

Talis set Caius down on the table and immediately ripped open his robes where the wounds were present and hurried to his potions cabinet.

“No, not the blue one,” he said looking over his many vials magical liquids and medicines “and not any of the red ones I don’t want to burn him. Not the green...AHA!”

Talis reached into the cabinet quickly withdrawing a vial of darkest black, so dark that the sunlight seemed to be absorbed into the glass rather than reflect back from it.

“My universal coagulator,” Talis said marveling the vial “with this I can at least stop his bleeding and might yet save him.”

Talis quickly poured a few drops of the liquid on Caius wounds causing the bleeding to stop at the surface of the skin adding a healing charm he’d learned a year previous from one of the gypsies in Bristol.

“This is a spell that I intone

Flesh to flesh and bone to bone

Sinew to sinew and vein to vein

And each one shall be whole again!”

Blue light surged into Caius as Talis’ heart sped while he waited for Caius to wake. What if he didn’t wake? What if he’d already failed? Did Caius still have his command the Elements?

All Talis could do was sit and wait for time to answer all his questions.

Caius began to rouse and as he stood up he moaned with the pain.

“You must rest, Caius.” Talis said. Caius moaned a little bit, at the force of his body hitting the bed.

“Talis, I haven’t seen you in over a years time. How fair thee?” He inquired weakly.

“I am well, as I wish I could say the same for you. How did this happen? What happened?” He asked.

“Well, it’s a long story, but I can tell you the damage was from Draco Disciples.” I told. A worried look came over him.

“Draco disciples? Here? This does not sound good. I just had trouble with Draco’s not to long ago. What could they want here?”

“I could not tell you. But I know that they will not rest until Tso reaches Tiamat.” Said caius.

Talis gave a startled look.

“How do you know that?” He asked.

Caius reached into his side for something. As he did, he brushed something wet and rough. he looked as best he could at my side, and saw the wound. Looking at his hand to see blood smeared on it.

“I must apologize; I am trying my best to heal you. But I have not been the same since Lady Tso took some of my power...” His voice trailed off. I was shocked to hear this.

“She took your powers?” I said. He shook his head.

“I can no longer connect with my Fire. It is as if it never existed.”

“Talis, I know you and what you can do. It is still inside of you. You must believe, and all things will become possible.” He arose from his crouched position, and placed his hand on my shoulder.

“Spoken like a true Guardian.”

“I am sorry to leave you like this, but I must go inquire about... a matter at hand. Please, I beg of you stay put until you are fully healed. You should be ok to at least walk by tomorrow.” Talis explained.

“I can’t waste a whole day! Lady Tso just barley escaped me . I must catch her.” Caius protested, trying n to sit up to get better eye contact. Talis chuckled.

“You are in no condition to be Draco hunting. Here you will be safe, so just rest and I will return soon.”

“I will. Thank you. I owe you. Who knows what would have happened if I wasn’t found.”

“Honestly, I think you were very lucky. As far as I know, a person should be dead after all the blood you lost.”

“How much blood?” he asked. I

“Well, let’s just say I don’t think two people would have that much blood combined.”

Talis turned to the door.

“I am sorry to leave, but I must. When I return, you must tell me everything. How you got here, and how you ended up like this.” Talis said.

“I will. I at least owe you that much.” Said Caius as Talis walked out the door and closed it all but a crack.

“There are a few rations next to the bed for you, if you feel the need to eat, please do. And do not move; the spell works best while you are motionless.” And with that, Talis left the room before Caius’ inevitable protests took place.

With Caius safe in his lab Talis could now start his search for the Spirit Stone. His scrying for magical stones had led him to Scotland far in the North. It appeared Tso’s thoughts about the stone being hidden in London were wrong. But Talis didn’t have time to ride to such a location on Glory, not with a Guardian so vulnerable in his home. Instead he’d opted to use one of the spells he’d been working on. Putting on the black Draco cloak he’d stolen Talis

“Take me to a distant land  
Bring me forth at my command  
So I may see a different sight  
Move me now by magic’s light”

And with the incantation spoke a white glow began to surround Talis’ hands and slowly expanded to engulf him. The feeling of the light was glorious as if he was being bathed in the perfect temperature of warmth and peace. For the briefest of moments Talis could of sword he’d heard singing as if by a grand choir but soon all this dissolved into the sounds of the chilling winds and the sight of rolling hills of white powdery snow.

