

She Who Walks Behind the Court (Part 1)

As Santiago walked through the gates of Bristol, he could only think, “What in God’s name happened?”

Walking through the empty town; the earth itself cried out, lamenting of the blood spilled upon it. The air itself felt unbearably heavy; with the foul smell of sulfur choking Santiago’s every breath.

The streets of Bristol lay barren. Not even a blade of grass stands. The Noble’s Glade, nothing but a scorched wasteland, result of the atrocities committed. The Fae fled, seeking refuge in the woodlands outside the city. And not a single child roams their kingdom.

“Hello? Be there anyone here? Can anybody hear me? Hello?!” Santiago shouted, hoping for some glimmer of life.

“Unbelievable. If nobody shall come out by their own will, then so be it! I’ll forgive myself later” murmured Santiago as he draws a circle around him on the dusty ground and sketches various symbols around it. With a small quartz crystal hanging off a twine string in his hand, he repeats, “Winds of East, of South, and North. Hear my call and guide me forth. They who be lost, reveal to me. Open my eyes, so mote it be!” The quartz crystal immediately stands horizontally, giving off a faint glow, and points in the direction of the Order of the Sun camp.

“Heh, so there is someone here...” Santiago chuckles to himself as he runs towards the camp. As he arrives at the Order of the Sun Camp, he noticed that the camp is for the most part, still standing. The crystal glows brighter and points towards a half-broken door. Slowly walking in, he sees a little girl wrapped in filthy sheets, just sitting on the ground quietly giggling, head drooped down with an empty stare.

“Poppet, what are you doing here by yourself? Where’s your mother and father? Better yet, where’s everyone from Bristol?”

In a barely audible whisper, she says, “They’re gone. They’re all gone.. The Order of the Sun, The Lunar Tribe, The Twisted Claw people. Everyone...”

“To where were they taken? Pray tell, who took everyone?”

“She did.”

“Who? Lady Tso?”

“Lady Tso? Why would Lady Tso waste her time on Bristol? The Lady left Bristol on a ‘personal journey’ a while back.”

“Oh by the grace of Heaven child, if you don’t tell me who did this, I’ll have to force it out of your mind!” shouted Santiago.

The little girl, still staring at the ground gave a slight smile and malicious little chuckle. “Lord Espresso. Wouldst thou verily harm an innocent child?”

Santiago takes a step back towards the door with a shocked look on his face. “How dost thou know my name? I never mentioned who I am to thee. Who are you?”

The concentration of sulfur in the air suddenly spiked and Santiago started coughing, choking from the foul fumes. The girl stood up, lifted her head and revealed fiery red eyes, her long hair turned silver and started flowing violently as if a cyclone had surrounded her. Santiago fell to the floor, barely capable of breathing, and with all his might, he manages to shout.

“I’ve faced legions of Hell more powerful than thee, Demon! Ne’er think thou shalt take me down so easily!” Santiago makes the sign of the cross and begins to recite the Vatican rites of exorcism in Latin, “Recéde ergo in nómine Patris, et Filii, et Spíritus Sancti! Exorcizo te,

immundíssime spíritus, omnis incúrsio adversáarii, omne phantasma, omnis légio, in nómine Dómini nostri Jesu Christi eradicáre, et effugáre ab hoc plásmate Dei! Demon, tell me thy name!”

The little girl and her flaming eyes simply stare at Santiago, standing perfectly still, not reacting the slightest bit to the exorcism.

“You... You’re not a Demon are you? If you won’t leave this child, I’ll force thee to reveal thineself! Blessed Light of the Holy Lord, Cast the shadows and heed my word....”

“Dost thou truly believe thy magicks will force me to do anything? As you will... humor me.”

The girl continues to just stand there with a malicious grin on her face.

Santiago continues to recite his spell, “Free this child; reveal to me, the evil forces...” Stopping mid-spell, Santiago starts incessantly shaking where he stands, unable to say a word as the little girl approaches him, her skin peeling off and the Order of the Sun camp spontaneously igniting.

“Santiago Juan Carlos Pedraza Mondragon del Espresso. I’m surprised thou dost not recognize me. You’ve seen me sooo many times on your last visit to Bristol. Albeit, in a more ‘mature’ appearance.” Her figure morphs to that of a middle-aged woman, whose name is known by all of Bristol. Her skin still peeling off at the same of the physical transforming, revealing patches of skin blacker than the night sky.

