

(Story by Koviell Sashermasock)

I'm in front of the great hall. The two guards in front of the entrance look at me and open the door. I pass by. I can see the Elder on his throne. He was drinking something in a cup.

"Good evening, Koviell. I was waiting for you. Did everything go well?" Ask the Elder.

"It was a slaughter. Kalsed and I didn't take part of it."

"Interesting. What happened after?" Ask the Elder.

"We got back to Warmaster Leto. Malekiev carried the head of an half-ogre with him as a proof. Now I'm here with you."

"I see. Good. Now, I wanted to talk with you about something else." Said the Elder.

"Which is?"

"You. Tell me about yourself. I don't remember the last time I've seen one of your kin around. You're an exotic curiosity." Confess the Elder.

"I'm from the Clan of the Mountain. I was an arcane prodigy. I left the clan to study wizardry at the magical University, making me an exile. Some... events... made it so I couldn't have my place there anymore. So I wandered some time on the mainland. I travelled back to the cold lands and now I'm here, lost in an unknown place."

"Interesting. So you're a wizard?" Claim the Elder.

"I'm not a wizard, well, I'm no longer a wizard."

"You're no longer a wizard? Strange. It's hard to throw away the knowledge of the arcane arts." Claim the Elder.

"They burned my spellbook!"

"So? You must have memorised some of your old spells and write them down later." State the Elder.

"You're right. I did. But my magic is inefficient. The arcanes left me."

"What do you mean by 'the arcanes left you'?" Ask the Elder.

"Every time I try to evoke the arcanes, the energy fizzle and nothing happen, most of the time."

"Really? Let me see." Reply the Elder.

Something that won't harm anyone. Right. Focus the arcane power. Let the energy flow. Concentrate. You remember the spell. You can do it. Just shape the arcane energy and channel your spell. You can do it... You can do it... I see the magic flow through my hands and... the energy fizzle. It vanishes.

"I... I can't do it."

"Interesting. I know that you tried to channel a sleeping spell." State the Elder.

"I didn't want to use a spell that could potentially harm you."

"This is something I could have guessed. You say that your magic doesn't work most of the time. What happens when it does 'work'? Does it work on particular events?" Ask the Elder.

"The last time I was able to successfully cast a spell was in my last skirmish against someone tracking me."

"May I ask who was tracking you?" Demand the Elder.

"One of the sorcerers or my clan. They try to dispose of me."

"This is something very sad. You said before that you were an arcane prodigy. Is it a particular title from your clan? Or you were more skilled in the arcane arts?" Request the Elder.

"Both. The arcane prodigies are the few ones in my clan that can claim the title of Sorcerer. They're the gifted one with a strong draconic heritage. My cousin, my best friend back at the University and I are some of the prodigies of my clan. When my friend and I left the clan, there were two less potential Sorcerers in the clan."

"Interesting. So in this case, are you a Sorcerer in some way?" Claim the Elder.

"I'm not sure of this."

"Do you know the difference between 'sorcery' and 'wizardry'?" Question the Elder.

"I do. Sorcery is the mastery of the power deep inside the subject. The mystic force hidden in his own blood, heritage and nature. Wizardry is the mastery of the arcane powers, a force from another world, something that look so distant, yet so close."

"This is correct. And now, are you able to make use of sorcery?" Ask the Elder.

"I can't. I don't know why."

"Mmm... Interesting. I must try something then." Respond the Elder.

He steps up off his throne and start whispering something. Wait a minute. He's casting a spell at me. I can hear sparks of energy around him and then lightning flowed from his hand, in my direction. I won't be able to dodge this, I won't... I see the bolt coming right at me. I'm stuck and pushed away right on a pillar of the hut.

"What's the big idea? This could have killed me."

"But you're not." Told the Elder.

"Why would you try to kill me?"

"I didn't try to. Are you hurt?" Ask the Elder.

"My head hurt."

"This is because you were pushed back. But were you hurt by the lightning spell?" Demand the Elder.

