

# Sulfur

*A hush falls over the street  
And the red ladies are silent.  
The need for their green fairy is strong  
To dull their pains of constant living.*

## I

Emily was a spinster. It was not that she was ugly or homely; in fact, she was rather beautiful and intelligent with a sharp wit and a tongue to match. She spent most of her time pouring over books and maps, magazines and journals, seeking knowledge where it could be found. She desired to understand the world around her no matter how long it took. She preferred the company of books to the company of men; to her, men possessed a primal sense of knowing the world even though they ruled it. Men were nothing more than a nuisance, a fly upon one's dinner, and she wanted no part of them and their ways. Her father, Wolfe Eldenshire, a more than middle class businessman who was ruthless when it came to money and taxes, loved his Emily so. Although they lived in Victorian London, where women were considered to be the weaker sex, her father thought quite differently of his children. They never fell victim to the ordinary traps of society, where women could not speak their minds, but looked to their husbands to do it for them.

Emily was the middle child in the family of three children; Lysander, the eldest child, worked with his father and was also

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the company's accountant. He was a tall and lanky man with thick dark locks that fell to his shoulders just like his father, causing many a young heart to swoon just in catching a glance while he walked the streets, his mind filled with voices who spoke languages only he could understand. His eyes could get the truth from a mute person, it was said. When he walked, one could smell the scent of burning leaves and violets in the air. He, too, spent much of his time reading books and walking through forests trails at night, a habit he began as soon as he could crawl. At first, his family worried that he would be killed or kidnapped, but he always returned unharmed and sometimes laughing with leaves stuck in his hair.

Milenda, the youngest, was anything, but young. Her eyes were violet and they sparkled when she spoke, giving life to anything she talked about. Her hair was as red as a bonfire that seemed to move on its own while she walked or even while she stood still. Some claimed that her father had a tryst with a faerie while out walking in the forests and the result of that union was Milenda. Some even claimed that the Eldenshire family adopted her from the Wilde Fae and that she was not their own in blood. While she too enjoyed reading thick books like her older siblings, she also enjoyed studying different languages. To date, she was fluent in over twenty and still yearned to learn more. She was the tomboy of the family, always preferring to sleep outdoors than inside her warm and safe home.

Emily spent most of her free time walking along the dark streets of London, purposely walking in the not so savoury areas of the city, seeking the dirt, crime, pollution, and decadence that so many of London's upper crust refused to acknowledge or, in some cases, accept even though some of their family members dallied in such sordid interests. It was among the prostitutes, drug dealers, pimps, junkies, homeless, and others that Emily walked at night with no fear for her life in any way. She knew and understood these people, knowing them to be just as strange and unusual as she. During her

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times out, she would take notes on what she saw and observed, adding every detail no matter how morbid or gory. Emily wanted London to know of the dark underbelly of their fair city, giving accounts of real people who walked the same streets as those of the upper class, but whose lives were horrendously different.

One night, however, while she was out walking among the living shadows, a figure clothed in dirty and oily rags approached her, holding out its sore encrusted hand. Emily felt sorry for the poor creature; not once had anyone ever approached her. The people of the slums knew of her family blood and gave her the proper respect. They knew that she, like the others, were more on their level than they cared to admit and so never harmed any of them that passed through their world in any way. As the figure approached Emily, towering over her rather tall frame, she held her ground. She was born with a steel rod for a backbone and refused to swoon at every little foul thing in the world.

Once the figure touched her shoulder with its diseased hand, Emily covered its hand with her own, causing many an onlooker to gasp with surprise; no one had ever touched an Eldenshire before. The figure's face was hidden underneath its rags, but its frame trembled. Emily could tell that it needed food and rest immediately and so, without another word, led the figure to her waiting carriage and horses, all as black as the night, and soon they were off.

*Of roses and violets  
Smelling sweetly among the grass  
Giving no concern to the rotting corpses  
That lay just underneath.  
My darling, how I love thee so  
To keep me forever locked in your embrace  
Through Death, there is none better.*

II

Light. That's what it was, thought the figure. Light. It sent a command to its brain: open eyes. For several seconds, nothing happened, but soon, the eyes did follow its orders. The light was soft and not harsh like the lights in the places forbidden, the ones where not even the dead would go. No, this was a soft and inviting light, one that welcomed all and turned none away; it was that kind of light. The figure turned its head to the left and saw a side table with several books lying on it and a framed picture of a young woman dressed in purple and black with long black hair. The figure's eyes stared at this picture, its breath caught in its throat. Whoever she was, she was beautiful. No, beyond that; she was stunning.

"How are you feeling?" asked a soft voice from the other side of the room. The figure quickly turned its head towards the source and almost forgot to breathe. Here was the picture come alive. The figure stared at the woman as it tried to speak to her. Emily could see that he tried to speak (after removing the clothing, she realized that the figure was a man) and so propped his head up with many more pillows. The figure could only stare at her and be amazed by her; he had not experienced such kindness in quite a long time. Once his head was up, Emily took a step back to gaze at him.

His pale skin was made even more so by his shockingly long red hair that spilled around his shoulders. He glanced down at his hands and bare arms and noticed that he was clean. She must have done it, he thought, and a smile appeared on his face, causing her to smile as well. He coughed once then tried to speak again.

"Where am I?" he croaked. "Am I still in London?"

"Yes, you are. You are in the Eldenshire home. You've been out for two days. I cleaned you and applied salve to your sores. It is a family recipe; they will be completely healed by the end of the day." He looked down at his arms again and noticed that the sores were indeed fading. He looked up at her and smiled.

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“Truly you are an angel.” Emily blushed for a moment then regained herself; she was in no mood for anyone’s flattery, no matter if she saved them from dying or not.

“If you require anything further,” she said with a soft hint of steel in her voice, “please ring for the maid or me. My room is right down the hall and I will be more than happy to help you.” She then turned and left his room with a soft click of the door. He stared at the door for several seconds then sank back into the soft down bed with a sigh. Truly an angel.

Emily raced to her room, her mind occupied with many thoughts. Was it so wrong of her to be even slightly rude to him, she thought. After all, she did help him. Perhaps he was just grateful. Perhaps.

Lysander, coming from his room, noticed how deep in thought Emily was as she walked by him without even a glance. He smirked as he slipped behind her and followed her down to her room. His feet made no sounds as he walked behind her, noticing how tightly her hair was pulled back from her head, how her usual attire of all black clothing looked to be slightly out of date on her and yet it complimented her at the same time.

