

Chapter 1

“What will you do with your life?”

I will be the strongest, and avenge you. After 4 long years, I’ve finally done it. I will walk out of this graduation hall, with my diploma in hand. This is the first step, and soon I will get my vengeance. “I’m sure many of you have asked this question to yourselves over your time here, but I want you all to know that life is a journey. We will not always know where we’re going or if we’re even on the right path, but that’s okay...”

The last part of the ceremony passed without much action, I couldn’t care less. I knew what I was going to do with my life, and that was making it to Soli, the head Church of the Brotherhood of Exorcists. As I leave the hall, I see Maxwell in my path. “Ready?” Maxwell is the exorcist who oversaw my training in Iros, a church under the management of Soli. He’s once again going to mentor me, but this time in Soli, where my training will continue and I will become a full-fledged exorcist.

“Ready,” I say as I enter the carriage behind him, back pack in hand. I see that they spared little to no expense in luxury, the carriage they sent has padded interiors, and gilded windows. Maxwell follows in with me, leaving us together alone for the several hour ride to Soli. The coachman driving conjured two spectral horses in front, which then proceeded to pull us forward.

“We’re expecting great things from you, Matt.” I flinch, I was hoping this could be a silent ride.

“I won’t let you down sir, I already graduated at the top of my class and I will continue to strive for greatness.” Ah, it just feels like I’m a broken record player. I’ve been saying the same thing for all these years, maybe at some point it was sincere, but not anymore. As we pass the countryside going to Soli, I gaze upon the villages in the distance. Where we’re at is mostly farmland, and I can see the farmers plowing the farm.

The carriage draws to a close as we come to the gates of a great stone building. It features huge stained glass windows decorating its cold gray brick walls. As the horses dissipate into glowing dust, we exit the carriage, flashing ourselves to the blinding sun. I step onto the cobbled path, soon turning into a purple carpet with a solid red line running the length into the entrance of the building. “I will now lead you to your dorm room.” Maxwell takes charge in front of me, leading me through the twisting and winding corridor.

“This is where the first years will be staying,” he says, pointing the way into a long hallway, “you will stay here until you decide your specialization and go on to live in your chosen branch’s dorm.”

He’s referring to the four branches of Soli: Foculus, Sana, Verpera, and Aurora. Foculus are the enchanters and blacksmiths of the Church. They make the majority of the equipment we use, and are all brilliant minds to engineer and innovate new methods to become more and more effective

at exorcisms. However all the Artificers I've seen have some screws loose in their head.

Sana is a branch dedicated to exorcists who practice with water magic above the rest. They also include the medics of the Church. They use their knowledge of magic to create healing potions and holy water as well as perform first aid on the field. Without them, the Church would have a lot less manpower than it does now.

Vespera is for the exorcists who focus on using ice magic to fortify themselves and charge through the enemies. They are masters of conjuring thick walls of ice to hold back enemy attacks as well as sending flying bolts of frost to slow down the enemy front line. I respect their ability and will to take the brunt of attacks and still stand tall.

Aurora. That is the branch that I will be going to. They are dedicated to the exorcist warriors that destroy the enemy with heavy fire and holy attacks. Most at this branch are the ones who finish off the monsters using fireballs and blazing columns. The more senior at this branch imbue their fire with aspects of gold, essentially smiting any Corruption. I can already cast a lot of the elementary spells, I just need them to teach me how to imbue gold into them.

"I already have my specialization decided," I want to get stronger as fast as possible.

"Branches are decided at the end of the year, at Aurum Sol. Until then, you are to stay here as a general apprentice. You best get along with your roommate, they're not here yet but they will be arriving soon." He gestures down the hall, "Your room is down to the right, room 323. I'll give you time to settle in before dinner. I expect to find you at the Dining Hall by 7." And with that he hands me a golden key before quickly turning and walking away.

I head to the door, it's a nice sturdy wooden door that features a golden brass doorknob with a keyhole above it. I insert the key, hearing the click of the turn. Before the door swings open, revealing a simple small room, with two windows showing off the outside. There are two desks featured in front of the window, right by a bunk bed on the left side. There's already some basic supplies on the desk, some quills and ink and parchment. I head to the closet to see uniforms prepared for me. There are neatly folded black slacks in the drawers, and a black blazer hanging up by some white shirts. There is an embroidered symbol on the blazer, featuring a purple crest with a ram head and crossed wands behind it. I don the suit, and start organizing my desk. I grab my backpack and grab out first my water canteen, and then a small framed painting. The painting is of my family by our pasture with a couple sheep in the background. It has my mother, my father, my older brother, and me. This painting was made by my older brother as a gift to me before I took my internship at Soli so long ago, so that I won't get home sick. It has an ash wood frame, and a carved out signature on the back. I prop it on my desk, and then pull out a small necklace from my bag. It's a carved ram horn, my family's heirloom that my grandpa made for my father that my father then gave to my brother. I hold it close, and then put it on. Just as I finish arranging my desk to my liking, the door slams open as a blonde man bursts through with two suitcases in hand. He turns his attention towards me and equips a wide grin, "Howdy! You must be my roommate, you can call me Georgie." He drops the suitcases by the closet.

"Matthew, nice to meet you."

“So formal,,, I’ll just call you Matt.” Before I could object, he quickly brushes past me, “Oooh! a bunk bed, I call the top!” He says before rushing rapidly climbing the bed and nestling himself on the sheets, “ Where did you come from Matt?”

“ South of here, where did you come from?” I pull the topic off of me.

“ I came all the way from Albeti, it’s a small town so I’m not surprised if you haven’t heard of it.” He makes grand gestures as he speaks, “ I worked as a farmhand over there, making sure to study hard so that I can come here”

I’m surprised he was able to come here with such a nonchalant attitude, most would kill to attend the prestigious Soli Academy. He must be hiding his true potential, but it’s not my concern. Before he can continue talking we hear loud bells ringing through the halls. The dinner is going to be starting soon, so we had to make haste. Georgie quickly put on his uniform before heading out, following the crowd that was heading to the Dinning Hall.

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