Legion of the Inferno

Prologue

The tunnel was dark but quickly grew brighter as the white flame from Aerodynas’s hand brightened; the magic flame slowly growing bigger until it filled his hand. As he walked he was followed by six others. The six were chosen by Aerodynas for a great purpose. They would become the six to wield the legendary weapons and armor.

As they walked the echo of their footsteps coming off the walls grew duller as they entered into a massive cave. As they walked further in, a stone table became visible up ahead. As the group got closer, they saw that there were six wooden chairs on one side. In each chair was a set of armor; each a different size and different color. Behind the chairs were stone pedestals each holding a different weapon. In front of each armor set was the helmet that belonged to it.

Aero lit the torches that lined the wall then walked up to the first chair. The armor placed in the chair was a yellow as bright as the sun; it was small but very sturdy. Like all the other armors the chest piece was made from one piece of metal, no welding marks shown. The chest curved out and had a small collar around the top. The waist was tight and came out right below it. As the armor went down it widened, looking like a wide dress. It fell to just below the knees. It was made out of pointed metal plates that pointed down, connected by small rings. The helmet that lay in front of it was the same yellow and was small and round with small zigzags angling off the top of it. The whole front of it was an open gap allowing a full view of the face. A small whole in the back allowed hair to go through it. The weapon behind it was a tall trident. The staff of it was halfway in the pedestal so it could stand strait up.

“Sora this set is yours. You are now in the holder of the thunder element.” said Aero.

As he said this a small female walked forward. She walked behind the table and placed her hand on the armor. As her hand fell onto the metal, the armor and Sora started to glow a bright gold. Electricity started to slowly surround them. After a couple seconds the glow died down and Sora was standing there with the armor on her body; it fit her perfectly.

“Your armor protects you from any shock, and helps strengthen your weapon. Your weapon is the thunder trident. It has the ability to call down lighting and use it to power up the bolts that you can shoot from it. The helmet allows you to summon raging storms and control them”.

Aero walked to the second chair. The armor was a deep blue. It had small light blue arrows that lined the waist that started in the back of the armor and met in the front. The left shoulder had a round plate surrounding it. The lower armor was made out of smaller metal plates that formed pant legs. The helmet was deep blue with light blue waves circling the helmet. The face was just a light blue cloth that covered the mouth and nose. On the pedestal laid a blue bow. The bow was curved, but there was no string, but in its place was a small line of water floating in between the two ends of the bow. In the center of the bow was a sheath that was full of silver arrows.

“Aessixed, this is your armor. The armor absorbs water that touches it and puts it in your body so that you will never thirst. Your bow has the element of water. When an arrow is shot from it a trail of water follows behind it, and where ever the arrow lands a powerful geyser will spring from the ground. Your helmet allows you to breathe under water. The sheath will never run out of arrows because of the magic in it.”

A tall man walked over to the bow and ran his hand through the string. It passed straight through but the string didn’t move. When he pulled his hand out it wasn’t wet. Then he turned around and touched his armor. Instantly the armor and Aessixed started to glow a bright blue. Vicious wave circled at his feet furiously. The light died down and the waves ceased to exist. Then all that was left was Aessixed standing in full armor, a small smile passed on his lips.

As Aero walked to the third chair a bigger man dove over the table and tackled the armor out of the chair. As he landed a bright red glow erupted from him and the armor and intense fire covered them, but only little heat was given off. As he stood up the light stopped shining and there he stood in his armor a giant smile spread on his face, bouncing up and down on his feet. The armor was bigger and gold. It had straps on the back where, unlike the other armors, there was a gap that could be pulled closer to tighten the armor slightly. There were red balls of fire put on each shoulder and a ring of fire edging the collar and the waist. The flames reflected the light in the room and appeared to be moving. The waist was also gold and the legs of the armor had a line of flames swirling around each leg. The helmet was golden and a little bulky and slightly rectangular. The face only had two narrow eye slots and small vertical slots across the mouth that angled and narrowed so they looked like a smile, and was covered by a fire ball, the edge of the flames flowing to the top of the helmet. The weapon on the pedestal was a massive hammer. Like the trident the shaft of it was inside the stone so it could stand straight up. The hammer was massive. The head of it was the size of the chest of the armor.

“Apparently you figured out that this armor was yours Taco. Anyways your armor lets you withstand any heat. In fact the hotter it is the stronger your hammer becomes. Your hammer obviously controls fire. When you swing your hammer fire will emerge from the back end, speeding up you attack and strengthening the blow. When you strike something, your weapon it sends out a small shock wave that explodes the ground around it. Also when you choose, a ring of fire will spread from the impact of your hammer. You helmet has some unique abilities. The flame on the face of it turns into a real ball of fire, but it actually turns your head into the ball of fire, so you will have a fire head with a really sinister looking face on it. When that happens you are able to breathe in then release a blast of fire that can disintegrate almost anything.” The smile on Taco’s face only grew bigger.

Aero sighed and moved onto the next chair the armor that laid in it was brown the plates set on the shoulders were lined in black. A big rectangular rock with the left and right sides were slanted in and a smaller rock was leaning next to it. The design was only on one side. The legs were thick but easily movable and light. The helmet that was set before it was the same brown and also lined in black with the rock symbol on the side as well. It was round in front but as it wrapped around to the back it turned and created a crease on each side that were connected by another round piece. The face had a gap across the eyes and a piece of metal that looked like a gate across the nose and mouth. The weapon behind the chair was a big one handed sword. The blade was thrust into the stone but most of the blade was still visible. The blade was one sided and looked to be made out of small oval pieces that lay on top of each other without leaving any bulges or cracks. They were so silver they slightly looked light blue. The hilt had one spike that slightly curved down in the front and three slightly separated ones angling up in the back. They were lined up with each other vertically. The handle was a spiral of cloth going up. The bottom of the handle was a flat silver stump. The spikes were brown and the handle itself was black.

“Shinda this armor is yours” said Aero. A tall muscular man walked around the table to the chair. Taco slapped him on the back as he passed. Shinda in return kicked his foot back and made Taco fly backwards. Then he walked up to the armor and touched it. Once his hand was set on the armor they started to glow brown with black streaks surrounding them. The floor below them cracked and pieces of earth floated in the air. Eventually the light died down and the ground returned to normal and Shinda stood in his armor.

“Your equipment controls the earth. The armor is thin but can withstand any blow no matter how strong and leave you perfectly fine. The sword is sharp enough to cut through any rock or metal and will never dull. The hilt of it can send shockwaves into the earth and crack the ground or have a small hill flow from around you. The helmet can take any blow as well, but it can also make a crater into the side of a mountain the size of an elephant”.

Shinda turned around and grabbed the handle of the sword. Instead of pulling it out, he slid it through the side leaving a smooth cut down the side of the pedestal.

Aero walked to the next armor set seated at the table. It was a light pink and same as Sora’s it came out at the chest and hips. The armor was small and had silver swirls that looked like wind inlaid across the armor. The waist piece of the armor only came down half way down the thigh so it resembled a skirt with small points at the bottom like Sora’s. On each side of the skirt was a small sheath for two daggers. Even though it was only a skirt it had a pair of legs as armor below it. The pants came up under the skirt and hooked on under it. Each leg was the same pink but the knees were silver. Also on the outside part of each calf was a silver wing. The helmet was the same pink and was round. The face was a big space across the eyes, but the bottom part never reached the nose because the sides rounded down leaving room for the nose and mouth and not connecting at the bottom. The sides had a small silver wing on it like the legs, but instead of the feathers wrapping around the back and meeting the came off the helmet so it had the ends of three metal feathers coming off each side. The pedestal behind it had two small handles sticking out from it. The handles have the appearance of extremely small feathers overlapping each other with each feather lined by a fine pink line.

“Buni this is yours. The armor is extremely light and actually gives you the ability of flight. It is not very long but it is very fast and you can travel a great distance in a small amount of time. The helmet helps you breathe while flying up high and helps you see. Also it lets you teleport without flying. The distance you can teleport is the same amount as you can fly, but you do it a lot faster. It also lets you control the wind around you. The two daggers fit into the sheaths on your armor. They help stabilize your flight, but they can unleash raging winds from the blades. The wind released is able to cut through trees.

A small woman walked forward and grabbed the two handles and pulled out the daggers. The blades looked like the blade that Shinda has but it was one pointed piece of metal. The blades slightly curved backwards and came to a fine point at the end. The blade had small swirls carved into the metal like the armor does. Then she walked over to the armor and grabbed it. They started to glow a very bright white that was white beyond belief, but didn’t hurt the eyes. Streaks of wind violently swirled around her going so fast you could see it pulling the light into thin streams. The light died down and Buni was left standing in awe at herself.

Aero walked over to the last chair. This chair was at the head of the table. The armor that was in it was pure black. The only reason you were even able to see what it looked like was because it was lined with dark red lines. On the right chest of the armor was a dark red sun. The helmet on the table was sharp. It was the same black, but had very little red on it, only lining the major lines. The helmet from the top looked like a wide tear drop with the point facing forward. The face had two eyes carved in it and over the mouth and nose were three pieces of metal that folded down over each other. The back had spikes coming out from each side. The pedestal held a giant two handed sword. The blade was stuck into the stone but it still stood tall out of it. The blade was a very dark silver. It was two sided with a massive handle. The guard before the handle was black with two points that curved down so they pointed parallel with the handle and stopped half way down the handle. Each curve was sharp on the top with silver streaks following them to the point the handle was black and had silver lines that wrapped around the handle crossing each other as they went down.

“Major, this one is yours”. The last person in the group walked to the armor and touched it. When he did he didn’t glow, but rather started to turn black and absorb the light in the room. The light from the white flames Aero had made started to wrap around him and become absorbed into the darkness. Just before the room was emptied of light the darkness scattered and Major was standing in the black armor. Aero walked over and re lit the torches.

“Your armor is very special. It absorbs any magic that hits it. Then it puts it into your sword and makes you and your sword stronger. Also your sword is able to shoot the magic back at a foe. The helmet lets you see any magic that is being used no matter how small it is. Also it lets you control which magic to absorb. And you will be able to see the other armors through a special glow that they give off. It is something only you can see”.

“There is something that I need to tell you about your powers now. First of all, you will never age or get sick from now on. The armor prevents that because only one person is able to control the armor and those people are you. The only way you can die is in combat. Also once you die the armor vanishes. No one will ever be able to use it again. Also the abilities that your armor gives you will stay with you whether it’s on or off of you, but the abilities that your helmet gives you will only happen when you are wearing the helmet. The weapons ability is also only available with the weapon. You all now have a special responsibility. You all have to stick together and fight all evil. Major is the leader of the group. Now he is the leader but you all must respect each other equally. Even you Major. Always look at them as equals and not as a leader. You are all now the most feared force that will ever be known. You are now The Legion of the Inferno”.

Chapter 1

The ground trembled as the two armies collided. The waves of the beach crashed down onto the shore. The sound of metal clashing erupted from the air.

In the middle of all the commotion a ring of fire spread across a small area. In the middle of the fire was Taco violently swinging his hammer. The fire from his weapon was burning so hot that many of the enemy soldiers ran from the heat. As Taco kept fighting a geyser sprouted from the ground and flung a man into the air. As the water that came down and landed on Taco and started to sizzle and steam off of his armor.

Taco with a smile on his face yelled over to Aessixed, who was now only a couple yards away “Hey I was getting all fired up. One might even say I was on fire”

“You know, no matter how many times you say that it still gives me a little giggle now and then” replied Aessixed as he unleashed another arrow; the trail of water behind it confused many of the opposing men. In their confusion Taco ran up and uppercut one with his hammer sending the man flying through the air on fire.

Taco and Aessixed fought side by side going far past their army and into the enemy ranks. As the pair moved farther into the enemy army they reached a small strong hold by the enemies’ main camp. Once Taco realized what it was he set down his hammer and took a deep breathe the flame that was on his helmet started to move. The flame started to move faster and wrapped around the legates head. Soon his head was completely turned into the flame and the face that was the design came to life, the smile on it spread literally from ear to ear.

 Taco then took a massive breathe and leaned back, the cheeks of the flaming face bulged. As Taco pushed his body forward he opened his mouth and a blast of fire shot from his mouth scorching everything in its path. The legate turned his head keeping the blast going and burning more of the strong hold. Eventually he had burned the entire thing to the ground.

As the last few flames past from his mouth, his helmet turned back to normal. Once the helmet was back to its original form taco fell to his knees, his panting you could hear through the helmet.

“Let’s stick to just our weapons for the next stronghold ok” said Aessixed.

“Agreed” Taco replied in between a heavy breathe.

After a couple minutes Taco stood back up and grabbed his hammer and He and Aessixed walked through the ruble and ash towards the next strong hold. They were mostly interrupted because most of the men had burned away with the camp.

They reached the next camp and started on their rampage destroying the entire thing. Taco burning everything he could and Aessixed was launching things into the air with his geysers.

Eventually all that was left was a single catapult and some frightened men remaining. Taco lifted his hammer to destroy the machine when he all the sudden a massive boulder landed on him. Aessixed looked over to see enemy ships off the shore launching the huge rocks at the two of them. The boulder on top of Taco rolled to the side and Taco stood up with only a couple scratches on him.

“I will never doubt the strength of this armor again” said Taco.

“I hope not” responded Aessixed.

More rocks started to get hurled at the two legates. Taco took a couple steps behind Aessixed, turned sideways, and held his hammer above his head. Aessixed notched an arrow then shot it at the ground in front of him. As the arrow hit a geyser sprung from the ground and hit one of the boulders. The boulder slowed but didn’t stop until Taco swung his hammer and made the rock fly into the air towards the ship. The massive rock flew about twenty feet and fell to the earth.

“Is that all you can do?” asked Aessixed.

“No… Get another for me” screamed Taco in reply.

Another rock came and Aessixed did the same thing. When Taco hit this one the whole thing shattered and smaller rocks flew to the sides.

“I think you hit it a little too hard that time” Laughed Aessixed.

“I KNOW SHUT UP! Just one more”

Taco set back up. As another rock came, instead of slowing the rock Aessixed dove out of the way. The boulder kept flying and hit Taco making him fly very far backwards. Aessixed ran over to Taco dying of laughter.

 “How’d that feel!?” laughed Aessixed. No reply came.

“Hey Taco you ok?” Taco just lay motionless on the ground. Aessixed ran over, knelt beside him, and took his helmet off.

“Taco wake up… WAKE UP!” the legate kept screaming at his fallen friend. As he knelt there a dark shadow covered both of them. When Aessixed looked up he saw a boulder flying strait at them. The boulder was to close for him to hit with a geyser so he just closed his eyes and turned his back. As the boulder was about to hit them the ground on either side of the legates shook. Aessixed opened his eyes to see the rock cut smoothly in half. When he turned around he saw Shinda on his horse standing above them laughing.

“You looked so scared” laughed Shinda.

“I wasn’t able to stop it, and unlike you and Taco my armor isn’t massively strong” replied Aessixed.

“It’s strong enough”

“Maybe, we need to get Taco back to camp. I let a rock hit him and I think it actually did some damage”

“Alright put him on my horse” Shinda said as he climbed down from the saddle. The two lifted Taco onto the horse and put a strap around him.

“I hope he doesn’t fall, that could really hurt your horse” said Aessixed.

“It’s alright; he wouldn’t let you fall if you jumped from his back”

“True”

With that Shinda patted the horse and it ran back to the camp. Shinda and Aessixed kept destroying the boulders as they came. As another boulder was about to be flung from the ship, a bright light covered the entire battlefield. Aessixed and Shinda covered their eyes and when they opened them another ship was on the water, and one of the other ships was in ruin. The black and red sail with the yellow thunder cloud on it proved that it was Sora.

