

10-13-2021

## **The Ketchwitz Legends Book 1**

Titan

**Name for posting:** Titan

**Relationships to EWU:** student

**Additional information:**

**Your experience during COVID-19:** It has been rough, yet exciting, similar to my old life, but yet totally different. Out of boredom, I had started writing this book, but became stumped after two months of working on it. (Attached below)





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### Note to the reader

I would like to thank all of my family and friends for always believing in me, and the authors whose books I have read multiple times since fifth grade for giving me these ideas and the inspiration to write my own book from my own creativity, and a few concepts from each series. Those authors(from oldest to newest) are: John Flanagan(Ranger's apprentice), J.K. Rowling(Harry Potter), Curtis Jobling(WereWorld), R.A Salvatore(Legend of Drizzt), Sherrilyn Kenyon(Chronicles of Nick, and The Dark~Hunters series'), Suzanne Collins(Hunger Games).

Sincerely,

The Author

Titan H.E Greenamyre



Flamed Villa

Graveyard

Royal Castle

Acid Lake

Burning Temple Debris

Wolf Gulf

Eagle's Cliff

No Creatures Land

Big Cat Forest

Wholes Sweet Shop

Mermaid Bay

Animal Academy

Icey City

Water Tower

Carthy burrows

## Chapter One

### Miralokki- Royal palace Dungeons

I woke up to light shining in my eyes from above in an otherwise dark, damp, and sulfurous~smelling, concrete cell with four other people. So I got up, with a slight pain in my head and my ribs. I looked down at myself as I got up and noticed my clothes. What looks like it was once a shirt is now nothing more than a collection of dirt, loose pieces of fabric and holes, only barely able to hang from her shoulders like a discarded old towel.

Both of the sides are torn and worn out, leaving much of her sides exposed to the elements. I am wearing a scraggy coat over her shirt. It's a size too large, dirty- and torn-but at least it helps me stay warm, even if only a little. My pants aren't in great shape either. There's a big tear on the left side which runs from the top to almost the bottom. But at least I have shoes to protect my feet. Although they're worn down and mismatched, only just the right size and the left toe box has come loose from the sole. I am also wearing a bandana around my neck and I have it wrapped around my face in a way that covers my neck. It's full of holes, but at least it's still holding together. My head is covered by a second bandana, and although there's a hole at the front, it's in pretty good shape. Then I heard a crinkling sound in my pocket, so I reached into my pants, pulled out a slip of paper, and saw that it said 'Miralokki~human; will soon be able to fly'. So I decided to get up and look around. So I was snooping around, trying to find a way out, when I heard stirr behind me. I twirled around just in time to see the pale blonde boy with a ponytail get up, so I rushed over to help him. Once

he noticed me though, he hurriedly began to crawl towards the wall, I assume out of fear of what I might do to him. So I stopped, held my arms out in front of me and asked his name, then told him my name is Miralokki.

“Mural~oh~key?” he said in a soft, quiet and understandably fearful voice.

“No. it’s me~rah~low~key.” I corrected him. “Or at least, I think so.”

“Miralokki? And what do you mean, you think so?” he responded.

“I woke up, with no idea as to what my real name is. What’s your name?”

“I~I~I don’t know... What’s going on here??!” he cried out in confusion and fear. Then I heard everyone else begin to stir. I slowly sat down by the wall near to where I woke up, and told them all that I can remember, along with what I think is going on.

“Wait, wait, wait. So you’re saying that someone decided to just drag us in here or something, and now we have to figure a way out? And how do we know that we can trust you?” asked the slim, tall, and extremely beautiful female.

“To answer your second question, I told you why you can trust me, and to answer your first question, yes.” I said.

“Okay. What’s your name then?”

“As I said before, my name is Miralokki. And, to be honest, I found this piece of paper with what i believe to be my name in my pocket, and maybe it’s in yours, too, with your names on it.”

They all started to get up, and suddenly, the room was full of the crackling sound from paper being crumpled up inside pants pockets. They felt inside, and each one pulled out a slip of paper, and they were surprised to see that I was right.

“So...I wasn’t lying when I told you to check your pockets, was I? Or are you going to blame those on me, too? Because I woke up like

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five minutes before Ponytail, there, and I was trying to find a way out. Right, Ponytail?”

“Actually, this says my name is Jarok,” said Ponytail.

“Ok. sorry, Jarok. Anyone else willing to share their name?” I responded, somewhat shamefully.

The previously suspicious female admitted nothing except for the fact that her name was Vanessa.

The other female, the one with brown shoulder~length hair~said her name was Veramine.

The only other person in the room was Varik. Or at least, he says so anyway.

“Ok. Now that we’ve gotten all the pleasantries are out of the way, does anyone have any ideas on how to get out of here?”

“Yeah,” said Veramine. “The door.”

“That is kind of obvious, isn’t it?” asked Varik.

“Hey, no one said any *good* ideas, remember?”

“Yeah, but what other choice do we have? We can’t exactly reach the vent over there~” Vanessa said, pointed to the wall behind us. “~now can we?”

Just then, as if on cue, a typewriter began rising out of the floor, almost directly underneath the vent, with a sign on the stone slab it’s sitting on with the words “Use Me” in front. We can clearly see that it is, followed by the alphabet written underneath, and a diagram of which button has what letter on top of the desk.

“But what about this typewriter? Maybe this will provide some use?” questioned Jorak, pointed at the newly revealed typewriter.

“Go ahead and try it then, if you think it will help,” said Veramine, snappily.

“Fine. I will.” said Jorak angrily, stomped away. I followed him to see if I could lend a hand.

“You know, we should be trying to work together, not tearing each other to shreds,” I said.

“Go help him then, if you need to get so worked up over it.”

“What do you want?” he said coldly.

“Just wanted to see if you could use another pair of hands.” I replied. I sat there waiting. And waiting some more. And a little more.

Finally, I angrily asked “Do you need my help, or not?”

“Hold on a....minute....AHA!” he suddenly shouted, making me jump so high in the air, I thought I was on my way into orbit. “Okay, then. I tried exit, exeunt, leave, escape. What do you think will be the right phrase?”

“Umm. ‘ascend’?”

“Oka~ay...” he typed it in, and it worked. Then it gave us secret parkour steps up to the vent, just to find out it was welded closed. I told him to try typing in the word ‘welder’, and a welding machine appeared. So we melted the vent open using the welder, and we began to crawl through the vent, then it opened out into the wide unknown.

And so, we escaped, but not before we were affected by the toxic gas rushing straight toward us just dissipated into the air enough to the point that we inhaled most of it, which knocked us all out cold.

Sun light was streaming through the trees and foliage when I woke up. I sat up, and I saw that Varik was up and about, making something for everyone to eat. I got up and walked over.

“So...Varik. I see that you like to scavenge for food, and make meals. Why do you like this so much? Anything else about you we should know?”

He turned around and dropped his food, simultaneously drawing a couple of throwing knives out from under his jacket, and got ready to plunge one in my stomach, and slice my throat with the other as I dodged. Until he realised who I was. He slowly half~lowered his hands, as well as the knives.

“Oh. Good. It’s just you. Now what did you want?”

“Sorry to scare you. How did you get to be so fast drawing knives like that, by the way?”

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“All I remember is not having a real home. That weird mist must have removed some kind of block on my memories. And I remembered cooking a lot, as well as a couple other things.” he sighed exhaustedly. “So, It was pretty hectic yesterday, wasn’t it?”

“Well, you know, it didn’t really help when you and Vanessa started fighting over how we should get out.” I looked around, and right at that moment. I realized that Vanessa was nowhere to be seen. “Speaking of.. Where is Vanessa?”

“Yeah, there is a slight problem with our escape that I was going to tell you about, or, at least, up until we all passed out on the grass.”

“Oh no. What happened? Did she run off a little ways in a different direction? We have to find her!”

