



CHRONICLE 2

# THE THIEF AND THE DRAGONSEEKER

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## Chronicle Two

### “The Thief and the Dragonseeker”

Palimon rubbed the ointment just where the poisoned dart had pierced his thigh. The thief was surprised at how fast Mergtras, the dragonian, had reacted, dodging the dart intended for her and then deactivating the contraption that was shooting the darts, after which she threw a tiny flask with the brown substance saying, rub it on the wound now!”

The thief was no stranger to traps, having broken into numerous guarded vaults and even wizards’ towers, but he had heard that the dragonseekers were on another level. These groups of dragonians were professional artifact and treasure hunters, focusing on just one kind: relics, items, or remains of dragons of the First Age.

They were not only trained in the arts of thievery and burglary but adept warriors and scholars who could read many bygone languages and recognize forbidden and derelict languages.

Palimon had met Mergtras, although met was an understatement, outside a tavern on the city’s outskirts after a night of betting and drinking. The thief had been cheating on gnome poker the entire night, taking plenty of gold from a halfling merchant, a drunk satyr, and Mergtras, who, unlike the other two, had noticed that the elven thief had been cheating the whole game. When it was time to pay up, the dragonseeker paid with a silver ring with a carving of a wyvern.

The object was so beautiful that the thief put it on immediately and walked out with his ill-won loot and a wide grin on his face.

Not two minutes had passed when Palimon felt somebody creeping up behind him, causing him to unsheath his rapier in less than a second and strike whoever was trying to surprise him.

Sparks flew as the rapier was blocked by a much longer and heavier sword. Palimon recognized the figure instantly; it was the dragonseeker Mergtras, who glaring icily at him, said: “You stole from me. Now you have to pay me back.”

As she finished pronouncing the words, Palimon felt the muscles on his wrist stiffen, followed by his fingers and the rest of the arm. The dragonseeker didn’t need to say anything; the thief looked at the silver ring that now flickered with a queer violet light. Palimon’s greed had gotten the better of him, hastily putting a ring on his finger before checking if it might be cursed.

Mergtras made Palimon an offer. She would remove the ring from the thief’s finger if he assisted her in retrieving an item in Danen Forest. If he refused, the ring’s effects would spread throughout his body and petrify him in less than 48 hours.

A bottomless apprehension took him. He knew the dragonian wasn’t lying; he felt the ring’s power spreading through his body slowly, like a stalking predator toying with its prey.

Palimon also knew that he couldn’t ask for help. He had burned those ships in town, and more than a couple of individuals would be happy to kill him if he set foot in the city again. The thief sighed and swore that at the first opportunity, he would remove the ring and take revenge on the dragonseeker.

But first, he needed to obtain more information, which meant helping the dragonian for a while.

The trip to the forest had been instantaneous; the dragonseeker used a teleport scroll she had prepared or obtained, which surprised the thief since scrolls were very expensive or hard to come by.

The new moon hid behind the clouds as the thief and the dragonseeker materialized inside Danen Forest in utter darkness. Wordlessly, Mergtras lit two torches, and handed one to Palimon, who gawked at the thick trees and the dense foliage. He was an elf and used to life in the woods, but Danen Forest was unlike anything he had ever seen. Darker and quieter than any other he had been in.

Elder elves whispered that the place belonged to mad fey, and only some dragonian barbarians had been able to call that palace home long ago.

The dragonseeker pointed towards a faint trail and started to follow it, deep into the forest. Palimon felt a stiffness down his body, unsure if it was the ring or fear. He sighed and followed the dragonian down the trail in silence.

After a couple of hours, the two had come across an ancient structure built or carved in the trunk of the thickest tree Palimon or Mergtras had ever seen. To its sides were slimmer but taller trees leaving no gap between them, like a natural wall of wood. It was evident that some civilization or creature of power had erected the edifice eons ago.

After gazing in wonder for some minutes, Palimon felt a biting cold around him. The freezing environment had not suddenly begun; the thief hadn’t felt it before because he was in awe. He looked down at the ground; the grass was white and covered in a thin layer of snow so fine that it looked like crystal. He could also see his breath in the air, a cloud of steam that hovered around him before dissipating into the chilly darkness.

