

## CHAPTER I

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# Isolde, And Her Quest For Answers

Isolde, along with her Saber-Toothed Panther, Red, whom after 2000 seasons is no longer a kitten, as she now fully grown, standing at a height of about 120 centimeters, and over 2 meters in length, as well as weighing as much as 175 kilograms. She is an intimidating sight to behold, especially with her front fangs protruding 25 centimeters from her mouth. The two have ventured together throughout the supercontinent, as guardians of the realm. For Isolde is fulfilling her duties, as she is now part of the order of the Holy Guardians, also known as the Holy Watchers of Pangea.

She and Red now wander into the coastal dwarf village of Hogs Head. The village is nestled between the Sea of Light and the Aurelian Mountain range, whose chain separates the rest of the supercontinent from the Forbidden Desert. Hogs Head is an isolated village inhabited by about a hundred dwarfs, overall. This is the only free village of dwarfs recognized by the 6 kingdoms of Pangea. The dwarfs who reside there are under the rule of Queen Lazuli's empire, as it is located on the eastern boundary of the Southern Realm, on the Sea of Light. Essentially, throughout the history of Pangea the dwarfs have been enslaved by all the 5 kingdoms, with the exception being the Centaurs of Frostford. They have been born into this life and have been enslaved before the first age of Pangea. The dwarfs were captured by the wild Tehran tribes before the Treaty of Peace

was signed by the 3 Tehran Kingdoms initiating Pangea's First Age. From generation-to-generation the majority of the petite beings have worked tirelessly in the many mines scattered throughout the three Realms of the supercontinent. For they have the innate ability to discover, then mine gems and gold, which is the form of currency used throughout the supercontinent as payment for goods. The largest of all the mines and harboring more than 10,000 dwarfs, is the Mine of Mesquite, controlled by Queen Lazuli, located in the Corona Mountains along the coast of the Southern Ocean.

As Isolde and Red trek through the cobblestone streets of the dwarf village, they are stared upon in reverence, but also in fear. For the White Witch's deeds are legendary throughout the land, as she has fought for millions of Seasons to defend the meek wherever she may wander, as she and Red are nomadic. As the most revered sorceress in Pangean history, as she has assumed this task since before the convergence of the continents.

Visitors to this part of the supercontinent are extremely rare to say the very least, for the nearest village to Hogs Head is the Tehran town of Oium, nearly 2900 kilometers to its north. There is nothing but open, wild country between the two villages, just the evil poisonous Black Lake, which is fed by the River of Noir lies between them.

The tiny beings scatter at the sight of the Panther. Isolde calls out to the onlooking crowd of dwarfs,

“Don't be afraid, she will not attack, she is my companion.”

The dwarfs then suddenly stop and stare at the travelers, as the two walks past many of them.

A dwarf dressed in more formal attire approaches the White Witch,

“My Lady Isolde, it is so good to see you, how long has it been?” As the two embrace each Other.

“Turley, my good dwarf, I would say it has been at least 10 thousand seasons since I have last visited your village, I see you are still the mayor”.

“Yes, My Lady, no one else would want to do this job, having to deal with these moody dwarfs day in and day out. It’s remarkable I still have what’s left of my sanity,” he retorts, as they both laugh together.

“What brings you to our village, after so many seasons? And who is your companion?” Turley asks.

“This is Red, she has been with me since she was a kitten”, Isolde answers.

“Well then, you both will be our honored guests”, Turley concludes.

Turley escorts Isolde and Red to a small café in the village center and offers the two a special meal prepared by the dwarf chefs of the establishment. Codden fish, grilled over coals, with blackened potatoes, along with a pint of Corn Ale for Isolde. Hogs’ meat, chopped raw for Red. As hogs meat and fish are the basis of the dwarfen diet, in which feeds the entire village daily.

“Well, my lady, you haven’t answered me as to why you honor us with your presence?” Turley asks.

“Red and I are venturing into the Forbidden Desert. We are on a mission to find the unholy, lost Scrolls of Panduar, which were stolen from the Underworld, under EVIL’S nose”, Isolde answers him.

Turley nearly chokes, as he is gulping his corn ale when Isolde tells him this.

“The lost Scrolls of Panduar? I have heard of them. Evils laws, but that’s just a rumor, isn’t it? But the forbidden Desert... Why would Evils scrolls, if they even exist be there?” Turley asks with fear in his voice.

“I have had a vision, that the scrolls lie beneath the sand, under a huge pile of rock whose spires resemble 100 spears protruding from it. This may be the only way to figure out how to defeat EVIL once and for all, by using his laws against him. Morath “The Defiler,” his most trusted disciple, betrayed Evil for being passed over for the demon Abaddon, as he was chosen over Morath to attempt to take over the world. Morath, then took the scrolls and hid them somewhere. EVIL’s minions, the jinn-do tracked him down and caught up to him in the Forbidden Desert. The jinn-do enchained Morath and brought him back to the Underworld. Then, in the fiery realm they tortured Morath for thousands of Seasons on end. Slowly, over time they severed fingers, then hands, then feet, but he would not

disclose where he hid the Sacred Scrolls. Having his patience wear thin, EVIL in his vengeance, finally decapitated him and killed him there in the bowls of the Underworld. He then left his body to rot in the fiery realm purposely for all his slaves to see what happens to traitors.” Isolde concludes.

“But you have defeated Evil...twice, My Lady”. Turley states, his voice shaking.

