

Remnants

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PROLOGUE

Daire Loegaire was surprised that he was still here, that he hadn't been arrested or killed. He sat in the small room he had been given to act as his office. It was bare except for the chair he sat in and the small desk where he worked. The tools of writing sat untouched as he considered the situation. It had been a week since the disaster on Earth at the place humans called Stonehenge; five

days since he had informed the Archwizard of Overwizard Aedan's failure.

He was once again considering his options: stay and be killed or run and be hunted down and killed. Either way, he was dead. The prospect of becoming a rogue wizard, who would be hunted like some animal, held little appeal to him. *I suppose I could always approach the Heretics*, Daire thought to himself. He shook his head, unwilling to consider the thought further. Going rogue was one thing; actively fighting against his people was something else, something he was not willing to do.

"Well," Daire said to himself. "if I'm not going to run and hide, I might as well turn myself over to the Archwizard. I hope she grants me a quick death."

He grabbed his staff from where it was leaning against the wall and stood up. He looked at the desk but did not approach it. Everything in it was of no value to him, even the plan he had written up to try and fix this debacle. You did not fail the Archwizard in such a grand manner. As he reached for the handle of the door, a knock came.

Daire froze, unsure who it could be. If someone were coming to arrest him, they would not knock. He opened the door and the words he was going to say got caught in his throat.

The Archwizard, hair in elaborate braids that almost touched the floor, stood just outside his office, with two of her guards.

"The Archwizard wishes to speak with you," one of the guards said.

Daire opened his mouth several times but nothing would come out. The Archwizard and her guards waited patiently as he attempted to speak.

"Of course," Daire managed to get out. "my...my...my office is a bit small. Per...perhaps we could go to a different room."

"Your office will be fine," the Archwizard stated, moving into the room. "My guards will make sure we are not disturbed."

Daire stepped aside, letting the Archwizard through the door. The guards took positions on both sides of the door, one of the guards reaching in and shutting the door. Daire turned around to find the Archwizard sitting in his chair, her braids arranged across her lap and her staff, a black and white pole topped with a huge emerald, grasped before her and a little off to the side.

“Wizard Loegaire, do you know why you are not dead?”

“I have no idea,” Daire whispered, head down.

“Look at me,” the Archwizard commanded. Daire lifted his head and looked her in the eyes. “That’s better. You are alive because I am still unclear as to what has happened. I have spent the last five days trying to figure it out but I can’t. Do you know why?”

Daire shook his head.

“Overwizard Aedan shared no information with me about what he was planning,” the Archwizard fumed. “He was constantly dodging my inquiries as to how soon the human world would be ready for invasion. We had a plan that he was supposed to execute and almost a year ago he tells me it has to change. He told me a Dragon had been found on the planet and he had to deal with it. Dragons are a concern, but whenever I asked how it was coming all he would tell me is, ‘I’m still working on it’. Your message about what happened on the human world was the first real information I have received in months and it was not good information. Hundreds of Aldri dead, my daughter among them and the spell that was keeping the humans from accessing magic has been weakened to the point where it will collapse at any moment. I have no one to punish but you. Yet you are the only person who can answer my questions and you will answer them. If you are straight forward and honest, I may grant you a quick death. If you give me the run around, like Overwizard Aedan did, I will rip your soul from your body and make sure you cease to exist on every plane of existence. Am I clear?”

“Yes, Archwizard,” Daire answered.

“First question then,” the Archwizard said, “Why are you here? Why weren’t you with the Overwizard when this happened?”

“I was left here as punishment,” Daire told her. “I disagreed with the Overwizard on the handling of most of the affair. I vocalized it just before he left for Earth.”

“Earth?” the Archwizard said.

“It is what the humans call their world.”

The Archwizard nodded, “So, you objected to his plan and he punished you?”

“Yes,” Daire said.

“You make it sound like this has been going on for a while,” the Archwizard stated.

“It has been,” Daire said. “I believe the whole situation should have been handled differently.”

