

Exterminator

A blast threw me back against the barrier I was holding, bouncing me hard. The spell I was casting failed, epicly. Tendrils of Mana coursing through me, tossing me, and burning me causing fatigue and exhaustion to set in. I may be a powerful hermetic mage, but even this human can hardly take a blast from a magical spell.

“How many times has that happened to you?” she asked. “Are you sure that you are alright?”

She is a beautiful elf with short cropped raven hair, sharp but exquisite features, and a slender build. She was wearing a leather armored jacket with the name of some band on the back and carrying a self amplifying electric guitar. There was an aura of power around her, making her seem even bigger than she really was. Her name is, at least as far as I know, her name is Banshee.

I shook the blast off, “I’m fine. Yes that has happened before. I am not as skilled as you in the arcane arts. At least not on the reactionary spells.”

“Well Bishop, you should be more careful. Too much backlash could have terrible consequences for you and any around you.”

I nodded. Rubbed my head. Then said, “I know. We should get going, there is a lot to do before the job begins.”

I walked around the back of our van that was parked in the alley. As I walked up, the door slid open. A drone was waiting for us with guns out. The humanoid form wobbling a little as the door slid shut.

Through the speaker on the drone, an electronic voice said, “Are you two done with your test?” the whirring of the drone could be heard as the vehicle started moving forward.

“It didn’t go very well,” Banshee said, “he flubbed the incantation again. I told him we should set it to music, but he is a traditional hermetic and doesn’t like the blending of magic types.” Frustration sounding in her voice.

I turned and looked at her, “There is something unnatural with what you do. I don’t know how to harness your powers for a ritual. It is just so,” I trailed off in thought, “different.”

The drone turned to the back of the van, guns pointing out the ports hidden in the doors, distracting me for a moment.

“If we had more time I could study your songs and try to figure out how you cast through the music. Then I could integrate your music. If I can get a Sustaining focus I could drop the barrier and focus on the spell.”

“What you need is a Talis Monger. I just so happen to know a good one. He won't help with any attack spells because he is a pacifist, but he will gladly help you with focuses for defensive spells.” She smiled as she spoke, “I can bring you to his store front.”

“Ok, let's go then.”

Banshee told the rigger through his drone the address that they are going to. The rigger, who goes by 3PO, never leaves his safehouse. He does all his runs remotely. No one on our team has ever seen the rigger. Even on face to face calls, his drones always answer.

The van moved toward the direction that Banshee told 3PO to go.

A few minutes later the van stopped and both Banshee and I got out in downtown Dallas. The neon and AR assaulting your senses. I turned off my AR glasses to block out most of the light and noise.

As we walked into the Talis Mongers shop, the first thing I notice is the scent of different spices. The smell is so overpowering I actually couldn't smell the pollution that normally is in the air here in Dallas. The next thing I noticed was the ward, I could feel it as we crossed the threshold of the building. The entire room or building was protected.

I noticed a small orc wearing leather jacket that has several feathers and a birds claw hanging off of the front. His purple mohawk was pulsing to the beat of the music. He is sitting at a high table in the back of the room. He seems to be looking at different crystals, feathers, wood barc, and more. It looks like he is sorting different reagents.

I assense him as we walk up. His aura was glowing with power. He is obviously awakened and at peace.

We walked back to the orc and Banshee introduced us. “Max, this is my friend Bishop. He is in need of a focus, and possibly more in the future.”

The orc finally looked up at us, noticing us for the first time. His eyes rolled back as he assenses me. I had an aura mask up showing only a third of my power. I couldn't mask all 8 levels I have initiated in my group, but most I could.

His eyes came into focus a moment later, then he smiled a toothy smile. His raspy smoker's voice rang out, “Nice to meet you Bishop.” He looked me over again, “A hermetic, I have things that you will find useful. Can I interest you in a box that blocks the decay of magic items?”

“No thank you, I am looking for a strong sustaining focus, one that I can leave to hold up my barrier while I do a special spell.”

“I have just the thing for you,” he stood and I realized he was much shorter than the table, he barely came up to my hip, and I wasn’t a big man. He went through a curtain in the back hollering over his shoulder, “I will be back in a minute.”

