

# ***BETWEEN TWO WORLDS***

## ***BY OMAR BEJARANO***

### ***Chapter 1:***

I walked quickly, my steps uneven, while drops of sweat ran down my forehead. It was late, and the hallway was deserted. Even so, I could vaguely hear the chaos of a nearby classroom. The sound came from behind the first door of the long corridor. I pushed it open without hesitating.

Now inside, the bustle of the seventh-grade class that had sounded like a small murmur in the hallway was a giant storm of conversation. People were casting spells on others and wildly shaking potions.

Mr. Orion, the Levitation teacher, was standing by his desk, waiting patiently for the uproar to stop. Finally, he grabbed a thick, old book and slammed it on his desk to get everyone's attention. The sound was like scissors cutting through the threads of the various conversations; the class settled into an uncomfortable silence. Unfortunately, now everyone could see how late I was. Mr. Orion was the first to speak.

"Silence, please!" He turned to me. "Darek, you're late again. What is it this time?" Mr. Orion asked.

"Ummm ...," I mumbled.

"Are you going to tell me you were attacked by dragons like the last time?" he replied, mocking me. The whole class laughed. "Go sit down. This afternoon, you will write 'I must not be late to class' one hundred times. "

It was totally unfair. My teacher was using me to calm the class down and teach everyone a lesson.

He was punishing me for no reason, and I thought he was being very harsh.

I tried to hide my anger and walked over to my desk at the back of the classroom. Suddenly, Orpheus stuck his foot out into the aisle formed by the desks, hoping I'd trip over it. I didn't notice the trap in time, and I ended up on the floor while his friends looked on and laughed.

"What was that for?" asked my friend Ewans.

"Ha! So now you're protecting your friends? How nice," Orpheus teased cruelly.

'Silence!' cried the teacher. I got up and went to my desk, seething with rage.

At this point, I think I should introduce myself. My name is Darek and I'm twelve years old. I'm blond, medium-sized, and skinny. I am also curious, adventurous, and above all, I'm an everyday kid. Also, I really like Pegasus races. My parents disappeared when I was a baby, and since then my aunt has taken care of me and raised me. But I'm not writing to tell you just any story about a boy in my world. Of course not! I'm going to share with you a disturbing story, an unusual story filled with magic — I'm going to tell you my story!

## **Chapter 2:**

In our school, there are four different clans.

The first clan is the Fire Clan. Its members, the Fuegorosos, are considered to be the most powerful, intelligent and proud. They can produce and control fire. My arch nemesis Orpheus, a child with black hair and small, vicious eyes, is one of them. He's always looking for a fight, especially with me.

Then there's the Water Clan. The Aguarosos are also popular, and there are lots of them. They control the water, forming waves or calling them when the need arises.

Next is the Earth Clan. The Tierrarosos do not mix much with the other clans, and they are very shy. They can move earth, making peaks out of the ground or forming small mountains.

Finally, there's the Wind Clan, the Vientorosos. We control the wind and make it do what we want. I say "we" because I am a Vientoroso. One big advantage is that our clan can fly. Well, after a lot of practice that is, and I'm still not that good. My best friend is Ewans. He's also a Vientoroso.

We are inseparable and laugh all the time. Ewans is tall and muscular, unlike me. He has deep, dark eyes and brown hair.

Now, back to the classroom... After three hours of total boredom, the piercing noise of the bell rang out, jolting me out of my half-sleep. We all got up at the same time, like clones, while the teacher finished his class. Like a tsunami, we flooded out of the tortuous classroom.

Levitation is always very boring. Even after years in class, we have only learned to levitate a pencil one centimeter above a table. Also, we have to read lots of old, long, and boring documents about inner peace, and who knows what else. I'm not going to sugarcoat it; I have many reasons to hate this class.

I left the classroom and walked with Ewans towards the dining room. Along the way we passed other hungry students heading in that direction. My stomach was growling, so we sped up.

We arrived at the cafeteria before the onslaught of the other famished students. I suddenly lost my appetite when, baffled, I noticed the day's menu: spinach steak with gooey carrot purée.

"I think I'm going to pass on lunch today," I said.

"Me too," answered Ewans, and we went to sit down at the long table decorated with conical shapes that represented the Wind Clan. At school, each clan had a table where all its members sat, and we almost never mixed.

We spent time chatting, telling jokes, and fooling around. On a normal day, we would have had Pegasus races, but the weather that day prevented it. Today there was one of those crystal rays' storms.

