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Some People Say

by James Stiffel

The wisened old man gently eased himself down onto the tree stump. He took a heavy, conceded sigh and stroked his long white beard.

“I am probably the only priest brave enough and... alive enough, who can tell you this.” He spoke nervously. His reluctant lips pressed together firmly, finding the words and memories.

“Some people say, that Draak-maka killed his mother, when he entered this world.” He swallowed. “...that he sliced her from womb to navel, to make sure none could be made stronger than he. Some people say, that when the gods created him, they were so filled with remorse, they killed themselves and the evil within their hearts leaked into the lands. Some people say, that he was forged in the mountains of ‘Forgotten Voices’ by the Elves after they lost their lands.”

Drudayus, normally so inquisitive and full of questions was solemnly still, empty of questions. Bar one.

“Where do you think he came from, Thayadese?” he said. His stew growing tepid as it trickled down his unbeknowing hand. Thayadese closed his eyes for some seconds before continuing. His eyelids battling with some hidden trauma.

“I believe the rumours of the Trinitus woodland folk. That he was neither conceived nor of deliberate design for malicious intent.” Thayadese narrowed his eyes as if seeing through a thick fog. “He was naturally...manifested...from 1000 broken hearts. Just as chemicals once intertwined together in a beautiful embrace of union from the first life tonic, so too did the despairing souls of unloved lovers, made so by loss or by self murder.” He let out a raspy, relieved breath.

“Alas, whatever the tale, he...exists. Evil is upon us all. Yet with every unbalance, a balance. With every sickness, a cure.” He turned to Drudayus with wonder in his eyes. “With every chaos there is hope, Drudayus. There was one other who cried his first cry the same day as Draak-maka. It was you. This is why he killed your father and made your mother infertile. So that his undoing could not come to pass. He found out what you were but not of where you were.” Thayadese waved a hand in the air. “And he wasn’t about to let you take away this land from him.”

Drudayus stood up uneasily. He looked towards the grass with the look of certainty that came before vomiting. He looked out over the sprawling countryside. The suns were setting. The sky looked deep enough to swim in. An unending ocean of orange and yellow met Drudayus’s gaze. The suns left today and lead the way to tomorrow. But what fool kept hope for tomorrow in these uncertain days? What lay beyond the light of today?

“Drudayus?” Thayadese broke him from his far away longings. “Can you be the man we need you to be? Can you pierce Draak-maka’s heart and bring peace back to our lands?” Drudayus turned to look at the suffering in Thayadese’s eyes. He dared not answer.