“Well, actually... she stayed behind and welded the vent back on so that we could get away.”

“Oh no. We didn’t even fully escape, and she started having second thoughts? What was she thinking? Why would she do this?!”

“She said it was just to buy us more time. Especially since the guards started rattling the key in the lock as she was about to climb through. So she typed in the phrase you and Jarok figured out, and in two seconds flat, everything was gone. Then I rushed to catch up with you as fast as I could so I could tell you, but, clearly, it wasn’t fast enough. I’m so sorry.”

“Well then, let’s wake up the others, and figure out how to break her out of there before they do something absolutely terrible to her.”

“Um, yeah, about that... I tried to wake you up first, but for some reason, you wouldn’t wake. And then, for some weird reason, I started to feel a burning sensation on my palms. When I pulled them away, they were covered in painful burns. But then something even stranger happened: the second I looked at them, they quickly began to heal. So, unless you want to be burned too, go ahead. It might be different for you though. Either it will permanently burn you, or it will do the same thing for you as it did me.”

“Or, it might not affect me at all.”

“That too, but are you sure you want to test that theory out? Because if I am right, then it would be very uncomfortable for you either way. Especially considering the fact that if you put leaves or something else around your hands, it will cause that material to catch on fire and burn you through that material as well. So, again, I must ask you: Are you sure you want to test that theory out?”

Suddenly there was a slight movement behind him. It looked liked... pixies? And they were making off with Veramine and Jarok!

“Where the hell are we?!”

“I would say in Asmodea, the realm between all worlds and planes of existence, but it might turn out to be true, Or at least, with our luck, it might.”

We turned back just in time to see them carry them off deeper into the forest. But they were gone in minutes.

“Great! Now what are we going to do?”

“Try to figure out where they went? Just a thought.”

“Haha. Very funny. And how do you propose we track them down? Fly?”

“Yes. Actually, I do. I saw there was a cut on your cheek, and I started applying salves and ointments to it~ones I made, of course~ and I was hoping it would just heal itself. I looked at it to apply the treatment, and saw that it was slowly stitching itself seamlessly closed the second the ointment touched it. So, from that experience, I suspect that we all may have some kind of powers, and we just have to figure them out.”

“Alright. Now how do you suggest we do that? Jump off a cliff? Start a fire? Try to drown me? Surround me with wild, man-eating creatures?”

“Yes, actually. While I was foraging for food, I saw a centaur. He came up to me and we talked for a little while. That is where all this food came from, by the way.”

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“Wow. not even out here for a day, and you already made a befriended a centaur,” I said

“So, here is what I was thinking: we will start with the fire power. I start a fire~a small campfire., and you try to control it with nothing more than your pure will. Stick your hand in, and if it burns, then it’s not your power. If it doesn’t, then your power is fire. Okay?”

“Wai~”

“Go”

I shot my hand straight out, and it burns worse than putting my hand flat on a stove top. I pull away after less than a second, and blisters are still forming on my hand. He taps my palm gently one time, and they are gone in five seconds.

“Man, it is a good thing you have that power.”

“Yeah, well. Maybe for some. Okay..Swim!”

Suddenly, I am falling. I shove my hands out towards the water below- palm~first, and I am suddenly just levitating there. “Woo~hoo” I can fly!” I screamed out in excitement, and immediate began plummeting towards the water again.

“That’s great and all, but can you see anyone being flown anywhere?”

“Oh, yeah.” I look around at the trees from above, and see a few specks in the distance. I flew over, and it turned out to be our companions. I picked them both up, carefully put them on my back, and took off to Varik.

Once we were halfway across the narrowest stretch of water, they began to wiggle and squirm around. Ten minutes later, they were beginning to move around, and started to send me off balance in the air.

“Stop moving around! I can’t rescue you if you die first!”

Then, as they realize they’re flying, they start trying to get as secure and comfortable as possible. Once they were secure, and we were more stable in the air, they started asking ridiculous questions, like:

“How are you flying?”

“Why are we flying?”

“When did you learn to fly?”

“Ask that when we get back. Varik will be able to explain it better than I can.”

We flew on in relative silence for the next half hour or so, finally reaching camp just before dark.

“Ok, now that we are back.... HOW IN THE REALM OF HAIDIS WERE YOU FLYING?” asked Veramine.

“Hold on, hold on. Hold on, Veramine.” said Varik. “I told Miralokki my thoughts about everyone having their own super powers, and I talked her into trying to find out what hers was, since mine mostly seems to be healing. That’s how I came to think about it.”

“Well, why didn’t you wait until we woke up before you started flying us everywhere?” Jarok asked Varik and I.

Varik answered before I could, “Because pixie-creature things grabbed you as we were talking, so we had to hurry up and find her power so we could find you and bring you back. Or would you rather have been kept wherever the pixies were keeping you?”

“Ok, yeah, sorry. Thank you, Miralokki, for rescuing us. By the way, how did you discover you could fly....” he said, as we all looked at the cliff, he followed our gaze, made a small *o* with his lips. “Oh, I see.”

“Okay, So, Varik has healing powers, Miralokki has flying, so there’s telepathy, telekinesis, communicating with animals, super speed, super strength, elemental, weather (aka atmokinesis), power to shrink or grow, super sonic scream. Am I forgetting anything? Oh yeah, mind reading, clairvoyance and divination, mind control, teleportation, invisibility, illusion casting, animal-morphing, elemental/weather, animal manipulation, mental projection, levitation, teleportation, portal creation, omnipotence, immortality, enhanced physical skills, vision-fire, death, healing, heat, infrared, color, illusion,

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night, photographic, electro-pulse, telekinetic, telescopic-supernatural Intelligence, psychic shield, knowledge replication, Astral Projection, otherworldly communication, mental projection, danger intuition, clairvoyance. Then there's Mental manipulation, which consists of mind control, life force absorption, and the fundamental powers, like force field generation, camouflage, health regeneration, deflection, replication, invisibility, wall crawling, gliding, and wing manifestation. That is, as long as no one is allowed to have powers that may overlap with someone else's." Noted Veramine.

"Man, who ate an entire super power encyclopedia for breakfast? After reading enough times to remember all that for a year straight?" asked I, impressed, and skeptical that Veramine just made some up.

"Hey... where is Vanessa?" asked Jarok, interrupting before it could escalate. Veramine looked around too.

"Yeah, where is she?" she asked

"That is another reason why we have to find out our superpowers.. She stayed behind to buy us time. The guards came in a lot sooner than we thought they would." said Varik

"She still should have tried to get out with us, rather than stay behind."

"Well, she wanted us to get as far away from there as possible, and avenge her, if need be.

## Chapter 2

Veramine, Throne Room

“Where did they go, girl? I am done playing these games!”

“I said I would never tell you! So you can go ahead and do your worst to me!”

“Oh, no. I have something better in mind for you and your...unique abilities.”

“Wh-wha-what do you mean...unique? And what abilities are you talking about?”

“I forgot that you don’t know. Well, I guess you have to find out at some point or another. You have the ability to raise the dead, I plan to fully-what’s the word...ah, yes, that’s it- utilize -your ability. Why did you think I had you and your friends locked up?”

“Wait, so you admit to locking us up? Why would you lock up a bunch of teens? We didn’t do anything!”

“That is exactly why!”

“That means all the sense in the world, doesn’t it?” said Veramine, her voice just dripping with such a lethally potent amount of sarcasm.

“Because stay by my side, and you each could have become my commanding generals. Your little friend, Miralokki, would be my Aerial Forces general; Varik my General of Healing, or, in more understandable terms, my Top Healer; Vanessa, the General of Elementals; and Jarok, the general of my Animal Forces. And, as I said before, you would be my ground General. And you would each have a

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place on my War Council, along with War, Famine, Death, and Plague. And me, of course, as it is my war council.”

