

## Chapter 1

Aaron tried to tune out the ruckus coming from the entrance of the library. Not that he didn't want to know what was going on. The problem was that he had a massive pile of books that needed to be reshelved. Aaron knew that as soon as he diverted his attention from the task one of the librarians was bound to appear and scold him.

The noise increased again. Normally the library was quiet. Apparently whatever was happening was a big deal. For a moment Aaron wondered if the library was under attack. Nobody was screaming though.

Finally his curiosity overcame his fear of being scolded yet again. Walking through the various shelves Aaron finally got close enough to see what was going on. There was a crowd gathered around a group of mages.

Aaron recognized the mage at the center of the crowd. Josh was widely considered to be a paragon among mages. Young, handsome, and arrogant. He loved to lord himself over everyone else. Especially those with weak magical talent such as Aaron.

He had only run into Josh a few times. That had been enough to convince Aaron that it would be better if he stayed away from him. That didn't stop him from seeking Aaron out though. Luckily inside the library all he could do was make a nuisance of himself by requesting that Aaron find various books.

Aaron jumped as a hand dropped down on his shoulder. "What are you doing over here? Why aren't you shelving books?" A familiar voice said angrily.

Shuddering Aaron realized that the head librarian had found him. Head librarian Black was a truly terrifying mage. Thinking quickly he tried to come up with some reason why he wasn't slacking off from his job. Finally he decided that he could bend the truth just enough to get out of trouble.

"I heard all the noise and thought I should investigate to see if anyone needed help. It looks like I was wrong though. I'll return to my work right away." Aaron said praying that she wouldn't punish him. Not that she used physical pain as punishment. Instead she would just assign him extra work. Last time she had ordered him to do a complete inventory of the elemental magic section. He had ended up working through the night to complete it.

"I suppose I can't blame you considering how loud this group of buffoons is." She said with an evil looking grin.

Aaron shuddered as she held up a small bag. Reaching inside she pulled out a glowing crystal. He was sure that whatever she wanted him to do with the crystal wouldn't be pleasant.

"You know where the heart of the library is right?" The head librarian asked.

Reluctantly Aaron nodded. It wasn't like he could ignore something so visible and important. Centuries ago a powerful mage had created an enchantment for the building. The enchantment protected the library and all the books contained within. It even repaired or made copies of damaged books. Without the heart the library would have been destroyed at least half a dozen times by some bumbling wizard. And that was just what Aaron knew about. That didn't even begin to consider the number of books that hundreds of novice mages would have destroyed.

"Josh managed to secure a dungeon core. From the way those idiots are acting you would think that it's some incredible feat. Any master mage could have destroyed that dungeon." She said scornfully.

"The library heart needed to be fed a core in the next year or two anyway. So I suppose I shouldn't complain too much. It saves me a trip and being a master mage at that age is mildly impressive." She seemed distracted for a moment as she looked towards the crowd around Josh.

Aaron tried to ease himself away. Maybe if he escaped now she would forget about him. Looking around for the best escape route he noticed something odd. There was a beautiful woman walking along the top of one of the bookshelves. Or at least Aaron thought she was beautiful. It was hard to tell since she was only around six inches tall. Before Aaron could start wondering why he was seeing things the head librarian regained her focus.

"Sorry I started to ramble there. Take the dungeon core and place it next to the library heart. Stay there until the heart absorbs the core. It should only take a few minutes. Once that is done return to your work." She said and then handed Aaron the glowing crystal.

Now that she had given him the task Aaron knew better than to try to avoid it. Besides it didn't sound that difficult or time consuming. He had expected it to be far worse. In fact it would be a nice change of pace from sorting and shelving books.

As Aaron walked towards the heart of the library he couldn't help but think of the first time that he had seen it. The heart of the library was a massive glowing crystal. Similar to the one he carried except hundreds of times larger. Despite that it wasn't close to the most impressive item in the library.

His path took him close to one of those items. Inside a heavily warded display case was an enchanted sword. Supposedly it had been used by a knight to slay a dragon. Normally those cases inspired Aaron to daydream about being one of those heroes.

