

The air is sweet. Rolen instinctively breathes deep, filling his lungs with it. His steps are slow and deliberate. In fact, it is not just his steps but everything around him that seems to be moving without time. The light shines with unnatural brightness through the canopy of the forest, delicately dancing with the wind and the leaves.

A pleasant light guides Rolen to a clearing of wildflowers of every color. In the center is a towering throne of twisted branches and vines, spotted here and there with delicate green leaves and beautiful white flowers. Upon it sits Obad-Hai, the Goddess of the woodlands, looking too small and fragile on the enormous natural throne. She beckons him forward with a genuine smile. As Rolen approaches his soul seems to fill with all things good. Without conscious thought, Rolen bows before the goddess, regretting only that he cannot see her beautiful face while doing so.



“Please,” says a sweet voice, “arise.” Rolen arises with anticipation. However, to his surprise, a hooded shadow dripping with blood has taken a place beside the throne of his beautiful goddess. Rolen reaches for his sword but finds he cannot move. He looks helplessly at his goddess, shocked regret upon his face as tears begin to fill his eyes.

“Please, my boy. My dear sweet boy. Do not be alarmed,” Obad-Hai implores with a motherly tone. She motions to the shadow, acknowledging it without emotion. “This is Morgion, the god of death and disease. I need him. We need him.”

The shadow glides toward Rolen, leaving blood smears on the flowers and leaves along the way. As it approaches Rolen is filled with an overwhelming desire to

run away, far away, as far away as he possibly can. However, his muscles hold him firmly in place.

“My sweet boy,” says Obad-Hai from her throne, lowering her delicate head as if ashamed. “I am sorry. Truly. But your mission is not yet accomplished.”

The shadow is closer now. The smell of rotting flesh is overwhelming. The bile rises in Rolen’s throat, threatening to spew forth.

“The Sword of the Woodlands must be reclaimed and we are running out of time. You are so close. Closer than anyone else. I must send you back.”

The shadow is upon him. Rolen vomits. He is staring helplessly, uncontrollably, into the black void of the hood. Slowly the darkness overcomes as everything else begins to fade.

“The sword must be reclaimed from the forest. Do this for me, and we will spend eternity together. One last time, Rolen of the forest. I need you one last time.”