

## Restructure the Iron

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# Restructure the Iron

by [KadeJaneStoker](#)

## Summary

This is not the story you know. This is the story of false icons daring to take many names. The names that once haunted the world. What they fail to realize is that their false glory will be their downfall. Because if they are false, where are the real ones?

## Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

The dead night greeted howling snow pelting down. December was always the time when winter displayed her full cruelty. When it forgave none and forgave all. Such a predicament was laid unto the young Anna. In times past, she would be one of the last Valerious destined to kill the Faustian son of the first. Of the Elder Valerious. But she didn't know that. She didn't know of destiny or her true origins. What she knew was that the snow burned.

It burned every time she took a step within the snow-buried forest. How it burned even though she was cold. How she was lost in the deep forest. The young child was lost, separated by her brother who had naively neglected her to pretend to fight his family's greatest enemy. Anna had ventured in deep.

And now she was lost. The child was at the mercy of the wild. The wind continued to howl, no matter how hard she had dredged through the snow. Anna was tired, lost, and above all, scared. She cried as any child would. She called out for her mother, howled for her father, and screeched for her brother. Anna cried for them, for her home, messy tears streaming down her face. Even as her own voice became hoarse as her knees finally collapsed on her.

With her howling, the ancient woods answered. At first, it was but a mere whisper cracking branches and leaves. But it became the rustling in the bushes, and pattering became the louder whispers. Young Anna was oblivious, a child would be, for that was what she was. A crying child lost.

She was oblivious to the paws crunching and its hot breath. It was only when it tried to lick her tears, did she open her swollen eyes to greet what was before her. Two coal eyes, with the right side scarred by a single tear in its flesh. A grey old wolf looked at her with these eyes. She cried again at this sudden sight, only for the wolf to gently approach. It licked her face again, attempting to dry her tears in the only way it could. It meant her no harm, only solace. Eventually, Anna began to giggle, assured by the kisses. A warmth reached her heart.

When the wolf saw its intent, he snuffled her shirt. He buried his head into her shirt and tried to lift her up. The young child was confused, squirming and whimpering. The wolf stopped and took steps back. She was weak still, shivering in the harsh cold. How she had managed to stay alive for this long was unfathomable. But it could never be chalked up to being a Valerious. No, it was something else, that called the wolf to her. Something within her blood that the wolf recognized unbeknownst to her.

It circled her to her back head low. Before she could act, young Anna was lifted off her feet by the scruff of her shirt. With a mouthful of fabric in between its teeth, the wolf proceeded to walk with her in the mouth. It was protective and gentle as it carried her within the woods, powering through the snow where young Anna couldn't. Why didn't she fight back? For one thing, she was tired and weak. There was one other reason...

Many times her father told her and Velkan about the dark. How many dangerous things crawled within the blanket of night. To beware of all they encountered, for none would be so kind. And yet, there was the wolf and deep down in Anna's blood, she knew it wouldn't hurt her. If it could be described, it was a warm, lulling wordless whisper that assured her no harm would come.

Eventually, young anna was lifted up once more and onto the wolf's back. Young anna squealed as she was lifted up again. She moved and adjusted to better sit atop the wolf. It was soft under her tiny fingers as she gripped the fur. Not too harsh, but not too gentle. It was enough to hold on tight, to prevent falling.

The wolf pushed on, and the woods passed by as it ran. Deeper into the woods. Only the snowy sky was distinguishable against the dark woods. Young anna bounced atop, but she still held on. She even giggled a little, the bouncing growing to be fun for her. For a moment she forgot the pain and being lost. Only for that to disappear as more howls echoed in the distance. The woods whispered with the crunching of snow and the pattering of footsteps. Through the passing trunks, young anna could see wolves running to catch up. The wordless whispers erupted into a full-blown choir of the lulls. They began to come out, furs of natural shades began to dominate the white snow. They were accompanying her.

They were keeping her safe.

Young anna could not begin to count the numerous wolves that followed behind her. They were but a swarm, aiming to protect an unknown queen. An undiscovered one. Anna thought of them as brave, feeling kindred to them. They all ran with such fervor, singing their nightly songs. She couldn't help but want to join. A smile begins to spread on her soft cheeks as she raised her head high. She tried to howl just as she did, with her voice cracking after crying. But the wolves did not judge and howled with her.

She feels safe and encouraged as they howled together. Their choir of rapture was boisterous, as they were the children of the night. They were alive together as one family.

At one point, the grey wolf stopped, and so did the others when they came across a castle. A grand castle. Its gothic architecture pierced the dark sky. But in no way did it subtract from the empty vibes. Curious, young anna slid off the wolf, landing with some effort. The old wolf whimpered, not because of pain, but of fear. It gently bit the edge of her shirt and tried to pull her back from what lied in the castle.

Young anna was stronger now that she rested. Her legs did not want to cave under her, nor did they tremble. But she could smell food from inside the stone and her stomach growled in demand to fill the void. This was something the old wolf understood once he heard the growling flesh. Slowly he let go and nudged her to the ruins. It would allow her to go, but it couldn't go past where it stood.

She didn't understand but childishly walked forward into the old castle. The castle, knowing its guest arriving, opened its old doors. The cobblestone path was soft and smooth, making it safe for her tiny feet. Young anna braved a second look back to see her wolf companions once more. They stayed their positions but kept watch. She saw their eyes gleaming like the ivory moon, as wild as the goddess was, she was the protector of the night. She nodded to them kept going further and reached an area where the roof's ribs were exposed. The main foyer is illuminated with candles, giving some warm light throughout. Regardless, Anna walked as though she knew her way as though this was her home. As though this was home the way Castle Valerious was. A place she was born in, it all seemed so strange to someone foreign. But to Anna, this was home. One she knew like the back of her hand.