“Well, I don’t know the whole situation,” the Archwizard said. “So why don’t you start from the beginning?”

Daire took a deep breath, “My brother, Llyr, was sent to kill the human female whose magic had awakened. He was severely injured by some local goblins and the girl healed him, soul linking in the process.”

“Soul linked?” the Archwizard said. “That was unfortunate for your brother. Why weren’t they both killed?”

“That was the plan,” Daire explained. “However, the girl met a Caroba that told her he knew of someone who could teach her how to use magic. This alarmed the Overwizard and he wanted to find out where this human was before he killed them.”

The Archwizard nodded, “That was wise. If there was a human magic user, he was good. Even I didn’t find anybody who could use magic on that world. I am wondering how your brother was able to stay with the girl after he tried to kill her?”

“The girl didn’t know he was there to kill her,” Daire said. “She never witnessed him trying to kill her. When it turned out that he couldn’t harm her because of the soul link, we told him to tell her he was a Heretic and had been sent to protect her.”

The Archwizard leaned back, “So, when we declared your brother a Heretic before the Convocation, disgracing your family, it was a lie?”

Daire nodded.

“Why did you allow this to happen?” the Archwizard asked. “Your family has lost influence because of this.”

“The Overwizard commanded me to tell no one,” Daire said. “He wanted the Caroba’s contacts to confirm Llyr’s story. He thought it wouldn’t matter since my brother would die anyway.”

“And reduce the influence of a potential rival in the process,” the Archwizard added. “You realize this drove your brother to truly become a Heretic.”

“I’m well aware of that.”

“I can see why you said this was handled poorly,” the Archwizard said. “Did they find the human teacher?”

“Yes,” Daire said. “Only, it wasn’t a human, it was a Dragon.”

“So, there really is a Dragon,” the Archwizard said. “If it’s a Dragon, how is it teaching humans magic?”

“I don’t know,” Daire answered. “I’ve never heard of one species teaching another to use magic. We were very confused but the girl did learn from the Dragon.”

“Why did you not kill the Dragon?” the Archwizard asked.

“As you well know, attacking a Dragon in its lair is ill advised,” Daire said, “This Dragon not only had protection spells on his lair, but also an army of Golems specifically enchanted to protect his school..”

“School?”

“The Dragon’s lair also was a vast school dedicated to training humans in the use of magic,” Daire explained. “From what information I’ve been able to gather, it was well attended before the spell that kept humans from magic was cast.”

The Archwizard nodded, “This is all information I should have had months ago. We could have avoided this mess. Now, explain to me why an attack on the humans was executed without my knowledge?”

“I don’t know,” Daire told her, “I was under the impression that he was communicating with you at every stage.”

“I think you know why,” the Archwizard said. “Did you know he was planning on eliminating me after the human world was taken?”

Daire shook his head.

The Archwizard laughed, “Overwizard Aedan was always more confident in his abilities than he should have been. It led him to make mistakes, such as this one. Tell me what prompted him to attack.”

“Several weeks ago, the Overwizard discovered a Conflux on Earth,” Daire said.

“A Conflux? Where?”

“The humans call the place Stonehenge,” Daire said.

“During the summer solstice of the northern hemisphere, this place is centered over a junction of magical currents. The Conflux had already been tapped to channel the magic. All that was needed was unused moon stone to focus the energy. When he discovered this, the Overwizard decided to cast the cleanser spell, using the Conflux to enhance the spell so it would affect the entire planet.”

“Thus killing all life on the planet,” the Archwizard mused. “Not a bad plan. What went wrong?”

“I’m not sure,” Daire said. “As part of my punishment, I was forbidden to view the casting. After the Overwizard did not return, I looked and saw that the place had been devastated. It appeared that the spell had be catastrophically disrupted.”

“The release of the energy from the Conflux would have ripped them apart,” the Archwizard said. “Do you have any idea what happened?”

“No.”

“Pity,” the Archwizard said. “Thank you for the information. You have been most helpful. Now, what do I do with you? You have part of the blame in this. Is there is any reason I shouldn’t kill you right now?”

