

PART 1 OF 3

DANIEL TAYLOR

AND THE DARK LEGACY



MONICA DAVIS

BASTEI ENTERTAINMENT 

that he would actually encounter a demon, especially since he was only a student.

Usually, the underworlders kept themselves well-hidden; they wouldn't allow themselves to be spotted so easily. The creatures avoided watchers like the plague.

Suddenly, a shadow rushed up to him.

“Boo!”

James dropped the letters and the lantern, hands already busy preparing a crackling energy sphere to hurl at the enemy. His pulse was pounding in his temples, and again he held his breath.

“Ruben!” At the very last moment, James burst the energy sphere, swearing as he recognized his fellow student. “Damn it, you idiot! I almost killed you!”

The young Italian, whose blond hair was just as dusty as James' own, simply laughed.

“Do you really think your balls of glitter could hurt me?”

Like James, Ruben wasn't just a normal student of archaeology and Egyptology; he was also a member of the Watchers' Guild.

“I'd gladly give you a taste of my glitter balls,” James muttered. Their energy level was not particularly high, but if one managed to create a really massive sphere of concentrated energy, it could be used to repel demon attacks. James would much rather have been working on his battle skills than digging in the dirt. In two weeks, he'd be flying back to California to finally start the last part of his watcher training: defense and teleportation! Their group had already been trained in certain skills, but some students — unfortunately, himself among them — still needed a little remedial help in magical matters.

Ruben walked over to him. “What are you doing here, Jimmy, *amico mio*? Reading love letters in secret instead of working?” As the young man began to sing “Amore mio,” James rolled his eyes and growled, “That’s none of your business. Anyway, I’m on my lunch break.”

James liked Ruben, but he hated being called “Jimmy.” In any case, he was two years older than the Italian.

“Ah, trouble in paradise?” Ruben grinned.

James gave him a dirty look, and Ruben retreated from the room, raising his hands defensively.

“*Si, si, ho capito*, I’ll creep back into my own hole. You know where to find me, Jimmy,” Ruben winked, “when you want to talk about it.”

“Not likely!” Now James had to laugh. Talking — yes, that was what Italians did best.

“But if you have an extra bottle of water, I’ll consider it.”

“I’ve got a whole case!” Ruben’s words echoed through the dark corridor. “I’ll even give you a special price!”

“Liar!” James shouted back, smiling. He could no longer see his colleague, but still could hear his footsteps. Ruben had found a narrow entrance into a ventilation chamber where he had stashed drinks and other items that he could sell at a hefty markup to his fellow students. If the professor ever found out, Ruben would get the boot. He seemed to get a thrill from the danger.

There were five of them in the group, plus the professor, and they always worked together on one site under the watchful eyes of the old man, so that no one would do anything stupid if they happened across an artifact. Naturally, none of the Egyptian

authorities had any idea who they really were. They had posed as scientists and obtained a special permit to carry out “measurements” for a few months.

With the help of sophisticated instruments, the Guild had identified a constant but very weak energy pulse that couldn't be localized precisely. Their scholars had concluded that a dark-magic relic emitting a weak electromagnetic field must be somewhere within this pyramid. Now the students were pulling out all the stops to find it in the limited time frame of the permit.

Working in the depths of a pyramid could be eerie. Sometimes the silence was broken by quiet, unexpected noises — rustlings, cracks, rumbles. James told himself that it was just little animals or crumbling rocks, but sometimes it still gave him goosebumps —