

Chapter 15: The Ultimate Betrayal.

Sitting in Dimetrius's lap being rocked gently wearing nothing but a thick diaper and a shirt Crystal cried into his chest in shock.

They had been at Jades cottage for just over a month. The full moon had come the first time and nothing had happened but they had wanted to be extra sure and decided to stay there until the next one. Sure enough, come the second full moon, Crystal had shifted into a massive white wolf with blueish tints in her fur and sparks popping from her eyes and mouth as her lightning chakra found a new way to escape her in her feral state.

Dimetrius had a hard time keeping her from going berserk and was cut up pretty bad at first but once Crystal had taken down a massive buck and eaten from it her mind came back and while she couldn't talk in her bestial state she had made it clear she was sorry for his injuries by doing the canine thing and licking his bites and scratches that were already starting to heal.

A few hours later Crystal passed out against him whimpering in her sleep and halfway through the night she shifted back into her human self and he had diapered her knowing the raw meat of the deer would work its way out quickly now that she was shifted back to normal. Once she was set he pulled her into his lap as much as he could get then holding her close he went into a meditative state to consult with Boccob. Getting his three questions answered he knew that he and Crystal would have no choice but to use the sword to grant them a wish each...unfortunately it granted it in a way that they weren't expecting.

"A...at least you'll know when I'm happy right away now." she said jokingly in his lap as her new tail had hung limply behind her.

"I know you're upset love but that was at least a good attempt." He said kissing her on the head as he pet her back soothingly. "At least we guaranteed you have control over when you

shift by making it a choice for you and made it so only those you WANT to infect can be infected as well. I'm sorry you were stuck in the hybrid form though. I know it's going to take getting used to but there are big benefits to it." He added.

"Like never needing a knife to cut up fruit for our rugrats?" she said looking down at her elongated fingers with their razor sharp claws sticking out of the ends of them.

"Well that's one but I meant that in the hybrid state you get all the benefits of the animal form while still being able to manipulate tools for humanoid hands and still talk to us. Your hearing, sight, smell will all increase slowly until you are fully accustomed to it. Boccob guaranteed that for me when I consulted him last night while you were passed out. He also said that because of the way I worded my wish you will not have the lycanthropy weakness to silver and fire so you got all the good and none of the bad now." he said smiling at her and tilting her face up he kissed her on the lips.

Kissing him back she chuckled wetly and said, "Yeah...that would have sucked not being able to touch silver or use fire anymore."

"You ready for dinner then or you want to snuggle some more love." He asked softly before kissing the tears off her eyes and pulling out a handkerchief and holding it to her nose.

Taking the handkerchief from him she held it herself and blew her nose nodding. "I think I'm okay now. It was just a big shock and really painful having the tail appear and my hands grow in length for the claws." She said before kissing his cheek and getting up.

"Alright then what should we have? I think Jade has some kibbles and bits in the cupboard." He said teasingly before letting out a yelp as she slapped him upside the head.

"Not funny you jerk." She said though she did have a smile on her face.

“That’s something we’re going to have to work on too hun. You probably meant it to be soft but that felt like one of your old full force slaps. You got the strength boost already and if last night was any clue you’re speed is going to be faster than I am in full flight speed now when you run. Seriously I could barely keep up with you to keep you away from the villages.” He said

“Guess that means daddy gets to be the disciplinarian while I learn my new limits and control. Hope you don’t mind being my practice dummy for a while.” She said sort of sad as she got out the steaks they had marinating and going out to the grill area outside the cottage.

“I would rather you practice on me than accidentally hurt the kids hon and they don’t earn that many spankings so it’s not like I have to be “the evil daddy.” They also know that we love them to pieces and don’t spank just to spank them. Don’t worry dear they will understand when we talk to them after we go back tomorrow morning.” He said hugging her from behind before moving in front and getting some practice on his Ninjutsu in by using the fireball skill to light the grill and get the charcoal prepped instantly.

“I know I’m just more worried how they are going to react when they see my hands and tail. Good job by the way you got it on the first try and faster than you used to be.” She said with a smile.

“Mikey will probably giggle and use your tail as a handhold while we’re walking instead of your hand. The girls seem more mature and they already knew you would probably be fully infected anyway so they will be happy that you got the good and none of the bad. Though...” he said going silent for a moment.

“Though?” she said putting the meat onto the grill and covering it with the dome to cook.

“Well...When I was talking with the girls the night before the tournament Diana kept asking questions that made me think she is going to want to be, for lack of a better term,

Powerful. She might try and get you to not only teach her our skills as ninja's but also infect her. I don't want them thinking that the only thing that matters in the world is power."

"When we get back I'll sit down with her and explain that being strong doesn't mean having power to use but by knowing when to use the power you have to protect the things you hold most dear to your heart and to protect the innocent from being hurt." She said.

"Good luck with that she ended up saying a few words that got her a spanking when I tried. That's why she was so well behaved the day of the tournament." He said as he started cooking the steaks making hers rare to see if she preferred it that way now.

"Oh dear is that why she has been such a snuggle bug and not wanting to let us come here alone?" she said tisking.

"Yup that's part of it. But I think she was trying to butter you up into teaching her something. Personally I don't want them even to think about training unless they show the signs of magical gift until they turn twelve at least." Dimetrius said.

"Why the exception for Magic?" she said scratching her head.

"Magic is a dangerous force and if not trained from the moment of emergence it could find ways out on its own that can be very dangerous for the person or people around them. I learned that the hard way in my previous life." He said.

"Are you qualified to teach them or would we need to send them to the magical university?" she asked.