Daire stared at her for a moment before speaking, “I...I...I have a plan, a plan that may be more beneficial than immediately invading Earth.”

“Really,” the Archwizard said. “You have one sentence to explain it to me, Overwizard.”

Daire licked his lips and turned to his desk, pulling out the notes he had made during the last week. He stopped, looking at the Archwizard when he realized what she had called him.

“You have one sentence,” the Archwizard said again before he could speak, “Do not waste your words.”

Daire straightened and looked at his notes, trying to think of how to explain his plan with only one sentence.

After a few minutes, the Archwizard slammed the end of her staff on the floor, causing energy to crackle around it. “You’ve had enough time to look over your notes. What is your plan?”

Daire looked her in the eyes and took a deep breath, “We may be able to study Dragon magic without having to capture a Dragon.”

Her look tightened and she leveled the staff at him, the energy leaping into him. He flinched and dropped his notes, but it did not hurt. He looked at his hands and saw that they were glowing with magical energy.

“You have earned your life, Overwizard,” the Archwizard said, standing up. “For now. Come with me and you will see the

true power of our people. Gather your notes quickly. We have to finish this spell before it kills you.”



CHAPTER ONE

Rebecca woke up tangled in her blankets, sweaty and breathing heavily. Her room was pitch black and she lashed out with magic, activating the magical light globe on the wall, almost knocking it off. She sat up, leaning against the wall behind her but did not close her eyes. In the darkness she saw the meteorites tumbling toward the Stonehenge. The meteorites that she had made with the earth she had ripped from beneath the feet of the goblins that were attacking her and her friends. The meteorites with which she had killed hundreds, maybe thousands, of living, thinking people. Even though they were not human, she still thought of them as people. Even though they were going to kill all of humanity, she could not help feeling guilty about causing their deaths.

Her dreams were far worse than the darkness. In the two months since the battle at Stonehenge, Rebecca had only slept when

exhaustion overcame her. She dreamt of those she had killed, of how they had died; or at least how she imagined they died. She had passed out from the exertion of creating and hurling the meteorites. She woke up several days later in the lair of her teacher, the dragon Havaar. Dealing with the fact that she had killed so many was the hardest thing she had done in her life.

She looked around her room, feeling uncomfortable. It was as if someone was staring at her. *Why am I feeling this?* She thought to herself. *No one is in here but me. This doesn't make any sense.* She got out of the bed and got dressed, choosing a comfortable peasant dress that Havaar had provided when they had arrived at his school. The feeling of being stared at continued to follow her as she moved about the room.

Rebecca let out a frustrated sigh, wondering what was going on. None of the resident ghosts were in her room. Then she realized that other feelings were intruding on her senses. An outside sense of annoyance and frustration was clear in her mind. She shook her head, turning and walking to her door. She opened it and found Llyr, an alien from another world, sitting in a chair in the sitting area between the four sleeping chambers, staring right at her.

When they had first met, he had been seriously injured, dying from a spear wound he had received while fighting goblins. Rebecca had healed him. A shutter ran through Rebecca as she thought about the incident. Her first experience healing someone had also soul linked them, which is why she could feel his feelings and know that he was staring at her.

“Why did you shudder?” Llyr said, his colorless eyes never leaving her.

Rebecca closed her door and sat down across from him. “I was thinking about the first time I healed you. I shuddered because, now that I am trained, I know it was pure luck that I didn't kill us both. The fact that it worked is amazing.”

“Well, it did have some unintended consequences, didn't it?” Llyr replied.

“I am sorry about the soul link,” Rebecca said. “I'm sorry that I keep you up at night. I've been searching for a way to break the link but I haven't found it yet.”

“There is no way to break the link,” Llyr said. “Not even death, despite what we’ve been told. We will move to the next world together.”

“It was made; it can be broken,” Rebecca insisted.

“Is it so bad to be linked to me?” Llyr asked.

Rebecca was shocked by the question. The hurt that was being conveyed by the link added emphasis to how much her comment had stung him. “Well, you’re stuck with me because of the soul link. It forces us along a path neither of us planned or wanted.”

