

# Chapter Seven

## Bonnie Learns Her Task

People were terrified and for good reason I said to myself. I had been rather more fortunate or lucky than good as Baris called me against the Jungle Master. Although I was glad the Jungle Master was gone for the time being, I could not help but wonder if I really did any good at all. What if I made it worse than it had been? That was one possibility I said to myself though Bonnie was not going to let me dwell on that.

“Go on,” Bonnie said to Baris. “Take care of your people. Alex and I got this.”

“We do,” I said.

“Oh yes we do,” Bonnie said. Baris acknowledged and then quickly went to help his people clean up after the Jungle Master’s attack. “That was so cool that you fought that jungle man.”

“The Jungle Master,” I corrected her.

“Yeah, whatever. It was cool though,” Bonnie said.

“Are you sure you want to do this?” I asked.

“And let you get to do all the good stuff. I’d think not. Come on Alex show me what you got,” Bonnie said as she took out her sword and shield.

“Ladies first,” I said.

“Ha. Ha. Very funny but if you insist,” Bonnie said. She quickly ran to me and swung her sword and as she did I quickly parried her attack away. She again took another swing, this time to the right, which I avoided by jumping in the opposite direction. She then took her shield and

swung it at me. I barely avoided being hit by it as I took my shield and parried her attack back.

“Blast it Alex.”

“Don’t look at Bonnie. We both have had as much sword training which was really none,” I said.

“Not true. You had a little training before the Jungle Master attacked,” Bonnie said.

“Okay. Okay. But it is not much more than what you have had. Besides Bonnie, you are doing good. Look at you-you’re a natural,” I said. I barley was able to parry her attack again as I finished speaking.

“And you’re not doing bad yourself. Heck, you might even give my boyfriend a run for the money for being the most athletic,” Bonnie said.

“What was his name Bonnie? I forgot,” I said jokingly.

“You forgot. How can you forget? His name is Paul and he is the only Paul in the school,” Bonnie said as we continued fencing.

“Oh yeah,” I again teased. “But dear me I did forget.”

“Jerk,” Bonnie, playfully said as we continued to fence.

As we continued practicing several elders, soldiers and even some of the other villagers began watching us fence. Baris, came back and began watching us too after he finished helping other villagers clean up. He said nothing, just like the others, but the smile on the face was all that needed be said. Asli, who had been watching too, suddenly stood beside Baris as she continued to watch us practice.

“Not bad,” Asli said.

“Nope. Not all. Still have some work to do though,” Baris added.

“No kidding,” Asli said.

“But they do have promise. Both the boy and girl are doing better than what most of you have expected,” Baris said.

“I confess I was wrong. You always seem to be one step ahead of everyone else Baris,” Asli said.

“Not always. I too have been wrong,” Baris said.

“When have you been wrong betrothed?” Asli asked.

“I was wrong when I thought we could communicate and negotiate with the Jungle Master and his people,” Baris said.

“But you did what you thought you had to do. You had to try to do something. I mean he and his people were picking off our people one by one,” Asli said.

“And I am still bothered by that. I mean the sudden change from us and them being at peace and friendly with each other to now being enemies,” Baris said.

“Yeah, the change was sudden,” Asli agreed.

“And without warning. I think the elders are right. The change with the Jungle Master and his people occurred around the same time the temple became inaccessible,” Baris said.

“So you think whatever is causing the Jungle Master and his people to go berserk is in the temple,” Asli asked.

“Yes,” Baris replied.

“How are you going to get in there and find out what it is? I mean the temple itself is inaccessible and besides you will never get past the Jungle Master or his people. They are even stronger out there in their natural environment than they are here in the village,” Asli said.

“True, but we must try,” Baris acknowledged.

“Whatever you chose to do my love I will always support you,” Asli said as Baris pulled her close to him.

“Then help me help these kids. Help me help them. Help our young friend Bonnie. The girl needs to discover her role in all this. Although I want her to be trained in arms so she can defend herself and others in times of need I do not think combat will be her role. I do not think that is her strength,” Baris said.

“Why do you say that? Is it because she is a girl?” Asli asked.