"Well...I do have my black robe of mastery which is the highest ranking possible for mages in this half of the world. To the lands across the sea to our south the color is Red but it's the same ranking. I can teach them but if it gets to be too much we can always leave them with mom until they have control enough to learn from me. And don't worry I'm not intending to

teach them anything from the high levels until they are fully grown and have proven worthy of the spells I know. I'm mainly going to look at cantrips and level one spells." He said.

"So nothing dangerous but enough to get them to learn control. That's how we train our ninja back home in ninjutsu. Until they learn control of their chakra in a strong enough level we don't teach them stronger ninjutsu. Of course you already know that since you were my student crinkle butt." She said teasingly her tail wagging a little.

Since hers was done quickly Dimetrius plated it along with the raw vegetables on the side and gave her a knife and fork and said, "Try it rare to see if your lycanthropy makes you need it more bloody if you don't like it that way I'll put it back in the pan to get it to medium rare for you love."

Nodding she cutoff one piece of the meat cautiously ate it as he watched and swallowing it she said, "it's okay but I still prefer medium rare can you put it back in till it's to that please?"

Taking the meat on the grilling fork he nodded and kissed her cheek saying, "As you wish sweetie. I'm just trying to find what we need to expect with this. It's no problem. At least we know you didn't get their bloodthirst and want everything raw or rare." He said smiling.

"Thanks... Though I wonder what fish would taste like raw when it's not sushi?" she said thoughtfully her tail wagging.

"What's Sushi?" he asked.

"It's a way of prepping fish from my home that involves seaweed, rice, fish, and other small ingredients there's dozens upon dozens of styles of Sushi but I prefer the basic roll" She said.

"Maybe when we get back I can scrounge up the ingredients and you can cook it for us and the rugrats?" he said smiling as he checked her steak again and found it to be at the right

level of cooked. He then put it back on her plate and plated his own and sat down with her after turning off the stove to make it save energy and he kissed her cheek, “Two medium rare steaks and some veggies to balance it.” He said before cutting up his.

“Thank you dear.” She said cutting the steak the rest of the way and starting to eat it. “Much better not too much blood.” She said smiling.

“And you’re sure your stomach didn’t object to the raw buck you had when you were shifted?” he said.

Shaking her head she said, “It might be part of the curse. Being able to handle raw meat like the animal we resemble.” She then went back to eating and said, “BLECH...why do these taste bad now?” and she pushed the vegetables away.

Tasting his and then some of hers he said, “They are still good...might be a side effect of being a lycanthrope now. Well this will be hard to explain to the kids, you being allowed to eat only meat and us expecting them to eat their fruits and veggies as well as meat.”

“No even if I get a bit of an upset stomach I’m still going to eat vegetables and fruits just so they can’t try to use that against us. I’ll be fine it will just take getting used to again that’s all. Besides wolves do eat plants in the wild somewhat they are just mainly meat eaters so I’m not going to forgo what’s good for me.” She said forcing herself to eat the food.

“You know despite all that’s happened there’s one thing about you that hasn’t changed. Your fighting spirit and determination. I love that about you.” he said hugging her sidelong as he ate. “You look at the good along with the bad and you focus on overcoming the negatives. You’re the kind of person I failed to become in my previous life.” He added.

“But you managed to do it this time. Or do you think you’re going to fail in your task still? If you need it I’ll give you a butt kicking to snap you out of a funk.” She said.

“No I’m good love I’ve found the true strength I lacked before and it’s because of you and Jade, and even Aimeric who is back in his homeland now. If it wasn’t for you three I wouldn’t have gotten this far.” He said smiling. “The power of love and friendship shall overcome all challenges.” He said.

“Now you sound like one of those corny comic book characters.” She said giving him a shove though her tail was going like crazy.

Laughing he said, “Nothing wrong with that. I used to read those comics as a kid but they all got ruined when the roof leaked one year and my room got drenched. We had to throw out not only my comics but half of my diapers. Luckily I saved up my allowance and was able to offset the cost of the diapers for my parents which made them happy. And I got to pick the ones I would get since I paid for them.”

“Let me guess...pink with unicorns on it?” she teased.

“Close it was purple with pegasi on it.” He said

“Pegasai?” she questioned

“Plural of Pegasus. It’s like a unicorn but instead of the horn it has wings.” He said.

“Oh never heard of those before.” She said.

“Yeah they are very majestic when they are flying. Hard to tame though so even if I wanted to I probably couldn’t.” he said as he was halfway done.

“No real loss. Anything that is that beautiful and majestic deserves to be let to run free rather than cooped up in a Corral.” She said reaching her halfway mark.

“So what do you want to do after dinner?” he said.

“I’m thinking snuggle in bed and go to sleep early so we can get back early tomorrow.” She said.

Nodding he said, “It would give us time to get you some new diapers since cutting holes into them isn’t good for containment and I can’t transfigure them for some reason.

“It’s okay I’m not planning on using them until we have proper ones this is for comfort only.” She said kissing his cheek.

Nodding he said. “Fair enough.” Then he went back to his food and finished up first and took his plate to the sink and washed it before putting it away along with the knife and fork as well as the pan he cooked the steaks in to begin with.

When she finished eating she walked up behind him and helped him wash her plates then took him to the bedroom and drug him into bed and snuggled with him and he snuggled her back popping the pacifier from the side table into her mouth before getting his own and popping it into his and shutting off the light globes with a snap of his fingers.

The next day around noon they walked into the capitals gates and were immediately beset upon by the guards who were there and the leader of them said, “Dimetrius Song and Crystal of Nights Reach by order of the King you two and Jade Moonflower are hereby under arrest for the attempted murder of the queen and prince. You will come with us for questioning peacefully or we will be forced to use deadly force.” He said reading off a scroll.

