

A Fairy's Tale

A while ago, a close friend of mine, at least I like to think of him as a close friend, had several interesting things happen to him. This tale involved a necklace, an elf, a mermaid, a warrior, and an empire bent on destroying the world. I followed my friend through this, as he met allies and changed himself. My name is Tophet, and I am a fairy, probably about six inches high. (Sorry, I never took the time to measure myself in human lengths.)

Sadly, my friend, Chade, often takes advantage of my small size, though he has gotten better as of late. He used to bully me around and force me to do things for him. He didn't hate me, or even dislike me; I think I just annoyed him. But all I was trying to do was help him! I don't know why I even hung around him... but he has gotten better. Besides, this isn't my story; (though I did play a large role in it) it is his story, and it all started that time...

While walking a trail, we came across a note pinned to a tree. It was addressed to us, so they probably saw us coming. It simply stated that the village head of the upcoming village wished to hire us for a job. This was regular, and Chade decided to look into it.

We reached a village, which was rather expensive looking for being a forest village with no more than seven houses. I asked, looking around "Which one do you think the village head is in?"

"Eyes front" he responded in his usual smart aleck way. So I looked forward and saw a building much larger than any of the houses we had passed up until this.

"Wow."

"If you just paid attention you'd ask a lot less questions." We moved forward and went into the building. The village chief and a female swordsman who we would later find to be named Gehenna immediately greeted us. We

hadn't seen many people outside, and it was only once we entered that we found that this was a village of elves. This wouldn't end well; Chade doesn't like elves...

"You must be the hunter. I would like to propose a job offer."

"That was obvious by the letter, just tell me what the job is." This somewhat startled the chief, but he continued as though it hadn't been said.

"A necklace belonging to Gehenna here has been stolen and we would like you to get it back."

"Sorry, I don't do police work." And Chade began to turn around.

"Wait! It's not that simple. That necklace was one of three in the world that holds a mystic power. We fear it may get into the wrong hands and it could end with catastrophe!"

"What if some organization is trying to collect them to cause this destruction? Then why should I accept such a dangerous job from filth like elves?"

Gehenna then stepped forward, "Please! Please help get my pendant back!"

"Of course you'll be well-rewarded."

Chade was somewhat tweaked by this. He paused for a moment then said, "Fine! But that reward had better be worth it!"

"Thank you so much!" Gehenna said energetically.

"I'm already not liking this."

"We saw the man who took it, but we couldn't stop him. He went off to the east. We believe it was towards the mermaid village, which is supposed to hold another necklace. Oh! And Gehenna will be accompanying you."

From there, the new party of three set out. Chade said to himself, "Joyous, I get to travel with an elf. I really hate elves."

Gehenna responded, "And humans are any better!?"

"No, I hate humans more than elves."

"But aren't you...?"

"Yes, and I curse myself every day for it."

From there, we set out to get the remaining necklaces, to be positive they wouldn't fall into the wrong hands. Chade strode out front, with Gehenna now nervously following.

"Where did you say the next pendant is?" Chade asked Gehenna.

"It's to the east in the mermaid village. I believe it's in the possession of a girl named Sheol."

"Mermaids, finally, a group of people I can stand."

"Why do you hate elves and humans so much, anyway?"

"Because they're foolish, self-centered, belittling, malicious, and the scum of the planet." Again, they continued their voyage silently, until they got to the mermaid village.

They walked into the village, which looked interesting, since it was entirely afloat on the water. There were several people walking about on the wood planks, they were fully clothed in a rather elegant looking, sleeveless, thin shirt, and a pair of shorts and sandals. Other than them, looking out to the water, you could see a number of mermaids playing in the water.

One of the reasons that I follow Chade around is because he is much nobler than he acts. This was evident here, for other than the fish tail, these mermaids were wearing nothing but pieces of seaweed randomly strewn about their upper body; and Chade paid it no mind at all.

"It looks like we beat that thief here." I stated.

"Why do you think I made us walk here without rest?"

"We could have taken at least one break!" Gehenna said.

"Not if we wanted to beat the thief here. He'll be here at any time if he truly is heading here." It was at that, a mermaid swam to the plank we were on, and brought herself up upon it, so that she was sitting on the edge.

She looked at Chade and asked, "What brings someone as handsome as you here?" She was somewhat young, looked about eighteen. To Chade's early thirties, she was even more obviously young.

"We're looking for one of you named Sheol. We have some business with her."

“Well, you found me! I’m Sheol. What can I do to help?” I was surprised at first, that she wasn’t scared or even cautious of Chade. His large stature and strong build (not to mention the horse-slayer of a sword on his back) would put anyone on their guard, but she was completely trusting of him.

“I understand you have a pendant. A sort of necklace.”

“I have a few, but you must be speaking of this one...” She took the one off from around her own neck, her long aqua hair flowing elegantly over the necklace strand in the process.