When the bell rang for the second time of the day, we all filed out in a single line through the big front door, and I went to my next class.

In the afternoon, we had a fascinating Transformation class where we learned to change a person into an animal! Next, was Magic Formulas class, the last class of the day.

We all returned home from school by Terxu, which was a bit like a flying school bus. Once inside, magic seatbelts automatically secured you. The driver controlled the bus by alternating its flat, side wings and steering and the pointed front.

Today's trip did not take more than a few minutes, but there was a lot of turbulence owing to the crystal rays' storms.

Once home, I did my homework. Later, when my aunt returned from work, we ate dinner together quietly.

I did not want her to know about Mr. Orion's punishment, because, although she is very kind, she can also be very strict. I kept relatively quiet and went up to my room by seven o'clock, saying that I was tired. My aunt didn't ask questions, and I completed my punishment assignment.

By the time I finished, my fingers throbbed, and I was really exhausted. I went to bed without changing, and I fell asleep in a few seconds.

That night, I had a very strange dream—though it felt so real, like I was truly alive. In fact, I'm not sure it was a dream...

### ***Chapter 3:***

I suddenly found myself in an unknown world. I rubbed my eyes to try to get used to the sun's blazing light. I finally managed to open my eyes and take in the wonder before me.

I turned my head in all directions, but I could not believe what I was seeing: a land full of endless colors, strange plants, and incredible, unfamiliar creatures. It couldn't be real. How could such a fascinating place exist?

I was in a stream in the middle of a jungle. Suddenly, the stream turned into a spectacular waterfall and I was standing on a bed of colored flowers. Brilliantly colored birds flew all around, and fish were shimmering on the bottom of the lake that was created by the waterfall. The sky was peacock blue, without a cloud in sight. It looked like paradise. I was overcome by a feeling of serenity.

## ***Chapter 4:***

"Brrriinnnggg!!!"

"Ah!" I woke up startled. What was that strange dream? I wondered. I wanted to get back to that world, but unfortunately, I had to leave what I thought was my imagination and get up because it was time to get ready for school.

I put on sweats and drowsily went down the stairs. My aunt was already awake, and she had made a delicious cake for breakfast. I ate it slowly but was ready to leave when the Terxu arrived.

On the way, I couldn't stop thinking about the dream. My mind was churning with questions. Where was it? Would I ever see it again?

I arrived at school on time. The bell rang, and I headed for my first class of the day: Potions.

The class was really fun. The teacher, Professor Hagalbar, made a lot of jokes, and was very nice. During each class we were given a problem of the day. Working in groups and using different ingredients, we had to create a potion that might resolve the problem.

For example, one of these problems was to create a potion that could grow hair. That day, Ewans and I created a potion that might have worked too well. When Ewans dropped some of the mixture we had made onto Professor Hagalbar, it did not take more than a minute for his red beard and curly hair to extend all the way to his feet!

Fortunately, Professor Hagalbar laughed and did not punish us. We were happy to receive a good grade for that potion.

Today's problem was about invisibility: we had to create a potion that would make you invisible. It was a very difficult problem, and we had never made such a complex potion.

Each group took various ingredients, and we started experimenting.

First, Ewans and I mixed some fly eyes with two retractable claws from a grumpy lion in a big bowl. We waited a bit, then added crushed frog hairs and a dozen leeches. Then, we put the mixture in a cauldron to cook it, and when the liquid heated up, it began to bubble. The bubbles multiplied, the potion expanded, and finally came together to make a giant, gloppy explosion!

The green potion exploded everywhere, soaking everyone in the room with a fiery, sticky liquid, smelling of rotten rat.

Professor Hagalbar was now red with anger and green with the strange mixture like everyone else in the room.

Orpheus, who was in the same class, was glaring at us with a death stare that clearly meant he was going to get revenge. But I wasn't as scared of him as I was of the Headmaster and my aunt.

"I don't think we'll get a very good grade this time," Ewans confessed.

Hagalbar didn't say a word, just motioned for us to go see the Headmaster of the school, Professor Wulfe.

## ***Chapter 5:***

We entered a small office. In the center, there was a large desk strewn with documents. On the walls were snapshots of various groups of teachers and students.

Inside the room sat a solitary and imposing figure, wearing a frightening scowl on his face. He was seated in a large chair, carefully stroking his long, white beard as he waited.

"Enter," said the Headmaster in a very serious voice.

