

**The Twelfth Century**  
by  
**The Dark Lord Insidious**  
(just call me Sid)

**A New Beginning:  
Zombies  
&  
Skeletons  
&  
Not So Elvin Princesses,  
Oh my!**

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**### Chapter 28 ###  
### A Little Help ###**

To say Abby is a little upset would be an understatement. (Note: I say this as she fires off another Bolt of Destruction in my principal direction).

So maybe a little insane is more accurate. (I could, after all, squash her like a bug.) And then, after she fires another volley of bolts (one after another and far too close for comfort, I might add, as even I don't like being the target of animosity and even if the spells in play would be meaningless, I'm not keen on her perfecting her aim if you know what I mean, so) perhaps a lot insane would be more accurate (as not only am I able to squash her like a bug, I'm beginning to feel like doing just that).

But my feelings do not daunt her in this. "I'm going to get you for this, Sid." Or then, perhaps they do. For suddenly she grabs Ned by the arm, "Come on." And the two of them disappear into her house -- more of a cottage, really, complete with smoke coming out of a chimney from the cheery blaze roaring inside.

"Ah, you're back," Wally says by way of greeting (once we've morphed through the walls). And then, because she was raised all civilized -- and not on a battlefield -- Abby lets one final bolt fly (at the china cabinet, no less, destroying the contents therein), before stopping this childish display and turning her attention to (and therefore, venting her rage on) Wally, "How could you let him do that?"

"But, you my child..." he starts, indicating the damage she has done. Hadn't he warned her about casting spells inside the house? And how is this anyone's fault but her own?

But Abby is having none of it. "Sid, has a dragon!" There. She's said it. She's wrong, of course... or sort of wrong. That wand she has in her hand? The one she's been fashioning on the fly? Refining with every blast? Never once thinking to try another spell with it? Well, one could say that Abby owns that wand. Or, since it's in my graveyard, if one wanted to be technical about it, one could say that I own it. So, it should be no surprise (but then, a great deal of surprise) when Wally says, "I suppose he does," have a dragon, even though, he good and well knows that the only dragon (in these-there parts at the present moment -- in egg form or any form, for that matter) is the one in Wally's cloak pocket. Still, what do you expect? You come home, screaming and shouting, making random accusations, or really, letting fly with random facts (not to mention bolts of death and destruction) and the person waiting there for you (quietly reading a book) now has to try and incorporate your version of reality into theirs. And yes, Wally and Abby's versions of reality differ a great deal: Wally's differing a great deal more than hers, if you know what I mean, being the backwards sort of living creature that he is (i.e. a Wizard).

Anyway, his Apprentice (his forward living counterpart, hence the match and glue that holds them together) has just told Wally that I (Sid, a.k.a. Insidious the Dark Necromancer) has a dragon; and she wouldn't

lie, now would she? So in order to make some sort of sense of that fact (even though he knows good and well that the only dragon in these parts is safe in hand), well, let's just say a few wires got crossed in the transmission and leave it at that. (It happens you know.) Suffice to say, Wally takes a deep breath, soaks it all in, and asks, "Is that a bad thing?" because, let's face it, he's lost track and he doesn't know -- not like he should, or at least, not like Abby seems to think he should.

"Is that a bad thing? Is that a bad thing? Of course it's a bad thing. He's going to kill that Dragon and milk it for power."

"Is he?" Wally asks as he sort of wrinkles his nose and then sort of shrugs, "Well, I suppose he is..." because Wally is technically minded sometimes and the truth is, after all, the truth. I mean, where (exactly) do you think all the energy to power this graveyard that we call home comes from, Missy? It had to come from somewhere. And you wouldn't be here, nor would the dragon (bones, dust, and all) if you hadn't contributed some of that energy, as well. It probably was the very last drop of energy that you had in you, I'm guessing. But what do I know? Eh.

Oh, rather, this is what I know (and the pertinent fact in all the proceeding, you know, just in case it was a mite bit too cryptic or technical) is that he who takes that last drop of energy from another is often called a...

"Murderer!" Abby screams; and again, it's with the bolts. She's really lost it (no she has), because anyone else would have started to go down their arsenal trying out different spell combinations -- shooting lightning, fire, ice, cold, flowers, shaving cream, whatever. I mean, sure, it's not likely that covering me (all of me and mine) in a delicious marshmallow sundae is going to have much effect (except for perhaps to make for a tasty change of pace), but even a direct hit with a disintegration ray (where, what, and how a direct hit might be measured in my current disembodied state, I know not how) isn't going to do one iota of good.