Which was how she found the grand hall. A grand fire hearthed itself in the fireplace, and next to it a table decorated with food. From freshly made paprika hendl to mamaliga and impletata. The spices filled the air, causing her mouth to salivate. Anna looked around, hoping to check the coast is clear--

“Sit, child, and eat to your heart’s content,” A deep English voice cut through the crackling fire.

Young anna turned and was greeted with the figure draped in the color midnight. She slowly looked up and two red eyes stared back at her. Followed by a clean-shaven, elderly face, white hair and the bushiest eyebrows young anna had ever seen. They were thicker than the poisonous caterpillars in spring. He showed a dark smile with his protuberant teeth, but his voice was soft and low. He gestured to the table. Anna looked at him unsure now.

“I’ve already had my fill, and this feast is yours to consume. Please, child, eat to fill the void and satisfy your survival,” He said.

She looked back at him and back at the table before dashing to the table. The man expected her to just start grabbing the food with her fingers, shoving it in her mouth. Children were like that, messy. But he was...amused as he saw the child slowly sit on the seat. He watched as she placed the napkin on her lap and grabbed a fork before she began to ate. The man slowly followed and took a seat across from her.

Youn anna was hungry, yes, but she wasn’t a savage. She was a princess of the gypsies. Princesses were expected to have manners and class. Even though she was starving, it was just ingrained t her with every smack of her trembling wrists at the end of every lesson. But her taste buds were electrified with every bite of the rich food. Young anna caved in and wolfed down, knowing that none of her family was here, and nor were the lessons. Eventually, she finished, having filled the void in her stomach.

The old man started to ask her questions. How she became lost, where she was from. He seemed more curious about the where rather than the why. She told him that she came from a place called Vaseria, near the river. She answered as a child would; with childlike honesty. The old man was patient but eager to know more of a world outside the castle. For her answers, he presented her with a silver chafing dish. He opened it, revealing baklava.

Baklava was a rarity, but one she enjoyed whenever she could. She ate them, but this time slowly. The void had consumed its fill, with the sweets now a gentle addition. Baklava was always wonderful.

She was warm and full once again. The old man took note, standing up, and held a hand out for her. Childishly, she left the table and went to take his hand. From there they departed from the hall. He talked of his castle, and of the history of the land. He walked her through the castle, explaining to her the land.

“The land the new blood call Transylvania, it was once Wallachia. Old and savage, this was how people came together. They took to each other and forged their bonds of blood, caring for one another in the name of survival, later humanity. But they are not just devoted, no, they are also cruel and brutal in times of hunts and wars. War is where they give their all in the

name of their Christ or of their land. The ones who fight for their land and for their people are the true victors, even in death It is their blood that enriches this land, and not Christ.”

Young anna had listened as they walked. God was a part of her family, from the bible readings to the crosses hung in the village and in the castles. How the small iron crosses held so much meaning around her family’s necks. Protect them against the night, that was what she was told. She never understood it, but she was curious, but never questioned it. Until now.

“Does that mean God is not responsible for food?” She shyly asked, looking up at him.

The old man paused before looking at her. He seemed to have a bit of joy, evident by his fanged smile. He answered with enthusiastic engagement.

“The food you consumed, came from the people. From their own hands, they sowed the seeds and raised the livestock with care. It takes years and the people do so with devotion when they reap the harvest. Then the harvest is given to the cooks, the mothers, or whoever has the gift in their hand,” He added with a twirl of his hands. “God may have some metaphorical part, but in the end, it is the people who forge things by their hand. By the conviction of their blood!”

The wind howled in agreement as they passed windows. It was also open, and Anna could hear the wolves howling once more. This time, she joined with them on impulse as she raised her head. Her voice was a little stronger, and she forgot about the old man for a moment. But he did not mind, if anything he encouraged it.

“Yes, child! Be one with the night! Forget your life if only for a moment!” He exclaimed. “Let the night be your sanctuary and forget the day!”

She giggled and she howled even more. This continued, and even the old man joined for a moment. Eventually, the howls faded as the wolves retreated, leaving her and the old man once more. Her eyes eventually laid upon a set of stairs. There was something that invited her, a magnetic beckoning. Young anna only took one step forward, before a clawed hand pulled her back.

“What lies beyond those stairs, is not meant for you night child,” He cautioned. He knew who she really was. A cursed child, of a fate from forced promises, and of doomed purgatory if the false one isn’t killed. He knows what lies beyond those stairs, but she is not strong enough.

At least not yet.

“It is time to return you home night child,” He declared. He then procured something from the pockets of his cloak. He presented to her an amulet with gold as its chain and clasp. A deep blood red jewel. Young anna looked at it in awe. The old man knelt down and attached it to her neck. “A gift for your time night child.”

It was so pretty to the young Anna but...Home. Velkan and father, of course. That was home to her, and she missed them terribly. With that cue, her body started to fall into a deep sleep,

eyes growing heavy and she couldn't fight it.

“But know that this will be the first of your many visits to my home. And the steps to your freedom.”

This was all she heard before she closed her eyes. And then, she woke up in the day, without a scratch on her body, nor a hair touched. She was back home in her bed. Young Anna thought it was a dream.

But the locket was still around her neck.

## End Notes

Happy October! Please remember to drink plenty of water!

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