This part of the forest was frozen, “but why?” wondered Palimon.

“We are here,” commented Mergtras, with words just as cold as the surroundings.

“What kind of dragon relic are we looking for?” asked Palimon. “Not dragon,” replied Mergtras, who entered the structure through the great arch in the center of the tree’s trunk.

Her reply surprised Palimon, who thought dragonseekers only sought things related to dragons.

“Then what?” he quizzed, wanting to know why they were in the creepiest forest he had ever been in.

“Something old, something even the gods...” before she could finish her sentence, the sound of an activated trap reverberated around the entrance, followed by the low-pitched whizzing of darts speeding towards Mergtras and Palimon, hitting the latter, causing him to shriek.

The thief looked down at the injury, noticing how the skin around the area was turning green and black, reaffirming Palimon’s fear that the dart was poisoned and the effect was spreading, followed by Mergtras throwing him an ointment.

When Palimon was done applying the treatment, he saw his skin returning to the normal pale white of his complexion. However, his relief was short-lived, noticing that sections of his hands had taken a grayish color, and the soft skin had been replaced by a crust of rock-like texture. The thief knew he needed to act fast.

The structure's inside reassembled a castle's hall, but with every surface made of wood. The interior was even colder than the outside, but that didn't stop the dragonseeker, who carefully moved the torch in all directions, trying not to miss any inch.

After an hour and surviving numerous traps, which Palimon deactivated, the two arrived at a squared chamber, the only one without a roof and where the moon's light descended from the sky.

On the center of the chamber lay a blue sword on top of a bed of frozen leaves.

Without a thought, Mergtras headed towards the blade before being stopped by Palimon, who grabbed her by the arm, "Let me check for traps." The thief didn't do it out of goodwill; many of the traps they had encountered affected entire areas, putting him in danger if he hadn't nullified them.

Palimon scoured the chamber for more traps, starting from the outside and working his way to the bed of frozen leaves, with the dragonseeker closely behind. He felt her breath on his back and noticed her heart beating faster than a galloping horse. She was agitated; the blade was clearly something she desired.

Distracted by his thoughts, he did not notice the shape beside the weapon. A man with a large blue cloak stood beside the sword, his gaze fixed on Palimon and Mergtras.

When the thief spotted him, he unsheathed his weapon, as did the dragonseeker, both ready to attack at the slightest provocation or sign of danger.

"There's no need for that," said the man with a sorrowful voice. The worlds calmed both Palimon and Mergtras loosened their grip.

"Please. Do not touch the sword. It can only be wielded by the most worthy individuals."

"My name is Mergtras, I am a dragonseeker."

The hooded man bowed politely, "I know who you are, both you and Palimon."

"I have come here for the Frostblade. High and low have I searched for it," stated Mergtras in a firm voice.

The hooded figure took a couple of steps towards the two intruders, "Searched? You think you did it out of your own free will?" retorted the figure before chuckling.

"The Frostblade called you. It wanted you. That's why you found it; it allowed you to do so."

The moment he heard "Frostblade," Palimon remembered an old legend about a sword made of ice of such power that it could slay gods and allow its wielder to conquer entire kingdoms.

Throughout his life, he had heard thousands of stories and legends about ancient artifacts, but they had been make-believe, tales invented by old men and bards to pass a cold night by the fire.

He never imagined coming across one of those fabled items. "Are you its guardian?" asked Palimon.

The hooded figure hesitated momentarily, "Not exactly, but my destiny is attached to the Frostblade."

Mergtras took a couple of steps towards the weapon.

"Believe what you will, guardian, or whatever you are. But I did find it. I'm a dragonseeker; it's what we do!"

"You were," replied the hooded figure with an otherworldly authority.

"You are Mergtras, a former member of the Drakken, a renowned clan of dragonseekers, expelled because you were responsible for the death of many of her colleagues during an expedition."

Palimon turned to her, intrigued by this revelation but also ill at ease, comprehending that he was at the mercy of an individual who would probably sacrifice him at any moment or not keep her word.

