



THE FOUNTAIN OF  
ETERNAL YOUTH

Vol 2

Alina Udrea

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## Volume 2

### Chapter 1

Mark couldn't believe his dream had finally come true. He was a knight in the king's army, King Harold's army. But things were way better than he had ever dared to hope for. He was engaged to Lizzy, the young and beautiful sorceress who turned out to be the king's daughter. So he was to marry a princess. But she was nothing like her step sister Milly who was cunning and selfish. As for John, he was Milly's step brother and he was in fact Lizzy's brother as king Harold finally revealed after he got his youth back and those things wouldn't

have mattered anymore as he would continue to rule his own kingdom.

Milly knew that John couldn't have been her brother as her mother died when she gave birth to her and John was younger than her but it wasn't her business to ask her father. As long as Harold knew and acknowledged John as his son, it didn't matter that he wasn't the late queen's son.

Now the kingdom of Karaland had a queen once again, Gabriela, and a young and powerful king, Harold. He was indebted to his daughter, Lizzy, and to his future son in law, Mark, as they had made all these possible. And let's not forget Gabriela, the once again young and beautiful sorceress, his wife and queen.

But not everyone was happy with how things had turned out. Milly was the least happy. All her dreams of ruling her father's kingdom had crumbled in a heartbeat. And it was all Lizzy's fault as far as it concerned her. Furthermore, she didn't have Roman anymore to rely on him for her dirty jobs. She would have to find someone else, she couldn't get her own hands dirty. Nope, she was a lady.

Now she wouldn't only have John in the back of her mind, who could aspire to the throne when their father would eventually get bored with a lifetime of ruling the kingdom, but she had Lizzy to worry about too. Her step-sister. Why couldn't her father keep his pants on? Wasn't she enough? Why did he have to have other children and with another woman? Gabriela, her step-mother. And it turned out that John was in fact Lizzy's brother.

Things were looking bad from Milly's point of view. First of all, her father was young and strong again. And now Lizzy could also claim the throne in case something unfortunate happened to the king, their father. It was even difficult to put Lizzy in the same sentence with her father. She couldn't conceive that they were step sisters. Step sister with a witch. She hated her. And her future husband. And everything that had to do with Lizzy. Yes, even her father for putting her through this. She was the most able and wise of all. She should rule....

Gabriela on the other hand was thrilled to be reunited with her son, John. King Harold had taken him when he was born as Gabriela couldn't have taken care of him because he was a boy. The sorceresses of her line never kept baby boys. All her ancestors either gave their sons to their fathers or sacrificed them in weird rituals to

increase their magic powers. They would only keep the daughters, future sorceresses like themselves to continue the line of magic and witchcraft. But Gabriela was different, too. She could have never sacrificed her children, even if she had a boy. She left him with king Harold while she remained his mistress and his witch, but not his wife although he was already a widower back then. Still he hadn't been ready to marry her as she wasn't a queen and he would have been perceived as weak by the other kings of the world. And he was proud and stupid. Good thing it wasn't too late to make amends. At least now in his old age he saw things clear and wanted his youth back, wanted Gabriela back. And with her help and her daughter's help, king Harold got a second chance. They both got a second chance. This time Gabriela knew things would be different. He had learnt his lesson...and so had she. Yes, she loved the old fool. And she couldn't believe they were both young again. They had their whole lives ahead. A life together as husband and wife.

John too was excited to find out that he had a mother and that she was alive. Gabriela seemed nice but she looked almost as young as himself and she was a sorceress. He wasn't sure what he felt about her, about

the whole situation. He tried to understand why she had left him with king Harold, why she had abandoned him. After thinking and pondering, not too much because thinking wasn't his strong point, he decided to forgive and accept her as his mother, to her joy and wonder.

## Chapter 2

Milly was restless. She was trying to find a new assassin, someone else she could turn into a weapon to do her bidding. This time she would have to choose wisely. Roman had been pretty good, but not perfect. He had been killed by that boor, Mark, Lizzy's future husband. And had linked her to the murders of her father's two counsellors. Good thing her father had got his hands on the water and was reunited with his witch, if that could be called a good thing, as he forgot about what she had done and seemed to have forgiven her. Or at least she hoped so. This time she would choose more carefully.

There was a secret guild of assassins she had heard about. That is where her father, King Harold, had found Roman and had hired him. He had been one of the best assassins the guild had. But there were others just as good. She just had to find a way to get in touch with a member of the guild. Or their leader. The leader of the assassin's guild. That was who she needed if she wanted a job well done. And take her revenge on Lizzy for prolonging her father's reign.

