slope, Glacier asked Puzzle what was going on, but he just kept gazing into the ravine. Thunderbolt-sudden, an idea struck her - perhaps Puzzle was acting as a sort of guide, leading her to the carrier of the virus. Well, there was only one

way to find out: she lifted Puzzle onto her back, spread her snow-coloured spirit wings and dived down. The screams of demons flooded her ears. Red eyes glowed all around her, but she kept going, pushing past them.

Glacier's eyes fixed on orange brownish fur and saw the familiar glowing eyes she had seen in her vision. Slowing her descent, she levelled herself so that she could get a better look at who she was dealing with. There was nothing that was obviously different about the fox, but something was definitely wrong. Closing her eyes, she looked into his soul and saw: eating into his mind were two Crimson Cobras. Everything suddenly became crystal clear: it wasn't the fox's fault, the cobras were forcing him, polluting his thoughts, clouding his judgement. Crimson Cobras were powerful mind controllers, and the only way to stop them was to reject them utterly - something which was practically impossible for any mortal.

Glacier racked her brain trying to find out anything she could about the fox, searching for the right approach. Then she found it. "Your family's not all dead. This is your son."

## 7. The Cub

The wolf's words echoed in his mind, "This is your son."

No, it couldn't be, it wasn't possible! Twist's family had all been killed and the Venom Virus was the only way to avenge them. And yet, at the back of his mind a small voice was pestering him. What if he is your son? After all you were too upset to properly check if they were all there. An image flooded his mind, five out of six cubs, one survivor. Twist sniffed the air, taking in the sweet fragrance of a familiar cub "My son!"

The cub stared back at him, and slowly a smile crept its way onto his face. "Daddy!"

It really was him! He gave one ecstatic bark, and the Crimson Cobras shot out of his mind. He was Twist again, a fox with a twisted paw but with a VERY good heart.