Emily stopped and turned quickly to face her brother whom she knew was following her down the hall. He stopped in mock surprise as a faint smile appeared on his lips.

“I trust the patient is doing much better?” he asked while running a slender hand through his hair. “He seemed to be when I last looked upon him.” Even in the semi dark hall, he could tell she was blushing, causing the smile to increase. “What’s this, dear sister? Why are you blushing?” Emily held a hand to her cheek and touched it, feeling the slight heat emanating from it.

“I am not blushing.”

“You know you could never lie to me, Em. You always had that trouble even when we were little.”

“I know, Lys, I know.” He leaned against the wall, his eyes still upon her.

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“So, who is he, then? Someone you found from one of your usual nightly dalliances in the murky streets of our fair London? Or, perhaps a lover?” Emily smirked at her brother’s futile attempt of trying to get the truth from her. So, she did what she could only do: she told him the truth.

“I found him from the streets, or rather, he found me. He was the only person who has ever walked up to me when I walk at night. I felt sorry for him so I brought him home.” She glanced up to see that one of the large white candles that lit the hallways was melting wax on the floor. She reached to cup the falling wax into her hand, but Lysander grabbed it instead. He leaned in close to her, giving off the scents of burning leaves and violets. She still could never figure out just how he acquired that scent, but after all, he was an Eldenshire.

“Em, I worry about you when you go out at night,” he said in a soft tone, “but I know you could kill anyone with just a look. Please, be careful with this one. Once he has healed, send him on his way. It would not be good for us as well as the other families to know of this . . . intrusion.” He released her hand then sauntered back to his room, closing then door behind him in silence. Emily stared at the door for a moment while she rubbed her hand, her mind racing once more with thoughts.

*Here we come, men and women fair  
With clothing of black and lilies in our hair.  
Our eyes, they do glow under the moon’s light  
And our smiles are of warmth during the night  
We dance under the stars and invite to join us  
Here, take my hand, please do not fuss.  
Closer and closer, see my love for you true  
Remove that frown and feelings of blue.  
For we are here to love each and every one  
To give to your dreams, everyone under the sun.  
Come with me, dearest, through the trees dense and thick  
Let me make love to you; let our time not be quick.  
Do you feel my hand sliding to there?*

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*Do not be alarmed; do not give it a care.  
See how much I love you, feel my tender kisses  
All of this can be yours if those are your wishes.  
A wet sex, an erect cock, a bare breast  
Now my darling, lie back and let me do the rest.*

### III

“Wolfe, we have heard of your most recent guest. You daughter, Emily, brought him home, is that correct?”

“Yes it is. She told me last night. She told me-“

“We already know. You daughter has a rather large heart.”

“So it seems.”

“Have you seen him yet?”

“Once, while he slept.”

“I see. And do you know who he is?”

“I . . . think I do.”

“Of course you do. We all do. My question to you is what will you do with him once he has recovered?”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean, Wolfe, will you kill him just like the rest of his kind?”

“That I do not know yet. Must we even consider such a thought about him? After all, the war ended many years ago. We are now of peace. For gods’ sake, this is the 1870s! We are no longer savages; we keep to our own and preserve it the best way possible . . . including the Dinashai. We must consider that.”

“Yes we must consider that for the sake of all of the families of Aurwen. We have not gone this far without knowing which possible tumours to remove. His family has been a thorn in all of our sides since the founding of our fair city. We have survived because they have not, once we figured out just who and what they were.”

“I see.”

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“Do you, Wolfe? Do you see at all? Tell your daughter, for the sake of all of us, that she must remove him from your home. Once you have taken him to a place of our choosing, inform us and we will take it from there. Is that understood?”

“Understood.”

When she was not reading, Emily spent her time with her patient who was getting stronger every day. His eyes, once cloudy and fading, were now bright and shimmering as they glanced at the door every five minutes, waiting to see her face. She was beautiful, an angel sent to help him. He wanted to talk with her about the books she liked to read so much, but he felt too shy to do so; he could barely speak to her when she was around him. He sighed as he lay back in his pillows. His memories were also coming back to him; when she found him, he was little more than an idiot just trying to survive. Now with her care and healing, he began to remember himself, remember why he was found in that horrible condition. Why his family?

Suddenly, the door opened, and he sat up straighter only to fall back when he noticed that the woman’s father appeared behind the door. His eyes stayed on the man’s face, wondering why he had appeared in his room. Wolfe caught himself for a moment then walked over to the patient’s bed and sat down on the side. For a moment, he did not say anything, but just stared at the patient who was beginning to shiver a bit. Finally, he cleared his throat and said, “My good man, it appears that you are doing rather well under our Emily’s care.”

“Y-yes, sir, I am. You daughter is gifted in healing.”

“I have no doubt of that.”

“Is that why you are here, sir? Will she not be here today?”

“No, she will. She is reading right now. No, I wanted to talk to you for a moment.” The figure rearranged himself on his pillows and focused all of his attention on him. Wolfe locked his slender hands together then said in a low voice, “I have

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spoken to certain individuals about you, who you are and where you come from-“

“I wondered when that was going to happen.” Wolfe stared at the man for a moment; was it going to be easier than expected, he thought. “My memories have been coming back to me. I remembered what happened.” He laid his head back on the pillow, clearly exhausted by their short conversation. He closed his eyes and said no more, leaving Wolfe to leave the room with no more answers than questions.

A short time later, the door opened again and he did not need to open his eyes to know it was her. Emily, carrying one of her books, came in the room without a sound then sat down in the same spot as her father. She placed a cool hand on his forehead and sighed.

“How are you feeling today?” she said softly. He opened his eyes, causing her to gasp; his eyes had changed, or rather, they had gone back to what they used to look like before the sickness. They were completely black.

“I am fine, thank you.” She smiled then removed her hand and reached for her book, but his hand grabbed hers swiftly, forcing her to look at his now pleading face. “I thank you for your kindness,” he began, “but I must leave here soon. I am . . . no longer welcome here.”

“I know.” His surprise caused her to smile again. “I’ve known what you were ever since I removed your filthy rags from your body. I’ve read about your family, but never met one, considering what happened to them.”

“I see. And you are not afraid of me?”

“Why should I be? The Dinashai family, although of demon blood, does not scare me, even when I have helped one regain its strength. Most women in Aurwen would have run screaming from you, but I do not.”

“I am glad. But, you do realize that because of your kindness, you have placed your family in danger and that I must leave as soon as possible.”

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“Not without answering one question for me.” He arched an eyebrow in curiosity.

“And that would be?”

