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*Myrddin; The Meeting*

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Trista was sitting by the Nepenthé as it flowed under the trees. Perfume filled the air. Suddenly she heard a noise and turned about. A dark shape stepped forward and bowed. It was Myrddin. She tightened and felt anger as she realized her solitude was ruined. She stood and stared at him. Myrddin chuckled softly and then spoke.

"Hello, my lady."

"Good day to you, master Myrddin."

"I came concerning Demetre, my brother."

"Your brother!" She spat on the ground before his feet.

"Yes, you treat him cruelly for he worships you. And the same streak of cruelty caused Elphas to remove you from training. Using demons is foolish and Elphas warned us of that fact."

"I will use anything I want whenever I want, no matter how dangerous. Help me, Iphthine." A dark form like smoke appeared behind her slender form.

"So you control a demon, or does she control you?"

"I use all I wish to. My training was through despite its human teacher. She, pointing to Iphthine, "helped me to learn the rest. I challenge you, or are you afraid?"

"Never, my lady. I accept." He moved to a grassy spot while Trista followed. "For safety, I shall enclose us in a circle. Does she stay?"

"Of course, she is always near when I work magic."

"So be it." He raised his arms in a circle and softly spoke, "This is the battleground and its circle protects all from harm." His fire opal blazed and a white half-circle appeared behind and to both sides of his body.

Trista carefully made a circle with her fingertips. "Here is our battleground broken at the duel's ending." A gray half-circle joined the white.

"Do you wish the first charm, my lady?"

"I thank you for the honor." She gestured and a shape appeared. Myrddin waved his hand and it vanished. "The first round is yours, but not the last." She turned to Iphthine and words or gestures passed between them. Trista turned and gestured, "I call on a dragon of flame and fire. Destroy him if you can." A golden lizard, twelve feet long, golden-eyed, with a tail coiled about its body, and utterly covered with snails, appeared. From its mouth poured fire and thick smoke.

"Water to quench thee and drown thy fire. Then disappear, powerless beast." Water covered the dragon in clouds of steam. As the fire died, the dragon vanished.

Trista called quickly, "Imps and demons, aid me now!" Several vague forms appeared before her.

Myrddin destroyed several, yet one managed to touch his arm. Pain caused him to wince. "By the sacred names, I order thee to go." Myrddin paused, then touched the opal to the spot and it stopped paining.

However, it will require proper attention if I survive this duel, he thought. "One round for you, my lady."

He bowed deep and low, watching her all the while.

The duel continued with lightning and noise. The balance went back and forth. Finally Trista grew furious. She pulled a crystal globe from her gown and threw it at Myrddin. Her aim was off so it passed him, cut the circle, and crashed against a tree. Myrddin turned slightly as a blue mist bubbled forth from the shards. It solidified into a demon of medium height robed in blue. The creature looked and his eyes fastened on Hyrddin. In a rich voice he spoke.

"I thank thee, sir, for helping me to escape that prison. I shall teach thee a great spell in return." He fell to his knees before Myrddin who picked him up and smiled. Still smiling, he turned to Trista.

"You broke the circle and thus the duel. We will meet in the future to resolve this." He turned and left while behind him trailed a demon.
"O Dreamer!" cried the dryad.

"O I await thee here, Deep asleep and dying, I await thee in my virgin solitude, To cloak thee in my long green hair, All dark with leaves,

My soft brown bosom All dark with earth.

O Dreamer! I am dying! Awaken me with kisses From thy mythic lips, Cover me with kisses From thy trembling mouth, Thy tongue that utters The ancient psalms of Earth! Revive me with thy reveries, O come to me, my lonely dreamer, Cover me with fabled kisses Only the antique satyrs before Have rained upon me, Caresses only youthful fauns with Ivory thighs could bestow! Whose scarlet love alone could ever sate me?

O dreamer, The soul of my tree and my life Are too deeply adrowse With aches of emptiness! O I await thee here in dormant state, My long green hair all dark with leaves, Brown thighs all dark with unctuous earth, My brown soft bosom, My grieving breast, All dark with the dying earth."

by Sutton Breiding