

# Like a Kind of Dance

a *Willow (TV 2022)* fanfic

by Rodo

for *Celamity*

“YOU’RE REALLY GOOD with him.”

Graydon looked up, hand still petting Kenneth’s nose. He hadn’t noticed Elora walking over, hems of her skirts swishing through the shallow waters of the Shattered Sea. She was a vision, the halo of the setting sun behind her making her hair seem even redder than it now was. In her hand, she held Cherlindrea’s wand, gripping it tightly as if she were looking for courage.

“Thanks, I guess. He’s really great, once you get to know him.” With a final pat, Graydon sent him off to do whatever mudmanders did in the silt. Then he stood up, facing Elora with a hint of trepidation he couldn’t quite explain himself. Maybe it was because of the way his heartbeat kept speeding up whenever she was near. The sweet smile certainly didn’t help.

“So, I wanted to ask you something...”

Graydon had figured as much, so he just looked at her, waiting for her to get around to her question.

Elora took a deep breath. “Do you want to train with me?”

Her question was so far from anything he had expected, Graydon didn’t know how to respond, painfully aware of how he was staring at her, dumbfounded, but unable to do anything about it. Until he finally found the words.

“You have Willow, don’t you? And besides... you’re, you know... *you*. Elora Danan. That’s a little out of my league, don’t you think?”

Elora scoffed in that cute adorable way she had, with her lips curling ever so slightly. “Don’t put yourself down. You’re the one who took down the Dag while I... well... besides, shouldn’t you be learning how to do magic too, now that you know?”

“Oh, I am. I’ve got the book, and my notes, and I’m watching you and Willow practice sometimes.”

“But I haven’t seen you do magic since,” Elora pointed out, frowning.

Graydon sighed, knowing full well that she had a point. Truth was, he was afraid. Not of hurting people or anything like that, but of it having been a fluke, no matter what Willow said. Deep down, he still felt that his father had been right about him all along: that he was a failure, and always would be. And this had been his dream forever. It was simply too good to be true.

“Is that a yes?”

She was looking at him with hope and a bright spark in her eyes that made him feel all warm and happy and he knew he’d lost before he’d even begun to put up a fight. Graydon nodded, resigned to his fate.

“Come on,” she said, taking his hand and leading him away to a more secluded place behind the boulder at the center of the islet that they’d docked at for the night. From the other side, he could hear Kit and Jade crossing swords. In the distance, Boorman was singing an off-key tune while doing his laundry.

“So, what do we do know?” he asked. He wasn’t ready to battle her – he’d either fail miserably or hurt her, and he didn’t want to do either.

Elora hummed, tapping her chin with the wand, thinking. “See that stump over there?”

Graydon nodded. It was the sad remains of a palm tree that must have died when silt and sand had shifted. Now it was barely poking out of the water.

“Think you can hit it?”

Graydon shrugged. If he could make the magic work, probably. He’d managed to hit a flying target on pure instinct. If he couldn’t, well...

“Come on, give it a try,” Elora told him with an encouraging smile.

With a sigh, Graydon took out his flute and gripped it, tighter than he wanted to. But he was nervous. This was it. He tried to take a fighting stance, like the ones he’d imagined back when he’d been a child playing at being a wizard with his laughing older brother. He tried to remember the instinct that had had him focus his power when he’d needed it the most. He went through all his mental notes about magic. Then he took a deep breath and gave it his all, focusing on the stump. He half expected nothing to happen, and half expected the stump to explode. What actually happened was that a purple bolt of light shot out of his flute, missing the stump by what looked like half a mile.

“Huh. I didn’t expect that,” he mumbled. For a moment, he stared at the plume of steam rising in the distance where his magic had hit.

“See? You definitely need the practice,” Elora said, patting him on the shoulder. “Especially target practice.”

“And you’re better?”

Elora pursed her lips, changed her stance like he’d seen her do a hundred times by now, whenever she was training, and an elegant green bolt of light shot out of Cherlindrea’s wand, shattering the stump into a thousand pieces. It still impressed Graydon, even though he’d seen (and done) much more.

“Okay, you’re definitely better. I don’t think you need the practice. Well, this kind of practice.”

“I do, though. A tree stump, that’s easy. But the Crone isn’t a tree stump. I can’t freeze again. Not where we’re going.”

“And you think training with me will help?”

Elora nodded, and Graydon noticed an air of doubt and worry about her just then. He supposed the weight of her destiny was starting to wear on her. “Willow is great but... sometimes I think learning from him makes things harder than they have to be. I know it shouldn’t be *easy*, of course, but I’d like to try something else.”

“With me.”

“Well, I don’t think Boonman’s quite up to it,” she joked, an impish smile stealing on her face. Graydon couldn’t help but return it.

“Alright,” he said. “Where do we start?”

“How about I show you the motions and then we’re going through them together until you’re ready for a real fight?”

Graydon nodded, and for the rest of the evening, they went through Elora’s stances. It was strange, but at the end of it, he felt calm and certain and happier than he had in a good long while. Somehow, they just fit when they were doing magic together, like an old married couple that had been dancing to the same tunes at balls for fifty years. When they collapsed on the shore afterward, Elora grinned at him, panting, and Graydon grinned back. He’d be content if he could stare at her like this forever, in this place that seemed to exist outside of time and reality. But then Jade called them for dinner and the spell was broken.

Until the next evening.

*Fin*