“Your name, sir.” Now he was shocked.

“M-my name?”

“Yes,” she said while laughing, “you do have one, don’t you?”

“Of course,” he replied laughing as well. “It is Sandon. Sandon Dinashai.”

“Emily Eldenshire.” She extended her hand for him to shake. He looked at the hand for a moment, then took it and instead of shaking it, brought it to his lips and kissed it tenderly, causing her to blush. His eyes looked up at her and noticed she was blushing.

“Are you scared of me?” he whispered, her hand still close to his lips.

“No.” Her voice was firm. Without another word, he pulled her towards him and kissed her on the lips. At first, she wanted to slap him for his rash behaviour, but soon those thoughts dissipated as she welcomed the kiss. Scents of burning wood permeated her senses. She could feel his slender hands reach up to her hair, tugging at the tight bun. A second later and her hair fell about her shoulders and back. He pushed her away to see her with her hair down and sighed again.

“Like a true angel,” he murmured while running his hands through her coal black hair. Her eyes tried to look anywhere else, but they soon fell back on Sandon’s face. “You are my angel, Emily, do you know that?”

“Am I?” He did not reply, but instead pulled her towards him again to kiss her. As their lips met, he pulled her body closer to his on the bed. She could feel heat emanating from his body as his hands began to tug at her clothing.

“WHAT IN THE GODS NAME IS GOING ON?!” Emily pulled away from Sandon to see her brother Lysander standing in the doorway, furious and enraged. Emily tried to pull her hair back into a semblance of a bun, but it was no use. She

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clutched her book and held it towards her throat. "I said," he said in a lower, but still angry tone, "what is going on here?"

"Lys we-"

"Em, please. I want to hear it from this-" he waved his hand at Sandon, "creature. Well, half spawn, why were you kissing my sister? Don't you know your kind is not allowed such interactions?"

"I know that," Sandon said calmly, but with a touch of steel, now exposing fanged teeth, "but your sister has shown me nothing, but kindness while I was ill. I think only the highest thoughts of her."

"Highest thoughts of her?" he snorted. "Rubbish! If I hadn't come here, no telling what you would have done to her. That's why your entire family was wiped out, half spawn."

"He has a name, Lys," said Emily, clearly not wanting her brother to speak on her behalf. "It is Sandon Dinashai."

"Em, please, stay out of this. In fact, why don't you go to your room? This is something that does not concern you."

"Yes it does, Lys. Sandon is my patient and I am responsible for him."

"Responsible?! He is a Dinashai, Em! They almost wiped out the entire existence of Aurwen or have you forgotten? You were around when the city was trying to recover from their kind. You were around when some of the Mythica's guardians lay at our feet, dying or already dead. Do you not remember how long it took all of the families to wipe the streets clean of blood? Violet blood spilled for their own selfish reasons." He shook his head like a wolf. "No matter. He is to leave now. We are to take him to the Firling Tree!"

"**NO!**" The force of saying that one word caused Lysander to fall back against the wall while several of the lamps shattered. Even Sandon held his ears against the blast. Several of the servants ran into the room, wondering why Ms. Emily had to use her Voice. They saw the trio, patient, brother, and sister then turned and walked back; this was clearly not a situation for them. Emily stood staring at her brother, her long coal

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coloured hair creating a dark frame around her face. Both Sandon and Lys' eyes were on her. She held the control now.

"We will not take him to the Firling Tree. He may leave, but we are not to take him there. I know what happens there, Lys. I remember seeing such horrible things there when I was younger." She walked over to Sandon and sat on the side of the bed, taking one of his slender hands in her own. "I will take him away from here where the other families can not get to him."

"Em-"

"No, let me do it. I just can not bear it."

*Through vale and rock and soot laden winds  
My eyes turn to you, my hope against hopes*

## IV

Hidden under a black thick cloak, Sandon raced with Emily through the streets of London, trying to get as far away as possible from her home before anyone realized that she was gone. Emily held his hand with a vise-like grip, refusing to lose him in the human traffic. They spoke very little unless necessary, saving their energy for running, as Emily directed them to a place where she knew he would be safe for the time being. Sandon, while being led by her, allowed his thoughts and now strong mind to focus on his current situation.

He was the last of his family and that made him an immediate target for Aurwen's hatred. He remembered, now, how the mob came into his family's home and slaughtered them, one by one during a night that never seemed to end. Even the children, those born of innocence, were slaughtered even more horrendous than the adults for they were seen as the future of his line. Sandon hid himself in one of the crypts underneath the house, hearing his family's screams as they were killed off one by one. Although they were half demon, they

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could be killed with silver in any shape or form. None of the mob ventured down into the crypts; they possibly did not even know they existed. Sandon hid behind his great-great aunt Viria's tomb and waited until all was quiet and the presence of the mob was gone from his senses. When he felt was safe, he crept out. As he began to walk up the immense and narrow flight of stairs with no light to guide him, the scents of sulfur and copper burned through his nose. It was his family's blood that he smelled.

When he reached above ground, he began to cry. Bodies, both of his family and mob, lay strewn all over mixed with blood. He carefully stepped over the bodies of his sisters and brothers, almost tripping over his mother's severed head. He knelt down on the bloody floor and picked her head up, wanting desperately for her eyes to open. It was said their family could still live for several hours even after their deaths. He placed bloodied fingers over his mother's eyes and closed his own, focusing all of his power to her. For a moment, he felt nothing and almost gave up then soon the eyes under the sockets began to roll around. Sandon opened his eyes and removed his fingers just as his mother opened hers and stared into the face of her son. He smiled as the tears rolled down his face.

"None of that, dear love," she said in a whisper as he placed her head on the floor then sat down next to it. "Please, do not cry, dear love."

"Mother."

"Hush now, Sandon. Save your tears and strength. Save them for a much later time."

"Mother, what happened? Why were we attacked?"

"Because of what we are, dear love. The Council came after us, wanted to make our house an example."

"True, we have never been liked, only tolerated, but why this rash attack now?"

"Whispers have been heard, my love. Whispers from the other cities, whispers of 'cleansing' our world, my love, starting

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with the demon-folk.” She rolled her eyes in their sockets once to moisten them then continued. “They want our world to be free from mistakes like us, my love. They are trying to establish bonds and trust with the humans and for their world to be populated with our kind and others is no longer an option.”

“Mother, our family has been one of the building blocks for Aurwen. We have never been mistrustful on any level. “

“And yet, because of our sulfur blood and some of our kind who have sullied our name and race, we were all, but extinguished from this realm.” She closed her eyes for a moment, giving Sandon a momentary reason to worry, then opened them once more. “My love, hide in London. The Council must never know that one of us still lives.”