“Wait, wait, wait. You expect us to work alongside the Four Riders of the Apocalypse? What kind of idiots do you think we are?”

“I actually thought you were all super smart. Hence the little...test that would have allowed all of you to work and escape together until you had unlocked your powers. But, side yourself against me, and you shall face almost certain death at this point.”

“How do you know they haven’t already discovered their powers, and are preparing to take you on?”

“Because I would have felt it if they had unlocked all their powers, let alone if they were being used anywhere in my kingdom. That is, shall we say, a perk in being a ruler of any kingdom, no matter how small.”

“Then what if I killed you? Would I become the ruler of this kingdom?”

“In theory, yes. And also under certain extenuating circumstances.”

“Such as?”

“I will tell you at a later date. Anything else? No? Good. You are dismissed. Guards, put her into the luxury suite.”

The guards approach me from behind. Two of them with their weapons aimed for my lower back, and then two others grabbed me by the arms with vice~like grips.

“Umm, Your majesty?”

“What?”

“Which suite are you talking about? The newly refurbished one, or the previously refurbished one?” He made it sound like I was going to a recently created dungeon cell, which I was half expecting.

“The newly refurbished one, of course.”

“Aye, sir. Come on, girl.” they roughly shove me in the back once we turn around to make me move.

We make so many turns, go through so many twists, that by the time we get to my room, I only have enough time to get ready for the evening meal. The room is about 12 feet by twelve feet, with a large four poster bed, a large make~up table, a french door leading to a large walk~in closet 20 feet long, 8 ft wide, and 12 ft tall, with an intricate ladder leading to the upper floor, which is full of fancy, high~end expensive~brand shoes of every shape and size. The wallpaper was nothing but a beautiful black, deep royal blues, and rich, vibrant, blood red. The bathroom could fit three large master bathrooms side by side. The bath tub was the size of a large hot tub, with a three~sink vanity.

There were two other doors leading out of it in opposite directions. I opened one door, and it opened into a room that I would have thought was mine, if it didn't have such colorful wallpaper. I opened the other door, and this was the same case, although this one had a single color for the entire wallpaper. and in all the rooms, the bed sheets and bedspreads all perfectly match the wallpaper.

Just then, a maid walks in, and starts telling me it's time to So I obey, trying to understand Rogalon's reasoning. At five o'clock exactly, I was ready for dinner and was being escorted to the dining hall, when I almost collided with a tall, handsome looking man wearing the Prince's crown.

"I am so sorry, ma'am. Are you okay?" he said in a smooth, gentle voice.

"Umm, uh, yes. I mean no. I mean no I am not hurt, and I appreciate your concern," I said in a stuttering voice. "So you are the Prince of Ketchwitz then?"

"Prince Romalon Noralea of Ketchwitz, at your service. May I ask what your name is?"

"Oh, um yes. I am Veramine." I said, kind of shakily.

Just then we were interrupted, and it just so happened to be the king himself.

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“Well, well. I see you two have met. Come in, come in. dinner is being served, so if you would like your food warm, I would suggest sitting at the table now, or stand here talking until your food is cold.”

And with that, he turned and walked off to re-enter the dining hall.

“Don’t worry about him. He isn’t always like this. It’s probably just that your friends escaped before he could sway them to our side.” he said with extreme confidence, as he put a consoling arm around my shoulders, and pinned me with a genuine smile, one that didn’t quite reach his eyes, plastered onto his face.

“Oh. okay.” But for some reason, that fact made my stomach tighten a little more, despite his attempts at comforting me.

## Chapter 3

## Miralokki, Big Cat Forest

We were flying over the body of water back to the forest where I had rescued Jarok and Veramine, when Jarok suddenly noticed a weird castle half-buried underground, and Varik suggested we should check it out.

As we began to come in for a landing, a sudden gust of wind from the north blew us off course. So as we began to fall back to the ground, we nearly crashed into a place with a sign stating that we have entered “No Creatures Land”.

“No creatures land?” asked Veramine. “What creatures are they talking about?”

“How should I know? I didn’t exactly make the sign did I?”

“No one said you did. She was just asking,” said Varik.

“Umm, maybe we should set up camp over there in that cave? Get some shelter from the *creatures* that live here? And from the elements? After all, it is turning dark.”

“Actually,” I said, “Jarok has a point. It’s dark, we’re all hungry, cold and tired. The cave should be able give us at least two things to freshen us up.”

“Umm, yeah, I’m not so sure. I don’t know why, but I am getting a weird feeling about going into that cave. What do you think Varik?”

“Well, I think Miralokki and Jarok have some very good points as to why we should go into the cave. And I don’t see any reason not to as long as we have a fire and a sentry at all times. We will go one

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person minimum, for four hours, before we trade. Does one else have any better ideas?”

“Nope.”

“Umm, I don’t think so.”

“Not really.”

“Then it's settled. I will take the first watch, then Miralokki, and Jarok, ending with Vanessa. Everyone good with that? Yes?” Everyone nods their heads in agreement. “Good. Now let’s get to work.”

And so, I flew them all to the cave that jarok had spotted, and we started setting up the camp. We were just about to start the fire when a large shadow fell over us. We turned, and saw a massive dragon.

It had large red, curling devil-horns, a green sheen shimmering on his scales. On top of his wings, he had black and red swirling pattern on his scales. On the underside of his wings, they were a blue and green shimmering pattern, sort of like a crosshatch. The talons were, and curled in about two inches at the end, and were still wet with some kind of red liquid. This told the companions that the dragon just got back from The Hunt. His teeth were so long that the shortest tooth was as long as Vanessa’s arm, which was about a foot and half in length. The left eye was a deep, grassy green, and the right eye was piercing sky blue.

Then, as I was about to scream, she became even more afraid as the dragon, in a deep, gravelly, yet honey smooth, voice, so deep, it felt as if the entire ground was shaking. But we didn’t *hear* it audibly. Rather, we heard it *inside our heads!!*

“Hello, Vanessa. I have been waiting for you to arrive since I heard you were captured. “It has been so long since last I saw you.” At the confused look on her face, it almost looked as if she had literally jack-slapped him, or at least, that’s the image he portrayed. “Y-yo-you don’t remember me?”

“Umm....no?”

“But why? Whenever the witches at the sweet shop lured you in, I came and saved you from a grisly death.”

“Well, you see, Mr. Dragon, sir-”

“Oh, So sorry. My name is Draven Draconius. But please, call me Draven.”

“Ok. Well anyway, Draven, The King has blocked our memories from anytime before we woke up in the dungeon he was holding us in. So, you don't need to worry about Vanessa not remembering you. The only reason why we know this is because when we escaped, there was this weird green mist. And when we were knocked out, I remembered the smallest detail ever, and it happened to be that Veramine, who is still at the castle, is my sister.” said a very exhausted looking Varik, rather blatantly.

## Chapter 4

Miralokki, The confusion

It was like a slap to my face. Veramine and Jarok were siblings?! Why didn't he tell us this before? It would have saved so much time I spent trying to understand why she risked all of ours. But maybe she was just trying to protect Varik?

“Wait what?!”

“Hold on a minute!”

“Why didn't you tell us?!”

“Because I didn't want it to affect your choice to learn your special powers, and I was only going to tell each of you as you learned your powers. I just haven't had a chance yet to tell you. So now you all know. I am sorry for keeping this little secret from all of you.

“Anyway, Draven. This is how I knew, and when I told Miralokki about our memories being blocked, she was just as surprised as I expect you are right now,” said Varik.

