

## **A Request II**

The inside of the castle continued with the same atmosphere as the outside. Little light penetrated through the curtains that covered the windows. There were no living servants, and even only a few undead ones. Ryun hadn't seen another that held a soul, so he figured that these ones were just cheap labor.

Antaro led them through the castle, never speaking. They walked for a while, and Ryun's sense spread. Not because he wanted to snoop, of course, his sense was always active. Though, there were a lot of areas in the castle that his sense couldn't touch. The wards in place were obviously powerful.

At last, they reached their destination, another area that Ryun couldn't sense anything from the inside. His eyes could see the weaving of Essences into formations that protected it. Nothing in this place was less than the highest tier of Essence. It was oppressive to even walk through. Once inside, Ryun still couldn't sense anything with his skill, but his eyes showed him a lot. It was a workshop, filled with tables, most of which had a different project in the varying degrees of being finished. Only one of the tables was occupied, and that by a krecean, all four limbs held tools and worked on a small plate. Ryun could see the Soul Essence attached to the body.

"Eratemus," Ryun greeted. The krecean raised his head, and nodded his head. He finished up one last engraving and then rose, putting the tools down and walking around to meet with them.

"Ryun, Tali," he greeted. "Welcome to my home. I was not expecting this, to what do I owe your visit?"

Behind them, Antaro left the room, Lesamitrius staying outside as well, and closed the doors. Leaving the three of them alone.

Tali glanced at Ryun in a way that he knew very well, it translated to roughly *this is all you buddy*. Ryun nodded to himself, then stepped forward.

“I have come to trade,” he said.

Eratemus tilted his head, blue glowing eyes staring straight at him. “You didn’t need to come all this way for just that.”

Ryun nodded. “No, I didn’t. I don’t want just a simple trade, I am looking to create something, multiple things. You know about my spiritual tools?”

Eratemus nodded. “I do.”

“I have issues in combat. My Aspect destroys everything, even items I wear. Bright Star helps with that a lot, but there comes a moment when I let everything go where not even the strengthened copies can survive for more than a moment,” Ryun said. “I want to create something that will be able to survive through it. A weapon that will define me. For that I need a few things. Materials, the highest grade I can find. I’ve secured what was harvested from three Domes. And I am hoping that you have access to other rare reagents that I can use.”

“What do you want to craft?” Eratemus asked.

“I don’t know yet,” Ryun said slowly. “Crafting a spiritual tool is hard to explain. I’ve come to realize that the best pieces I’ve created come when I am not setting out to create something precisely, but when I am trying to bring an idea to life.”

Eratemus’s beady eyes narrowed. “You want my materials, but you don’t know what you want?”

Ryun shook his head. “What I make will be decided based on what you can give me.”

Eratemus glanced at Tali, who just rolled her eyes. “Be thankful that you don’t have to deal with this every day,” she told him.

That hurt, a bit. “I have brought materials that we harvested at the dome,” Ryun told him. “High tiered carapaces, completely immune to Fire and Oblivion, even spread.”

Eratemus blinked. Ryun had known that he would be interested in that. He would be able to specialize undead with them.

“That is... generous. I might have something that is appropriate for trade.”

Ryun knew that his idea wasn't being fully understood. He shook his head. “I don't want just anything. I want the things that you have that you hide, your greatest possessions. The most powerful items, the most powerful materials, your greatest treasures.”

Eratemus looked at him, then the mandibles on his face started clacking together in laughter. “You don't have enough to buy that.”

Ryun walked up to one of the few empty tables, then he pulled out items. His rewards for the Dome had followed the same line as what he had received for Hastur. Three potions, the **Eternal Elixir of Oblivion**, the **Eternal Elixir of Pure Willpower**, and the **Eternal Drought of Path Perk Upgrade**. Two items, one that was a mansion structure which Ryun planned on using inside his territory. Soon he was going to raise his second Path, it had been too long. And already he had missed out on some gains by waiting. He did not anticipate that he would lose a perk when advancing. But that was the way of life. If everything went right, he would probably get the ability to let others into the territory. Having a place for them would be nice.