“Mother.”

“Be silent! Listen to my words and heed them. You must hide, my love. Hide where they can not find you.” She closed her eyes and spoke no more, finally giving Sandon a chance to let his tears fall.

He raced to London in the cover of the night sky, constantly on guard for anyone who was still thirsty for his family’s blood. Once he stopped crying over his family’s loss, he gathered their bodies into a large pile and smoldered them quickly and without smoke; his kind possessed the power of flamespeak, setting anything on fire within seconds then quickly extinguishing, leaving no trace. Once done, he quickly said a small prayer to their deity, a dragon god named Filarn who watched over all who possessed flamespeak, to guide their souls well, and then he wrapped his body in black cloak and set off towards London.

When he reached the city, he casually sniffed the air, making sure that no one was looking for him. When all was clear, he set off. Although he had visited the human city many times, London still amazed him. People of every background existed here and each one was unique in their own way. After feeling somewhat comfortable while walking around, he took off his

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hood, revealing his half demon trait of flaming red hair that hid his knobs of horns on top of his head. Several women glanced his way, noticing how beautiful he was, but none dared go near. He smiled at one, setting her to a swooning fit, then walked on. He caught the face of an Aurwen being, and some of them caught his scent, but were too afraid to acknowledge him. He allowed himself a hint of a smile; he felt free, caught in the human masses and not hunted for the time being. However, he had to find a place that was warm or else he would slip into a coma. He covered his head once more so as not to draw any attention to himself, hoping that he could pass for a full human. He found several places, but since it was the middle of April, none of them had roaring fires going in their fireplaces. He began to shiver and lose consciousness, but still continued to look. Five hours later, he was without any luck and soon had to find any place to sleep, but now the idea of finding an inn was close to impossible; he had begun to break out in sores, another sign that he needed a fire immediately. He tripped over a hole on a street corner and fell to the ground while people walked over him. He could barely keep his eyes open; he needed sleep.

Suddenly, he smelled something familiar. He opened one eye and saw a young woman walking along the streets. He sniffed the air again and realized she was Aurwen. With what little strength he had left, he rose to his feet, completely covered in his cloak, and walked up to her just as she was walking towards him. She had to help him.

“Stop here,” she said, jarring him out of his thoughts. He looked around and noticed that they were no longer in London, but in a forest glade. He looked behind him, seeing the lights of London, then back at Emily. She raised her eyes to the night sky and stared hard, looking for something rather important.

“What are you looking for?” he asked.

“A friend,” she replied then fell silent. At first, he could only hear the spring wind rustling through the leaves and branches

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and saw only what the night sky did not cover. He felt, for the moment, safe, although he had to find a fire soon. He was beginning to tire.

“We have a rather large fire prepared for you, half demon.” Sandon looked around in shock, seeing no one, then changed his focus to whole demon. There, sitting on one of the higher branches, was a slender figure dressed in a long dark green dress. She, he could see now, walked along the branch now without any regard for her safety; either she had been born in this glade or she spent most of her life here. The figure jumped down to the ground, a good ten feet, and walked over to Emily, who had seen her even before she spoke. The two embraced like sisters and Sandon felt relief even though he still needed a fire.

“Well met, Em,” said the figure with a smile.

“Well met, Milenda.” Her younger sister then walked to Sandon and raised a hand in greeting.

“Come, embrace my fire and breathe of Filarn,” she said in the formal Dinashai greeting, shocking Sandon to the core since no one, but a member of their family would know of such a greeting. He raised a shaky hand and said, “May Filarn bless you with sulfur,” he said in reply, then fainted.

The bonfire woke him up immediately. He opened his eyes and noticed that he lay on several thick pillows in the middle of a grove of immense trees. He looked up and noticed the black velvet sky, sighing with loss. He missed his-

“Family is important, you know,” said Milenda who sat above him in one of the trees. He smiled without looking up. A group of almost every creature and race in Aurwen was here, talking and meeting, greeting and playing. He was the only half demon in the grove and suddenly, he felt quite alone.

“I miss my family,” he said, knowing that she was still there. “I miss them terribly.”

“I know, Sandon, but understand; there are those who know what happened and who want to help you. There was no

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reason for the Council to do what they did simply for the sake of looking more pleasing to the humans.” Sandon saw Emily walking some yards away with a centaur. She was smiling and laughing and looked to be in good spirits. “You love her, don’t you?” asked Milenda then disappeared into the tree, giving Sandon no chance to answer, but he did anyway.

“Yes, I do.”

Emily talked with her friend Bruc, one of the leaders of the centaurs, catching up on old times and unforgettable moments. She laughed heartily when he spoke of his children and how much they wanted to be like their father. As they walked, she looked over and saw Sandon watching her; she looked away and felt herself blushing. Bruc caught it immediately.

“My dear, why dost thou blush so?” he asked. Centaurs were known in Aurwen to speak in archaic tones, much to the frustration of everyone else. He brushed his immense head against her shoulder in affection. “Speak to me of thine thoughts and I shall help in whatever course deemed necessary.”

“The Dinashai I brought here, Bruc-“

“You give him your heart, dear child?” Emily blushed even more so.

“I can not answer that, my dear friend.”

“Thou dost not need to. I see it in thine eyes, dear child.”

Soon, several minstrels picked up instruments and began to play, giving everyone else a chance to find a place to sit and listen. As they played, a young dryad dressed in leaves and trigs began to sing.

*In all of my life  
There is no one fairer than she  
Who loves me still  
Who loves me still  
And though she be right next to me*

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*Does she know that I love her too?*

Sandon glanced at Emily who had sat next to him after her conversation with Bruc, and took her hand in his. Emily could feel his warmth radiating through his hand and fingers as she stole a glance at him. His hair was brighter than before and his knobs had grown somewhat. He glanced at her, catching her in her glances and soon the two sets of eyes were locked on each other. Everything else disappeared.

“If you hadn’t saved me, I would have been dead,” he whispered. She said nothing, fearing what she felt in her heart. Was it possible? He took her silence as possible acceptance and pulled her towards him before she could say anything to stop him. The words were on her lips as his touched hers. When their lips made contact, Emily felt his inner heat rise through him, causing her to sweat. She wanted to pull away, but could not; she loved him no matter his background.