Shocked by the words they just looked at each other and Dimetrius said, “We are innocent of such charges but we will come peacefully as I do not wish to harm anyone. Take us to the king and Aram and we will answer any and all questions under the use of Eyebright by Aram to prove our innocence.”

Crystal’s tail hung limp and started tucking between her legs and she said, “how...Did I get away from you. don’t lie to me did I get away or not?”

“No you didn’t, now just calm down we’ll settle this when we get to the castle.” He said calmly having a bad feeling in his gut.

As they were escorted to the castle the two were placed in handcuffs as was standard though they both knew they could easily destroy the cuffs if they wanted. Once in front of the king they were reunited with Jade who looked like she was about to have a panic attack.

“Where is Tina she should be here too?” the head guard said.

“She is gone she chose to run rather than face the questioning and used her strange magic to block us from following. We were able to see her open a portal and jump through it before the hex wall faded. She as good as admitted that she was guilty.” The group that came in at the question said.

“So one of your friends is guilty of attempting to assassinate my queen and my son the prince what have you three to say for yourselves for your part in this?” King Gorgash said in a slightly shocked but very angry tone.

“I have two questions your majesty. When did this attempt take place, and to what purpose would the three of us have to do such a thing. Crystal and I have been at the cabin in the forest north east of here that is owned by Jade for the past month ever since the tournament for the giants war. As you know she was infected with wolf lycanthropy and we went there for two full moon’s to be sure she was safe to be in public. As you can see she is in hybrid mode right now and will forever be thanks to a wish we made upon this sword. It has the power to grant any wish without limit but only four wishes per week. Unfortunately the magnitude of our two wishes made the four gems that show its level of power left were depleted because we wished for her to have full control over when she shifted and to only be infectious to those she deems worthy of it.” Dimetrius said pulling the sword from his hip and handing it over to the guard.

“Show it to Aram if you doubt the power of this sword I know he is hiding in the shadows using eyebright to monitor whether we lie or not.” Crystal added looking right at Aram who was surprised that his invisibility spell dropped.

“this attack happened earlier today after breakfast when my queen took our son to his room to change him and get him ready for his studies for the day.” King Gorgash said looking down to Aram from his dias.

“Crystal and Dimetrius speak the truth they were not here the past month. What about you Jade?” Aram said.

“I was giving the morning prayer in my orphanage over breakfast and dealing with punishments that needed dealing out for demerits during the week.” Jade said. “I’ve not even had lunch yet because I had so many bottoms to tan.” She added.

“Again truth my liege. What I find difficult here is I saw you three making the attempt myself. There is only one thing that will determine what I saw as truth or illusion. Stand still.” Aram said before speaking several arcane words and making complex figures with his fingers.

As they stood there the guards backed off and a golden fog fell upon the three causing their bodies to glow but at the same time there was a darkness that started glowing on each of their right hands. A rune of a type Dimetrius was unfamiliar with was glowing black on each of their hands.

“Ah that would explain everything. Release them they were not here. Some time ago they had a bit of their essence stolen from them without their knowing. This small bit can be used to make an illusion powerful enough to fool all senses and even the most powerful of mages into thinking that what they see is the truth. The only drawback to the illusion is that it does not impart the skills of the person the person is impersonating. My liege if you will follow us to the

room of the prince so that her Majesty Aquatica and your son calm while I work some magic to try and discern the location of the culprits using my talents. If this goes right then I will accompany these three on their journey to bring the perpetrator and her cohorts to justice.” Aram said to the king.

“Very well do as Aram said an unshackle these three and return their weapons.” The king said causing the guards to take off the cuffs and return their weapons.

“Oh one more thing.” Aram said snapping his fingers and causing the runes to disappear. “I have banished the curse runes upon you and you should now have the entirety of your powers back. I don’t know how long you’ve been with those marks but it felt as though it’s been a long time. You’re lucky that you haven’t needed your full powers yet though I suspect that you will soon.”

“When I find Tina I’m going to snap her little neck after beating a confession out of her.” Dimetrius said mouth crackling with electricity.

“Calm yourself Dimetrius anger is justified yes but a calm mind will win the war not a clouded mind.” Jade said placing a hand on his shoulder though she shook a little with her own contained rage

“Jade’s right let’s just remain calm. If you want to help the prince and queen now then they will need you to stay calm and not look terrifying while you are in their presence.” Crystal said taking his hand in her own and calming him down more than Jade did.

Letting them lead him he closed his eyes and breathed deeply through his nose to calm himself. “You’re right...you’re both right I’ve never been this angry before. Not even back then when I failed him...I just have this bad feeling that...why do I sense the corruption from those goblin sacked towns and the ocean city getting closer?” he said.

Once they were in the corridor to the royal wing of bedrooms he stopped. “Aram you go in first calm the queen and prince do your magic to find the location but Jade will need to bless the entire room. I can taste the corruption in the air whatever it was that came here to kill them it was from the Nine Hells. What level I don’t know but I can taste HIS corruption so I’m guessing one of the lower rings.” He said.

“Do you mean...the one that had you before?” Jade asked.

He nodded and calmed his mind. “He is behind it all. I won’t say his name Aram so don’t ask. Even writing it down can summon him if you have a book of greater devils I can point it out to you but don’t ask me to say or write his name.”

“Alright give me three minutes and I’ll be back out to get Jade.” Aram said going inside and talking to the queen and prince calming them down before coming out to get Jade.

