

ENDANGERED SPECIES

Written by

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Judge. Necktie. Pet Store. Fantasy.
Villain is the hero

FADE IN:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

SUPER : ORLAND KINGDOM 653 B.C.

Sparks fly of steel with every hit of a blacksmith's hammer.
Peasants shop for grains and vegetables from merchants.
Streets paved with mud and loose rock.

INT. PET STORE - DAY

A small hut made of stone and straw. Within are a wide array
of snakes, dogs and lizards. The MERCHANT (30s) and JUDGE
PHIRN (50s) an imposing figure, dressed in black robes.

Phirn holds out his hand. The Merchant lays a gold coin in
it. Phirn pockets the coin. Grabs the merchant by the collar.
Bares his teeth, spitting.

JUDGE PHIRN
I'm not interested in money.

MERCHANT
Better if you take that -

JUDGE PHIRN
And what I'm here for.

MERCHANT
It's dangerous.

JUDGE PHIRN
Yet you have it.

BACK ROOM

The Merchant lifts the cage's loose cover. Inside is a BABY
DRAGON. Judge Phirn admires the beast.

JUDGE PHIRN (CONT'D)
Magnificent.

Two DARK KNIGHTS (both 20s) grab the Merchant. He struggles.

MERCHANT
Mercy, Judge Phirn! Mercy!

JUDGE PHIRN
And mercy you shall have.

The first knight takes out a dagger. His colleague holds the Merchant as the blade drives into his heart. Twice.

JUDGE PHIRN (CONT'D)

Mercy can be a quick death.
Sometimes mercy is freedom.

He frees the Griffin. It scurries out. The Knights laugh as the Dragon hobbles next to the dead Merchant's left hand, bits off his ring finger.

EXT. OPEN FIELD OUTSIDE CASTLE WALLS - DAY

Crows peck the Merchant's flesh. His eyes long since gone. RAYDEN (25) on a horse, rides past. Heads around to the drawbridge. He's got something big and bloody in his satchel bag.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - TAVERN - DAY

Ties the reigns to a post, and with a smile on his face, heads on in.

INT. TAVERN - DAY

Plenty of fools getting drunk, in the company of many half naked women. Rayden already welcome. Beelines for TALA, the barkeep, a woman in her 40s. Her bosoms a major asset, she's a bit more modest than the rest of the ladies.

RAYDEN

That's a sight I don't often see.
A fine lady serving ale.

TALA

After a few, no one notices. You'll be no different. You already seem to be in a good mood, lad.

RAYDEN

Name's Rayden. Rayden Of Kodeonor.
I want the finest wine you have.

Slaps down serval coins.

RAYDEN (CONT'D)

And I wouldn't mind knowing the fine maiden's name.

TALA

I'm Tala. And that's all I'm tala'n ya.

Some of the locals overhear this, laugh.

RAYDEN

Fools. I may have all just saved all of you from a horrible fate.

TALA

You can do it again by shuttin' up and start drinkin'.

She pours him some wine in a goblet. He taps the end of the table. Keep it coming. She stops pouring at the rim. He lifts up the drink high.

RAYDEN

To my victory! The Dragon of Valdmir is dead!

The crowd falls silent.

RAYDEN (CONT'D)

I have the proof!

Downs his wine. Digs in his pocket. A row of DRAGON'S TEETH spills out over the counter. Tala steps back in horror. Rayden reaches in his bag, Dried blood splattered all over a set of DRAGON SCALES.

RAYDEN (CONT'D)

Skinned the beast, cut out it's sharp teeth, nearly escaped with my life!

DRUNK

Keep it down, you bastard!

TALA

Why would you do something like that?

RAYDEN

Was a dragon. Destroyed crops, burned virgins alive! I heard all the tales! Wicked beast felt the end of my sword!

Shows off the weapon. It's a little rusty, but still impresses.

RAYDEN (CONT'D)
This very sword!

The crowd hushes once more. Clear the way to reveal...

THE TWO DARK KNIGHTS. Not pleased to see Rayden.

INT. CASTLE - COURT ROOM - DAY

The Two Dark Knights toss a beaten up Rayden in front of Judge Phirn, who sits on a small desk made of stone. He takes a small snake, performs an incantation, and drapes around his neck, magically turning it into a necktie.

RAYDEN
What was my crime? I need to know!
I killed the dragon of Valdmir! The
monster could have leveled your
kingdom to ash!

JUDGE PHIRN
But it didn't now, did it?

RAYDEN
I wish to speak to the king!

The Dark Knights laugh. Judge Phirn grins.

JUDGE PHIRN
Lady Madred, Rayden of Kodeonor
wishes to speak to the King.

MADRED, (30s) dressed in a dark cloak, holds a small case with a veil over it. She approaches. Madred lifts up the veil. In the glass cage is a wart filled toad slumped over a throne of paper.

MADRED
Hail King Araxies of Orland.
Murderer of two Stymphalian birds.
And a poor taste in women.

JUDGE PHIRN
'Tis his queen who cursed him. And
I pardoned her.

Judge Phirin nods. Madred steps away, locking eyes with him. Rayden understands.

RAYDEN
Treason!

JUDGE PHIRN
You murdered the Dragon of Vadmir!

RAYDEN
The beast terrorized women and
children!

JUDGE PHIRN
Not from this kingdom! We treat our
creatures of nature with respect.
We leave them alone, they leave us
alone. You coming here puts us at
risk! Justice must be swift!

RAYDEN
Alright! I never laid a hand
against it! I lied! It was already
dead! It was an avalanche! Crushed
by a boulder that fell on it!

JUDGE PHIRN
Already dead?

RAYDEN
I just put it out of its misery. I
swear.

JUDGE PHIRN
So it was still alive?

RAYDEN
All I did was take some scales,
teeth. Do you really think I can
extract a dragon's teeth?

Judge lays down a gavel.

JUDGE PHIRN
One way to find out.

RAYDEN
Mercy, Judge, mercy!

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Rayden, chained up, terrified. The young dragon from the Pet Store is now a few inches bigger. It crawls on Rayden, claws scratching, drawing blood.

Close up. Bared fangs. Drool. The dragon puffs a cloud of ash in Rayden's face. Too late to turn away.

FADE OUT.