“No. It cannot be! How could we have been fooled for so long? I turned my back on España for YOU?!” Santiago falls to the ground on his hands and knees, a face of shock and fear as if staring in to the eyes of the Specter of Death itself.

The girl smiles and retorts, “Thou art a fool Santiago. Just like the rest of the Champions. Your Paragons have abandoned you, and instead of turning to the only one thou needest guidance and protection from, you chose not to! Bristol paid the price for their insolence and let it be known to all of Englnd that...” her voice changing to a heart-wrenching demonic scream, “I AM.....” And then there was nothing but an inferno of fire where the camp stood.

Screaming, Santiago woke up drenched in a cold sweat, shaking uncontrollably as if a plague had struck him. He finds himself in a heavily wooded area, in a small makeshift camp built for him by a few woodland elves.

“Blessed Light of God. What was that?” Santiago whispered, composing himself. “Fie! Now I can’t finish converting these bloody elves! I have to worry about being burned alive in Bristol!” Santiago gestures to one of the elves to come forth.

“Eldrin, come here!”

“Yes Lord Espresso? How may I assist you?” asked the small elf.

“I need you to fill a large bowl of water from the creek and bring it to me.”

“What for?”

“I need to find that blasted wizard, Talis Riverwind!”

“Right away Lord Espresso.”

“Actually, bring two bowls of water, I’ve yet to baptize you elf!”

A short time passes by and Eldrin returns, struggling to carry two enormous gourds filled to the brim with water.

“Perfecto! Now, go have fun, or whatever it is you creatures do, while I prepare the scrying spell.” Eldrin rolls his eyes and walks to his tent.

Closing his eyes and holding his open palms over the water, Santiago casts his spell, “Blessed waters let me see, he whom destiny brings to me. Lift the haze, open thy door, reveal to me London’s Moor.” The water began to swirl, and a hazy image of Parliament appears within the

waters.

Santiago jumps up from his seat shouting, "He's in London! Blessed Father forgive me for my sins of witchcraft."

"Lord Santiago did you find Sir Talis?"

"Eldrin! Pack your things!"

"Where to are we going?"

"To London! He's there!"

"Before we leave, could you do the baptism thou hast promised me for some time? I wish to properly serve the Lord."

Santiago stops and turns around, facing the Elf. "Bloody Hell! We finally find that bloody wizard and now you want to be baptized? Fine! Lower thyself to one knee!" As Eldrin lowers himself, Santiago dips his finger into the gourd and makes the sign of the cross over Eldrin.

"Do you accept Jesus Christ as your Savior and denounce Satan?"

"Of course Lord Espresso."

"Do you repent of all your sins and commit yourself to serve God Almighty wherever He may lead you?"

"Yes Sir."

"Do you renounce your pagan, Elven past and lay your loyalties to the Holy See?"

Eldrin somberly replies, "...yes..."

"In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be cleansed!" Upon saying this, Santiago lifts his hands towards the two gourds and lifts all the water from them. Then pointing at Eldrin, he directs the water to blast at him full force, throwing him several feet back.

"Santiago that hurt!"

"What, did thou verily think purging 320 years worth of sin and blasphemy from your soul was going to be pleasant?"

"That hurt my body more than it hurt my soul!"

"Hmm, mayhap the Archbishop of Canterbury wasn't lying when he said you Elves don't have souls...But look at it this way, now thou art clean enough to serve the Lord! And that foul smell yours is gone..."

"Aren't Ryder and Skylana in London as well?"

"They very well may be there, but if they are, don't you dare tell them about the baptism."

"But, why not? Should I not proclaim the Lord's word to the world?"

"Yes...but not to them. They won't be...pleased...Now, stop asking questions! We're losing daylight!"

Arriving in London two days later, Santiago and Eldrin take shelter in an inn nearby the Parliament building.

"Now Eldrin, listen to me carefully. For the time being, you must not mention anything about the Vatican or Catholicism. The English are still very hateful of the Catholic faith. So, don't be stupid."

"And where is Talis? Did you not say he was in London?"

"He's a Moor, did you really think he would be in this area? No, we need to find the privy of this city."

"The privy?"

Santiago thinks to himself, "Why couldn't this bloody elf been more like Skylana or Ryder, I'm

stuck with this stupid, but unbelievably helpful bastard.”

