

THE
ELEMENTLESS
MAGICIAN

S.E. DERACY

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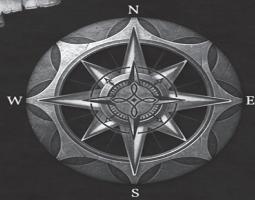
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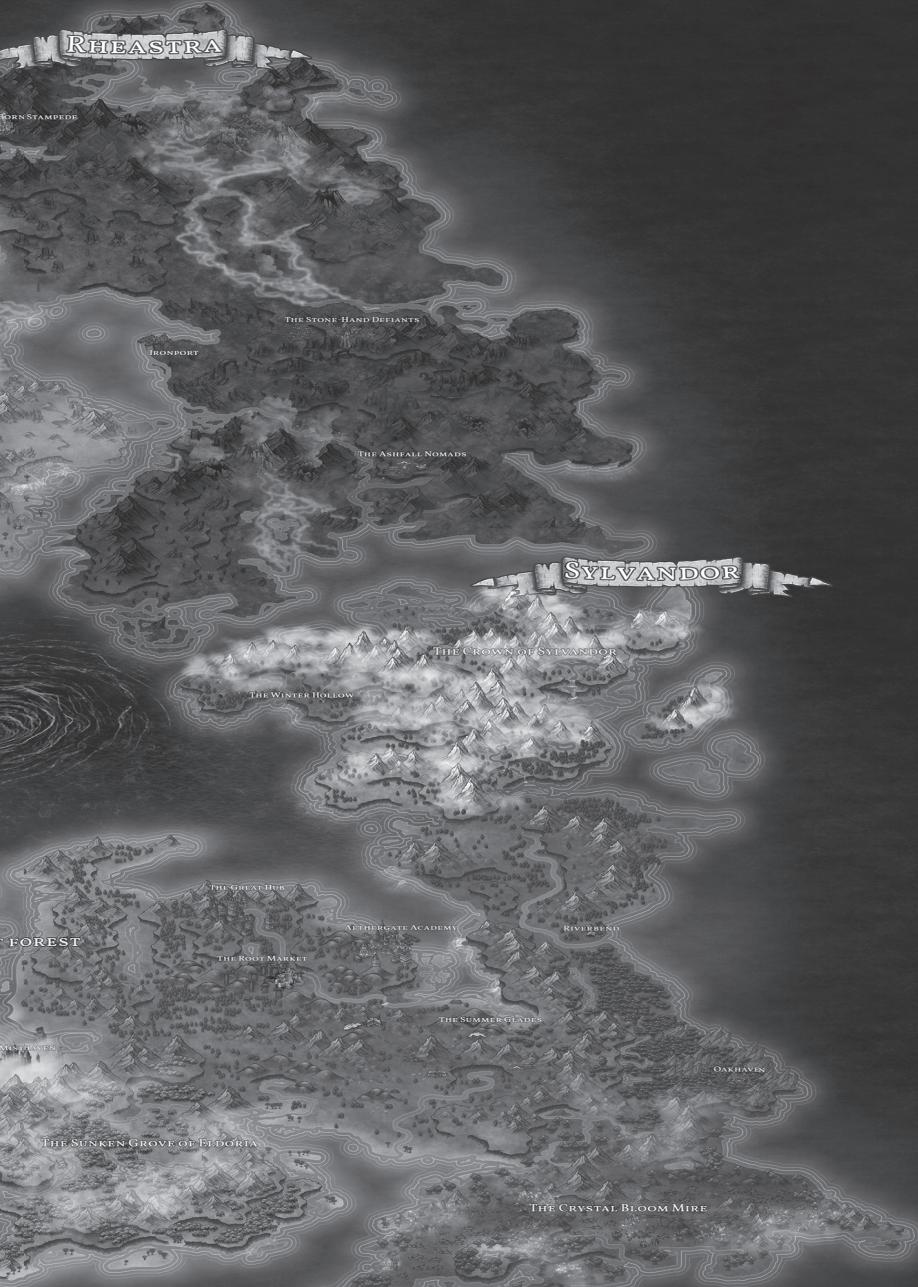
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EURION





PROLOGUE



Magic. The lifeblood of Eurion. The unseen current from which the Three Continents—Rheastrā, Sylvandor, and Ayealon—rose. Those who wielded it held the quills that wrote history.

The path to mastery wound through mana circles—rings of power that tamed chaos into form. Ten circles marked the mortal limit. Only one had stepped beyond: Merlin, the Ascendant, who carved new rings—eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth—into the fabric of magic itself. His name was spoken in reverence, in fear, in longing.

Far east in Ayealon, the Velaris residence loomed like a fortress of still water, its stone corridors steeped in the scent of lavender and jasmine. Magic hummed in its walls, subtle as the breath before a storm.

In the queen's chamber, Emelina Velaris strained in the throes of birth beneath silken canopies painted with ocean swells. Sweat beaded on her brow, catching the candlelight like morning dew. The room held its breath with her, attendants frozen mid-motion. Then the air

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shifted—an invisible tide pressing down, swaying the hanging silks and snuffing half the candles.

A voice rolled through every mind in Eurion.

“People of Eurion...”

Ancient magic threaded each syllable, resonating in bone and blood. Emelina’s attendants exchanged wild-eyed glances. She stiffened—the tone unmistakable.

Merlin.

“My time has come. The sun sets on my era.”

From marketplaces to mountaintops, the world stilled.