“No. Why do you even ask that? I have trained both men and women to be warriors and I do have plenty of men and women who help me defend this village. If you remember Asli it was I would suggested to the elders to open up the possibility of women to become warriors despite their reservations,” Baris said.

“Fair point. In spite of their objections you were the one who convinced both the Queen Mother and Princess Elmas to allow women into service,” Asli said. “And for that I am thankful.”

“Asli, I have been a warrior far too long to not know who is meant for combat and who is not. The boy has demonstrated extraordinary courage as foretold by the elders,” Baris said.

“You mean Elder Salma,” Asli added.

“Oh yes. I sometimes forget their names,” Baris joked.

“You do have a bad habit of that,” Asli said.

“Indeed I do,” Baris replied. “The boy is meant to be a warrior I have no doubt on that but the girl I feel has a different but equally important role to fill to.”

“You think she is meant to be a healer?” Asli asked.

“You tell me. Being a healer is just as dangerous as being a warrior is. Without healers we would not have warriors and the fact is not many people can do it. Actually as a matter of fact, no one has come close to being able to the job well since Irmak. And I mean no man or woman,” Baris said.

“Good point. Being a medicinal doctor is not an easy job,” Asli said. “Takes a special person with special knowledge to do it well.”

“Which our young female friends has whether she knows it or not,” Baris said.

“Somehow you know more than you are letting on,” Asli said.

“Do I?” Baris asked. “Perhaps we can talk more after dinner.”

“I would love that,” Asli said.

“My friends,” Baris shouted. “It is time to stop. Practice has come to an end for today.”

“Okay,” Bonnie and I said as we stopped our practice. The elders, soldiers and others who had continued to watch us let out thunderous cheers.

“Well done my young friends. You two have done well. You must be starved,” Baris said.

“Now that you mention it,” I said.

“Get the fire ready. A feast it will be,” the first elder said as he turned to three men who quickly went to prepare dinner.

“You two have done really well,” Baris said.

“What now?” Bonnie asked.

“My young friend, for you, I want you to go with Asli. She will help train you,” Baris said.

“You don’t think I can be a warrior too?” Bonnie, asked with slight anger in her voice.

“No, my young friend. It is not that at all. I think you and Alex both are more than capable of being warriors. I just happen to think that your role will be a little bit different, and yet equally important and dangerous as his role is,” Baris said.

“And what might you think my role will be?” Bonnie, asked again appearing skeptical.

“A medicinal doctor,” Baris said.

“A doctor,” Bonnie asked. “How is that dangerous?”

“Look at what happened to Irmak,” Baris said.

“Good point,” Bonnie confessed.

“Look, my young friend. I know you want to be a warrior and everyone does. Being a warrior is honorable but not everyone can do it. Just like not everyone can be a doctor either and being a tribal doctor is just as dangerous if not more so. I would not ask you to try to be the doctor if I did not think you can. Being the doctor means you do go with the warriors out into the field. Being in the field means you too are putting yourself in harm’s way. Let me tell you how important your task is. Without a doctor it is not likely that we would have any warriors left to defend our village. All the men, women and children here would be at the mercy of the Jungle Master and his warriors,” Baris said.

“Whoa. I did not realize,” Bonnie said.

“Everyone has their roles and truthfully we all must be the ones to discover our roles. As I told Asli I have been a warrior far too long and I know my people. I know who can do what and I suspect you have more skills, abilities and knowledge than you are letting on. Only you can truly discover what it is that you are meant to be. If you truly are meant to be a warrior like Alex then you will do so but if you, as I suspect, meant to do something else too then it will reveal

itself to you in time. No matter what Bonnie just be patient. Patience is key in any field that you find yourself working in,” Baris said.

“Thank you sir,” Bonnie said.

“Hey Bonnie,” I added as she and Baris turned to me. “As I have always said you can do whatever you put your mind to and I still believe that.”

“Thanks,” Bonnie said, appearing a little happier and less upset.

“Now my friends I say it is time for dinner. What do you say?” Baris asked.

“Let’s eat,” Bonnie and I said with agreement.