

A gentle breeze greeted the sun, carrying a warm scent of pine from the Marshwood. Sheep mingled about as a shepherd moved his flock over a green hill, taking them towards the river for their morning graze. Down a dirt packed road, an old fat horse pulled its heavy cart towards the small town of Nearfen, the owner of the cart was nearing the end of his journey. The small town of Nearfen was nestled between the swamp filled forest on the west, the tall AyrI Mountains to the north, and the wide Torin River on the east. The people were mostly tradesmen who supported the local farmers, who in turn supplied the townspeople with their produce. It was a quiet place, among fertile land and beautiful country.

The horse carried its load towards the town, its owner and a young boy walking to one side. The owner was a local farmer, by the name of Maddock Branside who lived north of the town about a half days travel. Maddock had a tall broad build, years working in the sun gave his skin a leathery look, his appearance would make a cutpurse tremble, but he had sincerity in his soft blue eyes. The local traders knew him as a trustworthy man who would keep his word and make a fair deal. The young boy was his son, Isaac; he had just reached his fifteenth summer and was the farmer's only child. Isaac was of normal height for a boy his age; thin, but strong from days of working on the farm. He had his father's brown hair, and he kept it long, this was the first summer he could tie in the back with a leather cord, as was the local custom for men.

Isaac didn't get to go on most of the town trips; in fact he spent most of his time taking care of things, while Farmer Maddock picked up the supplies. They would trade their milk and cheese in town for metal work done, or foods that they didn't grow or animals they didn't have. Their cart this time was not full of produce for trade, it was weighed down with a gift, today was a special trip to Nearfen; The Mayor's daughter was getting married. Everyone for miles was pouring in for the party.

Gaebril Banon had been the Mayor of Nearfen for almost thirty years, he grew up in town and learned the tailor business like his father, but he had a gift of smooth talk, and the decisive actions to back it up. He was tall strong man; he had the look of a king, and fit the role of mayor well. He kept the town clean, and listened to the thoughts of the other townspeople. His daughter, Aeryn was several summers older than Isaac; more beautiful than a sunrise, she had long golden hair and fair colored skin. Her eyes were a deep blue; not that Isaac had noticed. It was well known that she was the most beautiful girl for miles.

If Aeryn was the most beautiful woman, Camwell Payton, her betrothed, was the most eligible husband. Camwell was the blacksmith's son; he apprenticed there and now worked alongside his father, who was a bear of a man. Cam was shorter than Gaebril, but was a thick armed man and had long reddish hair, kept in the local custom. He had the mayor's gift of speaking, and it was whispered that it wouldn't be long before he became mayor. The whole town was excited for this marriage, and the entire countryside was showing up for the party. As the cart crested the last hill, Nearfen could be seen, smoke pouring from chimneys, the bright sun shining as if mirroring the excitement of the small town.

The cart jostled a bit as it hit a bump, and Maddock put his hand out quickly to steady the load. Isaac caught a glimmer from the sun off something under the heavy blanket that protected their gift.

Isaac thought it was a bunch of his mother's jams, but wasn't sure what that golden glimmer he'd seen was. For a second things seemed to slow down, his vision darkened and he felt an image pulling at his mind. He saw a large stone castle, and then his vision flew to a tower high above the ground, and stopped at a window where he saw a woman in a fine blue dress. She had raven black hair and she stood in front of a golden trimmed mirror, as he floated in closer, he could almost see her face in the reflection, when he felt himself trip on a rock and his sight came back to normal as he stumbled for a couple quick steps.

"Are you alright there, son? Was it another blackout? Do we need to stop for a second?" Maddock reached to the cart and grabbed Isaac a water skin and pulled the reins to slow the horse.

"I'm fine, Poppa. This time was different, not like the others. This time I saw a castle and a woman in a blue robe. It seemed like she was worried about something. I think I'm fine, we can keep going, we're almost to town." Isaac drank down some water, and tried to bring up the last thing he saw, tried to picture the woman's face, maybe it was someone he knew, someone he might see at the wedding.