“A darkness rises that only one can avert. Even now, a child enters this world who will surpass all who came before. Guide them, as you once guided me. My legacy rests on Three Great Trials. Complete them, and the resulting power will form the ultimate bulwark against the Void.”

Fear cracked the silence, just enough for hope to seep in.

“When the time is right, I will proclaim my successor. They will gather strength, forge a united light, and face the hunger that seeks to consume us. Have faith. The light will prevail.”

The voice faded. Silence swelled in its place.

All eyes turned to Emelina, who cradled newborn twins, their cries the first ripples in the pond of their lives.

In his study nearby, Torin Velaris tapped a quill against parchment, waiting. “These twins,” he stated, his voice low, “will lift our name higher than tide or storm.”

A shadow detached from the corner at his summons.

PROLOGUE

“Lucian—send word to the Council,” Torin commanded. “The heirs have come. The Velaris family is ready to claim its destiny.”

The newborns’ wails tangled with the crackle of fire. A new chapter in Eurion’s history had begun, its pages yet unwritten.

CHAPTER 1



The Pendulum's Swing

Eighteen years had flowed like a river since the Proclamation of Merlin, forging the Velaris twins, Abel and Cain, into young men. On their eighteenth birthday, sunlight spilled through tall windows, bright as if the day itself knew its importance.

The Affinity Attunement Ceremony awaited.

Their chamber rang not with celebration but the clash of spells. Dark indigo robes swirled around them, a declaration of the pure Water Affinity their lineage demanded. Sweat stung Abel's eyes. His muscles coiled tight, trembling with the sheer force of will required to hold his focus. Cain's face was dry, his movements a flawless, liquid dance, perfectly aligned with the Water element he commanded.

Abel struck first with a Wind vortex. The air current that ripped from his palms was the expected clear white of Air magic, but traces of violet coursed through

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it. The air current grated with a low, ragged sound—a dissonance that suggested the spell might tear itself apart. He gritted his teeth, forcing the unstable power to hold its elemental form.

“Ventus Impetus!”

Cain, his expression calm, his focus unwavering, countered with a surge of water.

“Aqua Murus!” he intoned, and a shimmering wall of water rose before him, deflecting the wind’s fury. Droplets clung to the air, momentarily suspended like glittering jewels. He held the shield with no visible effort, his gaze steady on his brother.

“You’re getting predictable, brother,” Cain said with a smirk, snapping a whip of water low toward Abel’s legs.

Abel sprang up on a current of wind, flame blooming in his hand. *“Ignis!”* The burst hissed against the thin film of water Cain had drawn over his robes, vanishing into steam. The steam didn’t rise white; it lingered heavy and gray, smelling of ozone.

“Pretty, but pointless.” Cain’s eyes softened. “We’re Velaris, Abel. Water will come if you let it.”

Abel bit down on the frustration rising in his chest. “Easy for you to say.”

He tried again. A ribbon of water shivered into being, then broke apart in the dry air.

Abel moved his hands like sweeping tides, forcing the air around Cain to thicken, the humidity rising sharply. A fine mist swirled, obscuring Abel’s position. Cain, his senses heightened, extended his awareness, feeling the subtle shifts in pressure. He knew Abel was

THE PENDULUM'S SWING

hiding, trying a new angle, but there was an unsettling tremor in the mana.

“You’re trying to blind me?” Cain chuckled. “A clever trick, but you forget who you’re dealing with.”

Cain closed his eyes, his breathing slow and deliberate. *“Aqua Sensus,”* he said, and the mist around him vibrated, revealing Abel’s exact location, a faint ripple in the ethereal cloud.

Cain spun, his hand slicing through the air. A blade of water, thin and tightly controlled, shot towards Abel. It was a warning, a precision strike, designed to tap, not wound.

Abel, caught off guard, barely managed to raise a shield of air. The unstable barrier shuddered as the water blade struck, the impact jarring him to his marrow. The wind dissipated, leaving behind a stinging spray. He stumbled back, shaking his head.

Abel looked up at his brother, holding back a bitter laugh. No matter what he tried, the result was always the same.

Cain crossed the distance to place a hand on Abel’s shoulder, a look of genuine pride in his eyes. “You’re getting better, little brother,” he said. “But you still have much to learn. Focus on water, Abel. Trust its flow.”

Abel’s chest burned, his face flushed with exertion and frustration. Cain could never understand. He was the sun and the tide—the pure, effortless embodiment of magic.

Rumors of Merlin’s heir coming from the Velaris family had plagued their childhood. Both twins had an

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equal stake. But even as a child, when they could finally read, Abel had known it couldn't be him. How could he, who sweated and clenched his jaw just to conjure a flutter of wind, ever compare to the force that was Cain? Merlin's true successor.

However, Abel did his best to force a weak smile. "Right. Next time, the roles will be reversed." The words were a lie, but the frustration wasn't.

Cain removed his hand from Abel's shoulder, his smile tight and sincere. "I believe that," he said with an easy shrug. "Let's spar again after the ceremony."

A sharp rap on the door silenced the room, drawing the twins' attention. The door swung open, revealing an attendant in the Velaris family's ceremonial robes, the deep indigo fabric. The color, representing the deepest parts of the ocean, was the signature of the Velaris lineage's Water affinity.

The attendant bowed low, his expression rigid. "My lords," he announced, his voice strained with urgency, "you are needed in the Tides of Eurion. The time has come."

Cain moved toward the door; Abel's feet felt nailed to the floor. Abel felt a chill, deeper than fear, touch his spine.

"Come on," Cain said, steering Abel toward the hall. "Before the patriarch loses his patience."