



The Traveling Tower
Chapter 1

FICTION *Rawly Rawls*

The Traveling Tower 1

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“Mother ... Mother!” Prince Rian ran up the circling stairs. The masonry around him shook with the power of the assault. He stumbled, caught his balance, and kept going. He moved to the side as three soldiers passed him, their armor clanking loudly in the confined space. As heir, he wasn’t allowed to fight. He gazed at their sheathed swords with longing. *I should be allowed to defend my home.* But if the king was fighting, as he was, the heir must be protected.



Exiting the stairwell, Rian came to a halt. He glanced around the long hallway. This was the floor where the queen was supposed to be. "Mother!"

"Rian!" Queen Hestia pulled her son out of the hall and held him to her bosom. "Thank the gods, you're well. This all happened so fast."



"What news do you have, Mother?" Rian's voice was muffled by his mother's ample bosom. To regain some dignity, he pulled himself away. They were high up in the tower, in a room that looked west. "Oh ... gods ... the news is not good, is it?" Rian stepped to the window, a grim frown on his face. His father's forces were fleeing. The witch's dark creatures were moving into the city. Fire flashed and smoke billowed. "Father is surely dead."

"We don't know that for sure." Hestia put all her training into keeping her voice calm and sure. Looking out at the destruction, she had to admit that her son was right.

"I'm king now. At least until they reach the tower and murder me." He looked around the room. "Bring me a sword, Mother. As king, I must fight."

"The Sisterhood would not let you snuff out your flame so easily." Hestia saw winged creatures lift from the witch's forces. *They will be here soon. Some of her monsters may already be inside the tower. They must do it now.* "Have you noticed how this tower is not built like the rest of the city? The Sisterhood broke it away from a larger, magical building. In the event of such a moment as this, the Sisterhood has pledged to move this tower, and everything in it, to rejoin the original structure. I just hope that they do it soon."

"Move ... the tower?" Rian's brows furrowed in anger. "No, I'm going to stay and fight. It's my duty as -"

“Do you feel it? It’s happening.” Hestia sat on a nearby armchair and pulled her son onto her lap. He was about the same height as her and didn’t fit so neatly as he once had. Nonetheless, she tightened her arms around him. “I’ve never seen this sort of magic before, I’m not sure what to –”



There was a blinding light, and then mother and son found only blackness.

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Rian was the first to wake. He slowly stood, blinking his eyes in bewilderment. He went to the window and had a hard time trusting his eyes. Instead of the beloved city he had grown up with, there was only a barren expanse of sand. "They really did move the tower." He tried to judge their distance from the ground. It wasn't easy with the monolithic view, but he decided they were higher up than was possible with the tower he had known from home. "We've joined with the original." A moan from somewhere behind brought him out of his stupor. "Mother!" He turned and found her lying on the stone floor.



"Rian?" With her son's help, Hestia slowly sat up. "Did it work? Are we safe?"

"We've exchanged a noble death for a less worthy death. Come see." He lifted her to her feet, and with an arm around her waist, helped her to the window. "We will starve or ... perhaps die of thirst before that."

"The magic is more clever than that, My Prince." She breathed a sigh of relief. "The magic will provide our sustenance. If we please the tower, it will care for us. Every day, several floors within the tower will be stocked as if servants had been busy throughout the night. We need only find the correct floor, and we will be sustained. Or, at least, that's what I was taught."

"Oh." Rian thought about that. It wasn't practical, but magic was rarely practical. "How do we find the correct floor?"

"The stairs." Hestia thought of her king, and her face turned ashen.

“What is it?” Rian took her hand and held it in his.



“Nothing ... nothing,” she lied. *If the tower is here, then my husband is surely dead.* She cupped her son’s face, focusing her love on him. He was her everything now. “When danger has passed at home, the Sisterhood will bring our tower home. The elves sent word to your father that they were coming to our aid. They will destroy the witch. We must be mindful not to wander from our tower to the original parts of the building, or we may get left behind.”

“Yes, that seems easy enough.” Rian looked his mother over. “Are you injured?”

“I’m fine.” Using all of her will, she held back the tears that wanted to spring forth. Instead, she gave him a tight smile. “There will be others in the tower. We should find as many survivors as we can and assemble. Safety in numbers.”

“I did see soldiers in the tower right before I found you.” Rian narrowed his eyes. “Safety from what? We’re in the middle of the sands.”

“It is possible that some of the witch’s creatures made it into the tower before the Sisterhood could act. Also, this is a traveling tower. It doesn’t always sit in these sands. It may have picked up stowaways at some point.” Hestia kept her spine straight and her shoulders square. “Come on, let’s move along.” She smoothed out her skirts and straightened her crown. “Maybe we can find you that sword you requested.” She led the way to the stairs and descended.

They passed floor after deserted floor. Nothing looked as if it had been stocked by magical servants.

“Where is everyone?” Rian followed his mother as they examined another empty room. This one had a large, empty hearth and furniture for lounging.