Sora stood on the ship’s deck proudly in her armor and holding her trident. She then thrust her trident in the air and a storm started to brew. Dark clouds formed above her ship and they started to spin with the center of it right above her. Then a massive lightning bolt came down from the clouds and struck her trident. The weapon glowed a bright yellow then she pointed it at another boat and the lightning shot out of it and destroyed the ship. The last ship was swallowed by the massive waves the storm had brought.

Once all the ships were gone the storm passed and Sora took her boat back to where it was docked.

All sudden a ball of wind formed in front of them and Buni was standing in front of them.

“Major has asked that we all return”

“We were just heading back” said Shinda

Then Buni disappeared with a breeze being the only proof she was there. The legates walked back to the camp without any more disturbances.

“I wonder what Major wants to talk to us about. He doesn’t do this that often.” said Shinda.

“He probably wants to go over the battle plan for tomorrow” replied Aessixed.

“Ya, but he normally lets us finish our fights and then once we all get back he does that.”

 “Maybe he changed something that would confuse you so he needs all of us there to help him explain it to you, you can be pretty dense sometimes”

 “I can be dense!? This is coming from the guy that had to ask if the sisters in the group were actually sisters.”

They both let out a huge laugh as they reached the camp. They walked into the infirmary to look for Taco first but he wasn’t there. They checked his tent but he wasn’t there either. They gave up the search and just went to Major’s tent. As they walked in they heard the deep laughter of Taco. And there he was half drunk curled up on the floor laughing hysterically.

“You don’t look that bad for a man who almost died” said Aessixed, somewhat pissed off.

“Oh I was never close to dying. I got sick of walking and I saw Shinda coming our way so I played dead so I could ride on the horse back”. With that he let out a huge belch and started laughing again. As Aessixed jumped to tackle Taco, Legatus Legionus Major walked in followed by the white robed sage Aerodynas his staff in hand.

Chapter 2

 “Calm down you two” said Major with a small chuckle. “You guys are always fighting… and Taco you are always drunk”. “What’s so wrong with being drunk?” replied Taco “it keeps the mood happy, and I tend to get better at making Aessixed mad”. “Yah and him being drunk makes it easier to do this” said Aessixed as he tossed taco across the room and then jumped on him again to get him into a head lock.

“I got this” said Shinda as he walked over and walked over and picked both of them up effortlessly. Holding both by the collar he dragged them over to the table and threw them down on opposite sides of it.

“Thank you” replied Aerodynas. “At least we have one person in control of themselves” looking around the room everyone was laughing at the scene, even Major.

“I’m sorry Aero, but I know you want to laugh too, you’re just the best at hiding it” said Major as he wiped a tear from his eye. “Alright now that we’re all done being children I will actually start this meeting”.

“First things first we need to discuss the enemy’s surrender, they have asked that we spare them and let them walk away and they won’t invade our country again, however they will not provide any other service to us other than retreating. We have the power to easily overthrow them by tomorrow. If we do that we can destroy their army so they won’t be able to invade again, we will send a message to their country that will make them realize our power to where they won’t attack us again because of fear, and we’ll be able to take supplies. What are your guys’ thoughts on this?”

 “I feel we should just destroy their forces.” Said Buni “As you said, we have a lot more to gain from destroying them.” “We could also take them over and have another group of men under our command.”

“You’re not looking at what we could lose either” said Aerodynas. “If we do that we could risk having a massive war on our hands. People would rebel against us for not granting mercy unto the weak, as far as gathering them and having them under our control; we don’t need more men, out force is strong, and the group here alone can destroy their entire army even though this is only a fourth of the entire army.”

“Plus don’t forget about the economical trials that would bring us. We would have to be responsible for their army, the food they eat, the lives that are killed in battle, and since we have their army we would have to protect their country for them” added Shinda.

“How ‘bout we do both” Taco was slowly getting up off the floor. “We don’t have to destroy their entire force to teach them a lesson; we can beat half of them and then let the others go. That way the can go and spread the word about our strength, but they will also tell about the mercy that we can give. We could collect the resources as we fight and then we don’t have to be responsible for their country because they will have an army to protect themselves.”

“What else is on your mind?” asked Major, noticing the worry on Taco’s face.

“We can’t do that to the children and wives either. We will have to kill a lot that much is known and I know I can’t change that, but we don’t have to hurt every kid and every wife.”

“Then it’s decided. We will go with Legate Taco’s plan. Any objections?” announced Major. No hands were raised, everyone sobered by the speech.

“All right then. This is how we shall proceed. At first light we will sound a horn. We will wait an hour for their army to prepare; we will not win by pulling a cheap move and not warning them first. Then we will have Taco and the Epsilon Tacti along with a couple of infantry units attack followed by Shinda and the Delta Tacti’s mounted forces. Sora you will take care of the ships of course. Buni you’ll stay with me and do the tasks that I need when they come. Aessixed will take care of the people that are running away and provide support for struggling units. You are all dismissed.”

As everyone started to walk away Aerodynas yelled “Stop”. Everyone turned to see what was happening. They all saw a small hint of fear in the face of the sage.

“There is one more thing that we need to discuss.” The pain in his face was easily seen by everyone in the room. “There have been reports of… shadow men in the battle field”. Everyone was startled.

“What do you mean shadow men?” asked Major. “According to the reports they look like ordinary men, but when they are killed they turn into a black dust and float back further away only to re-appear. The reports say that even the other army gets confused during these moments which shows that it’s not dark magic being used by them” responded Aero. “Its Dark magic being used by a third party that is completely separate from both sides”.

“I thought I saw something like that while I was out, but I thought it was my imagination because I was out at sea” said Sora. “It’s a very real thing. I have never seen our solders so concerned” replied Aero.

“Why are they still not out there if they can’t be killed?” asked Major. “Apparently they all just disappeared once the fighting started too sub-sided” said Aero. The worry on Major’s face was apparent. “We shall go on with the plan tomorrow. Hopefully we will be able to hold off the shadow men until the fighting stops again and then see if they disappear. If they don’t disappear then Aero you’re going to have to go out and take care of it”. Aero nodded, but you could see he still had his concerns.

“Now everyone go to your tents. We will have a battle ahead of us tomorrow that we won’t want to be tired for” Shouted Major.

Everyone left and slowly walked over to their individual tents. As Taco went into his tent he stripped off his armor and lay down. He had sobered up quickly during that meeting. Honestly, a little too quickly than he would have cared for.

He laid there for a couple of hours restless. Not being able to sleep he got up and went for a walk. He needed to distract himself somehow. He grabbed his hammer as he walked out and headed for the forest.

He walked a couple miles in and then picked up his hammer and smashed it as hard as he could against the nearest tree. The tree toppled over and started to burn. The hammer kept swinging down on the tree sparking more and more flames until the tree was smothered in flames.

He kept going, attacking more and more trees until all that was left was a field of ash. The field was blazing hot, and it radiated heat too hot for most people to stand, but he just stood in the middle of it destroying the stumps that were left behind from the fallen trees.

As he was swinging a strong wind came and cooled the area and spreading the ash. In the midst of it was Legate Buni.

“What are you doing here?” asked Taco breathing heavily. “I saw your face during that talk about what we would do to the other army, and how it would affect the wives and children” replied Buni. “I know that the first thing that came to your mind was the incident that happened. I know that you had to go through a lot during that, but holding onto it won’t help you. We all had to give up something, and you definitely got the worst of it. But you can’t hold on for so long. It’s been 10 years. It will tear you apart for the rest of your life if you don’t let go”.

Taco just kept hammering the stump. It was reduced to rubble from the constant pounding, but he just kept going. After around ten minutes Buni let out a sigh and slowly started to walk away.

Taco finally stopped hitting the mound of ash. “They were so young”. Buni turned around. “They were just kids being protected by a helpless woman. They couldn’t do anything about what was happening. They could only accept their fate” Taco said quietly. Buni walked over to Taco and looked at his face. Tears poured from his eyes.

“They were trapped in that house that I burned. I couldn’t stop it. It just kept getting hotter and hotter. There screams kept going until the roof collapsed. I couldn’t get to them. I ran over to see if I could get them out, but the heat was too much to take I couldn’t get close enough.”

Buni pulled him into a hug and just repeated “I know, I know”.

“And then it happened to me” Taco said in a sobbing whisper. “My little boy screaming my name and my wife yelling she loved me. I tried to run over and help them, but I couldn’t get there in time. I had to watch that scene twice in my life. Once with those that I killed, and once with those I love most. No one should have to see that, not even once”.

His crying grew heavier, and all she could do was standing there holding him, and crying with him.

As they cried Buni’s eyes started to glow a pale white. The harder the y cried the brighter the glowing became. Soon the valley was filled with the bright light, but neither one noticed, so distraught by the sadness that had come over them. Once the glowing stopped getting brighter, the breeze started to pick up and turn into a fierce wind. As the wind grew it became so strong that it started to lift the legates up into the air. As they started to float they looked around noticing that only the little valley created by Taco’s hammer was filled with the air and light, the rest of the forest was completely serine.

They started to calm down after seeing what was happening. After a while the wind calmed down and Buni’s eyes stopped glowing. They were set back onto the ground softly.

‘Do you know what that was?” asked Taco looking around at the small area. “No, but I think it was me doing it” replied Buni. “It would make sense since your element is wind”. “We’ll ask Aero about it, he’ll know something about it”. “Alright” replied Buni

“We need to get back now. The battle is about to start and they can’t start without us” Buni said softly. Taco just looked up at her and nodded his head. Both their tears had finally dried up. He grabbed the hammer and headed back with Buni. The ground was still hot from the hammer and the breeze remained.

Chapter Three

As Taco and Buni walked into camp people rushed passed them getting prepared to attack, and getting into their individual squads.

“Where the hell have you been!?” yelled Shinda as he rode up to them. “We’ve been looking for you for hours trying to get ready, Aero is pissed because some new info was brought up and you two haven’t been around to hear it!”

“I’m sorry it’s my fault Buni was just helping me” Taco replied. “I just needed some time”

“Well you better go and find Aero and Major as fast as you can, they are pissed” said Shinda

“Alright, we’re going” said Buni. “Let’s get our armor on first then we’ll find them”

Taco and Buni jogged to their tents as Shinda had his horse sprint in the other direction.

Taco was coming out of his tent, still strapping on most of his armor and carrying his hammer, when he saw bomb barrels being carried over to the catapults he ran over as the first batch of them are launched at the other army.

“What are you doing!?’ screamed Taco. “We can’t use those we need to save most of them, not destroy all of them”

“We were ordered to do this by Major Zero” said the captain in charge. “He told us to release everything we had and to not leave a soul alive”.

“Why would he tell you that? We agreed on leaving some souls to go back to their families”

“I don’t know why I’m just following orders”

“Well I’m telling you to stop”

“I’m sorry I can’t do that, I respect you as a legate but Major Zero has told me to and he has more power than you”

“Then I’ll stop it” screamed Taco. The rage in his eyes was easily seen by everyone. His eyes started to glow. Small flames started to flow from the sides of his eyes.

“What kind of demon work is this” whispered the captain as he ran away.

Taco pulled out his hammer and started to charge the catapults. He ran and smashed his hammer on the ground using the blast from the elemental weapon to get blasted in the air and soar over the fleeing guards landing hammer first onto the nearest catapult destroying it in one deadly smash.

He then leapt to the next catapult and the next destroying each one passed reconstruction. As he got half way through the line of catapults the fires left by his hammer were put out by the water flowing from the arrows of Aessixed.

Taco turned angrily and yelled “I am not going to let them kill all of those men” then turned back and kept on his rampage, the fires still burning in his eyes.

He kept going to each catapult destroying each one, with Aessixed still putting out the flames. As Taco started to take out another catapult Shinda ran over, his horse in full sprint towards the danger, and hit the hammer with the hilt of his sword knocking it back to the ground only to be picked back up by Taco and be swung at Shinda knocking him to the ground.

As Taco lifted his hammer again to smash the machine he was tackled to the ground by Shinda. As they wrestled, Buni and Sora came over to see what was happening. When they saw the fight Sora used her trident to blast the ground next to them sending them both flying to the side.

By then Aessixed had run over and pulled Taco into a head lock trying to restrain him, but he broke free grabbed his hammer and went back to the destruction had started. His rage was getting so furious that his feet started to burn the ground he was standing on. All the legates had stopped their defense realizing how impossible it was, especially with the air around Taco heating up like it was.

Taco just kept going everywhere he stepped a footprint of ash was left. Eventually the heat radiating from became so intense that equipment close to him started to smoke then burst into flames. As He reached the last catapult the heat became around him became unbearable. Then as he raised his hammer for the final strike fire surrounded the weapon. The fire started to swirl around Taco, spinning around him in thick streams of flame, getting absorbed into the hammer. As the last bit of the fire flew into the hammer the Legate brought the hammer down onto the machine. As it hit a wide spread of fire erupted. A massive dome of flames spread across the area, re-destroying previous catapults. The dome suddenly stopped and then shrunk and went back into the hammer, only to be released as a massive beam of orange light blasted strait up into the infinite space above. As he destroyed the last catapult the heat calmed down and his eyes started to return to normal. Then he dropped to his knees and sat there panting. When the legates saw that (luckily they were out of range from the blast) they ran over to him.

As they reached him Buni reached out and put her hand on his shoulder only to jerk it back. “OW!” said Buni a little louder than normal, “he’s hot”. “What do you mean he’s hot?” asked Shinda. “I mean his skin burnt me” replied Buni. “Here watch out” said Aessixed as he pulled out his bow. He notched an arrow and shot it at the ground next to Taco. When the arrow hit a geyser shot from the ground, then the water started to rain down onto the legate, evaporating immediately. As the shower continued steam started to flood from Taco.

After a while the steam stopped and the geyser had stopped its flow of water. Taco was still on his knees, now completely soaked. His breathing had slowed and he was now just sitting there.

All of the guards had just stood there watching, murmuring could be heard amongst them. They rest of the legates just stood around Taco.

As they stood there a black crow flew overhead then landed in front of Taco. Everyone looked at the bird when it landed. A small paper was in its claws. The bird looked at the five of the legates, then looked at Taco, cocked its head, dropped the paper it had been carrying, and then flew off.

Taco reached down and grabbed the paper. Pulling it to his face he read out loud “Because of the amazing display I just saw I won’t have my army attack, not yet”

All the sudden Taco stood up and yelled “who the hell does he think he is, we were destroying his army yesterday, and now he’s acting like he could destroy us in one swoop”. As he picked up his hammer and finally finished putting on his armor, he never got it strapped on all the way because of the previous event. “Well you know what, I’ll leave most of his force but I’m going to kill that king” taco yelled as he started walking towards the other army.

“Stop!” yelled Aero. Everyone turned to see the sage walking towards them followed by Major Zero. “I’m going to go kill that king whether you want me to or not” replied Taco. “You don’t have to” said Aero, “he’s already dead”.

“What do you mean he’s already dead? He just sent us this message, and the battle hasn’t even started yet” said Taco in confusion.

“That note wasn’t from him; it was from the leader of the Shadow Holders” replied Aero.

“Who the hell is that?”

“He is a man I once met while traveling, he controls shadows and uses dark magic to do what he want”

“Well you have your magic and I’ve seen what you can do with it, just take him out”

“I can’t do that. I do have a lot of powerful magic, but facing another magic holder is difficult. I don’t know his strength, and I don’t know his spells. If I just went in blindly I would probably be beaten. Plus dark magic can be very strong, stronger than my white magic if trained right and judging by his army I’m guessing he has trained it properly”

“Well then what happened to the other army? I’m pretty sure they didn’t just disappear overnight”

Major then spoke saying “well that something we explained to the others while you were mysteriously gone last night”.

Taco just looked at him.

“The entire army from our fight yesterday was killed and taken over by shadow men” said Major.

“The leader of the Shadow Holders, his name is Itzal, snuck in and killed all of the men then turned the entire army into a group of shadow men. So the other army didn’t disappear, but rather was transformed”.

All Taco and Buni could do was stare at Major in awe.