“Wow. Well, thank you, Varik. It goes a long way to beginning to understand. But I would like to help you a little bit on your way. And, I don't think there is any better way than to help you unlock-or master- your powers. And yes, I know who has what powers, but only because a little birdie told me that they overheard the king talking about it. But I will have to leave some of you alone in dangerous predicaments every now and then to evaluate your progress.” Suddenly, in a flash of blue light, Draven had transformed into a handsome young man, aside from a scar that goes from his forehead straight across his eye, down his nose, all the way down his chin, and escapes view,

under his shirt. “Well then? Are you ready for a nice night’s stay at the Draconian Cavern?” and then, with a small burst of fire from his mouth, the cave was lit up so well, we could see the drawings and sketches that someone had done on the walls.

“As he led the way farther into the Cavern, we all hung back a little ways, and whispered among ourselves.

“You sure we should stay here? What if this is his way of trapping us here for a midnight snack? Maybe we should ditch this place? Go find somewhere else to stay where we don’t have to worry about any predators, mythical, supernatural, or whatever, getting to us and eating us for their meal?”

“But, Miralokki, what if he is telling the truth? It would really hurt his feelings. I think we should give him a chance,” said Vanessa.

“To eat us, or help us?” asked Jarok.

“You all have good points, but I think we can trust him.”

“Okay, but if we die because of you two, I, personally, am coming back and killing your ghost, so you have to live life as a shade.” said Jarok.

“What is a shade?” asked Varik.

I shuddered just thinking about the meaning of living as a shade. “Shades are mostly vaporous clouds. As a shade, you can’t eat or drink. And that alone would cause anyone lots of misery and pain. But you can never sate your appetite or thirst. You can’t touch anything. You just go right through anything. That is the closest you will ever come to physical contact, with anyone or anything. For all eternity.”

“I really don’t like the idea of that.” stated an extremely nervous Vanessa.

“Good. Because you’re not supposed to.”

“Well, are you coming or not?” asked Draven from a little ways down the cavern.

### Miralokki-Into the Draconian Caverns

It is bright and sunny out when we come out of the Draconian Cavern, the way led by Draven. We are still yawning and stretching when he transforms Into the dragon we saw last night, and he looks a lot better in this form during the day than at night.

“So, Draven... who are you going to work with first? What power are you going to try out when we start?” Asked Jarok

“Seriously? Does he ever shut up?” he asked Vanessa.

“Not really. That is something else that we are trying to get him to stop doing so much. We did try to put a mute button on him at one point as he slept, but it didn’t work, so we tore it off of him this morning. Hence the red circle on his neck.”

“Wait, what?! You guys seriously did it? And now there’s a red mark on my neck? You guys really find me so much better looking than you that you would do this?”

As he continued to ramble on about it, we all moved away until we were out of earshot, and we continued talking about the special abilities each of us have.

“Okay, so Varik has Healing; Miralokki, flying; Veramine, Jarok, and I are still to be decided. Actually, I bet you Jarok’s is super annoying, and just as talkative.” said Vanessa. “So who has what power? Does anyone have more than one power?”

Draven scratched his chin, and ran his hand over his face, through his hair, and rubbed the back of his neck. “So, the king actually

learned the ability to sense others' powers from me when he was just a prince. His parents told me he was interested in magic, of sorts. So I eventually agreed to train him in those powers, and while he was really good at it, he usually gets the indicators mixed up at first. But, with more thought, he could figure out the super power each creature could have, until he figured out he could sense and read other people's auras. But even then he sometimes gets it mixed up. Less frequently, of course, but he still does it nonetheless. And some creatures have multiple powers, but everyone has primary ability. Other powers are just boosters, or extras.

“Veramine, however, knows the primary ability for all of you, because the king told her the day after you escaped, and she stayed behind. What she doesn't know, though, is that all five of you have additional abilities. Probably because the King didn't tell her for one of three *positive* reasons. One, he doesn't know, or didn't look deep enough into each of your auras. Or two, he neglected telling her because he thought it might give her too much power over him.”

“You said three. What's the third one?” I questioned.

“Well, you know, It is quite possible that he might actually be afraid that Veramine will somehow send word to you to inform you of your powers, primary, and additional.”

“Those were three positive ones. What are the negative reasons?”

“I am sorry you asked, because from what I know about him, none of them are going to be appealing to any of you. Unless you have a dark, or morbid, sense of humor.”

“That didn't answer Miraloki's question. What are the negative reasons?” questioned Varik, an extremely agitated tone in his voice.

“Here goes nothing. There is one major negative reason: he plans on turning her against you by ensuring you don't come back to the royal castle in a good long time. And even if you do manage to overthrow him, there will always be members of his court you have to overthrow, or replace, as well. And not to mention, if he succeeds in

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turning her against you, Veramine will not even hesitate to betray you for a place in the Royal Family as the Future Queen.”

“That’s the major negative reason? Everyone is betrayed by someone or for some reason or some such. It’s a part of life.” said Jarok, who had finally shut up long enough to listen.

“Wow, we didn’t even realize you had stopped being vain and whiny, J. Good job.”

“Thanks...I think?”

“You're welcome. Anyway, what happened to you to make you so jaded?”

“I don’t want to talk about it.”

“Ok, I am definitely beginning to really like this side of you,” said Vanessa, somewhat flirtingly, which resulted in a sharp jab in the ribs by Jarok. “Hey! Hate the game, not the players!” Varik and I looked at each other with surprise evident on our faces.

“Anyway, I can tell each of you all of the secondary powers that have nothing to do with your primary powers. But note this: If your primary is shapeshifting, then you automatically receive telepathy, heightened senses, and communicating with animals. As well as the ability to transform into whatever creature you want. Got that?”

“Umm.. yeah, I think so. So, can you tell how we are supposed to figure them out, as well, or do we have to figure that out ourselves?” questioned Jarok.

“I can tell you, but that would be cheating. You need to figure it out yourself, or you will never learn. But don’t worry, the way I am helping you will ensure that you learn the way you need to. And remember, never draw from anger. Always the pain and sadness. If you draw from the anger, there is a very good chance that once you transform, if you are a shapeshifter, then you will never be able to transform back. Pain and sadness will allow you both the ability to transform, and to retain full control. Anger has the ability to blind you.

But sadness, and pain, allow you to do more than blindly change from one form to another.” replied Draven.

Jarok and Veeramine decided, eventually, to go at the same time.

“Now, remember, not everyone learns the same way.” he said in an ominous warning, as if he knew exactly what would happen to them if they continued with this choice.

“You know, Jarok, maybe I should go first, okay?” she said, kind of scared of how he would answer.

“If you are absolutely sure, then I will support you all the way. But if you start having second thoughts, I will be right here for you. And no matter what happens, I will never give up on you.” And then, to everyone’s surprise, he leaned in, and gave her a long, scorching hot kiss that left her visibly breathless, and fighting to keep on a straight face and some kind of composure. There were plenty teasing catcalls and whistles from everyone which quickly-and quite effectively-interrupted their “private” little moment. They hopped apart, flustered, and quite embarrassed.

“Thanks for the reminder that we were in public, Ness. I just made a complete fool of myself for you in front of our so-called ‘friends’.” Said Jarok, with an anger that derived from his embarrassment. “I hope y’all liked it, because you won’t be seeing that from us again, I can promise you that. And I Swear to the Greek Pantheon Furies, no one will have mercy on either of you two if you do anything to embarrass us about this, or if we get to Veramine in time, and you tell her. And it's not a threat, either-it's a promise.”

“Ooh, look, *Var*, he promised to do something to us. Oh, I am so scared, please, protect me!” I said in a high-pitched, teasing tone.

“You can fly away in defense. I only have healing powers. If anything *you* should protect *me*.” said Jarok

“Chivalry is so dead these days,” I tsked.

“No doubt, Van. Why do you think I was never chivalrous towards you?”

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“Because you don’t know the meaning of it?”

“Ooh, Jar, she got you there, buddy!” I teased him.

“Butt out!” the two yelled, in perfect harmony.

“Ok, ok. Just trying to kid around. For the love of the Graces, we can’t even enjoy ourselves, even at another’s expense, if we’re just poking fun.”