A few hours later, Santiago and Eldrin make their way into the slums of London, with all the shanties essentially looking the same, decrepit. Santiago casts a minor spell to detect magickal energies in the area. “Through this gem, lead to me; where there be much magick energy.” His quartz crystal begins to faintly glow and points to a small shack. Walking towards the shack, Santiago knocks on the door and is ‘greeted’ by Talis.

“Oh dear God, another one?”

“Talis, there is a slight problem. I had a dream, a vision, of Bristol burned to the ground...”

Talis shouts, “Burnt to the ground? Did your vision reveal to you who it was?”

“Well...yes. But, it may a tad bit hard to believe, I’m actually hoping it isn’t true and is some sort of metaphor. But, it was Queen Elizabeth...”

Talis pauses for a moment and bursts out laughing, almost maniacally, “The Queen?! Elizabeth burns Bristol to the ground?! Santiago, I thought you were just odd at first, but now I know you’re utterly insane! The Queen would ne’er burn a village for no reason; perhaps hang a few traitors, but ne’er an entire town!”

“I know Talis, it’s hard for me to believe as well, but my visions have ne’er been wrong before. And we need to investigate this.”

“Unless thou can find me concrete evidence Lord Espresso, I want absolutely nothing to do with this nonsense. I have more pressing issues as of late. But, just come inside and serve yourself a pot of tea. Oh, and don’t go in the basement, there’s a bleeding Guardian down there...”

“What?! Is he dying?”

“Not if I have anything to do about it” say’s Talis. “I’ll be back shortly.”

Santiago walks in the house, serves himself a cup of tea and tosses a biscuit out the door for Eldrin. He asks, “Lord Espresso, may I come in as well, it’s a tad bit nippy out here?”

Santiago chuckles to himself, “Talis does not allow Elves in his home. As for the weather, pray to God to keep you warm.”

Eldrin stares at Santiago with a shocked look on his face and murmurs to himself, “Overly pompous bastard...Sometimes I don’t know why I even stay with him.”

Inside the house, Santiago is busy preparing a spell, using a bit of his chalk and borrowing a few of Talis’ candles, Santiago draws a circle on the floor of Talis’ home, and lights five candles along the periphery of the circle. “If he wants evidence, I’ll find him evidence. The Queen is of course heavily protected, so, I’ll just have to take more...discreet measures.” Sitting in a lotus position he recites, “Spirit of mine, go take flight. Soar across Heaven’s Light. May I be one with the air; though mine body be empty, it shan’t despair. Show me not to those with eyes, my presence may they never find.” Upon saying this, Santiago rises out of his corporeal body and his spirit takes flight towards Hampton, where the Queen and her Court currently reside.

Shortly upon arriving at Hampton Court Castle, Santiago’s spirit soars in through the castle and finds the Queen convening with several of her advisors.

An advisor speaks, “Your Majesty, there have been reports of Plague spreading in small towns in the northern-most reaches of England, and the people there are demanding for the Crown to take action.”

The Queen responds, “The disease must be contained to the North, we cannot nor shall we allow

this disease to spread to the rest of the country. Take any means necessary to control this threat.” The Queen and her advisor continue to discuss various topics at hand, and the Queen eventually ends the meeting. As the Court leaves the room, one of the Queen’s knight’s approaches her, “Your Highness, we have detained a witch from southern London. A neighbor of hers reported to the local militia that this woman was heard denouncing your Royal Name...while practicing supposed black magic.”

The Queen smiles and chuckles a slight bit, “Leraje, you make me laugh sometimes. What is this woman’s name?”

“Her name is Ester.”

“Ester. Well then, bring this Ester to my quarters.”

“Your Highness, do you need assistance? You don’t know how powerful she is.”

The Queen’s smile slowly fades away as she retorts, “Leraje, thou should know better than ANYONE that I can handle a little fortuneteller.”

“My apologies your Highness.”

As Santiago hovers over the chamber, he thinks to himself, “Leraje, I know I’ve heard that name before. But what in God’s name could the Queen be thinking to face a witch alone?” Santiago follows along behind the Queen as she heads to her chamber. Leraje returns moments later with Ester, a beautiful young woman with flowing brown hair, dress in a white dress. The Queen smiles, pulls Ester by her hair and slams shut the door behind them. Santiago attempts to go through, but is pushed back by an invisible force.

“What? Why can’t I go through?” Santiago say’s to himself, “Open my eyes, allow me to see the hidden forces that there be!” The door and walls around the Queen’s quarters reveal glowing runes, invisible to the untrained eye. “Arabic? Why would there be Arabic writing here? Whatever it may say, it must be a spell to keep people out. It’ll take too long to break past, but at least I can hear what’s being said.”