“This is why I was telling you to go find Aero and Major as fast as you could, because that is what you missed” said Shinda.

“Let’s go to the Battle tent and we’ll discuss this more” said Aero

They all walked over to the main tent and sat down waiting for an explanation, but Aero just kept passing back and forth. After a while Shinda stood and said “We need to know what happened Aero, this is some crazy stuff we’re dealing with and we’ve already seen weapons that can control the element. We need some answers about what happened”.

“I know I’m just trying to think of other surprises that may come up” replied Aero.

Taco jumped to his feet. “Other surprises!? You mean that there is more than what we just saw, more than that insane power that made me destroy all of our equipment!? What else could there be!?”

“Most of it was just rumors that I have heard that I didn’t believe to be true, one of them was about what just happened” replied Aero. “I might as well tell you all of the rumors I’ve heard and we’ll try to figure out if they’re true or not”.

“Well first off I guess is about what we saw today, and then I’ll just go from there. What you saw today was the power of your weapon brought out through your emotions. Every one of you has the ability to do the same thing as Legate Taco, but only when a certain emotion comes upon you. Like Taco’s, as we figured out today, is anger.”

“But I’ve been angry before and that definitely didn’t happen before” replied Taco

“It’s only in extreme cases. You can’t just be mad; you have to feel true rage. The emotion has to be at its extreme to create enough power to trigger it”.

“Well then what’s our emotion that triggers it?” asked Shinda.

“It’s the emotion that you don’t show the most” replied Aero.

“It’s probably happiness for you Shinda” said Taco.

“I can be happy… when I want to” replied Shinda

 Everyone laughed, even Shinda chuckled.

“Well Taco I think you’re right on that, but what about me” asked Sora. “I’m pretty even with my emotions”

“I’m not sure I know that each one of you has a different emotional trigger, but I’ve never heard of how to tell except for when you see it” replied Aero.

“I know for sure mine is sadness” said Buni. Everyone looked over to her. “How do you know?” asked Aero. “It happened to me last night. I and Taco were crying and all the sudden my eyes started to glow. The wind became so strong that it picked both of us up into the air, way above than the trees”.

“I didn’t feel anything last night; a wind that strong would have carried over to our camp easily” Said Aessixed

“That’s the thing; it was only in the clearing that Taco made, the trees outside didn’t move at all” replied Buni.

“Well at least we know that, I’m sure that Shinda is happiness since we never see you smile, Taco is rage, and Buni is sadness. The only other things I can think of would be loneliness and fear. Aessixed I think you would be fear since I saw that boulder getting hurled at you and nothing happened, and you never seem too afraid of anything. And Sora you probably are loneliness because I always see you around people, you are never alone” said Aero.

“Makes sense” replied Aessixed.

“Ya loneliness would be me” Said Sora.

“Well then that’s settled, and it was easier than I thought” stated Aero.

“Alright, now what other surprises are there?” asked Major

“I forgot you were in the room Major” replied Aero. “But I have heard more rumors, one of them being that you can use the weapons together, now I don’t know how I have just heard that you can. You guys will have to figure out how on your own. You already know that when you obtained the weapons something very dear to you is taken. And you already know that the weapons prolong your life seeing as you’ve all been alive for a couple hundred years. The only thing I can think of besides those is the mastery of the weapons”.

“What do you mean mastery, we’ve all used these for hundreds of years I think we know how to use them” replied Taco.

“Ya and you also knew that you can get massive powers when you angry or that you can combine you weapons with another to make them stronger, you definitely know everything about the weapons don’t you” said Aessixed.

“…shut up” replied Taco

“Anyways there are certain things about mastering the weapons that you have to do in order to master them. One is having your episode with emotion. When you do that you learn a lot of things that you can do with your powers and weapons” said Aero.

“Ya like I learned that I can use the kick from my hammer to launch me in the air” said Taco very proud.

“Yes you can do that. Also you need to learn how to use your weapons together. The weapons are actually capable of knowing what you know about using them. Once you’ve found out everything you can do you’ll be able to master your weapon” said Aero.

“How do we know when we’ve mastered them?” asked Shinda.

“Your weapon will glow and surround itself with its element. Once you have mastered it you gain more powers to use”

“What powers, and do we have to master those as well?” asked Buni.

“Once you’ve mastered your weapon, you will be able to control your element freely without you weapon. You’ll be able to control, move, make, and change your element as you please, and you won’t need your weapon to do all of it. And yes you will need to master these powers as well”

“What happens when we master these powers?” asked Sora.

“I’m not completely sure, but I believe it’s along the lines of where you can summon the power that you get with your emotion whenever you want. And you will be able to create new worlds with your powers. I’m not sure if the last one is true but it has the possibility. And before you ask, no I don’t know how you know if you’ve mastered your powers”.

“That’s a lot to take in” said Buni with a big sigh.

“I have two questions” said Major.

“What are they?” asked Aero.

“First why didn’t you tell us about this before now?”

“Well I wasn’t sure if it was true. I thought maybe they were just rumors, but seeing the display today I think it’s safe to assume that they are true”

“Alright, then second, who told you all this?”

“I was afraid you would ask” Aero let out a sigh “The person that told me was Itzal”

“What?!” yelled all the legates.

“How should we trust anything that guy says he’s the bad guy?” yelled Taco.

“And if this is all true, this means that he knows more about the weapons than we do, and he might not have told you everything” said Shinda surprisingly calm.

“I know, but it all we have, and whether it’s all of it or not it’s still helpful” replied Aero

The tent erupted into screaming and arguing. Everyone one yelling at each other, Aero trying to calm Taco repeating the same thing over and over.

“Quiet!” screamed Major. The fight immediately stopped everyone looking over at Major.

“This arguing stops now. I doesn’t matter how he got the information. We have it, it will help us, and we need to accept it” yelled Major sternly. Looking over at Taco and Buni he said “Now we are all going to sleep now. No late night walks, no wandering off out of camp, and if you feel like visiting each other, no more than two in a tent because I don’t want a big argument starting. Am I clear?” Everyone just nodded in acceptance. “Good now go to your tents, tomorrow you start training and figuring out more about your weapons, now go”.

Everyone walked out and headed to their tent. As Sora walked back to her tent Taco came up behind her.

“Hey you ok?”

“I’m alright, just a little confused” she responded

“About what?”

“A lot I guess”

“Tell me” Taco said as they walked into Sora’s tent. Sora walked down and sat on her bed Taco ride beside her.

“What’s it like? I mean to have all that power?”

Taco sighed.

“Honestly it’s like it’s not even you even doing it. When it happened to me I kind of fell asleep and dreamt it all. Then I woke up and realized it was all real. The weirdest part is that you watch your body. You aren’t in it, you’re watching from outside”.

“Is it scary?”

“Not really. Actually when you’re watching it’s pretty relaxing, you’re worn out when you wake up though”

“I would think so” Sora said with a slight chuckle.

“Anything else?”

“Just one more thing. Does it bother you that Aero learned everything about the weapons from Itzal?”

“Tons. But not because I don’t trust the info, but because this means that he knows more about our weapons than we do, and who knows what else he knows and didn’t tell Aero. It will be a lot harder to beat him if he knows so much”.

“Ya, I’m curious about how Aero knows Itzal and how they were able to talk so much and learn all of this. And was it all part of Itzal’s plan and he tricked Aero with all of that info so certain things would happen, like having us get the weapons?”

“I don’t know. It’s a good question though. But I don’t think it will help us worrying about it. I think its best we forget that part and just continue trying to figure out what we can really do. I’m going to head back to my tent. Go to sleep and don’t worry about all the stuff about Itzal so much”.

Taco stood up and started walking to the tent opening. As he pulled the flap back Sora called to him.

“Taco!”

“Ya?” He turned around

“When you knew you could do all that amazing stuff what did you feel like?”

“…Godlike”

With that he turned and walked out of the tent.

When Taco got inside his tent Buni was sitting on his bed waiting for him.

“Where ja go?”

“Sora was confused about some stuff so I cleared a little bit up for her”

“Hmm what was it all about?”

“She just wanted to know about what the power is like”

Taco started to pull off his armor

“It’s definitely something huh?”

“Ya. It’s weird to think that we have had these weapons for so long and yet we are still learning new things about them”

He reached back to pull a strap but couldn’t reach so Buni stood up and walked over to help him.

“I swear you would never get this armor off if it wasn’t for me”

Taco chuckled “Ya but I got you so it doesn’t matter. Besides I’m sure that I would eventually be able to reach it after a while, if not I’ll go bug Aessixed until he helps me”

“It’s nice that you guys are so close. You always give everyone a good show”

“I know. We always hear your laughing over everyone else’s. Especially when you start to snort”

“I don’t snort” screamed Buni.

Taco ran and belly flopped onto his bed. As he rolled onto his back Buni came over and sat next to him.

“I really wish that I could control that power” said Buni.

“Ya me too. It’s really weird but I’m not too scared of it, a little surprised, but not scared” replied Taco.

“I’m a little scared just because of how it comes about. I have to be as depressed as I can possibly be for it to happen. I don’t like that at all”.

“At least you know that you are normally an extremely happy person”

“I guess”

“Hey look at me”

Buni turned.

“You don’t need to worry about anything. We are all going to be ok, nothing is going to happen, and so what if you have to be sad every once in a while”

“Thanks” replied Buni.

“Let’s go to bed now, I’m exhausted” said Taco

“Alright, good night” with that Buni leaned over and kissed Taco and stood up.

“Good night, and don’t worry about anything, you’ve already had your moment so you won’t need to have another to master your weapon. And once you master it you won’t have to be sad to have it” said Taco.

“Thanks again”

“Always”

With that Buni walked out of the tent. Taco rolled over and whispered to himself “It will all be alright”. Then he blew out the lamp that was next to his bed and fell asleep, ready for tomorrow.

Chapter Four

Aessixed was the first to wake in the morning. He started clearing an area of for them to practice as he waited for the others. He had to move the ruble from Taco’s outbreak the day before because apparently the rest of the army was a little nervous to touch it. He started to push one of the catapults out of the way when Shinda awoke and came outside his tent.

“Morning Aess”

“Hey Shinda. Could I get a hand”?

Shinda walked over and helped push the charred pile away.

“So what do you think we will find out? I mean we have worked with these weapons for so long and yet we are learning that there is so much more” said Shinda

“I don’t know. I can’t even imagine how we can combine our weapons or their abilities or whatever we have to do. I just hope that it will help us defeat Itzal and let us forget the fact that even with all this time we didn’t know everything. And the fact that Aero held all of this back from us for so long” Aessixed’s anger was easily seen by Shinda

“I think he thought it was for the best that way we didn’t go chasing after some false dream of power”

“He still should have told us of the possibility”

Sora came out next followed by Buni. They all waited for the last legate, but Taco never came out of his tent. Aessixed went over and open the flap to find him still asleep and snoring louder than normal. He turned and left the tent and walked back to the group.

“He is still passed out, like usual, and we all know how bad of an idea it is to wake him, so we will continue without him. He will wake when he wakes”

Aessixed kept discussing with the group what they should start doing with his back turned to Taco’s tent. Taco slowly and quietly creeped out of his tent. He had no armor on, just his gray under clothes.

He walked over to Aessixed, who Taco noticed was leaning on his bow like a staff, and held up his hammer. Taco swung the hammer down and attacked Aessixed’s bow trying to knock the legate to the ground.

As the weapons made contact a small ping rang out followed by the crashing of wood and armor. Aessixed (who was un-effected) looked back to see Taco’s tent was ripped apart with a massive whole in the middle and a line of steam went through it. Taco himself was about forty yards passed his tent lying on the ground, his hammer next to him, as well as all of the armor and weapons from the racks he took out as he flew.

Aessixed turned back to see Sora and Buni on the floor laughing hysterically. Shinda was standing with his arms folded but he was even chuckling.

“What the hell just happened” Aessixed look concerned as he asked. Aero and Major came running over to see what the commotion was.

“What happened here” asked Major. Shinda walked up to the three, still laughing a bit.

“Taco tried to sneak up and hit Aessixed’s bow out from under him with his hammer, but when he hit the bow he got shot back through his tent and most of the barrack’s equipment”

Shinda started laughing a little harder after he explained it. Aessixed looked back at the unconscious legate, still a little confused. Major looked at Taco as well but then burst into laughter, and Aero just stood there looking at the rest, shaking his head, and trying to not let his lips curl into the smile the wanted to be.

“Only he could screw this up” Aero said

Taco slowly started to wake up and he rolled onto his stomach. He pushed himself off the ground and onto one foot only to stumble and fall again.

“What the hell happened?” Taco said threw a grunt he let out as he stood back up.

“I think that the weapons won’t let you attack each other” replied Aero

“Well that would have been nice to know last night”

“I didn’t know until right now, and I’m not completely sure that’s what it is, I’m just taking a guess”

“Whatever let’s just start figuring this stuff out”

Taco limped over to the group.

“Alright where do we start?”

“Actually you don’t need to practice” said Major. He had finally calmed down and stopped laughing.

“ Aero and I were talking last night and we decided that a better way for you guys to figure out you weapons powers is to send you off in groups to complete a task”

“What do you mean?” asked Shinda

“We are going to split you up and send you off on a quest. We have always gotten requests for you to go and help out people in need. We have recently gotten two requests that we feel are very important and we believe this will be a good time for you to go and learn. After you come back we will discuss how we shall handle this situation with Itzal”

“So who is going with whom, and who’s doing what?” asked Buni as she stood up. Sora stood as well.

“We have decided that the group will be Taco and Aess, and then Buni, Sora, and Shinda shall go together. Taco and Aess you have the task of killing a dragon. A village has been getting terrorized for a couple weeks now by the monster and they fear that it will move and attack other towns.”

“Oh this will be fun. I’ve always wanted to test my fire against a dragon’s” replied Taco

“Yah plus I get to watch Taco get nailed by the Dragon while I stay at a distance with my arrows” laughed Aessixed.

“What’s our job?” asked Sora.

“An island is cursed. They have been suffering from massive floods all around but it doesn’t make since because they also don’t have a moon. Normally if something like that would happen it’s because their moon is to close, but it has completely disappeared from the island” replied Aero.

“So we need to go and figure out what’s wrong and then fix it” stated Shinda.

“Exactly. And like I said when you get back we need to deal with Itzal. Knowing he uses dark magic makes us responsible to take care of him and prevent any harm from being done by him. But right now we can’t do that if he knows more about our powers and weapons than we do” said Major.

“You will prepare today and gather all you things and needs, tomorrow you will set off to complete your task. Before you go to sleep tonight you need to come see me and Aero. We need to talk to each of you individually before you leave. You are dismissed”

Everyone left and headed to their tents. Buni sat on her bed and started to think. Aessixed made started to grab some food. Sora went for a walk around instead of going to her tent. Shinda made his way over to the Stables to tend to his horse. Taco left and fell back asleep.

Taco woke to Aessixed dive bombing his bed.

“WAKE UP” Aess screamed as he landed on Taco.

Taco pushed Aess off his bed and Jumped to his feet. He noticed that it was dark outside.

“How long was I asleep?”

“Well you woke up for about half an hour then fell back asleep for the entire day, so I would say around 20 hours. Actually I’m really surprised you didn’t try to kill me for waking you.”

“I was about to, and then I realized how hungry I was and figured you were getting me for our meal”

“Actually I came to tell you to pack your crap, but dinner sounds pretty good.”

“Ya it does, let’s go”

They both started walking towards the biggest tent in camp. It was over three times bigger than the tent that Major stayed in.

As they opened the flap and entered the tent instantly flooded with the sensations of all the cooking. Food covered a long table with seven chairs around it.

“You finally woke up huh” said Buni as she set down a turkey. “We were about to eat without you”.

“Good thing Aessixed woke me up then” replied Taco

Sora walked into the tent holding a big basket of bread. “We figured since this is the last time we will be eating together for a while we should make it good”

“Well nothings better after a long nap than a big meal right?” replied Taco.