Milly knew the assassin's guild had its headquarters somewhere outside town, somewhere in the Teyush Forest. It was a place avoided by most people as it was well known the assassin's guild resided there. Not even the king meddled in their affairs, especially as he himself hired assassins when he wanted to take care of certain problems. Their guild was protected by the king himself.

That was where Milly had to go if she wanted a new assassin. So she put on a hood to hide her identity from prying eyes and when the moon was up, she exited the safety of her chamber to venture alone in the darkness in search of a new assassin. She was a bit scared but she had her dagger with her in case she needed it. It was a small golden dagger encrusted with beautiful and expensive gems and it was worth a little fortune. It had

been her sixteenth birthday present. It was what she had asked her father as a gift. King Harold thought it was an unusual gift for a girl, but if it was what his daughter wanted, then that's what he bought and brought her. When Milly first put her eyes on the beautiful weapon, her eyes gleamed with joy and happiness. It really was a perfect gift, she had thought. And even now she marveled at the beauty of the dagger. Its simple presence in her pockets gave her confidence, made her feel protected. She had never used it but she was sure she had what it took to use it in case she needed to defend herself. Better safe than sorry, right?

So Milly took her horse from the stables and galloped to Teyush forest. It was such a dark night that even the trees seemed distorted and spooky. And the night animals and insects were making constant noises that gave her the creeps. But she was determined to find a new assassin, she needed a new assassin to protect her and to kill for her. So she gathered all her courage and went on in the dark of the night. She galloped for a while until she realized she couldn't find the assassin's guild. Upset but not willing to give up just yet, she stopped her horse and looked around for any sign of the assassins.



Besides the crickets and occasional owls, the forest became as silent as death.

Milly listened for any signs of humans nearby but no matter how hard she tried she couldn't distinguish anything that would mean the assassins were anywhere close by. She started to doubt that she would find what she came looking for when she felt the cold blade of a sharp dagger at the base of her neck and someone putting his hand over her mouth so she wouldn't yell, although she thought that even if she screamed, no one would come to rescue her anyway. She started sweating in fear and water formed on her frowned forehead, dripping down her long nose. Her heart started racing as she was thinking that maybe this had been a bad idea after all. It was too late now anyhow, so she would just have to wait and see what happened next.

Then Milly heard a low and calm voice whispering in her ear:

- If you scream, you'll be one head shorter. And nobody would hear you, anyway. Nobody that could help I mean. So when I take my hand from your mouth, you will stay calm and answer my questions, understood? Then he slowly took his hand off her

mouth, allowing her to speak. He could feel her trembling with fear and could hear her breathing heavily.

- Ok, Milly could hardly mutter, but she didn't scream. She was trying to be brave and remind herself why she was here in the first place.
- So who are you and what are you doing here in the middle of the night? Are you a witch?
- No, she answered while thinking about the irony. Her sister Lizzy was a witch, not her. She was born and brought up as a princess, taught good manners and stuff. Unlike Lizzy who was a witch and had another witch as a mother and lacked education and good manners. Lizzy had been taught magic spells and how to kill stuff while she was the real princess who should rule over Karaland when King Harold would be ready to pass down the reign of the kingdom.
- Then who are you and what are you doing here? Milly heard the same voice asking her the same questions again.
- I am Milly, King Harold's daughter, she answered boldly this time. And if you are already thinking about a ransom for me, forget it. I am here to find

the assassin's guild. I want to hire the best assassin. He will be nicely rewarded for his time, that I can assure you of. And who are you, asked Milly and turned around to see her captor.

He was a muscular tall man but his face was hidden behind a hood, just like hers. By the way he was clad and armed, she was sure he was one of the assassins. Which meant he could take her to their leader and she could then hire the best money could afford.

- Ok, follow me, Miss, he said then and he showed her the way through the dense forest. He led her to the assassins' headquarters. Their headquarters was well hidden among the tall trees, somewhere up on a steep hillside, making it almost impossible to stumble upon it by mistake. There were high wooden fences connecting the trees and forming a real fortress. And a really huge reinforced wooden gate, standing like a barrier between the outside world and the assassin's guild.
- Ok, she heard him speak again, we are here. Then she heard him whistling a nice tune. Then the huge gates started to creak as they began to open slowly. Milly was wondering how many assassins were

behind those wall like fences. Finally, the gates opened and they entered through them. There were some hooded men going about their business, but she couldn't distinguish anyone's face.

- Come, the man spoke again, this way, and he showed her inside a medium sized house.

It was evident that the house was where the important members of the guild resided. Where decisions were being made. Once inside, the house looked a lot larger than it seemed only minutes ago from the outside.

