

The Wolf's faced flashed both anger and anguish just for a second. Then, as if he consciously forced all feeling aside, the emotionless look of a killer returned to his eyes. "I'm going to find out sooner or later." He shrugged. "I can kill you, and then ask Kelnor. Maybe, with you dead, he'll want to talk to me. Perhaps, knowing that both you and Kelnor are dead, Thallon will be anxious to help me." He shrugged again. "By the time it's Lendron's turn, I'll probably have enough answers. Think about it for a minute."

The Wolf walked away a few paces, giving Jadron room to think with less pressure. Fifteen feet from the young noble he stopped, looking down at the ground as though waiting for Jadron to make up his mind.

Jadron was sweating profusely in spite of the coolness after the rain. He bent over, trying to calm his breathing. If he could just get his heart to stop pounding. Head still bowed, he stole a glance at The Wolf, then eased his hand toward his dagger and slipped it out of its sheath. Still bent over, his left hand over his heart, the dagger hand allowed the blade to slide in his fingers until he had a firm grip near the tip. He'd practiced this so many times.

"Well?" The Wolf asked.

With unexpected speed, Jadron straightened, his right hand heaving forward. Like an arrow the long blade whistled through the air straight at The Wolf's heart.

Impossible! Jadron could only stare in amazement. Looking coldly at him, The Wolf's upper body snapped a quarter turn, left shoulder presented forward. The right hand snatched the dagger out of the air as if it were a ball tossed by a child. But the arm never paused in motion. There was the tiniest circular action to the wrist, then the knife came back with unbelievable speed. With a *THUNK*, it passed through Jadron's throat, piercing his windpipe and his spine before becoming embedded in the tree.

"Wrong answer," The Wolf hissed.

Jadron's eyes were still staring in amazement when the light of life went out of them.