

Epilogue: An Ending, and a Beginning

In a place beyond the feeble constraints of space and time, the Figure in Black floated within a void of pure darkness. All of the glowing sigils continually revolving around the figure for once were completely dark; this being now focused all of its concentration on the mortal events taking place.

It was surprised; it really was. Very little ever actually caused this creature to feel that emotion; it had not experienced shock for at least a hundred and fifty thousand mortal years. But now both of those human feelings were attempting to creep into the depths of this creature's mind.

The mortals had succeeded in their hopeless quest. Even when every prediction had proclaimed their failure and deaths, this small group had succeeded with only minor losses.

But all was not well. The slight amount of interference the One in Black crafted did help the group succeed, but now the predictions were changing. The myriad futures branching out of this group were slowly beginning to shift into new forms, and the Figure in Black knew they might soon twist fully out of its control.

Looking into the future with deep foreboding, the Lord of Entropy could now only wait and watch.

“Wake up! Wake up, you fat old man!”

Lazarus floated in a peaceful darkness, in a place where he felt no pain, no stress of any sort. Part of his mind wanted to stay there forever, but that nagging voice would not let itself be ignored for long.

“Come on and wake up, you miserable sorcerer!” the voice continued, “Now is no time for a little nap. Mal'Zyn is dying!”

This information suddenly pulled Lazarus' wandering thoughts back into total clarity. He opened his eyes to find Perfection roughly shaking him as she tried to get him up.

“I'm not fat.” he croaked as he tried to raise himself to a sitting position. He failed, and fell back to the ground in a disgraceful heap.

"Oh really," Perfection sharply poked Lazarus' stomach with a finger. Seeing that the

sorcerer was not making any attempt to move, she actually expressed some concern. "What's wrong with you?"

"I don't think I will be of much help," Lazarus moaned, "I think I'm dying too."

"Oh great, not again!" Perfection tried to keep her voice sarcastic, but a faint tone had crept in which expressed the concern she did feel over her companions.

"I can help." A new voice faintly spoke. Both Perfection and Lazarus looked over to the speaker and saw Brittany standing in the doorway to the Dark Lord's inner sanctum.

"Wow. I thought you would be dead," Perfection spoke as Brittany moved forward. She almost stumbled a number of times during the short trek over to where Lazarus lay.

"I thought so too." Brittany weakly replied with a slight smile on her face. She stood over Lazarus and closed her eyes, readying herself for the spell. Surprisingly she did not need to concentrate at all; the correct spell immediately came to her mind. As she cast the healing spell, Brittany did not feel tired at all. In fact this was the best she had felt in weeks. She felt strong, completely rejuvenated. Her magickal power seemed stronger than ever. At this moment, Brittany felt as if she could conquer the world...

Lazarus groaned a little as her spell passed through every cell of his body, curing all the damage it found. After her magick had ceased, he slowly pulled himself up to a sitting position

"The Dark Lord?" he asked, glancing around to see if Dobby had survived. The elf was taking a nap in a corner.

"The Dark Lord is dead." Brittany said with some conviction in her voice. "The Rite of El'Ran'Kasheen has failed."

Lazarus nodded at this; he had felt the magickal waves as the spell had gone out of control.

"Alright, you're fine." Perfection interrupted his thoughts, "But what about Mal'Zyn?"

"What happened to Mal'Zyn?" Brittany asked.

They found the albino warrior quietly bleeding to death in the center of a large storage room. Montfallion quickly moved around Mal'Zyn, trying to help repair the man's wounds wherever he could.

"This is too extensive," Montfallion said as Brittany and the rest came over to them. "He

will be dead within minutes, but if I remove the sword, he will die within a second or two."

"Is he awake?" Brittany asked. Montfallion shook his head.

"No." he answered. "He was unconscious since before we found him."

"And how are you two doing?" Lazarus asked both Perfection and Montfallion, "The Dark Lord hit you pretty hard."

"Ha! It will take far more than one blow to defeat me!" Montfallion proclaimed as Brittany moved over to where Mal'Zyn lay. "Am I correct in assuming that bastard has been sent to Hell by now?"

"Very much so." Brittany answered, but she no longer concentrated on Montfallion. Instead, all her thoughts were turned to Mal'Zyn. She knelt down beside him, thinking she had to try. Without saying a word, Brittany began to concentrate on the spell, thinking about what would be needed to knit his shattered bones back together and close his dripping wounds.

Brittany grasped the handle of the blade extending from Mal'Zyn's chest and began to slowly draw it out, one inch at a time. She had to heal this massive wound very carefully; if she just pulled the blade out, the man would be dead within instants, too quick for Brittany to save him.

Long minutes passed, and Brittany continued her spell. As before with Lazarus, she was surprisingly not tired at all; it seemed as if every use of magick only ended up increasing her power even more. Soon the sword was removed and Mal'Zyn fully healed, and still Brittany did not feel fatigued.

Brittany knelt down and kissed Mal'Zyn on his blood-streaked forehead as he opened his eyes.

"You are safe." he whispered. He moved to kiss her, but Brittany had already moved away, distracted by her own thoughts. It was left to Montfallion to help Mal'Zyn to his feet.

"Even though the few remaining sorcerers are probably harmless now that we killed their master." Lazarus spoke up. "I do not want to tempt fate any more than we already did. We should thus get out of here as soon as possible."

Everyone agreed to this, and soon they were all looking towards Brittany for confirmation.

"Yes, of course," she said, even though she was barely listening anymore to Lazarus. She was no longer listening to any of them. Instead, Brittany listened to a new voice, one that began speaking immediately after she had healed Mal'Zyn.

"How foolish all of you are," the new voice slowly whispered within the depths of her mind. "You all think I failed. You are wrong. The Rite of El'Ran'Kasheen was a complete success. You were not just used for power, but rather as a vessel which I could use. My immortal spirit is now forever bonded to yours, and we are one! Think of the future. Once you have come to my side, the entire universe will tremble under the force of our dark will!"

The Dark Lord's words continued to echo throughout Brittany's mind, and she found herself whispering an agreement to them as she followed her companions up the stairs and out of the temple.

