

There is no start to this story. There is no middle, there is no end. There is only the now and the here. The present is a fickle mistress, for some the present is what was, for others it is what will be. For every generation, for every family there is a clear, defined past and present. The Velkari's however are different. For the Velkari's the story just comes to be; there was an angel, a child, a kingdom, and a family that would live past the natural lives of most.

One could say it all started with an angel, a Seraphim that controlled the frosted realms. He was the lord of all things cold and was rather bored with his stature. His name was Attarib and was a lonely archangel. He sighed from his grand perch in the clouds as looked over the frosted realms. Unlike other angels this one preferred to be with those under his watch. He was especially fond of a German Shepherd, named Morrigan.

Every time he came to visit would take shape of a red panda, however it never seemed to appear quite correctly, and his more natural wolfish appearance would come through. His face would start at the top white and end with a reddish hue, his eyes glowed an icy blue that seemed to glow around his diamond shaped pupils. His hair was white and flowed down to his upper arms. The red fur would follow under his clothes to his chest and stomach, at the center of his upper chest was a yellow beige coloring that seemed to form a heart, on his back was a similar marking but formed an inverse chevron. The white would follow to shoulders and the sides of his bodies, along the back of his legs. The rest of his body was red.

He wore time appropriate clothes consisting of a fresh white tunic, with a brown leather vest; he had a metal plate to cover his upper chest and a single silver pauldron on his left arm. On his arms were leather bracers with a metal covering. His legs had blood red cloth slacks strapped by leather chaps that cut into some leather boots that were plated with metal for extra protection. At the time he wore no weapons, as he saw no need for them. Out of all under his care he took special attention to Morrigan.

He could Stare at Morrigan for hours, watching her lightened brown fur wave in the wind, her white tipped tail wagging near her legs. He would get lost in her steel blue eyes and couldn't help but sniff that reddish-brown hair. In her village she was a priestess or some other high member of their society. She would grand but white robes, that cover her from shoulder to hind paw. At home however, she would instantly drop the pious act walking around in a loincloth and metal bra plating. Attarib was always amused at how casual Morrigan was around him. It would be some time before things changed, but as clichés go, not all happy stories stay happy.

A neighboring village had decided to attack the village Morrigan lived in. Attarib from up high could hear the cries and prayers of his wards, he looked down in surprised and dropped from his perch forming his shape as he flew down. Touching off near the forest barely disturbing the ground as he landed, he looked up past the tree line. He could see the village grabbing pitch forks, scythes, and other farm tools getting ready for the fight. He ran over to the distant cottage of Morrigan's questioning only now after 10 years of visiting why it was so

far from the village. He banged relentlessly on the door but found that no one was home. He noticed there was a sword on the side of the door with the name Arend inscribed on the steel. After a short pause he decided to grab it and changed the appearance of his belt creating a draping war wrap to cover his legs like his angel armor, and a scabbard to place the newly acquired weapon.

As he rushed back to the village the air around him changed, it was getting harder breathe and particles were dancing around him, the world grew darker with each step. Finally arriving at the conflict, he could see Morrigan holding a brown staff covered in vines with a lit sphere entrapped in the wood at the very top. She was trying her best to keep the hapless villagers safe as others were fighting around her. He tried to push closer but was stopped by one of the invaders.

He was about to ask the ruffian questions but barely dodged the club that was headed for his head denting the light metal on his left bracer. For the first in a millennium he felt a pain he did not recognize. He pushed the man back with a pulse of frozen air, drawing the sword at his hip as another invader started toward him. He sidestepped the first lunge lightly tapping the attackers back with the hilt of his sword swinging around to keep his foe in his sight as he raised the sword still unsure how to use the primitive tool. He watched his target carefully learning as blocked each attack. He finally surmised that he had a possible opening after blocking the latest attempt on his life slashing at the brute catching the fur on his back and cutting lightly into the hip.

After hearing that yip, he was slightly disheartened but knew at this point it was either himself or his foe. He tried to follow up with a second attack this one landing firmer and deeper sinking into the visceral abdomen. His sword became ensnared in the now slumped enemy trying to yank the sword out with his boot on the enemy before rushing over to Morrigan's failing shield. Finally reaching Morrigan he took the staff gently from her smiling holding out a bloody paw to her shoulder. "It is ok, rest now my friend, I will take care of the rest." Attarib twirled the staff around gaining a feel for it as the air around them dropped in temperature, his own body started exhaling smoke as if it was warm breath on a cold day. He raised the staff staring down the invader's leader. "My child, if you know what is wise you will turn back and never bother this village again."

Their leader did not listen however, much like all of Gods creations the bipedal ones were the most stubborn and exercised their free will greatly. He had no choice but slam down the staff shaking the earth around them chanting in Enochian as giant trees started to sprout, these trees swung their branches like arms picking up the invading foes, dismembering, and brutalizing the enemy. Some villagers turned away, others watched in horror as the trees turned more corrupt with each kill.

Attarib, disheartened, dropped the staff. Something or someone must have interfered with his spell, this was not supposed to happen, they were simply created to trap and turn

away anyone else that would try to get near here. He watched in similar horror holding Morrigan tightly to keep her safe. She watched in apathy, her mind already keeping her away from the horrors that were happening. Attarib took her away from the corrupted forest. He watched as the trees moved and followed them around, he dropped his tail low to the ground as he chanted creating a boundary the corrupted forest was forbidden to go. As each tree got closer, he could see faces cracking and breaking into form, their newly found fists pounding at the invisible wall.

