

The Watcher: Light Ascends

Written by Michael Fuchs

Peter Hellebore was troubled. It was unsettling to see the barren spot of land where the city of Bristol once stood. For the first few months of his isolation, it was difficult to keep the despair at bay. Each day he did what he knew he had to do -- he remembered those around him. It had become like a calming mantra.

Beatrice. Avis. Falco. Lillith. Talia. Efah.

He had no sight of the outside world -- he was not bound to it. Only to the city that did not exist anymore.

Aiden. Poppy. Rhydian. Vashta. Morrigan.

He could feel his mind slipping as he fought on to remember them.

Lucretia. Drye. Grace. Ysolt. Maxwell.

Name after name after name. Pacing back and forth, praying to anything that may remain that the city and those he knew and cared about would return. He knew the names of all of the Draco Disciples and all of the Travellers by heart.

In the Month of April, something strange happened. The city of Bristol was still gone, but at the edge of his vision, he could see something. It had been so long since he had seen anything.

Laurel. Priscilla. Sybil. Mimsy. Holly.

He strained to see the wavering images. Then, suddenly, he blinked, and he saw her. He began to weep. They still lived.

Peter saw Gaia Vedeia standing in her inn. The customers were few, but she seemed happy. She poured a glass of wine for one of the patrons, and upon seeing the bottle was empty, began to make her way to the cellar. "Little brother!" she said in her thick Romani accent, "Bring more wine!"

The booming, deep voice of Amyrite replied. "I am practicing new magics! Make more hair on chest. Be as attractive as bear!"

A loud *heh, heh, heh* echoed up the stairs. Gaia chuckled. "You are only skilled in rune magics. Be careful!"

Suddenly, there was a loud bang as the inn shook -- accompanied by a pitiful roar. Gaia sighed, and with a smile on her face, she strolled over to the inn's entrance door and flipped the wooden sign to "closed". She looked at the few patrons remaining. "We are now closed. Little brother has turned himself into bear again on accident."

Peter moved his fingers through the air in confusion. There was powerful magic at work here -- and not from the magics that had just been cast. This did not feel like the mortal realm.

Peter continued to glance sideways and discovered more people that he had known, and some he had never met.

Robert O'Coppe fishing by a lake as his wife Robin sat beside him and they talked about the adventurers that Avis was up to.

Adria Dubh surrounded by a loyal band of men and women as they regaled their latest exploit for their mercenary company.

Nais with a bottle of wine swinging at another patron in a bar while she laughed.

Then he saw another image that startled him, and he focused on it more.

Rose Peregrine, one of the previous Keepers of the Order of the Sun -- before the Order of the Sun and Lunar Tribe -- had been united into the Band of the Twisted Claw, stood at the door to her home. A shattered plate lay before her.

She had not expected the man to be standing there, wearing tatters of red and black. However, instead of fear, she looked looked happy. "T-tristan?"

He smiled and held a bottle of milk towards her. "I am sorry it took me so long to get back. I went to get milk...but then got lost...and then there was the owlbear attack..."

She kissed him, and he stopped talking. "You can tell me all about it inside."

Peter believed he understood, and he was glad for it. He was worried that those that had been outside the city when the barrier had erected would be obliterated, but through some twist of fate -- some magic, they were safe. They were not in the mortal realm, but rather...somewhere else entirely. Each living in their own safe haven to live out their days in happiness.

But where were the others had known? Where was Efah? What of his sister?

Peter continued to watch those of the past live their lives. All of them, no matter their deeds deserved their happiness. They had been forced to live the wills of the Lord of Light and Tiamat -- never to gain their own happiness.

It was nearing the end of May when he finally learned what had happened to Efah and the others he cared about. In a blinding flash of light, the City of Bristol reappeared.

He was surprised. He immediately turned his attention towards Bristol and saw them. They were all there. He sensed that the barrier still existed -- the city would still be cut off from the rest of the world. However, he knew the day when the adventurers returned was nearing -- they would be able to enter.

Then he noticed something was different. He wasn't quite sure, but things seemed...different. He did not realize he was standing in the center of the Training Camp when a pair of eyes looked directly at him and whispered. "Toil no longer. You have remembered. You, and the voices from the outside. You all allowed us to awaken and seek this place of refuge. They will take care of themselves like they always have. And we are here to help."