Llyr nodded. “That is true, but I wouldn’t change what has happened.”

“Why not?”

“Because life has a way of throwing the things you need your way, however unexpected,” Llyr said. “When I came to Earth, I was planning to complete my mission and return home. By soul linking us, you changed everything for me. It forced me down an unwanted path that I now want to continue on. I have discovered things about myself and my people that made me realize that I was burying who I wanted to be so that could please my people.”

“Aren’t you a heretic?” Rebecca said. “Weren’t you fighting against your people already?”

“I haven’t been a heretic for very long,” Llyr replied. “Even the heretics do not know the things that I now know. This is all because you soul linked us. I never would have stayed here so long if it wasn’t for you.”

Rebecca stared at him. His words and the feelings flowing through the link were almost too much to bear. “I’m sorry but I don’t feel that way. My entire life has been flipped upside down because of magic and the soul link. I will never go to college; I will never see my family again,” Tears began to form in her eyes and she wiped them away.

“Because of this, my family will kill me if they get the chance,” Llyr said. “My father has already sent people to kill me. He will send more; I have the family sword and he wants it back. My death will also save some of the face that he has lost by my being a heretic. My mother has been dead for a long time and my brother most likely died at Stonehenge.”

“That’s another thing,” Rebecca said, standing up. “I never would have killed all of those people if I never started using magic; if I had never met you.”

She turned to leave the room. “Don’t say anything. I don’t want to hear it.” She slammed the door behind her.

Llyr didn’t do anything as Rebecca slammed the door. These conversations with her ended like this far too often. Llyr could feel the constant shame, fear, loathing, and frustration coming from her. It was almost all directed inward. She could not face what she had done and she hid from it in any way she could, but it was always with her no matter what she did. Llyr had no idea how to help her and the soul link was beginning to make it impossible to go on with his daily routine.

“How long do you think she is going to go on like this?” Natalie said as she exited her room.

“I have no idea,” Llyr said. “She did what she had to, what my people forced her to do. There is no shame in what she did and yet she is ashamed.”

“Has she ever explained to you why she is a pacifist?” Natalie asked.

“She told me it was because of the old soldiers she saw at the place where she helped homeless people,” Llyr said. “I think there is more to it than that, but that is all she will tell me.”

Natalie nodded. “Maybe she doesn’t even know why.”

Llyr gave her a questioning look. “Why wouldn’t she know why she feels that way? With how she held onto her pacifism until the very last moment, you would think that she would have a good reason for believing it so strongly.”

“Or maybe it is something she decided to believe in as she told you she did,” Natalie replied. “And as all the events of the last year unraveled her life, it was the one thing she thought she could hold onto. I have felt a lack of control over my life since this started and it has been hard. I’ve dealt with it better than she has. I’m not saying that she doesn’t have a better reason, but I’m sure that her wanting to maintain some control in her life has influenced her behavior. From what you have felt from her, does she feel like she is in control?”

Llyr shook his head. “Quite the opposite.”

“She feels she has no control over her life,” Natalie said. “I felt the same way after we came here but the chance to use magic, real magic, excited me. As I’ve learned how to use my powers, I’ve found purpose in my life and have been able to move on. I’m sure she feels like she has no purpose in life anymore.”

As Llyr thought about the feelings she was having, what he was feeling through the link, it all made sense. “She told me that all she wanted in life was to help people, to heal them. Now she has killed a large number of living things and lost her purpose.”

Llyr sat there, not saying anything else. Natalie kept quiet as well. *How can I help her?* Llyr thought to himself. *She needs to feel like what she is doing is helping people. Yet here, all she can think about is how she hurt and killed people. We need to get her out of here.*

Llyr jumped up, startling Natalie. “Where are you going?” She asked.

“I know how to help Rebecca,” Llyr said as he moved to the door. “I need to talk to Havaar.”