He cursed himself under his breath still dreading the creation of the evil forest. This time during the run to Morrigan's cottage he was glad it was so far away from the village. By now the trees have overtaken the village and he was unsure what would happen to its citizens. Morrigan woke up in Attarib's arms as they arrived at the front door. He followed her inside her silence was deafening to him, he helped her into the bed and was padding towards the door when the tension was finally broken.

"Don't go..." She would say. "Please stay, the whole village is gone and now I'm by myself..." Her ears were completely down, and her tail seemed to be dead. This was his fault and he couldn't deny that no matter how hard he tried. He decided to stay with Morrigan, at least for the night.

Nights turned to days, and days turned to years again. With Morrigan by herself, he found it hard to leave her side. Perhaps, if he would admit to himself, did not want to leave her side. His love for the shepherd only grew with each passing day. He would shower with gifts, affection, anything that would make her happy. He even gave her a kiss before and after waking up. They walked the edge of the forest together holding each other. Attarib couldn't help but stare at the aptly renamed Forbidden Forest. The tress presented the couple with different corpses and skeletons to goad them into passing the protection wall. But neither would fall for it and only lamented

Back home was quiet, it was always quiet after the forest walk. The walk was heavy after all seeing their old friends be used as mere traps and toys. "I want a child Attarib." Morrigan broke the silence, her hands clenching the knife and carrot in her paws. "I want to see life return in this deathly place. It shouldn't stay like this, we've been together for so long after all. Wouldn't it be nice to have someone to pass things on to?"

Attarib had to admit it wasn't a thought that had crossed his mind before. "The child wouldn't be safe here Morrigan, it would have to be taken to another village. I don't even know if I'm allowed to breed!" It hurt him to such things, but there have been rules for centuries that forbade an archangel to create another angel without proper permission. He looked over to the stiff canine, he could she was crying softly but was trying her best to hide it. "If we do this, we would have to prepared for anything to happen. I shall go look for nearby villages, one where you could frolic in the forest without worrying about death." Morrigan nodded and was willing to do anything to make sure this would happen.

It bothered Attarib for some time after Morrigan announced her want. He remembered that something had changed how his spell had worked and needed to find the source of the evil. He told Morrigan that he needed to go find the source of evil that corrupted the forest. Morrigan held Attarib close her head just reaching under his chin. She licks him on the nose and meets his gaze.

"Where you go, I go. I want to help frost."

Attarib smirked, it always amused him that he was nicknamed frost after a mishap with an ice trick he was trying to show off. "It will be dangerous, I can't guarantee your safety, but I will try my best. We may end up having to cross tha-" Attarib grabbed a hold of Morrigan and jumped to the ground. His ear was sizzling, and he cupped it to heal but sensed a dark, no devilish power. He wheeled around pushing Morrigan behind him drawing Arend imbuing it with light. He was not sure what exactly was in front of him.

This apparition was completely imbued with malice and darkness. Staring into the spectre was comparable to a night with stars. As his eyes adjusted to the shape, he could make out two red lighgs boring holes into his skull the "ghost" staring at him. It floated there studying the two swaying back and forth flying up and down. It shot a tendril towards Attarib trying to grab him.

Attarib brought up the sword letting the tendril wrap around the sword. The specter shrieked as the light burned it floating back. "Just what are you?" Attarib waved the Holy imbued sword around the ghost watching writhe in fear of the light as it stepped back. "hmmm, you must be the demon that corrupted my Enochian. That's no easy feat demon..." He moved forward waving the sword around more.

The demon grew larger taking a humanoid shape no bigger than a teenager trying to grab at the sword. "Stop it!" He yelled in anguish, sounding of a young male. "Just leave this area and go away!" The apparition dissolved shortly after its statement and started to engulf the cottage in darkness. Attarib grabbed hold of Morrigan and bolted through the house. Morrigan looked up as the fled her home was taken over completely by the young demon. The demon was cackling as they fled. She closed her eyes and held on tightly to Attarib.

They found a small village that was known as Zigra, it was a budding kingdom that had a king and a queen and according to Attarib's scrolls they were due for a child soon. He was also expecting a cub and was anxious to stay out in the open this long. Word had finally spread to the higher Enochian realms that he broke a capital law. He was going to try to make sure he could stay with his new family for as long as he could. He escorted his wife and unborn pup to the wooden Zigran gate. He made sure they got through and found them a remote cottage to live in.

It wasn't as remote as the original cottage, but it was far enough from the townspeople that they would not be disturbed. Attarib attempted to find work but was turned for some time

before finding a place near the king. It wasn't the best job in his mind, but it was one none the less, especially with a child on the way. After a few years Attarib determined they would be prepared for gold issues. He also kept researching on what the child would be now that they were closer to birth.

He was worried what the cub would be. If it is to be angelic like him, they would get discovered and he would be taken back to the higher realms. He would be punished for his transgressions possibly even be killed. It was a worry that stuck with him till it was time for birth. His current issue however was finding someone they could trust to birth their cub. His thoughts were broken when he felt a tiny paw tug on his tunic.

"Oh! Hello there, princess, it is nice to see you... out here..." Attarib looked around realizing they were in the marketplace. "What are you doing here kitten?"

The tiny blue snow leopard kitten was giggling and beamed Attarib a smile. "I'm supposed to follow you remember? We're grabbing treats and sweets for daddy's birthday!" The kitten bounced ahead of Attarib as they got closer to the candy stall.