For the first time, a woman outside of his own race was not afraid of him, he thought while kissing Emily. She knows of my kind and what we’ve done towards and for the other races, but still she treats me with no blemish. He could feel his two hearts beating simultaneously against her single one and wondered for the millionth time today why he had to meet her and why he was now in love with her.

“I was right in my wish for her, Bruc. I knew this was going to happen.”

“Was their love for one another obvious?”

“Yes, and yet, I know my sister. Most of the Eldenshire women are like Emily; backbone made of steel, yet will melt when a man looks at them longer than a second.”

“Thou dost protest such action to be folly?”

“Not at all, but after all, this is 1874. We have come quite a long way, both human and those of Aurwen. Progress is being made by means of machines and art. The humans could not have done it without us and yet look at how they treat us. We

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are still seen, to some degree, as stories to tell their children before going to bed so that they can meet with us in shadowed pubs to strike even shadowier deals.” They both looked up towards the night skies, watching the thick black smoke curl and twist through the air from one of the many factories that populated London like a debilitating virus. Horns could be heard all throughout, even in their special and sheltered area of the woods. The horns signaled to one another of their progress, their power of being machines rather than flesh and blood. However, it took flesh and blood to create and keep the machines going – Aurwen flesh and blood.

Although human men, women, and children worked and operated the machines that polluted the city of London, it was Aurwen blood and magick that truly kept the machines from falling apart. Due to a treaty created by individuals hiding in shadowed corners for fear of being seen by innocent eyes, it was agreed that the machines would be fueled by those of Aurwen who were sickly or dying from a long and fulfilling life while the humans worked them, thereby keeping a rather strange peace between the two worlds. Those who saw the smoke filling the sky had no idea that it was the souls and spirits of the “magick folk”.

Milenda turned her gaze back to her friend with no more answers than questions.

“It chills me to the bone to see what we have done for the short-lived (a derogatory term for humans) and yet they still mock us. Sometimes I even wonder why we are fighting amongst ourselves when we should be building walls against the humans. They have no idea and yet we still help them.” She ran her slender hands through her hair in frustration. “Why did Em have to help him, Bruc?” she asked, trying to change the subject. “I feel sorry for him . . . and for her. We were never really that close since I spent most of my time out there, but I still love her dearly.”

“She knows, dear childe.”

“And yet, I wanted him to be caught and sent to the Tree.”

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“Confused, hmm?” said Bruc with a chuckle, causing her to smile.

“It seems I am. What-“

“My dear, “ said Bruc in a surprisingly modern tone, the formal archaic gone for the moment, “we do what we must do in order to survive. I do not like it any more than you, but that is how it is for the time being. With regard to your sister . . . just let her enjoy this moment. This half demon does not appear to be like his other family members.”

“Most of them were not so bad.”

“True, but some of them blackened the family name in such a way that those who were good could never be trusted again. But, in looking back, perhaps the other races helped with those stigmata as well. Maybe we should be pointing the finger at us.”

The two watched Emily and Sandon kiss for a moment longer then she pulled away only to be nestled in his arms. His horns, during that kiss, had grown several inches and curved away from his head.

“He is coming back, I think.”

“Yes, it would appear so.”

“I am still not sure whether I should be alarmed or not.”

“Nor I, my dear.”

*Steam and metal, pride and glory  
Makes way for progress, a history footnote  
To provide children with tales of better days  
Rather than the sordid truth when Magick was real.  
Truth denied to make way for a better lie.*

V

He could feel the heat against his face, but did not open his eyes for he knew what he would see. He was not ready, at least not yet. Before he closed his eyes to the songs of the minstrels, he had Emily snuggled deep in his arms. Her hair felt like satin

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against his own and he laid a hand on her head just to keep close contact with it. He felt his horns coming back, producing a slight itchy feeling; he was coming back into his own. Emily, he knew, must have felt the change as well, but she did not say anything nor did she glance up. All he could feel from her was that she loved him. He wanted to tell her that it was ridiculous for her kind to love a Dinashai and yet the words seemed to be lodged in his throat. He wanted to push her away from his rapidly heating body, screaming at her to run far away while he disappeared, but he did not. All he wanted to do now was stroke her hair and whisper that he loved her too. All he wanted to do was claim Emily as his own. Far away was London, a city full of smoke, begging waifs, crooked humans, and garbage, but here . . . here was comfort, peace, and love.

The heat, however, was still there. Sandon groaned in frustration; he knew he had to open his eyes, even if only lasted for several minutes. It was necessary and yet he loathed such a responsibility. He opened his eyes and almost smiled; home infernal home. He sat on a volcanic rock that could have burned a human body within seconds, yet he felt only a slight twinge. Such was the way of the Dinashai. Demons and dragons needed such heat to survive, even half demons like Sandon.

He sat in an immense valley that would have been pleasant except for the fact that it was entirely covered in flames and lava with rocks scattered here and there. There was no sun, no cool breezes to help a traveler along the way; the skies were a smoky red while dragons flew the skies searching for their next meal. During any other visit, he would have taken to flight, soaring the skies with distant family members or just others who enjoyed the heat as much as he did. Today, however, was different; the familiar sights and sounds did not remove the weight from his heart. Only she could do that.

“She must be quite a woman to put you in such spirits,” said a melodious voice behind him, but Sandon was aware of the

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figure's presence long before. He kept his back to the figure and said, "I have only known her for a short time and yet she has taken hold of my heart."

"Both of them or just the human one?" chuckled the figure.

"Both of them, actually. I thought you would have figured that out by now."

"I was only trying to lighten your spirits, but I see I was wrong in bringing you here. I thought you would have been happy to come here for a while, but I see I was wrong to assume so." Sandon turned around to face the figure and said in a melancholy voice, "I am happy to be here, Father. You know I am always happy to see you whenever I can." Without another word the demon embraced one of his sons fiercely; father and son reunited again. The demon, a good two feet taller than Sandon's own height of six feet, was covered in red skin that felt smooth and hot to the touch by anyone who did not share their infernal blood. His black hair was long, thick, and pulled into a ponytail while spiral white horns signifying his rank sprouted from his head. His ears were pierced with five golden earrings each while his nose held a bone from a past kill. He wore a black coat that fell to his ankles, white shirt, and pants that hid his legs although everyone in the land knew of him and his physical makeup. He just loved wearing clothes of the human world from time to time. He loved the look of the Victorian gentleman and tried to imitate their style of dress and mannerisms as best as possible, no matter how much his fellow demon folk laughed at him in good spirits.

When father and son pulled away from their embrace, Sandon said, "Father, why did you bring me here this time? Is something wrong?"

