

Roiling coils of energy, crackling, like imps laughing in the dark, burned all around my body. Just when I could take no more they dissipated. When my eyesight came back to me I was in a small room, my companions close by me, all of us huddled on a raised platform that continued to hum even after its work had been done. It was the warlord and the fighter who jumped off the platform first and wondered aloud where we were. I laughed silently to myself. I was expecting something like this. The last time we used this transporter pad to gain entry to the, aptly named, Blood Caravan, we appeared in a large open room. This time we ended up in a supply closet, I was not even sure we were on the Caravan. Only the gentle rocking motion of being on a large moving structure betrayed our actual presence.

The fighter opened the door and we filed out into a long narrow hallway. I reached into the pouch at my side and reached in, placing my hand around the Devil's Hand. Immediately, another voice entered my mind, joining my own. As the group busied themselves with searching a small empty room at the far end of the hall my mind was in a state of turmoil. Ever since the first time I laid hand on the broken hilt of the Traitor's Lot it had been that way. When I used it, its personality became part of my own. It was always angry, always hunting for those who had caused it harm. And while I was using it, it was using me. I was its implement for rejoining its severed half, and together we were more than I ever was.

It was with its voice whispering in my mind that my companions and I entered another room, this one with someone else in it. A genosi, and one who appeared eager to talk. The half elemental's skin was black, like volcanic rock, and his voice like gravel. As our wizard engaged him in conversation, attempting to learn the whereabouts of the mastermind behind the Caravan, the Hand urged me to strike. It was bored and eager to move deeper into the structure. Its urgency became my own when soft muffled music reached us through the walls, my heart raced as its blood lust rose to the the surface. It became warm in my hand, and without any effort my hand rose and a sizzling bold of eldritch energy flared from it.

The genosi dove for the floor as the bolt smashed into the wall behind him, causing the lit lumps around the room to quiver. One of them fell to the floor, but instead of going out or spreading its flame, the fire pooled on the ground as if it were liquid. The genosi, now on his feet, laughed and raised a rod of his own. With a flick of his wrist the lamp on the floor, and the ones still on the wall exploded, the flames expanding into roiling humanoid forms.

The battle was quick and brutal. The close quarters afforded my party little escape from the fire. The voice in my head laughed as the flames lapped at my skin, the fire doing me no more harm than a sunburn. After the flames had dissipated, and the genosi lay crumpled on the floor, I reached down and ripped the rod from his blackened hand. My group licked their wounds as the Hand explained to me what the rod was. Inside was a small spark of elemental flame, if prompted it could call a flamespark from the Feywild to help burn down my enemies. I placed it inside my pouch and we once again set off.

The next room we came across had lone creature inside, a vile succubus. She was lounging on a couch and was intrigued by our presence. My group, all of whom are male, fell over themselves to speak to her, with our warlord winning out. He gleaned from her that the leader of the Caravan, a lazy and indulgent spine devil, employed a

blood letter as a bodyguard, all the while hatred seeped up within me. My race, the tiefling race, was betrayed by devils like her, left with a shattered empire, and plagued by mistrust. My drive to seek the ways of the warlock was derived from the desire to use the power of my enemy against them. As my own rage intensified it was joined with the Hand's, boiling inside of me like burning pitch. My passion erupted and I was dragged kicking from the room by my party, while the succubus' laugh echoed through the hallway. My anger subsided as I realized that my outburst had pulled my group from her enchanted voice.

As we ascended a staircase, at the end of the hall, the sound of music become stronger and the Hand became more agitated. At the top of the staircase we entered a large room with a stage that dominated one wall. Facing it was a bench with a lone satyr, a small pan flute to his lips. As we moved further into the room it became apparent that the music coming from his flute was not the only source for the haunting melody. shadowy forms, clutching equally insubstantial instruments played on the stage. The satyr was commanding a troupe of ghostly musicians with his seemingly magical flute.

His head slowly turned to our group and he lazily asked us what our business was. A lie about being here to collect on a debt to the spine devil sated his interest and he once again raised the flute to his mouth and began to play. It was at this moment that the Hand's rage swelled inside of me with such power that I almost screamed with the intensity of it. Whether it was the expression on my pained face or a desire for action, I don't know, but the warlord, catching the satyr off guard, attacked him with a well placed blow to the back of the head. But satyrs are not so easily brought down, especially not this one. I knew that he was one of those responsible for the mutilation of the Traitor's Lot, and his death was now my responsibility.

As we fought little was on my mind except for the death of the satyr. As our cleric turned the ghosts, scattering them across the room, I joined the fighter and warlord as we brought the battle to the devil. As he was brought down I raised the Hand and moved to drive it through his skull, its voice in my head yearning for the blood of the satyr. It was then that he removed a small stone from his cloak and touched it to the Hand, a second before it would have entered his hideous skull. It was as if someone had reached inside my head and pulled out my mind. And as the Hand disappeared from my grasp I could feel its elation.

I fell to the floor beside the satyr, who with his last gasping breaths was laughing at me, my hand now empty. As I laid there my companions huddled around me, the world moved in slow motion. For over a month I had lived with this second voice, filling me with a passion and drive that I had not felt since The End destroyed all that I knew.

My companions helped me to my feet and the cleric pushed a battle worn rod into my hands. It was cold and lifeless, and made my loss that much deeper. The wizard picked up the small stone, that had fallen from the now dead satyr's hand, and pronounced that it was a teleportation stone, and that it must have sent the Hand to the satyr's master. I knew that it was what the Hand wanted, it was now closer to its goals, but I was without it.

Through my grief I heard a yelled expletive from the fighter as he dove for the ground. Through the a window I saw a moving platform race towards us, and in a moment it had slammed into the building, smashing the wall into rubble with the force of

it. A quartet of blood letters rushed into the room, the same group that had attacked us several weeks before, a battle in which I barely made it out with my life. And yet, I felt nothing, no hatred and no need for retaliation. It was as if I was dead inside.

The fight was long and arduous, but we were victorious. My companion's celebrations barely reached my ears as I silently wept for my loss. But it was no time for grieving, we were now close to our quarry. We found him, and his body guard, in a large chamber with a sunken platform, where he lounged on a gigantic throne. The devil was grotesque, an amorphous shape with spines jutting out from almost every inch of his disgusting body. In his rage he sent his guard to dispose of us, greatly underestimating our power. We kept the blood letter from ascending the stairs and rather quickly burned him down. It was then only a matter of keeping our distance from the energy sapping aura of the Caravan's leader as we hurled arcane energies against him.

In the end we were victorious. With his death the Caravan lurched as the Bullets that pulled it broke free from the Caravan's sway, diving back into the earth. We were lucky not to be harmed as the enormous structure collapsed upon the Black Plains. As we searched the now empty halls, collecting everything of value we could carry with us, I could not help but feel that no amount of gold could fill the void in my mind, where the whispering voice of the Hand used to reside.