Attarib sighed, a bit relieved to see such a small but happy figure. He realized that whatever was going to happen would be for a reason and was excited for the birth of his own pup. "You know princess, I have a pup of my own who will be due soon! Perhaps you two will get know each other." Attarib chuckled at the thought.

Alecia tilted her head and giggled. The 4-year-old snow leopard was wearing a olive white dress that flowed down to her bare hind paws the toes wiggling about idly her movements looked like a happy jig and she was given treats and gifts from passerby's which lit up her world every time. Attarib couldn't help but smile at the little one ruffling the hair on her head and petting a ear.

A few months later Attarib was busy in the princesses' room having tea time. It was favorite time as he has gotten to know the kitten like a daughter. Whenever her parents were busy, he was the go-to caretaker of the little kitty. As embarrassing as it could be to be dressed like a princess, he couldn't say no to that kitty homfing on her tail in the cardboard box. He would drape a blanket over her just to hear the delighted comforting purrs and sighed. The fun was paused when someone busted into the room explaining about Morrigan's state. He bid the princess adieu then left hurriedly out of the room. He had a pregnant wife to attend to!

Attarib was running back to the cottage. He had received word while tending to the royal daughter during tea time that his child was being delivered. Still dressed for tea time wearing a tight child dress over his clothes he bolted towards the cottage to catch up with Morrigan. As he arrived the house was shining a bright blue and a small crowd had formed around the home. He had to push and shove his way through the busy bodies just to get through the front door. He was greeted by a midwife and was led to his mate.

Inside their wooden bedroom there laid Morrigan clawing the feather bed as she pushed and pushed through the pain the light shining brighter. Out of everyone only Attarib could really see through this blinding light and had to deliver his cub himself. He felt the head of his son and held onto it gently as he kept sliding out, grabbing a towel he swaddled the little pup and handed it to Morrigan.

By now the light had died down and Morrigan was able to lay her eyes on the newborn pup. Tufts of red feathers could be seen poking out his sides and his Dark red face framed ice blue eyes. His German Shepherd ears were flopped over too big for him to hold up on his own. His chest had a similar heart shape to his fathers, but his hands and legs took form of his mother's "socks". He churred softly looking up at his mother and wiggled in delight.

Attarib breathed a sigh of relief but shivered feeling more ethereal presences. He looked behind him as his shoulders were grabbed by two different angels. He sighed again and looked over to Morrigan and his child, he waved them as they phased from the realm. Attarib's ears dropped as he was teleported back to the higher realm stuck in a chair and suddenly on trial. He groaned as the angels gathered around.

"You knew it was against our sacred rules to do what you did." One voice said. "There is no punishment that can properly fit this injustice!" Another chimed in. Soon there were hundreds of voices with varying ideas, but all were united in the fact that Attarib broke a major rule. After much debate his fate decided. "You are to live your days on earth restrained, you will not be allowed to be near your cub, you can not search for him, if you were to ever meet, he would have to find you!" Attarib's heart sank. To think he would not even be allowed to be with his family was worse then death. "Your punishment follows with your child. He will not be allowed to join us on these realms, he will see no glory here nor will he find friends. They shall be on their own from here in!"

Attarib hoped that Morrigan was truly prepared like she promised. Morrigan at first had no idea what to do. Her only love just disappeared into thin air, leaving her alone with a newborn. She looked down at the child and sighed, the first thing she had to do was come up with a name. She kept looking at him wondering what the child would be. "My little Malik Donovan."

Morrigan was trying her best to keep going with Attarib vanishing 4 years ago. She couldn't get used to a floating cub and was having a hard time understanding the differences that seemingly at first seemed irrelevant with Attarib. Thankfully Alecia, who was 9 now came quite often. At first the kitten was looking for her play buddy, but left them alone after hearing of the disappearance, she came back a few years later to offer Morrigan help with her "crazy baby" and took care of the child.

Alecia was holding Malik in her arms purring at him giggling hearing the 4-year-old reply in his curious churrs. It seemed to her that the "Churr" had multiple meanings, and it took some time to understand each one. She had plenty of time to spend with Malik after they moved into

the castle. For instance, when Malik was five, he used to hide in bushes in the king's farm and hunt chickens. He was never successful at first. Then at 6 he finally managed to capture one.

Alecia was watching him from atop a tree branch and was a giggling eleven-year-old. She watched with interest as he ran around the farm chasing after his prey. He managed to corner the thing and pounced after it but the "clucker" as he would put it jumped away letting Malik take a bath in a pond that was hidden behind the chicken. After shaking himself dry he finally caught up with it and managed bite down on the prey's neck halting the chicken in its step causing them to roll around. He tussled with trying to break its neck till a big burly cook came out looking rather annoyed. Alecia moved closer seeing that the cook was about to give the puppy a stern talking to.

As Alecia got closer, she could hear the pup chanting "Leggo" as the cook continued to berate the pup trying to wrestle the chicken from his surprisingly strong jaw. He had found a snack and was determined to keep it! The cook had to throw the pup around before he let go and scampered off somewhere else. Alecia giggled then went back over into the tree soaking up the rest of the sunlight from her perch.

They celebrated Malik's 8th birthday in the courtyard, the now 13-year-old snow leopard had grown into a fine woman and had already started gaining suitors. Malik was suspicious of all the other whelps sniffing around his caretaker. He would growl now and then when one was getting to close and moved his tail in front of Alecia. Alecia was amused at the pup's jealousy and giggled; yet she would find herself blushing now and then to have someone care for her that much.