Those dreams were what had drawn Aaron to working at the library originally. It was the next best thing to attending a mage school that he could never afford. With his lack of magical talent getting a scholarship was impossible.

Unfortunately he had quickly found out that without a teacher the books were nearly useless. He had persisted anyway and learned how to control his mana. At that point his disappointment had reached a new low. He had no magical talent. Which meant he couldn't even cast the most basic of cantrips.

Something moving drew Aaron's attention. It was the tiny woman from before. Apparently she had followed him. Which should have been hard since she was only six inches tall. Except apparently she had wings and was able to fly.

Continuing towards the library heart Aaron tried to figure out what she was. Finally he settled on her being a fairy or a pixie. Based on her height and demeanor she was probably a fairy. Pixies were usually tinier and more childlike. Although Aaron wasn't sure. Both had powerful natural magics that hid them from view. He had read a few stories about them. It was odd since according to the stories they were only ever seen when they wanted to be seen.

Finally Aaron reached the heart of the library. Pulling the crystal out he set it down beside the giant crystal. A visible line of mana began to flow from the dungeon core into the heart. The fairy landed next to the dungeon core and then started sobbing.

Finally Aaron couldn't take it any longer. "Okay what's wrong? Why are you crying?"

The fairy stopped crying and looked up at him in shock. "You can see me?"

Aaron nearly rolled his eyes. "Yes. Now why are you crying?" He said in exasperation. The last thing he needed today was to deal with a crying fairy.

"I'm crying because Andrea is dying. She's my best friend." The fairy said sadly.

"Who's Andrea?" Aaron couldn't help but ask. He didn't see anyone else nearby.

The fairy hesitated for a moment. "Andrea is the dungeon core. Please stop killing her. I'll do anything you ask." The fairy begged.

It was obvious with just a glance that the dungeon core was dimming. Aaron considered the situation for a moment. He could easily save the dungeon core. Just reach out and move it away from the library heart.

The problem was that there was a good chance that the head librarian would find out. If she did then at the very least Aaron would lose his job. If she reported him to the guards it could easily get worse. Depending on the value of the dungeon core it could be considered a capital crime. He could end up in a work camp for the rest of his life or even executed.

That didn't even begin to consider the fact that he would be saving a dungeon core. Dungeon cores were voracious predators. At the first opportunity it would probably try to kill him. Less was known about fairies. They were physically weak and lacked strong offensive magic.

They had strong defensive and illusion magic though. Also they enjoyed playing tricks on people when they could. From the stories those tricks were often fatal for those involved.

All of this went through Aaron's mind in a moment. Then he looked back at the fairy. She had offered to do anything he asked. Perhaps she would be able to offer him something that would be worth the risk. There was little risk in at least asking.

"How does saving the dungeon core benefit me? What are you offering?" Aaron finally asked.

The fairy seemed surprised by the question. For a moment it looked like she was going to start crying again. "We lost everything when the dungeon was destroyed. Humans like gold though right? Tell me how much you want. If you save Andrea I promise that we can pay it once we find a new home." She said desperately.

Aaron considered the offer for a moment. A quick glance at the dungeon core showed that it wasn't going to live much longer. "No amount of gold is worth risking my life. If it was I would have become an adventurer." He told the fairy after a moment.

The fairy glanced at the dungeon core in panic. "What do you want then? As long as it's possible I'll agree. Please hurry though. Since we are bonded when Andrea dies I will also die."

Aaron had already decided what he wanted. "You. I want you and Andrea. You will both swear a magical oath to serve me for the rest of your lives."

## Chapter 2

The fairy nearly fell over in shock at my demand. For a moment Aaron thought she would refuse. Then a loud crack came from the dungeon core. A chunk broke off the core and began to disintegrate. Aaron wasn't sure how much longer the dungeon core could survive. Probably only a few seconds, a minute at the most.

Frantically the fairy looked at the crystal. "Agreed." She said with a sob before falling to her knees. He kind of felt bad but there was no way Aaron was going to trust a fairy and a dungeon core.