Llyr ran through the walkways that edged around the large section of open space that the school was centered around. He reached the corner of the walkway, putting his hand on the wall in front of him. A section of the wall slid away to reveal a horizontal wind tunnel. Llyr stepped in, the wind forming a solid layer of air beneath his feet.

“1st Floor,” Llyr stated. The section of wall closed and the solid layer of air disappeared. He fell through the school, hundreds of feet. The wind soon started again, slowing him down until a solid layer of air stopped him and the wall in front of him slid open, letting him onto the first floor of the school.

He burst out of the wind tunnel and sprinted down the hall until he came to a set of large doors. He banged on the door several times. As soon as he stopped banging, the doors swung open. “Come in, Llyr,” a booming voice said.

Llyr walked into a large entry area. The undecorated walls were tall enough that the lights just above Llyr’s head weren’t bright enough to illuminate the ceiling. The lights were placed around four doors that led to rooms set about the chamber, the entryways open. Llyr looked into each one, seeing no one. “Havaar?” Llyr called out.

“Come to the back.”

Llyr walked to the back of the chamber. There were no lights lit this far back into the room. As he walked into the dark area, lights attached to the walls began to faintly glow, illuminating the dragon near the back.

The dragon was curled up on the ground, his tail wrapped around the front him, his head resting on his forelegs. One eye opened and looked straight at Llyr. "What do you want?"

Llyr stared for a moment. "I'm sorry to bother you. I didn't think you would be asleep. I'll talk to you later."

"You have already woken me up," Havaar said. "We might as well talk about whatever it is you wish to discuss."

Llyr nodded. "I've been thinking about Rebecca and how we might be able to help her."

"That has been on my mind since Stonehenge," Havaar commented. "What is your idea?"

"We need to get her out of this place," Llyr said.

"You want me to send her away?" Havaar asked.

"Not send her away," Llyr said. "Send her out to do something."

Havaar turned his head, opening his other eye. "I have talked to her about leaving here. She doesn't want to leave; she is afraid."

"She needs to leave," Llyr insisted.

"Why?"

"Because here she does nothing," Llyr said. "Here, she is wallowing in her own guilt and fear. I feel that from her every day and it is draining. Nothing will change if she stays here."

Havaar nodded. "True, but how would leaving here help her?"

"She always says how she wants to help people. All she can think about is how she killed at Stonehenge. We need to show her the people that she helped, that she saved. We need to have her focus on the good and she can't do that here," Llyr said.

"What about your people?" Havaar said. "They will try to kill her, and you, if she is out in the open."

"I know," Llyr said. "But we are accomplishing nothing here. My people will be back no matter what. They have set their sights on this world and that is not going to change. If we wait here, Rebecca will continue to be depressed and won't develop her abilities. She won't be ready when my people attack again. If we leave, there is a

chance that she will begin to see that what she did was necessary and she might be willing to train again.”

“That is a lot of ifs and might’s,” Havaar said. “Are you willing to gamble your life on those odds?”

“At least this way we have a chance at living,” Llyr replied. “If we stay here waiting for her to work these things out, we’ll be dead by the time she is ready to fight.”

“You realize that getting her out of here guarantees nothing,” Havaar said. “You may take her out into the world and things could get worse. Being forced to fight too soon may send her further over the edge, possibly to the point of suicide. Are you ready to face that?”

Llyr did not speak for a few moments, taking in everything Havaar was saying. “Are you making her welfare and recovery my responsibility?”

“If you insist on this course of action, you will be responsible for its outcome,” Havaar explained. “I will support you in this but it will be on your shoulders. I have other things that I am preparing for the Aldri invasion. Rebecca was only one part of my defense plan; an important part, but the plan will succeed with or without her help. If you can help her, it will save many lives. Are you willing to take on this responsibility?”

“Yes,” Llyr answered without hesitation. “Rebecca may not be essential to your plans but I am linked to her. I doubt even in death we will be separated. Choosing not to help her now is a death sentence for us both. Forcing this may be no different, but at least I’m trying.”

