

The Art of Alchemy

written by: Trendane of Windshift

Arumel,

It is with heavy heart that I take quill in hand to inform you of the passing of Grand Master Alchemist Mahuk. Though her years were long and her skill great, she has moved Beyond. It is therefore the decision of we, The Council of the Golden Halls, that the title and tasks of Grand Master Alchemist to the Adelin Province should be bestowed upon you immediately. We have dispatched a crew to help move your household and should have you in place before the next new moon. You have both our sympathies at the loss of your friend and our congratulations at the honor of carrying on her legacy. We know you will make her proud.

-Scupp, High Magus, Golden Halls Council

P.S. Sorry to drop yet another burden upon you with such short notice, old friend. It seems Mahuk had recently taken on a new apprentice. We know only that his name is Chuch. If he proves skillful, you may continue his training if you so desire. If not, you may discharge him that he may seek indentureship elsewhere.

-Scupp

Bastards. Even after the hundredth time he'd read the message, he could scarcely believe that they were doing this to him. His eyes were just as sore from reading as his tail was from bouncing on the wooden bench as the cart clattered along, following the other six just like it. Like dusty brown ships, they followed the dusty brown road through the dusty green sea of short grass which was too afraid to grow any taller against the windstorms which ravaged this area in summer. A small flotilla of wagons which carried everything he owned.

Of all of those who had studied under Mahuk over her long life, of all of her students, why had The Council chosen him? Why had he been uprooted from his beloved forest of towering majesty with trees so tall that a pie, fresh from the oven, would be cold before it could fall from canopy to root. He knew that from youthful, mischievous experience. Why had he been the one sent to this dusty, flat plain? He looked at the message again...

We know you will make her proud.

Bastards. They chose him because they knew he wouldn't say no. Not to her.

Adelin was, as he had complained to his 'crew' many times, horrifically flat. There weren't even any trees. At least, not what he would call trees. Not a one of them stood much higher than the tops of the plain, squat houses of the region.

"Is that thing magicked?" the driver asked beside him.

Arumel raised his weary eyes and looked over at the armadillo beside him, "What?"

Partly plated fingers shifted the reins from one grip to the other as the driver pointed at the scroll the raccoon held, "That. There's only the one page but you've been reading for days. I thought maybe it was magicked."

Arumel rolled up the scroll and tucked it away in his satchel, rubbing at his eyes in an attempt to make them feel less gritty, "It's cursed. As am I."

The armadillo quickly pulled his hand away as though suddenly confronted by a leper. He idly scratched his claws across his soft belly, glancing several times at the satchel and the raccoon before scooting a few inches further away and trying to focus his attention on the road.