Reaching out Aaron grasped the crystal. It resisted movement for a moment and a surge of mana flowed into him. The mana started to burn his hand. With a bit of effort he managed to keep the mana from hurting him further. The core itself resisted his effort to move it.

He had wondered why the fairy didn't try to move the dungeon core herself. The mana flow probably would have destroyed her tiny body. Even if she had been able to shield herself from the mana she lacked the physical strength to move the core.

It took a couple seconds but he managed to get the core far enough away from the dungeon heart. With a sudden snap the outflow of mana from the dungeon core stopped. So did the resistance to moving the dungeon core. With a bit of a yelp Aaron sprawled on the floor.

Standing back up Aaron looked at the core in his hand. It was in bad shape now. Cracked in numerous places and barely glowing. He hoped it would survive. Otherwise all he had gotten for his efforts was a burned hand.

When Aaron looked at the fairy he realized he had made a mistake. He had removed the dungeon core from danger but hadn't gotten a magical oath from her yet. Mana was flowing around her and he could tell she was preparing to attack him.

"If you attack me I'll toss the core back to the library heart." He said threatening her. The fairy hesitated for a moment and the mana around her dissipated.

"It's apparent that until we get that magical oath in place I'm not going to be able to trust you. So that is what we are going to do right now." Aaron said, glaring at the fairy.

Once again he thought she was going to refuse. She looked at the dungeon core that he grasped and then reluctantly nodded. Aaron felt a bit relieved. Now he just had to figure out how to make sure that there was no way around the magical binding.

Magical oaths were something that Aaron had read about. He had no experience creating one though. Which meant he had a lot to do and not much time. There was no way he

would risk sleeping without the fairy magically bound to serve him. He had every expectation that if he did he wouldn't wake up the next morning.

What he wanted to do was hurry to the section of the library that contained the books he needed. He was sure that it would only take him a few hours once he reviewed the proper books. Unfortunately things weren't that easy. He was in the middle of a shift. There was no way that he could avoid the librarians that entire time.

The other issue was that his hand had been badly burned. Thankfully being able to control mana meant that Aaron could heal himself. Although calling it healing was probably an exaggeration. He could block his pain and accelerate natural healing. The burns may be relatively minor but it would still take hours to heal.

Thinking about it he realized that maybe one of his problems would solve the other one. Looking around the library for a few minutes he found one of the friendlier librarians. Not that he would ever describe any of the librarians as friendly. This one just wasn't as mean and occasionally had shown a small amount of empathy for his situation.

"Excuse me ma'am. I was wondering if I could get permission to take the rest of the day off? I seem to have hurt myself." Aaron said to the librarian while holding his hand out where she could see it.

The librarian gasped when she saw the burns. "What happened?" Apparently the injury had overridden the normal derision the librarians had for him.

"The head librarian ordered me to feed a dungeon core to the library heart. The mana flow burned my hand." Aaron said being careful to not tell a lie. Many mages had spells and abilities that would let them tell when someone was lying.

The librarian frowned slightly. "A good thing you have some magical talent. If you didn't you would have been burned to a crisp. What happened to the dungeon core?" She asked suspiciously.

"It's gone. This injury is all my fault for following instructions so poorly. The head librarian said to set the core near the heart, instead I held it. Luckily like you said I do have some ability to control mana. Enough that I can heal myself today and be back to work tomorrow. If you would kindly approve me taking the day off." Aaron asked hoping she didn't ask what he meant by saying the dungeon core was gone. From the library's perspective it was gone. As in stolen and in his pocket.

The librarian considered the situation and then nodded. "Yes you can take the rest of the day off. You certainly won't be able to do your job properly with a burned hand. Just don't expect to get paid for the time you are taking off." She said scowling at him.

“Of course. Like I said this injury is my fault and I’m the one requesting the time off. Thank you.” Aaron said hoping she wouldn’t ask anymore questions.

The librarian nodded and then turned back to her desk. Like most of the librarians she was spending her time reading one of the magical tomes. The librarians justified it by saying that it helped them direct other mages to the tomes and spells they were looking for. Being a librarian was an excellent job for mages that were interested in research instead of adventure. Personally Aaron didn’t consider reading magical spell books work. Mages that weren’t employed by the library did it all the time without getting paid.