Regardless (and concurrent to this rather long winded explanation), Abby is yelling and screaming and continuing to do her bit with the wand, which is starting to look pretty darn honed (polished, if you will)

at this point (amazing that she's constructed in on the fly when you get right down to it).

Still, "Um, excuse, me," Wally says, breaking into her tantrum. "Why exactly are you mad at Sid?"

At Sid? It's a good question. "You think maybe I should be mad at you?" Abby reasons. "You let him kill a dragon."

"I wouldn't really say that."

"So, the dragon's not dead yet... or he kills it in secret," Abby counter-reasons as quick as can be as the insane (even the temporary insane) are so prone to do. "How do you kill a dragon?"

And don't ask me why, as he was doing a perfectly good job of remaining anonymous, but Ned feels the need to make stabbing motions with his hands, as if to say, 'With a sword.'

"No, not the first death," when and how the dragon came to be among us, but how do you turn it into, "Dust. He's going to harvest it for dust. That's clear," and whiz-bang, why don't you blow up the chimney while you're at it -- dear sweet little Abby -- in order to accentuate your comments. I mean, let's face facts. It will take Wally a good twenty seconds (maybe more!) to repair all this damage when we're all done here and Abby's done throwing her hissy fit.

As in, "Hey, I just got done fixing that!" (See how it works.)

And Abby is asking the seriously important but (oft so) misguided questions, once again, "So, how do you harvest a dragon?"

"Get the juice?" Wally asks in what can only be considered a half question that can (handily, easily, and/or conveniently) be taken almost any way a person (probably Abby in this case) desires, before advising (almost conspiratorially), "With Fire. Birth, death, whatever, with dragons it's fire... assuming it's a Fire Dragon that we're talking about, of course. Ice Dragons favor ice; Snow Dragons, snow; and so on."

"But we're talking about a Fire Dragon, here."

"The one and the same," Wally says, but if you know Wally like I know Wally, you'd know it's a nothing sort of statement, as in, 'If you're talking about what I'm talking about, then we are indeed talking about the same thing, which at the moment is a Fire Dragon. Are you talking about a Fire Dragon?'

“What kind of fire?” Abby asks, overlooking the former, which is really just as well, as it’s not important and there is only one Dragon at this point, and I for one am more than happy to take Wally’s word on the fact that it’s a Fire Dragon.

And as to the fire that will give it birth, death, or the slow torture that is life as we know it, “Any old fire will do. If I had a fireplace,” Wally says indicating the smoking ruins and what’s left of the tea he was getting ready to brew, “I could toss it in there.”

“I bet you would!” Abby says, sort of wrapping the conversation up in that petulant way that multi-eon-ic (if that’s a word, and if not, then that way in which old, really old, thousand year old) teenagers have. Anyway, Abby’s a bit out of sorts because if any fire will do, looking for a fire isn’t going to help them any. “Blast you, Sid!” And yet another bolt goes flying my way, blasting the front doors off the hinges.

“Neighbors are going to start to talk,” Ned observes.

“Complain,” Wally agrees.

“Let them!” Abby sort of screams at the top of her lungs letting a few dozen rays fly out through the various openings that she’s created in the last few minutes in their humble abode. (Yes, these would be The Wonder Years.)

And then, once Abby’s settled down a little (because that’s that, and all that), Wally asks of Ned, sort of chummily, “So, studies? How they going? I’m very disappointed in your midterm results. I know you have it in you to do better.”

“What? I mean, even if we were going to have those...”

“We’re going to have them,” Wally assures the boy.

“Well, they wouldn’t be for...”

“A few weeks, so you still have time to bone up and do a better job this time.”

“But it won’t do you any good,” Abby assures him. “Wally is never wrong,” which gives Abby an idea, like the type of basic idea that an Apprentice should almost always pursue (first and foremost) and, like, the only reason she hadn’t pursued this particular course of action already was because she was, in fact (and excuse me while I step to the

side and let another bolt of focused malevolence go whizzing by) and obviously continues to be (more than) a little mentally unstable.

“Just answer the question, Wally. Does Sid have a dragon?” Abby asks, oh, so evenly. (And you probably wouldn’t notice this if I didn’t point it out, so I shall. In the preceding a future tense is most assuredly implied.)

“No. Of course not,” you do, Wally replies, but once again, the import points are implied (and perhaps unfortunately, not heard by anyone in the room but you and I).

“So, he kills it,” Abby says, which is clearly a statement and who is Wally to argue with statements of fact. And trust me, it’s hard to listen to them at times (follow along, understand what they are really saying). In fact (and in truth), I only relate those parts of the conversation that I understand and/or can make some sense of -- and usually those are the parts of the conversation where Abby is talking forwards and Wally is going backwards. But then, half the time, the roles are reversed. And truthfully, the better I get to know them, the more I am convinced that they hardly ever agree on who is going forward and who is going backward and which way the timeline should be rolling...