Jade went into the room with him and as Dimetrius thought there was a scream from the queen and he felt a powerful shield spell go into place before Aram started talking again as Jade worked on blessing the room with her connection to Pelor removing all the taint of demonic corruption from the room and the princes things. Walking out she went to the king and queens bedroom and did a search with her detect evil aura and started blessing it as well. She went to every room on the wing closest to them following the taint and removing it by the time she was done Queen Aquatica came out of the room and looked at Dimetrius and Crystal through skeptical eyes.

“Your majesty I give you my word of honor, by Boccob and Bahamut’s wrath we are not the ones who attacked you and the prince. I also vow to catch and bring to justice the ones who did.” He said.

“Invoking your deity’s wrath is a very serious thing. Aram says you three were under an essence stealing curse. I know the way of magic as much as he does. He was my star pupil when he was in the academy. If what he says is true then you will need help finding and dealing with the culprit.” She said as she waved her hand causing a book to appear. “He said you know the taint that Jade is cleansing from the rooms from your previous life and you refuse to speak or write the name of the one who it belongs to. He also says you will however show us who it is so find his entry in this tome and show us so I can give you some trinkets to protect you from the majority of their power.” She said.

Nodding he took the book and opened it looking at the index to find the man’s name and page number and then flipped to the proper page. “This is him. Do not say his name...I don’t want to face him but if you can give us something to protect us from these particular powers...” he said pointing to the known ones that were most dangerous. “And we will have a chance. As I suspected he dwells in the 9th level so it’s going to be very tough to get there and get to him. His power is immense and if SHE is with him or giving him power then we are going to literally go through the worst challenge hell has to offer.”

Nodding she went to her room and got four blank amulets and held her book up with a hover spell before she started casting spells on the amulets enchanting them to protect the four on their quest. Once the spells were on the amulets she cast permanency on them all and then came out of her room and handed them to Jade, Crystal, Dimetrius and one to Aram. “They’re going to need your help getting there and back Aram so you’re getting one too. I’ll trust you all to do this job with utmost haste as the longer you stay down in that realm the more chances there are for you to become corrupted or lost forever.” The queen said softly in a worried tone.

“Fear not my queen we will return triumphant. I have a feeling this is what my true mission was going to end with.” Dimetrius said causing Jade and Crystal to look at him. “What you knew that I had a mission of divine importance and you know what they say fate is a circle and ever entwining with other lives. I’ve dealt with this one before and know his secrets. Aram...Do you have the ability to use the wish spell?” Dimetrius said seeing the looks and turning to him.

“I can what is it you need?” he said.

“I don’t like having it but...I’m going to need you to undo the block on my mind that will give me access to ALL the spells I had in my previous life not just the non-evil ones. We’re going to need them.” He said.

“Dimetrius you can’t be...” Jade said before being cut off.

“Jade you’ve never had to deal with this bastard in person. I have. He is very powerful and these amulets will only protect us from the worst of his magic not all of it. He is probably even being powered up by the “Mother of Light.” Which means I need everything I can throw at him and his minions. When it’s over with we can remove the knowledge again with the sword. My queen I leave this in your hands with this phrase for you to remember to know it is us. The nights curse has been lifted and justice has dawned on the world.” He said giving the queen the Ungodly Luck Blade.

After repeating it back to him she took the sword and opened a pocket in space and slid it inside it saying, “Best of luck to you four and may the gods watch over you.”

Nodding Dimetrius said, “This all started in the north with the goblin caves...My best guess is there is a portal there in a chamber we never went into.”

“But we also encountered the corruption inside the ruins of the deep and inside the ruins where we found Clair. Three points of access. And the last was where the mother of light threatened us most. I suggest we go there.” Crystal said.

“No need. I actually have a map with the location you three encountered the evils in and have been connecting the lines. The layline closest to them all is right here in the castle in the dungeons we’ll leave from there.” Aram said. “If there is any supplies you need get them now and we’ll meet back up in the mages wing in one hour I need to prepare some things.” Aram said.

Nodding Dimetrius said, “Jade...best if you go to the orphanage and leave your last wishes with your main assistant. We go into the nine hells itself and few come back from there whole. I’m going to get some things from the shops for Crystal and Me and then I need to confer with Boccob and Bahamut.”

Nodding Jade said, “Yes...I have all my spells ready for the day but you’re right...I should make arrangements if we do not return. Do you want me to send a letter to your parents and the kids?”

“No...I hate to sound overconfident and a doombringer here but you were the only one my heart is unsure about returning.” He said sadly.

“Do you have this feeling because of my skill or because you have had visions?”

“Not visions...but close enough with my instincts. We will need you in your best but I don’t think it will be enough in the end.” He said patting her arm.

Nodding she said, “That is alright...I am prepared to die to protect the world and my children at the orphanage if I must.” She then walked away from them and Aram looked at her sadly before going to the mages wing.

“What are we getting?” Crystal asked.

“My bag is nearly empty of supplies and given where we are going fear may cause you to...you know...so we might as well get some for you as well. I love you and trust you to fight through the fear my love but even the most battle hardened warrior would soil himself when facing down this foe.” He said.

Nodding she said, “Alright...but only you get to change me if we are doing this. No more of the rules that Jade set down when we first came together.”

“Agreed.” He said eyes staring into the distance as they walked. “Aram can undo the spell blocking my memory of the spells before we go.” He added noticing that the man hadn’t done a thing while they were talking.

After they all finished their tasks Dimetrius went to the king and said, “I have a favor of you and the queen that I want done if something should happen to us down there.”