Milly quickly saw that there were doors to private chambers on each side of the large room. And also stairs leading to an upper level of the house, but that was guarded by two assassins. It probably led to the chambers of the leaders of the assassins' guild. The two guards were heavily armed and looked really dangerous. They had their faces covered and the interior of the house was badly lit, but Milly could feel them watching her, analyzing her, following her with their gaze.

At the end of the long house, where the rooms ended on both sides, there was a large square wooden table and a few assassins sitting there. All

chairs were the same except one which was higher than the rest and had more sophisticated carvings on it. An assassin was seated there and Milly figured that was the leader of the guild, the one she had to talk to.

Nobody had spoken anything yet, not even her captor, and the silence was deafening. She couldn't take it anymore, she was going to break the silence first, show the leader that she wasn't afraid although she was all alone in their den. So as soon as she got in front of the big wooden table, she coughed first to clear her throat, then she said in what she thought was a commanding voice, the voice she used to order her servants around:

- Hello, sir, mister... and seeing that he still said nothing, she went on: hello! I am here to hire you as my personal bodyguard and assassin!

Now the assassins seated around the table burst out laughing. But the leader was serious and kept silent. Maybe he didn't have a developed sense of humor, Milly thought, as obviously the others were having a good time on her behalf. Instead of making her uncomfortable, their laughter relaxed her a bit.

Made her feel safe. They wouldn't kill her if they were laughing, right?

- So who are you, Miss... the leader finally spoke in a husky voice.
- Milly, King Harold's daughter. I know my father hired his assassins from your ranks, from your guild members. Now I wish to do the same.
- Yes, King Harold... the leader said. He paid us well for our services.
- And so will I, Milly said putting a purse of coins on the table to show him that she meant it.
- You can call me Drae. I am the leader of the assassins. They all answer to me. We form recruits and we house whoever doesn't have a home or a job and wants to become one of us. There is always need of good trained assassins as this job is not without risks, even for us. Some come here since childhood and train hard to become good assassins. We offer them shelter and food and at first they work for us. When they have paid their debts for the shelter and food and they become good enough at what they do, in case they don't die first, then they can work for themselves. Earn for themselves. We have strict rules here.

- Aha, interesting, Milly said pondering. So how much would it cost to hire you!?
- You can't afford me, young lady. I am their leader, I train them and the generations to come. They need me. But you can hire anyone else from among our ranks. They are just as good, Drae said showing a large grin which let big white teeth to be seen.
- Uh, ok.... Said Milly a little upset by his refusal. She wasn't used to not having things her way. But she would have to get used to it. So whom would you recommend? You must know them best so please recommend me the best skilled assassin you have.
- Hmm, Drae said after a few minutes, that would be Dorian. But don't be fooled by his appearance. He may be short and a bit plump but he is good at what he does. And he is a master of disguise.
- Can I see him? She asked wondering how good this Dorian was. But Drae must know his own people best, right?
- Sure, Rudy, go get Dorian please. Tell him someone is interested in him. And tell him to be quick about it.

A skinny silhouette left in a jiffy. Milly figured that must have been Rudy. The rest of the assassins were paying attention to the discussions, trying not

to miss a word of what was being spoken. Some minutes later two shadows were approaching fast. One was tall and skinny and the other was .... Short and rather fat in comparison to the rest of the assassins that were surrounding them. And also had a funny gait. But even so it looked like he was able to keep up with the other guy who must have been Rudy. They were an odd pair.

- Yes, did you ask for me, Drae? Milly heard his husky voice and the words seemed to rush too fast out of his mouth, almost unintelligible. But perhaps Drae was used to him and understood him easier and faster than she could. He almost seemed to babble rather than speak.
- Yeah, you might have work. This young lady here wants to hire an assassin and I recommended you. You can thank me later, Drae said bursting into laughter.
- What's so funny? Are you making fun of me? Milly asked and stomped her feet. She wouldn't let anyone mock her. Was this a joke? Was this short guy even an assassin or was he the janitor of the place? And was Drae taking her for a fool??



- Told you not to be fooled by the way he looks...forgot to mention the way he talks. That was all. But no, nobody is making fun of anybody. And your father used to be our best client and he is the king! So no, no one is mocking his daughter!
- Good! Milly said simply before discussing her terms with her new right hand man.

### Chapter 3

Lizzy was so happy and grateful for everything. It was like a dream in which she was a princess.... only it wasn't a dream. She really was a princess and her mother was the queen now. And King Harold was her father. It almost felt unreal. And Mark...she was in love with the wannabe knight and hero. And she knew he loved her. Anybody could see that.

But Mark wasn't the problem. The problem was her step sister, Milly. She had tried to kill her once when she sent her assassin to do the job for her and failed. If she

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