Maddock looked concernedly at his son, and they talked some more about Isaac's recent blackouts. The first one happened three weeks ago; it blacked out his vision for two days. After that, the blackouts were lasting anywhere from a few moments to half a day. This was the first time Isaac saw something in his mind when his vision went dark. Maddock had promised they'd find time this trip to see Shaellan, the village Wisdom. She was everything from midwife to healer for most of the surrounding farmers and townsfolk. She also held a certain authority among the townspeople.

As the horse trod down the road towards town, villagers could be seen setting up tents, and bringing out table after table. The field that the wedding was being setup on was a large flat area with deep green grass, and an apple orchard on the far side. Fires were already being built to roast boar and casks of ale and wine were stacked, waiting for the party to commence. As Maddock and Isaac came closer, Mayor Banon could be seen talking to people and shooing them off to continue preparations. Maddock waved and called over to him, and the mayor called back, smiling, and began to walk over.

"Maddock you old badger, I'm glad you came! Isaac, you're looking taller, growing up to look just like your father." The two men clasped arms and gave the traditional greeting of the other hand on the opposite shoulder. He turned to Isaac, and offered the same greeting. Isaac burst with pride as it was his first such greeting, now that he was considered a young man. Maddock smiled at the kind gesture, and turned to the contents of their cart.

"You know I'd be here. Moira almost rode down with me to be sure this didn't get damaged on the trip over." Maddock pulled the cover off to reveal a six-foot mirror, gilded on all sides in what looked like solid gold. The golden sides were shaped as two serpentine dragons, their tails entwined at the bottom and their long bodies snaking up the sides to where their heads met at the top breathing fire. The mirror itself was a perfect reflection, not a blemish on the shimmering surface. Isaac stared with wide open eyes, he had not seen his father load the cart, and hadn't given it a thought as to what they

were bringing with them. "It's been in the family for eight generations, Gaebril. My Gran always said it belonged in the house nobles. We wish blessings over your house and its bright future."

Tears began to build in the tall mayor's eyes; he hadn't taken his eyes off the beautiful golden piece of art on the bed of straw. Gaebril embraced his old friend the farmer, and as he closed his eyes tightly, he whispered an old blessing: "Ehr adn lo pah ehron ti Abir." Isaac had only ever heard a few words in the old tongue, most of it, as far as he knew, wasn't understood anymore, people just spoke a few phrases. Isaac never bothered with learning any of it, but somehow, he knew what that phrase meant.

"Live in peace, truth and the strength of Abir." Isaac hadn't realized he'd whispered those words, and he looked up to see both men looking at him, shocked that at what he'd said. Isaac looked at each of them, wondering what the big deal was.

"Maddock I didn't know your son was interested in the old Draconic sayings. He should speak with Shaellan about that sometime. It's good that the young people learn their history. There's good knowledge to be had from things past, young Isaac. Learn it well." He clapped Isaac on the shoulder and the two men turned back to the beautiful mirror.

Isaac turned away from then, he didn't care to learn things about the past. He was a very focused young man, who was only concerned for what in front of him then and there. He wanted to be sure his family was fed, and the chores were done. To milk the cows, till the soil, have enough seed. But something was tugging at his mind about that mirror. He knew he'd seen it before, but never knew his parents had a treasure like hidden around. Isaac felt his vision darkening again, and again he saw the stone tower and the woman in the blue dress. She was standing again, in the same spot, and staring directly into a tall golden trimmed mirror. As Isaac looked closer, he could see the two golden dragons, entwined on the sides of the mirror, their heads peaking at the top, their mouths breathing fire.

Fire all around him, Isaac wasn't sure what was happening, he could hear screams, but all he could see was fire. All he could feel was the flames. He tried to call out, but the smoke was too thick, the house he was in was crumbling, the roof collapsed and the fire engulfed him.

Isaac opened his eyes to realize he'd had another blackout. He turned to see his father and the Mayor still talking, but about crops and soil now. Isaac looked around to see if anyone had noticed him. The butcher and his sons were moving a cart of meat towards a fire. The Kinley boys were stacking piles of wood for burning. He could see Edin, Jaer Tanith's wife, putting pies out on a table. No one was looking at, he was glad to realize the screams had only been imagined. He wasn't sure what was causing these blackouts, and he was puzzled at these new visions, he knew they meant something. Isaac tried to push it out of his mind; he could see his two friends, Trent and Kaiden sneaking behind Edin's cart of pies.