“Is this it, Gehenna?”

“Yes, it’s identical to mine, it must be another one.”

“Why do you need to know about my necklace?”

“We believe a thief is on his way to steal it, he has already stolen Gehenna’s.”

“And you came here to valiantly protect me from this intruder!” Suddenly she was standing up, had legs, and was fully clothed like the other girls in the village. She threw her arms around Chade, and said “Thank you so much for such a noble deed!”

“Wait! I said no such thing!” But she was stuck to him now; she wouldn’t let go.

Gehenna blushed and drew an angry face. “How dare you do such a thing to a complete stranger! He said that wasn’t the case, now let go!” All of us looked at her somewhat awkwardly, before we noticed a robed figure behind her, slowly moving into the village.

His pace quickly picked up, as a shiny blade could be seen protruding from the base of the robe. He charged at Sheol. Chade grabbed the necklace from her hand and shoved her into the water, all in one movement with his left hand. With his right, he drew his large sword and blocked an incoming attack. He pushed him back, but before they continued, the figure noticed the pendant in Chade’s hand, and apparently realized the fight would not be so easily won.

The figure, in a quick move, leaped into the air, and into the leaves of some trees that were growing on the edge of the shore. Sheol, from there,

jumped back on the plank and again threw her arms around Chade. “You saved my life! Of course I would expect such a noble deed from *you*, my love!”

“What!?” (Does it really matter who said it?)

“I owe you my life! I’ll follow you to the ends of the earth, and repay you with my life and my love!”

“What!?” (This one was Chade, though.)

Chade started moving his arm about, trying to get her to let go. “Let go already!”

Once he said that, she immediately did. “Of course! I’ll do whatever you ask, my love!”

Chade then looked forward and saw Gehenna walking off, at least a good twenty yards away already. “Gehenna! Wait!” Chade went running off after her, me flying after him, and Sheol happily running after us.

We eventually caught up, and calmed her down. From there, the four of us, now with a new traveling companion, set out to the south, where the next pendant supposedly laid in rest.

We traveled for a bit, and eventually came to a town with an inn, in which we stayed the night. Very late at night, well after the girls were asleep, Chade and I, (mostly me), had an interesting discussion. Chade couldn’t sleep, so he stayed in the larger room, sitting on a sofa with his feet up on the table. I floated in and landed by his feet. “Can’t sleep?” He sat there, not responding. “You know, I’ve been doing some thinking, and I think Gehenna’s developed a crush on you.” Again, no response, “Every time Sheol shows any affection, Gehenna gets upset and the like, as though she’s jealous.” I paused again. His eyes were open, I know he was awake. “Come to think of it, I’m surprised, you’ve been a lot nicer to her than I imagined you would be to an elf. And I know you pretty well. Why have you been acting that way, anyway? Normally, you’d have bitten her head off by now.” Again, I paused, but he didn’t answer my question. I thought for a minute, then stated, “I’ve got it! You’re in love with Gehenna, aren’t you!” I almost couldn’t finish the sentence, before he crossed his legs, kicking me off the table, rather roughly.

“You really need to keep your mouth shut.” That was the only line he said. I decided not to bug him anymore, but as I was leaving, I heard him say, under his breath, “Ridiculous...”

We waited till morning, and from there, we made our way to the southwest. We eventually came to a beach, and started to wonder where the village was that the last necklace was supposed to be in. We followed the coastline for a bit, but to no avail. Eventually Gehenna noticed an island off in the distance. “Could it be there?”

“Most probably, but how will we get there?”

Sheol then happily interjected, “It doesn’t look dangerous, I’ll swim to the island and get it.”

“Okay, but be quick about it. Tophet, follow her.”

“Me?”

“Yes, you! Do you see any other six-inch fairies here!?”

“Okay, okay.” At that, Sheol dove in the water, and I followed. A distance out, she dove out of the water, like a dolphin, probably just trying to show off to Chade, but also to show off her mermaid form as well. She was a fast swimmer, and it took about all I had just to keep up with her.

Us fairies are very in tune with nature, and its from the trees and animals that I know what happened to Chade and Gehenna after we left. They told me this happened: The two of them stood around on that beach for a few minutes, without saying a word. After a bit, Chade started to walk off, and Gehenna asked, “Where are you going?”

“We don’t know how long they’ll be, so we might as well find a descent place to sit down. There should be a port town just over here.”

“Doesn’t that mean the pendant could be in that town?”

“It’s not, its too far west. Now come on.” The two walked to the town, and found a sort of café by the coast that they could sit outside and look at the ocean, Chade said that he “would be able to see Sheol coming back from there” so that’s where they waited.

