

Crowharrow

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A Double Dragon eBook

Published by
Double Dragon Publishing, Inc.
PO Box 54016
1-5762 Highway 7 East
Markham, Ontario L3P 7Y4 Canada
<http://www.double-dragon-ebooks.com>
<http://www.double-dragon-publishing.com>

A DDP First Edition October 16, 2012

ISBN-9: 1-77115-025-4
ISBN-13: 978-1-77115-025-5

Book Layout and
Cover Art by Deron Douglas
www.derondouglas.ca



Crowharrow

The Chronicles of Ealiron, Book Three

By

F.T. McKinstry

Sample file

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In loving memory of my maternal grandmother, who knew gardens.

Sample file

Born of gods, a larger part;
Skies above the mountains.
Wings of crows, a darker kind;
Wind between the worlds.
Maiden's hand brings him,
Mother's blood feeds him,
Destroyer's smile bids him depart.

- Song of the Sioros



Prologue

Late summer hung over Loralin Forest with a fading sigh. Aradia moved with her younger sister Ana through the mountain wood, her heart skipping a beat as the air closed its eyes and withdrew like a bird hiding its head beneath a wing.

"Here they are!" Ana said, grasping her skirt as she knelt beside a tumble of mossy boulders in the shadow of a hemlock tree. She set aside her basket and leaned over, her slender fingers caressing a patch of dark green leaves.

Wind swelled from the north. It passed through the forest like the breath of a wolf catching a scent, mingled with the whispers of a nearby stream, and then passed away, leaving the trees too still.

"...never seen periwinkle so fine," Ana continued. "And blooming, too!" She pulled a short, curved knife from her basket and began to mutter an incantation.

Aradia sighed. The Mother's own, periwinkle surrounded its votaries with a powerful cloak of love and protection. But it was a dangerous herb, a channel for lust and death, a scythe that reaped payment for the sweetest passions. Since her man left her, Ana had taken to tinkering with things like that. Foolish girl.

"Periwinkle blooms in spring," Aradia grumbled.

Ana turned around with a smile. "I think it's a sign."

"Hurry up. Evening's coming on."

Ana rose slowly, a clump of shiny evergreen cuttings dangling from her hand. "Why are you acting so? You've been off all day." She glanced skyward. "We've hours yet."

When the wind rose again, Aradia flared her nostrils and caught her breath.

He came from the trees in a ghostly storm of male force that sent every creature within his pale blue gaze shrieking for shelter. He landed in the shallows on the river's edge, a flawless man in the height of strength and desire, his ivory skin covered in silken wisps of moss green and his black hair flowing. The late afternoon sun glistened on his raven wings, high as two men standing.

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