“I told my maids to stay. But ... many must have fled the tower. Of course, the tower’s magic was a secret from almost everyone.” Hestia walked over to a rack of display weapons on the wall. “At least we’ll have swords.” She checked the blades. They were dull, but could be sharpened easily enough. She took one for herself and handed another to the prince. “Belt it on, and we’ll continue to the next floor. I’m parched.”

“Me too.” Rian belted his sword and followed his mother out of the room.

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An hour later, they found their first person. But the poor man wasn't a survivor. "What killed him?" Rian knelt next to him. The man's armor was rent in four bloody gashes across the chest. His skin was pallid, and his eyes stared in horror at the ceiling. This was the first dead man Rian had seen.

"Other than some sort of beast, I cannot say. There are bloody claw marks here." Hestia pointed to where something had scrapped its nails along the wall. "Let's say a prayer for him and move on."

"We're going to leave him here?" Rian stood, his stomach queasy.

"We can't very well bury him." Hestia ripped a tapestry from the wall and covered the man. They said their prayers and moved on.

When they finally found food, a purple evening spread across the sky outside the tower's windows.

"Oh ... thank gods ... it's ..." Rian stumbled toward a long dining table laid out with only one food item and pitchers of water. "It's all gruel. I would have thought the magic would have provided something ... more appetizing."

"I think the tower isn't pleased with us. It made us travel a long way, and it is only providing the barest necessities." Hestia picked up a tarnished spoon and sat down to eat. "Come, dine with me. It will keep us alive."

They ate in silence. When they were done, they explored the floor. They found a bedroom made ready for them, with a majestic four-poster bed and a fire in the hearth.



“There is a cold bath in here.” Hestia peeked her head into a washing room. “I’ll bathe first, then it’s your turn.” She went into the room.

Rian listened to her splash and shriek at the cold. When she was finished, she exited the washroom with two small towels held up to cover her modesty, one over her breasts, and the other over her vagina. Rian saw that she had nothing covering her rear end when she jogged past him to the bed. He quickly looked away. “Mother, I don’t want a cold bath.”



“Your trousers are stained with blood from that man upstairs. You’re stale with sweat.” Hestia didn’t uncover herself with her son still in the room. Instead, she turned to face him, shivering. “The bath will be functional. Like the food, our necessities are met.”

Rian frowned, nodded, and entered the washroom. The bath was painful, but at least he came out the other side of it clean. Holding a small, rough-spun towel over his soft penis, he reentered the bedroom and found that his mother was in bed. “You’re ... sleeping naked?”

“The door is locked. I suggest you do the same. We both need sleep.” She gave him a tight smile, trying not to think about everything the witch had taken from her that day. “I still have you, light of my life. We will be safe here. Especially once we find some others. For now, lay your head down and dream.”

"In the same bed as my mother?" Rian hesitated.

"The tower gave us no other bed." Hestia shrugged carefully to keep the sheet over her breasts. "Regardless, we're safer together."

Rian kept his towel over his penis until he was under the covers. Then, he tossed it to the floor. He was thankful that they at least had a large bed. He turned onto his side, facing away from his mother, and settled his head onto the pillow. "Good night, Mother. I love you." He tried not to be ungrateful. At least he and the queen were alive. At least the elves were coming to dispatch the witch. At least ... He drifted off to sleep.



Hestia listened to her son's soft snoring. "Good night, my northern star. My love for you is all that I have left," she whispered. She tried to get comfortable and settled in for a long sleepless night.

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Hestia was the first to rise. She found that her old clothes were gone, replaced by a simple dress made with scratchy fabric. She put it on and waited for her son. Sitting by the bed, she couldn't help but notice the tent his morning stiffness made. *At least he's vital and healthy. He will make some queen very happy someday.* Growing tired of waiting, she shook him awake. "Time to rise. We must find other survivors today."

"Yes ... yes ..." Rian rose quickly and climbed out of bed. He was ashamed to find that he suffered from morning wood. "Look away, Mother."

"I've seen it all before, silly." Hestia dutifully turned her back to him.



"Not since I became a man. I'm eighteen now." Rian looked around. "Where are my old clothes?"

"Gone." Hestia shrugged. "Put on what the tower provided."

"These clothes aren't fit for a prince." Rian picked up a tunic and ran his fingers along the grabby fabric. He glanced at his mother's earnest face, saw what she was wearing, and sighed. He quickly dressed, tucking his cock under his waistband to keep it contained. He squirmed in the itchy clothes. "What now?"

“Now we have breakfast.” She turned to him, lovingly cupped his face, and kissed his cheek. “Then, we assemble with the other survivors. Then, we wait for the Sisterhood to recall the tower.” She gave him a hug, careful not to press her stomach against the raging steel of his erection. It was certainly bigger than when last she’d seen it. Of course, she had never seen it hard before. She thought of her husband’s smaller, more dignified-looking erection. That helped put her son’s angry-looking thing out of her mind. “Come along, let’s see if there’s something other than gruel this morning.”

Unfortunately, their breakfast consisted of the same menu as their dinner from the night before. They ate their fill and restarted their descent.

