

Backstory for Archi – Way of the Ascendant Dragon Monk

Among the various orders of monks across the Forgotten Realms, there is an ancient prophecy that predicts the birth of a human child that will awaken the abilities of a legendary creature, the fearsome dragon. The prophecy has been recorded as the following:

In times untold, a monk child shall be born. Of humble beginnings, yet of power unknown. For this child shall be blessed with the gift of the dragons. A power that will shake the very foundations of the heavens. The skies shall darken, and the winds shall howl as the child's destiny unfolds. For the power of the dragons is not one to be taken lightly, and their true nature shall be a mystery to all. Some will hail this child as a savior. A hero sent to vanquish darkness and bring forth the light. Others will fear the child's power and seek to destroy them, seeing them as a harbinger of doom and destruction. Yet the child shall remain steadfast and true, walking the path of the monks before them. One fateful eve, the child will unknowingly decide to use their power to bring about balance and harmony, or annihilation and ruin. For such is the way of the dragons, and such shall be the child's destiny. In the end, the position the child assumes on the spectrum of morality shall be revealed, and the world shall know whether they are benevolent or maleficent. Until that day comes, the child shall remain a mystery. A being of power and potential, with the fate of the world in their hands.

The emergence of this prophecy produced discourse among the monasteries unlike any seen before. This led to event known as *The Epochal Splintering*. The splintering concluded with the formation of two distinct factions between the monks of Faerún. One faction has become

known throughout Faerún as *The Order of the Ivory Sky*, and the other is known as *The Order of the Frozen Phoenix*. The Ivory Sky believed that, with the proper upbringing, this child could bring peace and longevity to the realm, whilst the Frozen Phoenix believed that a single person cannot be worthy to wield such immense power. The creed of the Ivory Sky is “*In a world consumed by shadow, we need only have faith in the light*”, and the creed of the Frozen Phoenix is “*Absolute power corrupts absolutely*”. The radically opposing views on the nature of the child led to the creation of two titles. The Ivory Sky referred to the child of prophecy as *The Arch Child*. The Frozen Phoenix referred to the child as *The Void Heart*.

Long after the emergence of the prophecy, some began to believe it was a myth, though, the monks of both the Ivory Sky and the Frozen Phoenix maintained their belief, continuing to prepare each generation for the birth of the child.

Then it happened.

On that day, the sun did not set for 24 hours, watching over the child of prophecy as he arrived in Faerún. When night finally fell upon Faerún, the moon watched over the child just the same. To the average person of Faerún, this was simply a strange phenomenon, the prophecy having been long forgotten, or thought to be a hoax; however, to the monks of the Ivory Sky and the Frozen Phoenix, this was the mark of his birth. The Arch Child was born to a virgin nun of the Ivory Sky. It was a typical birth with little to no complications, though unfortunately, the mother died shortly after giving birth due to an unknown cause.

The child was raised by the Order of the Ivory Sky. He was not given a name, only referred to as the Arch Child, and he was given no privilege by the adults and elders, treated as

a normal child; however, the other children of the order were not so kind. It was quickly learned that the power which the prophecy spoke of was not one that the Arch Child would be born with, rather, one that would awaken with time. This was a secret that was kept very close to the Ivory Sky, for if the Frozen Pheonix were to catch wind of this, they would likely launch an attack before the Arch Child could awaken his abilities.

Though he had not awakened his abilities, the Arch Child was a remarkably talented martial artist, outclassing the other children of the order, and many of the adults as well. Due to the humility forced upon them by the Arch Child, the other children turned envious and irritated towards him. The children would bully and exclude him, and with no family of his own, the Arch Child grew lonely. He began to sneak off the grounds, traveling along the mountainside in the night, watching as nature continued, even as the humanoids across Faerún slept. It brought him peace and reminded him of the purpose the elders had said he must fulfill. This began as an infrequent behaviour, only going off the grounds once every few months and only traveling slightly outside the borders of the temple grounds, but over the years, the Arch Child began to leave the grounds more frequently and strayed further away, until he found himself going every night and completely out of sight from the temple. It became so that the Arch Child would only feel free during this time.

