

The Seducer

At a well in the center of the village near the monastery of Ostrog, a youth is out drawing water for his parents when a dwarf approaches him, “Well, what would your name be, young fella?”

“Olie.”

“Olie, would you do an old man the kind service of fetching him a drink of water?”

“Would you be the old man?”

“Yes, I would.”

Olie draws some water from the well. “Well, old man, what is your name so I may know who I am helping?”

The dwarf thanks him for his kindness as he takes the water.

Handing him a ladle from the bucket, Olie says, “Here you are.”

The dwarf replies after taking a drink, “My name is Chaffie and as a reward, I would like to bless you for your service. Please receive my special stone.” He takes out a green gem from his side pouch and holds it in his open hand.

“Wow! What a beauty. It is far beyond anything I’ve ever found or seen before. It is special.”

“Even beyond this, it will show you favor in obtaining whatever you desire as long as you carry it.”

“I don’t know. I better check this out with my parents first.”

“Yes, by all means as it is wise to honor them. Who knows? I may have stones for them, too. Perhaps even enough for the whole village, for your manners speak of everyone’s character here.”

“I will go and fetch my father from the fields after I finish my chores or I will never hear the end of it.”

Olie quickly carries off his bucket of water as Chaffie slyly smiles and shouts after him, “I’ll be here!”

While this happens, a bell sounds at the Monastery to call the priests to ready themselves for a regiment of prayer. All file into the courtyard and stand attentively, awaiting instruction from the Monsignor. As Claude enters the yard last from ringing it, the Monsignor begins to share, “There will be a fasting rotation of eighths every three days. For those of you who have newly arrived, this means every three days, fifteen of you will fast for our traveling mercies and safe return while we are away. Brother Bartholomew will be in charge during my absence. So, you will all be able to focus more diligently on your prayers as I have just learned of a new evil in our lands which I must be going to Dagog to do battle against. These are all the details I know for now, but I will be learning more while on route by the visions Marcus has had. They will be further disclosed to me during travel.

So, without any further delay, will our instructors of the faith please raise your hands that Morris and Nettle may see them? Now as there are three of you, Thomas, you being the

eldest in the lot, shall accompany us. There is a new village in our province not far from the mountains of Zantee. Gather your belongings and canteen, for you will be accompanying Sono, Marcus, and I as far as this village. For they are in need of a priest.”

“Yes . . . Monsignor.” Turning, the eldest goes for his belongings.

The Monsignor looks over and gives instruction, “Now for you two little ones, I do not know how long correspondence will take to reach our seat of The Great One’s authority established here on earth. So, I recommend you two stay on and be trained in the faith to rightly divide the words from the *Book of Life*.”

Looking to one another, Morris and Nettle say at the same time, “I will do it!” They chuckle to themselves.

“You can put down your hands now, Manfred. You too, Gys. Go to them now and be sure to pay close attention in your studies, for you shall be teaching others to contend for the faith as well.”

Thomas returns winded and while catching his breath, our leader responds, “You didn’t have to run. We would have waited.”

Marcus chuckles, “You remind me of someone I once knew.”

“Who would that be?”

“Why me, of course.”

Sono looks on with an inquisitive smile of his own, “I wish I could have been there for your whole Journey.”

The Monsignor looks on, “We might be having just as interesting a journey this time, too.”

Bartholomew interjects, “Quite right!”

Olie arrives with a large bucket of water. He sets it down on a table, picks up a broom, and begins sweeping the floor. His mother, Suma, enters the hut and suggests, “Olie, why don’t you join your father in the fields? He’ll be clearing more rocks today, so we might have additional land for planting vegetables. You can take him some roasted chicken with potatoes and do me the favor of a trip.”

“Okay, ma.” He starts for the door with basket in hand before remembering, “Hey ma, when I was getting some water this morning, there was a strange little man in town by the well. He offered me a little green stone that sparkled real nice for getting him some water while saying something about how the stone would show me favor in whatever I did for just being kind. He even said how he had gems for you and possibly the rest of the village. Can I have it?”

“You did good, Olie. I will check with the town elder and have an answer for you by the time you get back from the fields.” A very excited Olie starts on his way.

