



Fire Mountain
was named for
Fuego Mateo,
the
Dragon
who lives within.



As one might expect, dragon outbursts can cause serious damage.

Flames emitted from Fuego Mateo's mouth and nostrils ignite greenery, blacken the rock face of the mountain, and scorch willows in the valley below. Razor-sharp claws gash the rocks around caves. One lash of the tail can snap trees like toothpicks.

Sometimes for long stretches of time, and as is happening right now, Fuego Mateo sleeps.

When the dragon rages, there is no peace. On the other hand, when Fuego Mateo is calm or asleep, an extraordinary serenity pervades the area. Such contrasts abound around Fire Mountain. Even the geography manifests extremes. Cold snowmelt runs down from the peak on the north side while a bubbling hot spring that once coursed freely now trickles over rocks on the south. Solid rock faces above give way to flowing green grasses below. Jagged, dark caves loom above massive round boulders.

Of course, stories of the dragon abound. To this day, most people steer clear of the whole area where fire and fury can erupt unpredictably from the innards of the mountain.

But as is so often the case, the fear is grounded in lack of understanding. Fortunately, truth was eventually revealed, albeit on a very small scale. A few brave souls came to understand Fuego Mateo through careful and diligent attention. They learned what provokes and what soothes the dragon, and they discovered the treasures that can be uncovered by attending to flare ups.

With this knowledge, the tiny community of Korarok was created on the land right below Fuego Mateo's caves. The families coexisted with the dragon and Korarok flourished for quite some time. Then, one fateful day, a dragon encounter escalated to the point of catastrophe, almost completely destroying the village. Just two very old sisters remained in Korarok until the recent death of one of the sisters. Now only one person lives on the land below the dragon.

Her name is Josphine, and she holds the crucial knowledge:

She knows what incites as well as what tranquilizes the dragon.



Josephine knows about twilight
when both day and night exist,
when neither day nor night exists.