But things didn't go so well on the island. Sheol had made it there, and was in the process of tracking down the one with the pendant, but apparently nobody knew who had it. It wasn't long before we saw the robed thief come by. He started demanding the pendant, and killing anyone whom didn't tell him. The whole village was running and hiding in fear, but he was tracking each person down. Sheol ran and hid as well. I told her in a panic that I'd get Chade, and flew off back to shore. There, the trees told me he went to the town, and I rushed to get him.

They had been silent for a while, but Gehenna started, "Um... Chade?"

"Hm?"

However at this moment I interrupted, yelling, "Chade!"

He stood up quickly, "What is it?"

"It's Sheol, the robed man, she's in danger!"

Chade ran off from there, tracking down the first boat he could find, person on it or not. He ended up with a boat with someone on it. He tried to stop him, but Chade just punched him off the boat, and started sailing towards the island. There was a good wind, and he made it quickly. I managed to grab hold of the sail, so I could come with him, but Gehenna couldn't keep up with his sprint.

We got to the island to find it in worse condition than I left it. We got to the town, which was burning a great fire, and there were dead bodies everywhere. Sheol rushed out to us, but Chade was focusing on the figure he saw walking out of the fire. It was the robed man, but his robe had burnt up. It showed a warrior, wearing upper body armor that was designed to look like a dragon.

"You're the man that stopped me before..." he said as he walked towards Chade.

"What do you want? What do you want with these pendants!?"

"I am Erebus, the king of the Barathrum Empire. My goal in getting these is revenge. Revenge on the world."

"Revenge? What did the world do to you!?"

"The world shunned me, turned its back on me. I have never been able to exist on this world. For not allowing me the simplicity of life here, I'll just destroy

it! These pendants hold a great power, if used correctly; I'll make sure nobody can live here! Only then will my life have meaning, will I have proof of my own existence!" He held up the pendant that he had found in this town. "All that's left is yours, but time is not on my side, I'll get it from you yet." He paused, but for only a second, "What can one person do to stop me!? I don't care if you know my plan or my history; it won't do you any good! All it accomplishes is giving you forewarning as to when you need to start praying!" He started laughing at that.

"I don't believe in God, but regardless, I won't let you do such a thing to all the innocent people here!"

"Good luck stopping me!" and at that, in a gush of wind, he was gone. Chade then turned to us, and told us we needed to get out of here. The village was dead, and was burning to the ground, there was nothing left here, but we'd be overcome by smoke if we stayed. And at that, we left. We sailed back to town on the ship Chade had taken, with Sheol sitting on the front of the boat in her mermaid form, looking out at the ocean.

We got back to town and found Gehenna, who seemed somewhat depressed. We decided that it was getting late and that we would head out in the morning. "He said he was the king of the Barathrum Empire, right? A terrible empire to the east. Let's rest up and head out in the morning.

That night, I was fluttering about, (because of our small bodies, fairies don't need much sleep) and I noticed Gehenna in the main room, apparently thinking about something. "What's up, Gehenna? Can't sleep?"

"No."

"Anticipation for what's to come?"

"That's not it. It's just that Chade rushed off so fast to save Sheol, leaving me behind. I guess you could call it jealousy, and I know it's silly, but that just made me realize I've got a bit of a crush on Chade."

I just floated there for a second, somewhat shocked. And she continued, "I guess I've realized the side of him that you've seen. The side that's much more honorable and noble than he leads on to. It seems as though he's acting that way because he's hurting inside. It may have something to do with why he hates

humans and elves. Since I am an elf, though, I doubt he could ever feel about me how I do about him.”

At that I started, “Actually, I think that he...” then I noticed Chade standing around the corner. How long had he been standing there? At noticing him, he walked out.

Upon seeing him, Gehenna blushed slightly, probably realizing that he must have heard everything she said, and she began, “Chade...”

He interrupted, “Now is not the time for emotion, we have much work ahead of us. Get some rest, we’ve got a big day tomorrow.”

“Right!” She was happy. This was probably because he didn’t deny or argue against anything. From there, we all rested till morning, when we set out for the Barathrum Empire.

They reached the empire late the next day, just after night fell. Sheol asked, “It’s night, should we wait till morning to move?”

Chade responded, “No, we’d probably be killed in our sleep. We move right now. There are too many guards, so sneaking in, especially with our colorful group, would be useless. Our best bet is just to rush in and cause as much destruction as possible. This should surprise them, especially since its night. OK, let’s go.”

The four of us rushed in, knocking down doors, killing random people that got in our way and so forth. Obviously Chade was the mainstay of our assault. He was right, it completely caught them off guard, in fact, since we moved quickly, we made it to Erebus’s throne room before the army could get its act together and make a counter-attack. Chade opened the door, (I’ve come to the conclusion that it was too big for him to knock over) and saw Erebus sitting on his throne, seemingly waiting for us.

“I see you’ve been expecting us.”