Not that Aaron was going to complain if she was distracted reading. It meant that she wouldn’t question that he didn’t immediately leave the library. Not that he wouldn’t easily be able to explain why he hadn’t left. A stop by the healing section of the library gave him everything he needed. If anyone asked he had stayed to study the books about healing. As was his right as an employee of the library while he wasn’t working. He wasn’t allowed to take any books from the library so he was even following the rules.

His next stop was a section of the library that contained the books about magical bindings. A copy of *Magical Oaths, Contracts, and Other Bindings* was exactly the book he needed. If anyone asked he needed time to passively heal his burns. During that time he had selected something else to read. His story even had the benefit of being true.

As Aaron sat down he noticed that the fairy had obeyed and was still following him. “Why hasn’t anyone else said anything about you?” He asked out of curiosity. A fairy was uncommon enough that surely someone would have noticed by now.

“The magical nature of a fairy makes them invisible to normal sight. We can only be seen if we cast a spell making us visible. Of a powerful mage such as yourself casts a magical sight spell. How did you know that I would be there?” The fairy said sounding slightly depressed at the entire situation.

For a moment Aaron wasn’t sure what to say. He hadn’t cast any such spell. Suddenly he felt a tingle of fear. The fairy thought he was powerful. Despite that she had been willing to attack him earlier. In reality though he was pathetically weak. He had a suspicion that she could kill him if she wanted. All the more reason to bind her magically quickly.

“Let’s just say I was lucky.” Aaron admitted hoping that she wouldn’t ask anymore questions.

The fairy looked at him with wide eyes and then started crying again. “I thought you cast the spell because you knew about dungeon fairies.” She said between sobs.

Aaron shook his head. After a few seconds the fairy seemed to get control of herself. “This is worse than I thought. I’ve revealed the existence of dungeon fairies. If the council of dungeon fairies find out they will have me executed.” The fairy sobbed.

“Well I won’t tell them if you don’t.” Aaron said with a shrug.

The fairy shook her head despondently. “That may work for a few months or even years. Eventually they will find out though.”

“Well we can cross that bridge when we come to it. Meanwhile I have a few things to review.” Aaron said hoping to end the conversation. He could ask his questions after the fairy was bound to serve him.

It took nearly three hours. For the first hour Aaron wavered between which type of binding to use. A magical contract would allow a detailed and nearly inescapable binding. The problem being that if the contract was destroyed then so was the binding. A magical oath couldn’t be destroyed. It didn’t allow the same level of detail though. That lack of detail meant that there were often loopholes in the binding.

In the end he realized that there was no reason why he had to settle on a single type of binding. At the moment he held the upper hand. With that decided he created a magical contract and figured out the wording of a very specific oath.

### Chapter 3

As Aaron wrote the contract he realized that he had forgotten one important detail. He had never asked the fairy what her name was. It was a necessary part of the contract.

“What’s your name?” Aaron asked when he was nearly done with the contract.

“My name is Valerie. Are you done with that contract yet?” She said in a fearful voice.

“Yes. But first you are going to swear a magical oath.” Aaron said.

“What’s the oath?” Valerie asked softly.

“There are a few parts. You will not attempt to harm me in anyway. You will also serve me to the best of your ability. That includes defending me from any harm. Finally if at any point a magical contract does not exist between us you will seek me out as soon as possible to make a magical contract. You will agree to that magical contract no matter what it contains.” As Aaron told her the details of the magical oath he had to remind himself that he held the upper hand.

Aaron handed her a piece of paper that contained the exact details and wording. There was no mention of the penalties for breaking the magical oath. Breaking a magical oath would result in extreme pain and eventual death if the oath taker didn’t make amends quickly enough.

Valerie shuddered as she read the oath. Finally she steeled herself and read the magical oath while channeling a bit of mana. Aaron channeled his own mana. Luckily this wasn’t something that required magical talent. It just required that Aaron knew how to control his own

mana. The mana spread between himself and Valerie binding them together before it disappeared.

