

## The Forgotten Prophecy: Caius' Farewell

“Three Cheers for the Paragon Defenders!” The Gypsies yelled. The Surrounding crowd began to cheer. I straightened and smiled to myself, basking in the glory. It’s finally over! Lady Tso has been stopped, and Adona Dragonborn was safe at last. No more threat, no more Draco Disciples. I looked at my friends, and they were tired, yet smiling. All is well, I thought. The greatest triumph here is that the long struggle between the Order of the Sun and Lunar Tribe as been resolved. Now, nothing will befoul this land.

As the crowd parted and the Defender’s returned to the camp, I walked slowly. In our greatest moment, I felt as if I had lost everything. With Tso stopped, my journey has too. I have no need to stay here, with the remainder of the Defenders here. They will have all the power they need to protect the citizens of Bristol. As I thought this, I heard a voice coming from a dark alley.

“Caius.” It called. I stopped and turned. A shadowy figure emerged. I jumped back and drew my Sword.

“Tharenian! What do ye want?” I commanded. He raised a hand, telling me to stop.

“Fear not, I seek to give thee the final task.” I starred back, confused.

“Explain yourself.” Still holding my ground. He advanced, placing a hand on my blade and gently pushed it to the ground.

“You are not finished. And you never will be. As you heard Thoren say, there is much evil out there yet. It is your task to keep balance.”

“Balance?” I asked, sheathing my sword. It is still a different feeling wielding a sword, after using spells for two years. My Staff still gleaming in the sunlight, attached to by back by the leather strap, still offered protection should steel fail.

“Aye, You see, since you were born, the Gods have placed a prophecy on your shoulders. Your parents knew this, and will play a part in it.”

“My parents are dead, no thanks to you!” I raised my voice back, choking back tears. He shook his head.

“Nay, in fact they escaped. I cannot stop the prophecy I had a part in. I let them escape.” My head began to spin. Why does this come out now? What does it prove?

“This prophecy was meant that you do exactly what you have. Now you must keep the balance, and what I mean by this is to protect the innocent, as you have been trying so hard to do.”

“I cannot protect all,” I argued, “ I have tried, but without the darkness, I have no powers but a few spells in my book and my Steel.” He smiled, but it was not a sinister one like he always has. It was gentle and inviting.

“You still have the Darkness, you must release it. It remains trapped in your staff. You must chose to release it.” I still have the power? This was fantastic! I can still help the world! No more evil will plague these lands.

“But this is the prophecy. You have the darkness. Now, it is time for you to become the darkness.” I froze, a look of shock upon my face. I am to become what I have sworn to prevent?

“I cannot. I am sworn against the shadows.” I replied.

“Aye, ye are. Hence, the reason you are to become it. With your power and will, you can survive its everlasting toil within you. You can command it to be good or not. You are the Balance between good and Evil.” I had nothing to say. What could I say?

“I have this power and now, after the struggle to stop using it, I am to use it once again to

determine what evil arises and what doesn't? Who Lives and Dies?" I asked. He nodded.

"Release this darkness, you must take your place, before an evil force does. Do not start another chapter in the Book of Evil." I removed the staff from my back and looked at it. The dark shard on top still glowing, the claws of the staff holding it in place. I raised it above my head and began to swing it. I will smash this crystal, and release the dark force. I stopped before I got very far.

"Wait. I must say goodbye. I will not make this mistake again. My friends must know that I am leaving. For good." He nodded.

"Meet me back my the Dragon's nest. The power surrounding it is the perfect place to contain this darkness." I nodded and ran to the camp.

As I neared, I could hear singing and laughter. They were celebrating. I entered the camp, and no time passed before shouting began.

"Tis another of our Defenders!" Someone yelled. There was much cheering. I has handed a mug of Ale.

"Drink, Friend, you deserve it!" Thoren told me. I nodded, and downed the mug. I looked back at him.

"May I say a few words?" He nodded.

"Listen up! Caius has a few words he'd like to share." I nodded.

"Gremercy, Thoren. Aye, Friends. We fought valiantly today. Tis a victory that will not soon be forgotten!" Huzzah's erupted from the crowd.

"Mages, ye have preformed well today. Talia, be proud. You have a fine collection of mages."

"Aye, love. I am proud." I nodded at her in approval. I looked back at thoren.

"We fought well today, all of the warriors. Ye too should be proud, thoren. A fine arsenal you have.

"You preformed well yourself." He replied.

"Aye. And to the trainer of these warriors," I looked at Greece, " Swing less harder next time." I rubbed my shoulder, and everyone laughed.

"Now, the main reason I have asked to speak is this. I am leaving." There was a rush of talk from the crowd.

"You can't leave."

"No!"

"Why?" I raised my hand for them to stop.

"I must, and this is why. For those who have not heard, I have had quite the journey before returning to Bristol. I had to fight my own battle, with the Darkness inside of me. I hold this dark curse." I held up my staff, the Crystal glowing twice as bright now.