“Yes, and now I will take my pendant.”

Sheol chimed in, “How dare you! Do mean to say that you knew we were coming, but didn’t tell you’re men?”

“Yes, because once my plan is set in motion, we will all be killed. Their lives are insignificant.” Erebus stood up and began walking towards us, but stopped once he and Chade were completely in the open.

“I think I’m starting to understand you.” Chade began, “You’re like me. You lived your entire life with everyone hating you. I can imagine the angst that would stir up. I can, for the same happened to me. I grew up in a village of humans and elves, and it was there that I realized just how filthy they really are. I left that town as soon as I could, only to find that it was the same everywhere. I hated people, and they hated me, but I found how to live; and eked out a living in my own way. For someone like you, who only knows hatred, and has only lived with hatred...”

“Shut up! You can’t possibly understand what I’ve been through!”

“You’re wrong!” and at that, Chade dove towards Erebus. They both drew their swords, and a violent battle ensued. They traded blows for a good while, but Chade pulled off the win. Erebus stood back, holding his stomach.

“You are... much stronger than... I first thought... I may have... underestimated you... but this fight is long from over!” Erebus turned black, almost a liquid appearance, and quickly moved backwards into the next room.

Chade stood, holding his own wounds, “Someone with that much hatred, I don’t think I can kill someone with that much hatred.” He turned around and saw a number of guards rushing down the hall towards where they are. “Gehenna, Sheol. Think you two can hold them off?”

“Of course! These small fry should be no trouble. I am a swordswoman, after all. ”

“Good, you three stay here, I’m going in to end this.” At that Chade walked through the door to where Erebus went. Gehenna and Sheol got ready to hold off the assault. I, actually, sneaked back with Chade, so that I could see this battle.

When Chade entered, he saw a weird device behind Erebus. It appeared to have three glowing red orbs connected to it. This was more than likely the device Erebus was going to use to destroy the world. Erebus expanded his power, so that the entire room was engulfed with a pitch-black entity.

From there, the fight continued. Erebus attacked, but it was by manipulating the obscure area they were now in. He would swing large, whip-like things at Chade, which he managed to cut off. The assault continued until Chade had ended every attempt of an assault that Erebus had tried. Two red eyes appeared on the wall, Erebus, by now, was very mad. "I *will* kill you!" the room echoed. "Someone like you could never understand what I went through!"

"You don't understand the world! I hate it as much as you do, but I at least attempt to understand it!"

"Being all alone my entire life, not even this empire has offered me anything! It is filled with hatred and power! This aloneness, the hatred from it gives me power!"

"You'll never understand! True power does not come from such things!"

"Be quiet!" Chade was in no position to talk, he had warded off every attack, but doing so has left him seriously injured and out of energy. A large dragon's head dove out of the wall, going for Chade. It would eat him alive. Chade pulled his sword back and dove forward. The clash gave off a white light. I looked into this light, and saw the silhouettes of Chade and Erebus, in his human form. They dove at each other and swung. There was a clash, and the light cleared.

Once the light had cleared, Chade was crouching down across the room, blood dripping from him. Behind him, was Erebus, lying on his back, dying. Chade pulled himself up and walked over to him, "You don't understand. True power does not come from fighting for yourself, but from fighting to protect others. As long as you have the will to protect the life of another, you will always persevere."

Erebus lay there, and said, "I see now... I understand... Could I have been so wrong all this time?" At that Erebus closed his eyes; we were quite sure he had died. Chade took the necklaces from his hand, and Gehenna and Sheol came running into the room at that.

“They stopped attacking, apparently there aren’t many warriors left.” They both paused, and saw Erebus. They both yelled, “You did it!” and ran over to him, throwing their arms around him.

“OK, were done here, let’s go.” And at that we left. On our way back, we stopped by the mermaid village so Sheol could return home.

“Goodbye everyone. I would like to stay with you, but I would just get in the way. As long as Gehenna’s around, I know I don’t stand a chance with Chade. If you ever wish to visit, feel free. You will always have a home here. And I will always be a friend.”

We left the mermaid village and headed for Gehenna’s hometown. They gave the necklaces back, and collected the reward. Chade was somewhat irritated that it wasn’t as large as he would have liked it to be.

That is our adventure. Chade continued his life as a vagrant, but he and Gehenna cared enough for each other they traveled together, for neither of them wanted to be far from the other for too long. They were rarely seen again, just passing in and out of towns. Completing jobs quickly and efficiently, then moving on. It wasn’t long before they passed into legend. They were best know by the villages they had traveled to, the ones with the pendants, but they were also well known as the ones who caused the destruction of the Barathrum Empire, which had been a dangerous threat since it had been created. Also, though they worked as vagrants, they more or less established a residency in the mermaid village, so the four of us could stay living near each other.

That is our adventure; that is our legend.