The elder is checking the supply of grain in the storehouse when Suma walks up to him, “Trevor, I have been looking all over for you.”

“What has you so uneasy, Suma?”

“There is a stranger in town who has offered Olie a special precious stone for the kindness of just drawing some water for him from out of our well.”

“Was it mentioned why the stone is so special?”

“He was told it would show him favor for whatever he desired.”

“Where is Olie supposed to meet the stranger?”

“He said at the well.”

“I will have word sent to everyone in our village to meet outside the village for a gathering. Suma, if you’d be so kind as to go to the fields and inform the men there, I would be grateful. Tell them we shall meet at the three o’clock sun, for we must meet this stranger in unity this afternoon so as to not let him disrupt our having a single mind.”

“I am troubled as well. I will go and tell all who are working the fields.”

The Vision Revealed

On the road while traveling through Ostrog, the Monsignor starts to inquire of just what was seen in my vision. “What exactly did you see in those seeing pools out in the woodlands?”

“You were much younger than you are now for a start. So, what I saw in the seeing pools must have been from your past.”

“Know it now, Marcus, there are certain things that happened in my past which I could have handled better concerning my family. So, much confusion led me to want to find peace and give me understanding because of my prior decisions in this place. Perhaps you saw something from those days which I can interpret through my newer and much wiser eyes.”

“If what was revealed to me will be of any help, I will be honored to share.”

“Please do so.”

“The first thing I saw in my vision was a fight taking place among the caverns: The light was dim in the caves, a fire roared at its center, and the smoke escaped through some cracks within the heights of its roof. There were five sisters and that’s when I saw you in your younger days, perhaps in the mountains of Dagog.”

“Yes-yes, what happened afterwards?”

Well, a mud fight took place between the youngest . . .”

“ . . . that would have been Katrina.”

“ . . . and the oldest sister.”

“ . . . Claire.”

I believe the youngest, Katrina, was trying to get the approval of her sisters by swallowing a lizard. You were changing one of the babes clothes while the other quietly slept.”

The Monsignor stops walking and raises his arms “Lord, have mercy! They were such precious babes.”

“How do you ever expect me to tell you the full vision if you keep interrupting?”

“I’m sorry. I will contain myself from any more of my emotional outbursts.”

“As I was saying, soon after the mud fight started, her other sisters joined in with the eldest against Katrina. She left the cavern in a flurry of mud being flung at her.

Outside of the cave when she went to wash dirt from her face while beholding her image in a puddle, she cried out and pounded the water with her fist and said, ‘I would do anything to have more power than my sisters!’ When the water settled, she saw a dark hooded figure looking over her shoulder in the reflection. She turned to see who was standing there but no one was seen ’til she looked back to the puddle again. The dark angel then spoke:

“What has you so uneasy, Katrina?”

“My sister's bullying because of my powers not being formed yet.”

“Do not be uneasy, for thou hold the knife of sacrifice.”

“I do not understand what good that doth me.”

“Be quick to trust me and you shall have the power you seek, more powerful than all of your sisters combined.”

“I rejoice in what you say!”

“Take the spelling knife and prick your finger and allow it to drip on my reflection in the water, then all power shall be thine within time.”

When Katrina followed the dark angel’s instructions, the sky turned dark and cracked with lightning ’til a prevailing wind suddenly whipped her image together with the angel’s. The puddle was violently disturbed as Katrina fell on the ground. Once the puddle was blown dry, her eyes closed and she lay still for a time ‘till the storm completely passed.

Next, when she opened her mouth from sleep, the dark angel's words came at first and spoke with her until its words entered her thoughts to speak on her own, “You have one more task to perform and then my powers will flow at my . . . Errr! Thy will.”

“My sisters will belong to me is all I need to know. What is required?”

“Destroy the female babe and thou wilt be free to practice evil at will. Whatever thy desire shall be thine, stronger thy shall be than all of your sisters powers combined.”

“I cannot do this as the babe is kin to my own bone.”

The dark angel came out of her eye and whispered in her ear, “Thou hast seen thy sister abort many a babe for greater obligations many times. It wilt be like one of them.