One evening, as the Arch Child was travelling around the mountain range, he came across something he had never seen before. A magnificent wall of trees that spanned as far as the eye could see. For the first time in his life, he had reached the base of the mountain. He peered into the forest and was amazed by it. He never thought that there could be a place in Faerún so dark. His curiosity, and his innate passion for adventure carry him over the border of

mountain and forest. As he travels deeper and deeper, it becomes too dark, so he decides to turn back. When he does, he realizes that he traveled so deep into the forest that he could not see the border of the forest anymore. He feels his way to a tree, climbs up and finds a branch that is strong enough to hold him, sleeping through the night.

When he wakes, he hears the blissful songs of the birds in the forest. He begins to make his way back to the temple, easily finding his way out of the forest. As he travels up the mountain, he sees smoke coming from over a ridge. He rushes back, only to see his temple in ruins. Bodies charred, bloody, beaten, and dismembered. The horror of this is inescapable, and from the main temple, the Arch Child hears a group of people shouting, “WHERE IS THE VOID HEART?” The Arch Child is confused. The elders had never told him about the Epochal Splintering, the Frozen Pheonix, or of the other name he is known by in Faerún, the Void Heart. The man’s voice is followed by a loud scream and the sound of some sort of blade being thrust through a body. Not knowing what to do, the Arch Child flees. With nowhere else to go, he heads for the forest which he had just returned from. As he steps off the grounds, a member of the Frozen Pheonix notices him leaving, calls out his presence to the rest of them as he chases after him.

The Arch Child makes it to the forest, but the man from the Frozen Pheonix is hot on his trail. As he breaks through the border of the forest, the Arch Child feels a sense of relief, as if he has made it, but the feeling lasts only a moment as he is tackled to the ground by his pursuer. The Arch Child manages to push the man off him, and the two battle, neither gaining the upper hand over the other. The Arch Child can’t remember the last time he had been challenged like this. If he had not just suffered a tremendous tragedy, he may have had... fun?

As the two begin to tire, the Arch Child hears the sound of footsteps from the distance, though he knows better than to take his eyes off his opponent for even a moment when he is as fatigued as he is. The man's gaze does not leave the Arch Child either, but it is clear he hears the sound too. "Looks like you're finished... Void Heart!" the man spits at the Arch Child. The Arch Child looks confused. That's the name they used at the temple when they raided his temple. Was all this death and destruction... because of him? Suddenly, the Arch Child hears two loud *SLICE* sounds. The man in front of him now has a large mark over both his eyes, blood gushing from them, then he falls to the ground. A tall, young woman with glowing marks on her body that resemble the night sky extends her arm out to him. "C'mon, we must move quickly, or you will be caught." The Arch Child grabs her hand, the moment he does, she grabs it and begins to run deeper into the forest. He looks back, feeling immense guilt and regret. Is everyone really dead? Will he ever see his home again?

The two travel for nearly the entire day. Eventually, they break to set up camp, still deep in the middle of the forest. The Arch Child is still in shock, he feels like he will never be able to speak again. "So, now that we have made a bit of distance, what's your name?" the tall woman asks. Her voice sounds so soft and pure, it feels as though an immense weight is lifted from his shoulders as he hears her speak. The Arch Child only now notices that the glowing marks are now gone from her body. "The Arch Child", he replies to her in a very short and shy manner. "I know that much, but what's your name?" she asks again. The Arch Child looks at her with a confused stare, that is his name. "You mean those dumb monks never gave you a damn name. Terrible. Everyone should be free to be their own person, not bound by ideals that were conceived before they were!" The Arch Child smiles after hearing these words come from her

mouth. He has just suffered great loss, yet this person makes the dread wash away. "Hmm..."