"Good afternoon, Professor Wulfe," we responded, trembling with fear.

At this moment, I heard footsteps approaching from the corridor. A few seconds later, I saw my furious and embarrassed aunt walk through the door.

"Good afternoon," repeated the Headmaster, and my aunt responded with a nod.

"You can sit down," he said to us, pointing to the chairs in front of his desk. Then he addressed my aunt.

"As you know, your nephew and one of his friends had an accident in Potions class. Fortunately, it did not have any terrible consequences, but it could have, which is unacceptable. For that reason, I need you to make Darek understand that he cannot just do whatever he wants at school. This is very important. Are we in agreement on this matter?"

"Yes, Sir," answered my aunt.

"Perfect. However, I also have to take measures to ensure that what happened today does not happen again. I have decided that Darek and Ewans will be punished. For the following week, they will stay after dismissal for two hours to clean the school. Do you have any objections?"

"No, Sir," she replied.

"Alright," he said while turning to Ewans and me. "You are dismissed. Make sure it doesn't happen again, because I wouldn't want to have to suspend you. OK?"

"Yes, Sir! Thank you, Sir!" We agreed in unison, and left without looking over at my aunt, who remained in the office.

## **Chapter 6:**

When we left the office, it was time to eat. I was heading to the cafeteria, when, in the middle of a dark hallway, I saw a fist coming directly for my face. Unfortunately, I wasn't quick enough to dodge it, and it landed squarely between my eyes.

The pain of the blow was instantaneous, and I lost my balance. My vision became blurred, and I could feel my nose starting to bleed. I looked up and saw Orpheus in front of me, smiling cruelly.

This was his revenge for the experiment gone wrong.

"So, you thought you were going to get away with what you and Ewans did? Speaking of Ewans, it's a shame he isn't here to defend you," he said mockingly.

I couldn't help grinning a little when I saw Ewans coming up behind Orpheus.

"What did you say?" Ewans asked, shoving him up against the wall. Then he turned to me.

"Are you okay?"

"Ehh ... yes. But my nose hurts a little. Thanks for coming to my rescue," I said to Ewans.

"You're welcome, I just did what any normal friend would have done," he replied.

Since we weren't looking for a fight, we left Orpheus and walked over to the cafeteria to eat lunch. When we were done eating, we headed outside for some Pegasus races.

The stadium was impressive. There were thousands of seats, none of them filled. On match days the whole place buzzed with electricity, but today it was deserted.

The stadium was very similar to the old Roman stadiums called hippodromes. It was oval and the stands lined the racetrack. There was a separate section for the referees.

The race rules were simple: You had to be the first to cross the finish line. Ten runners competed at a time, and each had their own winged horse. You sat directly on your animal and were allowed to cast spells on the other players to get them out of the race. The sport was pretty dangerous.

Today we were just there to practice. I got out my racer, Thunder, and prepped him to ride. He was sky blue, big and muscular, with large, white wings. When racing, his mane made a crackling sound as it swayed back and forth, which reminded me of thunder. A winged horse is a mix of eagle and horse, a beautiful, luxurious animal with incredible strength.

"Ready?" asked Ewans, who had already mounted his animal and was waiting for me.

"Coming," I answered. I brushed Thunder's hair quickly, climbed on his back and trotted over to Ewans. We organized ourselves at the starting line.

"The first one to go to the end and back wins," I declared.

"OK. Good luck!" he replied.

Today we weren't really racing, just riding for fun like we did every day. What I loved about Pegasus races was the feeling you get when you launched into the sky and flew around like a bird. It was absolutely exhilarating!

We got down to business, gathering our strength and establishing the connection we each had with our own familiar creature. Little by little,

I began to feel Thunder's heartbeat, his breathing and his thoughts. I was sending him positive vibes, and he whinnied. Now calmer and less fidgety, he was waiting for me to give him the signal ...

"Now!" I said.

Thunder shot out like an arrow, as if he were an extension of my own body. He picked up speed and took a giant leap into the sky, flapping his wings as we started to fly!

In that moment I felt relaxed and confident, all the worries of the day behind me. Although flying is soothing, I had to remain focused and concentrate on the task at hand. After all, racing just for fun still provided valuable practice for a future race.

I commanded the winds to our backs to blow faster and urged the air ahead to cease following the rules of aerodynamics. We were going very fast, but not fast enough. Ewans zoomed ahead, and ten seconds later he was a good five yards ahead.