Slowly the rest of the group trickled into the tent. They sat around the table eating and joking and telling stories that they had all heard from each other before. When everyone had finished eating they left and finished preparing for tomorrow or fell asleep.

. . .

Morning finally came and everyone gathered together at the edge of camp.

Aero stepped forward and faced the entire group. “We hope you find success in your journeys. They will be difficult but we believe that you will obtain the knowledge you need with these tasks. We put you in the group we believe will best suit each mission. I think it would be hard for you to fail. May your future shine bright and may you return more glorious than you left. ALL HAIL THE LEGION!”

Everyone yelled back “ALL HAIL THE LEGION!”, and with that they turned away and walked towards their destination. Taco and Aessixed turned east and headed towards Os-Tan that was in between them and the dragon. Buni, Shinda, and Sora headed north towards Sora’s ship to head to the island of Mangtak.

“Do you think it’s a good idea to split them up with a threat such as Itzal out there” said Major

“We have much work to do, it would be safer to stay together, but with them separated Itzal might focus on them allowing us to search and figure out a way of dealing with him.” replied Aero. “Now we have a lot of work and discussion to do so let’s get to it”

Chapter Five

Taco looked back at the camp as they reached the top of the hill.

“I can’t wait to come back here with a dragon’s head”

“You can carry that on your own” said Aess with a small laugh. They both missed camp already, but they both that the request was greatly needed, so they both turned back forward and walked down the other side of the hill heading into the forest.

The Trees were packed closely to each other making it hard to walk through. The roots all flowed above the ground and tripping Taco more than once. “When does this forest end” asked Taco.

“I don’t know. I didn’t think it would take a couple days to walk through, it’s ok though. Once we hit the plains before the city we’ll be fine and make up all the time.”

They kept walking through the forest the entire day, and the day after.

“It’s been a week I don’t know how much longer of tripping over everything I can take” yelled Taco as he caught himself from falling again.

“I don’t know what’s going on. I have passed through this forest a ton and it has never taken this long” Replied Aess.

“Well I’m done with this”

Taco dropped his weapon and walked over to the lowest hanging branch and started climbing. As he reached the top Aess yelled out to him.

“What do you see?”

“One sec I’m almost there… We are at the edge of it. I think around ten more minutes of walking will get us to the end”

A massive crack broke into their conversation.

“What was that? Are you breaking the branch?”

“No, that wasn’t me. There is something coming right at us and its breaking trees as it goes.” Taco yelled back. “I’m coming back down then we can run over to the field and fight it in the open”

Taco jumped down barely missing Aess as he landed. He picked up his weapon and the pair started to run towards the edge of the forest. The roots started to shrink as they ran along. The light started to shine through the trees as they started to thin and disappear.

They broke out past the last tree and ran a couple hundred yards into the plains that they just entered; they slowed to stop and turned around to wait for whatever it was chasing them through the woods.

The crashing continued as they waited. At last the beast showed itself. It was around twelve feet tall and insanely muscular. Its brown body was barely darker than the dead grass that surrounded them. They Horns protruded from the top of its head as well as from the side of its mouth, curving around towards the front of its face. The tail was the size of Taco, and it swung through the air knocking down trees behind it that got in the way. The beast had four legs but was standing on just two.

The beast crouched back onto all fours then sprung forward launching itself towards the two legates. Its speed was incredible until, easily bringing itself half way in between the distance that separated the beast from them in mere seconds, until it caught its foot on itself tripping and falling onto its stomach, skidding to a stop ten yards away.

“AWW THAT’S SO CUTE!” yelled Taco. He turned to Aessixed “Think I could tame it?”

“Um… I’m not sure you would want to but, I don’t know maybe”

“Dude if we could ride this thing the rest of the way, imagine how fast we would get to the end”

“You have a point. Go ahead and try”

Taco turned back to the creature which was still on the ground. He started to walk towards it, hammer at the ready. As he got closer the creature looked up at him and let out a roar launching Taco back towards Aessixed who was able to catch the legate from flying farther. Taco stood up and looked at Aessixed again.

“I think it’s just a kid”

“That thing just let out a roar that knocked you a good twenty feet back, and you think it’s a kid?”

“It didn’t sound like a roar to me, more like a whine. I think I know how to get this thing to like me”

Taco walked back towards the monster, but his hammer was dragging next to him. As he got a bit closer he dropped his hammer and walked over to it normally. The beast was still on his stomach on the ground, but he didn’t release his howl like he did last time, instead he just let the legate walk over to him.

“Dude... I think its working” Taco said in a very loud whisper.

He took his hand and stroked one of the horns on the creature. It let out a small bubbling sound from its throat.

“I think its purring”

“What like a cat?” replied Aess.

“No…If an elephant could purr I think it would sound like this”

“That’s kind of cool”

“I know”

Taco kept petting the creature for a few minutes then he went to see if it would let him sit on it. The instant his leg was slung over its back the beast’s tail whipped up and slammed into the legate flinging him off of its back. Once the man was off it, it hopped to its feet let out a roar and ran away back into the forest.

“Velsi come back” Taco yelled as he got to his feet.

“Velsi?”

“I figured it would need a name once I tamed it”

“And you did such a good job with that”

“I got pretty close; it just wasn’t ready for an owner yet”

“Yah, that and the fact that you tried to sit on it”

“Shut up”

The pair turned back around and headed towards the city once more. At the edge of the field far off in the distance the city of Os-Tan was visible. Its castle in the middle with tall city walls colorfully decorated with paintings and different patterns on the originally gray stone walls.

“I can barely see it, but why is there paint on the walls” asked Taco?

“It’s because that is the happiest city in all of the OS. It’s always full of art and creations from people. That is one of the things that they brag about. They take a lot of pride in it.”

“That’s cool. But why aren’t there any little peasant villages around the city?”

“That’s the other thing they take pride in. They always trade with people to get there food so they don’t need to have farmers outside the city gates. Also everyone there is really friendly and they try to share as much as they can. There really isn’t a poverty level there, so there is no need to keep people out. And plus it would look bad if they wouldn’t let their own people in the city, but they let strangers come and go as they please”.

“Sounds like a pleasant place”

“It is. I’ve been there a couple times”

“Well we better hurry over there then”

They kept walking towards the city, but still about a day out they stopped for camp.

“I can’t wait to reach it. We can finally stay at an inn and sleep in a real bed” Said Taco

“IS sleeping on the floor so bad?”

“It’s not the floor; it’s what is on the floor. In the jungle it was super bumpy roots which hurt my back, and here there is a bunch of dead grass that crunches and pokes me through my blanket. It’s fucking annoying”

“Well we should be there tomorrow so don’t worry… And I found the roots pretty comfy”

“Whatever, night Aess”

“Good night”

. . .

They woke the next morning and started back towards the city. They ran a couple miles of it and ended up reaching the city wall a little past midday. A small tent was pitched right outside the gate, it was blue and had silver stars painted all over.

When they neared the tent a man popped his head outside of the tent. The man had very dark skin with an afro about a foot and a half wide. The tips of his hair shining bright from the platinum color that covered them.

“Hi… My name is Shayde. Nice to meet you”

“Um. Hi. I’m Taco this is my friend Aess” Taco responded. “Why don’t you come out of your tent to talk to us”

Shayde turned his head from side to side then slowly stepped out from his tent.

“Sorry, I try to stay inside my tent as much as I can”

Shayde himself was around five foot seven, his air making him around seven feet tall. He wore a robe that went down to his ankles and had the exact same pattern on it as his tent.

“Well I don’t see any of them yet, well anyways like I said my name is Shayde, and I sell magical gadgets. They range from wands the…”

He was interrupted by a big bunny jumping full speed and landing on his face knocking him to the ground. Shayde rolled on the floor as he tried to rip the animal from his face.

“I didn’t even see the bunny until it jumped” Taco said as he leaned towards Aess.

“Neither did I”

Shayde stood up still trying to rip the bunny away.

“Get off of me!” he yelled. Finally (with a slight popping sound) the bunny came free. Shayde took it, threw it as far as he could away from them, turned around as he pointed up in the sky marching back towards his tent and yelled “WE ARE GOING BACK INSIDE!”

The two legates followed the wizard into his tent. Once they were inside and their eyes had adjusted they saw hundreds of different toys lying all around the tent. Some were on tables and some were inside bags hanging from the walls.

“Sorry about that, for some reason every time I go outside I get attacked by an animal. It sucks. But anyways, this is my shop. All my equipment is fairly priced and it’s all very fun and easy to use.” Shayde walked over to a table and picked up a rod off the table. It was blue and yellow spiraling towards the top of it was a red tongue stuck out the end.

“This is one of my favorite wands. Anyone you point it at will burst into uncontrollable laughter…Watch”

He pointed the wand at Aess and pressed a button. The tongue at the end of it started to flap around while the colors swirled up towards the top. Aess started to giggle. Slowly it broke into a chuckle and kept elevating. Eventually Aessixed was laughing so hard that he fell on the ground and started to cry. Taco, who was standing right next to Aess, started bursting out in laughter as well. The two legates both rolled on the floor laughing as hard as they could. After a few minutes Shayde let go of the button and Aess started to calm down, but Taco kept laughing.

“That was pretty cool” said Aess, “but can you turn it off now so I can actually talk to Taco”

“I never aimed it at Taco. He was laughing at you” replied Shayde.

Taco stood up and started to catch his breathe.

“That was hilarious. I’m going to by one and use it on Aero and Shinda” he said through his breathes.

“That would be a site to see” replied Aess.

“You know what if you by one of those ill toss in two more gadgets for free. One of which I’ll let you choose” said Shayde.

“What’s the one you’re gonna give me” asked Taco.

“It’s my latest creation called a pocket bite” Shayde pulled out a small metal animal from his pocket and handed it to Taco. The toy fit perfectly inside of Taco’s palm.

“If you pull its tail it opens its mouth and when you let go it clomps down”

“Aess come here” said Taco

“Uh…no” he replied

“Come on, just one nibble”

“No I don’t want metal teeth biting my body”

“Just once”

“No”

“Please”

“No”

“Por favor”

“No”

“… You suck”

“Don’t care”

Taco turned back to Shayde.

“Alright I’ll do it, and for the one I choose do you have anything that a pet would love?” asked Taco.

“I do, it’s a small gadget that animals go nuts over. It’s a small light that you can see even in the day time. You shine it on the ground and move it and the animal chases it. It’s pretty entertaining” replied Shayde

“Perfect. I’ll get it”

“Great, let me just go in the back to grab it real fast” With that Shayde turned and went into a different section of the tent.

“Do you really think that that will help Velsi like you?” asked Aess.

“It could”

“Sure”

Shayde walked back into the room holding the laughing wand, a pocket bite, and a small gold tube.

“Here ya go. The Laughing wand costs 50 donas”

Taco reached into his pocket and pulled out some small black coins. “I only got 45 donas. Aess can I borrow an avat?”

 “I lent you money not too long ago that you still haven’t paid me back for, why would I give you more?” replied Aess

“Because you love me” Taco said giving him a double thumbs up and the biggest smile he could muster.

“Fine, but not for you, because I want to see Aero burst out into laughter and not be able to stop”. Aess reached into his pocket and pulled out a brown rectangle token and tossed it to Taco. When they turned around they saw Shayde being pulled out of the other side of the tent by two solders. The two ran out of the tent towards the three men.

“What’s going on here?” yelled Aess. The guards turned around looking at the Legates.

“This man’s contraptions have been made illegal within our city boundaries. Possessions of prior purchases are ok to have since they were made before the law was put in place. But even with our warnings he continues to sell his toys so we are arresting him.”

The guards turned back around and dragged Shayde into the city leaving the two legates alone.

“Let’s go back inside his tent. I’ll leave the money for him on his table” said Taco.

“Alright, I can’t believe that his little toys are illegal” replied Aess

“Ya its kinda weirs, but I don’t really care. It’s not like they can do anything to me to stop me from buying it, and if they try ill just tell them I bought it before the law was made”

The men walked back into the tent and walked over to the table that held the three toys. Taco picked them up and left the money on the table, and then the pair left the tent.

“Come again” Shayde yelled from the back of the tent. Taco and Aess turned around and looked back into the tent to see the “wizard” waving to them and smiling.

“Hold up I could have sworn that you just got arrested” yelled Taco

“It was a little joke that some of my friends and I play on some costumers. It’s always nice to see who can take a joke, or be kind enough to not take what they weren’t supposed to while I was gone”

“Um, you might want to think about getting a new joke” replied Aess.

 And with that the men left the tent again and headed towards the city, not knowing that had they turned around they would see the guards unconscious behind the tent.

When they entered the city gates they were met by people singing and dancing, dressed in all sorts of weird costumes, everyone was celebrating. As one dancer approached the legates Taco started to slowly bob his head with the music. It slowly turned into him dancing along with the crowd.

Taco handed his hammer to Aess and started flying around with the rest of the people. Aess went and sat down on a nearby bench and watched Taco party harder than he had ever seen before. Taco was dancing madly, drinking by the keg, singing in a horribly loud voice, and playing all the little games that the children were playing (the sad thing is that he eventually got so drunk even the children beat him in the game). Eventually it became dark, but the party kept going. A couple hours after the sun set taco fell onto the floor laughing and getting tackled by all the kids he had been playing with. Aess stood up and walked over to his friend.

“Taco, we need to go find an inn now. It’s time we said goodbye”

“Come on five more minutes”

“No, we need to get going”

“Please”

“No”

“Nyah” Taco replied with a very high pitched voice as he got off the ground. He turned back to the crowed and took a wobbly bow and yelled “Until next time”, then turned to Aessixed and said “Now give me my hammer”

The locals that had partied with Taco showed them over to a nice inn with a tavern below it. Aess rented a room and flung Taco into the bed inside it. Taco hit the mattress and instantly fell asleep.

Aess all their gear to the side of the room and laid out a blanket on the floor and fell asleep.

Chapter six

Sora turned around and looked over to Shinda who was standing next to his horse Fang King, who Sora barely let on the ship. It was a dark grey horse that had been with Shinda for a long time.

“Shinda, I know that you have been with Fang King for a long time, but you have never told us how you found him” said Sora

“Actually now that you mention it I don’t remember you telling us either” said Buni

“It’s a very long story” replied Shinda.

“That’s alright, we got a pretty long ride till we get to the island” responded Sora

Shinda let out a small sigh.

“Ok then. I first met him when I was about ten years old. I was very poor, I didn’t have a home, a was weak, never had enough food for myself, and I didn’t have a family. I would steal food from the carts as much as I could so I could survive. It was a very hard life, especially for a ten year old. One day I was out looking for food and I crossed paths with some of the richer children that were out. They all hated me because I was different from them. They would beat me and make fun of me, throw things and then make trouble and blame it on me. Everyone always believed them because they were well known and thought to be the very good kids and they never did anything wrong. I was just the trouble making homeless brat to them. No one cared about me there, but eventually I got over that fact and didn’t care about them either. I just decided that people in general were horrible creations and I didn’t want to be a part of them. I didn’t feel bad for taking their food because I figured they were horrible things anyways so it didn’t matter. That’s the reason I never really talked to people or try to be social.”

He let out another sigh.

“Well when I was out I found a cart left alone. It was full of raw meat. I was really able to cook, but I knew that if I left the meat over a fire for a little bit it would be good to eat. I also knew that it could help me get stronger. So I ran up and took some of the meat that was laying there. After I grabbed it I ran back to a little aero in the forest that surrounded my town. There was a small clearing in it about twenty feet wide, and I kept all my food there. I had a small little shelter that I had found when I first found it and hid the meat. I knew that it was rare to get something like this so I went back for more. I ran back and grabbed some more then headed back to start cooking, but when I got there all of the food I had saved up was scattered every were. My little shelter was broken down and everything I had was tossed all around the clearing. When I saw it I ran to the middle and dropped the food looking around trying to see what happened. About ten boys came out of the woods that surrounded me. They were all laughing, calling me names and yelling at me. They all ran over and started to beat me. I couldn’t do anything because I was in very poor condition. I had barely any muscle and I wasn’t eating well so they were able to get me without that big of a struggle. They kept going and hurting me, and all I could do was take it.”