“Ahem. Well, are you doing this alone, or together?” interrupted Daven, still in his dragon form, before it could escalate into something else-in either direction-impatiently tapping his foot.”

“Oh, umm, yeah... well, wish me luck.” And she spun on her heel towards the sign, and bolted.

“Wish she could say what she’s about to do.” he sighed in exasperation. “Well, let’s see how it goes,” he yawned, as if he could tell that she was about to be torn apart limb from limb.

## Chapter 5

## Vanessa, No creatures Land

I had just ran into no creatures' land, for fear of never leaving Jarok's side. And the sad thing is, once you enter, there is no way to escape, unless escorted out by a creature that lives here. Or at least, so said the dragon. Because once you cross that little line so small that it's nearly impossible to see, there is a fog that suddenly appears behind. You will see the fog, but anyone on the outside will just see straight through to the other side. The fog looks kinda like oil, she realized as she continued to stare at the oil-substance walls, with the different colors in different widths, melting together perfectly. So perfectly, in fact, that she found herself reaching out to touch it. *What does it feel like? What is this?* Then she was hit by a sudden and vain thought: *Oh my gods! What if I am covered in this slimy goo?*

So she began dancing and shrieking, shaking and then she started hearing voices in her head. Draven had warned her to beware the Voices of Echoing Doubt

*What is wrong with you?! You know perfectly well that, as your boyfriend, he should be helping you handle this. And he was really trying to, so why did you ditch him? To conquer your powers on your own? But what if he is the one who needs to be in trouble, and I unlock them by saving him? What if that's what the Dragon meant?* She thought to herself. *Well, no use crying over spilled milk. Now you gotta lay in the bed you made.*

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She was so busy talking to herself, that she didn't hear the creatures beginning to growl and snarl as they closed her escape routes off, trapping her inside a small circle.

Then, once she realized what was happening, she screamed so loud it broke the fog's sound barrier, and reverberated all the way back to her awaiting companions. The second they heard it, Jarok was off and running straight in, and the second he went through, we heard him yelling extremely profane things that should never be used lightly. Next thing we knew, he was screaming in pain halfway through the sentence. When we next saw him, his clothes were on the body of a huge lion. The clothes were ragged, torn, and hung loosely off his much broader chest, and the pants were so baggy, that as a lion, the first step he took, they just slid straight down. But the most shocking thing was that it was walking on its two hind legs. We at first thought it was Vanessa. But when Vanessa came out a minute later, we realised who it really was: Jarok! *Jarok was an Animorpher!*

“Jarok? Can you understand me?”

*Yes, I can understand you,* he said mentally while nodding.

“Do you know what kind of animorph you are?”

*No. Am I really an Animorph?* He asked in surprise and glee.

“You are a Lion Animorph.”

*No way! Maybe that's why those wolf creatures ran away from me!*

“That, or they were just terrified that another Anmorph species existed. Maybe?” responded Varik.

*Maybe. Now Draven was in our heads, too. The thing is, Jarok and Vanessa, I chose this spot for your training, and didn't want you to go in together for three reasons. One, I knew that if Jarok had gone in with Vanessa, then neither of them would find their powers, and they most likely would have died. Two, when we first met, I saw the beginnings of a relationship, which you two just confirmed, was in the making. Which led me to believe that if Vanessa felt as if she had to do*

*something on her own, then ran into major trouble, she would not only find that one of her less important, yet just as useful, powers was sonic scream, and that if it broke through the barrier the fog put up when you are inside, then Jarok would be the first to react. And the second he entered, the oily tar substance there would temporarily magnify the feelings of the importance he feels for you, causing him to shift. Luckily, it wasn't from tapping into his anger that you two-*" he stared at Varik and I *"-had armed him with, which could have caused him to completely lose control of his shifting abilities*

*"And three, if I hadn't done this, you, Jarok, would have been deafened by the sonic scream, and, unable to hear, and out of anger over that little disadvantage, you would have turned into a lion, lost all thoughts about protecting Vanessa, and would have ripped everyone's throat out without realizing what you were doing, until it was too late."*

We all stopped moving, surprised at how thoroughly he thought this out, and then, out of the blue and scaring us to our wit's end, which also caused Jarok to roar in fright, he said verbally, "So, who's next?"

## Chapter 6

## Varik-Power Training

“Okay, since Nessa has learned one of her secondary powers, and, ironically, so has Varik, though he did it on his own, it’s time to work in groups. Group A, or Alpha, is going to be made up of those who learned their primary powers, and Group B, we’ll call them Beta, are the ones who learned their secondary powers first.”

“Hey! That’s not fair!”

“Wait, what?”

“Why?”

“Because you continue to work in a group you are used to, and not work in different groups of two or three at a time, you will never learn how to fight and work as a team. Won’t know the best way for you to conquer anything that stands in your way.”

“But if we are going to be doing team exercises as a group of four, why are you breaking us up into groanut butter and jelly. They were in perfect harmony in everything they did. They tried taunting Nessa. They tried thinking about the best or worst thoughts and memories to find out what allows Nessa total control of her powers. When Draven passed by them, Jarok heard Draven say “good job” and tell them to keep up the good work. "But try more pleasant methods first, before criticism." And after that, it was so easy for her to use her sonic scream when she thinks of something that would make any other girl squeal in happiness, whether it’s with her best friends, or her family. After another hour of practicing on everyone’s part, Draven called lunch break for all of us, and we all congratulated each other on a job well done. The only one who didn’t seem to fully enjoy it was

Varik, which, since he doesn't have any power he could use for offense, therefore practice for both offense and defense, it kinda makes sense..

As we sat down for our mid-day meal, we talked about how we did, and got feedback on what we could do next time to try out, and so on. Or at least, until Varik needed to excuse himself. But when he did, he vanished so fast, it was like he existed as nothing more than a blur. One second he was right next to us, the next he was nowhere to be seen. And when we were all walking around the table in circles, Draven came over to see what all the fuss was as we yelled Varik's name repeatedly. So we filled him in on what happened, and he actually seemed pleased that we couldn't find him.

"Oh, don't worry, he'll turn up. And just to make sure he does, what is his favorite food?"

"Pizza!" blurted Jarok.

"No, not pizza! It's biscuits and gravy!" retorted Vanessa.

"Actually, I think it's mozzarella sticks!" I stated.

"You're all wrong. My favorite meal is a double cheeseburger with onion fries, wild cherry pepsi, and triple chocolate pie."

Everyone screamed except Draven. Draven just smirked, and said, quite calmly, "I knew he would turn up. Thank you for sharing your super power with us. Now what happened just before you vanished, and how did you feel?"

"Those three were talking about how they figured out how to channel their abilities, and mine is the only one that can't be used to do anything more than heal, both myself and others. I felt extremely frustrated that I was the only one that had yet to find out their offensive ability. And next thing I knew, they were getting up, and looking everywhere for me, calling out both our names so that you could probably help search for me." said Varik, hearing it come out his mouth. But then, everyone started asking Draven who, or what, he was talking to.

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“I am talking to Varik. His secondary ability, which is more for recon, and stealth-therefore both defense and offense, is Invisibility, with a hint of intangibility. That’s why you couldn’t find him. So now, we are definitely going to be hard-pressed to get his primary power unlocked. Because we know it’s not thinking thoughts about helping others heal, clearly, or frustration. But we still need to work on communicating with Varik when he is invisible. So we will pick this up later in the week, just like with Miralokki gaining the physical strength to hold you each as she flies around, all at the same time. We need to build her muscles up, and learn to communicate with Varik while he is invisible.” So we are going to take a break for the day. Go ahead and do whatever you would like, just make sure to stay in a group. And do not enter No Creature’s Land, because you have no idea how to really fight yet. Otherwise, go where you wish, and be back by sundown. Have a good time. Bye.”