“Ah, so this is Scotland,” Talis bitterly muttered to himself as he drew his cloak in closer “I’d of thought there’d have been of been less wind.”

Talis had hoped that by leaving England the unnatural cold would have abated; and that the chill, known as Druscilla’s Lament amongst some of the mage circles, would not be found here. But it would seem that the sadness would be contained by no earthly shore, and neither would the cold. Talis made his way through the numbing winds toward the strong presence of magic he’d been feeling since he’s arrived. The feeling itself was a complex combination of incredibly hot and intensely cold all at the same time. The feeling generated by these two extremes however wasn’t one of balance wasn’t, but was conflict. As Talis felt this tension grow higher he saw a woman making her way through the blistering winds toward him. As she approached Talis realized that she was the source the powers he’d been feeling.

“You aren’t a stone.” Talis said disappointed.

“I beg your pardon?!” the woman responded.

“I mean no offense, I seek a particular quarry. Pardon me madam, I am called Talis Riverwind. I am an alchemist back in London and-“

“An Alchemical with the Order of the Sun?” She finished.

“Do you know me madam?” Talis asked with a raised eyebrow.

“You are my quarry, Talis Riverwind. Well, I’ve been seeking you. I have questions and believe you are the only one who can help me find answers.”

Before Talis could respond a shiver was sent up his spine and his amethyst amulet began to glow.

“Talis Riverwind? He who laid low Mark Korvis? Oh what providence, it would seem my scrying was not off when I went seeking Guardians that were alone. It’s going to be a most fortunate day for the Draco Disciples. Conquest, power and revenge!” came the harsh French accent of a cloaked figure

“Who are you?” Talis shouted as he put himself between this strange woman and the Disciple before him, “What business do you have with me?”

“The same business my cousin Katherine does,” he stated “to continue or great Mother’s work and take her vengeance on the Paragons and their Army for what they did her soul. As for a Name, you may call me Robert Mayhew.”

“Soulrinker,” Talis said in a breathless whisper recognizing the name of an upper level member of the Draco Disciples and one of Druscilla’s descendants “God have mercy.”

“You have already seen the power we possess Mage,” Mayhew chided “Surrender the rest of your powers to me and I may let you yet live as a servant to the Draco. You do have some promise and considerable information. What say you?”

Talis knew he was not yet ready to challenge another Descendant of Druscilla. The last time he’d tried he’d wound up near death; a mistake that cost him the use of his fire magic. He knew he had no choice. Whether he liked the option or not he had but one thing to say as he took the woman by the hands.

“Take me to a distant land

Bring me forth at my command

So I may see a different sight

Move me now by magic’s light”

Mayhew, much to Talis’ surprise didn’t seek to stop him from escaping via spell. In fact, the last thing Talis saw as he and the mysterious woman became covered in light was an alien grin crossing Diabolico’s face. Once again music and warmth circled Talis in a comforting embrace, promising peace. Talis knew that promise was hollow though. Some days he felt this war between he and the Disciples would never end, not until all were dead; him included.

As the light faded Talis realized he was in his home once more. The tidy space had Talis surrounded by modest décor, rickety furniture, and shelves filled with old books that sat by a fireplace whose flames barely kept the house comfortably chill due to lack of quality firewood.

“This is where you live?” the woman asked “I often imagined that you’d live in a large manor or something given your status in the Order.”

“My alchemy and tinkering doesn’t bring in as many pounds as I would it. But nevertheless my ends are met...for the most part. Tell me good madam, what is thy name?”

“My name good sir is Druscilla Snowfyre.” the woman stated “May I ask who that Disciple was?”

“Soulrinker, he is Tso’s blood cousin and a very powerful mage.”

“How powerful? Could you not have defeated him?”

“Like Tso, the depths of his powers have yet to be tested.

I require your most urgent assistance with my questions on a subject I’m told you are most learned in.”

“And what subject might that be my lady?” Talis said with an arched eyebrow?

“Why, the Fae of course.” She spoke flatly “Please as a Guardian of the Egg I ask you your assistance.”

Oh dear God, another one, Talis thought.