

### **Just a Token (497 words)**

The fiend dashed across the empty street into a dark alley, and Whisper was right on its heels. She tackled it, and in a tangle of limbs, they burst through a wooden door. Odd-looking objects and jars cluttered the shelves and tables. Whisper dodged as a black tipped claw came too close for comfort.

The demon scrambled backwards, bumping into a shelf. Glass bottles fell and shattered, spilling its contents all over the fiend. Its lips suddenly stretched tight over its yellow rotting teeth, and its crimson eyes glazed over.

“Merfolk acid! What a classic,” a familiar voice said.

Whisper watched in annoyance as the vigilante Blade crossed his arms and leaned against the (now door-less) door frame.

Merfolk acid was a hallucinogen, and over-dose meant certain death. Judging by the amount of broken glass around it, there was no way it was going to survive, let alone answer her questions.

Whisper cursed. She grabbed a scantily clad statuette off the counter and chucked it at Blade.

Blade caught it effortlessly, “Hey! What was that for?”

“Thought you might need some help getting ladies,” Whisper growled.

“I’m only interested in one lady.” Even though his face was covered by black cloth, Whisper was sure he was grinning at her.

He looked down at the statuette, “You know, you really shouldn’t be throwing things around in a shop that sells Merfolk acid. Never know what you’ll get.”

“Probably nothing good. We should go before – ”

“Leaving so soon?” The statuette that she had thrown at Blade glowed blue in his hand.

With a startled gasp, Blade tossed the figurine away. Instead of falling, it sprouted wings. The fairy gave them a wide smile and began to gesture animatedly.

“I see you’ve dealt with the demon terrorising us this past month so I won’t charge you for the mess. Goodwill and all. Do feel free to look around! Faevor’s Curio shop has many a thing to offer.”

The fairy flew around the shelves pointing at various objects. "Can I interest you in a gnome's heart? Place one in your home and you'll never need to clean your house again!"

Blade and Whisper exchanged glances. They eyed the glass jars that contained what seemed to be various body parts and organs suspended in liquid.

"Or, how about a nail of a giant; you'll be unstoppable! Oh oh, this one's particularly popular –"

Blade cleared his throat, "Perhaps next time,". Though the fairy's smile didn't falter, Whisper thought she saw its eyes blaze in anger, but the expression quickly passed.

"Surely something here interests you, I don't ask much. Just a token, really. A trifle." It flew in front of Whisper. "You have beautiful eyes - shame you hide it under that vile magic."

"We should be going." Whisper said quickly. The fairy's unblinking eyes watched her as she pushed Blade out the door.

"That's unfortunate," the fairy said, "I do hope you'll be back. You'll need something here soon enough."