“Not having to worry as much about her will allow me to prepare the other things faster,” Havaar said. “There are a few things that you will need for your journey; it may take a few days to prepare them. I suggest that you study more about the humans in this area. You are going to be out of place and the more you know about them, the less you will stand out.”



CHAPTER TWO

Rebecca sat in an empty classroom, her head on a desk. She would have been crying if it didn't hurt so much. Her face ached from all of the crying she had been doing over the last weeks and she wondered if her face would ever feel normal again. She only wished this was a classroom in her high school.

She wished she didn't have to pretend that this room was in a building, not a cave. She wished that there were the great variety of teenagers around her, not empty space. She wished the school was run by a normal, human principal, not a dragon. She wished a lot of things lately, none of which would ever come true.

She was stuck here. She was a wizard who was hidden by a spell cast more than 1500 years ago by Merlin, a wizard so great that even those who thought magic was a fairy tale knew his name. Rebecca doubted she would ever become half as great as Merlin, but she had to try. She had to try and break that spell that hid her from the normal world. She did not want to have to live out the rest of her life around dragons, ghosts and goblins. She wanted more human interaction; she wanted to see her parents again.

Rebecca sighed as she thought about her parents. How could she face them after what she had done? How could she stand before them, knowing that she had killed so many? The thought of telling her parents about what she had done filled her with shame. Maybe it was better to be stuck here underground. Maybe this was a fitting punishment for what she had done. Being isolated from the rest of humanity was the accepted form of punishment for murder and maybe she should accept her fate. That left the problem of Llyr.

Poor Llyr; not only was he stuck here with her, he had to feel everything she was feeling. Whenever she was able to pull away from her sorrow, she felt his worry for her. When she was up all night, he was up all night. Sometimes, when she was pacing her room, she could feel him doing the same. He was so brave, standing up to his people, standing up to his family for what he thought was right. She had saved his life, more than once. He had saved her life, more than once. She was closer to him than she had been to any other person, mostly because of the soul link.

The soul link allowed her to feel what he was feeling and vice versa. It had been very strange at first but now she had come to rely on it. The few moments of peace she had had recently was when she was able to concentrate on his feelings, allowing them to fill her mind, helping to block out her own turbulent emotions. It was the only way she could find sleep without being completely exhausted.

He had fought so hard to keep her alive. *He had fought...* The thought rang through her mind. *He had fought and killed to keep me alive.* If her killing made her deserve to be stuck here, did not his? Did not his actions deserve the same punishments as hers? No matter how much she thought about it or what angle she looked at it, she could not condemn Llyr for what he had done. Despite feeling that violence was never the way to solve things, his actions seemed justified, and if what he had done was justified, why should she condemn her actions?

She could not work it out in her head. How were his actions okay while hers were not? The more she thought about it, the more confused she became. No matter how much she told herself that if what Llyr had done was fine, what she had done was okay, it did not change how she felt. The opposite feelings for similar actions were driving her crazy. How could violence be ok for one person but not the other? Was she not always the one who said violence was never the answer?

Maybe that was one of the problems. No matter how she thought the events that led up to the fight at Stonehenge, she could find no other answer but violence. The Aldri had forced her to make a choice between allowing every living thing on Earth to be killed or killing the Aldri trying to wipe out all life. Both choices meant violence and Rebecca didn't like being put into that situation. It went against how she had felt, how she had formed herself to be. There was always another choice besides violence; yet she had been given a choice where she could only choose violence.

She had never felt more confused in her life and all she wanted to do was to talk to her mother but that wasn't an option. If she were standing right in front of her mom, her mom wouldn't even be able to see her.

The tears started to flow despite the pain. Feeling so alone, the tears fell as she slipped onto the floor, sobbing and moaning. After several minutes, she felt a hand on her shoulder. "Rebecca, I think we have found a way to help you but you need rest. I will help you sleep so you will be ready for whatever you will face." The hand moved to her head and she felt magic being poured into her body and mind. The sobbing stopped and soon she was in a deep sleep, free of dreams.