The woman ponders for a moment. "I think I'll call you Archi. Yeah! I think that fits. What do you think?" The Arch Child had never thought about what his name would be. He was always told that the only name he needed was The Arch Child, but Archi, it made him feel... real. "I like it" he replies. "Archi it is then, nice to meet you, Archi!" she says back to him with a smile so bright it seems to light up the forest more than the fire they had started. "What's your name?" Archi asks her. "Maylin" she replies with a smile.

The two begin adventuring together. The destiny of the Arch Child now in the hands of a young Elven Druid, the fate of both, yet to be discovered.

Archi Character Flaws:

Emotional Detachment: Archi has experienced significant loss. Everyone he has ever known of loved has been filled by the Order of the Frozen Phoenix. This causes him to struggle to form emotional connections with others, preferring to keep people at arm's length to avoid being hurt again. This is particularly difficult for him now that he has met and traveled with Maylin for some time now. He feels drawn to her and the radiant aura he feels from her, yet another force in his soul prevents him from getting too close.

Naivety: Due to his sheltered upbringing, Archi lacks knowledge in many fields. His education has been primarily on his role as the Arch Child, so his adventures are filled with learning. This causes him to walk into situations that are clearly dangerous to others as he does not know what is dangerous in this world. Luckily, he is quite wise and is able to apply any knowledge he does have, and learns over time, to future situations.

Self-Doubt (New): His entire life he was a martial arts prodigy, easily defeating many adults in sparring matches at a young age. One day, Archi is defending a small town from a dragon attack and is challenged to a duel by a half-dragon. The half-dragon utterly humiliates Archi, causing him to question his abilities. He now is unsure if he is worthy of the powers he has been gifted and does not believe he can live up to the expectations the world has for him.

Unaware of his full destiny: The monks of the Order of the Ivory Sky did not teach Archi of the other half of the prophecy. Archi thinks his destiny is solely to bring peace to the realm. This leaves Archi vulnerable to falling to the dark side of the prophecy as he does not know to protect himself from dark influences.

Archi Character Bonds:

Martial Arts/Monk Code: Archi feels a strong connection to the philosophies he was raised on.

He believes in honour, peace, and tranquility. He will do his best not to stray from these ways.

He also feels a strong bond to the ways of martial arts. His innate talent causes him to trust his ability to duel strong enemies. (Until the day he battles the half-dragon and gains self-doubt)

Proven loyalty: Archi struggles to connect with people, but once they have proven that they are trustworthy and loyal companions to him, they have his protection for life, 'till death.

Responsibility: Archi feels a strong sense of responsibility to fulfil his role in the prophecy as the monks have taught him. He is unaware of the other side of the prophecy, stating that he could bring the destruction of the world as well, but he feels like he is the one who will bring peace to the realm.

Archi Character Personality Traits:

Highly disciplined: Archi is devoted the monk ways by which he was raised. Although the Order of the Ivory Sky has been destroyed, he continues to follow their teachings and practices as well as honing his skills as a martial artist.

Socially Awkward: Archi is socially awkward due to his sheltered upbringing and due to the bullying he experienced. Though he is socially awkward, he is not shy, he is simply bad at reading social queues, though his wisdom allows him to apply social rules to his social interactions if someone were to teach him.

Archi Character Ideals:

Perseverance: Archi believes in the importance of hard work and dedication. He will not give up in the face of adversity – though he may question his place in the world and in the prophecy, he tries his hardest not to let go of hope.

Honour: Archi places a high value on integrity and honour. He will never compromise his principles for personal gain. Wealth and material gain does not interest Archi due to his monkish upbringing. He cares only for kindness, dedication, and loyalty.

Wisdom: Archi values knowledge (though he lacks it) and insight. He seeks to broaden his understanding of the world around him through experience, and potentially studies (though unlikely through study).

Selflessness: Although Archi knows he is the chosen one, he does not believe himself to be above others – in fact, he finds that there is an immense pressure over his shoulders to protect those close to him. They matter to him more than his own life.