If I wanted to win, I had to do something. I focused all my attention on the figure in front of me and conjured up a mini tornado alongside

Ewans, shifting the wind he was using for momentum and blinding his racer.

My attack didn't hurt Ewans, but he had to stop to prevent himself from falling and the tactic helped me pull up even with him.

Determined to keep his lead, Ewans counterattacked with a cloud of bats that he sent swarming in our direction.

Ewans wasn't stupid: he knew that Thunder was afraid of bats. The animal was now utterly terrified, and he started flying in all directions.

"Calm down... Calm down, down...," I tried to reassure Thunder. "Whoa there ... they won't hurt you! We *have* to win this time ..." I whispered as I tried to steady him.

I could see Ewans was already about to cross the finish line and there was no way I was going to let him win so easily. Just then, I had an idea.

Ewans is using our weaknesses, so, we have to use our strengths! In a last-ditch effort, I summoned the winds to gather the clouds in the sky and form a storm. "Thunder isn't his name for nothing!" I thought. Rays began to fall from the sky by the dozens! By the hundreds!

Ahead of me, I saw Ewans and his animal struggling against the elements as Thunder regained his courage and strength. Victory was ours!

## ***Chapter 7:***

Later that day, we were waiting in Mindreading class, the last class of the day, but the teacher never showed up. That gave Ewans and I two free hours before we had to clean the school.

I wasn't planning on spending those two hours with Ewans; something was on my mind. The dream.

I clearly needed help from someone wise, and I knew just the person.

I left school and walked until I reached the foot of the mountain where there was a very long and winding staircase that led to the Wisdom Temple. I debated over entering the temple for a long time. I would have to climb the long staircase to reach it. I finally convinced myself that I desperately needed help and I believed that help was in the temple, so I commenced the climb.

"One, two ... One, two ...," I kept repeating as I climbed the steps. Thirty minutes later, I found myself at the first flat surface. I closed my eyes and rested on the floor as I recovered my strength.

When I opened my eyes, I was stunned to find the temple standing right in front of me. It was built in a Chinese style, with several statues surrounding the building.

I passed through an archway and entered a small courtyard in the center of the temple. There were numerous plants, along with a pond full of brightly colored fish swimming around in it. The sun's rays poured through a giant hole in the ceiling and fell upon an old man levitating above the pond.

"Hello young man," said the man in a deep voice that indicated his advanced years. "I have not had visitors for a long time. What brings you here?"

"H-H-Hi, I'm Darek," I stuttered. "Are you the temple Wise Man?"

"Yes, if you wish to call me that. But you did not answer my question."

"I'm sorry. I have come to find out more about a dream that ...," but the old man did not let me finish.

"Tell me now!" he exclaimed.

"Well, it was a day like any other, but when I fell asleep, I started dreaming. Suddenly I was in a very strange world with animals and plants I didn't recognize. There was a waterfall right in front of me. It was a lovely place, full of vivid colors. "

"Interesting ... " murmured the Wise Man.

"Yes. But what surprised me most of all was the feeling I came away with, as if there was some deep meaning behind the dream. As if it wasn't just a coincidence ... It didn't feel like an ordinary dream."

"Very interesting ... " he repeated. He was wearing a blue quilted vest, and plum pants. He was bald, with a thin blue line running across his skull, and he had a long, white beard that was braided. "Little boy, would you like to hear a story?"

"Uhhh ... sure, " I hesitated. In truth, I was a little uneasy because the Wise Man was so mysterious. He was known to be a hermit, and no one knew how he spent his time.

"Very well. Listen closely."

It all started twenty years ago, in a strange yet fascinating kingdom full of peace and kindness. All the inhabitants lived a wonderful life. Every

kingdom needs a king and queen: in this place, which many described as paradise, the king was a fair and strong ruler, his queen, intelligent and generous. One day, the queen gave birth to an extraordinary little girl who became heir to the powerful ancestral stone. But, some years later, this ancestral stone was stolen. The problem was that it was no ordinary stone. It kept a magical shield around the entire kingdom that protected it not only from invaders, but also from bad feelings such as fear, anger, resentment, or jealousy. Once the stone was stolen, the kingdom no longer knew a day of peace or tranquility. The sky turned black, the crops failed, and people turned against one another. The peaceful world was now a world full of famine, poverty, and war. The king and queen died sacrificing themselves to defend the kingdom from their fiercest enemies, the Orcs and Drovnos. And that is where we are today."