“Did I say that?”

“No, I’m telling you that.”

“Just now?”

“Yes. What, you see things different?”

“I just don’t see the importance of the Dragon.”

And I could go on, but the last is enough to stop Abby cold. “How can you say to that?” She gasps. She flutters. She does that trying to talk thing, but words fail her... until she comes upon the novel idea of repeating what she’d just said, “How can you say that?”

To which Wally just shrugs, “Zombies,” as if that that says it all. But since it doesn’t say it all, after a pause, he adds, “They’re getting worse from ALL angles,” forwards, backwards, let’s not even talk about sideways (and yes, there is a sideways, the way in which neither Abby nor Wally is particularly adept at seeing -- the way into chaos).

So, “The Elves?” Abby reasons.

“No, I don’t think they sold out. They’re getting hit hard.”

“All the more reason to believe they sold out,” getting their just desserts and all that. I mean, sometimes Abby just doesn’t have to say what’s on her mind for me to get it. See, it’s like that last (lazy, almost perfunctory) bolt of death and destruction that she casts over her shoulder (without even looking, mind you). It means, ‘Butt out. This is a private conversation,’ but you know I’m not going to. (And seriously, if you don’t want me to listen, go to a different graveyard. See, two can play at that insane game.)

“So, what, then?” Abby finally asks (having nothing to do with what I just said, but rather still trying to work out the details with Wally).

“For now, forget the Dragon...”

But Abby is having none of that. “I’m not forgetting the Dragon!” And then, you know, she starts in fresh with the smash-bang, letting the bolts fly (a bolt here, a bolt there) as screams, “Never forgive! Never forget!” I do believe she just might be talking to me.

“But Sid doesn’t really care about the Dragon one way or another,” Wally observes, trying hard to be the voice of reason. “It’s just a tool...”

“It? No a dragon. And I care about that Dragon.”

“And so you shall, but to do that, you need to be there with the Dragon at the right time and at the right place...”

“To stay Sid’s hand.”

“No argument from me,” Wally concedes. Personally, I don’t know why he would (concede that point or why it would need conceding), but he does. “The important thing is you have to be there where and when... or better yet, prevent the where and when from ever, you know, actualizing in the first place.”

“Yes,” Abby agrees, through gritted teeth, so perhaps agreeing is not exactly what she is doing. “But to do that, I need to know the where and the when. Think Wizard. Where? When? This is important to me.”

“Ah, but therein is what’s blinding you,” Wally says, perhaps getting a fuller understanding of the situation as he sort of caresses the egg in his pocket, “You like surprises, don’t you?”

“No, I don’t like surprises.”

“Yes. I think you do. You’re always going on about how you like surprises, ‘Best surprise ever,’ and all that.”

“I don’t like surprises, what Apprentice would? What Wizard would?”

Wally shrugs. “The thing is, you really want that Dragon,” to have and to hold and all that, “and there’s only one, right?” the one I’m holding. And if that’s the case, “Then what you need to do is stop the Zombies.” (And I won’t even begin to understand Wally’s reasoning at this juncture. Perhaps there is none. Perhaps he’s as sick and tired of the zombies as the rest of us. Yes, you heard me correctly, as in All of the rest of us, including me are sick and tired of having those zombies about.)

“What? But I don’t care about the zombies.”

“But Sid does, as much as you care about the Dragon, I’m thinking.” See, even Wizards can be wrong, but he goes on, so maybe there’s more to it than that. “Think. Why else would he,” you know, if he in fact did, “have a Dragon if it wasn’t to aid his quest?” Ah, and there it is. But that’s a lot more future looking that either Abby or I expected at this juncture, so I think we’ll leave that as that for the moment and not try to unravel its significance. “Anyhow, do away with the Zombies and I’m sure the path to the Dragon will be revealed. I mean, that’s the only reason he wants it...”