Shinda looked up at Fang King.

“And then he came. He ran out of the woods and trampled into them. The boys were so scared they all ran away. The best part was he was just a little pony then, but they still ran away as fast as they could. It walked over to me and looked at me. I was just lying on the ground, barely able to move. He looked down at me, and I stared up at him. I was crying, some of it from the kids beating me, but a lot of it was also because I was thinking that I finally found a friend. But that wasn’t right. He was looking at me. I whispered thank you to him because I didn’t have any energy to do anything else, and his response was to kick me really hard with his hoof, grab an apple that was lying on the floor and run back into the woods.”

Shinda let out a small laugh.

“Honestly, I wasn’t mad that he left. I still felt like he would be there for me. And from then on he was. I think he was trying to be sneaky, but everywhere I went, I would see him trying to hide behind something so I wouldn’t see him. This continued every day, but when I needed help he was always there to jump to my side and help me. He is the reason I’m alive today. I wouldn’t have been able to live much longer the way I was. But Fang King gave me hope.”

Shinda looked up at the two girls, he had been looking at the ground or at Fang King the entire story, and they were both crying very hard. Shinda smiled, a tear falling down his cheek.

“That is the most amazing story I have ever heard” said Sora.

“I don’t know how you were able to take all that abuse” cried Buni.

“It was hard, but I got through. The best part was when I met Aero and he told me that he could give me a lot of power as well as being able to live Fang King for a lot longer than I would have.” replied Shinda.

“That’s great” said Sora.

“What’s your story Sora?” asked Shinda.

“Mines not as amazing as your” she replied

“That alright. It’s still something I want to hear”

“Alright. Well I was the exact opposite of you. I was born into a really wealthy family. But like you I didn’t have any friends. To everyone I was too good to be around. That and the fact that my father wouldn’t let me go out. He always wanted me to practice and manners and all the things that a lady should be doing. This went on until I was about twenty. I had one friend, and that was the guy that went to each room to take out the trash. He was the most disrespected man in the house, but for some reason I loved talking to him, he was my only friend there. Well one day when he was doing his job he knocked on my door to see if I was in there, but I didn’t hear him because I was too deep in thought to hear him. I was trying to decide what I wanted to wear for the day. Back then I was as girly as I could get, clothes meant a lot to me and I always carefully chose what I wanted to where every day. But I had just come out of my bath and I hadn’t gotten dressed yet. But I hadn’t made a sound so he thought that I wasn’t there. He walked in and saw me. He instantly turned around and said he was sorry and I didn’t answer my door so he thought I wasn’t there so he came in. Then he went to run out the door. I called after him because he was only about five years older than me and I had started to fall in love with him. I ran out and looked into the hallway to see my father standing there. He was so furious because he thought that the man had looked at me on purpose. My father had a lot of power, so he had the man killed that afternoon. When that happened I ran away from home, and while I was running I met Major and he talked to me about having friends and people that would care about me, and having the power to protect those I cared about. It’s a good thing he found me, because I was about to go back to my house. I wasn’t used to living the way I was.”

Sora smiled a little bit.

“That’s my story”

“Yours might not be as action packed as Shinda’s story, but you still had some pretty hard things that you went through.” Said Buni “I don’t think I would be able to handle it”

“Buni it’s your turn” said Shinda looking over. Tears were slowly welling up in his eyes”.

Buni looked down and stared at the floor for a while. After a few minutes she spoke.

“I wasn’t in a very wealthy family, or a poor one. We were living just fine, all happy, had what we needed. Ever since I was a kid I wanted to be an artist. As a kid I thought I was great at it. All my pictures were scribbles and things like that but I loved them. When I got a bit older and I got serious about it I was never satisfied with what I made. People loved my work, the neighbors would come over every once in a while to look at anything new I’ve made. I always told them that it wasn’t good, but they always said my work was beautiful. It took me a long time to realize that I won’t enjoy making art if I never give myself any credit.

I started to like my paintings more and I showed them to more people. Eventually I started getting offers to buy my work. I loved how it was going, in fact I made it a goal of mine to move to Os-Tan were I could really do it for a living. That was until my town got raided by an army.

They set everything on fire. My whole family was in my house along with all my art when it burned down. I was out looking at the forest when I saw the smoke rising from above the trees. I ran home as fast as I could but when I got there my house was already ablaze. I couldn’t imagine my family burning so I ran in to see if I could help anyone. I ran into our gathering room to see that my whole family had been slaughtered before the house was set on fire. My parents, my little sister, and even our dog. I was so distraught that I just dropped to my knees and sat there in the middle of the burning house.

The house was starting to creak as the pillars burnt more, almost to collapsing. And then a man in black ran into the house, scooped me into his arms, and carried me out. It was Taco. He had seen me go in and he ran after me. He kept yelling something at me but Im not sure what he said because I was still focused on my burning house. The only thing that I have left of that house now is a picture I was able to grab as Taco carried me out. It’s a small picture I drew as a kid. It was so horribly drawn that my dad had to write on it what it was when I told him. If you looked at it now it just looks like a rainbow of scribbles, but written on it is ‘my family as happy as thay can be’. That’s my story.”

Buni looked up and both Shinda and Sora were crying their eyes out. Seeing them made her a little happier.

 In between a heavy sob Shinda was able to manage a sentence.

“Im so happy that Taco was from the same village as you to save you”

“He wasn’t” Buni replied.

“Then how was he there?”

“He was part of the army that invaded”

“What?! If he was the one that did that to you why would he save you? Why aren’t you mad at him? Why the hell are you dating him?” yelled Sora, finally catching her breathe.

“For one he wasn’t the person that killed my family, he didn’t burn my house either, all he did was look for treasure in the houses. He didn’t want any of the violence but he was under orders so he had to.”

“So it’s Taco. If he doesn’t want to do something you can’t make him, we all know that”

“He wasn’t like that until after his own village burnt”

“His own village burnt?” Sora stopped talking

“Yes, he never told you?”

Shinda replied “Well just from what has happened here no one has really told anyone about their past.”

“Yah it’s weird. You would think after the three hundred years we’ve known each other we would have talked more to each other.”

“Tell me Taco’s story” Sora said quietly.

“Normally I wouldn’t want to because it’s his story, but he has told me that I can tell it to the people I think actually need to know.

He had a normal childhood, it wasn’t until he was twenty five when his life really started to change. When he was a kid he wanted to join the army, so when he thought he was ready he went and enrolled. He got in and he started to travel around with the solders. He had a wife and a baby boy that he left behind, but his wife supported him in his choice because she knew what it meant to him.

Well when he was out the army started to grow low on food. They didn’t have much money to buy any so the captain decided to tell everyone that if they wanted to eat they would have to go to the villages and get there food. When they asked with what money the captain said ‘You make it free’. So the army started to raid villages. When it got to mine Taco was sick of it. He didn’t believe what they were doing was right. Saving me made him even more sure of that. After they finished pillaging my town he went up to the captain and told him that what they were doing was wrong and that he quit. He went back to his home, but when he got there it was up in flames. The army was put into full march and wasn’t allowed to eat until they reached Taco’s village and raided it, so the army was able to get there first. Now it had been five years since Taco had left so some things had changed in the village, but the army still knew which house was his.

He got there just in time to watch the last men barricade the doors and windows as they set it on fire. Taco ran up and shoved the men aside trying to get to his house. The men tried to fight him and hold him back but his rage had taken care of them quick enough.

He ran up to one of the windows because the door was too blocked. He tore off the boards covering the opening. His wife ran over to the window with their son who was now six. Taco was able to open a hole big enough for the boy to get through. Taco pulled him through and set him down then continued trying at the other boards. But he wasn’t able to get enough of them before the heat became too much for him and his son to bear. His wife yelled at him to leave because she knew that if he kept trying to free her he would die too. Eventually she stopped crying and looked at him through the window and whispered I love you to him and then she took a few steps back and became engulfed in the flames.

Taco screamed at her to come back, but it was too late. Taco turned and picked up his son and ran from the house. A week later the boy died as well from all the smoke. When he was at his lowest Aessixed came to him and invited him to join the legion, an army that didn’t have a king, just free men going out and stopping all the evil they could. Taco instantly accepted hoping that they would be able to catch up to the captain in time to kill him. The sad thing is that he still hasn’t been able to find him, but he keeps looking”

“So that’s why he gets so emotional whenever we bring up taking out the enemy completely, he doesn’t want the wives to have to live without their spouse like he does” said Sora

“Exactly” replied Buni.

“I never imagined that Taco would have something so dark hidden inside him” said Shinda. “What about Aess? Does anyone know about him?”

“No, he has been as secretive as Taco has been. Its weird how all this time we have never talked about this. We have been so close for about three hundred years and yet still so many mysteries about us still” said Sora.

“I know. It’s so strange” replied Buni.

“Well let’s put that behind us for now. I can see the island” said Shinda as he looked over the side of the ship. The other legates followed his view towards the north. A small island was coming closer to them, it had one mountain in the middle of it, smaller islands were barely visible in the background.

As they reached the island a crew of men started to anchor the ship down. The men were wearing dark grey clothes with a yellow thunder bolt in the middle which showed they were Sora’s crew.

“Alright do not leave this island until one of us comes back and tells you to do otherwise. The only exception is if it becomes too hostile to stay here, then you may sail a little off shore to protect the boat. Understood?!” shouted Sora.

“UNDERSTOOD!” replied the men.

The three legates stepped off the boat and went down onto the beach. The sand was warm and the water matched it perfectly. The three walked forward towards the jungle that was spread out in from of them. As they neared the edge of it a woman stepped out from the shadows that the trees had concealed her in.

“Hello, my name is Melove. I assume you are the soldiers from the legion as we requested, yes?”

“We are” replied Shinda.

“I shall guide you over to our chief. He shall explain the request to you.” And with that she turned and walked into the jungle. Melove was about average height, she was obviously very healthy by the look of her body. Her clothes were tight, made from some very large leaves and a little bit a fabric. Most of her body was exposed except her chest and her waist down to half of her thigh. The clothes matched the weather perfectly though. On the beach it was fairly hot, yet in the jungle it was warm with a slight breeze worming its way through the trees. The legates followed her into the dark. Sora and Buni stumbled at first while their eyes adjusted. Fang King didn’t stumble once as Shinda rode him.

After a few hours of walking they came to the village. It was raised about twenty feet, sitting on a platform made out of stone. Vines were starting to climb the walls of the platform, the trees twisted around the corners of it slanting in different ways, trying to find a way to grow with the stone block being there. Surrounding the platform was a swamp that ran about thirty feet wide, spreading from the wall, seemingly to get more liquid as it became closer to the wall.

There was a small bridge that led from the ground up to the top of the wall. The group walked up it, the boards creaking as they walked. As they reached the top Shinda noticed that there weren’t any guards to protect the entrance.

They walked through the village which was lined with tents and small booths. At the end of their path was a larger green tent that resembled one of the leaves that was held by the trees surrounding the village.

Melove turned and addressed the group.

“I must stay here, after your meeting I shall guide you to your tents were you can rest till the morrow. After that I shall guide you through out your journey.”

She reached over and grabbed the flap of the tent and pulled it open. The legates started to walk in.

“Your horse must stay out here, I shall watch him for you” she said as Shinda walked towards the door. He hopped off of Fang King, pat him on the neck the handed the reins to Melove and walked inside.

The tent was empty except for a fire in the middle of the room, a mat spread on the floor, and an elderly man sitting across the room.

“Hello. I am Gattusso. I am the chief of this village and the one that sent for your aid. Please sit down so we may talk.”

The group sat around the fire. The warmth from the fire had heated the mat they were on making it comfortable to sit.

“So what is the entirety of this mission.” asked Shinda.

“My people and I are plagued by a curse, not one traditionally thought of, but still a curse. For the past month we have suffered great floods every day. In fact once we are done it should be time for todays to plague us.”

“Wait, why does it matter if it floods? I mean you on a huge platform” said Buni.

“We have had the platform for a very long time since flooding is common, not as common as every day, but common. It usually doesn’t affect the village itself because of this, but we cannot grow crops through stone. The flood has taken all the soil and washed it away. Many people have died because they were washed away by the floods that came when this first started. The worst thing though is the way it has affected the animal.

Because of the constant flooding the animals have started to adapt and have become hybrids of land and water creatures. It is unnatural and should not happen. That is why we need you to stop the flooding.”

“How are we supposed to stop nature?” asked Sora

“Not everything is natural. There are two artifacts here, one on each of the two sister islands. They control the sea and the moon. The island that is west of here is called Antak, it hold the mask. The island to the east is Gamtak, it holds the arrow. The mask controls the sea levels. The mask is made of three pieces. One half of it looks happy, one fourth looks sad, and the last fourth looks angry. Depending upon which pieces are present with it while it is on its pedestal depends on the flooding. Because of the flooding that is happening we know that the happiness was taken from it. You must go, defeat the guardian, and remove the rest of the mask. When it is gone everything balances out and it is normal.

The arrow controls the pull of the moon. The water follows the moon with its tide. The direction the arrow points controls the pull of the moon. You must remove it from its pedestal as well, then everything shall be equal. Normally we would ask you to return the artifacts to us, but we do not want them near because if we are attacked and those are taken we shall have to obey them because they will control us.

One thing that I can tell you is that there is a helmet the mask belongs to. For some reason the mask is of water the helm is of fire. When they are combined the fire takes over and becomes stronger. The arrow also has a bow that it belongs to. I don’t know much about what will happen when the artifacts are combined other than magnificent power shall be made manifest. If you can find those another artifacts you shall become very powerful.”

“Well I think I know exactly what those other artifacts are, and where they are, but they are not within our grasp right now, but we can get them after this.” said Shinda.

“Well I hope that you shall find success. Melove shall guide you to your tents. Rest well for tomorrow you set off.”

The legates stood and left the tent to find Melove still standing there with Fang King in hand, happily letting her hold him.

“It’s rare for him to let someone other than me or one of my close friends hold him so calmly.” Said Shinda

“I tend to be good with animal, horses are my favorite because of the loyalty they can show towards there master” responded Melove.

“Well it looks like he can see that in you” Shinda said as Fang king nuzzled Melove’s shoulder.

Melove handed the reins back over to Shinda. “I will show you all to your tents”

She walked off back the way they came. As they walked they saw a few villagers come out of their tent here and there, but total they only say about twenty people.

“Why don’t you have that many people in the village? Are they all out getting food or attending the crops?” asked Buni.

“No. Everyone that lives in the village is here, they know that a flood is about to happen. The floods have taken many of our villagers’ lives and injured many past recovery. These floods will become the end of our village, making our people go extinct, if you should fail.” Melove looked down at her feet. “I don’t mean to sound so gloomy; I just want you to know how important it is to us that you succeed.”

Shinda walked up to her and put his hand on her shoulder, a small tear going down his face. Buni and Sora looked completely surprised.

“We will not fail, I will take this plague from you” Shinda said to her. Melove turned and hugged Shinda crying as she did. Shinda hugged her back, holding her as close as he could. Even Fang King bowed his head and reached up one of his hooves to wipe a tear from his eye.

All the sudden a bell rang out. It only made one high pitched ding, but the sound echoed through the jungle, with the ring came a wave of pressure that pushed on the legates’ bodies, bringing the three to their knees with all the gravity they felt. Melove was still standing, but it looked like she was still having some trouble.

“What is this?” asked Shinda through a struggled breath.

“This is what happens at the beginning of a flood” replied Melove with the same struggle. “Try and get to the edge of the wall if you can.”