"That's not a very happy story," I commented.

"No, it isn't, but you needed to hear it."

"Well," I said, noticing the time, "I'm going to have to leave now."

"Alright. But actually ... We'll meet again."

What? Did he really say we'd meet again? What does that mean? I wanted to ask him what his story had to do with my dream, but I didn't have time.

It was time to clean the school, so I just said goodbye.

## ***Chapter 8:***

I returned to school just in time for an old man to hand Ewans and I each a broom and give us cleaning instructions. We started cleaning the school, chatting quietly to pass the time, until I had to go to the bathroom.

I was walking down the hallway when suddenly, instinct warned me that I was being followed. I whirled around and noticed a shape disappear around a corner. I set out in search of my spy.

A few seconds later, standing in the hallway where I had last seen my pursuer, I was surprised to find no one. All I saw was an open door at the end of the corridor that revealed a room labeled "PRIVATE". I walked in without hesitating.

The light was off, but I could make out some brooms, an old sofa, and a pile of empty chairs and desks. There was dust everywhere and lots of spider webs. The room was so dirty, it couldn't have been used that often. I looked around, but I didn't see anyone.

The last thing I remember was feeling a sudden pain in my head. Then nothing.

When I woke up, I was dazed and in total darkness.

"You woke up!" roared a voice behind me. "I hope your head doesn't hurt too much."

"Who are you?" I stammered. Out of the corner of my eye I noticed a large shadow of a creature.

"Oh ... sorry." The creature turned on the light. "I am the Queen's messenger. My name is Rajab."

My eyes adjusted to the light and I noticed the astonishing creature. He was three feet tall with a tiger head and a wiry jaguar body. His fur was dark blue with yellow stripes, and he had eagle wings on his back.

I realized that I was still in the same room, but now the door was closed.

I thought I must be hallucinating. I tried to remember what I had eaten or drunk recently. But no, there was clearly a strange creature standing in front of me.

I wanted to ask a million questions or read Rajab's mind to know the full story.

"You—you said the Queen's messenger?" I managed to stammer.

"That's right. First, you should know that there is another world parallel to your human world. In ours, there are many different creatures that live under the reign of the Queen. We all respect and obey her. As messenger, she sent me to find you."

"Wait, so you come from another universe?' I asked, shocked.

" Yes." He lowered his voice. "The Queen sent me because we need you. Our world is in danger, but that is all I know." It was difficult to take in the unexpected information. And I was still a bit distracted.

"Why did you hit me?" I asked.

"If I had introduced myself calmly in front of other humans you would have reacted poorly, and things could have ended badly. Plus, I don't have much time. I didn't want to cause chaos at your school. I didn't want everyone to see me. If I didn't knock you unconscious, you might have shrieked and tipped off your friends. All right, then, are you coming?"

These last few days had certainly been the craziest of my life.

"If I said yes, what would happen to me? How long would I be gone? What about school? My aunt? Ewans? Would it be dangerous? Would I come back?"

But I had a thirst for adventure so I agreed before he could answer any of my unasked questions. "Alright," I said.

"Great! Let's go!" he exclaimed, and a portal opened up in the wall. Rajab jumped into it without waiting and I took one last look at the door behind me before jumping in after him.

## **Chapter 9:**

Almost everything was like in my dream: the plants, the animals, the lake and the waterfall. But something had changed. The place no longer had the same feeling of joy or paradise I'd felt in my dream.

The sky was black, as if a storm was coming, but there was no moisture or wind in the air. The darkness was making me shiver. Something had happened, and it was clear my reason for being here had something to do with this chilling change.

"I see you know the place," said Rajab. "The Dreamer managed to send it to you in a dream."

"How?" I asked. I was so confused.

"The Dreamer. She controls dreams and can send them to other people."

"Okay, I'm starting to understand. It must be incredible to have powers like that." Rajab ignored me, instead asking, "Do you know how to ride a Pegasus?"

I was overjoyed at the question because it indicated our two worlds weren't so different. They rode winged animals in his world as well.

"Of course!" I wanted to shout, but contented myself with a simple, "Yes."

"Perfect," he roared back. Then a powerful white Pegasus emerged from the black clouds at full speed and landed in a shower of dust.

Without hesitating, Rajab indicated I should get on the animal. Soon, we were ready to take off.

"Ready?" he asked.

"Ready!" I answered, and we launched ourselves into the sky.

