



## *Righting the Wrongs, Part 2*

by cjpearson03

H'Drin was fortunate enough to cover about one hundred more miles in the past week. Stopping only every now and then for food, he was able to gain more ground on his destination: The High Hills. Memories of the M'teoulin continued washing over his mind.

Children screaming.

Mothers clutching their babies.

Fathers, husbands, and men bleeding, laying upon the ground, having given their lives to protect the ones they loved.

Where was he? Where was H'Drin? He was sitting, as still as stone, in the form of a bird, watching the battle wage beneath him. Considering his age, only twenty-eight, he should have joined the fight.

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Instead he sat, watching his kinsmen die under the dark and bloodied knives and then as soon as the M'teoulin appeared, they vanished into the night taking captives into the darkness. H'Drin, over the past several months, tried to block out the emotions tied to what he realized was his own betrayal, but he could not. As these memories continued to flood, H'Drin found himself at the base of a family of mountains and decided that such a place would be the best place to camp for the evening. After looking around for several hours, he found a small cave that would be perfect for his needs. He removed his clothes and transformed himself into a wolf in order to hunt for his supper. As he had no fire to cook his food, he would only be able to stand the taste of raw meat in his wolf form.

However, H'Drin quickly forgot about food once his human nose was transformed into the keen sense of his new form. He sniffed the air and smelled...slime? Yes, slime and dirt mixed with human scents. While H'Drin proved himself to be a coward in battle, he often excelled at curiosity. Slowly following the scent, he made his way into an area that was not as dense with trees. Coming upon the origin of the smell, H'Drin's new senses nearly made him vomit as the scent of slime became stronger and stronger. Finally, he saw what drew him to the clearing. Five men, or what looked like men, covered in slime huddled around another form that became blackened right in front of his eyes.

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“*What is that?*” H’Drin thought to himself as he crept closer but remained hidden between trees. The moonlight glistened off the forms of the man-like creatures and H’Drin found it odd that some of them even wore clothes. As he tried to approach closer his back foot landed upon a twig and snapped it in half, provoking the creatures’ attention. They did not speak to one another, but moved slowly throughout the area, looking for the origin of the sound. H’Drin was going to run, but as the creatures disbanded he saw woman, who seemed to be badly hurt, lying on the ground. Sprinting up to her, H’Drin sniffed her body and realized, where the creatures smelled like slime, she was a mixture of human and slime, as an inky black substance moved around her body.

He pushed at the woman with his front paw, but she was either dead or in a deep sleep. Maybe something worse. Even as H’Drin stared at her, he could tell her scent was growing more and more noxious to him. She began to look like one of the creatures as her skin became dull and grayish in the moonlight. Curiosity finally released H’Drin from its grip. He slowly backed away from the changing woman, but it was too late. As he turned around he came face-to-face with one of the five creatures. Slime dripped from its tentacled mouth and yellow eyes searched H’Drin, as though trying to figure out what it should do with him.

H’Drin began to back away, but the movement provoked the monster. It leapt at him, scratching with its claws. H’Drin let out a primal yelp and tried to dart away, but found himself standing before yet another creature. This time he merely cowered like a pup who had been disciplined. He whined softly, fully believing he was about to die. The creature bared its teeth and lunged, but not at H’Drin. In the fear of being killed, H’Drin had not realized that the scents of the air had once again changed from slime and dirt to human. Turning around he could see a young woman with a bow in her hand, aiming at the creature that jumped over him.

“That’s it, just keep coming. I could bump off you grey ones all day long!” She let loose an arrow, landing it straight in the maw of airborne creature. H’Drin could see that one was coming from behind her and let out a bellowing howl to warn her. The woman spun around, but not before she was clawed in the back. Not missing a beat, she dropped her bow and pulled out a dagger. The grey one spat a sharp object, which she ducked as she jabbed the dagger into the neck of the attacker.

“Thanks!” She shouted at H’Drin, and then flung her dagger his direction. Her speed was such that he barely had time to react before the weapon made an entrance into one of the



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creatures standing behind him.

“Now we’re even! Three down, do you smell anymore in the area, boy?” But all H’Drin could do was back up, farther and farther until his backside hit a tree.

The young woman, who looked in her mid-teens, moved closer to him, “What’s wrong boy? I can’t hear your thoughts.” She moved upon him, knelt down and stroked his fur, obviously trying to calm him down. Out of the corner of her eye could she see the last two grey ones approaching them.

“All right, well, I hope you can understand me, boy. I’ll take the one on the right and you the one on the left. Got it?” H’Drin’s yellow wolf eyes widened at the thought of purposefully fighting one the things that attacked him. She obviously took his expression to mean he agreed with the plan. She moved forward to attack the monster on the right, removing a second dagger from her boot, but. As she engaged it, the one on the left began to circle around, trying to find a strategic position to enter the fight.

“Alright, pup, any minute now would be awesome!” H’Drin began to shake even more as he understood the woman was going to be in trouble if he did not move. He steadied himself and rushed at the one circling the fight, tackling him, but all the while shivering with apprehension, with fear. As if coming to himself, H’Drin backed off the fallen creature, cowering once again and backing up.

“What is wrong with you, pup?!” She killed the grey one she was fighting, again dodging a projectile. But H’Drin was not so lucky. As he retreated backwards, and before the young woman could help him, an object flew from the creature’s mouth, landing in H’Drin’s shoulder.

“No!” The woman seemed to fly in fury at the creature, stabbing it with her dagger in a frenzy of blackish blood. “Pup?” She spun around to see that H’Drin was no longer there.

He was running, trying desperately to make his way back to his cave and shake off whatever he was feeling. Darkness seemed to swoop over him and a muddled voice tried to surround him, but he could not make out the words. Finally he made it back to his cave and transformed back into his own shape. Grabbing his bag he did the only thing he could think of doing: he fumbled with the vials he stole from the Alchemists and drank two of the three before falling down, exhausted and groaning in pain. His eyes grew heavy in the darkness of the cave, as all he wanted to do was throw up. But as he drifted, he could see a shape in the entrance of the cave.





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“Are you in here pup?” The young woman from the fight called out to him. The shadow came closer to H’Drin as he squirmed and fought the darkness around him.

“Oh, Na'naat! You’re a shape-shifter!” She ran over to H’Drin, who was still writhing on the ground. She pulled a vial from her bag and forced it into his mouth, but most of it dribbled out. H’Drin’s eyes began to close as he heard a voice. It was not his own or the young woman’s.

“Come to us...”



“M'teoulin” created by Thomas Ryan in “[Rain in the Spring, Part 1](#)”

“Grey ones” created by Rūne in “[Ambush in the Night](#)”

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