Morrigan watched the two with amusement thinking back on how Attarib and she was. Her face would scrunch up in sadness wondering just where Attarib could be, how she missed his scent and his arms. Her depressive thoughts were broken when the king came and patted on her back. She went to attend to the duties of the castle. Life in the castle was interesting, it was different then living in the forest in a log cabin. She was to take care of smaller situations that weren't deemed important enough for the king. She took care of the townspeople and some of the most basic wants one would be surprised to hear.

Her life at the castle was important, but some days she wished she could teach children rather than teaching stubborn adults. She wanted to open a school just outside the castle walls so "strays" could also learn and benefit from a proper raising. Despite her wishes she did what was best for herself and her pup. She trusted Alecia with him, but she still wished she could spend more time with her family.

Meanwhile Malik was death staring every suitor that passed and chatted with Alecia. "Why do you keep doing this?" He was rather blunt with the ask but still wanted to know. "No one here is good enough for you anyway."

Alecia was giggling softly as she politely smiled at the now disturbed suitor as they left. "Because Malik, I have to find a suitable heir to the throne being the only princess." She thought a bit then shot a quip. "And just who do you think is a proper match for me? You? My little knight?" Alecia's tail flicked in satisfaction seeing that already red face turn redder at her response and giggled."

"Y-y-you should just be the Queen and by yourself!" Malik blurted rather embarrassed. "You're strong you don't need anyone to help you." He huffed and pouted shuffling in the bench. It backfired on him and made him pouty. His mood quickly changed when he remembered there was presents nearby! He hopped off the bench and started sniffing at different shaped boxes rustling a few to see what was inside. He picked up what he could determine was the heaviest and toted it off the table where the party was.

"Oh Malik, your mom wanted to be here for this one, try choosing a different one." Alecia grabbed the long box that he diligently carried over, she knew what was in this one and could tell it had some sort of importance when Morrigan explained what was in the box. Malik huffed and slinked back to the present table determining which one to choose.

Just then he felt two different tugs on his tail coming from either side. "Choose this one big brother!" He could hear in unison. Malik turned around and saw Aither and Vin beaming a smile at him holding a box. Out of the two Aither was the older being 6, he was a dark red panda with wolfish features. At least, that what their mother would say, anyone else could only ever see him as a red panda. His fur patterns were somewhat different from Malik's. While Malik was predominantly dark red with shades of beige and gold; Aither was dark red with shades of green that looked like mint and blues that matched the sky.

Vin was only 4 and was extremely different to the other two. It caused quite a stir in the town when the child was announced. Unlike Aither he shared more "holy" characteristics with Malik. Vin was born with purple wing's; however, his skin pattern was more like Morrigan's, he was different shades of pale brown and white with a pair of purple eyes to match his wing's. The striking difference between him and his brothers was that Vin had antlers. No one in his family had antlers which Morrigan wouldn't answer to when asked.

Lego was unsure of what magical power Vin had, He knew Aither could play with fire after watching him sneeze as a baby and it nearly burned their new home down. His mother said when he was a baby it was like holding a glacier. But with Vin, his powers haven't surfaced. Lego was lost in thought thinking that perhaps Vin didn't get lucky enough to have magic, after all not everyone can have magic... It then dawned on him that the present looked heavy for the cubs to be toting so he grabbed it and smiled back.

"Thanks guys! I'll open this then right away!" Lego scuttled back to the table and plopped on the bench ready to tear the box up. Just as he was going to, he turned quickly to Alecia staring her down. Alecia quirked an eyebrow then turned some acting like that one didn't matter. Malik simply churred in excitement as he tore open the box! Inside the box was a

leather band with metal lining, there was also some rope to fasten and tie around a tail that ended in feathers. He sniffed at the feathers curiously gathering a scent that seemed kind of familiar, yet, somewhat old. He also spotted a necklace that had another feather fastened to it. After satisfying his distraction he turned back to the band.

The band like he originally saw was fully leather. On the top was a metal band that had different symbols and objects engraved on it. At the center of the band was a blood red panted shield. It seems to split near the beginning creating a skinny outline that encompassed the main shield. In the center was a sword that seemed to be winged. Above it was a pair of wings with a halo sitting above the pommel of the sword. The colors of this peculiar combo were an energetic turquoise. On one side of the image was a golden wolf that was facing a blue snow leopard. The leopard confused Malik looking up at Alecia for a bit then back at the image.

The next thing he saw made him blush a little. He wondered if his mother knew about his crush on the kitten. In a scroll under the sword was the words "L'Amore Resiste a Tutti". In plain talk this meant that "Love Endures All". Lego was getting redder which made Alecia giggle, "And what do those words mean?"

"...Huh?! Err n-nothing! I mean... something! I mean uhh ah...." Lego was stumbling for words having been lost in thought. He sighs and recites the phrase "It's Italian, it says L'Amore Resiste a Tutti. In English it means Love Endures All." Lego shifted some as he stared at the snow leopard on the symbol.

"That's pretty beautiful, definitely not something you thought of." Alecia laughed at the prod to Malik and stared at the ban some. "Hmmm, this looks like it goes on the tail, lift your tail pup I'll help you put it on." Lego nodded and lifted his long fluffy tail over to Alecia. She fastened the leather band to his tail then tied the strings around his tail near the band as well. Lego put the necklace on his bare neck and churrs wiggling his tail in delight. Alecia smiled stealing a sniff off the fluff blushing softly not sure why she did that. "All right Malik, you're all set take a look!"