Llyr stepped out of his room, surprised at how well he had slept. Since Stonehenge, he had been used to catching sleep whenever Rebecca's emotions were calm enough to allow it. Last night, she had been asleep before he came to bed and he sensed that she was still asleep. This was the first time in months she had slept for more than two or three hours. Having a full nights rest made him feel refreshed and ready to do his morning exercises.

He walked over to her door, reaching for the handle. *I should check on her, to make she is alright.* As he grasped the handle, a ghost floated through the door, slapping his hand. He jumped back, startled not only by the ghost coming through the door but also by the fact it was able to slap his hand.

“Stay out,” the Ghost said sternly. It was the same ghost who always tailored their clothes. No one seemed to know her name and she would not give one if asked. “The Master has instructed me to make sure she is not disturbed until he says she has had enough rest.”

“I only wanted to make sure she was alright,” Llyr said.

“No exceptions!” The Ghost said. “Go talk to the Master if you have a problem with it.” She then floated backward through the door, her stern gaze the last thing to go through.

“Well, I wonder what that is all about,” Natalie said as she closed the door to her room. “Do you know?”

Llyr shrugged his shoulders. “All I know is that she slept all night and is still asleep. I guess we need to talk to Havaar if we want to know more.”

“Let’s go to him.” Natalie said, heading out of the apartment. Llyr followed, curious but unconcerned. Now that Havaar was taking a direct hand, things might get better for both of them.

They made their way down to Havaar’s room, knocking on his door. The door swung open and they entered. “Havaar?” Natalie called out. He did not respond but they heard a voice in one of the side rooms. They followed the sound of his voice and looked through a doorway.

Havaar was sitting in an office chair in front of a computer, talking into a strange device.

“Yes,” Havaar said. “I will need two passports, along with a couple of sets of traveling gear.” He nodded at whatever the person on the other end of the call said. “One male and one female...I will be sending the pictures and info to you shortly. I need them ASAP. Price doesn’t matter. Okay, give me a time and I will pick them up.” He ended the call and looked at them. “What do you need?”

Natalie was staring at the device in his hand. “What are you doing with a smart phone?”

“Calling people,” Havaar replied. “Now, what do you want? I’m busy.”

“We’re wondering what is happening with Rebecca,” Llyr said. “That seamstress ghost wouldn’t let us see her.”

“She does a good job with the tasks I give her,” Havaar said. “Rebecca requires rest so that she is ready to travel with Llyr.”

“Travel where? Am I going?” Natalie asked.

“She is going to meet the people she saved,” Havaar answered. “You will not be accompanying them. I have other plans for you.”

“What plans?”

“I’ll tell you later.” Havaar said, turning to the computer. “I need to finish getting things ready for Rebecca and Llyr.”

“Aren’t we just going to leave?” Llyr asked.

“You would be arrested,” Havaar replied. “Things are a little chaotic out there at the moment.”

“That spell will hide us,” Llyr said.

“Merlin’s spell no longer affects the British Isles.”

“The spell is broken?” Natalie said. “That means humans will be able to use magic again.”

“That means your governments are scrambling to control the magical creature population,” Havaar stated. “At least, the British government is. As I said, the spell is only broken over the British Isles. Though, it won’t be long before it breaks entirely.”

“How is a spell broken but not broken?” Llyr asked.

“Merlin’s spell has been in place for over 1500 years,” Havaar explains. “The support system that Merlin put in place to maintain the spell has evolved. Each area of the spell has its own support now. This break is a like a rock through a pane of thick glass. There is a hole with cracks beginning to spread out from it. The countries in Europe are just beginning to see the effects of the cracks, getting glimpse of magic and magical creatures. Any more stress on the spell and it will shatter.”

“Like what happened at Stonehenge?”

“It doesn’t have to be that big,” Havaar said. “A smaller surge will have the same effect. I’m debating on whether or not to do it myself.”

“Why would...?”

“While I enjoy talking, I have a lot of work to do,” Havaar said. “Back to your training; I will be there at our scheduled times.”