“No Turley, I have only defeated his demon disciples, Naamah, then Abaddon, not Evil itself”, Isolde answers Turley in a somber tone.

“So, he still exists” Turley whispers to himself out loud.

“He is the Lord of the Underworld; Pangea is his domain. The malevolence EVIL instills will always be present in our world, as long as he lives and has influence over the land, and those who dwell upon it”, she explains to the dwarf.

Turley stands up and begins to pace back and forth, for this is beyond his comprehension. He realizes the perils she will face will be beyond anything she has ever imagined or attempted before. For the Forbidden Desert is far more perilous than the Dark Forest with less places to hide. It is infested with many different types of beasts, but with a greater concentration of them.

“My lady, in the forbidden Desert you will face many Tehran and dwarf bandits. Many of whom who were sent into exile, as they were driven out of their respective kingdoms for the dastardly deeds that they have committed. They will be hidden among the thousands of outcrops scattered throughout its landscape. Not to mention rogue Neanderthals, and maybe a Malakai or two. But worst, you Will encounter the Louse Worms, who attack from below, without warning. And you are not even sure where to look”, Turley pleads to the White Witch.

“Turley, I appreciate your concern. But now, I not only possess the magic of the Alicorns, but the vision and wizardry of the Guardians. It is imperative that Red and I leave for the Forbidden Desert after our meal, for time is of the essence.” Isolde states to Turley.

After the hardy meal that the dwarfs prepared for them, Isolde, and Red leave the dwarf village of Hogs Head, as they continue their trek

southward, toward the Forbidden Desert. The scarlet rays of dwarf sun are now at its at its zenith, heating up the desert sand below their feet.

They wander along coastline, alongside the eastern boundary of the Aurelian Mountains, with its steep inclines and narrow valleys. The ocean waves break onto the shoreline alongside of them, as the cool breeze coming off the sea brings refreshment to both. For once they venture into the interior of the desert the heat will intensify, and the solitude that the sea brings will fade fast, along with the cool ocean breeze that accompanies it. As they continue to head south walking on the sandy beach, Isolde and Red come across an abandoned cave protruding out of the steep mountainside facing the Sea of Light. She and Red will bed down here for the night. With the dwarf village now behind them Isolde begins to mentally prepare for the journey into the interior.

As the sun begins to set over the Aurelian Mountains, casting its shadows on the sandy beach, Isolde stands and gazes out on the endless sea, which appears to fade into nothingness. As the dimindark begins to ascend around them Isolde watches as the twin moons begin to rise over the ocean. Both oblong moons are about half full, projecting a pinkish hue as the white beams of the moon mix with the scarlet rays of the dwarf sun. The moonbeams project enough of a glow for her to light a fire and start to grill the hog steaks given to her by Turley. A bag of raw chopped hogs' meat for Red, as she devourers every morsel of it. After the evening meal the two lounges around the small fire and gaze out onto the ocean. Red closes her large crimson eyes and finds slumber on the warm sandy beach. Later, as the fire begins to turn into embers, Isolde and Red retreat into the nearby cave.

The dawn of twilight brings a new day of adventure and anxiety to the White Witch.

As Isolde exits the cave at the dawn of twilight, she marvels at the clusters of hundreds of palm trees lining the coast. As she looks up to the sky, she spots a large flock of small pterosaurs who are swarming directly overhead. Suddenly, the flying reptiles begin to flee the coast and begin to fly over the open ocean. Isolde watches intently, as the flying reptiles quickly fly farther and farther away from the coastline. Then as the flying

pterosaurs are out of her line of vision, Isolde then turns and stares at the long coastline and realizes that the worst is yet to come.

After a morning meal of hog strips and corn bread, Isolde and Red continue their quest to enter the arid wasteland. The two now turn their direction inland. They are now beginning to enter the narrow valleys, which lie between the tall spires of the Mountains chain. The temperature begins to gradually rise as they head away from the cool breezes that the ocean offered up. As the two cautiously trek in between the spires of rock, Isolde continuously gazes upwards, as bandits have been known to inhabit these remote valleys. Then suddenly, Red stops dead in her tracks. The fur on her neck begins to stand straight up. She raises her head toward the sky, as she begins to vigorously sniff the air. It appears she has caught a scent of something in the vicinity.

“What do you smell girl?” Isolde asks the panther.

Red then takes off like a flung arrow, as she begins to speedily climb the steep spires of the mountain wall. She swiftly darts from outcrop to outcrop. Then abruptly, arrows begin to reign down in Isolde’s direction. She instantly takes refuge behind a large outcrop of rock to avoid being struck by the barrage, which just misses her. Then unexpectedly, a body comes flying down from the mountain side and crashes on the valley floor. Blood flowing from a bite to the neck that a Tehran bandit has sustained. He screams in pain as Red has severed his Juglar Vein with a fatal bite. The bandit appears to be bleeding out directly in front of Isolde. Arrows continue to reign down in the White Witch’s direction. Another body reigns down on the valley floor. It impacts the ground is forceful thud. The impact splatters the Tehran body, splattering its claret in all directions. Another Tehran bandit has encountered the vengeance of the Saber-Toothed Panther. But this time the bandit is armless, as they both have been severed by veracity of the Red’s bite. Isolde then closes her large eyes and begins to whisper in the language of the Alicorn’s.

“LO MODI ALACON, EN SU MIDI ANOR, UN LA RAK ASAN”