



The Ember of Exile

sillybilly



THE ARTIFACT'S POWER

The guards shove Jonhe into the tangled brush of the ancient woods, their faces cold as they cut the ropes from his wrists. Without a word, they retreat toward the safety of the civilized world, leaving him alone in a place where the law has no reach.



JONHE'S DESPERATE ESCAPE

Towering trees with bark like wrinkled skin stretch toward a sky they have long since hidden from view. Jonhe pushes through the dense undergrowth, surrounded by the unsettling echoes of growls and the low, rhythmic hum of a forest that feels alive.



He stumbles into a silent clearing where a gargantuan dead tree stands like a bleached skeleton against the gloom. Between its gnarled, split roots, a strange and vibrant light pulses from the earth, casting long shadows across the moss.



Kneeling before the roots, Jonhe finds a crystal the color of a setting sun, glowing with an intensity that warms his weary face. He reaches out a trembling hand, hoping this find might be the key to his survival or a treasure worth a fortune.



As his fingers brush the cold surface, the crystal shatters with the sound of breaking ice, releasing a torrent of orange sparks. The light surges into his palm, a searing heat racing up his arm that forces a cry of agony from his throat.



The burning sensation fades into a gentle warmth as Jonhe stares in disbelief at the small, flickering flame dancing in the center of his palm. The fire does not scorch his skin; it moves with his breath, a living extension of his own will.



JONHE THE ARCANE WARRIOR

Empowered by his new gift, Jonhe points his hand at a rotting log and unleashes a concentrated burst of heat. The wood erupts into a roaring blaze, lighting up the darkness and filling the air with the sharp scent of smoke and victory.



Far beneath the forest floor, in forgotten caves and buried ruins, other crystals begin to wake in response to the stolen fire. Shards of sapphire, emerald, and violet light up the subterranean gloom, signaling an ancient imbalance.



The forest is no longer silent, as heavy footsteps and rustling leaves mark the movement of guardians long forgotten by man. Great, shadowed figures emerge from the depths of the woods, their eyes fixed on the source of the unnatural heat.

**JONHE**

Jonhe stands amidst the smoke, a man once broken now fueled by a dangerous power, unaware that he is being watched. In the darkness beyond the firelight, something ancient and hungry prepares to reclaim what was taken.