“Ok. Thank you!” we all said as we started running off toward the forest.

Then we were inside the forest. We looked everywhere, trying to find that weird castle we saw a few days ago when we were blown off course. Then, suddenly, I flew straight up into the air to get a better view when we heard a big screeching, like metal on metal.

As soon as I saw the trees falling down like dominoes towards her friends, she dove straight down, scooped them all up, and hurried toward the cave to tell Draven, and also to show the friends she scooped up what was wrong at their continued, persistent questioning.

## Chapter 8

## Miralokki and The Tree Uprooter

When they finally arrived back at the cave, I made a hasty crash landing and called Draven's name three times like he told them when something was wrong. The second she did, he appeared out of nowhere in his dragon form, and asked what was wrong. When she told him about the trees being felled like dominoes, he looked sincerely terrified. When he asked how close they were, I told him that I wasn't sure, but they were heading towards the weird cobblestone tower when she saw it. Draven immediately sets off towards the cobblestone tower, leaving them with the demand to stay put, and make themselves useful until he gets back.

"Why are you so worried about trees being felled like dominoes, Miralokki? Are you scared they're gonna hurt the trees?" teased Jarok.

"Jar, maybe she is a tree lover. She might want to marry one day, and with them taking the trees down, she's afraid she might have already lost her chance." mocked Vanessa.

"Well, I guess I deserved it after mocking you two. If you must know, I think I heard someone crying out there. That's why I was in a hurry to get back. So we could summon him, and we could talk it over for a reasonable explanation."

"That makes sense. Sort of." said Varik.

"So, you are telling us that you were in a hurry to get back because you think you heard *voices*? Makes a lot of sense to me," said Jarok, his voice loaded with sarcasm. "And why wouldn't you tell us while we were flying?"

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“Be-beca-because.... I haven’t attempted flying long distances while talking for the entire period. Why do you think that when you were all flying on my back I told you and Vanessa to stop asking me questions? Just for fun and laughs?”

“Kind of?” said Vanessa. “I mean after all, you were flying and everything, so I figured you and Varik had it all figured out. My apologies.”

“Well, now that we have got that sorted, how about we try that out now?” asked Varik. “Besides that, I didn’t know you hadn’t tried it before.”

“Maybe around sunup. I really don’t want to do it right now.”

“Okay. We’ll do it in the morning.”

We were sitting around the fire we started a couple of hours ago, still waiting for Draven to get back. Dinner consisted of last night’s leftovers: meat, bread, cheese, and dried fruit. Along with a little bit of fresh jerky.

“What do you think is taking him so long? You- you don’t think they captured him, do you?” asked Vanessa.

“Nah, he’s too tough and experienced to go down that easily.” responded Jarok, putting a comforting arm around her shoulders.

Varik suddenly started speaking so quietly we all had to lean in to hear, “Maybe, they captured think-I mean after all, he is relatively old, as you pointed out-” everyone gasped, and Vanessa began to cry, “-and he torched his way out of there-” Another gasp “and is on his way back right now!”

“Great, thanks for making me imagine him toasting weird creatures that only Miralokki heard,” said Jarok and Vanessa under their breaths.

“No problem!” said Varik, looking- and sounding- quite pleased with himself.

“You really didn’t need to do that, Varik. We are supposed to be learning how to get along with each other, not terrorizing.” I said. Jarok and Vanessa agreed wholeheartedly, and super quickly.

“Anyway, guys, I am going to see if I can find out where Draven got off to. You guys want to come with me?”

“Not unless I have to.” Varik.

“I guess.” Vanessa.

“If she goes, I go.” Jarok remarked.

“Well, I guess if everyone else is going, I might as well.”

“Great! Let’s get going then!” I said enthusiastically.

“I have a feeling that I will come to seriously regret this,” came Varik’s voice from right behind me, directly in my ear, making me jump into the air.

It was a couple of hours later. We were flying through air at a fast, yet leisurely, pace. It was a peacefully dark night, if you ignored the sounds of the trees continuing to fall over like a house of dominoes. And if you didn’t include their self-appointed mission to find Draven Draconius, their humble, Draconian host.

As we flew through the sky, I was startled to see a giant six-armed jaguar monkey creature.

“W-wh-what is *that*?”

“That, my friends, is a Jaguankey.” said Varik in a superior tone.

“Jagu-onkey? What is that?”

“No. jag-wank-ee. It is a hybrid breed of Jaguar, and a monkey. Hence, as per monkeys, its fascination with trees.”

“Ok. So, what does it eat?”

“Living creatures. Especially ones that walk and run.”

“Whew. So we’re all good then?” inquired a sarcastic Jarok.

“Not exactly. They also eat the occasional flying creature when they can catch them. It is rare, but it still happens. And right now, that

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would be us. So steer clear of them. If at all possible, anyway," replied Varik.

"But what if Draven flew straight into its course, and it ate him? What then?"

"I don't see anyone in its stomach," Varik informed us. We all gaped at him, wondering how in Tartarus he could know that.

"Wait. How do you know that? Did you just discover another power?" Jarok queried.

"I-i-i guess so. Weird right? First healing, then X-ray vision. It's like I am being told I will have something to do with healing. Or maybe healing is just a useful and handy secondary power, and nothing else? I am so confused." said Jarok, telling me to land on the treetops. When we did, he collapsed to his knees, and let his vulnerability out for us to see. "Why must these powers be forced onto my shoulders? Why bother helping when i am nothing more than a hindrance?!"

"We all are, bud. We all are." said Vanessa, trying to comfort him, and despite her efforts to be sympathetic, ends up failing miserably.

## Chapter 9

## Jarok, On The Treetops

We had just landed on the treetops, and I am so upset with everything that has happened to us. *And then, to make it worse, I only have two secondary powers unlocked, and not my primary. Why? Why did I have to be the one with the lame healing powers? I really drew the short straw this time. I mean, no offense, Moirai, but I want not these stupid powers you have thrust forth unto my shoulders! Why must you put these healing powers on me? Why can someone else not have one of these? Then, at least, if I were captured, they would not have such a good weapon to be used against them. Would it not be better for everyone if I had a primary fighting power? In lieu of these healing powers, these powers that make me nothing more than the best physician around, and, because of my newfound X-Ray vision, a good weapon and tooltip be used by our enemies, should I get caught.*

“Jarok? You okay?” asked my companions.

“NO! I AM NOT OKAY! WHY WOULD I EVER BE OKAY? ALL I AM TO YOU RIGHT NOW IS A HINDRANCE! I have no useful purpose here! Why do you insist on keeping me near you? I hate that I have unlocked two secondary powers , whereas you guys have all discovered one secondary and have discovered your primary powers! WHY ARE THE FATES SO CRUEL TO US? To shove the weight of the world's challenges upon our young shoulders! No *matter* how *strong* they think us to be?! How dare they put us through this turmoil that I am in and that you three refuse to let show, even in front of each other, because you don't want to seem weak!” I realize I am yelling. I breathe in and out a few times, and ask for water. “I am sorry. I

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probably just drew them towards us. I know this is supposed to be a spy mission, but I had nowhere else to be, and you guys were here, ready to listen.”

“It’s okay. We understand how you feel.”

“Do you? Do you *really*? Then how about you tell me how you think *I* feel?”

“Well, considering what you just told us, we would just end up using your own words, and therefore, they wouldn’t be our own words.”

“Actually, I think I understand,” said Jarok. “He feels like a deer, trapped in headlights, about to be gunned down for sport. Not out of necessity, but of fun. Deer, when they look directly into bright lights, tend to normally freeze completely, then hunters take advantage of it, and kill them.”

“So, basically, Jarok is saying that Varik is the deer, and we are the hunters. Always shining the light directly in his eyes, and while we may come close to pulling the trigger, we don’t actually pull it, and the hunt starts again.”