The legates slowly got to their feet and pushed over to the boundary of the village. When they looked over the edge they saw that water was rushing around the walls that protected the village. The water was only three feet from spilling over the top and claiming the village as one of its casualties. The water was moving so fast that it didn’t look much like it was coming from somewhere; rather it was being pulled into something.

The legates watched in unbelief as they saw trees get ripped from the ground, with roots longer than the tree was tall, all because of some water.

One of the trees scraped the side across the top of the wall where the legates were. Still barely able to move out of the way because of the pressure the tree latched onto Sora as it swept by, knocking her into the water.

“SORA!” yelled Shinda and Buni.

Shinda took a step back ready to jump.

“You can’t go into that, only Aess would be able to survive.” Buni yelled as she ran to grab Shinda.

“I can’t just stand here and do nothing” and with that he ran and jumped over the edge, still in his armor, landing onto another one of the trees that was being carried in the flood.

He landed hard on the trunk, pushing the tree a little under the water only to have it pop back up. The trunk was massive, the size of one of the tents in the village. Shinda held onto the tree branches to hold him up as he scanned the water for his fallen friend. The tree was moving fast crashing through smaller trees and debris; he was already about half a mile from the village.

Finally seeing a spark of yellow floating at the bottom of the water he dove after his friend hoping that she was still wearing her armor and he wasn’t chasing a an empty shell.

When Shinda reached the bottom he saw Sora still in her armor, unconscious. He swam towards her as fast as he could, grabbing her arm swimming to the top. He was able to get to the surface and hold Sora as he waded on the top of the water, still blasting through the jungle. Thankfully the water had taken out most of the trees when it first came through, so they didn’t have to dodge to many things.

After about five minutes of flying through the jungle in the water, a tree that was still standing stood between them and the rest of the water. As they were launched towards it Shinda turned his back to it, catching the pair on the trunk as he slammed into it. The water kept the legates pinned to the trunk for ten minutes until finally the water slowed to a stop.

Shinda was dropped onto the jungle floor, Sora in his arms. After catching his breath for a minute he looked to Sora. He took off her armor and put his ear to her mouth and looked at her stomach trying to see if she was breathing, when he saw and heard nothing he put his head against her chest listening for a heartbeat. He heard nothing.

Shinda sat there for a moment, staring at his friend, one of his best friends, lying dead in front of him. He let out a cry of sorrow that rang out through the forest. For how long he doesn’t know, but he sat there and cried for many hours. The day started to turn to night, Shinda realizing this he picked up the body of his partner and started walking back to the village through the path that the flood had cleared for him.

Chapter Seven

The morning came earlier than expected, the sun shining brightly through the window of the room of the inn that they were resting at. Aessixed was the first one up, grabbing all the gear and packing it up, getting ready to head out on the rest of their journey.

Taco took a lot longer to wake up, by the time he was able to stand Aess had already gone to the tavern and gotten some food, eaten it, gotten more for Taco, and come back to the room. Taco looked at the food for a moment then instantly scarfed it down.

“That was a great night” said Taco in between bites.

“It was pretty funny to watch you party, especially when you pissed off one of the guys for dancing with his wife”

“I don’t remember that”

“I wouldn’t expect you to, you drank so much, I’m surprised you’re awake this early”

“You know how high my tolerance is”

“Yah but how much you partied last night made it pretty clear you would suffer some consequence”

‘Hmm… Was the wife cute?”

“I’d say eight and a half”

“Hmm… was the husband big?”

“He was a good size, if you weren’t so drunk you would have beaten him faster”

“Hmm… cool”

“Yep. Now get up, the sooner we get moving the faster we finish this quest, and the better you’ll feel”

Taco went to stand up, trying to stop his legs from wobbling, but still ending up falling onto the floor. Aess let out a laugh and then went to grab Taco’s armor. Taco put all his armor on and grabbed his bag and hammer, then followed Aess out the door.

Aess went and paid the counter person for the room then the legates headed out. They walked through the city passed many booths and stands crowded by people.

“TACO!”

Taco turned around to see two girls waving and calling out to him.

“HEY…you... Aess do you recognize them?”

“They were part of your fan club that you gathered last night” he responded.

“Damn I’m good” laughed Taco.

The legates walked out of the gates back onto the road that led towards the dragon. As they walked they noticed Shayde’s tent was gone.

They started walking on the plains once again, the mountains that they needed to reach still far ahead of them. They kept walking on the mostly dead grass, which slowly turned green. There were few trees here and there as they walked.

“You know that it’s following us right?” said Aess

“What” Taco turned around to see the creature Velsi crouched on the ground with its hands covering its eyes, the fact that it was brown and bigger than anything else made it pretty easy to see in the flat land of grass.

“YES! This is the perfect time to test out the toy that Shayde gave me”

“You mean that I bought for you?”

“Whatever”

Taco pulled off his pack and grabbed the small tube. He pressed the button on the side, and a small red dot appeared on the grass in front of him. He pointed it at the ground in front of Velsi. The beast lifted one hand off its eye to look at the dot. With its other eye still covered it crawled over to the dot and slammed its paw down on the dot, only to see it on top of its hand, using its other hand it attacked the dot again. It kept doing this for a while until the light started to move, Velsi ran and dove on top of the spot trying to catch it. Taco slowly brought Velsi closer to him until finally Velsi was only about five feet away.

Taco turned off the light, confusing the creature making it look around trying to find it’s “prey”

It finally looked up to see Taco above it smiling. Velsi went back to its position of crouching down and covering its eyes. Taco walked up and started rubbing its ear. Its tail started to swing and beat against the ground. Taco walked around in front of its face and pulled one of its hands from its face. The one eye looked up and started at him. Then it jumped to its feet and landed on Taco licking his face.

“Hey he likes me now” taco yelled through muffled laughs.

Velsi sat back on its hind legs looking at Taco with an angry expression on its face.

“Umm Taco I think you just made it mad.” Said Aess. Taco looked at Velsi.

“She likes me now?”

Velsi jumped back onto taco and started licking his face again.

“Well we have a new partner now” said Taco as he stood up. “Now let’s see if we can ride her.”

Taco walked over to Velsi and went to hop on her back, knowing what he was trying to do Velsi bally flopped onto the ground knocking the legate off. Taco stood back up and walked over to Velsi and got back on. Once he was on, Taco scooted up towards her neck and grabbed her horns to help him balance. Velsi then stood up and bolted off across the plains running through the fields as fast as she could. Taco was laughing and cheering the entire time. After a few minutes Velsi turned back around and headed straight towards Aess. She slowed to a stop in front of him and crouched down letting Taco off.

“This is so much fun. And now we don’t have to walk that huge gap in between us and the dragon” said Taco as he hopped off.

“Come on, grab the stuff and we’ll ride over there.”

Aess reached down and picked up the bags, handed Taco his, then walked over to Velsi. The two legates hopped onto their new companion’s back and rode off towards the mountains that were ahead of them.

. . .

After a few days of riding the group came to a fissure spread across the ground. The crack ran for miles in either direction. Velsi stopped and looked down into the ground, but it became so dark that you couldn’t see the bottom. The gap was around fifty feet wide. Velsi looked at the gap, then ran back a little ways, turned back to the gap and took off full sprint.

“VELSI, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!” yelled Taco.

She just kept running forward

“Taco I think we are going to die, I honestly do” Aess yelled over the sound of wind rushing passed them.

Velsi reached the edge of the fissure and leaped. She sprang high into the air launching the group above the gap. They were going so fast and were so far in the air that things looked good.

“Just kidding, I think we will live” yelled Aess. But then the group was grabbed by a monstrous hand coming from the crack in the earth. It wrapped its fingers around them and pulled them down into the darkness. The legates were both knocked out by the fingers that had grabbed them.

. . .

The legates woke up, tied together back to back; Velsi was next to them, all four paws tied together. A little ways away from them was a creature sitting next to a pot over a fire. The creature was a pale green color, the same size as Velsi, and had a very pointed nose. Taco finally realized that it was a goblin.

The goblin was stirring the pot and whispering to itself.

“So long since meat has come, yes, so very long. It cames so easy, alls we hads to do was grabs it. Now it turns into meals for me. Now I’s get food. I makes it good, I makes it very good. It’s can’t get mad because I’s makes it tastes good.”

Then its arm grew way longer than it had normally been, reaching over and grabbing a jar from a stack that was across the room, and dumping it into the pot.

“Taco you awake?” whispered Aess.

“Yah”

“I’m going back to what I said before, we are going to die”

“We aren’t going to die”

“Well how do you suppose we get out of this?”

Well, I got my knife. I have already cut my rope”

“Ohh good, cut me free”

“Umm…no”

“Wait what, why the hell not”

“That thing will notice if we are both gone, but if it’s only me then we have a good chance that that thing is stupid enough to only glance over here and see you, then assume I’m here too.”

“That is the worst logic I have ever heard”

“It’s the only logic I have right now, I’ll leave you my knife that way you can cut yourself out, but don’t move until you need to.”

“Fine”

Taco handed his knife over to Aess, who started to cut his bands. Taco looked over to see that the goblin was still distracted, so he jumped up and ran over behind a jar. He saw his hammer across the room, but the monster separated him and his weapon. The legate looked over at Aess and saw that his friend was free but was staying put like he said.

Taco looked back at the creature and then slowly went behind it and snuck to the other side grabbing his hammer. Then he looked around finding a small stack of jars leading up to a shelf. HE went and climbed up the make-shift stairs getting to the shelf. He peered over the side judging how far the leap was, noticing that he was close enough to hit the goblin.

“If Velsi has got the courage to try than I have to.”

Taco took a couple steps back than sprang forward. Pushing off the side of the shelf, he jumped off the ledge hammer held high. He flew through the air hitting a sudden stop as the goblin reached out his hand and caught the flying legate.

“Thoughts I didnts sees you huhs? Thoughts yous could sneaks ups on me, well I’s very smarts. I’s can see alls. I musts thanks you thoughs. Now I donts haves to choose whos to eats first.”

The goblin started laughing and clapping.

“I EATS GOOD!”

Then he stopped talking. It looked down at its nose to see an arrow stuck in the middle of it. He looked across the room to see Aess holding his bow with another arrow ready to let fly.

“Let him down” yelled Aess

The goblin let out another laugh.

“You thinks puny arrow can hurts big me?”

As he finished his sentence a geyser of water erupted from the tip of his nose, sending him flying back landing on his back and crashing against a pile of jars behind him. In the middle of him flying back, the goblin let go of Taco. The legate jumped up to his feet and ran over towards the creature. An arrow landed a little in front of Taco as he ran. He stepped right on the arrow as the geyser erupted from the ground, the burst of water sending Taco soaring through the air towards the creature. The goblin was starting to sit up as Taco’s hammer collided with its head. The fire erupted from the hammer burning the monster’s flesh as the weight of the hammer and Taco’s falling swing collapsed the goblin’s head.

The creature’s head was sent slamming back into the rock floor. Taco landed on his feet, then turned and ran towards his best friend. The goblin laid motionless.

“That was awesome”

“Yah, let’s get out of here.” Aess said as he turned towards a passage that was behind him.

“WAIT” Taco yelled.

“Where is Velsi?”

The legates looked around. They saw their companion hanging upside down by the tail; her face was a bright red. Aess launched an arrow that severed the rope holding her up. Taco ran over and caught the beast, not stopping the fall, but cushioning it a bit. As Velsi laid there still unconscious the blood started to flow away from her face, returning it to its normal brown color.

“Velsi wake up” said Taco, tears starting to flow from his eyes. Taco was crying when all the sudden the massive hand that had grabbed the group over the fissure ensnared Taco. Aess looked over to see the goblin on his hands and knees, head dented and bleeding immensely. Its eyes were wide open with a sickeningly psychotic smile spread on his lips.

“I WILLS HAVE MY MEALS!” it yelled. Its arm that was holding Taco flexed trying to pull the legate towards him, but he wouldn’t move. Taco eyes started to glow red, growing brighter and brighter until they burst into flames. Heat started to swim around I’m, bring the air around him so hot the fire in the room dimmed in comparison. The smile on the goblin started to fade as he realized he was out matched. The beast started crawling into a corner, cowering in fear. It released its grip of the legate, pulling back its seared hand. The fear in its eyes easily seen by Aess. Taco slowly started to walk towards the creature.

“You have delayed my journey, tried to eat me and my best friend, and now you have killed one of my friends. You shall suffer the consequences of you action” Taco yelled in a deep voice that echoed through the chamber.

The legate’s body started to glow orange, the flames on his armor started to flow and dance on the metal. The ground started to crack under his feet with each step he took.

“I’m sssorry… I was only tryingsss to eeeats a meeal.” The creature replied in a wavering voice. Taco ignored the apology. His weapon back with Aess, he walked bare-handed towards the fiend. He held his hands in front of him, a ball of fire growing in between them. The legate pushed the massive ball at the creature, the room lighting up as it descended on its victim. The goblin let out a scream of terror as it was engulfed in the fire. The screaming stopped shortly after it had begun. The fire died down, and all that remained in the corner was a charred skeleton.

The fire around Taco flickered out, the heat faded, and his eyes returned to normal. He dropped to his knees, taking massive breathes. After a few minutes he stood and turned back to his friends and walked towards them. He reached Velsi and dropped to his knees, and hugged the creature’s head as he cried. After a few minutes Aess spoke.

“Taco, we have to get going. We can’t just sit here and mope. It won’t bring her back, and it won’t make anything better.”

Taco looked up at his friend, nodded and stood up. They walked over and grabbed the rest of their stuff that had been set in a corner of the room then continued out the passage. Taco wouldn’t turn back; he couldn’t because he knew if he did he would go back.

The rest of the journey through the goblins caves was a quiet one.

After a long time of walking the legates came upon a light in front of them. As they walked through the opening they emerged out of a cave at the bottom of a mountain.

“Taco look” Aessixed said as he pointed up the mountain. They both looked up to see the top of the mountain held a castle.

“We are almost there.” Taco replied in a soft voice.

Aess turned to Taco and slapped him across the face.

“What was that for?!” yelled Taco

“You need to wake up” replied Aess in a shout. “You have been quiet and gloomy through the entire caves. I let it go on then because I know you needed it, but you need to get your head in it now. We can’t go kill a dragon with you being sad and depressed. You need to get over Velsi. It will not help either you or me to stay down about it, now get over it, pull your head up, and get excited because we’re going to kill a dragon”

Taco looked at his friend in shock, but quickly turned it into a serious face.

“Your right, let’s go.”

The legates turned and walked over to a path that led up the mountain. The higher they got, the colder it became. Half way up they stopped.

“Alright let’s eat then leave everything here. We don’t need to have extra weight holding us back.” Said Aess.

“Sounds good” Taco responded. They pulled some food from the bags then stuffed them in between some rocks.

They continued up the mountain with only their helmets and weapons being carried. Along the way wolves and other animals tried to attack only to be easily overcome by a blast of water, or burst of fire.

After a few hours they reached the top, held back from entering the castle by massive doors.

“Alright. We need to figure out a way to get in quietly. I don’t want to go waking a sleeping dragon.” Aess said as he put on his helmet.

“Well it looks pretty hard to open those doors, how high do your geysers go?” Taco was putting on his helmet as well.

“I think it could get us to barely short of the top of the wall.”

“Well, shoot more than one arrow.”

Taco finished latching on his helmet then grabbed his hammer with both hand and started jogging forward. Three arrow landed in front of him, launching a massive geyser which propelled him through the air. He landed on the top of the wall then turned back to see his friend following him. The pair ran over to one of the watch towers and started going down the stairs. At the bottom they found themselves in an open courtyard.

“Let’s try to avoid this place while we fight. It would be really hard to beat a dragon while its flying.” Said Aess.

“Agreed.”

They continued on through the castle until they came to a dining hall. It had two rows of pillars lining the sides of the room, holding up the vaulted ceiling. Small piles of hay, sheds, and farming tools scattered the ground.