Behind the door, Ester hisses at the Queen, “Thou had my family killed! Dost thou really think I would allow thee to get away with that? You may be the Queen, but thou art nothing but a cruel murderer! You’re as wretched as Bloody Mary!”

Elizabeth simply smiles, “A tad bit upset I see. Throw one of your spells at me witch, go ahead...” She chuckles, “Humor me.”

“Gladly! Portus!!” A black portal opens beneath the Queen, but she simply stands there, floating centimeters above it. “What?! How could possibly...”

“You’re really not what I expected...You could at least have made an honest effort...”

“Don’t insult me! By the power of...”

Elizabeth interrupts, “I grow tired of this charade. You threaten my life and insult my name. More so, you can’t even properly use magick, I feel embarrassed for you” she growls, “and I HATE feeling embarrassed!”

Ester starts sweating profusely, “It’s...it’s so hot in here, what are you doing? Who are you?!” Elizabeth’s eyes glow red and she hisses, “Ester, don’t you know who I am?” Her voice drops a several octaves and becomes a demonic double voice, “I’M ELIZABETH!!!” Santiago hears Ester let out a horrific wail and from the edges of the door he see’s the bright red-orange hue of fire and feels an unbearable heat.

“I knew it! I must return to my body at once and tell Talis, we need to end this NOW!”

She Who Walks Behind the Court (Part 2)

Santiago's spirit soars as fast as it can back to Talis' home and returns to his corporeal body. The candles blow out by themselves and the circle of chalk is blown away by a magickal wind emanating from Santiago's body. Talis stands up and shouts, "Where the HELL have you been? I said you could have a cup of tea not use my ritual candles and take an astral vacation!"

"Talis, I was in Hampton Castle..." and Santiago tells the story to Talis. Talis sits down and shakes his head in disbelief.

"Santiago, I didn't want to believe any of it, but I've heard 'rumors' that the Queen had possibly been 'possessed' or 'replaced' by someone or something that looks like her. But it was almost too absurd to accept, more so the fact the rumor came from the local wenches! But if what you say is true..." Talis stops, "Did you see anything out of the norm at the castle?"

"Yes, there were glowing runes in Arabic outside her quarters. However, they weren't readily visible, I had to reveal them."

"Arabic? Queen Elizabeth does not know Arabic, nor does Her Highness know magic...that we know of at least. I'll gather the other magi in London and the surrounding areas, while you do your research. We shall meet at dawn, two mornings from now. Anon Lord Espresso."

Talis sets out to find the other noteworthy magi currently in London he had met in his last visit to Bristol. Whereas Santiago and his Elf companion spent the next two days researching the magicks and mythology of the Arabian Peninsula.

As the sun broke through the horizon and began to illuminate London; Talis burst through the door along with Skylana Softbreeze, Druscilla Snowfire, Caius Shadowsworn, Gaia Vedeo and Vashta. Walking through the door, Skylana right away recognizes a fellow Elf with Santiago, "Eldrin?! What are you doing here? Why aren't you back home?"

Eldrin smiles and replies, "Tis a pleasure to see you again Lady Softbreeze! Santiago and I have been wandering together for quite some time now. He taught me the way's of the Lord!"

Skylana no longer smiles and snarles, "The ways of the WHAT?! Santiago what did you do to him?!"

Santiago looks at Eldrin with a fiery glare and takes a deep, frustrated breath, "Skylana, this is not the time for your...for this." He walks back to the table and begins to tell the group of magicians, "I've spent the last day and a half researching what we may be facing. In my vision, I could not exorcise whatever the thing was, so, it is not a demon. And the fact that there were Arabic runes may rule out a Fae. So, based upon Islamic eschatology, I verily believe we may be facing a sort of Djinn."

Druscilla responds, "...A Djinn?"

Talis interrupts, "A powerful being with immense magickal abilities. Most are ancient and very dangerous..."

"Yes, and there are a few classes of Djinn, the most powerful being an Ifrit. An Ifrit is unbelievably powerful and commands magic to near absolute perfection. And perhaps the one that may be possessing or disguised as Queen Elizabeth may very well have had thousands of years to perfect it's magick" replies Santiago, in a somber tone.

Skylana steps forward with an eyebrow arched, "I heard word that the Queen left Hampton Castle late last night to Bristol. Supposedly a few people there had died of Plague. She's probably headed there."

