

The Norse Boy

I was very young when we first left the Elven Lands. My tribe was searching for hospitality among the humans. We had watched them grow from primitives and were curious about their newly formed cities and communities. We had heard many things from "The other Peoples" who had traveled through their lands. In the elven lands, it was known that humans could do the magic's the other "peoples" could do. But not all of them could do it. In fact their abilities seemed to vary much more than any of the other species we knew. We knew of places within the human lands that naturally stored magic's. The humans, we had heard, called them nodes or lay lines. But not all of them could feel them or use them.

This made my mother and father curious about them. My tribe decided that the best way to find out about them was to become them. So, we disguised ourselves as humans and began to travel. We were looking for a peaceful land, with welcoming locals and somewhere we could learn of the ways of the humans. We were searching for a place with many varieties of humans. A place where lots of cultures came together to trade and live.

We soon found that there were a lot of differences between humans and the other beings. Not all of them believed there were other beings. They seemed to age quicker and have shorter life spans than beings who embraced the gifts of the Gods wholly. Also, time seemed to move faster in their lands. We learned quickly to disguise our tribe as humans, changing identities every 30 years or so. We learned show age as they did.

The first time I met the young Norse boy, He was playing beside a river. He was a human child. Almost a baby, he must have aged about five summers. I, myself, was still considered an adolescent at the time and I had aged 100 human summers. In my disguise I looked like a human who had aged about 14 summers. As I watched him from a little ways away, he seemed to be searching the river bank for something. He kept picking up rocks and skittering them across the river.

Suddenly his feet lost their purchase on the shore and he slid into the river. He screamed for his mother, but I could not see her. Feeling his fear, I acted before thinking. Diving into the river I pulled the young boy out. He coughed and sputtered against my chest while crying and clinging to me tightly.

His mother came running frantically from over a small hill. Her face was pale with panic and eyes wide in fear. Her body was moving slowly, as she was ripe with pregnancy. She took the boy from me suspiciously. After checking over her son and ensuring that he was alright, she turned to thank me. I was already heading back to my vantage point in the nearby woods, when the little boy suddenly grabbed my legs from behind. His mother was not far behind him.

I was unused to interaction with humans, but I smiled at her nervously and nodded politely. I hugged the child and began to pull away when she finally spoke to me.

"Stivan tells me you pulled him from the river. I thank you for saving my firstborn. I owe you a great boon. What can I do to repay you?" She spoke as if it was a duty and she feared the answer.

"Simply love him, kind woman. He is a special child and he will have great blessings in his life." I said, trying to detach the boy from my leg and leave quietly. I nodded again and gently nudged the boy toward his mother.

The woman narrowed her eyes and set her hands on her hips. It was a gesture that I recalled from my own mother. It was a posture that meant she didn't believe me.

"What is your name milady, and where do you hail from? So that I may spread word of you honor and generosity." She questioned sarcastically, suspicion deep in her voice.

"My name is Sarrin, and I am merely passing these parts with my family. Really, your son's health is repayment enough for a quick swim. Anyone would have helped, or should have. . ." My voice began to trail off as I became unsure of my statement. My doubt must have showed on my face because the woman laughed at me.

"My name is (Alice), and you are truly not from around here. Tell me

Sarrin, why were you near the river. I was unaware of any strangers in the area and that is remarkable to me. We are a small community. I thought I would know if we had visitors passing through these parts."

At this point she was getting closer and eyeing me. She was trying to tell my birthplace by my features. I was suddenly afraid that she could sense the magic of my being. I had been told that some humans could feel it, even if they could not use it. In my sudden panic, I must have let my human guise slip for a moment.

"Ancient one!" She exclaimed suddenly, her posture becoming humble and embarrassed. "Forgive my impudence. I did not know. Truly Stivan must be blessed to have one of you watching over him. Surely I must have a way to repay such a boon . . . a way to honor you . . ."

I stopped her before she could go on. Letting my guise slip completely I reached over and lay one hand upon her son and the other upon her shoulder.

"If you wish to repay me, you will not tell anyone you spoke to me. I am still a young one and not supposed to be out here on my own." I looked from her to her son meaningfully. Smiling at her I said "Your son has an aura about him. I see great things for his future." Leaning down to Stivan, I stroked his hair and kissed his cheek. I focused on his eyes and smiled at him. As he smiled back I winked.

"Stivan, you must always follow where your heart leads, for within the heart does magic lie. You will have a blessing from me Stivan." I heard his mother gasp as I spoke, Feeling the magic flow from me, I placed my hand on his head. "May this boy's life lead him to many wonders and may he know life. . . true life . . . and may it be long and healthy" With that done and the blessing given, I kissed his forehead and assumed my humanity once again.

"Remember Alice; please leave my name out of this. My entire tribe is nearby and we will soon be coming to live here for a time. You will see me again. I promise. Thank you for your kindness and allowing me to watch your son play. He is beautiful. Good bye." And with that I walked into the woods nearby and tried to disappear.

Alice kept her promise, when my tribe made their appearances almost a week later; she seemed not to know me and welcomed my tribe with open arms. She ensured that the other locals did as well. She often left Stivan in my care but he never seemed to remember our first meeting. And I never found out if he or his mother carried the spark of magic. But that young Norse boy runs through the fires of my memory often, as does his mother.