I turned toward Banshee, “How well do you know this guy?”

“I have known Christian longer than I have known you. We are friends from a different life.” She smiled at her memory, “now he supplies me with what I need and helps me learn as the normal channels of learning my art won’t work for me. There is no circle for what I do.”

The orc came back out, “Here you go, look at this.” He handed me a black crystal that was cold to the touch. It looked to be obsidian, but was much lighter. I could almost feel the power pulsating within the focus.

“That would do nicely.” I stated.

“If you need anything stronger, I can get it. It will take time and money,” Christian stated.

“Nope, not right now. This will work for what I have in mind. I also need to get some city reagents. I burned through the ones I had trying the spell we are working on.”

The orc, Christian, went around loading up a bag with different items that I may need. He never asked any questions about what we were doing, just filled the bag. A few minutes later he came over and gave me a price for everything. I didn’t hesitate to pay it, the price was about what I was expecting.

I shook his claw like hand and thanked him. He told me to come back anytime while giving me his contact info if I need to order anything that he may not have on hand.

As I turned to leave, Banshee piped up, “Christian, do you have my order in yet?”

He looked at Banshee longingly, “I do. I even through in a little extra for you.”

He pulled out a brown bag wrapped in twine and tossed it to Banshee. I looked at her questioningly, she just smiled and told the orc, “Thank you. I will put the money in the account for the next order.”

We walked out and climbed into the van. She refused to tell me what was in the package.

The next morning we were at the safehouse getting ready for the job. The smell of coffee was filling the main room.

“What the frag?” I asked. I couldn’t afford coffee, not real coffee and I was definitely not smelling soycaf.

Banshee walked out of the kitchen with two steaming cups. She handed me one. It smelled amazing.

“So, are you going to drink it or just smell it?”

“I don’t know, it smells so good. I had forgotten how real coffee smells.” I smiled at her wholeheartedly.

“We have one more day to try and get this spell right before we have to go on the hob or abort it.” she said. “Should we get going out to the desert to try again?”

I mumbled, “Yeah, we should.”

We took the van back out to the same spot we were practicing in the day before. An alley between two abandoned warehouses. This spell had to be done outdoors to work.

“Banshee, I had an idea on how to incorporate you into the ritual. When I start the spell, can you enhance my magic? That way I will be less likely to fail, for a third time.”

“I have just the song for that.” She smiled, her magic was a little different from the two types of magic out there. Shamans and Hermetics were the normal magics, hers was more.... Bard like.

I put the barrier up around the area we were going to be working. I then attached the barrier to the newly attuned sustainment focus. It held. I was able to drop holding the spell and concentrate on creating the ritual we will need for the job.

“Banshee, please start. I will tap into the power and focus it through the ritual. We should be able to make it work.”

“Um, Bishop, what about the sample?”

“Frag, I had forgotten.” I took out a black worm-like creature and put it in the circle that I had drawn on the ground. If all goes well, the sample will be no more after this.

Banshee started playing an ancient rock song from some group she said was called Triumph from 99 years ago. She was playing her guitar and singing,

"I'm young, I'm wild and I'm free
I got the magic power of the music in me

I could feel the power of her song start pooling the manna for the spell. I tapped into it and started chanting the incantation.

"Spiritus est relinqueret, in exilium agere Parasitus enim malus, virtute adolebitque illud Lucius Annaeus Seneca. Spiritus est relinqueret, in exilium agere Parasitus enim malus, virtute adolebitque illud Lucius Annaeus Seneca." I was chanting and using reagents to strengthen the spell. I continued chanting and building the power to the point the spell would definitely work on the sample.

I released the power at the sample. A scream rang out from the little creature and it shriveled up. There was an audible pop and the sample was gone. The spell was a success.

Banshee's song is continuing, I listened to it a moment before I told her the spell worked.

*The world is full of compromise, and infinite red tape
But the music's got the magic, it's your one chance for escape
So turn me on - turn me up - it's your turn to dream
A little magic power makes it better than it seems
I'm young, I'm wild and I'm free
I got the magic power of the music in me
(Triumph, Magic Power 1981)*

"It worked Banshee."