“What is it? I know where you are going is a most dangerous place so while I will pray to Pelor, Boccob and Bahamut as well as Crystal’s goddess the Kami of Shadow’s Keep, I do not kid myself that something could happen.” He said kindly.

“If Crystal and I fail to return and give her majesty the phrase I gave her when I gave her my wish sword, I want you to take care of the three children that Crystal and I adopted. My parents just had a baby girl hatch and four diapered children would be too much for them to handle at fathers age for too long. I want them to get the education and raising they deserve should we fail to return.”

“Why did you give her a code?” he asked.

“Your majesty we already saw that we have been subjected to an essence stealing spell causing the three of us to be cloned via illusion spells. The code is to prove who we are as that

spell won't give memories only the look, smell, and taste as well as the aura of us." Dimetrius said.

"Very well should you two fail to return I'll adopt the children in your parents care and raise them as my own. Is there any other wish you want to make of me before you embark on this dangerous journey?" he said.

"Only that you have only those you can trust completely stay around you and the queen and your son until we return. I would hate to have it happen again and succeed." Crystal said.

Nodding he said, "I already planned that and have guards who are immune to mind control and powerful enough to fight off greater demons ready to fight at the place you four shall leave from. May your gods watch over you my friends and good luck." He then wove them off and the three went to meet Aram in his room at the mages wing of the castle.

Once the four were together Dimetrius said, "Alright...hit me with that wish spell Aram. If you can do three then I ask the second one double my spell pool while we are in the nine hells. And the final one...and this is the one that's going to help us most but be risky...I need you to cast the wish spell to make me into a fully powered acolyte of the skin like I would have been had my friends not betrayed me back in my past life. It will cause the denizens of the Nine hells to think I am truly an evil person and I will show up in your aura of good as evil Jade but this is most crucial At full power I can control the taint of the corruption so it does not pass to you three any further than needed. My plan is simple enough. I am going to be the one who is escorting three "gifts" to "him." This will cut down on how much we have to fight but will require you all to play the part well."

"Is this why you gave the queen the Ungodly Luck Blade Dimetrius? So you could undo what Aram is about to do to you?" Jade asked.

“Yes. I do not want to feel that taint again but since I am familiar with it it will be easier on me than it would on you three since you’ve never been corrupted. I spoke with Boccob and Bahamut earlier remember. They assured me that this was the safest route for us and that they would forgive my doing this when we return. Though I’m in for a LOT of pain when we come back.” He said closing his eyes as a tear trickled down his face.

Nodding Aram cast the spell thrice causing three diamonds the size of his fist to turn into powder and blow into Dimetrius and coat him before vanishing. As the third spell took hold of him Dimetrius fell to his knees screaming in pain as a blood red rune appeared under him and his blue scales fell away leaving him looking like he had been skinned alive and were replaced with a shiny black-red skin which hardened quickly and gave him the appearance of someone who was wearing the skin of a demon. “Don’t touch me yet...not yet...” he cried out seeing Jade wanting to help him up.

Stepping back she looked away as did Crystal and Aram leaving him on the floor breathing raggedly as his skin continued to lose the sheen it had and darken until it looked black with red veins along the blood veins on the surface.

Getting to his feet he said, “I’ll pay for the diamonds when we return. I’m going to scratch all three of you just enough to pass a TINY portion of corruption onto you so you will read as evil denizens of the nine hells this will save us some explaining. With the taint you could be any denizen of the nine hells even fallen heroes who chose to become evil. This will keep people down there from trying to start things with you as you each read powerful to the aura I’m giving off but not as powerful as my new body will read.” He said.

Nodding they held out their arms and he scratched them just enough to break the skin and pass corruption onto them and said, “The key to keeping your mind is willpower. I know you

three well enough to know you won't fall to the taint but stay on guard." Then they went down to the dungeons and met three massive guards in spiked plate armor all carrying double-headed ax's that glowed bright white. "We are the kings chosen and favored souls of Pelor we shall stand guard at the portal for your return what is the password you wish to use to prove who you are when you return?" The middle one said in a booming voice.

"The sun has slain the curse of the night. Justice shall reign supreme." Dimetrius said giving an altered version of what he said to the queen to retrieve his sword.

"The password has been noted and etched into our minds. Lead the way Aram." He said stepping aside letting Aram go ahead of the three and they take up the rear.

Walking down the dungeons Aram checked each cell with his aura and finally when they got to the room where the Torture of the worst criminals was done he stopped. "Figures...in a place where the darkest people get their jollies is where we find the strongest place for a portal."

"Makes sense though. The only ones who end up here are either the torturer and the guards, or those who earned torture. I'm just happy to see a very thick layer of dust on everything." Jade said looking around.

"Yes it's been unused for three years thankfully. The king is a very effective leader and has kept the need for this at a null." One of the soldiers said shifting lightly. "I used to be the one to do the torturing so I'm glad he found me a job that I can be useful in besides making people hurt." He added.

Nodding Aram started speaking in ancient arcane and drawing runes in the air before drawing a huge circle around them and literally pulled it wider and used his feet to help him make it taller leaving a blood red hole in the space before them.

“Be prepared for a cold blast guys. The skin is telling me that level 8 is an arctic like climate and infested with fiends, devils and demons who thrive in the cold. Ice devils are the most common but there will be other evils there too. Our target is immune to fire and poison, and highly resistant to acid and cold spells. So our best bets are holy, electricity, and straight arcane. He is cloaked in fire that will harm anyone who comes near him and his damage type is unholy which will be more potent, or would have been had I not infected you, against Jade. Jade your holy weapons will be our greatest ally against him as other types of weapons are resisted but not repelled. Think of it as you being the only one who can hit him as though he had no armor on while the rest of us can only HOPE our spells are strong enough to surpass his resistances.” Dimetrius said.