Aaron then slid the magical contract over to Valerie. As she read it a few tears fell from her cheeks. The contract Aaron had made was harsh. Then again he felt it was necessary to prevent the fairy or dungeon from attacking him.

Probably the harshest part of the contract was that if Aaron died Valerie would be in breach of the contract. Which meant that within a few hours she would die, followed quickly by Andrea since they were bound. Aaron just couldn't take the risk that either of them would try to figure out a way to attack him indirectly. That or just not defend him if he was attacked.

The rest of the contract basically turned Valerie into his personal slave. She would obey any order he gave. Although in cases that did risk either of their lives she had the option of letting him know first. If he ordered she would still have to carry out his orders though. Which meant that he could order her to kill herself. If she didn't obey then the contract would kill her within a few hours. With that level of obedience there wasn't a need for further detail in the contract. Aaron could specify his exact orders and she would have to obey.

Valerie reluctantly signed the contract. She had no choice besides for dying after she had sworn the magical oath. Aaron breathed a sigh of relief as the contract was signed.

"Okay now for a few orders. First you will not lie to me. You will also not attempt to conceal information from me." Aaron ordered Valerie.

Valerie nodded and then took a deep breath. "According to the contract I must warn you that revealing some of the information I know could get one or both of us killed. For instance knowledge of dungeon fairies." She said quickly.

Aaron smiled. It seemed like the magical contract was working. "If an answer to a question would contain sensitive information you may warn me of the danger. But if I insist you must still answer me." Valerie nodded that she understood.

"Now first question. How do we get Andrea to agree to the same magical oath and contract?" He asked.

Valerie looked slightly depressed at the thought that she was going to participate in binding her friend in the same way. "She will have to reestablish a dungeon first. It's an easy process but will require finding a good location for a dungeon first. Until then she can't interact with the outside world."

"What makes a location good for a dungeon?" Aaron asked.

"There are many different factors. Higher mana density will help the dungeon grow faster. Terrain is the second factor. Although a dungeon can survive anywhere some areas are better than others. For instance a forest that is populated with lots of animals is better than a

desert. Finally and most importantly the location of the dungeon compared to the other sentient races. Too close and they are likely to be destroyed while still young. Too far and they will have difficulty attracting weak adventurers.” Valerie explained.

Aaron thought about various locations for a few minutes. He had spent enough time looking over the maps in the library to know where everything nearby was. He also knew a bit about the local mana density. Mana was generated by every living plant and animal. Over the centuries the various nations and mages had used spells to direct how and where that mana flowed. In fact one of the largest destinations was the magical university where the library was located.

“Does it have to be somewhere far away from people? I think we would have to travel for a few weeks to find somewhere with high mana density and that is more than a few miles from any farms or towns..” Aaron said hoping that he wouldn’t need to make that trip.

“I don’t think Andrea will survive for a few weeks. She’s badly hurt and will keep on deteriorating until she establishes a dungeon.” Aaron could tell that Valerie was concerned.

“Well is there a way that she can establish a dungeon near people? Maybe some way to hide the fact that she is a dungeon?” Aaron asked trying to figure out a solution.

“I don’t see how that would be possible. When a dungeon is first established it draws in a large amount of mana from the surrounding area. Once enough monsters and plants are created the dungeon can use them for mana. But that leads to a whole new set of problems. It’s almost impossible for the dungeon to contain and absorb all that mana. If a mage doesn’t detect the initial drop in mana they will certainly recognize the excess mana flowing from the dungeon.” Valerie explained.

Aaron tried to imagine exactly what Valerie was talking about. “I think I need to look at a map of the mana flows in the surrounding area.”

A few minutes later he had a map laying on the table. It showed all the major mana flows for the country of Koravar and the surrounding area. The university wasn’t considered part of the country, but it maintained close ties with them. In fact the capital of Koravar was just ten miles west of the university.

There were a handful of final destinations for the mana flows on the map. The magical university and the capital of Koravar being two of those. None were located in the northern fourth of the map which was labeled as the frontier of Koravar. Past that was the wildlands. In terms of being far away from sentient races it was ideal. But it was over fifty miles away over rough terrain and the mana flows were only average. Plus it was heavily occupied by various monsters.

