

Entry by Daniel Seth Harris

She lifted the amulet to the stones with runic carvings on them and they began to glow a faint green. The stones split apart revealing a darkness that consumed what little moonlight reached this part of the mountain. She held her torch up to push back the encroaching darkness. Despite the ancient runes, the entrance showed little signs of inactivity. There were no cobwebs and the air did not hang heavy with the sign of old circulation. The passage had been opened recently. She knew that her mother must have come this way. She entered the passage with only a moment's hesitation to ensure she was not being followed. She stepped into a small work area that housed a small table, old parchments, and many old books. This must have been some sort of registration area to gain access to the area beyond. "Entrance for one please." She announced to no one in particular. She found herself talking to herself more often these days. It made her miss her brother. She pushed the nostalgic thoughts aside. Out of curiosity, she checked the book on the table, but the last name entered in there was from almost 500 cycles before her time. She knew her mother would not have been naïve enough to leave evidence of her presence behind. She did see names she recognized from lectures in school and decided to make a note for historical preservation. She made her way to the only other door in the room. It also had runes around it. She lifted the amulet again to the runes and they began to glow this time with a blue light. She silently thanked Baldur for getting her the amulet without it her trip would have been in vain. The door began to move with as much ease as the first one had a fact that filled her with hope that she was still on the right path. She prepared herself to enter the Dungeon of Solitude. A place famous in history for the imprisonment of some of the greatest and quite possibly the most insane minds in the world.

She was caught off guard by the smell. It was not the typical smell associated with a dungeon. Granted, there was moisture on the air, but it was not dank in nature. The scent of wet smooth stone carried up to her senses. She could smell the dust of years as well, yet it strangely did not feel old. But none of the scents were unpleasant to her. It did not have the feeling of a place sealed off from the rest of the world. It instead smelt the same as if it had been opened for the first time yesterday. She could sense the mountain all around her as if its very energy held her there. The

smell was ancient yet clean at the same time. It made her remember the stories of myth that said the wizard who had created this prison had meant for its prisoners to remain locked up here for all time. It was said that he used very advanced magic to trap this place in space and time. It never aged and the men/women who were trapped here did not age either. They were forced to live a fate worse than death knowing that all of the world they knew aged around them, but they remained. She trembled at the thought not only because the idea of it was horrible, but because if her mother had been correct, this was the fate that most likely had befallen her father. More runes led her way which she was grateful for because if they were not there it would have been pitch black all the way down the stone steps and she had left her torch behind. The scent and the runes encouraged her forward despite the uneasy feeling growing in her stomach of what lay below. She knew her mother had to have come this way. The trail and the signs had all lead this direction. She hoped the stories were wrong. She hoped they had only been myth. That was when she heard the scream from below...