She stopped singing and put her guitar down. She walked over to the sample and saw that it was missing. "Do you think we can do that for the infestation?"

"I do. Now that I know how to get rid of one, I can get rid of them all. I would have liked to know where the boy got them, but cleaning him out will have to work for us now. Maybe we can find the source at a later time."

She looked at me, smiling, almost glowing with pride. "You figured out how to use my power I see. I told you if you used me it would work."

"If you only knew Latin, I could make a song for you that would work."

“Even if I knew Latin, it wouldn’t work. I have to feel the song, and I am a rocker.” her smile made me feel warm. It was the first time I was actually attracted to her. Her smile, her energy, and her ability to sing a spell made me notice her.

“I will need a day to rest before we cure the boy.” I said.

“So will I.”

We went back to the safe house to eat and rest. As we were talking, I realized that we were getting close. We were watching a vid that she had picked, an old flat vid from over 100 years ago. School of Rock. It was funny, and odd. There were no other races other than human. It seemed weird to watch.

As we were watching the movie, she laid her head on my shoulder. I looked at her, then we kissed. We watched the rest of the movie, then headed to bed...

The next day we were ready. After some real coffee and eggs we went to the house where we were going to do the ritual. I walked around back to prep the area, and Banshee went to the front to talk to the people inside.

In the back I was drawing my circle, preparing my ingredients, and energizing my focus to make sure everything would be ready. About the time I was finishing, Banshee came out singing a song,

*Well, you don't know what
We can find
Why don't you come with me little girl
On a magic carpet ride
(Steppenwolf, Magic Carpet Ride 1968)*

There was a body floating in a bubble in front of her. The opaque bubble was moving toward me. I knew what was inside, a young boy infested with those parasites.

I started chanting to make the barrier. “Confirma munimenta quaedam et potentia. Confirma munimenta quaedam et potentia. Confirma munimenta quaedam et potentia.” As I was finishing, the body of the boy was put in the center of the circle. The bubble was dropped and Banshee quit singing. There was a glimmer of power as my barrier went up. I transferred it to the sustaining focus. Happily it held.

The boy was an elf, a high elf from the looks of him, whose regal looks meant he was of royal blood. That would be why they were willing to pay so much to do this job and for us keeping it silent. It was time to save this boy who was getting close to death. I nodded to Banshee. She started singing her

song of power. Building the power pool. I let her build it and build it before I tapped into her strength, letting her beautiful song wash over me.

I put out the reagents around the circle that I would need to strengthen the spell, and to destroy these magical parasites. Ready, I started chanting the spell. Over and over again I was chanting, building the strength of the spell.

First I located all the parasites, there were over 60 in the boys aura. Eating and eating his magic power, draining his mana, and ripping the mana flow from the boys grasp. These parasites were much stronger than the one that we destroyed in the same ritual yesterday.

Worriedly, I changed my chant to the destroyer of parasites. I had to get them all or the boy would not recover. One by one the spiritual parasites popped out of existence. An hour passed, then another as I worked to rid this young boy from these foul creatures. Banshee's song resonating in every chant, her power aiding me in the fight.

More hours passed, more chanting, more power flowing through me. I was getting tired. We were so close, I could not fail. We continued to cast, hunt, destroy these parasites. One by one they popped out of this realm.

Finally, the boy was clear of these parasites. I was exhausted and needed a lot of sleep. I dropped my barrier spell and let the boys family come in to fetch him. It was the first time they could touch their son in almost a year. They hugged him as he was waking up and brought him into the expansive house.

It was then that I realized it was long past sundown. The spell had taken all day to cast. As the family went in the house, a servant came out and brought me a credstick for our troubles. There was 1.5 million New Yen on the black stick. More than enough to retire on. I nodded to Banshee, we were going to both get out of the shadows now.

"Lets go back to the safe house so we can sleep. I need a shower and a good rocking. Then we can get to sleep." Banshee was smiling seductively.

I agreed happily and started moving to the van. Looking at her I started thinking, her power. It seems delicious. I just want to devour her magic... Silently I realized I had been infected. Before I could say anything everything went black.