

The Knights of Destiny

The grey office building crawled into New York's sky. It seemed a strange place for an Euthanatos chantry, but a perfect place for those who have committed themselves as a Knight of Radamanthys. I don't remember on which floor the elevator stopped. My bodyguards escorted me through an awkwardly colored corridor up to a huge, oaken, double door with an embossed Omega symbol.

This was not my first time being here. Dr. Robert Amber, an honored trainer of the order who first discovered my talent, introduced me to the leaders years ago. Being a young, confused girl with no meaning in her life; the fact that I, after so much hardship and sorrow, had found a place in this world made me thankful. The leaders had sensed some kind of important destiny when I first approached them, so I was accepted to be trained as a Knight.

The members had to be the fittest not only physically, but mentally. Most of them worked as bodyguards or mercenaries to aid people whose safety was important, and sometimes crucial, from the view of the world's fate. There could be no negligence, weakness, nor emotions among the members. This task, and loyalty to the Order, took priority over everything else.

At first it was frightening, how these mages could murder without remorse or regret. Most of the victims were evil, and had brought something awful into this world, but some had just "Run out of time.", they said. The "Good Death" was given to women and children as well, suffering patients, or those who had given up, and would have become a worse person if they had continued to live. Those with ill fate in this world got a clean slate for the next.

But there was a great peril in killing people... especially for the Euthanatoi: Jhor. It did not matter if you have been working for ages in the Order; if other members noticed so much as a smile on your face after letting someone „Turn with the Wheel”, your every step after would be under the watchful eyes of your comrades. Those finding joy in taking away a life were put to death by the other members of the Knighthood.

It wasn't easy, or safe, to be a Knight. We had to understand that the right thing was to accept the turn of the Wheel in case of our or a member's death. If Fate has decided to take a life, and you do not let it, maybe someone else will be taken instead.

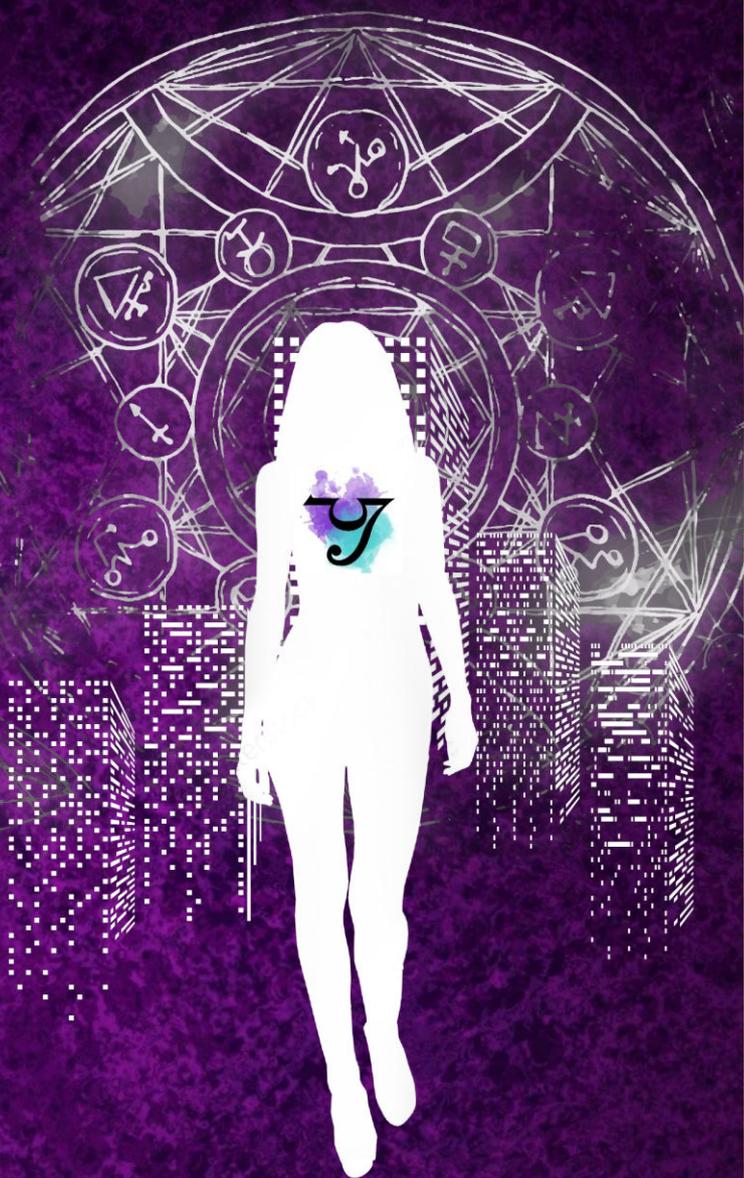
The training started with developing humility and loyalty toward the Order. In some cases the risk posed by a potential Initiate's power was too great, so the Knights had to keep them contained and under control. Thus, once one was initiated as a member of the Knights, they were not allowed to leave without permission, or they would have to face the consequences... potentially being hunted down by their fellow Knights themselves.