Lego whirled around before plopping onto the bench again putting his tail in his lap. There it sat in the center gleaming in the sunlight. Morrigan could be seen coming down the stairs in the reflection of the band. "Mom!" Alecia could hear in triplicate. Morrigan hurried down to hug each cub and smiled noticing the long box on the table then the band on Maliks' tail.

"Ahh Malik you chose that box first?" She was pointing to the one on the table next to Alecia. Malik nodded in agreement making her smile. "And why is that little one?" Malik told his mother due to its weight and size. "My child that thing has to be the lightest thing here!" Se chuckled and watched her pup with interest as she rubbed Aither and Vins ears.

Lego quirked an eyebrow at his mother and lifted the box again, it felt heavy to him at least! He opened the box with rapid excitement and stared at it picking the object up and lifting

it into the air. It was almost as if it was scripted to happen. The sword glowed a bright light blue blinding the groups view of the sky and nearby area before it returned to normal. Malik was stiff his eyes engulfed in a shining sky blue that glowed and lightened his face. His hair was waving around as if there was a wind coming from nowhere. His simple tunic ruptured from the back and out came dark red wings that splayed out to full span then arched back. A ring of pure energy started forming above Malik's ears. "Arend" the crowd could hear Lego mutter.

As the energy died down Malik faltered as he lowered the sword. He knew the name of the sword without anyone telling him, he looked around as everyone stared at him in disbelief. "W-what's going on guys?" Malik started feeling like jelly and started to fall to the ground. His form was normal again after the whole ordeal, but his tunic was still ruptured. Morrigan looked grim as she held Malik to keep him from falling.

Alecia was completely blinded by the bright light looking away. The brief explosion of power had caused Oren the king of Zigra and Ava the queen to come out. They rushed over to their daughter and hugged Alecia. "Are you ok darling?" her mother would ask.

"I'm sorry Morrigan but its time, he has to go! This isn't the first time something like this happened. He needs to go that kooky bird by the docks!" Oren looked rather frustrated and was determined to keep his only daughter safe.

Morrigan's ears lowered but nodded. It was indeed time. The birth of an angel, as Attarib would call it, was a powerful one. The only one in Zigra that knew anything about Enochian lore, was a salty owl that spent his days on his ship. In history the bird was known as the Winged Marauder. He was ruthless and quick to plunder. He was master of the sea and a downright devil in naval battles. Morrigan was not happy knowing Malik would become a ward to such a pirate.

Malik sheathed the sword unsure what was happening as he was ushered away by his mother. "Malik you must go and live with someone named the Winged Marauder, this isn't your fault but it's time to go on a journey that will be long and difficult." Morrigan was being blunt with her cub she needed him to understand the importance of what was happening. "This sword is your fathers, it is not the only Enochian relic that was brought down by him." She knew he had questions that she couldn't answer and didn't give him a chance as they walked towards the docks. "There are others just like this that will call out to you when the time is right, you must find them before others do. I know this is a lot to take in, but you will be an expert who can help you find your path."

Malik was bewildered by what was happening, he was trying to wrap his head around everything, but he was only 8! He had no idea what the word Enochian meant, nor what this sword entailed. He nodded at everything he was being told and held onto a sack to carry as his mother loaded him down with different things, a change of clothes, some money, a scroll he was told not to open till he was in a room on the boat, and some misc. things he might need. Some embarrassing things like a shirt he took from Alecia, a chewed-up milk bone and a bag

incase he got sea sick. With a huff and a pout his favorite blanket was also put in the bag and he was rushed over to the docks.

The owl was laying near the top of the crow's nest in his battered brig. He was perched on the rope ladder dressed in shades of black and grey. He had black tricorn tipped to the side it had a red band and strange insignias and symbols encased in the fabric. At some point the long trench coat he wore was a bright red with gold lapels and patterns, but not it was a former husk scorched and dull mostly black. He had a leather vest on and a dirty beige tunic underneath. On his side was a cutlass and several pistols. He even had pistols strapped to his legs, his chest, and a small one strapped to the back of his waist. The brown leather belt was secured to some black pants that were cuffed into brown boots.

From where he was, he could see as far as he wanted to, staring off into the distant sea through his stained brandy. The bird was bored and swung his legs over to the side noticing two furred creatures rushing onboard. He jumped down using his wings to soften the landing barely making any noise as he landed in front of the two canids. "Oi then, what are you doing trying to catch free rides?"

Before he could grab at his cutlass Morrigan grabbed his scaled hand. "Easy now, you have a full-fledged Enochian in your midst, he must travel you so you better protect him like those doubloons you covet so much.

"Ha!" The bird squawked out a laugh and turned to the tiny canid. "You consider this one Enochian lass? I'll have to be the judge of that. Come here whelp lets put you through the tests. Would you like some brandy? We got no ale or rum here mi lad!" He chuckled more as Morrigan shot him deathly eyes. "Easy lass I'm just pulling ye anchor, we got plenty of juicy oranges and a cow in my hold! He'll be fine, perhaps he might learn to fight, after all with a relic like that on his side, he better learn how!"

Malik was even more confused and just absolutely lost trying to understand the bird. "Do you think you can speak like you lived on land all your life?" The pup was annoyed and confused. The bird laughed even more and ushered him over to where his first mate was. The canid looked up at the tall salty smelling Doberman then back to the bird. "Just what is your name bird brain?"

