

## PYRE BLAZE LUMBER

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The sparks of life. The flame of existence itself. The day the baby was born was a hot summer day. The mother, Karma, told of the struggles she had that morning. The ones that told her that her baby was ready to be free. Her fire child. The day almost seemed too ironic. The news warned of the hottest day of the year, urging everyone to stay inside.

Karma felt the piercing thuds, like a drum against her, as she tossed from side to side in bed. She wondered why the baby was so active and what it meant. She sat up and stared out the window. The heat waves were vibrating the earth. She felt herself heating up by the moment. She struggled to stand, and when she did, she felt a pressure in her abdomen that was incomparable to anything she'd ever felt. She managed to pull herself to the living room, where she felt a *pop*. A *pop* that came with a waterfall that soon filled the entire floor surrounding her. Or at least it felt that way. She knew it was time.

She yelled to her husband, Joseph, who was drowning in a pool of his own sweat, to inform him that it was time. He ran, and in the blink of an eye, they were off to the hospital in the dead of the heat.

The car heated up as they went on their journey, and Joseph feared they wouldn't make it. As they got closer, while on the freeway, the car got hotter, and slower. Sweating buckets, Joseph started to panic as they came to a stop. The heat beat on the couple with such force, as if punishing them for trying to have this child.

Joseph opened the hood, and thick clouds of gray smoke immediately filled the air with a strong fragrance. He worried, wondering if he could resolve this problem in time to get his wife to the hospital.

Joseph heard a piercing scream from within the car, and ran to see the additional problem that had arisen.

"She's ready! She's coming," his wife screamed.

Joseph panicked harder. He waved, he danced, he jumped. He did all he could to get even an ounce of someone's attention. He finally found someone willing to help.

They drove a red and orange truck with orange flame decals. They stopped slowly and offered Joseph a ride, but the driver had one bizarre condition. He wanted to name the baby.

Joseph hesitated. But with time slipping away, he realized he could always pretend to agree and choose a different name later.

The mysterious driver spoke three words, "Pyre

Blaze Lumber.” This was to be the name of Joseph and Karma’s child. What did it mean? The couple had no idea, but the name had a ring that appeased both of them—quite a lot. Joseph agreed in the end.

The driver sped their way through the traffic of the busy, hot, freeway.

In the beautiful month of April, Pyre Blaze Lumber was born. She’s passionate and aggressive—a flame unlike any other. Her parents often attributed her nature to that hot summer day. With her heavy belief in astrology, she ascribed it to being an Aries, a fire sign.

Nothing was all that great for Pyre. She always felt a looming curse. Her parents reminded her how “special” she was and even told her where her name originated. She couldn’t believe a random person named her, but to her, it fit well.

The first chemical reaction she experienced up close was a fire. She sat and watched the flames’ destructible properties, and wondered how powerful they could be. Could it wipe out civilization, she wondered. Her infatuation grew as time went on.

With more life lived, she felt the flames had ever-changing meaning and purpose. They weren’t just destructive but helpful. For some, fire is all they rely on to cook their meals, to keep warm. For others, it took away their security and lives. Fire could be used



for bad things like burning evidence or good things like lighting the dark. Fire is incredibly versatile.

By her late thirties, her parents passed away in a suffocating fire. She wondered if their death was related to her obsession. Sitting by a bonfire in her backyard, she saw a new perspective. She never thought her parents would pass and thus never thought of any potential burying methods. She thought of all the raw emotions she experienced as she looked intensely at the alluring light. She wondered what it'd be like to touch it. To feel it, inside of her bones. To breathe it, up close.

She got up and walked into the blazing flames. When she made it to the other side, she felt a liberating force. With all her life feeling like a curse, she wondered, how could fire feel worse?