

Raven's Story

The number of wagons was astounding. Never in her life had Wisp seen so many wagons in a single convoy. She stopped counting them at 20. She knew there were many more than that but nobody had ever taught her how to count higher than twenty and she had never bought anything more than 4 coppers so there wasn't much use in counting that high. It was almost night fall when she first saw the cloud of dust on the horizon and she had become very tired hiding in the bushes next to the kings road as the wagons made their slow squeaking pace by her not 20 feet away. She had laid her head on the ground and was looking out from under the bushes as the last wagon rolled past her hiding spot but it did not continue on as the others had, it stopped in front of her and she could hear a woman and a man arguing silently for a moment before a woman in a black skirt ambled slowly down from the seat and landed on the ground very nimbly. The only thing Wisp could see was the black skirt as it started to walk slowly towards her location. The black skirt stopped about six feet from her hiding spot and an old reassuring voice spoke, "Its ok dear, you can come out, we will not harm you and we have food for you." Wisp held her breath hoping the black skirt would turn around and head back to the wagon so as not to be left by the convoy. "My dear the Goddess of the Night has granted me the power to see quite well in the dark and I can see you there laying on the ground behind that shrub as if it's mid day. Come out here at once so I can get a good look at you. Be quick about it" "Even without my gift I can see your white little face looking up at me" Slowly you crawl out from behind the shrub, slowly look at the lady in the black skirt about 6 feet away. Even in the failing light you can see the lady appears to be in her late 60's and is dressed in a black skirt and a black shirt with a collar that is tight around her throat. She wears a black cloak and stands about 5 feet tall with her white hair up in a bun underneath the hood of her cloak. As she stands there in front of you with her hands on her hips giving you an appraising look you feel as if she is sizing you up for something. "Do not fear me child for I mean you know harm. I do not know how you became lost on the kings road between Aria and Cyris but I do not intend to leave you out in the middle of nowhere to be eaten by some roving thing." "My name is Tess and I am a priestess of Luna". She cocks her head to a man sitting on a wagon hunched over in the driver's seat. "That old man driving me around is my husband Jonathan and you have nothing to fear from him either." She turns to walk away and motions with her hand to sit in the back of the wagon with their other passenger "sit next to him, there is plenty of room back there and the inn is just up the road about an hour from here." By the time the old lady walks to the wagon she realizes that you have not moved from your standing spot and briskly walks back over to you. "So you are apprehensive and afraid. I see in your eyes that you have intelligence and I can tell by your hands and the way you stand that you have good bones and are used to work." You don't know what to make of this lady and her wagon driving husband who have mysteriously stumbled into your life. There have been so many people that have come in and out of your life over the years that you feel as if this could be just another face who disappears after a short period of time. You shiver slightly as you stand there before her appraising glare and wonder where you would stay if they continued on their journey. The night has been very cold as of late and the small amount of provisions you took with you from

Aria city were almost gone. You are about to tell the old lady that you have changed your mind and would appreciate a ride when a very small barn owl lands on the edge of the wagon parked not 20 feet away. The priestess and the old man quickly turn to look at the creature before the creature takes flight in your direction and lands softly on your shoulder. Amazingly the bird is very light and you do not shirk away in fear as it lands on your shoulder. You can feel the heat of its body against the side of your face and hear its heart beat in your ear. You feel very at ease with the creature so close to you. Never have you heard of an owl coming to roost on someone's shoulder but this seems unnaturally pleasant. The priestess's eyes are wide at the sight as she steps back a few steps before regaining her composure. "It seems you have a guardian child. The messengers of Luna are revered in my religion and since this one has chosen you I must insist that you accompany us this night". By this time the old man is standing up in the wagon and is making a gesture in the air that you do not understand. "The child is gifted Tess, I did not see it before but it is there, faintly". Tess turns back to you with a look in her eyes that your mother occasionally gave to you, a look of caring and of gentleness. By the gods you have missed being looked at like that and you find yourself yearning for these people's company. You slowly walk towards the wagon with the small owl on your shoulder and step up into the bed of the wagon and sit across from the other passenger. Tess speaks up from front riding seat "It will be about an hour until we arrive at the inn, tell me a little bit about yourself child. I feel like we are going to know each other very well before long". As the wagon starts rolling you jerk to the side with its motion and are relieved that the blisters on your feet are not going to get any larger today. The soft heartbeat of the owl is all you hear as the wagon rolls down the rutted old road.