Llyr bowed and walked away, grabbing Natalie and dragging her along. “Hey, I wasn’t done.”

“He was,” Llyr said. “All you would’ve done is annoy him. It is never wise to annoy a dragon.”

“Fine. I’ll just ask my questions during training.” Natalie walked away, leaving Llyr.

Llyr made his way to his training room. Things had changed so much since he had arrived on this planet. He found that he was beginning to care more about these people, these aliens, than his own family, excepting his mother. He had a feeling that his mother would have approved of his actions if she were alive. He wished he knew all of the details about why she was taken by the Watchers. His father had turned her in and he had not talked about her since, even forbidding the mention of her name.

It had been like his mother had never existed. His family and their servants didn’t talk about her. The other nobles they had associated with hadn’t discussed her, at least not around him. Was she a heretic? Was he being treated the same way in those same circles? He had a feeling that he was.

He went into his training room and pushed all thoughts out of his head. He began to stretch, concentrating on loosening his muscles. He moved through his stretches, allowing the habitual motions to clear his mind. After stretching, he drew his sword and started his kata. He moved slowly, exaggerating each motion, holding at the end of each movement. He closed his eyes and brought his sword in front of him, holding the sword vertical, both hands on the hilt. He tensed his muscles and held his breath. He then opened his eyes and burst into motion, moving through the next part of his kata as fast as he could. He stopped in a slight crouch, his left arm stretched out from him and his right arm holding the sword horizontal in the opposite direction. After a few moments, he resumed, moving faster than before.

While he did not usually do his kata so fast, he was using the intense concentration required for the feat to focus his mind. He did not want to speculate about what Havaar was going to have them do in the human world. Havaar would be there soon and would tell Llyr what he needed to know. Any thoughts about it would be a waste of time, so Llyr pushed himself.

He finished but did not stop moving. Sweat covered every inch of his body and he felt his blood pounding through his veins with every heartbeat. He was ready for the next part of his training and turned to activate the sparring golems that Havaar had created for him. He stopped when he saw Havaar sitting in a chair next to the golems.

“You didn’t know that I had come in, did you?” Havaar said.

Llyr shook his head. “I was concentrating.”

“If I was an assassin, you would be dead,” Havaar pointed out.

“I will not let it happen again, Master,” Llyr said. “The events of the last few days have been distracting me.”

“Distractions will get you killed if you allow them to focus all of your attention on a single thing,” Havaar said. “Whether it be the distraction itself or trying to ignore the distraction, we can’t allow ourselves to not be aware of everything going on around us. Surely your teachers in the Hunter Conclave emphasized this.”

Llyr nodded. “We were encouraged to create distractions in order to gain access to our prey.”

“Remember that so that you do not become the prey,” Havaar instructed.

“Master, what have you done to Rebecca?” Llyr asked.

“I put Rebecca into a magically induced sleep in order to prepare her and you for when you leave,” Havaar said.

“Was that really necessary?” Llyr said.

“Yes, considering the circumstances,” Havaar said. “You will be taking her out into the world to face her biggest fear.”

“You think meeting the people she saved is her biggest fear,” Llyr said.

Havaar shook his head. “No, her biggest fear is that what she did was right.”

“I don’t think you’ll ever convince her that what she did was good,” Llyr commented.

“I did not say good, I said right,” Havaar corrected. “I agree with Rebecca that peace is the best way, that discussion is a far better way to solve problems. We are not always given that option. Sometimes the options we have could both be described as bad. At that point, you have to choose the one that is not as bad as the other. At Stonehenge, we could have chosen to ignore the Aldri attempt to kill all life on Earth or stop them. What we chose to do was not good but it was right. This will be the hardest thing for Rebecca to accept and seeing the people she saved will help her reach that realization.”

“I can see what you’re saying,” Llyr said. “Where will you be sending us?”

“I’ll tell you when Rebecca’s awake,” Havaar said. “I haven’t worked out all of the details and I don’t like repeating myself. Now, let’s begin your lesson. I want to focus on fighting an enemy who tries to avoid direct confrontation.”