The wind was on our side, and in under two hours we began to see the outline of a massive city through the mountains.

The capital was built on a mountain with a river surrounding it. The center of the city was at the foot of the mountain, protected by walls and towers full of guards.

The skyline reflected the red and orange of the surrounding rocks, and a few crops were growing on mountain ledges. The only way to enter the city was by the three bridges that crossed the river.

If the capital were in danger and I'm supposed to be the one to make a difference... They're dreaming! There's no way I can save this kingdom, I thought.

I was afraid ... Afraid to disappoint all the people who believed in me. "What's so special about me? Why am I the Chosen One?" I wondered.

As I approached, I noticed something terrifying: the city was full of unbelievable creatures, each one more unusual than the next!

We landed in a small courtyard inside the fortress. The air was calm, and various creatures were working or strolling peacefully around the central fountain.

Our arrival caught everyone's attention, and several guards surrounded us.

There was a small market happening in the town square, and many creatures stopped what they were doing to watch. The only sound I could hear was the incessant noise of the water falling from the fountain.

"Who are you?" said a guard menacingly once we had set foot on the ground.

"I am Rajab, messenger of the Queen. And he is your guest." Rajab replied, pointing at me.

"Alright, you can pass." Most of the guards withdrew to let us through, but one stayed with us and escorted us through a small alley.

We eventually arrived at a large building—the Pegasus stables. We dismounted and started walking, though this time we were accompanied by a half cat- half dove attendant instead of a guard.

After passing several roads that were cordoned off, we were able to access the mountain through a giant stone door standing nearly fifty feet tall. It boasted of extravagant inlaid designs.

We were stopped and questioned by guards for a second time. After letting us continue, we spent another twenty minutes walking through enormous hallways lined with beautiful paintings where we encountered different squires or guards rushing through the corridors. Finally, our attendant told us that we had arrived.

Rajab gave him a coin, and our attendant flew back, leaving us alone in front of a golden door encrusted with rubies.

Rajab rapped on the door using a special knock, and a few seconds later we could hear some noise coming from the other side. Another servant swung open the door, revealing a dazzling room behind him.

## ***Chapter 10:***

The room was made of gold, lavishly furnished with items of unimaginable value including a diamond candelabra, paintings of battle scenes, marble sculptures, and several small fountains. The place was humming with soft, soothing music being played by a small creature off to one side. Several other creatures were waiting at the head of a blue, jewel-encrusted throne atop which sat... a human!

She had long, straight white hair and her face was furrowed with worry lines. Her nose was small but distinct, and she had enormous blue eyes. She was cloaked in a tight blue and white robe a pair of black boots covered her feet. A small gold necklace dangled from her neck and an emerald ring adorned her finger. She looked to be around twenty years old, but she exuded an air of power, intelligence, and honor. She looked every bit the queen that she was.

Rajab knelt as he entered, and I followed suit.

"Hello, my Queen!" he exclaimed.

"Hello, Rajab," the queen greeted him. "Hello, Darek," she added.

"Welcome to my kingdom and the city of Dara Iris."

"Wait! How did you know my name?" I wondered. But aloud all I did was timidly return the greeting and whisper a thank you.

"Did you have a good trip?" she asked.

"Yes, my Queen. The wind was on our side. And in fact, it was easy to find Darek and relay your orders."

The Queen nodded and turned to me.

"I hope Rajab didn't cause you too much alarm?" she asked.

"No, I'm fine, your Majesty" I replied.

"Wonderful. Well first, I should introduce myself," she said, raising her voice above the roar of the wind. "I am Queen Amaia, sole survivor of the lineage of Raia, Master of Water, Queen of the Northern Lands and all its inhabitants," she thundered, and suddenly the wind stopped howling. "My people and I need you, Darek."

To be honest, I didn't know what to say other than "Why?" I was standing before a real queen who was telling me that her kingdom needed me, and I did not have the slightest idea why.

"You must be wondering why you are so special?" she asked.

"I am," I admitted reluctantly.

"That... I cannot tell you. All you need to know is that you are the Chosen One," she continued. I felt despair overwhelm me. "I'm sorry, Darek. At the moment, the Orcs are maintaining their pressure against us on the Great Wall of the East, and Drovnos and his army are closing in on us as well. The King of the Southlands has formed an extensive army. At this very moment, he is marching toward our lands to eliminate us. I predict he will be here in under three weeks, and if the information from my spies is correct, his army should be several times larger than our navy. And that is not even taking into account his powerful Blood Magicians. We are vastly outnumbered. We cannot pull our armies back from the wall to fight Drovnos because the Orcs will surely invade us."