“Wow, Jarok,” said Varik, “I really doubted that you guys actually understood. But you seem to understand better than I might ever have hoped.”

“Yeah, well, I learned from reading books.”

“Well, we are going to need that knowledge when we face the King,” reminded Vanessa.

“How can you be so sure?”

“Because if he knows about our primary powers, then it is a relatively good chance that he might know about our side powers. So, we need a tactical attack master. Someone who can evaluate strategic gameplans, with a high chance of success. So. What are we going to do? Keep sitting around, sharing our feelings, or go back to the cave in hopes that Draven returns sometime in the last half hour or so?”

“Let’s fly around a little more, and meanwhile, we can get Miralokki to try talking as we fly. Help get her used to talking and flying. Does that sound good to you guys?”

“Sure.”

“I don’t see a problem with that.” Jarok

“Why not?” Miralokki grumbled, clearly unexcited to be trying something new right now.

“Great. Well, let’s get going then.”

So we started flying again. They started with short answer questions. Then we gradually began to fly faster as I spoke, and after a full fifteen questions, we started giving her more open-ended questions, like *if we didn’t have to save the world, what would you like to do with the rest of your life. First with superpowers, then without them?*

When we got back to the cave, Draven was still nowhere to be found.

“Where in the world is he? We have looked everywhere!” Jarok

“Not everywhere,” said Vanessa, putting extra emphasis on that last word.

“What do you mean?”

“You guys know that tower we saw, just before we got blown off course? Into this cave?”

“Yeah... why?”

“Remember how when we told him that the thing was heading in that general direction?”-at this, I pointedly cleared my throat- “fine, when *Miralokki*” -she said, exasperated- “told him, he immediately rushed off to that tower, and told us to stay put. So, maybe it’s his lady friend? Or, he could have decided it was time to abandon us. Either way, it ended up with us all learning Varik’s secondary side power. And, if we had done as he told us, Miralokki wouldn’t be able to talk and fly at the same time. So while we didn’t succeed with our initial goal, we have now completed three goals-one for teamwork, and

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another for working on our special abilities- for us all. It is starting to feel a little like a video game, isn't it?"

"I guess, but we still need to learn *how* we got these powers in the first place. It might help teach us how we can master them more quickly."

"Yeah, I agree with you both." replied Vanessa, reminding Jarok and Vanessa that they are not alone. "But I have one question: how are we supposed to find out the way we got our powers? We don't exactly remember much from before we woke up in the cell-aside from Varik-right?"

"Yeah... why?"

"Well, if he could look back at his previous memories from before our captive days, it might explain why his powers mainly revolve around healing. Then, we could figure out how his super power turned out to be one of great healing."

"Great idea, Jarok. In fact, it is *so* smart, you guys may no longer need me soon." replied an exhausted, yet still freshly sarcastic Varik, "so, how do you plan on making me open up some more? 'Cause I'm an open book. Whatever you want to know about me, just ask, I will give you the truth as I know it."

"Really?" said Vanessa, with a deep, mischievous twinkle in her eyes, an evil smile that reaches her eyes, and greatly reminds me of a grinch, made even more sinister, that for a second, her eyes, already squinted, flashed a brilliant, angry red. It was there one second, and the next-*Poof*- it was gone.

"Whoa, Van, calm down. Are you okay? How did you do that freaky thing with your eyes? And why are you smiling like that?" asked an extremely terrified Jarok.

"Ok..." Varik steps away from Vanessa before she could start laughing maniacally, and spreads her arms wide as if greeting a god.

Suddenly, there was a loud *crash!* As lightning zapped right next, forcing us all to jump out of the way, for fear of electrocution. We

were nearly out of the way of the strike, when, poor Varik, was struck and neither vaporized nor dropped onto his back, flailing like a fish out of water. Then, as we stood watching, he suddenly spread out wide his toned, well-muscled arms. And out of nowhere, Tim McGraw's Last Dollar [Fly Away] started to play somewhere in the back of my head, yet from somewhere outside my body. And as we watched, Varik began to rise up, and all our metallic items began pulsing, pulling us all towards him.

“Varik! Stop! Please! Varik! VARIK! It's us! Your friends! Please stop! You are hurting us!” we screamed, begging him to stop, to put us down.

Finally, we barely manage to break through to him. He slowly opened his eyes, lowering us-and himself- back onto the canopy of trees.

“W-wh-what happened?” he asked, purely terrified over what just happened here. “Why was I floating?” he asked in a scared shriek, rather than his usual, low-toned voice. ”What did you do to me?”

## Chapter 10

Varik finds his Main Power

“Great. The second we believe you finally found your power, and you blame *us* for the scare?”

“Wh-what do you mean?”

“What we mean, you idiot,” said Jarok, giving a rough push, “is that you were struck by lightning. And instead of dropping and flailing like a fish in the last throes of death, preparing for the Final Sleep, you seemed to *absorb* the energy. And as you did, you somehow turned into a sort of god. Attracting metal nearby to you, levitating, *controlling the weather*.”

“So, what you’re saying is, you think my top power is weather control? That’s so cool!”

“No, it’s controlling electricity. Of course weather control! Honestly, you can be so stupid at times.”

“Ok, ok. We get it. He’s stupid. You’re a jerk. He has weather control. And you don’t. Can we go home now?” I asked.

“I don’t agree with the way she said it, but I *do* agree with Lokki.”

“Yeah, ok. Whatever.” said Jarok.

“Well, let’s go then,” said a very pleasant and chipper Varik. “Let’s go save my sister! Yaay! Death, here we come,” he yelled, laughing maniacally, like Vladd as he fights Danny Phantom.

“Should I tell him?”

“Don’t you dare! I want to see if he breaks into song. Lord knows, Olaf does it just about every time he speaks. I want to hear what Varik would say.”

“Who?” asked Vanessa.

“Nevermind.”

Then, from a distance, I could barely make out Varik as he began to sing.

*Off to our deaths we go,*

*To save my sister, shall we*

*We are off to our deaths, off to our deaths.*

*Hey, ho, the cherry-o. Off to our deaths we go*

*Hey, ho, the cherry-o. Off to our deaths we go*

*We are going to die.*

*About this I would not lie.*

*We will die, we will die,*

*Because of this evil bee.*

*We know him as a king*

*But all he wants to do is rule*

*And I need no sting.*

*‘Cause I am dead, I am dead.*

*My body is heavier than lead.*

*Let us go to see the tree, where in the past hangs us three.*

*Meet me by the tree, and we will see,*

*The king truly is made of greed,*

“Well, what are you waiting for? Don’t you want to meet the gods?” he asked, truly sounding sincerely happy, oblivious to the fact that he is singing about our deaths.

“Not the way you mean, no.”

“Your loss.” And he went back to cheerfully singing his death shanty.

“Now should I tell him?” asked Jarok.

○

“Wait another ten minutes. How creative can he get, singing about death?” and immediately afterwards, I came to regret it.

*“Can’t wait to die,  
On me, for your death you can rely.  
I don’t got no reason to stay aliiiiive.  
I am not going to take you alive,  
For the king I be,*

*And stronger than all of you,  
I always shall be  
Nobody can beat me  
Now or ever  
I shall be a greedy king forever*

*And if fight you try,  
I shall pull a lever, make sure you all become mine  
So save me, or save yourselves,  
You want get help from any elves”*

“Pretty creative, it looks to me.” replied Vanessa.

“No kidding.” said a sarcastic and surprised I.

*No matter how far into the earth you delve,  
you shall never escape my wrath  
My servant elves will give you a bloodbath.  
But not before you die.  
I declare you to die today.  
This order, you shall not relay  
This is not a game  
You shall not play  
See you in a year and a day.  
Goodbye, and remember-  
My order you shall not defy*

*Or against me, you surely shall die  
 Off to our deaths we go, and this you know  
 Off to our deaths we go, and this you know  
 Hey ho the cherry-o, we will die, we will die  
 Hey ho the cherry-o, off to our deaths do we go, off to our deaths  
 do we go."*

"Are you done now?" asked a very peeved Jarok.

