

Rebel Witch: The Crimson Moth: Book 2

ELEVEN

GIDEON

GIDEON SHARPE

THE LARK & CROWN, CAELIS

THE GOOD COMMANDER WANTS TO KNOW IF YOU'VE ELIMINATED THE TARGET.

HARROW

THE TELEGRAM WAS WAITING for Gideon when he arrived back at the Lark & Crown, a hotel in Caelis with rooms so damp, he might as well be sleeping in a bog. The carpets squished unnaturally beneath his boots, and the wallpaper had lifted off the walls. After only a few nights here, Gideon probably had mold growing in his lungs.

The Blood Guard were not welcome in Caelis, and most establishments refused witch hunters service. But the Lark & Crown was desperate for business. So when Gideon showed up, they didn't ask questions. Just took his money and gave him a room.

Gideon shook the rain out of his hair and reread Harrow's telegram.

I've barely been gone a week, he thought. Give me a little time.

But he knew the reason for the check-in.

The Crimson Moth had compromised Gideon. He'd been taken in by the very villain he'd spent two years hunting, and in doing so, failed the New Republic. Until he proved his loyalty, the new Commander couldn't fully trust him. None of them could.

Killing the Crimson Moth would not only stop Cressida's alliance; it would prove Gideon was no longer in Rune's thrall.

He wanted to tell Harrow about Cressida's plot to resurrect her sisters but didn't want the information falling into the wrong hands. So, he sent a vague reply.

SPYMASTER

OFFICE OF THE GOOD COMMANDER

*NEW INFORMATION HAS COME TO LIGHT. THE REPUBLIC IS IN GREATER DANGER
THAN WE IMAGINED. WILL FILL YOU IN WHEN I RETURN.*

GIDEON

Within the hour, Harrow sent a telegram back:

GIDEON SHARPE

THE LARK & CROWN, CAELIS

SO THE CRIMSON MOTH IS STILL ALIVE?

HARROW

Her scathing disapproval radiated off the paper.

SPYMASTER

OFFICE OF THE GOOD COMMANDER

I NEED A FEW MORE DAYS.

GIDEON

The next morning, her last telegram arrived.

GIDEON SHARPE

THE LARK & CROWN, CAELIS

THE COMMANDER NO LONGER BELIEVES YOU'RE THE BEST MAN FOR THIS JOB. HE'S SENDING SOMEONE MORE QUALIFIED TO COMPLETE IT. RETURN TO THE REPUBLIC IMMEDIATELY.

HARROW

Someone more qualified?

Gideon's hands fisted, crumpling the telegram, which he promptly threw in the fire.

He could do this. He simply had to prove it. If the Commander wanted to punish him for his disobedience once he was back on New Republic soil, so be it. Because Cressida Roseblood had to be stopped, no matter the cost. She could not retake her throne, and she could *not* resurrect her sisters.

Cress alone was one thing; she was powerful and cruel. But compared to Elowyn and Analise, she was a novice.

Gideon was seeing this job through to the end. There could be no hesitating this time.

He would find Rune, and he would kill her.

And if a small voice inside him objected, it was only because Gideon was still compromised. Still *weakened* by her. If he thought about how Rune risked herself tonight to help him, he would waver.

Gideon couldn't waver.

If he did, Cressida would rise to power. She'd resurrect her sisters. And together they would destroy the New Republic and usher in a new reign of terror, this one far worse than the last.

Gideon had no choice. Killing Rune was the only way to stop that from happening.

If it broke him, so be it.