It was important for us to get to know our potential victims. As being the most susceptible faction of the mages to the taint of Jhor, we strove to exercise proper judgment on a potential target before sending them on their way. Killing a human being puts a burden on the Euthanatos. Killing an innocent victim can taint her mind or even the thread of their own fate.

After humility and loyalty were established, the tolerance of pain and physical training began. Magick was used all the time, but many chose to focus their arts through a weapon, a martial art, or some form of modern technology as well, in case deprived of Quintessence at some point.

Sometimes seers and prophets had visions of possible events or people who need protection, as their presence or lack thereof may cause ebbs in the flow of history or fate, known to mages as The Tapestry. The Knights who were willing to cope without magick and performed excellently through the training could volunteer to guide such an important person.

These mages received personal mentors to guide them through special field trainings; wherein collective monitoring, analysis, emotional stability were tested. At this point the Mentor (*Acaraya*) and the apprentice (*Shravaka*) were bonded to one another. This bond could not be broken until: a requested separation, the apprentice was assigned to an important person, or death did them part. The Mentor made sure constantly, that the Apprentice is possessed the necessary skills to complete their important work.



I have killed a great many people. People of all kinds, just as the others who passed through this corridor have. The Omega parted at the centre as the door opened to a huge hall covered with black marble, where the Test of Fate took place. This final examination decided if a knight may guide someone with a great destiny. My reflection looked at me from the floor with questioning eyes, as if saying: "Am I ready?" Four people were sitting on the podium with my Mentor among them. Not many mentors were allowed to take part in their pupil's final test, but Robert was a special case.

"Sonja Zvezda" the Eldest said as he stood up. „You have proven yourself worthy of the chance to fill a most important role as a Radamanthys Knight. Shall we begin?"

No magicks were allowed in this final test. Blindfolded, Fate led my hands. Six people were brought before me. Women, men and children with dull minds, blindfolded as well. I had to tell the innocent apart. So I took my phurba dagger, and killed those whom I felt had ill fate about them.

I had no idea what would happen if an innocent were attacked, but I had to trust myself and the leaders. The last one was a little boy, but I knew he was not what he seemed. I lifted the phurba, ready to sink it in his chest.

"Mom" - His voice only resembled to my late son, Aleksej, but it was enough to make my hand shake.

"Failed" the deep voice echoed through the hall.

No human or blood remained on the floor when I was allowed to see again.

"Sir, this was not fair. She did recognize that the child is not an innocent " said my Mentor in his prim, respectful voice.

"This hesitation may cost the life of someone with a great destiny. This Knighthood serves a greater purpose. I must admit that your student is talented, but she has some faults which you tend to ignore. It would be disturbing if this is because you have developed an emotional bond with her. She is an instrument of the Wheel... as are you, and all others assembled here. Fate has other plans for her. She needn't even remember this exam, so she shall forget it by nightfall. Please return to your duties. "