The western border of Koravar was drawn along a series of mountains. On the other side were a handful of smaller kingdoms. Mountains would be excellent terrain for a dungeon..

Except that the mana flows were even weaker than the wildlands. The mana was being drained by all the surrounding kingdoms.

The land south of Koravar was occupied by dozens of kingdoms. Koravar had been established just over a century ago as the wildlands were pushed back. The kingdoms south of Koravar were older and many of them were heavily populated. Heading south was out of the question.

Which just left east. There was a dwarven mountain in that direction but that wasn't the actual border of Koravar. Instead it was a long narrow swamp. The swamp started in the frontier around ten miles north of Koravar. It then continued along the border until it was about five miles south of the land Koravar claimed. After that it became a river.

That did some interesting things to the trade routes and mana flows in the area. The swamp was considered highly dangerous. Traders rarely risked trying to cross it, those that did often disappeared. Traveling north into the frontier was a possible route to the dwarves but was still risky. Too many monsters and bandits, plus it only led to the dwarves. So most routes went south. If they wanted to get to the dwarves they would have to cross two southern kingdoms, one on each side of the river, and then travel up the other side of the swamp. Of course at that point most trade just continued south instead.

The larger mana flows themselves formed a sideways T shape along the border. Probably because there were no settlements within twenty miles of the swamp. There was just a fort that sat where the trade route curved south. A mile east of the fort was where the mana flow from the wildlands and the lands near the southern half of the swamp met. Half a dozen smaller mana flows from the swamp also intersected at this point. The combined flow then continued for forty miles until it ran into the capital.

"So you think Andrea can survive for a few days?" Aaron asked Valerie.

Valerie nodded after considering the question for a moment. "I can use magic to stabilize her temporarily. I don't think she will be able to survive more than four or five days though. Did you figure out a place?"

Aaron nodded. "There is a swamp east of here. I think I have an idea for how we can hide the mana drop from establishing the dungeon."

## Chapter 4

"That's good. When do we leave?" Valerie asked eagerly. Saving Andrea trumped any of her other concerns.

"I'll have to give it some thought. It will take a couple days to reach our destination so we can't delay for more than a day or two." Aaron answered.

He had to tell his landlord he was leaving and buy supplies for the journey. Shuddering, he realized that he also needed to resign his job. He was sure the librarians would bar his entry back into the library if he just disappeared. Aaron considered just what he had to do as he put the books and the map away.

Suddenly a hand reached out and grabbed Aaron roughly. Spinning around he realized that it wasn't one of the librarians. Instead it was Josh.

"Hey library boy I need you to fetch me a bunch of books." Josh said acting like Aaron was his servant. Although it wasn't like any of the librarians would disagree with that assessment.

"I'd be happy to find someone else to do that for you sir. I'm not on duty right now." Aaron said.

"Nah. I'd rather have you do it. Here's a list." Josh said handing Aaron a list of books. A couple girls giggled drawing Aaron's attention to them. He should have expected that Josh would have some of his fans following him around. Two guys and five girls were standing around fawning over him. Or at least the girls were. The guys looked like they wanted to be his minions.

"Hey, you listening to me library boy. Go get those books." Josh said giving Aaron a hard shove.

Aaron looked down at the list. There were dozens of books on it. Based on the titles at least some of them were in the restricted sections of the library. It would take at least an hour or two to find all the books on the list.

"Like I said I'm not working right now. You can go find someone else." Aaron said letting a touch of anger enter his voice.

Josh smiled evilly. "I don't care. Let's go see what one of the librarians says about you refusing to get these books for me." Aaron had to repress a grimace. He knew exactly what the librarians would say. He decided he no longer cared what they said. He needed to resign anyway.

"Fine let's go." Aaron said turning around. The quick action shocked Josh enough that he didn't have time to do anything but follow.

Surprisingly the first librarian they found was the head librarian. "I'm going to make you regret this library boy." Josh said in a whisper.

“Good evening Miss Black. I asked Aaron here to help me find some books but he’s saying he’s not working right now. Surely that’s a mistake right?” Josh said to the head librarian.