"You speak half-truths, you wraith!" screamed Mergtras, "I did not mean for them to die."

"Are you certain of that?" replied the hooded figure, his blue eyes glowing brightly for the first time from underneath the hood.

"Didn't you desire the glory and triumph all to yourself? Didn't you want to be recognized as the best? Deep down, you know it to be true."

Releasing a deafening howl, Mergtras attacked the hooded figure whose words had cut deeper than any blade had ever done to her.

The hood dropped to the ground like a blanket, with no trace of a person ever wearing it. The instant it hit the ground, the cold increased, followed by the figure's voice which now originated in the entire chamber, "Do not take the Frostblade. You are not worthy."

Provoked by these words, Mergtras rushed towards the Frostblade.

Sensing his opportunity, Palimon threw his bola around the dragonseekers legs, causing her to collapse.

The thief then jumped on her, pulling out his dagger and placing it over her neck. However, just before he could threaten her, Mergtras' fingers touched the icy sword.

A bright explosion of blue light filled the chamber, blinding both the thief and the dragonseeker for a couple of seconds.

When Palimon and Mergtras opened their eyes, they weren't in the freezing chamber anymore, but in the middle of a battlefield, with thousands of screaming soldiers behind Mergtras, chanting her name in unison.

In silence, Mergtras raised the Frostblade and led the charge against an army of attacking soldiers. Palimon, confused like someone waking up from a deep slumber, was horrified by the dragonseeker's eyes, only glimpsing them for an instant before she led the attack.

Mergtras' beautiful brown irises had turned to a deep and menacing crimson, fueled by hatred and a need for bloodshed and destruction. Her entire being had become possessed by an unholy ambition that required no less than the total subjugation of all the people of Eluan.

Palimon watched as the dragonseeker swung the Frostblade, slaying hundreds of foes with each strike. The bodies piled, forming entire mountains as crows and vultures feasted on the flesh of the fallen. Carnage and slaughter lost their meaning as the violence reached new heights.

The thief tried to look away, his heart unable to handle the gruesome sight, but he could not. The screams and cries begged him to gaze as the massacre unfolded. A brief hope formed in Palimon's heart when only a few enemy soldiers remained: this butchery will end.

As Palimon gave a faint sigh when the last enemy was downed, Mergtras turned towards her forces and stormed them.

The thief collapsed to his knees, a downpour of tears coming from his eyes as he begged Mergtras to stop. That didn't happen. The dragonseeker continued to kill everyone.

In this instant, something caught the thief's eye. For the first time since the battle began, Palimon noticed that the Frostblade didn't have a single stain of blood, not one.

"How can that be?" thought the thief. Had the magical weapon absorbed it all? Was its thirst unquenchable?

All these questions and thoughts passed through Palimon's head as his gaze was fixed on the purity of the Frostblade's blue color, which now spread through the rest of the battlefield.

When he awoke from his stupor, Palimon was back in the freezing chamber and still on top of Mergtras. The thief noticed that she was motionless and not breathing. To his dismay, Palimon discovered that Mergtras was dead. The hand that touched the Frostblade was frozen like a block of ice; her face had an expression of utter pleasure, her mouth wide open as if she had fucked.

However, one detail disturbed the thief: Mergtras's eyes were completely frozen. He jumped back in fear and realized that the Frostblade was gone, as had the cold that had haunted the chamber.

"Had she seen the same things he had?"

"Was it because I held on to her as she touched the blade?"

These and more questions ravaged his mind, and it took some time before he regained his composure, deciding to leave the structure in Danon Forest.

As Palimon made his way through the forest, he looked down at his hand and saw that it was back to normal, and the cursed ring was now cracked, ensuring him that he had not dreamt the thing.

The dragonseeker had perished, and the Frostblade existed, but where had it gone to? Had it gone to torment a new victim unworthy of its power?

Whatever the reason, the thief had made up his mind. He would never talk about the weapon to anyone, and if he ever heard somebody talking about it, he would state that it was a legend and that such a weapon did not exist. He feared what could happen if more people searched for the weapon, although that was nothing compared to whether a person should ever be worthy of wielding the Frostblade.

He had seen it, he had lived it.