“Anything else?” Aram said.

“Yeah pretty much expect a lot of summoned monsters to appear when we start fighting. He can animate dead bodies at will, charm all manner of monsters create greater undead like we faced in the ruins outside ghost haven. Cause areas to become desecrated, he can detect anyone of good alignment instantly as well as magic. Cast fireball at its most potent form, hellfire storms, create magic circles against good, locate creatures and objects, create illusions with major image, scrying, restoration, Geas/quest, greater dispelling, teleport without error, true seeing, Unholy aura, unholy blight, unhallow, wall of fire, wall of ice. And this is all just what he can do at will without a charge up time. once a day he can summon a meteor swarm, use any symbol, and cast wish. He specializes in evocation school of magic so his spells are going to be more potent with those than any other spell. IF we manage to kill him we should find his laboratories in his castle as there will be a treasure trove of magical tomes that hold every spell ever created.” Dimetrius added

“How does the skin know all this?” Jade said shocked.

Suddenly Dimetrius’s voice changed to that of a raspy whisper and he said, “Because I used to belong to one of his most trusted advisors inside his castle. He knows someone has stolen me and created a new Acolyte of the skin so he will be on guard.”

Shivering all three of them said, “Noted. Anything else we should watch for?”

“He has replaced the ice devils that surrounded his castle with pit fiends. And he can telepathically communicate with anyone or anything that has a language within a hundred miles of him. So be on guard of mind speech.” It said before giving Dimetrius control again.

“I forgot the skin could do that... anyway let’s get going. I want to get this bastards head and be free of his influence once and for all.” Dimetrius said walking through the portal first and waiting for the others to join him.

Once they were all through they saw a vast icy world with a huge city in the middle of a valley and a black and red tower on the farthest side with flames coming out of it at intervals.

“Mephistar. The one place we need to go and the one place I hoped never to see again.”

Dimetrius said sounding a bit forlorn.

Patting his shoulder Crystal said, “We’ll come back from this. Don’t worry.”

Nodding he said, “I know. I’m just worried that something bad is waiting that we might not be able to handle alone.” He then led the way to the outskirts of the city where they were stopped by two massive insectoid like creatures of an ice blue color holding a pair of exotic looking spears with a curved blade head rather than a straight point.

“Halt who goes there. None are allowed to enter the city without leave of one of the allies or the lord himself.” The one on the left said with a chattering undertone.

“I am the Acolyte of the skin with no name. I come bearing gifts for the lord of this level of hell. They are powerful in their own rights but not as powerful as I am. You would do well to let us pass and go about our business in the city before going to the citadel. Dispater will be displeased if you hold us up since he sent us personally.” Dimetrius said.

“You invoke the name of the chief alliance of our lord. You may pass if you can answer the challenge. A true ally of Dispater will have the power to withstand our use of this.” The right one said holding up a black iron crown that looked jagged and sharp.

“The crown of Evil will not help you defeat me in combat if you think of fighting me.” Dimetrius said firmly his gaze hardening and eyes crackling with lightning.

“Let them pass. You clearly don’t feel the aura of power this one exudes. They all have their own strength but he is most powerful of all.” The other one said moving aside.

“You can pass.” The one with the crown said moving aside as well letting the four through the city gates.

Walking through they felt an aura of power wash over them and they kept going as Aram set up a telepathic link to the four saying, “Mind link established you can communicate to any of the four of us by thinking. That being said what was that?”

“Power scanning. They have a barrier set up at each gate to scan the power level of everyone who walks into the city. The one who rules here is very paranoid after the last time he nearly lost the throne.” Dimetrius replied.

“So what’s the plan do we go right for the castle or do we start with going about the city to do things like normal visitors?” Jade said.

“We’re going to the bank first to exchange surface money for the currency here in the nine hells I’ll cover all our costs so just relax. Things are going to be dicey if we don’t be careful

so just follow my lead. And whatever you do don't act like "good" people while you're here. This is key we need to be careful to keep up the appearance of evil people. If someone offers to let you in on "their fun" it might be best to accept. This won't be easy and I can sense plenty of things in this city that would break most people mentally if they were subjected to doing these things." Dimetrius said.

"What do you sense here?" Jade asked.

"Multiple Succubi and Incubi. Souls of the damned being tortured, Pit lords, more of those ice devils like we just saw, odds are one of us is going to be asked to help torture a soul with sexual sadism. I'll handle that since I'm not exactly "pure" in that area anymore." Dimetrius said sounding sad.

"I forgive you for anything you have to do as I'm sure Bahamut and Boccob will. This is your mission and we are just along for the ride my dear." Jade said.

"Same here love I know we are going to have to endure a lot to get this particular mission done." Crystal said as they got to the bank.

Once inside Dimetrius walked up to an available teller and exchanged 50 platinum worth of coins for a bag of "souls" and then said, "Fuck off you greedy bastards. I get a better exchange rate up on the second level. No wonder demons hate coming here." And he left with the others.

"what's the currency they have down here?" Aram said.

"Souls. Little grubworm like creatures that are the souls of those who have lived out their torture to the fullest and transformed into a new state of being. They don't use real money down on these levels only up on the first two are real coins used." He said. "I think the first thing we should do is get some gear that will help us against him and his guards. Since we're all tainted a

little evil weapons won't cause us to be pained by using them and they will give us an edge in battle. Any arguments?"

"No you are the brains here I'm just backup. I'll trust your instincts on this one." Aram said.

"Me too." Jade replied.