Talis also steps forward, “We need to go NOW and stop this creature and find where the real Queen is! That is...” Talis pauses, “...if there truly is a ‘real’ Elizabeth.

Caius shouts, “Talis you’re always running into battle without a plan! How can you expect to fight something that’s lived for millennia and mayhap possess more power than all of us combined?!”

Talis shouts back, “You almost sound like my wife...It’s better to fight than to stand idly and do nothing at all while this monster burns Bristol and everyone in it to the ground! If you all wish to fight along side me, then stand by my side and fight! Otherwise, leave!” Talis starts heading towards the door in a rage when Santiago grabs his arm and holds him back.

“Talis, I know what we need to do.”

“Do you, Santiago? Are you going to pray to your Catholic saints and hope they respond?” Talis sarcastically hisses, with a slight chuckle.

“No Talis, we’re going to teleport ourselves near Bristol, and create a large binding circle; well, a very large circle outside the city We need to seal a large enough area to avoid harming anyone but the Djinn.”

Druscilla joins in, “A binding circle? But why?”

“We need to make sure the Djinn cannot escape the circle and that nobody can get inside...not even us.”

Talis snarls, “And what the bloody Hell are going to do with an enormous circle? Send it to Hell?”

Santiago looks at Talis sternly, his grip on Talis’ arm tightening, “No. We’re going to summon someone. A being more powerful than this Ifrit.”

Talis still fuming, “And who, or better yet, what; pray tell, are we going to summon? We don’t have time for your ridiculous ideas Santiago!”

Santiago pulls out from his bag a few small books from his bag. “I always carry multiple copies. Memorize this conjuration and when the crystals glow red, we must say it in unison. Not a single word added or left out, understand? If not, we all die.”

Druscilla asks, “The Key of Solomon? What do you plan on doing with this, and who are you asking us to summon?”

Santiago releases a very deep sigh, closes his eyes and say’s, “We’re going to summon the Archangel Michael.”

Everyone in the room drops everything they’re holding and scream in unison, “WHAT?!”

Talis is absolutely livid at this point, “You want us to summon the second most powerful Angel in creation and HOPE that he helps us slay this Djinn? How the BLOODY HELL are we supposed to do this?!”

Santiago replies, “Calm thyself Talis, it can be done. We all possess enough willpower and magickal knowledge to summon Him. Also, there are seven of us. This is the number associated with God himself and will most verily assist with the summoning process. We are not trying to control Him, we are going to bring Him to the mortal world, and with the offering I have for Him, I am most certain He will gladly assist.”

Caius say’s, “It’s worth a try. I mean, if we are successful in summoning the Archangel, Bristol can be saved. Now, we must leave now if we are to save the town. Let us begin the teleportation spell.”

The seven magi hold hands in a circle and light a single candle in the center and in unison recite, "Realms of immortal power, lead us now to our desires. To the darkness lead us not; may to our destiny we be brought. Open the gate, set us free. Take us now, So Mote It Be!" The shanty house fades away to reveal utter darkness in all directions other than a faint light overhead. The seven magi feel themselves be sucked upwards at an immense speed, and rush towards that faint light which grows brighter by second. The magi close their eyes, and as soon as they open them, they see themselves on an enormous field. About a kilometer or two away they see Bristol, still intact. Right away, they begin, they scatter themselves as far away as they can from each other, surrounding the main road that leads from London to Bristol. They quickly prepare the binding circle and link it to the small quartz crystals Talis and Santiago gave them. A few hours pass by and the crystals begin to glow, signaling that their target; Elizabeth the Ifrit has entered the circle.

An ear-piercing wail is heard from the center of the circle, "MAGI! You truly believe your magicks can hold me back? I've wandered this Earth for millennia, I know all there is to know of magic, I will NOT be held back! Do you know who I am? I'M ELIZABETH!!!" A twister of fire rises from the center of the several kilometer wide circle and spirals in all directions.

Talis shouts, "Focus your energy to preserve the integrity of the circle! It must not be broken!"

The infernal flames reach the periphery of the binding circle and vanish.

The magi hear Elizabeth cackling within their minds, "I didn't expect to encounter such powerful wizards here. It's a shame you must all perish today...unless, you bow to me and serve me. Then I may spare your lives and perhaps keep you as servants." She laughs, and then pauses, "No? Well then, you all made your choice. Let me teach you a lesson in respect for your Queen!"