"No, no," said the demon as he shook his head, clinking his earrings, "but it is not every day that one of your children falls in love with a non-demon. I wanted to talk to you about her and find out more."

"She saved me and got me back on my feet when I had nowhere else to go, plus she is helping me escape from the

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Council. They know of my existence and want me dead, but she and I fled before they could do anything to me. They're probably looking for me, but for now, we are safe. We are among her friends and those who want to keep the peace."

"I am happy to hear it, son." The demon grinned briefly, exposing his sharp teeth, then said in a somber tone, "I am sorry about what happened, son, but you know I could not help in any way. "

"I know, Father. The term sentence you received-"

"Is still in effect and will be for another 500 years." He sat down on a nearby rock, suddenly too weary to even lift his head. "I watched my wife die under the hands of those who claimed to be of peace for Aurwen, but instead wanted nothing more than to rid themselves of our kind. I also saw you hiding and hoped for your safety."

"I had to do it, Father."

"No one is blaming you at all; you did what was necessary. Our kind, no matter the place and history, has always been feared and hated. We can not choose who we are and what runs through our veins. We are of Filarn and nothing can change that."

"I know, Father. I know the Histories; I know of our blood. However-"

"However?"

"However, I love Emily. I . . . think she loves me as well."

"She does, my son."

*This is a time to wonder, my dear,  
To wonder and explore beyond touch and sight.  
To understand what it means to fight like a soldier  
And to fall with blood splattered.*

## VI

Wolfe paced the hallways of his home, his mind caught up in a frenzy of thoughts and emotions. He feared for his

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daughter's life, but knew deep down she was right in helping the Dinashai escape before the Council sunk their hooks into him. The time had come for all of Aurwen to lay aside their differences and focus on the future, Dinashai and non-Dinashai. He was tired, very tired; after 700 years of existence on this planet, he had seen various kingdoms rise and fall, power crazed people climb their way to the top only to be knocked down by an unseen or seen force, and so on. His body bore many scars that would forever whisper their tales in his mind; after all, he did experience their tales firsthand. Now, all he wanted to experience was peace.

Lysander watched his father sink into one of his pensive moments; sometimes it took days for him to completely come out of them if he was mentally wrapped in a dire situation, and those occurred few and far between. However, this one matter was different for it involved family. His own sister, Em, decided to be brave and foolish in trying to help the half demon; such an action would not go unnoticed by the Council. He watched his father for a few more minutes then went back into his room and silently closed the door.

He always kept his bedroom windows opened so as to fully enjoy the sounds of London and its inhabitants, trying to acknowledge the mortals in their colourful and grisly glory. How odd it was that mortals regarded life to be worth nothing more than horse dung steaming in the street. Yet, if they only knew what it would be like if they no longer had to worry about sickness, death of a mortal nature, hunger, any of it, their thoughts regarding their own short lives would be oh so much better. They would take the time to enjoy their life no matter how short it was. All they needed to do was spend one day as a member of his family; their tunes would change within the first hour.

His gaze fell outside where a carriage pulled by four black horses came down the street. Their hooves barely made any sound, but he was able to hear them a mile away. The tall and skinny driver was dressed in a black coat with top hat, but

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Lysander saw right through the glamour as it pulled up to their home. He raced to his mirror to check his clothing, then went downstairs to receive their guest although he had no idea what or whom to expect.

When he reached the bottom, he could hear several voices in the parlour to the right, his father's being one of the voices. He walked up to the massive oak doors, took a deep breath, and then opened the doors.

His father sat in one of the velvet wine-coloured plush chairs holding a snifter full of siren mead while two other figures sat on opposite sides of him, both seated in velvet chairs. The man on his father's left was dressed in a sparkling blue robe that fell to the ground, covering his feet, while his smooth skin was pale and almost glowing. His head was bald, save for a long black and thick lock of braided hair that started from the center of his head and fell down past his shoulders. He wore a smile that would make anyone mortal immediately trust and like him, no matter what he said. Lysander swallowed hard, trying not to shake too badly; it wasn't every day that one had the privilege of having a Swandi in their home. Swandi were from the island of Klesta, west of Aurwen in the Delphaen Sea. The race was noted for their high levels of intelligence, sharp wit, and good storytelling, which was why whenever a Seandi spoke, you could not help, but listen. Their magick lay in their voice.

The woman on the right caught Lysander's breath, although he had done it too late for any of them not to notice. Surely not here-

The woman looked up at Lysander and beamed a smile, increasing her natural spicy scent towards him, overpowering his senses to the point of wanting to tear his hair out. It was one thing to have a Swandi here, but another to have the Sylph Queen sitting in the parlour of his own house! She was dressed in what looked to be nothing more than flimsy pieces of fabric that shimmered in every possible (and impossible) colour. The clothing left her arms bare, showing off her dusty violet coloured skin. Her body was slender and tall, giving off the air

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of a regal being and yet her almond shaped eyes sparkled with pure undiluted happiness. Her long white hair was tightly braided into one long braid that fell past her thighs and as she moved in her chair, Lysander had to keep himself from groaning too loudly at her spicy scent; she smelled of cardamom, cinnamon, vanilla, and strangely enough, clouds, with each scent giving off just enough so as to allow each scent to be savoured. He swayed momentarily then quickly regained his senses, not wanting to embarrass his father, but Wolfe was already trying hard not to laugh out loud.

“You must forgive my son,” he said with a chuckle. “It’s not every day that he gets to see the Sylph Queen and a Swandi both in his home.” Lysander blushed with agreement while trying to compose himself in front of the two guests. “Son, they just arrived and they wanted to speak to me regarding the Dinashai.” Instantly, Lysander’s mood turned grim; it was time for action even if Em was involved.

“Your Highness and fair Swandi,” began Lysander in the tone he used only for business transactions, “I am sure you have been updated as to the circumstances of our situation. I hope you will not hold it against the rest of our family.”

“Lysander!” He turned to face his father’s anger with his own calmness and continued without any regard for his father’s outburst. “We can not allow such a . . . disruption to continue in our family and I am sure you feel the same. Even though Emily is my sister and I love her tremendously, she is still seen as a traitor for helping the Dinashai escape.” He walked over to one of the bookshelves that held many of the family’s tomes and handwritten books of spells and sources of magick, handed down from generation to generation for the last 5000 years. He traced an imaginary line down the spine of one titled *The History of The Yelna* (a race of women that lived in Old Europe who were born from rivers and streams and held the power of water magick), trying to form his next words carefully. When he pulled his finger away, it was wet and

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smelled of blue skies and pleasant dreams. He smiled; their power was extremely strong.