"Aye, ye got a fiya in your heart, that's good! You'll be needin it in these parts to come!" The pirate didn't drift his eyes one bit from the horizon as they shoved off the dock. "Ta names Valen Maicroft! From here on I'll be your teacher and mentor, *capire*?"

Malik's Ears perked straight up at the sudden voice change as he said his name and heard a word in his mothers' language. He was unsure of what was happening but perhaps he could trust the bird. "*Io capire*" was all he could muster suddenly very tired. The bird noticed the pup swaying and lulling into sleep next him he patted Malik's head and helped to a room.

“You can sleep here lad! Tomorrow starts our first day of training! There’s quite a bit catching up for two lost years and you only have 1 year left to do it in! Get ready for rough waters lad, and I don’t mean the seas!” With that he closed the door and went back on top to helm the brig. He set the brig to port and sipped on his brandy that never seemed to empty. As the ship turned there was a glint that most people would miss on Valen’s forearms, there was some sort leather bracer on him with hints of metal around its underside. These devices were what made his quick kills famous.

The ship itself as it turned also glinted. From all nautical sides it was encased with different metals to give the ship armor, it had full rows of canons that looked like the teeth of a sailor. Between the all the heavy armaments Malik could make out that the ships color was a red with white accents. The mast was not much taller then a short Douglas Fir. The sail spanned across a wide area. On the mast was a beige cloth it was covered with estranged symbols. The largest that Malik had noticed was a shield like symbol. It had a straight top that tear dropped as it lowered. In the center was a pair of swords with guns at their hilts. Slightly above and in between the blades was an owl shaped head with diamonds in the head. The rest of the sail was embroidered with leaf and vine like decorations.

As for the inside of the ship it was rather clean. The ground he stomped on was carpeted and the walls were painted. He could smell the other sailors which, while unpleasant was not the most distracting thing. The captains room had the most peculiar scent out of the entire ship, he stayed in his own room though as to not anger his new mentor on the first day. His own room was interesting enough to pass the time for now.

His door was new, the room smelled clean as well, the bed was freshly made, and the window was freshly washed. He gathered with the size of it and how new it was perhaps it was meant for a second ship officer of some sort. The bed was definitely meant for someone better, it was huge compared to the pup. There was also a standing mirror and wardrobe, with a desk to study on. Malik got on the giant bed and rolled onto his back, after seeing stars he got up and grunted looking over to the window, he huffed again as that made the stars faster turning to the mirror, he though how he might need that extra sac after all. After some time, he laid on his side finding it more passable as it had less stars around him, he adjusted his pillow and got ready for a rest.

In the castle of Zigra Alecia was nodding along to what her parents were saying about how she needed protection now and that her time of being a child was over now that the mutt ward had left. She sighed and agreed that it was time to take responsibility as princess and went off to search for her “true” knight. She moved around town sniffing and looking at all the different things, she was wearing a Purple tunic under a deerskin tailcoat that was slightly longer then usual, she had on gray slacks and some black boots to cover her paws. It was not an outfit her father would agree with, but it was one of the few she wore that was more becoming of a princess.

She was hanging out in the town gardens reading her grimoire that she procured from the king's mage by exclaiming that the king needed it to recite a spell that he had forgotten. Alecia loved magic as much as she loved the wooden bow that was gifted to her by the town fletcher. She was taken in all the spells in the grimoire with excitement when she was interrupted with some stumbling on her paws. "Ow! Hey!" She exclaimed as she pulled her paws close rubbing them some.

"That was your fault no mine, you should pay attention to your surroundings child." Alecia quirked her eyebrow and looked for whoever said that. She was about to give him a piece of her mind then saw it was someone that looked close to her age. She broke out into laughter and scoffed returning to her book. "Hey! I'm talking to you brat! So, help me you'll be the next body I inhabit!" Alecia broke out into roaring laughter again closing the grimoire and putting it on a belt strap around her.

"Listen little kid, you find yourself a better body to "jump into" and come find me." She got up and started walking away still laughing. "When ever that day happens sweet heart."

Robert was fuming, that was the most disrespectful display he ever saw from someone. He walked around the park for some time before finding the pond, he realized as he looked in the reflection that he ended up not grabbing the right body. He rushed after Alecia to prove her wrong. "Look cat lady I can prove it you right here, hold this limb and watch."

Alecia was surprised that the child was that adamant about what he said then gasped as his orifices filled with dark smoke and exhumed through out the body, she jumped back letting go of the boy whose lifeless body fell to the ground and began to deteriorate rapidly in front of her till bones were left. She could've sworn she saw the black smoke hover near her for some time as it waved and gave her finger before taking over the adult body of a near by guard. Once he took over that body it writhed and wriggled in agony causing a scene to erupt as the guards free will was slowly crushed under mental domination of Robert.

She stepped back some more then gasped as she was picked up by her coat collar. "Let me go at once guard!" She flailed and tried kicking at the man who was still engulfed in dissipating smoke.

Robert smirked and wiggled the little kitten. "Not so small now huh chump? The names Robert and who are you? You got quite the mouth for a child." He stared down the cat and looked her dead in the eyes wondering what she was thinking. "Well pipsqueak?"

Alecia growled at Robert and kept kicking at him. "Let me go this instant you fool! Don't you know who I am?" Alecia huffed and wiggled around some more starting to slide out of her coat. She figured if she could get out of the coat, she was home free.

