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## Rebellion

by Chris Baker

Rebellion meant a look in the eyes, an inflection of the voice. at most, an occasional whisper. That sounds so menacing doesn't it, but it wasn't and it isn't because we depend upon detecting predators before they detect us. We have to you see, to survive in the wild open spaces of Braeroy. What's Braeroy? It's a glen in Invernessshire, quite high up. The foot of the glen is at 650' and rises to 3,700' at the summit of Creag Meagaidh. On a lazy, bee buzzy mid-summer day its' mood changes quickly and in winter, it is savage. We wander the glen with an abundance and variety of other wild creatures: foxes, pine martens, golden eagles, peregrines, dippers, red grouse and all sorts of insects.

I was dropped in an area of dense vegetation on Braeroy in the second week of June a year ago. My mother separated herself from the harem when she knew that I was coming. It was a private place that she found. She hid me well. From what? Oh, foxes. Yes, they are especially horrible. They like nothing better than to sneak up behind a hind when its' fawn's fore feet and head have just appeared and drag it out with their sharp teeth. Golden eagles too. They soar and soar and soar, high, high on the wind and drop with talons open like great jaws to carry a fawn high away to the crags. Without warning, whistling air, thump of talons and a baleful bleat loose themselves in the timeless silence of the rocks and heather.

I was soon on my feet – only twenty minutes later. My mother licked me clean and nudged me to my feet: she licked me clean so that no one could smell me. I began to suckle. Oh, how comforting that was. We stayed there, alone in that place for about a week. I liked to doze in the shafts of sunlight that sprinkled the bracken and grasses and lying there in silence I watched the insects of the glen while I waited for her to return. How comforting it was to be shielded by her from the cool night air. In that place to protect me she ate my droppings and urine so that no one would find me. After going to all that trouble, who would rebel? When we returned to the harem, I ran at my mother's flank for a year but it is now time for me to leave the herd.

I shall wander to find other young stags – batchelor groups we call ourselves and we will wander into other glens. Only the strongest of us will challenge to lead a harem. Then is the rut: that is time of rebellion – no inflection of voice, no whispering – a full hoarse full volume roar. It is the time of risk and death.