

One Year ago...

“We shall meet again...” I said. The darkness covered my whole body, and I felt the power once again. The familiar power that I used so much. With the crystal empty, the staff disintegrated, leaving only me. I looked to the heavens and raised my hands above my head.

“The balance is restored. I now travel to the spirit world, to watch evermore upon this earth.”

And with that said, Caius Shadowsworn disappeared.

The story has finally come to a close. The balance had been restored, and the Paragon defenders lived on. All was well in the world. Evil came and went, and good always triumphed. The legend of things came and went, and the legacy of the Band of the Twisted Claw lived on. Man’s goal in life is to obtain peace and keep it. And this was so to this very day.

The land of Bristol was at peace.

Or so we thought...

CHANGING DESTINY

As I sat here, watching over all, keeping the dark forces in balance, I felt empty. I knew I was destined for greatness, but this cannot be all it is. I’ve seen wars waged, innocents killed, and people suffer great loss, and all I can do was watch. Make sure it happened. I buried my face in my hands.

“This can’t be right...” I said to myself. I just feel... well, I wish I could feel anything. What has become of all my friends? The Gypsies? I had to know. I waved my hand over the cloud like figure I was peering into. Show me Bristol, I thought. As I thought this, Bristol came into focus. I watched as the citizens went about their business, living their life. My eyes wandered over to the gypsy wagons. They were preparing for the yearly celebration. It’s hard to imagine it’s been one year since I left Bristol, since I left the world. Everything seemed in order.

Just then, my eyes caught a flash of color. It appeared reddish, but dark as well as red. A cold shiver washed over me. It couldn’t be. I followed it to its destination. And it was there I saw it. A cloaked figure, dressed in black and red. I jumped to my feet.

“No! I exclaimed out loud. This is impossible. The Draco’s fell apart after last year’s endeavor. I had to study this closer. As I watched, more figures appeared, at least five or so. Something was going on. Whatever it is, if the Draco’s are involved, it’s never good. I had to intervene. There is no way that I will ever balance the evil they do. I started towards the cloud, preparing to enter Bristol.

“Stop!” A loud voice commanded. I’ve heard this voice before, but never knew of its source.

“What is it now?” I asked. For the duration I’ve been here, this voice has been giving me the ground rules, what I can do, and what I cannot.

“You know that you cannot return to the tangible world. It will destroy the balance of good and evil again.”

“And how exactly will I do that?” I asked, looking for the voice.

“With no definite source of darkness to keep the world in balance, all evil will run free, unleashing chaos.”

“I understand that, but if I stay here, innocent people will die for no cause. It’s my duty to see that Evil has a purpose. These Draco Disciples have no purpose, no reason for killing or stealing. I must stop...”

“Enough! You have been warned. If you leave, the world will be thrown into chaos. “

“I can handle that as I go. But I will not stand Idle while my friends are in danger.” I said.

“Yes, and that you have proven. Alas, you cannot oversee anything if you leave. Your power rests here.”

“What do you mean?” I asked. I didn’t like the way this was going.

“If you leave, you will not have any of your powers. You will be nothing more than a Mortal again.”

This struck me, hard. The choice was to protect my friends at the cost of losing my power, or to watch the Draco’s do... Whatever it is their up to.

“The decision is yours, as it has always been, however, aside from giving up all you have here, you may never return. It is our law.” I gulped at this thought. No power and no retuning? Is that really worth the lives of my friends? Of course it is, I thought. That was a selfish thought. I know any of them would sacrifice everything for me. Snowfire, Talis, Gabe and Nightplox. Not to mention all of the Gypsies. I had to do what I believed was right.

“I understand the consequences, and I accept them. I will not let this Evil go unpunished... again!” I told. I knew everything would change, yet again. But I was willing to accept that.

“Very well, We honor your choice. But be warned, any evil can fill the gap you will leave.”

“I understand...” I trailed off. I walked towards the cloud, and stopped. I cannot go directly there. I must avoid being seen until the time is right. I waived my hand and a wooded area slightly north appeared. I will make my way from here. I stepped into the cloud, but withdrew yet again.

“If I may, When you say no power, you mean all of the Shadow King’s powers? Including mine that I developed as I grew?”

“Correct, your power was derived from the Shadows, as you are giving it up, you will have no magical abilities.” I stopped at this thought. No magic. Well, I dealt with minimal magic last year, how hard can it be to go without any?

“Very well,” I said, “Allow me a change of outfit first.” I closed my eyes, and envisioned a new appearance, one that no one would recognize. I geared myself up and let out a long breath. I was ready. I stepped through the cloud and felt a rush of air.

I landed hard on the ground. That hurt. Hey! That hurt. That means I’m mortal again. That’s when it hit me. I was normal. No power, no anything.

“Now what?” I said out loud. That’s when a thought hit me. No power, but two fast arms. I snickered to myself. It seems I’ll have to find that barbarian again. My power will be self-made. So, I began traveling south. It would be a day’s walk, due to my lack of speed. This gives me time to slow down and take in the sights. I smiled as I took my first step. 9 long years with that

curse, and now I'm free. A little too free. But hey, every day is a new adventure. It seems Bristol will be in for a little surprise.

Watch out, Draco's, Caius is back!