

# The Wizard

In the mirror was a man unrecognizable. Sun-beaten skin clung to his shallow features and thin lips, stained with blood, were cracked into countless unhealed scars.

The sink in front of the wizard released refreshing water with a shaky turn of the knob. He plunged his skeletal hands into the stream, splashed the liquid onto his forehead, and ran it through his thick, matted hair. As clay and sand fell down the basin's drain, locks of pale blond cascaded over his hollow, sunken eyes.

The man took a deep breath, allowing lines of malnourished ribs to show under his long, crimson-stained robes. He exhaled and a trail of fresh blood streamed down to his chin. He allowed his robes to fall to the floor. Gashes across his chest flowed crimson.

Kneeling, he pressed a palm to the bloodstained fabric. The cloth incinerated and sticky-red gore pooled around the remaining ash. A few shreds of cloth remained, glowing like embers at the edges. Red light caught in his eyes and cast slanting shadows upon his brow.

The world shifted where the wizard knelt as everything went dark.