

“The Danae people love life, celebration, and kindness. Their heart is the greatest strength they have.”

-Tavid the Traveler

Koliada: Journey of Sorrow

The dark evening flickered with bonfire light and warmth, making the man smile. There were people everywhere, dancing, singing, eating, drinking, and generally enjoying their existence. Many of the Danae were beautiful and he acknowledged the pleasure of gazing at them for a moment, but his eyes were only on one woman tonight. He couldn't believe that she would eventually give birth to his sister. A twig snapped in response to footfalls on his left and he turned immediately.

The man smiled as a small lithe form he knew materialized out of the darkness. He replied as though he didn't know her, one could never be sure of who was listening, especially here. “You're a far ways from home Shedon.”

She laughed, that musical soft lilt of hers making him smile again as it always did. “You are also very far from home, farm boy. What are you doing here?” His eyes sharpened and she laughed at him again. “No one is listening. Besides, why would they care? We're just two old friends enjoying the evening aren't we?” She lifted an ale mug and took a long draft while waiting for him to reply.

He nodded and smiled, though still not completely convinced, secrecy had been his ally for a very long time. “I am watching her, and making sure that things happen how they are supposed to.”

She looked at him rather suspiciously, which for her was saying something. “I still cannot fathom how you got access to that. I hope that you know what you're doing, farm boy.”



He rolled his eyes in an exaggerated fashion. "Indeed. Do you see that woman dancing over there?" He motioned his head and she looked, then smiled mischievously.

"She's very pretty, do you fancy her?"

His eyes widened and she laughed even more. "No, that's not what I mean! She's going to give birth to a baby girl who's very important, in about a year." He looked away for a moment, out into the dark. "I'm sad for what she has to go through, but some things have to happen in order to save us all."

"That knowledge of yours must be heavy sometimes. We should go join the party, you can watch her just as easily while dancing, instead of brooding by yourself in the dark. You deserve one night of fun farm boy, and besides it's been forever since you and I danced!"

A man came to join the woman he'd been watching and he tensed, suddenly growing angry. He wanted to rip the man's throat out for what he had done to his mother, and for what would happen to this woman too, but he couldn't yet.

His friend put her hand on his shoulder. "Is that him? I'm sorry, this must be painful for you." She hugged him and kissed his cheek. "We can dance another time, I'm sure we will see each other again."

He sighed and let the tension go, he was doing the right thing. "We should go dance, it has been a very long time. I've missed our talks. What do they call you here?"

She stepped back and ruffled his hair affectionately as she always did. "Having different names everywhere is way too much work for me. I'm



Myrtle here, like everywhere.” She laughed at his startlement, then raised her eyebrow at him. “What about you?”

“Elwin.” Myrtle started laughing immediately, a deep belly laugh that made her bend over. “I thought it sounded normal and forgetful, I am trying to stay unnoticed.”

She finally stood back up and wiped her eyes, which were still twinkling with mirth. “You are probably right, that name is so moronic no one will remember it.”

He started laughing too, Myrtle had a way of bringing that out of him. “Come on, let's go dance.” He raised his hand up and she took it, after setting her mug of ale down on a nearby tree stump, a smile of pure joy lit up her face.

They chose a spot near the woman he'd been watching and started dancing. Every time she came close Myrtle asked him questions about what he was doing and who the woman was. “What's her name and why are you watching her?”

“Her name is Niomh, and she's incredibly important for everything that's going to happen. Even more so her daughter will be important.”

Myrtle wiggled her eyebrows at him. “Her daughter? She doesn't look pregnant.”

He laughed and caught her in his arms, before spinning her around him. “The man she's dancing with will be the father.”

A note of seriousness entered her eyes. “That means the baby is going to be your sister, doesn't it?”



He nodded. "She is, I can't wait for you to meet her, she's so beautiful, strong, and intelligent." He felt the sadness close in again for a few heartbeats. "But her mother has to go on her journey of sorrow first."

She looked at him, sadness touching her eyes too. "That's why you're actually here isn't it?" She looked at Niomh, still dancing with the man. "I saw the way she looks at him, you don't have to do anything here. You're just watching and getting all muddled up inside because you're you." She kissed him on the cheek again as she came close so they could dance slower.

He laid his forehead against hers. "I don't like seeing people I care about, especially my family and those I love, getting hurt."

"I know, farm boy. But we live in the real world, love always comes with pain too." She looked into his eyes. "How will her daughter be so important?"

He finally smiled a little before answering. "She will be a Weaver, a strong one."

Myrtle blinked a few times before laughing. "I just realized something! They're the woman and child on the ship aren't they!?"

He nodded and looked at Niomh again. Sadness, love, happiness, and sorrow all warring inside of him. She was kissing the man now, while they held each other, dancing slowly. "She is indeed. Everything Rosalie becomes depends on those two."



