

## Adria's Heart

by Mohale Matsapola

Adria sat by at the forge in the Order of the Sun camp, the forge's warm glow kept back the icy blasts of the winds of the dark February night. As she sat at the worker's bench tinkering another leaky mug she couldn't help but yawn. She tired of the endless leaky mugs of the world and wondered when the real fun would begin. In her boredom Adria went over lists of things she could do in her head. She'd already fed Argyle and made sure he was well taken care of. She'd taken care of the chores Thoren and Talia had asked of her. She'd even helped a woman being harassed at the bar; after all lasses had to stick together. Adria slowly found herself missing the excitement of summer; Of Ignis' endless chore lists and projects and Aria's experiments constantly giving her something new to tinker. As she finished the cup she could not help but keep the events of the summer from her mind and decided to go help out Talia at the Egg as the bard had been acting strange of late. She lit her lantern and took to the Bristol streets with her tinkering hammer in hand. After all, she couldn't be too careful being a woman. The streets of Bristol were dark and quiet save for Adria and her lantern. As Adria approached the nest the ground became shrouded in fog and soft mutterings began to fill the air. Approaching the tree carefully Adria's scanning eyes finally fell upon Talia's sleeping form, lying against the tree the nest hung in. Adria smiled at the sight. Thoren would have had a fit if he'd seen this but Adria had found it adorable.

Gently Adria shook Talia as to rouse her from what looked like a peaceful sleep "Talia, wake love."

The bard stirred to see the other woman's face grinning above her.

"And what pray tell are you grinning about?" Talia asked Adria bemused

"You were muttering in your sleep. I found it adorable." She replied

"I'm telling you the only thing to come out of my mouth in the last hour was today's lunch."

Adria gave Talia a worried look "You've been sick for a couple days, why don't you go and rest and leave the rest of your Egg's watch to me."

Talia looked really touched before having a grin cross her face "You're bored aren't you?"

"Aye," Adria responded "Go and sleep now love I'll take care of things here. Night watch is boring here anyway."

"Tis well, I shall see thee in the morning" Talia spoke as she left giving no complaint as to being allowed to rest for the night as she began to feel ill once more.

Adria hated it when she was right. This egg shift was more boring than any cup she'd been asked to tinker. Yet, if it was for Talia's good, she would stay.

“I’m cold....” Came a whisper on the wind

Adria nearly hopped out of her skin when she’d heard the voice by the Egg. Drawing forth her hammer Adria looked around to see who’d spoken. None of the villagers dared come by the Egg especially at night when they couldn’t see as well for fear of the mysterious happenings that had happened to around egg toward the end of last summer. Many fear the place to be cursed and, given that Adria had seen no one to accompany the mysterious voice she’d heard, she was beginning to wonder if this place wasn’t cursed herself.

“I’m cold....” Came the voice again. This time Adria could hear it in the tree, with the egg.

“Get away from there you thief!” Adria shouted drawing forth her hammer and scurrying into the nest.

But when Adria got into the nest all that was there was the egg. Nervously, she peered around the egg looking for the source of the voice. But as she looked around the egg she realized the source of the whispers was not coming from around the egg but rather the egg itself.

“He—hello?” Adria asked the egg

“I’m cold...” the egg said with the voice of a small lass barely 5 summers old “so cold.”

Adria quickly took off her outer cloak and wrapped it, mouth agape, around the egg.

“Grammercy, this night is most chilly.”

“You....you’re talking!?” Adria exclaimed

“Well not exactly, but yes, I am communicating with you.”

“Very well, do you need anything else?” quirked Adria with an arched eyebrow wondering if this was some sort of trick.

“Do you know where my mommy is?” the egg asked innocently.

Adria winced at the question. How was she to explain this? This creature was obviously too young and innocent to understand.

“Your mommy is away, love.” Adria said as tenderly as she could muster “But we hope to have her returned to us soon enough.”

“That was the darkness I felt wasn’t it? The darkness took mommy away from me.” It spoke as flashes of this past summer event’s flashed into Adria’s mind. Soon she saw visions of Lady Tso summoning the Danse Macabre to bring Druscilla’s soul into the Gem.

“Aye.” Responded a shocked Adria, this egg obviously knew its surroundings very well. It knew the difference between day and night, between light magic and dark, mayhaps even good and evil. Adria was astonished at the insightfulness of a creature yet to be born.

“And the Light killed her,” said the Egg resolutely though its next question was genuinely curious. “I remember that too. Why does everyone hate my poor mommy so?”

Flashes of Simeon now came to Adria’s mind as Mages and Warriors came to mind standing around a roused Bloodtharcken plunging a spear into her heart.

“Well, the light attacked your mother because...

“Your presence is warm, you are one of those day warriors.” The egg observed.

“A what?” Adria asked.

“A day warrior, a warrior of the Sun. I remember many warriors and mages from Day and Night, Sun and Moon.”

“I do be a warrior with the Order but what does that have to do with anything?”

“My mother whispered to my egg in her sleep. She told me about you followers of the Sun and Moon. She warned me the followers of the Moon would not like that I would take back the knowledge which was rightfully ours. She also said the followers of the Sun would kill me for not being like them, not being human.”

“That’s not true at all!”

“Then why did you take my mommy away?” The egg asked, clearly confused.

Adria rested her hand upon the egg as if to grab a child’s shoulder. “Because your Mommy was angry love, so very angry. She wanted to make us all go away.”

The two of them sat quietly for a long time. Adria rested her hand upon the Egg which had once more fallen silent as if to shed the silent tears of a confused child. Adria didn’t know what else she could do for the creature. Had this been Argyle a few games of Hide and go Thump or Barbarian Chess would have had his spirits up again. But what remedy was there for such a pain at such a young age. Adria, toughest lass in all the Band of the Twisted Claw, shed a tear and leaned gently next to the egg and began to sing.

“I’m scared.” The Egg whispered with a shaky voice “I’m going to hatch soon. My time of life draws nearer and I don’t have a family. I don’t have a Mommy. Who will take care of me?”

Adria began to gently rock the Egg back and forth as if to lull the creature to sleep for the night.

“Do not worry about such things little one. You will be taken care of; after all, you’re special.”

“But who will take care of me. I hear mother read stories by my tree sometimes, or women with child who whisper to their unborn children as my mother used to do me. With her gone, who will care for me? I can’t hatch knowing that I’ll be all alone.”

“You shall never be alone love; that I promise you. The Band of the Twisted Claw shall be with you everyday.”

“But what about a mommy, I need someone who will make sure I’m safe!” The egg cried

“I’ll be there for you love,” Adria said while hugging the egg “You’ll be safe with me and Argyle will be like a big brother to you. And if anyone should try to do you harm...”

“You’ll fight them for me?” Asked the Egg meekly

“Aye, love, aye.” Adria responded confidently

“I’ll be coming out soon.” Said the Egg

“When?” Asked Adria with a mixture of excitement and fear. She knew the hatchling’s arrival would bring much conflict as the Draco Disciples were sure to return.

But the egg was silent and though Adria tried coax a response, it seemed as if the tired hatchling had decided to finally get some rest. And as the crimson sun rose upon the shire Adria realized that perhaps it was time she got some rest too.