"Just be careful." Crystal said.

Nodding he looked around and finding the weapons master, a six foot tall, four foot across the shoulders ogre with a giant Tetsubo club on his hip, he said, "I'm looking to get some new equipment for myself and my team you got any rare birds in stock?"

"What kind of weapons you looking for?"

"Two staffs, one for martial fighting one for magical focusing, a Katana or similar sword and a onehanded war hammer."

Nodding he said, "I have everything. For a magical focus I have this." He pulled a six foot tall staff with a flower burst pattern head which had an eyeball on each tip of the flower petals. "Thousand-eyed staff of Malrugu. Will double the potency of your spells but only those with a class S will can tame it. For a fighting staff I have a black iron shaft coated with the skin of a pit fiend. The wielder shall become immune to fire and poison though must have a will rivaling that of one who wishes to tame the Thousand-eyed staff." He added pulling out a blood red rod of six feet in length.

"How much for the pair?" Dimetrius asked.

"Ten large souls." He said. "You also wished to know about a hammer and katana. For a Warhammer I have this little beauty. I call her Soul Smasher as she was used to forged the three soul weapons of the Legendary Swordsman. She is indestructible, can pierce even dragon scales

with the pointed side, and will crush the bones of a Bullet when thrown at high speeds. It also has an auto-return feature for when it is thrown it will strike the target and return back to the hand in an instant with a teleportation spell. As for a Katana...I have one but it is a cursed blade.” He said.

“Cursed how? What does it do to make it a cursed weapon?” Dimetrius asked knowing Crystal would be wary of using a cursed sword.

“It requires payment when drawn. And that payment is blood. You cannot re-sheath the sword until it draws the blood of a living creature be it mortal or divine. If you have the speed to swing it it will fell a petrified redwood tree ten feet in diameter in a single stroke. I call her Zanmasu.”

Dimetrius looked at Jade and Crystal to see if they were willing to wield the weapons and though it was slow they both nodded.”

“I’ll take the lot then. If there isn’t enough souls in the bag I can give you surface money to exchange for the difference.” He said handing over the bag to let the demon check the contents.

“You’re ten large souls or five sovereigns short.” He said.

Pulling out his other money pouch Dimetrius pulled out the five gold coins and handed them over before distributing the weapons to everyone.

Taking their new weapons the three hefted them to get a feel for them and Aram stumbled a bit before catching himself saying, “That was a doozy...But I’m in control.”

Dimetrius laughed a little and said, “Guess having the power to control my skin and stay myself prepped me for the Will requirement.” Though his tone was a little off more like he was cocky which was different than his normal cautious tone.

“Careful there Dimetrius.” Crystal said warningly as she tied the new katana to her waist. The sheath of the Zanmasu was a red and black cloth made to look like drying blood and the blade, when she would draw it, would prove to be a deep blood red color.

Slipping the Warhammer onto her hip on the hook for her other one Jade looked worried at Dimetrius and said, “Yes caution is the better part of valor. Even Demons and Devils know some caution.”

Nodding he said. “Right sorry. Alright let’s get moving. The new master will be wanting to see us soon, and it’s never good to keep him waiting.”

The vendor watched them closely and said, “if you mean the one in the tower good luck. He hasn’t seen anyone in some time now. Even new recruits for his army are delegated to his second in command unless they have something of extra special about them to make them worth his attention.”

“Thanks for the info. I’ll put in a word for you with the army if they need a good smith to supply them.” Dimetrius said.

“Don’t bother they already have me on retainer. But they don’t pay the cost of those so be glad they were available.”

Nodding the four left and walked towards the castle. As they did Dimetrius’s skin started pulsing a little with power sending out an aura of fear to make anyone who would stop them or try to investigate their business just turn and walk away from them.

“Are you causing the aura of fear on purpose or is it automatic?” Jade whispered to him.

“It’s not controllable. It happens without me wanting it which is why when we’re done I’m in for a world of pain. Also since I paid for them don’t be surprised if I ask for the weapons

back so I can dispose of them permanently. No use risking someone trying to touch them and getting injured or taken over.”

“Agreed. I don’t want this thing near our little ones.” Crystal said though her hand started petting the sword absent mindedly.

“okay well the sword and hammer are not as bad. I can put them in a pocket dimension for when we need them. I’m more concerned about the staffs.” He said as they exited the market area and moved onto the residential and, for some reason, the religious quarter.

“Why are there churches here?” Jade asked.

“Even devils and demons have gods. There are evil gods out there Jade you should know that being a high priestess.” Crystal said.

“Right I just didn’t think Devils and Demons would worship them?” Jade said picking her chin. “I hope that the one we’re after isn’t in favor of any of the evil ones.” She added.

“He’s not, at least not as far as the last time I spoke with him.” Dimetrius whispered. “For now though let’s just keep any and all thoughts about him to a null he does have telepathic communication and can listen in on us.”

Nodding they all stopped talking and let him lead them on since he was supposed to “be their keeper” until they reached their destination.

Getting to the gates of the tower Dimetrius saw two things right off. One, they had about 12 pit lords, twelve foot tall demons with medium red skin, bat wings, and broad as a bull with a lionish like face, and Tina standing between them and the castle. Two, they were being watched by the group.

“The master said you would come. And he was right. Come Dimetrius come and join the master again or face his wrath through me.” Tina said.

“Tina you can’t beat us with your hexes we are too powerful for that and you know it.” Dimetrius said, “Surrender now and we’ll put in a word of mercy for the king to spare you and only incarcerate you in the dungeons. Force us to fight and you will die painfully.” He said causing the pit lords to laugh.

