

## The Four Pieces to Destruction...

I awoke with a terrible shiver. The snow was cold and the wind was colder. It seemed to have shifted during the night. I stood up, the magical fire still burning. I waved my hand and put it out with a thought. At the entrance of the cave, the sun was high in the sky. OH! It must be close to noon. I took off in a mad dash at blinding speed, towards Rock Falls. I assumed I was headed in the right direction, due to the shine reflecting off the ice of a Frozen waterfall. Within moments, I reached it.

"The path will be revealed at noon." I stood waiting. Watching, and listening with even more alert senses. Roughly half an hour passed, and it became clear to me. I'm going to freeze before I get in there!

"Stay alert, I need you alive." Gelmat said. I was taken back by this statement.

"What do you mean, you need me?" I didn't have time for a response. The waterfall shattered, ice spraying everywhere.

"Elaborum Mortess Protectum!" I shouted. The invisible barrier went up a split second before the sharp ice hit me. I sighed. That was close. Without that increased speed and senses, I'd be dead...again! I looked at the remains of the waterfall, only to see a small opening in the rock. This must be the path. I started towards it. The waterfall suddenly became active, water rushing down. I took off, and assumed shadow form. I am not going through water, I'd freeze for sure! I passed through the water effortlessly and got to the opening. Resuming my form, I turned to see the waterfall freeze as quickly as it had shattered. I sense a large magical power. Some sort of enchantment on it. I shrugged it off and walked in.

Within a few steps, I reached a long flight of stairs. I've heard secret caverns and tombs have traps to keep intruders out. I will not take any chances. I took my first step, and it happened. The whole stairway turned to a slope, and I slid uncontrollably down. I had no need to shout, I had to focus. The walls began to move in. Were they closing in, or were they simply narrowing? I took no chance. I put my hands on the walls and tried to slow myself down. The pain was immense, but I was slowing. Only a few yards away from the bottom, did I come to a complete stop. There was a hole in the rock, and large spikes were sticking out. I sighed again. This will not be easy. I slowly worked my way to the edge, and with a small lunge, I cleared the pit. It closed up, and the stairs resumed their normal state.

"Too close for comfort." Gelmat said. I stood up and composed myself.

"What did you mean, you need me?" I asked.

"Simply put, you are the one who can break this curse. I have served the shadow king for too long, and want my sentence to be over." I nodded in understanding. He is trapped with this curse. I looked at my surroundings, there were torches lit, and a small entrance way lay before me. I walked down it.

"Danger lurks everywhere!" Gelmat gurgled. I knew this. But nothing else happened. I came to a large door. This door was huge, but what got me were the markings. They looked like the strange

symbols on the Tharenian cards. And there were four slots big enough to fit them.

“Four slots for cards, but I only have three.” I stated, half defeated. All this time spent, I needed to find another card.

“Try to read the door.” Gelmat insisted. I looked at it. Studied it. Strange symbols and markings covered it. I noticed one at the top looked like the markings on the unused one. I dug it out and looked at it.

“I think the symbols on the cards need to be matched with the ones on the door. I placed the silver card into the slot. But nothing happened. I grabbed the other two and looked at them. The bottom hole looked familiar, as if I just saw these.

“Amplification.” I said as I placed it in the slot. I looked at the other two slots.

“Which one does Undetectable Invisibility go into?” I had a 50/50 shot. Gelmat perked up.

“The unused one!” I was confused.

“I already placed that one.” He perked up again.

“The unused slot!” I looked at the door. In the right side slot, was a small silver speck. I took a closer look.

“No way!” I stared in disbelief, brushing away a thick layer of dust. Inside the slot already, was the fourth Tharenian Card. I smiled.

“Well, seems my luck is turning around.” I stated.

“Hardly...” Gelmat muttered.

“What?” I asked.

“Uh... there’s still more danger ahead.” He said. This is true. I placed the card I held into the left side slot, and stepped back. The door started to glow, and began to crack. Instinctively, I grabbed the cards, all four, and stepped back again. The door crumbled to dust. As the dust cleared, I began to sense powerful magic.

“Uh oh. This can’t be good.” I said. Inside this next room, was nothing. I stepped inside to see a large square room with nothing, except large porcelain statues surrounding the perimeter. I already knew what was coming. I’d have to find a way out of this room, and the secret lies in one of these statues.

“Well, only one way to crack a statue.” With something hard, I finished in my head. But I knew no good earth spells. I had always hung around the Order of the Sun camp with Ignis and Aria. My earth magic was not as strong. I could use an earth elemental, I guess.

“Times up!” Gelmat yelled. I looked around. The statues began to move. ALL of them. Looks like a fight. I threw a shadow ball at one of them, and it shattered. Well, at least my powers work on them. I began to throw out more as fast as I could conjure them, but it wasn’t fast enough. I was shortly surrounded. I had only one option. I went into shadow form. I could feel the power. The Speed, even more so with the Spell card’s power. I quickly lashed out at the statues, taking out three or four of them in one swing. Only a couple hundred more to go. I kept lashing at them, and they kept falling. Even though they couldn’t lay a stone on me, they were grouped to close to move. I needed the tangible world as a guide to move. If only I could go through solid objects.

“Unleash the power within...” A deep voice inside my mind said. I was startled. This was not

Gelmat talking.

“What do you mean?” I asked, still swinging. I threw a random shadow ball at a group to clear a path.

“Let them surround you, then will your power to explode with force.” I growled at me, almost demanding. I paid no attention to it. I let them surround me. With only a few feet left for me to move, I thought about the power. Explode, expand, Power surrounding me, pushing out... there was no attack.

“Do not think it, mortal. Will it out!” The Voice commanded. With that command, I felt a shock. I curled up the shadowy form of mine, and forced it out. There was a loud eruption, and the statues were flung everywhere. Shattering rang through the room. As I collected myself, I felt a presence. Power, so much power. Too much power. Oh no...

“OH YES!” The voice bellowed, as if it was in the room next to me. I looked up, a look of evil in my eye. I saw a shadowy cloud appear and form into a human shape. NO! I wanted to yell, but I could not control my body. This can't be...

“IT IS TIME!!!” The voice became clearer and I knew exactly what was going on. Besides this figure, a saw a tiny imp materialize. Gelmat.

“You were unaware that I still dwelled within you, mortal!” It said. I was unable to respond, but I knew. By unleashing the dark energy blast as I did, I must have broken a magical seal on the curse. I had no idea that it could still exist as long as I had it's power.

“Yes, I can.” It said, knowing what was going through my mind. The thought I couldn't stomach but was said just then.

“I, THE SHADOW KING, HAVE RETURNED!!!”