"Yes, thank you," said an extremely pleased Varik.

"You do realize that as you sang, there was a weird, purple fog tinged with an orange hue, right? So I believe that it might very well have been a prophecy." I said.

"Does that mean he was being Overshadowed as he made the prophecy.....?" asked Jarok.

"Yes, yes it does." replied a sober Vanessa, all the morbid laughter dissolving into a sober, depressing pout.

"Man, I was just getting used to relaxing too," responded a sarcastic Miralokki. "So now what do we do?"

"I don't know... fly back to the tower-" and at this, Miralokki stuck out her tongue as Jarok put extra emphasis on the word fly, "-and go back to trying to find Draven?"

"Sounds good to me," agreed Vanessa and Varik at the same time.

"Well, I'm outvoted anyway. So, why not?"

"That's the spirit," said an unwittingly ecstatic Varik.

"So, which way do we go to the tower?"

"You're guess is as good as mine."

"Well...which way were we headed when Varik completely broke down?"

"Ummm... I don't rightly know. That way, maybe?" she said, pointing back towards the castle, then a little further away from the cave.

○

“You mean northeast?” questioned Varik, finally beginning to sober up.

“I guess, if that’s northeast.”

“Then, off we go.” I said, gathering everyone in her arms and on her back, and with a little help from the others, leaps into the sky, and, for no reason, Varik jumps off her back.

“Wait, what are you doing? Are you out of your mi-” I starts to speak, but then she breaks off mid-sentence once she realizes Varik is manipulating the weather to help float along beside her, keeping up perfectly.

“What was that, Lokki?” he said with a wide grin that reached his eyes, stretching from ear to ear.

“Nevermind.” But something about his ability to multitask like this with no problem truly unnerved her. But she couldn’t figure out why... *Ah, well. Nothing can be done about it right now. It’s probably just that he has unlocked more of his powers than we have anyway, right?* she asked herself.

Jarok powers:

Shape-shifting

Telepathy

Teleportation

Super senses

My's powers:

Flight

Super hearing, super strength

Vanessa's powers:

Sonic scream

Invisibility

Elemental control

Varik's powers:

Healing

X-ray vision

Intangibility  
Weather

## Chapter 11

## Veramine and the King

“Now, my beautiful, how are you doing on this most precious of all nights?” asked Prince Ramolano.

“Beautiful as always, my lord. And how is yours on this fair evening?” she responded as she had been instructed.

It has been three full weeks since her companions escaped, one week since they brought in the dragon by the name of Draven to “protect and interrogate him” about and from Miralokki and the others.

“Muy bien. What are you thinking about, *mi flor de vida*? Can you not just enjoy the beautiful night sky?”

“I can’t. I am still waiting for my friends to arrive, to try and break me out of here.. No offense,” she hurriedly reassured him. “It’s just, I don’t know if this life suits me. I am not willing to take someone’s life. And ever since the king unblocked my memories, I keep thinking about all the happy times most of us used to have together. The only one I am unsure of is Vanessa. I mean, I remember your father giving us room and board, and that he was trying to find all of us with superpowers so that we could help him “protect” our heritage. But how did he find us in the first place? And I can’t help but feel like she knew more than she was leading us to believe as we were imprisoned in your father’s”-at this, she spat out the word out- “dungeon cells.”

“How many times have my father and I both explained this to you? And how many more times will we need to do so until you are on board with this?” asked Ramolano.

“I know, I know. It’s just... I don’t want to believe they would give up on rescuing me. I am so sorry. It’s not that you aren’t nice or anything. I just really want to see them again, having fun, joking,

running around, playing. And I can't help thinking that they truly might have forgotten about me."

"It's just you getting paranoid. Don't worry. They will return. Either upon their shield, or bearing it."

Since he so often said the last statement, Veramine knew it meant, *Either dead, or alive.*

Just then, there was a huge roar up above our heads. When we looked up, we saw a slightly darker portion of the sky than the rest. Immediately, Ramolano whipped his sword out with a sharp, quick *hiss* as it was unscathed. "Quick, men! Sound the aerial defense alarm!" As soon as he said it, the creature began to spew fire from his mouth. At the same time, the dragon roared, "Rogalon, you fool! Get out here right this instant and get your spoiled little whelp under control! Is this really how you greet your old instructor after nearly three centuries of avoiding me? By attacking me when I come to visit?"

And at that very moment, the King- Rogalon?- came striding straight out onto the parapace where the dragon had finally landed.

"Well, Draven, my old friend and instructor! What brings you here on this most glorious of nights?"

"You and your soldiers are tearing trees out of the ground near my home. And I have had quite a few complaints from those in my territory."

"Oh, really? I am so sorry. I shall make sure to send them a messenger pigeon to stop doing whatever it is they are doing so close to your borders."

"Oh, there's no need for that. I had them for dinner. Breakfast and lunch too, actually, to be honest," he responded with a genuine deep-throated belly laugh.

"Then why in the name of Zeus did you show up here complaining if you had it handled?"

"To inform you of the reason why before you came knocking with those Were-hounds that you have hidden in the bush behind me."

○

“B-bu-w-w-ha-what are you talking about? I didn’t order any creatures to hide behind you! Ramolano! Call off your hounds!” stuttered a flabbergasted King Rogalon.

“But Father! If we do, then what’s to stop him from killing you?”

“Fool! If I wanted to kill him, I would have done it centuries ago when his parents sent him to be my pupil! I was the last dragon then, and I am the last now. And he is just as useless as a king now as he was as a prince back then. I am happy to say that you appear to be learning from your father’s mistakes, and making your own path. That is the making of a true king.”

“It’s all right, Ramolano. I will be fine. Especially... NOW!” and in the blink of an eye, the archers shot their arrows at the dragon. In mid flight though, they turned to manacles, and clasped themselves around his taloned legs. And when he tried to change, it shocked him so badly he collapsed on his side, and all the soldiers-with their weapon poised to strike- began to close around him on all sides.

Keep Reading for an  
excerpt from Book Two:  
Veramine's Escape  
Coming soon in  
December 2022!



## Epilogue

### Draven's Flight

Draven had fled the cave two days ago, visited his sister in the tower deep in the woods where the young heroes had flown into my cave from. And after talking with her for a couple days, they agreed he should try to throw Rogalon off their scent. And she will look out for them from a distance so as not to scare them. But not too far away that she can't help.

In his mind, Draven can't get over what his sister had informed him. Now that I know Rogalon is looking along my borders to recapture the escapees, I have to do something to throw him off the scent. Thankfully Miralokki has the ability to fly. I can't wait for Varik to unlock his powers of Elemental Manipulation. I just hope Rogalon doesn't get to them first. They must unlock all their powers if they wish to save their friend-let alone learn to control them. Because if they can't unlock and master each one, they will be forced into his army and-", suddenly there was a large CRACK!, and Libelle exclaimed with pleasant surprise, "-well, it looks like Varik has unlocked his power. I just hope he's not trying to strike me. And he mustn't know that Tanwen is alive and well, let alone my sister. If there's one thing about him that I learned while he was my pupil it is that he is relentless once he gets a goal in his head. They *must* find the Doomblade before King Rogalon, or the fight is over before it starts. At least they have a copy of the map of Kechwitz. I just hope they find it before they get to the castle. I already have their route planned out to help them better learn their powers. Vanessa better look in her pack, or they-and the rest of the world- are all doomed.

Suddenly, there was a rattling of the key in the doorjamb, and in stepped a dark-clothed female figure, with the cowl of the cloak over her head, strands of beautiful brown hair falling out, resting atop her cloak.