Robert gripped an arm instead and hoisted her up. "By the way you speak I'd say worth ransoming right?" Alecia went dead silent and gave deathly eyes. "Cheer up tiny tot, you aren't getting kidnapped today. If anything, you look like you need a guard. How bout I become your

guard? You've seen my powers so its either you let me help and we call it fresh start, or this kingdom will be without an heir." He taps the symbol on her belt and chuckles.

Alecia pauses then flails even harder smacking at the stranger. "You think I am going to trust you after this?" Certain death was a worse choice however in her mind, as princess he knew decisions would be tough, but she never anticipated this.

"Rest assured cat! I wont harm you ever, once you sign the deal, I will be loyal to you no matter what." Robert smiled and put the cat down and created a contract form thin air. "Consider it a charitable deal, I don't want nothing in return, hell you don't even have to sign it in blood." Alecia eyed the deal suspiciously as she read it the story was true, on her part it offered nothing but only gave, and on this fiend's side it would be force to eternal servitude. With a sigh she nodded and signed the document sealing their fate to be entwined for eternity.

With the deed done she was let go and he took his place behind her holding a hand on his sword ready to protect. "I do believe a change of clothes is in order however, I am in need of some leather, armor and a few other things like a duster, shall we reconvene somewhere? If you think I'm going to try running from this deal that won't be possible."

"I know, there is an armorer and tailor other there, I shall be in the tavern and waiting for you... *guard*." Alecia huffed and barged into the tavern the cat steaming her tail flicking on end. However, her mood quickly changed as she heard a roar.

A twenty-year-old wolverine was belching out her name. "Blue! Good to see you!" It was Alecia's newest and favorite "drinking buddy" Thorik Staedmon. She wasn't quite sure what that meant but she was never given the "good stuff" and was kept to milk when they partied. "How ya been blue?"

Alecia huffed and smiled at the burly wolverine. "Better, to say the least; I guess I have a guard now." She looked over to see Robert browsing through different materials and objects. "He's... different, but he will do for now. We've come to an understanding, hell of a way to do an interview though I'll give him that! Enough about that though, how are you?"

The wolverine groaned and let out a sigh. "Well... you know what they say blue, another day is a good day! It's been busy in the front, word is that another regiment just lost to some uprising clan." Alecia drifted a bit after hearing that, the front was never a good place for them, Zigra was losing a battle it didn't intend on fighting and now their people are suffering. "You may have to start planning evacuation routes, we're losing ground pretty fast."

Alecia groaned and slouched. "That will happen when you buy me some mead old man!" The wolverine chuckled and waved the cup around. She was only two years away from being allowed some beer.

"Come back in two years then blue!" The wolverine downed his mead and paid the tab. "I think your friend is waiting for you, I need to get going myself catch you around." With that

he left and stared down Robert. Robert looked completely different from earlier, he was almost unrecognizable. This outfit was freshly made, it was black leather for the duster, with a black vest to match, he had on a navy tunic and some navy slacks with dark leather chaps. His black boots were lined with metal. That wasn't the only metal he had on him, on his arms were a pair of gauntlets that looked down right hellish, with metal pauldrons to match. His sword arm had a plated metal band for full protection.

With the helmet off Alecia finally got a look at his face. His eyes were glowing red, but they were mostly black with red flecks. His face was clean shaven, and his hair kept short, it parted in the center where his bangs created a tufted fang like look. She couldn't help but smirk as she walked past him. "Look enough like death yet?" She waved him to follow as they walked back to the castle. "This contract doesn't really hold any weight, I think we both know your bluffing and it was just an excuse, lets head to the park and try this again."

At the park the two went to a more deserted part where they could talk a bit more freely. Alecia had Robert sit down at a bench as she took one across the table. "So, I take it you one of those demons I've been hearing about, and judging by your powers, I would say you were that angsty one that took over the cabin near the woods. Why are you here and why do you wish to be under my stead?"

Robert sighed and shifted some. "When I was born the first thing, I saw was the forest, it was beautiful, there were birds, deer, tiny rodent acorn loving creatures... It was much different then the mutation you see today. Around... eight years ago there was a scrap with some raiders at a nearby village. Some holy idiot decided to intervene and try to fight the bandits, I was indifferent to who won but then his "righteousness" decided to try to use the forest to stave off the bandits, so in my youthful age I tried to protect the forest. When our spells interacted, they created something... different." Alecia knew he was talking about the forbidden forest that cropped up when she was five, she also knew he was talking about Malik's parents. "I took their happiness away because they took mine that day. As for why I am with you, one of the bodies I snatched was caretaker of sorts, some bodies give more then I take, this one apparently had a conscience."

There was a short pause between sentences as he gathered his words. "I snatch bodies to survive, without a host I can't be corporal. These bodies last for a short amount of time when taken, usually the host stays alive throughout the entire ordeal, your guard friend here has been teaching me about your kingdom, their ways, and even how to fight. He is still alive as well, screaming very loudly at me to get out, this one has some strength to him...." It irked Alecia at how casual he was about this, she guessed when one has to live like this they get used to such conditions. "I will need more bodies, but that one body with conscience prevents me from just grabbing one, I want help to stay stable, before that body I was corrupting everything, I hurt people for sport, and I even started some territory disputes. What I want is someone who's willing to help me stay contained, and this body has taught a sense of duty and honor. I can't hurt you, you are the princess of these people and they need you now more than ever."