“We are facing dire times. The Council, through years of strife and battles fought with certain human groups, is weakening. Their power is not as great as it used to be and this . . . matter is not helping at all. This is a hindrance that needs to be stopped immediately.”

“And what do you suggest we do?” asked his father who had taken a seat while his son talked. He still held his glass and took a small sip of the fragrant liquid, savouring it slowly before swallowing it. “Find my daughter, your sister, and take her to the tree? Or should we just hold back such savage means of torture for Sandon?”

“We must kill the demon spawn, of course-“

“We must bring the half demon before the Council,” said the Sylph Queen in a voice that sounded like singing, causing both Lysander and Wolfe to hold their heads in a drunken swoon that lasted only minutes. When their heads were cleared, Lysander continued, “We must not show any form of weakness before him, my Lady. We must kill him where he stands. My sister must be brought before the Council.” He turned to face his father and, for the first time that night, he wore a look of genuine sadness.

Sandon woke with a small start, slightly forgetting where he was, then looked down and smiled at Emily who was still fast asleep. The rest of the group had turned in for the night with one or two keeping a night post, watching for any signs of commotion coming from London. Crickets and faint laughter from the spirits of the woods could be heard, but of London, there was none. He wanted to relax like Emily, but knew that he could not do so.

If it weren't for her, he would have been dead like ashes in a fireplace. He owed her his life, his soul . . . and his heart. He loved her from the first moment he touched her hand when she saw him in that dark street. She was not afraid of him or his

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dirt encrusted clothing. She wanted to help him. That was all that mattered to him; an Aurwen helped him. He sighed, blowing a warm stream of air from his lungs. Since she had saved him, he began to recuperate rapidly, recovering all of the “lost” traits of his kind. Although he carried the traits of a demon from his father, he also carried the traits of his mother who was Dragonkin – half dragon and half human. The Dinasai bloodline was full of dragons, demons, and others who lived of the Fire, but the demon blood ran the thickest in his veins. There was, at one point, underground talk that the Serpent in the human Garden of Eden was one of their cousin kind, but no one wanted to make such a claim in public due to the shame and embarrassment after reading the stories in the Bible.

Emily stirred; momentarily breaking his thoughts, then fell deep in her sleep once more, allowing him to pick up the thread of where he left off. He stroked her hair, but the act caused her eyes to flutter. She blinked once then said while her eyes focused on the still burning fire, “Are you all right? Do you need me to move?”

“No, not at all, Emily. I just wanted to stroke your hair.”

“Has there been any word from London?”

“Nothing so far, but there are people keeping post in case anything does occur.” He lifted her face to meet his and kissed her lips. Emily felt her cheeks grow warm due to his body temperature; it felt like coming into full contact with a bonfire that had been scented with cinnamon, nutmeg, and cedar. She could feel his arms pull her closer to him, enfolding her completely within his world.

Sandon did not want the kiss to end; never before had he met a woman like her and never again would he want anyone else. He released his hold on her body and lips and stared into her eyes. She stared back, noticing the twin flames that danced around his eyes, flames that came from within and not as a reflection from the fire that crackled behind them. She placed a hand on his cheek as a replacement for the words that she

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could not trust herself to say: I love you no matter what you are.

As if on cue, Sandon scooped her up in his arms and led her to a small grove of trees, not caring if anyone saw them. He carried her as if she weighed no more than a feather from a phoenix, running through the thick grove with effortless grace. When they reached a small clearing, he set her down on the ground. No sound reached their ears and the only light they received was from Laelrna, the Moon Goddess. Emily's face looked up to the Moon with an expression of peace while Sandon remained standing with a blank look on his face.

"Emily," he began in a voice that was lower than his normal tone, "do you trust me?" She looked at him and noticed that he did not face her.

"Of course I do," she said immediately in a strong voice." Sandon still faced away from her and yet the act did not offend her. If there was something he had to say, then he would say it in his own way, she thought.

"Why do you not fear me?"

"Because I love you." At this, he turned and knelt on the ground by her so fast that she jumped when his face was instantly inches from her own. She could see his now red eyes staring back and for a brief moment, she felt fear. Sandon stared at her for a moment longer then pulled back and raised his left hand next to his face. Emily gasped as soon as a thin line of red appeared on his palm. The coppery scent of blood hit her senses and she almost swooned, but she held her ground.

"How did you-"

"It is called claw magick: the ability to cut any surface." The line began to drip red slowly down his wrist and before it fell to the ground, he pulled her towards him and placed her hand over his own. "Now we are joined," he said, "in a bond that no one can break." Emily could feel the blood absorb into her skin and soon her blood stream. Sweat appeared on her forehead,

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but she did not pay it any attention for her eyes were now locked with his as the bonding took place.

Sandon watched with fascination as her eyes began to change colour and soon, her eyes looked like his; two dancing flames in a sea of white. He could feel her essence take his blood from him, wanting more, but refusing to overindulge. The two were locked together for several minutes in silence as the blood brought them together. She could feel just how important the ceremony was to him; people who were meant to be together shared each other's blood.

"I share my blood to make you mine," said Sandon in his mind.

"I take of your blood and make it mine," Emily replied in kind then soon her world went black.

*Strange; the light in your eyes had dimmed somewhat.  
Come closer to me and share my own-  
I need not as much as I had hoped.  
Farewell to those who thought me selfish.*

## VII

The ground shook. . .

Elves from the Mountains of Weyland stared up into the skies, not knowing and yet dreading the worst.

The ground shook. . .

An adult blue dragon flying over the town of Skili suddenly landed by a cave and crawled in, instantly going into hibernation forever.

The ground shook. . .

A Storyteller in the city of Galdahae picked up a pen and began to write his memoirs, for it was to be the last thing he would ever write.

The ground shook. . .

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Two lovers in a grove of trees in a forest nearby London were in the throes of making love; one being an Aurwen woman and the other being a Dinashai male.

The ground shook . . .

Humans all over the world . . . continued to forget and ignore.

The ground shook . . . as the Dancers of Nightwynd, a coven of witches, expressed their emotions in dance for what had already begun. Nothing could stop them from what they had to do; the dance had to be completed or else all would be lost.