“This thing doesn’t pillage for money and treasure, it does it just to make lives miserable” whispered Taco.

AS they scanned the room they saw the dragon laying down sleeping near where the throne would be. The scales were a deep black, small red cracks ran throughout its body. Its head alone was the size of the legates, two horns sprouted at the top of its head. It had four legs, the back two a bit bigger than the front. Its tail was long with four nasty spike sticking out from the end.

The two legates hid behind the pillar closest to them.

“Alright, I don’t think we will be able to plan for too much of this battle, but we can at least start with the advantage. So we will start with this. You sneak up right next to its head; I’ll shoot it with an arrow then when it wakes up you smash its head as hard as you can.”

“Alright. I have a better idea though, well more like an addition. Hit my feet with an arrow before you hit him. Send me in the air that way when I hit him it will do a lot more.”

“Sounds good, let’s go.”

Taco creped behind the pillars. Stalking his way up to the dragon. Once he was behind it he held a thumbs up instantly followed by an arrow landing at his foot, the water launched him high in the air as another arrow hit the beasts face.

The problem with the plan was the first arrow that launched Taco woke the dragon up; the second told the beast where to go. Once the second arrow hit the beast ran towards Aess, out of reach for Taco. When Aess saw that the dragon had moved away he fired another arrow that stuck into the wall behind Taco. The water shot forward sending Taco directly at the dragon.

“HEY OVER HEAR!” yelled Taco as he flew towards the creature. The dragon turned its head only to get met by Taco’s hammer smashing into its face and having a fire scorch its head. The impact of the hammer combined with the speed the water gave sent the dragon crashing into one of the walls as it blew through a pillar.

Taco hit the ground rolling until he finally skid to a stop near Aess. He stood up and looked back over to the cloud of dust that had covered the dragon. When the cloud disappeared the dragon was staring at the two, eyes ablaze with fury.

As it stood there the cracks on its body grew a bit more. The beast let out a massive roar, but with the roar came a black cloud, red lightning streaking throughout it. Taco took a step forward as his mask melted into the head of fire. He let out a beam of fire straight towards the cloud. The fire passed straight through the cloud and hit the dragon square in the chest, but the cloud continued forward enveloping the legates. Taco’s helmet returned to normal as the pair fell onto their knees. The red bolts started striking the men constantly until there were no more red lights left in the cloud.

The black slowly evaporated from around them leaving them on their hands and knees. Neither one could move.

“What is this? I can’t move my body, I only feel pain going through my body” said Taco through a struggled breathe.

“Same. We better figure out how to finish this quickly because we won’t be able to take another one of those”

The legates looked up to see the dragon looking, seemingly unscathed.

“Is this really were it ends? Am I really going to die right here” Aess started saying.

“Don’t say that, we will make it through this” Taco said.

“HOW DO YOU KNOW!?” Aess screamed as he looked over at Taco. His eyes were glowing a bright blue. Taco realizing what was happening responded.

“I don’t know, I don’t want it to end here, but it might”

“NO, I CAN NOT LET THIS HAPPEN” Aess yelled and stood up. Water started to swirl around him. It lifted him into the air stirring more violently as it went into the air. Aess was standing at the top of it, arrows notched and ready to fire. As he released, the arrows turned into beams of water, striking the dragon and passing right through hitting the wall behind it. The dragon knelt down in pain, but it didn’t have time to recover because blasts of water flooded from the walls by the hundreds hitting the creature and sending it flying into the wall on the other side of the room. As the rain of water stopped Aess released another volley of arrows, every single one piercing the body of the injured creature.

The water that was holding up Aess slowed and brought him back to the ground. The light from his eyes dulled back into the white that they were before. Once everything had calmed back down Aess stood there panting. He looked over at Taco.

“That’s what it feels like? That was amazing”

“I know. That was amazing to watch, and you have never been so cool” Taco replied, still on his hands and knees in pain.

Then a roar exploded inside the room. The legates looked up to see the dragon flying at them; holes covered its body bleeding immensely. It was diving at them in one last desperate attempt to defeat its executioner. Aess released one more arrow hitting the dragon in the eye. The dragon fell to the ground, but kept sliding towards them. Its face being ground by the floor as slid. The beast stopped right in front of Taco, its shoulder not taking out Taco.

“That was a close one” said Taco. No response came.

“Aess?” Taco turned around to see that one of the horns on top of the dragon’s head had pierced through his friend’s armor, going in the front and out the back straight through his chest.

“Aess!” yelled Taco as he stood up, pushing through the pain. “NO YOU CANT DIE ON ME!” He ran over to his friend who was hanging from the horn of the beast. Aess turned his head, his mouth leaking blood.

“Well Taco… This is it. You were my best friend, and I’m happy that I was able to meet you and go on this adventure with you. Please, go back and tell the rest that we finished the quest. And please, don’t let this hang over your head. I know you well enough to know you will blame this on yourself, but there was nothing you could do, so don’t live with this hanging over your head. Live with this making you stronger, teaching you your weakness and what you need to improve on. Thank you” When Aess had finished that his head drooped, and hung lifelessly.

Taco let out a scream and dropped to his knees crying. He had just lost his closest friend. He wasn’t able to protect the person closest to him. And even though he was told not to, he blamed himself.

Chapter Eight

Buni looked down at the rushing water; it had started to slow down. After a while the water stopped moving and it sank into the ground. Buni took Fangking and rode down the ramp and onto the path the flood had created. Melove jumped onto the horse as they rode past her. They continued at full sprint towards their friends hoping that they were ok.

Finally after an hour of riding they saw Shinda walking along the path, carrying Sora in his arms. Seeing this made the horse run faster towards them. When they reached the pair they slid to a stop and Melove and Buni jumped off the horse.

Shinda was covered in mud and blood, his armor was still dripping wet. He walked forward to the legate and their guide, and then laid Sora onto the ground. Buni fell to her knees looking at her fallen friend.

“Please tell me she is just asleep”

“I wish I could. She hasn’t moved at all, she has no heartbeat, and she isn’t breathing. She won’t wake no matter what I do. I’m sorry, but she’s dead. We can’t do anything about it” replied Shinda.

He walked over to Buni and put his arm on her.

“But this is no time to cry. Melove, show us to the artifacts now”

Buni looked up at her companion. Tears streamed down his face, but his face didn’t look sad. His eyes steady, mouth tightened, looking ahead, he was angry. He looked down at Buni.

“It ends now”

The group grabbed Sora’s body and strapped her to Fangking. Then they walked over to Sora’s ship.

When they reached the ship, the crew flooded down onto the beach. Some men cried some looked down, but every single one took off their hat.

“We are going to bury her, we wanted you men to be there because we know how close she was to you” said Shinda

“No” responded the captain of the crew as he walked forward. “We shall do this the right way.”

Four men ran to the ship and grabbed a canoe. They pulled it up to the shore and made it sturdy. Shinda grabbed the body from his horse and carried her over to the boat. He laid her in carefully then put her trident on her chest. They folded her arms and then each sailor took turns putting something into the boat. At the end of it all Sora was surrounded by little trinkets and hats from each of the sailors. As Shinda and the captain pushed the boat out to sea another sailor lit an arrow on fire. He set loose the arrow which landed on the end of the canoe, setting it ablaze. All the men bowed their heads as the boat floated off and burned. Eventually the fire became too much for the boat, cracking it and sending the entire thing to the bottom of the ocean.

As Shinda looked up he turned to the crew.

“We must set sail now. We need to get to the other islands and stop this madness. So lift your heads and get the ship ready, we leave as soon as we are prepared.”

The crew looked up at the man standing tall before them. They wiped the tears from their eyes and put their hands at their sides then saluted all shouting together “YES SIR”

Everybody got onto the ship and started working. As they went Shinda and Buni walked on board followed by Melove. By the time the men set sail it was already night time.

“Buni, Melove. We need to sleep. We have to be completely ready for what will come tomorrow. I feel like this will be more than going onto an island and grabbing artifacts. Nothing that important is left alone” after Shinda said that the group went to their rooms and fell asleep waiting for the morning to come.

. . .

As morning came the legates woke in the morning they noticed the ship wasn’t moving anymore. They looked outside to see they were on the next island, already docked and ready to go. The group left the ship finding Melove at the bottom of the ramp waiting for them.

“This is the first island. It holds the artifact of the mask. We need to get passed the guardian on this island. Once it is defeated we will be able to grab the artifact. Until the guardian is defeated the artifact will be protected by a shield that won’t disappear until the guardian is defeated.”

“Well let’s hope to it” said Shinda, he pulled his helmet from under his arm and strapped it on. Buni put hers on as well.

The group walked forward. There was a path made out of bricks leading through the jungle that was on the island. The group walked for about an hour until they reach an open area lined by the same white bricks they had been walking on. The area was lined on the sides by white pillars that were carved on, holding up a beam made from marble that ran around the perimeter. At the end of the area was a raised platform with stairs leading up to it. There was a pedestal on the platform that was like the pillars but the top was ringed with a gold line running along the edge. Floating just above the pedestal was a clear red orb; in the middle of it was an arrow that was pointing almost straight up.

Shinda pulled out his sword, holding it with both hands as he took his battle position. Buni pulled the daggers from her sides. Melove took a couple steps back.

“I will not be of any help to you in a fight. I will be safe beyond this area; the guardian can’t go past its assigned area. I wish you good luck.” Melove took a few more steps back and watched the legates walk forward.

The legates ran forward towards the podium trying to get on the higher ground for the advantage, but they were halted as the guardian crawled over the edge of the platform next to the podium.

The legates stopped running as they watched it finish its accent. The creature was massive, its green body taking up a lot of the platform. It had one tail, but three heads. Each head looked the same except for the eyes. They each had really bright eyes, the one on the right had green eyes, the middle was red, and the left was purple. At first the creature was looking all over the arena until one head spotted them followed by the other two. It rushed forward each mouth snapping towards them.

Buni was the first to move. She crouched down and then turned into a blur as she zoomed past the red green eyed head. She landed behind the monster on the pedestal, still in her crouched position. After a few seconds the monster stopped. The green eyed face started bleeding all over, cuts appearing from Buni’s strike started to show. The head fell limp against the monsters side.

The other two heads ignored the destroyed part of them and kept running towards Shinda. Shinda ran forward and jumped in the air, the middle head followed after him. Shinda swung his sword with all his might decapitating the middle head. The beast’s second head dropped to the floor, wriggling until it came to a lifeless stop.

The last head looked at the two legates who were now standing side by side. The last head released a mighty roar, the stump from the middle head producing three more heads.

“It’s a hydra” said Shinda.

“All we have to do is prevent the other heads from coming up then right?” replied Buni.

“No, I have a better idea. Keep cutting off the heads as fast as you can. Let them keep growing more”

“What?! That is probably the most dangerous thing I have ever heard you suggest.”

“I have a theory I want to test”

“You’re insane, but I trust you so I’ll go with it.” Buni disappeared reappearing on the other side of the creature again. All four heads detached from the body, soon to be replaced by twelve more. The legates kept running around cutting off the heads, letting three more come for each one.

Finally Shinda’s theory came true. The amount of heads on the hydra passed the limit it should take. For a while the beast looked like a bouquet of heads, every single one looking up unable to move because of the one next to it. Only the outermost heads were able to move.

The legates went one more time cutting every head off in one run. As the beast recreated more heads they started to push into each other. The body of the creature started to rip in half.

“I realized that the body never grew, only the heads. I figured at some point the body wouldn’t be able to hold how many heads it had.” Shinda explained as the legates stood back and watched as the heads growing ripped the body apart just by the pressure of them pushing on each other.

Eventually the body split in two parts, each following onto its side lifeless. They looked over at the podium and saw the bright red orb fade into a clear white. Shinda walked up the stairs and reached into the orb, grabbing onto the arrow and pulling it out. Once the artifact had left the pedestal a wave of pressure was released from them.

“I didn’t even know we were holding all that pressure on us” said Buni.

“I think it was to keep us on the ground to fight. I noticed that you never went into the air to fight”

“That’s true. Even though I planned on flying I never did.”

“Well we got the first artifact, let’s go grab the next.”

The legates walked over to Melove who was standing outside the arena smiling.

“That was amazing”

“Thanks” replied Buni

“I can’t believe that you were able to fight that well and that fast under the pressure barrier.”

Shinda stared at her. “Wait you knew about that and you didn’t tell us?”

“I didn’t remember until a little after you started, and plus you looked like you were able to fight really well so I didn’t want to interrupt”

“Well it’s over with now. Let’s just move on to the next”

The group headed back onto the boat and they set sail for the next island.

“So is there anything else that you can tell us about the next guardian?” asked Shinda.

“Yes. Well first of all the pressure barrier is different on this one. Instead of the wait holding you back down to the ground, it makes it so that the smallest jump will send you soaring into the sky. Another thing is that I can’t go onto the island with you. This creature is limited by the island boundaries, not the arena. If I went with you I would be at danger and just another distraction. I do want you to know one other thing, the guardian always changes, that way no one can just train to fight that one creature, but one thing that always stays the same about them is that they will be a master of the skies.”

“If you can’t go onto the island with us how will we be able to find our way through?” asked Buni.

“This island is an exact copy of the last. You will be able to find your way.”

Once they had finished their conversation they walked back to the side of the ship, they were already nearly to the next island. The crew landed the ship then set down the ramp and the two legates walked down the ramp and onto the path that had led them last time.

Again they came to the same clearing as last time, the only differences were that the orb on the pedestal was blue and was lined with black instead of gold, and the pillars that held the barrier were pushing into the sky high above their heads, a pillar separating the pillars every thirty or so feet.

The legates pulled their weapons and prepared for the guardian. Shinda stood on his tip toes, but even just the push from that pushed him into the air then slowly floating back down.

“This will be really fun” said Shinda as he landed.

He crouched down and launched himself into the air rocketing towards the clouds above. Buni followed him and together they soared up past the cloud top. The legates looked around, only being able to see clouds beneath them.

Shinda slashed with his sword, the ring of metal clashing echoed out.

“What was that?” yelled Buni.

“I was barely able to sense it coming. I couldn’t even see it.”

Then the guardian ascended through the clouds beneath them. It had the head and wings of an eagle, but the body of a lion.

“It’s a griffin” said Buni

The griffin jolted straight towards Buni who disappeared soaring as fast as the creature itself. The guardian looked around slightly confused but quickly gathering its senses and then darting straight at Shinda who had started to sink back down. The griffin realized this and dove down then came at the legate from the bottom, its strike knocking him higher into the air. As it pushed him he soars higher and higher. He defended himself from the creature’s claws with his sword, battering them away and knocking them back. As he started reaching the end of the pillars surrounding them the air began to thin. Shinda started to find it hard to breathe, and even harder to defend himself, but the griffin just grew stronger. Its claws attacking more viciously with every swipe.

Just as Shinda was about to pass out from lack of oxygen Buni appeared above him kicking him in the head launching him down past the griffin back towards earth. She then disappeared again and started zooming past the griffin slashing at it. In the beginning the attacks went through, but slowly the griffin became able to copy her, following her movements.

The pair battled in the air, trying to gain advantage over its opponent. They kept flying towards each other, lashing out a claw or swiping with a dagger, each move being canceled by the others.

All the sudden a massive rock came flying through the clouds hurling itself at the battle, unaware of where its target should be. The pair looked down but the clouds prevented them from seeing Shinda cutting chunks of rock from the ground and hurling them into the air. His eyes glowing a dark brown, a wide smile spread on his face, his joy coming from the fact that they were almost done with the quest then he would be able to go back to Melove and show her his success, making her proud of him. He might even be able to convince her to come back with him and stay with him at the camp.

He had never felt this way about a person before. He has loved his teammates extremely for a long time, but this was different. When she talked to him his heart raced. The fact that Fangking already trusted her seemed amazing to him. His companion had never grown so fond of someone so quickly. And seeing her smile, it gave him goose bumps just to think of it.