"I have the power of darkness at my disposal. However, when I destroyed a force of evil, It left a gap. A gap in the balance of good and evil. And now that Lady Tso is gone, this gap has gotten bigger. And if balance is not restored soon, the world may erupt into Chaos. In sooth, I must be this gap. I will fill it, and restore balance to the world. With my power to resist the Dark temptations, I can wield the Darkness for good purposes. I will use it to see that peace is restored, and that justice will always triumph. 'Tis the balance of things, and it must be done." I looked at one person in particular.

"Lady Snowfire, I am sorry about out last parting. I never said farewell, or gave any hint about where I was going. Now you know. And I cannot change this. It is my prophecy, and I must fulfill it. And so, I say you ye, Farewell, Friend. You are strong, and will overcome many obstacles that arise." She arose from her seat.

“But, Caius...” I held up my hand.

“It is not a matter up for discussion.” I looked to my right. The shadow of Tharenian stood there. He nodded. And I knew what must be done.

“It is time. My friends, Be well, and good luck. Know you this, Whenever you are in trouble, fear not. Wherever evil walks, tread not. I will be there, ever watchful. And I will ensure the safety of all.” I turned and jumped up onto the ledge of the flower garden that the Camp has. I turned to everyone.

“And With this, I am Gone. My Friends, fight on! May the Glory of the day Fuel your passion for the morrows fight!” And with a thought, I disappeared out of sight.

I reappeared next to Tharenian, just on the other side of the wagon, out of sight from the camp.

“Was that necessary?” He asked. I nodded. I have never actually completed a teleportation spell before.

“Aye, they need not know what is about to happen.” He nodded, and we were off.

Along the way, I ran into a beggar, groveling for change. I stopped.

“What is your name, sir?” I asked. He looked up at me.

“My name is Riyan, kind sir. Might ye spare some coin?” I looked at him. An idea came into my head.

“Aye, and more. You have potential, I can tell. There is much more for you to come.” I reached into my bag and pulled out my large sack of gold. I will not need it where I am going. I gave it to him. His eyes swelled up with tears.

“My lord, ye are too kind.” he replied, overjoyed.

“Think not of it, now I have one more thing for you.” I reached into my bag again and withdrew my spell book. I placed it in his other hand.

“Seek out the Band of the Twisted Claw. There is much to be done. You will become more then you ever imagined.” He looked at me.

“All will be reveled in time. Good luck!” And with that, I turned and continued walking. He called out to me.

“What is your name, so I may share the story of your generosity?” I turned once again to him.

“Call me Caius Shadowsworn.” I told him, and left the scene.

Underneath the Nest, I began.

“Tharenian, you may have been tainted by the Darkness, but you have proven yourself to be honorable. Live on, and fight honorably.” He shook his head.

“Nay, Caius. My time here is limited. Death has granted me one day upon this earth, to finish the Prophecy. Now that this is done, I must return to him.” I nodded.

“I understand.” He turned on the spot and disappeared. I was left alone. I turned to the nest, taking in one final breath of triumph.

“I call upon the Darkness, to refill my soul. I claim my rightful place in the balance.”

“STOP!” I heard a commanding voice. I turned to see Ignis, standing behind me with the other three paragons next to him.

“You do not have to do this, you have much to accomplish.” Aria complained. I shook my head.

“Nay, Paragons. This is my calling. I must restore balance, as you seek to do. There is no place left for me in the tangible world. My mind has been made up.”

“Foolish. You always were.” Teranis stated, “But wise at the same time. You will do what you must. We will as well.”

“Thank you Paragons. Your legacy will too, live on forever.”

“Aye, that is will.” Nais added.

“You will do fine, Caius. Be steadfast, as you were once called.” Ingis said.

“Aye. But before I go, there is one last thing.” I walked up to each Paragon, handing them the Items bestowed upon me in the Temple of Chaos. Aria’s Shield, Ignis’ Fire Gauntlet, Nais’ Cloak and Teranis’ Earthen armor. I remained in just my robe, the silver stripes shimmering in the moonlight.

“Return the power to the world. It has served its purpose. Now it is time for someone else to claim its power.” They each nodded. I turned and faced the tree once again.

“Now, I must close this gap, before the unthinkable happens.” I withdrew my sword and stabbed into the ground next to me. Then, taking my staff, I raised it above my head.

“WITH THIS ACT, I CLAIM MY RIGHTFUL PLACE IN THE BALANCE OF LIFE!” I yelled.

I brought down the staff, and smashed open the crystal. The darkness seeped through it and began to cling to my body. I turned back to the paragons, who were still watching.

“We shall meet again...” I said. The darkness covered my whole body, and I felt the power once again. The familiar power that I used so much. With the crystal empty, the staff disintegrated, leaving only me. I looked to the heavens and raised my hands above my head.

“The balance is restored. I now travel to the spirit world, to watch evermore upon this earth.”

And with that said, Caius Shadowsworn disappeared.

The story has finally come to a close. The balance had been restored, and the Paragon defenders lived on. All was well in the world. Evil came and went, and good always triumphed. The legend of things came and went, and the legacy of the Band of the Twisted Claw lived on. Man’s goal in life is to obtain peace and keep it. And this was so to this very day.

The land of Bristol was at peace.