Lysander, deep in studies in his room, dropped his work and ran out of his room just as the rest of the Eldenshire family did as well. When each member saw the others, they all wore expressions of fear except Lysander. His mask was of pain and hate. They knew that they had precious little time, so they grabbed whatever they thought they would need from their rooms. Even the servants joined in with whatever needed to be done. Soon, they were running at a speed too fast for mortal eyes towards the forest with Wolfe in the lead. At the same time that the Eldenshire family became “aware”, the heads of the Council were each startled by the “thread” and soon they began preparing in their own way.

Milenda was soon running through the branches of the trees, trying to locate the two while the other folk began to prepare themselves for a possible battle. When she heard a roar of a dragon coming from a grove of trees, she knew she was too late. She had to save them. She dropped down into the grove and landed soundlessly several feet away from the new couple.

“You sound like a charging rhino,” said Emily in a clear enough voice without even looking up from her naked embrace with Sandon. “What?”

“You both need to get dressed,” she said in an eerily calm tone. “It has begun.” With that, she jumped up into the trees, disappearing immediately. The two began to dress, picking up

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on the life threads of those now entering the edge of the forest. When they were both dressed, they ran back to the clearing where the others had assembled. When they reached the clearing, they were immediately swept up in the frenzy of everyone trying to assemble as best as possible. Weapons were being stored in hiding spots while the elderly and sick were led off to deeper parts of the woods. Bruc and several young centaurs directed archers to their hiding spots, giving Emily a brief nod of encouragement and slight hope. Even Sandon left her to help others with flame spells, leaving Emily by herself. She wanted to help, but was not schooled in any spells of defense. She had spells of healing, however, which were going to come in handy once the war had begun.

Suddenly, everyone stopped what they were doing as all eyes looked up into the night sky to see a phoenix the size of a lion fly directly over their heads. Its flame coloured plumage lit the night skies while its voice, sounding of angels, rang through everyone's ears, causing many to fall to their knees in praise of this sacred creature. It flew directly over the entire forest then disappeared, leaving many to wonder why they had just witnessed such an event, but others knew better. Throughout the history of Aurwen and other places in their realm, the sight of a Phoenix before a battle meant that those who were on the side of good and right were now protected. The sighting of a Phoenix by humans, however, caused many to go blind or instantly insane, for no one with mortal blood could withstand such a sight. When the phoenix disappeared, everyone went back to whatever they were working on, but with a stronger vigor than before; now they had hope on their side.

All of a sudden, the ground shook with such a force that many were knocked off balance, landing on the ground momentarily dazed. Emily looked up as an ice-cold shiver went down her back; they were here.

“By order of the Council, we insist you release the half demon into our care. Deny this request and we will attack immediately,” said a neutral voice that seemed to surround

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them. "We do not wish to fight, but we will if you do not hand him over to us now." The ground shook once more then all went quiet; the Council awaited their decision.

Wolfe felt like a tightly wound spring; he wanted to run to his daughter and hold her close, protecting her from all of this, but he knew that Milenda was keeping her safe. He walked up to Lady Charlotte Asworth, one of the members of the Council as well as a member of the Windlearners, elemental beings, and stood by her side silently while watching the soldiers prepared themselves for possible battle. Lady Asworth came to Earth from the Planes 1000 years ago, as did other Elementals in seeking a new life in the parallel world. Many found Earth to be a harsh place and left as soon as they arrived. However, some did stay, finding the blue planet to be quite mysterious and adventurous in its own way, appealing to those who wanted more out of their immortal life than just beauty and perfection. Charlotte was one of those beings.

Wolfe found Charlotte's wispy hand and held it with his own in tight anticipation. Nothing needed to be said between; both thought the same thoughts- fear, anxiety concerning the soon to be battle, and sadness. For a brief moment, Charlotte's body became fleshier as she too gripped Wolfe's hand with the same urgency as he.

*Of skies in black and salted clouds  
Did still the winds that blow in disease.  
Prayers, once thought of as saving grace,  
Now lay at the feet of sinners and saints.  
Blood flows freely through the forest of green  
Attempting to wash away the past of glories.  
Soon, we must all heed and listen to the winds  
For They alone tell of our falling.*

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1900

Has it come to this? What were we thinking back then? Of course, I remember; we thought of cleansing the world, as it were; to purify and protect what we could see and not see. Such was the way of our folk. And yet, I wonder . . . were we right? Did we have the right to kill innocent lives for the sake of one? Even now as I write this down in my notes, I still ask myself if he truly was as black hearted as the Council made him out to be.

I no longer have the strength to leave my home; going outside during the daylight is unthinkable now. Others, however, are braver than I, but I hear the whispers of their later charred and blackened souls. Fools . . . and yet I envy them. All I have are my windows, which give me a view of the new world, this turn of the century. Our kind are no longer needed for the humans to live and survive. We are now left to become subjects of faery tales and stories to frighten young children when they are behaving badly. No one wants to believe in us anymore and if they do, their minds are filled with hatred, distrust, suspicion, and anger.

The world looks the same and yet it is not, thanks to us. We were here, have always been here, and yet, we were the ones who destroyed it all, leaving the humans to do what they had to do. I do not blame them, not at all for if I were in their shoes, I would have sworn revenge as well. I do not blame their hatred for all magick now. I do not blame them for their vile words and slurs against my kind. Once we were thought of as pure forms of beauty; now we are called Viril or Forsaken. Somehow, that name fits us.

I still remember the night when the Council declared war against a young man who had the bad luck of being half demon as well. They came in from all sides and, with their war magick, destroyed the forest where he and his friends and protectors were hiding. Most were killed; even the Council lost quite a number for the magick was strong and not used

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regularly. London was not so fortunate; most of the city burned to the ground thanks to the Council's magick. The humans came after us with blood vengeance on their minds and yes, we did pay the price. Our treaty that had been set in stone for centuries was now on the brink of being dissolved. Thankfully, we were able to make amends and reforge what was almost lost to us, for without the peace contract, we would simply fail to exist.

Even with the war magick the main target, the half demon, and his lover survived. Their ongoing lives are a constant reminder of what we did and I for one welcome my ongoing penance with humility. Where they are, I know not, but I have heard rumours from the sea elves of Kithing of a strange couple with a demon child living in Ravenscliff, one of the larger cities in the Otherworld. I hope they are happy there if the rumours are true.

The sun has set and soon Night will come. Night is now our time; from dusk to dawn we are allowed out into London, to explore what we used to love during the time of Sun and to spend time with friends and loved ones. The humans have given us that much; I no longer pray for anything more.

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*May the Forest Still Grant Us Sanctuary,*

*Illian Wynderham*

*Elder of the Quandril Elves, Former High Chair of the Aurwen  
Council*

*May 14, 1900*