The second item was the **Shrine of Tri-Aspects**. It could create any three Aspects it was attuned to, and all it took for it to get attuned was a small sample. The Aspects were capped at Tier 7, but it was going to be a great help to the Sect overall.

The last were two Eternal Items, a ring that held an enormous extra core, letting the wearer use it as a battery. It was useful to Ryun, though not as much since he entered the Eternal Realm. With the way his core

worked, all he needed was to have Essence inside of it to convert it. And his draw in rate had skyrocketed since his body changed.

The second item was a floating animated arm. It looked like a piece of armor, though with delicate fingers. It was controlled with will and needed energy to be used, Qi worked, but also the ring batter too. Ryun felt that he had gotten them together for a reason. He had been spending a lot of time crafting these last ten years, and together, these two would be of great help. The hand could help him in smithing, and it had the ability to isolate and stabilize Essence.

All the reasons why the items were perfect for him, applied also to Eratemus, which was why he had decided to offer them up. He placed the two Eternal Items on the table and stepped back. He wasn't that eager to trade them, but ultimately his greatest works were done when working with others. He had both Selia and Erdania at hand, he didn't need them.

Eratemus walked over and inspected the items. He took the ring, giving it a close look. Ryun could tell that he was very interested in it, the battery had a really giant well that could be filled. It would be perfect for Eratemus who relied on as much Qi as his bodies could hold. He couldn't regenerate them naturally, only through the use of potions or by refilling them directly.

He turned his attention to the arm and activated it. It floated up into the air moving around the undead. Then the fingers moved in an elaborate manner. He walked over to another table and leaned down, had the arm pick up a strange tool and then start working on the plate. After a few minutes of work, he rose then looked at Ryun.

"This is very useful, especially for me, as you knew when you offered it. Still..." He shook his head. "I will trade you for this. I'll build you formations for whatever you want. Build you a forge for your work, but this is not enough for what you want."

Ryun looked back at the undead, then glanced at Tali.

"What're you looking at me for, I'm not giving him mine," she said.

Ryun chuckled. "Never crossed my mind."

"Riiight," she drawled.

He turned and walked back to the empty table, then looked up at Eratemus. "I will give you the two items, along with something else, and if you accept it, you will build me a forge, as soon as possible, ready for me to leave with. And you will let me into your vaults, with an oath that I will not reveal its contents. You will let me pick what I want from your trove."

Eratemus tilted his head. "I don't think that there is anything in the world worth that much."

Ryun saw Tali looking at him with a strange expression. She probably knew, or at least suspected, after all she had given him the idea long ago. Ryun pulled himself into his territory. He did not keep this inside a storage that could be stolen or destroyed. When he returned it was with a body in his hands. Carefully he laid him down on the empty table and then stepped back.

Eratemus stared, then slowly approached. One hand rose hesitantly to touch the body.

"Old friend," he whispered. Then raised his head to look at Ryun. "I thought that it was lost. I saw you wearing his things, I thought that you found his storage."

"I found him in the city," Ryun said. "Hastur was doing something. I don't know what, it was never finished."

Eratemus glanced back down. "His will remains, infused into the body. I can feel it." Even Ryun could feel the effects that the body had on the room. He could smell the ocean one moment, then a deep jungle, then feel the heat of a volcano. Switching rapidly, changing. And there was a sense of power in the body, like it was... eternal.

He knew that the Necromancer would want it. A body at the peak of a focus. It was priceless to Eratemus.

“I didn’t know him for long,” Ryun said. “But I think that he would want you to use it.”

Eratemus raised his head and met Ryun’s eyes.

Ryun smiled. “But he was also a greedy drake, so I’m pretty sure that he would’ve laughed himself to death at seeing me rob you blind.”

Eratemus stared at him for a moment, and then he burst into laughter.

“Yes,” he said after a while. “Yes, he would’ve.”