“To boost his failing spell at the critical moment!” Abby says, suddenly understanding -- or misunderstanding as the case may be. And though, I can’t say I understand the need for all this subterfuge, I guess if Abby had a baby Dragon to attend to, she wouldn’t attend to the Zombies, and very quickly there may in fact be no baby Dragon (only a baby zombie dragon, if you know what I mean, which isn’t the same thing as a baby dragon at all, not by a long shot). So, if you follow that line of reasoning to its end, which perhaps you can’t or won’t, but let’s just say Abby did or does or thinks she does, as does Wally, and so, if I understand correctly, Wally is simply trying to redirect Abby’s anger into a useful direction, which apparently he has. “So, we have to get rid of those zombies. I mean, it was important before,” she confides to Ned,



“But now it’s imperative.” And let’s face it. If we are going to be honest, the two of them haven’t really done anything about the zombies to this point, rather (and for the most) they have simply been watching the zombies, maybe complaining a little, maybe criticizing a lot, but certainly not taking an active interest... um, and by the look on Abby’s face, I don’t think I like the where this is going.

“So, it’s war,” Abby finally declares, no bolts, no threats, just a grim determination, a statement of fact, as if to say, ‘You’re not going to do anything to that Dragon and every moment I delay...’

Yes? Yes? You were saying something Abby? But then, apparently, there is not a moment to lose.

“How does one destroy a Zombie, Wally?”

“But they’re still our friends,” Ned points out, “I mean, that’s the reason why we’ve never tried to do anything before. And a Dragon sound cools and all. But that doesn’t change the fact that we’re talking about our friends, here.”

“Friends don’t let friends become Zombies,” Wally replies in that cryptic way of his, before adding, “But to turn them back is simple enough. I’m sort of surprised I never told you this. Ah, but then, you like surprises.”

“I don’t like surprises. How many times do I have to tell you that Wizard?”

“Probably as many times as you’ve told me you like them. ‘Best surprise ever!’ if I remember correctly...”

“Well, clearly you don’t. I don’t know a single Apprentice that appreciates being surprised or blindsided by their Wizard. You’re losing a lot of points,” and credence, “here. Just tell me how to turn a Zombie.”

“Holy Water,” Wally shrugs. There is that simple enough for you?

“And where are we supposed to get that?” you know on desecrated ground, but once again, surprisingly (the word for the day, I do believe, surprisingly, that is), Wally has the answer to that on the tip of his tongue, “Jack.”

“JACK?” Abby and Ned both say, shout, clammer, repeat to themselves together in utter disbelief.

“Jack’s a jerk.”

“Yeah, he’s not nice.”

Wally just shrugs, “I always thought you idolized him, Ned.”

“Jack? He hits me for no reason.”

“Maybe he sees evil in you and seeks to thrash it out,” Abby kids, which is nice to see for a change (her having a sense of humor, that is).

But to all this, Wally simply shrugs, “Hmm? So, Jack’s a jerk. Learn something new every day. I thought he was one of those, um, Paladins?”

“You’re kidding?”

“Well, if you want Holy Water, I’m pretty sure he’s got the Holy Water,” but then, the morning has been a bit discombobulating for Wally, so, “Maybe I’ve got it wrong.”

But he doesn’t.

“No, he doesn’t,” Abby agrees (with me, no less).

And what the heck, the day’s been getting on, so why don’t we give the old church bell a ring to greet the rising sun. After all, the Kibbers need something to do.

So as the bell rings in the distance...

“What’s that?”

“School bell,” Wally replies, this can’t be the first time it’s rung, can it?

Anyway, as I was saying, so as the school bell rings in the distance, another day shall begin, perhaps the last in which Zombies play a role... perhaps the first in which a Dragon does...

But whatever the case (or exactly because that is the case), as Abby goes to leave, she pauses by the door, and asks of her Wizard, “So, why are you always telling me to look for a cat?”

“Do, I? OK?”

Which is no sort of an answer, but if you read between the lines, it does explain an awful lot.

“We need to work on this,” communication thing, but obviously not now, for now she is out the door and off to school, a fake imaginary school. Why? So, she can get Holy Water from perhaps the biggest

jerk-off in school, to turn the zombies, to save the Dragon, so they can all live happily ever after.

And as to why Jack's got a bunch of Holy Water? Maybe he's been hoarding the stuff? Who knows?

Certainly not I.

I mean, that's one of the things that makes this (live, death, existence thing in general) fun.

And though I could do without the random bolts of death and destruction from Abby's wand, the truth of the matter is, before Abby and Ned have trotted more than ten paces away, the cottage is as it was... though I hope that's not the case for the cemetery at large when all is said and done. I do so long for a change of scenery...

"Mu-ha-ha-ha."

"Mu-ha-ha-ha."

"Mu-ha-ha-ha."

Yes, indeed, I do believe I can hear my laughter echo in the ringing of the morning bell.

Best run along, now. We don't want to be late for school. After all, it just might be the last day of class...

"Mu-ha-ha-ha."

"Mu-ha-ha-ha."

"Mu-ha-ha-ha."

{{{Chapter End}}}