

# Rendezvous in the Night

With much trepidation Bratsy approached the baby dragon. When G'lishi looked at him he bowed and scraped back a couple of steps even though he was not very close yet. He stammered speaking loudly, "Miss Thosl wanted to know if she could borrow your magical assistance."

G'lishi got to his feet. Bratsy turned to lead G'lishi back to Thosl's tent. They were less than halfway there when Thosl stepped out from behind a tree. G'lishi was caught off guard by her sudden appearance and by her entire lack of scent. Her magic was obviously low. Like Revnar, the mechanic gone off on a separate mission, her emotions were radiating from her like heat from a campfire. It was not something that G'lishi had witnessed from her before. The emotion was dark and sorrowful.

Bratsy said, "We were just on our way, Mistress."

The little goat legged creature cringed as if he had said something wrong. Thosl looked at him and opened her beak to say, "There is death all around us. The pall surrounds and I have not the strength to surmount it."

Bratsy scratched his head and then nodded, "Yes, the magical assistance, we were coming. You did not need to..."

He just trailed off. He looked back over his shoulder

at G'lishi. Thosl said, "The brink is near and the chasm is so deep. If this night, it were a hundredfold darker, it would not be as dark as the pit that is yawning within me. I am just a shell of my former self. Black is the mettle of my pain. A light before me does shine."

"Yes Miss Thosl," began Bratsy, "The young one has much assistance if he will give it to you."

Bratsy turned back to G'lishi, "We can do it here if you want, G'lishi. She just needs what you can give, no need to bother helping with the spell."

G'lishi had been relatively silent up until this point. He was mildly confused about what Thosl was saying, but mostly he was confused about the request. He had helped Chris with magic, and knew how to do it, but never before had he given magic without being part of the spell. He didn't know such a thing was possible.

"Mmmm... I don't know how to do that. I can help with the spell, that I have learned, but the only thing I know about giving magic is that there are powerful spells that let you store magic in items, which you could then give to someone else. I cannot yet do such magic, and I suspect that I need to learn much about magic before I can learn such spells. It would be quicker if I simply helped with your spell."

Bratsy spoke up before Thosl could, "We can teach you how to just give it without being involved in the spell. The Scarecrow and Miss Thosl do it often."

It was odd that the little anthropomorphically goat

faced fellow was doing so much of the talking. Normally he was deferential and often even skittish. G'lishi could feel the sadness around Thosl intensify. Then he was not only sensing it, but also felt sad himself.

G'lishi just stared at Bratsy, taking the measure of the creature. He made use of some of his psychic powers to figure out why and how this thing was talking for Thosl without her getting upset, which didn't fit what he knew of her. Bratsy's aura did not show anything untoward about him. G'lishi could not detect the use or even the capabilities of psionics within the little demon.

G'lishi briefly wondered what Bratsy tasted like, then wondered why he had such a thought in the first place. By the time he realised he hasn't answered yet it had been a bit of time. "Okay, show me," he answers curtly.

As best he could G'lishi shrugged off the sadness that was coming from Thosl, realising it was not his own emotion. He tried to replace it with his enthusiasm for learning a new magic skill. He filed away the observation that the Scarecrow was making Thosl sad, without having a clue why that might be so.

Bratsy spoke for Thosl again. His nasally and almost immature sounding voice belied his attitude. He said, "I can guide you through it, so Miss Thosl can concentrate on doing it. First you have to relax and be calm. You have to be open. You have to think, to focus on the magic inside you."

G'lishi closed his eyes and focused his attention on

the voice. He was used to this part, Chris had had him do very similar exercises while learning about magic. He quickly reached his calm, still mental state.

Bratsy continued, "You are holding it in and you have to be ready to let it out. You have to relax your hold on it but at the same time push on it, push it to move, but don't push so hard you clench down on it. You kind of have to squeeze it out but keep relaxed so it will come out. It kind of has to alternate but also do both at once."

G'lishi broke out of his meditative state, and stared suspiciously at Bratsy. Bratsy stopped his words and looked back at the dragon. He just started to look puzzled when G'lishi exclaimed in indignation, "I'm a boy dragon! I can't lay eggs, even if I was old enough! Is this some kind of joke?"

He continued staring at Bratsy, just waiting for the little demon to break out in laughter and start mocking him. He was so riled up he didn't think of using his telepathy or empathy to check on the demon. He clenched his fists subconsciously, his anger growing while Bratsy tried to respond.

Bratsy was stunned by the sudden evil look from the dragon. He turned and gave only a half glance at Thosl. He looked back at G'lishi and said, "Eggs? I suppose that some might think their magic is precious as an egg... <He saw G'lishi's fists.> What are you mad about? Thosl is..."

Thosl said, "Emptiness is mine, despairing of its absence my fate."

His voice cracking Bratsy said, "Miss Thosl... <He turned to G'lishi.> Can we carry on? You see the state..."

Thosl's comment broke through G'lishi's anger. He temporarily forgot that Bratsy was making fun of him as he pondered the statement. He completely ignored Bratsy for the moment, trying to fathom what she actually meant. She seemed to have said that she lacked emptiness, and that made her sad, except of course that she just said she was empty. He was just about to sink into a deep, contemplative mood when Bratsy's sputtering and gesticulating caught his attention. G'lishi then remembered his anger.

"We can continue if you stop mocking me," he said severely. Actually, it came out more petulant than severe but he was oblivious to the distinction.

Thosl said Bratsy's name in a commanding tone and the little guy turned and shot a glaring look at her. It was definitely something abnormal, that he should even hint at questioning her. She stretched her neck forward toward him. He shrugged and turned back to G'lishi. He said, "Okay, put simply, relax, and when you feel the pull of Miss Thosl at your magic, let it go."

He asked Thosl, "Ready?"

She nodded. He asked G'lishi, "Ready?"

G'lishi agreed and Thosl pulled what she could from G'lishi's reserve of magic. She thanked him politely then she and Bratsy left. G'lishi turned and went back the way he had come. He did not see when a few seconds later

Thosl disappeared leaving Bratsy looking around.