

While no coward in regards to mundane flight, hovering a dozen or so feet in the air, slow landings and takings off and basic aerial maneuvering, there was always an anxiety that racked Aquilla's mind, with thoughts of disastrous accidents being a constant, but what truly made him terrified was, advanced flying, tricks, flying fast, diving even maintaining a state of soaring was too much for the stallion.

"No more" Aquilla thought to himself, as he awoke from his sleep, he rose from his nest stood before his full body mirror and looked at the aquamarine griff in the reflection, he had a look of determination and as he clutched his yellow talon into a fist, he strengthened his resolve, furrowed his brow and whispered to himself "I will fear the skies *no longer*".

Aquilla despite vowing to rid his fear of heights and flying fast, was rather comfortable with keeping his fear of the dark, evident by his leaving of his room's light on overnight, because of this he had to check the clock in the room, which Aquilla made out to be 5:40, to check if it was PM or AM, he peeked through the curtains and it was not the pitch black dark of night-time but it certainly wasn't daytime.

"AM it is" thought Aquilla with no air of satisfaction or disappointment, but then he saw this as a blessing, earlier it is, the fewer griffs to see him cry like a hatchling.

He felt ready to just leave right then and there but he felt he needed some moral support so he took some nice feeling fabrics in his saddlebags, just in case he felt overwhelmed which was an inevitability given what he was about to do.

As Aquilla locked his front door and proceeded to walk through the empty neighbourhood, he felt fear already creep its way up his back, but he refused to let it get to him, if he can't walk a upper middle class neighbourhood early in the morning without getting scared, he clearly wasn't ready for what lied ahead

Along the way Aquilla decided to fly instead of walk, reasoning to himself that it's a mental warmup of sorts, as he flew closer and closer to the peak of his home of Mt Aris, he couldn't tell the cold wave that crept up his spine was from the high altitude or from nerves, he dismissed it regardless as he flew higher and higher, when he finally reached the top, fear while present of course, there was also a sense of majesty he felt being so high up, the breeze through his black mane and turquoise feathers, the cool morning air being so much less humid than the air nearer the base of the mountain, and the sounds of crashing waves against the rock of the mountain, he then looked down, saw the great distance from the ground, and with his heart racing and breath hitched, sent himself down.

Panic spread across Aquilla's whole body as he plummeted from the mountain, but then he unfolded his wings and shot up soaring around the mountain's peak, the panic while still there was overwhelmed by a near infinite feeling of adrenaline, as it pumped through the griff's veins and gripped his brain he decided to make a great dive to the base of the mountain, the wind almost cutting into his body like knives he flew with such speed.

But as he neared the base, he gave but two beats of his wings and stabilised himself now lazily soaring across the sea, as he soared he eyed the horizon seeing the breaching of fish and the faint presence of ship silhouettes in the distance, a smile curved across the griff's beak, as he glimpsed such sights, he was truly proud to call such a place his home.

Feeling on top of the world, he wanted to cement his achievements to establish himself, as a hippogriff he had the front of an eagle, king of the skies and he was determined to claim his throne among the clouds.

With mighty beats of his wings he flew higher, higher than the city of Mt Aris and even the mountain itself, as the last of the adrenaline flowed from his heart, he saw the hazy orange of the sun rising from the horizon, with the last of his adrenaline, he circled in the air a few times before rising higher than he ever had before and letting out a majestic and powerful "SKRRRRRAAWWWWWW".

As the last of the adrenaline left Aquilla's body emitted with that sky shaking screech, he clumsily flew down to where he had cast himself off the mountain, all the while his breathing became irregular and panicked and his limbs began to feel like jelly.

The moment his legs touched the ground he collapsed like a ragdoll his breath hitched and raggedy, his face flushed with heat and sweat and his heart beating like the drum of a heavy metal band, out of desperation he pulled out the fabrics from his saddlebag, and felt them in his talons and buried them in his face, slowly his breath became more stable and his heartbeat became less erratic.

He laid there for about 20 minutes his face and talons lost in the fabrics, from the fuzzy purple felts, to the smooth pastel silks, to the soft white wool, before he decided he needed to get home and have a nice ice cold glass of orange juice, so he pulled himself up and flew down towards his home.

As he flew he did so faster than what he was used to, not as fast as he had just done during his adrenaline high but still a tangible difference, with his fears faced and confidence established, he felt more comfortable with flying, not enough to replicate what he had just done but enough for now "Hatchling steps" Aquilla mumbled to himself as he soared downwards towards his home, ready to make a celebratory breakfast.