Alecia debated on what she was being told, on one hand this demon might be the source of their problems, on the other, he could be genuinely trying to reform as he takes on different personalities. It was another complicated situation but at least she was right on the contract being fake. She was still thinking when she finally found her voice. "So, you want me to help you find bodies, and keep you... more or less a lovable jerk?" She tilted her head to the other side and thought about it. "And in exchange for helping you, you will be my guard by choice? If we're doing this everything has to be done on friendly non-coercive terms, deal?" She reached out her paw for Robert to shake if he would accept being friends.

"Friendly? You want to be friends, with me? But I tried to hurt you and tried to force you into a contract." Robert was amazed at what he was hearing and stood up. "I... I'll take your friendship, I do hope you can learn to trust me too." He shook the cat's paw with his human hand looking up to Alecia who was smiling.

On the ship there was a folded over pup above deck. He tried staring at the horizon till he finally found some balance and walked over to where the helm was. He spotted the Doberman again and ran up to him. "Hoi! Do you know where the captain is?"

The Doberman quirked an eyebrow and shook his head to the right towards the door behind him. "Ya wait here though lad, no ones to disturb the cap'n while he's in there." Lego groaned and sat on the steps as he waited for Valen to come out. It felt like forever but eventually Valen came out of the back room and patted the sleeping pup on the shoulder.

"Wake up lad! Its time we get to proper training!" Valen barked some orders and cleared center of the brig. "We shall train here for today, you will earn your sea legs m'boy!" Malik nodded and got into the center with the bird. "First, we draw swords! Any beginning swordsman shall learn to fence, while we usually use a foil, our swords will be fine for the saber form which more common during scuffles." Lego nodded at the bird's words surprised at how knowledgeable he was. "Well? We haven't got all day whelp, draw your sword!"

With a firm no the bird was back with the pirate talk making Malik huff, he drew the sword and raised it up towards Valen. He naturally took a stance and held the sword with one hand as he shifted the rest of his weight and body behind his sword arm, the sword started glowing a bright blue again as it did before, making Malik's eyes glow the bright blue as well.

Valen was ecstatic, he finally found an Enochian and a relic to boot! This would make the training easier as the sword would start feeding him the previous users experience. Perhaps a little too easy though, the bird was back peddling throughout most of the sparing. Despite the attacks being misplaced or the form clunky his strikes were true and powerful. The bird decided that it was time to fight without holding back. He parried and reposed different attacks and started to gain ground on the pup as he started attacking nearer to different sides of his body. He focused his attacks on the chest letting the sword dance around the young form.

Malik was losing ground fast and started to lose focus causing his sword, Arend, to blink in and out his eyes also blinking. When he realized what was going on, he lifted his left hand which started to cool down rapidly evaporative smoke starting to form around the paw as he lifted it towards Valen. The bird cocked his head as he watched the new movement he jumped back and twisted the sword by its hilt using the broad side to deflect whatever was coming. Lego reeled his paw back before throwing a shaping ice bolt at the bird. To Valens surprise it had some force to it and blew him back knocking his guard away. While he was opening Malik formed a crude and misshapen dagger and was rushing towards the bird.

Valen was stumbling to get off his rear then heard a thud and some skidding, while he was working his way back onto his feet, the exertion of combined energy and mana was too much for the young pup making him falter on his run and trip into unconsciousness. He huffed and sheathed his cutlass walking over to the pup and gently nudging him over with a talon. "Now we see what kind of an angel you take after hmm?" He picked up the passed-out canid and carried him to his room.

Alecia was chilling in the castle chatting away with Robert. The demon and her had a lot in common that they didn't think about. He surprisingly got along with Oren and he was friendly once you look past the soul stealing. Alecia with her borrowed grimoire had found rejuvenation and extending magics to help keep his current body stable.

It wasn't a simple task to keep up with the decay, sometimes Alecia would herself with a disheveled and brutish guard that would be mean to others and rude. Through careful study of Roberts host and his possession technique the snow leopard was able to create a relation between his conscience and the lack of one. It was interesting to watch the demon change between a kindhearted person and an arrogant douchebag. She enjoyed her times with Robert as the years went by, he was a surprisingly good guard and an interesting person to know after getting over their first "awkward" meeting.

It turns out Malik's father and Robert were around the same time, to Alecia's knowledge he was one of the few people that had some sort of connection to Attarib. Alecia wanted to know more about Attarib, and she had already asked everything she could of Morrigan, but she was unsure if she could trust a demon's word. It might come off incredibly biased, but then again, she just made his body fresh, perhaps he won't lie to her and give her more substantial information. She took Robert over to a hidden waterfall at the base of the mountain just outside the castle.

She was ready to ask more questions about Attarib and figured while the body was fresh would be the best time. "Robert, do you remember anything about Malik's dad?". Alecia was starting at the waterfall before turning to face her guard.

The sun was glinting off the water and creating a shine behind the kitten, she was 17 now but she was still adorable looking to Robert. Despite her hard face she was still very soft looking, the light that radiated from her made him feel almost defenseless and somehow

happy. "Malik... the tiny red dog, right? Yes, I knew his father. Well, I wouldn't say I knew his father." Robert sighed and turned some. "What of it, and why ask now after 4 years since he left?" Alecia faltered in her look some but stayed determined staring at demon. He stepped back a bit knowing that look very well. "Very well, if you must know I'll explain what I can. Sit down and relax at least princess."

He got onto the ground and waited for the kitty to join him before resuming. "Evil, as you know, is drawn to good. I have seen him time to time, but I never actually met the person himself. He was, interesting..."