“Get them boys. I’ll support you from here.” She said to the pit lords causing them all to start chanting a spell in unison.

“I don’t think so.” Aram said casting a prismatic spray onto half of them either turning them to stone or making them vanish all together.

Dimetrius had the same thought and one of the Diamonds on his helm of brilliance went dark and turned to dust as the other half were just vanished to another plane of existence.

“You betrayed us Tina. Why did you do that I thought we were friends.” Crystal said unsheathing her normal katana.

“Friends? HA we were never friends. I was a plant by my lord to collect information on you LONG before you even knew me. How do you think I got your essences to make clones of you? I stole it back before you went under the ocean.” She said causing several copies of herself to appear all of them and herself looking hazy.

“Now the real question is do I kill you fast or slow. The master said I could do with you what I will but to make sure that the blue one, though he isn’t blue anymore is he? I had to make sure you stayed alive long enough to regret crossing him again.” She said to Dimetrius.

“Crystal?” he said.

“yeah?”

“max power fire. Dead center.” He said in a whisper.

Nodding she moved slightly to his right and made the handsigns before yelling, “KATON,” and launched a high speed fireball the size of a giant’s boulder.

Tina let out a scream as she was engulfed by the flames but they quickly died off leaving her black and cracked looking just like Dimetrius was. Laughing she said, “Guess I should have mentioned a resistance to flames.” She then thrust her hand out shooting a black symbol at them and Dimetrius jumped in front taking the hex to the chest before snarling in pain eyes going deep red. “Aram you got one more diamond?”

“One left...please tell me you’re not thinking of wishing for something more powerful than the skin.” He said.

“No...I’m just checking so I know my options.” He said before firing off a line of lightning from his mouth right through Tina’s chest making her scream in actual pain this time.

“RAKURAI.” Crystal yelled firing off her chakra lightning into the girl as well.

“BY PELORS WRATH I SMITE THEE.” Jade yelled leaping forward and slamming her new hammer into the stunned girl causing a massive crunch as her ribs were shattered and shoved inwards piercing her internal organs.

Collapsing into a heap Tina’s corps crumpled in upon itself and burst into flames just as Jade leapt back to give herself distance from the witch.

“What was that spell she cast?” Crystal asked as Dimetrius coughed up some blood onto the ground.

“Power symbol death. If your constitution is strong enough you can survive it but it hurts like a mother fucker.” He said pulling his bag off his back and fishing inside for a bottle. “I wasn’t risking you three when I knew I could survive it.” He added pulling a potion bottle out and taking a swig from it before capping it.

“You’re getting a spanking when you’re back to normal you idiot. That spell is diluted for every target it’s supposed to hit.” Aram said.

“Like I knew that I only know the spell cause it hit me you twit.” He retorted with a slightly augmented voice.

“Two spankings.” Jade said.

Dimetrius Growled and held up his hand to tell them to quiet as he went into a meditative seated position eyes closed as he tried to center himself. After about ten minutes he got up and said, “Until this skin is removed with the item back home give me room to let out its anger don’t threaten me as it makes it hard to control it. If I lose control all three of you will die. It’s not a threat it’s a safety warning. As for the “stronger things than the skin?” There were only two items I had in my previous life that would fit that and I don’t feel like dying when you remove them thanks.”

“What did you have that would kill you upon removal?” Jade said.

“I was in possession of both the hand and eye of Vecna. The eye was more powerful than the hand but together they were a dangerous combo. Let’s just put it like this. If I had them. This mission would be done in one move. But I’d rather not have to rip out my left eye again and chop off the same hand to attach them both. Let alone the dying when removed thing.”

“You’re starting to give me the willies Dimetrius. You told us everything you did but not what you were in possession of. How could you be given a second chance?” Jade said starting to sidle away from him.

“Because when I died I was taken before the entire court of the gods of my world. I pleaded, begged, abased myself, showed that I was truly sorry for my actions and wished nothing more than a chance to be forgiven. I was sent into limbo. A state of neither life, nor death,

trapped with my thoughts and only my thoughts for I know not how long before Boccob came back to me there and gave me that second chance. You said you were all for giving people a second chance why are you judging me now. I have told you no lies only what was prudent at the time and I have NOT betrayed any of you or have any inclinations in doing so. I love Crystal and our children, I love this world, And if you would stop being so judgmental you would see I look at you as a second mother which is one of the greatest honors a dragonkin can bestow on a mortal race.” He said looking and sounding genuinely hurt at her moving away and judging stare.

“Jade if he wasn’t worthy of the second chance he would have been destroyed by the gods already. They would have found his soul wanting and would have sent him to the lowest level as just a soul with no power to be tortured for all eternity. Do not judge him for his past possessions judge him on his actions in the here and now. He has done much to aid the kingdom and to protect the three of us and your other friend who went back to his own country nearly a year ago now. I too have many skeletons in my closet but you don’t see me as a despicable creature since you’re the one I confessed them to long ago before I took my trials for my mastery.” Aram said.

Shaking her head she said, “you’re right. I’m sorry it’s just...I’m of lawful good nature and all my life I have sent evil creatures back to this place...The atmosphere here is doing a number on my resolve and is making me have doubts. I’m sorry.” She then moved over to Dimetrius and hugged him. “I’m sorry.” She said again kissing his head.

“I forgive you. Now let’s go kick this bastards ass and get the hell out of this place. Save your spells, and you too Aram. I have a plan but you need to watch for my signals I will use

sleight of hand to show you all where to move and when before we fight. This bastard is strong but he is also a coward we will only get one shot at killing him.” Dimetrius said.