

RenQuest™: Darkness Descendant

Prologue

by Shane Hill

Three Draco Disciples ran heavily through the Bristol woods, burdened by the squirming prize slung between them. When they were miles out of town and only pale moonlight lit their way, they ventured to a small clearing. Ruby Nightshade set Thomas the assassin to stand watch and the young witchling, Estella Foxglove, to tend to their captive, Puddle the Fool, newly liberated from the spirit of Chaos Himself thanks to the Heroes of the Band of the Twisted Claw.

Ruby paced, impatient. “He told me....to bring her here. He said he knew what to do,” she whispered.

“Who told you?” asked Estella.

“Aye, Ruby Nightshade, just whom were you planning on meeting here?” an unearthly voice called from the darkness. A cloaked figure stepped from the forest, so deftly and silently the shadows seemed to cling to him, making it almost impossible to discern where his form began and the darkness ended. “Tell me, Ruby, to whom were you delivering this poor creature?”

Ruby spun around. “Thoren? You told me you’d trade fair with me if the spell worked!” There was only a cold silence. Ruby huffed. “This is no time for your jesting!”

The figure drew near. Two others emerged from the shadows to stand beside the cloaked figure. A sudden fear enveloped Ruby. This was not Thoren moving toward her. “But who” –

His cold sneer froze her in place. “Yes, no time for jesting, indeed.”

He pulled Ruby close and whispered into her ear. “Ruby Nightshade, you would look to Thoren Grymm for help? Then thou art a traitor to the Draco Disciples.” The hood fell back from his face. Ruby was stunned. “Where is thine gypsy hero now?” he breathed as he plunged his dagger into her side.

Ruby slid to the ground, curling around her wound. Thomas and the others gathered Puddle and joined the man. “Come,” he said, leading them into the shadows. “We have much to do.”

Thoren arrived at the rendezvous point only to find Ruby Nightshade crumpled motionless on the ground. Thoren rushed to her. Ruby’s eyes were dim. Laboring, she raised her hands to his face. “He...he took her,” she gasped, and then fell unconscious. “What fresh Hell is this?” Thoren thought. “T’is time to put forth the call for Heroes once more.”