“Hmmm. No he should be on the schedule. What is the meaning of this Aaron. Part of your job is retrieving books when mages request them.” She said to Aaron.

“I injured myself earlier and requested some time off. Plus many of the books requested are in the restricted section. It would be far quicker if Josh worked with one of the librarians.” Aaron said handing her the list.

“Well you don’t look injured now. Besides, there isn’t a reason to waste a librarians time retrieving these books. There is a process for you to retrieve the books yourself. So consider yourself back on the clock until you retrieve these books.” She said glaring at him. Josh was smiling like he had won and the girls were giggling again.

“Sorry Miss Black but I have already made plans I can’t cancel for later today.” Aaron said knowing what the reply would be.

“I don’t care. Your plans have changed. Now retrieve those books and leave me alone.” She said angrily.

“If you are going to insist then I must inform you that I’m resigning my position with the library.” Aaron said. He actually felt relieved after he said those words. Until that moment he hadn’t realized just how much he disliked his job.

“Resign? After all the benefits you have gained from the library you expect to just resign your position? Forget that you’re fired. Now get out of the library and don’t come back.” Miss Black was nearly yelling now. That wasn’t how Aaron had expected her to act. He had expected her to just shrug and agree that he no longer worked at the library.

Aaron couldn’t hold back his anger any longer. “Benefits? I’m paid less than Avarok’s minimum wage. I work at least ten hours a day. Every day you and the other librarians make me do any work that you don’t want to do. And then to top it all off you tell me that I can’t even resign this terrible job?”

He would have continued his tirade but then Josh sucker punched him. “I won’t allow you to talk to an esteemed mage like that.” Josh sneered.

Aaron looked up at him in shock and saw the sick grin he was wearing. He would bet everything he owned that Josh didn’t care about what anyone said to the head librarian. He was just using it as an excuse to hurt Aaron.

Aaron’s eyes widened as he saw Valerie standing on the bookshelf behind Josh. Mana was flowing around her and it looked like she was preparing to attack Josh. She couldn’t beat him though. She would just reveal her existence.

“Stay out of this.” Aaron said looking at the fairy. Unfortunately Josh thought that he was talking to him. A look of rage crossed his face and then he reared back and kicked Aaron in the stomach. Almost instantly his two minions joined in.

“That’s enough. Take him outside if you want to continue. You all are making far too much noise and getting blood all over.” The head librarian said.

“My apologies Miss Black. I think he’s learned his lesson and will think twice before disrespecting a mage again. Would you mind finding someone that can collect these books for us?” Josh asked.

“I suppose I can find a librarian to help you. Aaron, if I see you in the library again I won’t limit myself to some little punishment like Josh just gave you.” The head librarian said coldly before turning and walking away.

Josh rolled over gingerly and watched them all leave. The girls were nearly hanging off of Josh now as they followed him. “I want that.” Aaron muttered to himself.

“Want what master?” Valerie said from where she was standing nearby.

Aaron frowned. “What’s with you calling me master?” He asked instead of answering the question.

Valerie sighed. “I’m a magical creature that you just bound to serve you. Those bindings will have side effects. Right now I feel compelled to call you master. As time goes on more side effects will become apparent, although I’m not sure which ones. Now what is it that you wanted master? I’ll gladly get it for you.” She said sounding far too happy.

“I was just watching Josh leave. I want what he has. Money, power, and women. What man wouldn’t?” Aaron admitted.

“After Andrea establishes a new dungeon we may be able to achieve all of that. At the very least Andrea can use mana to create gold.” Valerie said surprising Aaron. He had been half joking about what he wanted. Then again he wasn’t going to argue if Valerie made it her mission to get him anything he wanted.

Aaron breathed a sigh of relief as he used his mana to block the pain he was feeling. He was pretty sure he had a few cracked ribs and a multitude of bruises. As he put some weight on a wrist trying to stand up he realized he also had a fractured wrist. It could have been worse though. Josh and his minions hadn’t been trying to kill him. None had tried to kick or punch him in the head or use any magic.

“Let’s get out of here.” Aaron said to Valerie.