Within the circle, flames spontaneously arise and an colossal winged creature with the appearance of a woman with black skin, glowing red eyes, and long flowing silver hair rises. "I haven't shown my true form to humanity since I was forced to face that bloody Prophet, Muhammad a few hundred years ago...I will NOT be bound EVER again! You shall all burn where you stand!" She lifts her hands to the sky, the sun is eclipsed as dark clouds fill the air. Lightning rains down around Bristol; the field and the nearby forest erupt into a fiery inferno as lightning rains down.

The seven magi kneel down and commence the conjuration,

"O ye Spirits, ye I conjure by the Power, Wisdom, and Virtue of the Spirit of God, by the uncreate Divine Knowledge, by the vast Mercy of God, by the Strength of God, by the Greatness of God, by the Unity of God; and by the Holy Name of God Eheieh.

I conjure ye by the Indivisible Name Iod, which marketh and expresseth the Simplicity and the Unity of the Nature Divine.

I conjure ye by the Name Tetragrammaton Elohim, which expresseth and signifieth the Grandeur of so lofty a Majesty.

I conjure ye by the most powerful Name of Elohim Gibor, which showeth forth the Strength of God, of a God All Powerful, Who punisheth the crimes of the wicked, Who seeketh out and chastiseth the iniquities of the fathers upon the children.

I conjure ye and I exorcise ye by the most holy Name of Eloah Va-Daath, which signifieth Vanquisher of God."

Standing up and holding both hands, open-palmed, towards the Ifrit, they finish the summoning, “Michael; Angel of Earth, Prince of Israel; I summon thee!”

The hail of lightning and firestorm the Ifrit created ceased, and the clouds began to swirl around violently, revealing rays of blinding light penetrating the clouds. The ground inside the circle begins to visibly shake and the flames are drawn up in a cyclone to the eye of the storm. For five seconds there was absolute silence, the magi look up towards the fiery, swirling tempest, in awe with open mouths. A flash of light engulfs the sky and a column of pure, white energy descends from the eye of the storm and plummets into the ground. The Djinn is sent flying to the edge of the circle where it collides with an invisible wall, in front of the section of the circle Gaia Vedeia fortifies. As the column of light fades, the façade of an enormous man; measuring more than twenty meters, with wings of crimson light, flowing blonde hair, gleaming white eyes, and carrying a flaming sword; appears within the binding circle.

The Ifrit stands up and upon seeing the Archangel, he screams, “NO! This was NOT part my plan! It shall NOT end like this!” The Ifrit charges towards the Angel with a torrent of fire behind him, leaping into the sky to deliver a strike.

Michael lifts his left hand towards the Djinn, and with a voice more powerful than a thousands claps of thunder, “ENOUGH!” The clouds part in all directions and the exposed clear sky within the binding circle ripples and tears open. A pillar of light comes down upon the Djinn with immeasurable force, erasing the creature from existence. Michael slowly walks into the pillar of light, which fades away as he steps through. The seven magi are thrown back several meters as a gale of wind penetrates the now shattered circle. As the sky returns to normal, they all hear a faint whisper in the wind, “Death... is only the Beginning...” Walking towards the center of the field, they see all that remains where the Ifrit stood is a scorched crater in the earth.

Saying nothing to each other, the magi part in different directions.

Santiago enters Bristol, the town seemingly having no recollection of the massive battle that took place outside of the city. The only thing the people of Bristol speak of is the news that the Queen had been found in the Tower of London, where she had been locked away...again, this time by unknown assailants. And that one of the Queen’s knights, Leraje, had simply vanished.”

Santiago sits down under the tree that holds Druscilla’s Egg to find Talis and Eldrin as well; he sighs, “My time in England has come to an end. I believe it is time for me to return to the Vatican. Come Eldrin, let us go home.”

Talis replies, “Perhaps. Just answer me one thing before you leave Santiago. What did you offer to the Archangel for Him to have assisted us.?”

Santiago closes his eyes and with his voice breaking from sorrow, “My most prized possession and one of the Church’s most powerful artifacts. The Deed to Purgatory. I wish upon you countless blessings Talis Riverwind. And I wish you the best in your fight against Lady Tso, for I shall not be there alongside you. I can no longer be called a Guardian of the Egg nor Champion of the Paragons.” A tear rolls down his left eye, “ Ne’er again shall I, Santiago Juan Carlos Pedraza Mondragon del Espresso, practice magick.”

The End

