

“Who is this child?” Asked the imposing man as he scowled down at Twigg.

Twigg shrunk behind Julius, clinging to his arm.

“She's my assistant.” Replied Julius. The man scowled.

“You aren't getting more money.” He said, bluntly. “We asked for a single trapbreaker. We won't pay for two.”

“That's fine.” replied Julius blandly. “But we're a set, so she comes or neither of us do.” The man scowled for a long time, offering no answer.

“Oh for sky's sake, Gorham, it's fine!” Blurted Gorham's cloaked companion. “ Let him bring the girl so we can get going!” Her voice seemed to startle the imposing man, s who quickly turned to face his associate.

“We have to work out the pecking order...” He moped.

“The pecking order is I'm in charge and everyone else does as I say, and I say its fine.” The hooded woman barked. Gorham seemed on the verge of tears, but sat down next to the wirey man who had remained silent so far.

“Chay.” Said the woman pointing to herself. “Gorham, Bund. We lost our last breaker, and two good men last time we tried looting the place we're going. If you're willing to put this girl in danger on your head be it.”

Julius nodded.

“Fine then,” said Chay. “into the cart. We'll be there by nightfall and get started at dawn.”

Twigg squeezed Julius's arm as the others walked away.

“Don't worry,” He said reassuringly. “We can take care of ourselves.”

The cart jostled down the road for a very long time before before Bund chose to speak. He alone rode in the back of the cart with Twigg and Julius.

“The girl,” He asked. “how old?” Julius hesitated, but couldn't see the harm in being truthful.

“Seventeen or so.” He replied.

“Both of you have the gift...” Bund mused.

“Magic?” said Julius. “Yes, a little.”

“The girl... Much stronger than you.” Bund continued.

“She had more teaching than I did.” replied Julius.