

Seshru origin story – by Magdalena Arana Tagle

“Come on Seshru!”

The small child reluctantly tore her eyes away from the Viper Clan camp and re-joined the Raven Clan hunters. She didn't want to be a hunter, but her father was the clan leader, so it was only expected of her. She longed to be a mage, always visiting the current mage (Henka), looking in awe over spells, rituals and potions. She took particular interest in curses, spells to drive away parasites and always wondered if they would work on humans.

“Seshru, just 5 more minutes and we'll be back home.” Her father reassured. The 7-year-old rolled her eyes and sped up her pace, dragging a crooked stick in the dirt behind her. They walked on a forest path, surrounded by plants. The sun streamed in through the trees. It was a glorious day for walking, bathing in the river and listening to birds. All Seshru could think about were the different berries that could kill each animal in a heartbeat.

Soon, the Raven camp came into view. Seshru gazed uninterestedly over the hive of activity, scanning the camp for Henka's tent. She had a question to ask, and she knew that it was not for the ears of her father. While the rest of the hunters stood admiring their camp, Seshru darted out of sight and snuck into Henka's hut.

“What question do you bring today?” Henka asked without turning round. Seshru smiled. She could never quite figure out how he could tell she was there.

“I never drop my guard. You never know when danger appeared in the forest” Henka answered before the question was asked. They both sat down facing each other, and Henka traced a spiral on the dusty ground.

“I wanted to ask ... how is a tokoroth made?”

Henka didn't reply, but instead kept tracing the spiral, round and round, until Seshru couldn't look away.

“All tokoroths,” he started eventually “were once children.” Round and round the spiral went, round and round. “A child is snatched from their mother's shelter, when they are only three summers old.” Seshru listened intently, still drawn into the spiral in the dust.

“The child is starved, given only enough to stay alive. It is forced to live in its own filth until it forgets the touch of its mother, until it forgets its own name.” Seshru couldn't look away from the spiral if she tried, round and round it went.

“By then, the child is only an empty husk. A demon is trapped inside it, and then whoever made it has a servant who will do their every will.”

Henka's finger lifted from the floor, and Seshru collapsed. Henka sighed.

“Simple entrancing spell. You're better than that Seshru.”

Henka picked up the sleeping child and dropped her off in her hut. She awoke a few minutes later. She didn't know how she got there or what happened. All that was left in her memory were Tokoroths.

Seshru ran into the forest, eager to try it herself.