That happiness of maybe convincing her to come back with him, and her loving him back gave him the happiness that triggered his power.

Shinda smashed the hilt of his hammer into the ground, crushing the floor beneath him and creating massive boulders that he launched into the air. He knew that his power wasn’t very useful in an air fight, but he needed to try.

Up in the air the battle continued to rage on. The opponents kept attacking each other as they dodged the oncoming the rocks. The griffin was getting sick of the fight, it darted straight towards Buni. Just as it was about to attack a rock came from the clouds nailing the griffin right in the chin sending the guardian spinning through the clouds and towards the ground.

One the creature passed the clouds it saw Shinda launching the rocks up. The griffin straightened itself out, tucked its wings and dove head first towards the ground. It picked up so much speed that fire started to envelope it as it dropped. At last second it spread its wings and curved itself to fly horizontal with the ground aimed directly at Shinda.

Shinda’s time turned into slow motion as he saw the griffin head at him. The light in his eyes faded to his normal pupils which were shaking in fear. The griffin flew straight into the legate, its beak smashing straight into his face, launching him back into one of the pillars, smashing through it and falling onto the small open ground that surrounded the arena. The pillar that he crashed through collapsed causing the entire structure to crumble and fall. Because the side he was on was the weakest it gave out first, tilting the entire thing in his direction. The pillars slowly gave out one after another, all collapsing onto the spot where the legate lay.

Buni came through the clouds just in time to see the griffin’s beak smash into her friend. The griffin soared out of the way as the arena collapsed. Buni dodged the structure as well, then watched as the whole thing fell crashing on top of the friend, then continue falling and landing in the ocean.

The griffin flew back underneath Buni and looked up with a smug smile spread across its face. Buni looked at the guardian and screamed.

“NO!”

As she screamed her eyes instantly shined a bright white, small white pearls dripping from her eyes. She put her hands together, palms out but her wrists were touching. A beam of light and air hurled itself from her hands going towards the griffin. The smile on the creatures face disappeared as the beam struck it in the chest hurling it towards the ground. Once the beast had hit the ground it stayed pinned as the beam kept going. After a minute of the light descending upon the fiend and hearing its awful scream the light stopped and the air became quiet. Buni calmed down as the light from her eyes faded and she floated down to the ground.

She looked over at the griffin’s body which now had a huge hole in the middle of it that continued deep into the ground. She then walked over to the pile of rubble that was on top of her friend. She slashed at the stone with her daggers breaking it into smaller pieces which rolled off the legate’s body. After all the debris was cleared she looked at her fallen friend. His face was no longer recognizable from the impact of the griffin’s beak. She wasn’t able to cry, all her tears were gone from losing Sora. She just sat on her knees holding his head against her chest, dry crying.

After a few minutes she walked over the pedestal and grabbed the mask from the now clear orb. As she pulled the two connected pieces of the mask, the happy part appeared in the orb. She reached out and grabbed the second half of the mask. She pushed the two pieces together which joined by a line made from a bright line running in-between them, once the light faded the mask was complete, and the light weight that she felt disappeared back to normal.

Sora then walked over to the beach which was right behind the podium and using the wind she created with her daggers and cut out a grave. She then walked over to her fallen companion and picked him up, carried him over and laid him in the grave. She covered him up with the remaining sand then stood there in silence for a while.

Losing two of her closest friends was too hard for her, but she knew that she had to keep living for them. Then she turned and headed back to the ship, her eyes dry, and her face calm.

Chapter Nine

Taco looked up from his hands, Outside it had grown dark during his crying. He looked over at his friend, now laying on the ground next to him. He had finally stopped crying, and he had finally stopped blaming himself. He accepted that he wasn’t able to do anything, the only reason that Aess had been able to move was because his power finally revealed itself.

The legate stood up and walked over to the dragon, it’s lifeless body crunched up on the floor. Burn marks covered its body from when the man took his anger and sadness out on the corpse. Looking now he realized that scales from the beast had been chipping off throughout his beating. Some were whole and others were pieces, some held the red stripe that ran along the creatures body. Taco walked over and picked up two of the whole scales that had the red streaking through them. He took off his armor and using his heat he welded the pieces onto the shoulder blades of his armor. He then wrapped the head of his weapon in the dragon’s armor, the golden hammer now black with the red streak.

He took a swing with his new hammer letting it strike one of the pillars. An eruption came from the hammer collapsing the pillar. Taco curious about the power his hammer had just unleashed he struck another pillar, watching very closely as he did. As the hammer made contact the flames burst out of the hammer, but he also noticed a small red and black cloud was released as well. Taco smiled as he struck another pillar, then another, then another. He kept destroying the pillars one after another, feeling his power surge through the hammer then coming out as the black cloud which the dragon had used.

Taco looked around and saw that he had destroyed most of the pillars. With only a few remaining and fear that the roof would collapse he stopped and back over to his friend. Then he turned and walked outside and started to gather wood from the courtyard. He broke down trees and picked up the pieces. Then he took a scale from the dragon and smoothed the rough edges with the piece. After he had a good amount of flat stumps he aligned them in two rows. Then he walked over to Aessixed and picked him up. He carried him over to his homemade bed and laid him down. He crossed his friends arms in front of him holding his bow. The he lined the bed with his friends arrows. Once he laid out the arrows he grabbed two more and bent them. He took the two arrows and welded them to the chest of his armor pointing down, the curves he put in the arrows matching his armor perfectly. Then he walked back to his friend and looked at him.

“You watched you village and family get burned from this dragon, and now you have your revenge. It cost you your life, but you got your revenge. You were my closest friend, and I will never be able to truly express the happiness and kindness that I need to show in order to repay you, but the way I will try to repay my debt is I will destroy Itzal. His taking of enemy army led to us taking this quest, and there for leading to your death. I hope that you will be able to find the peace that you need to find up in heaven.”

Taco let out a small chuckle

“Or in hell, I think we have both done enough stupid crap to land us down there… No… you won’t end up down there, you were not a bad guy… Good bye my friend”

Taco put his hand on the wood next to his friends head and set the stump ablaze. Then he turned and walked away, out of the dining hall, past the courtyard and down the path which led up the hill, smoke rising up from behind him.

He walked down the path reaching the rocks that hid their pack, only to find them gone. Taco looked around to find the thief, his gaze being met by a wolf’s. The creature didn’t look normal though. It had patches of fur missing from all over its body, it’s legs were longer and skinnier that a normal wolf’s. Taco deducted that the creature was a were wolf. Having no time to wonder what man was trapped inside that body the wolf charged Taco.

Taco side stepped the attack swinging his hammer onto the back of the beast. The creature collapsed onto the ground, a black circle scorched into its back from the fire of the weapon. The monster stood back up and roared at the legate. The sound echoed through the mountains. The beast let out another scream, but this time in pain. It’s face split down the middle, peeling away from its skull to reveal a face under its skin. The crack pealed passed the top of its head revealing a massive afro, the tips of it colored in a bright platinum. As the wolves body peeled away Shayde stepped out of the skin that had enclosed around him.

“God that was awful” he said as he turned and kicked the fallen skin.

“Shayde? What the hell were you doing inside that thing” asked Taco in confusion.

“Well, let’s just say that a client got really mad at me and leave it at that. Anyways, wait… where is your less fun friend?”

“He was killed by the dragon”

A small bunny ran out from a nearby bush and jumped at Shayde’s face, but Shayde just pulled out the pocket bite and let its teeth snap onto the animals leg, making the creature run back to the bush.

“I’m very sorry to hear that. It is always hard to lose a friend. I lost my best friend to a creature a long time ago as well. That’s why I went into the business of selling these gadgets, because he loved making them. They gave him a lot of joy when he messed with them. Here” Shayde pulled out a small ball from his pocket. It was a light blue and was very bouncy. There was a string hanging from it the Shayde pulled on making the ball grow till it was waist high on Taco.

“This little thing helped me get over his death. Every time that I thought of it I pulled this out and beat it till I felt better. It never broke, never wore out, it was always there for me to hurt. Take it” he held out his hand towards the legate.

“I don’t have any money.”

“That’s ok. This one is on the house today.”

“Thank you”

“Always. Well I need to get back. I have a tent full of merchandise left completely unattended.” And with that Shayde pulled out a small stick with a circle at the end. He blew through the circle creating a bubble that he hopped in and floated off the mountain.

Taco kept walking for a couple days. Eventually he reached the fissure that blocked his path before. But the difference is that now there was a bridge across it. As Taco approached the bridge he saw a note stuck to the bridge.

*Thank you to whoever killed the creature that lived below here. We were never able to do any work here because it would always reach up and grab our men. But now that you have slain the beast we were able to complete our work. Now we will be able to get trade to the farther cities. So thank you whoever did this great task.*

*Sincerely,*

*Jillaimay*

Taco read the note and smiled.

“Well at least we did help someone.”

Taco kept walking. he passed Os-Tan, but he decided not to stop since there were to many people that knew that he was with Aess last time and he didn’t feel like explaining things to them, and he just wasn’t in the party mood.

Taco reached the forest that he first traveled through and just walked through. The journey through didn’t take as long as it had going through it the first time. He emerged from the other side and looked down to see only five tents sitting where camp was supposed to be. He looked to his right and saw Sora’s boat coming towards the camp.

“I hope that they had better fortunes then me” he whispered to himself, then walked down to camp.

. . .

Buni walked back to the boat. As she approached Melove ran off the ship to meet her.

“I felt the pressure return to normal, I’m so happy that you were able to win” she hugged Buni and then looked up. “Where is Shinda, I need to thank him too.” She looked around but didn’t see him, then she looked at Buni’s face and saw the seriousness in her expression. Melove could tell that the legate was still hurting, but she knew that she was trying to hide it and not let it show.

“I see. I’m so sorry that this has happened. I know that you were very close, and this must be extremely hard for you” said Melove.

“No. I knew that we would all die at some point” replied Buni. “I knew that this wouldn’t always be here, my friends would die and I would die eventually too. Shinda died in a very valiant way, and he will always be remembered. He sacrificed everything for those he cared about, and he will always be loved by those who had gotten to know him.”

Buni’s lip started to quiver, she held back the tears until she couldn’t bear it anymore. She broke down crying, falling to her knees as she wept. Melove sat down next to her and cried as well. The ship’s crew looked down from the boat, knowing what happened by seeing the legate, and took off their hats.

The women finished crying and stood up. They looked at each other then walked onto the ship. They didn’t need to say anything to the crew, neither did the crew need to communicate to each other. They all just started to sail back towards Mangtak. When they reached the island Melove and Buni walked off the ship and into the jungle. They kept walking till they reached the village. They walked up the bridge and through the village, ending at the chiefs tent. The pair walked in and sat down. The chief looked at the two before him then spoke.

“You don’t need to say anything because I can see what has happened just by seeing you two. I know you have completed the journey because in the middle of a flood the water instantly stopped and sank down. Also the weight that the floods bring was lifted. I also know that your friends have died. I have decided that this day will always be one of mourning for our people. We will always remember what you and your friends have done for us. I also want you to know that their deaths were not in vain. Because of their sacrifice they prevented the extinction of my people, and for that I am permanently in your debt. I will let you do as you please now, seeing that you don’t want to talk you may leave or you may stay, which ever you prefer.”

“I will leave. I am happy that I was able to help your people in your struggle, and I hope that you will be able to become prosperous, but I need to get back to my leader. I have to tell him what has happened… And I need the support that they can give me. so I will say good bye” replied Buni. She dropped the two artifacts onto the floor and spoke again.

“I understand that you don’t want these things in your village for their protection, but I want you to have them. It is your responsibility that you must hold onto. We helped you with the problem, but it is not our problem to deal with.

Buni stood up, hugged Melove and walked out of the tent. She headed straight for the ship and got on. As the ship left the beach a group of people ran out from the jungle. They all started yelling at the ship, saying thank you, and we will never forget you, and things like that. They kept yelling until the boat was out of site.

The boat sailed back towards the main country. When the land was visible the men started moving faster, trying to reach their friends as fast as they could. Buni looked out to see that the camp had shrunk considerably. When she looked towards the hill that led to the forest she saw one man walking down the slope. She stood there hoping that Taco’s journey had been better than hers.

Chapter Ten

Aero looked at the hill and the sea.

“I’m so glad that they got back at the same time.”

Taco walked up to the biggest tent and opened the flap to see Aero standing there smiling. The legate dropped his bag and hugged the sage.

“I don’t think I have ever been so happy to see you Aero” said Taco.

“Same here my friend.

“I have a lot to tell you.”

“I know, but wait until the other group gets here. Then we will hear everything at once.”

A few minutes later Buni walked into the tent. She hugged Aero, then flung herself at Taco. The couple stood there hugging for a while. When they finally let go Buni spoke first.

“I’m so happy to see you right now, I need someone to hold right now.”

“I will always be here for you” Taco replied.

“This is very beautiful to see, but we do need to get down to business” said Aero. The group pulled up some chairs and sat down in a circle.

“Taco I want you to start. Buni, me and you cannot ask questions. I just want to hear what he has to say.”

Taco told his story. Telling the group how they met Shayde, how he got Velsi to love him, how he killed the goblin, how they fought the dragon, everything.

“So that’s why Aess isn’t here. I’m so sorry that this has happened to you” said Aero. “Buni your turn.”

Buni told her story and at the end she let a couple tears fall.

“These were both very hard tasks, but I never thought that this would happen.” Aero was staring at the ground.

“What about what happened here?” asked Taco.

Aero looked up at the legates.

“We were attacked. A couple days after you left Itzal brought his army down and attacked. We fought the best we could, but they outnumbered us five to one. I guess he wanted to make sure that we all died. Major was amazing on the battle field. He fought so hard, killing more enemies than anyone. He wanted to protect everyone as much as he could. In the end I believe he killed a fifth of the army all alone, but everyone has a limit. After a while he couldn’t move anymore from how much energy he had used. At least ten shadow men jumped on him, taking his life. I was the last one left. I was against the last of the shadow men. I killed them, but I was hurt as well. I was laying on the ground ready to die when Itzal walked over to me. He said that I would understand why he did this eventually, then he left, leaving me alive. Everyone in our armies was dead. The only people left alive were Itzal and I.”

Taco looked at Aero. The Sage was starting to cry.

“Well I guess we have no other choice. We need to go teach Itzal that we are stronger than him.” Buni stood up.

“That’s right. Taco and I can go take him, together the three of us can kill him”

“No” replied Aero.

“What do you mean?! We can do this” said Taco.

“No”

“Aero, we can fight. The three of us are stronger than the one him” said Buni.

“I SAID NO!”

The legates got quiet.

“I was able to get to Itzal’s camp for a bit. While I was spying over there I heard some of the captains talking. That dragon that you face Taco, that was Itzal’s. It was his creature that killed Aess and almost killed you. Those artifacts that were tampered with, were tampered with by him. He moved them, changed them, it was all him. He is so much stronger than you think. When he saw me laying on the floor he didn’t have a single scratch on him. He is powerful beyond belief. We can’t fight that.”

“Well then what should we do?” asked Taco.

“We do nothing. If the other legates had survived, and we still had Major and some other men, we might be able to fight him, but just the three of us won’t be able to do it. Maybe later on we will be able to bring the Legion back, but for now we don’t have the power to do it. The legion has died.”

The legates hung their heads.

“I am sorry, but there is nothing we can do. I am going to leave and search for things that will be able to help us bring the legion back.”

“What should we do?” asked Buni.

“Live a normal life for now. If ever at one time the legion can be built back up then I will find you. But for now just try to live a normal life.”

With that Aero hugged the legates and walked away.

“Well what should we do now?” asked Buni as she looked over at Taco.

“WE go live a normal life. Os-Tan would be a good place to start.”

The legates turned and walked away as well, heading back the way Taco had come. Their backs towards the camp.

The Legion of the Inferno was now dead, or rather sleeping, waiting to be brought back up from the ashes.

THE END