I'm looking at my clothes, arms and chest. He didn't miss me. I was stuck by lightning, but nothing happened.

"See? This proved my theory. I never failed to cast a lightning spell in my whole life, and as you can see I'm old, even for an elf. I've seen this phenomenon before and I couldn't have guessed that I would see it again." State the Elder.

"A phenomenon? What do you mean?"

"You're casting your spells the right way. At this point, everything is fine. But it's when it comes to launch the energy that you try to manipulate, your spells simply fail. This is caused but a strange phenomenon. Some call it a blessing, others call it a curse." Express the Elder.

"What it is?"

"Your scales absorbs magic!" Declare the Elder.

"How so? I was able to use magic back at the University."

"You may, yes, but the magical absorption phenomenon on the scales of a dragonkin may happen only when the subject make use of sorcery; this makes you a sorcerer." State the Elder.

"You're right. I've learned sorcery before studying wizardry. But how do you know much about this?"

"I've seen this phenomenon before. Long long time ago, when I was younger, I met a wonderful elven lady with long silver hairs. She was beautiful. I fell in love instantly, she did too. This elven lady was in

fact a silver dragoness living amongst us under the traits of an elf. Just like me, she was practicing wizardry. She was skilled.

Every time she was casting a spell, there was something... different... She wasn't manipulating the arcane energy. She was manipulating the energy deep inside of her instead. She wasn't a wizard just like me, but in fact she was a sorceress.

She explained that she could shape the energy inside of her and her scales/skin exactly the way I shape my spells with arcane energy. All she had to do is being confident in her skills and let the inner flame do the rest." Explained the Elder.

"She was a... Sorceress that used magic a bit more like a wizard does because her scales absorbs magic? This doesn't make much sense to me."

"It does make a lot of sense. Your scales may absorb magic around you, but not the energy directly inside of you. If you could manipulate your inner energy and in your scales instead of the arcanes, I'm pretty sure your magic could work." State the Elder.

"So if I understand well... I must mix sorcery and wizardry?"

"Or blur the line between the two. Try it. Think of the spell you're the most comfortable with. Instead of manipulating the arcane energy, use your inner energy instead, your inner flame. Let the magic flow through your body and cast your spell." Said the Elder.

The spell I'm the most comfortable with... Yes. Just need the right note. Let the energy flow inside of me, not the arcanes this time. Let my inner flame do the rest. I can do it. I look at my hand, snap my fingers... and a fire orb appears.

"It... worked? It worked! Just like that!"

"Impressive. Quite impressive. The magic never really left you, you must use it differently from now." Tell the Elder.

"May I ask you something? What happened to the lady dragoness?"

"She passed away. I was surprised to live longer than she did. Now she's old memories." Confess the Elder.

"Sad thing."

"Let's move on. I may have found a way to bring you back to your world." Declare the Elder.

"How so?"

"There is an ancient device that could let you travel between the worlds in the Frost Citadel. To use the device, you'll need a key. If you use the key on this ancient device, you could go back to your homeworld." Explain the Elder.

"A key? Like for keyholes?"

"Not exactly. The 'keys' are magical staff made of pure silver. I know the location of one of them, but not the others. One of the keys is on the top of a mountain. They say it's guarded by a creature, I don't know which one. If you get the key and get back alive, we could find a way to bring you to the citadel." Explain the Elder.

"I have a question for you. Why telling this to me? Why not to everyone else too?"

"I've seen things, in my crystal ball. One of you won't be able to make it back to your homeworld. Also one of you could make it so no one else will ever go back from that mountain. Be careful out there, you're the only one that I could trust in your party." Explained the Elder.

Someone won't be able to make it back to our world? I got a bad feeling about this. Who could betray us? Mmm... Maybe... We will see. For now, I've learned a trick to use my powers again, but will this be enough to face the dangers that are waiting on the mountain? Should I go there alone instead? It looks pretty dangerous. I don't know. I'll need time to think. Maybe, maybe not. That 'key' and the ancient device... will this work? I hope to. I hope I'll be able to return back...