"My God! What do they think I could possibly do to compete against thousands of barbarous monsters?" I wondered. "They certainly have a lot of confidence in me."

But I knew I couldn't leave this kingdom for dead without doing something. I heard myself utter a sentence that would prompt me to do things I never thought I could do.

"My Queen, I swear before you and all your kingdom that I will do everything in my power to help protect you from the enemy."

## Chapter 11:

"Follow me," Rajab said. He thanked me for making the pledge and invited me to dinner that night. But, before that could happen, he had to do his job for the Queen and help me to start training. Rajab then informed me that he was escorting me to the military training camps.

This time, we did not go by the same path which brought us to the Kingdom. In fact, it seemed to me that we were going in the opposite direction. I could not be sure of anything however because being in the middle of a mountain interfered greatly with my sense of direction.

We continued crossing several corridors and went down endless stairways. Eventually we began to encounter more people and the corridors changed from being unoccupied to teeming with life.

We began to hear the swish of swords and a loud voice giving orders. We entered a large room where different creatures were all fighting simultaneously. In the roof was a small hole that let in daylight, and many plants were growing on the walls—the only decoration on the pure white background.

The room did not seem so big at first glance, but it must have been about fifty feet high and three hundred feet long.

We walked up to the person who was shouting orders to the warriors and Rajab addressed him.

"Hello Eosirio, my old friend. I'm happy to see you again."

"Rajab! How did your mission go?" Replied the half human, half giant. He stood approximately 8 feet tall and had hands the size of balloons. He was in full armor including a sword, and his long red beard stuck out below his helmet strap.

"It was great. In fact, let me introduce you to Darek," he said, turning towards me.

"Pleasure to meet you, Darek. I heard you'd arrived and pledged to help us. I'm glad to know we have a new supporter," he bellowed, in a voice that reflected his size.

"Nice to meet you," I replied.

There was a moment of silence before Eosirio asked, "Do you know how to fight?"

"To be honest, not really," I said sheepishly. "I never really thought I'd find myself in this position," I admitted.

"I understand. So the two of us are going to have to work very hard."

I nodded.

"Then if everything is under control, I'll leave you two and return tonight, Darek," Rajab concluded.

"Goodbye," I said, turning back to Eosirio.

"Which do you prefer?" he said, pointing to a stack of knives, swords, axes, hammers, and much more.

I examined the objects, and a short diamond-encrusted sword caught my attention.

"This one," I said as I gently lifted it.

"Excellent choice! The sword is called Filandira, and it was forged by our ancestors a century ago. It is one of the sharpest swords in the kingdom". Eosirio was so huge, all he needed was a single giant hammer.

"I wouldn't want to be standing in the way of that weapon," I thought to myself.

The afternoon passed quickly, and by the time Rajab returned at the end of the day, I knew how to hold my sword correctly and had learned some basic combat positions and attack methods.

Other creatures were training as I worked with Eosirio. I watched in amazement as some without arms had to find completely different styles of fighting.

We followed Rajab to the royal dining room, and as we walked, I noticed several things that I had not had a chance to notice until that moment.

The first was that there was a considerable time difference between the two worlds. When I entered this new world, it was already the end of the day in my world. But here, night did not fall until several hours later.

The second was that I was very tired and hungry. I had missed a night's sleep due to the time change, and I had not eaten since lunch in my world.

## **Chapter 12:**

When we arrived for dinner, the Queen was already seated at a long table while servant creatures were bustling about with plates of food. Queen Amaia was not alone. A creature was sitting next to her.

When I saw the feast on the table, my stomach let out an impressive gurgle, and I blushed with embarrassment.

"My queen! and the Dreamer!", said Rajab as he extended his hand, and I did the same.

"How was your training?" asked Amaia.

"It was very interesting," I admitted.

"Wonderful. Now have a seat!".

"Hello Darek," said the Dreamer. The creature appeared human-like, yet the structure of its face was somewhat indistinct. I guessed that it was a woman. Her gray hair reached to her feet and she wore a long green robe.

"It's a pleasure to meet you." Her voice confirmed that she was a woman.

"Likewise," I answered.

"Go ahead, serve yourselves!" said Amaia pointing to the buffet before us, and the Dreamer grabbed an animal leg that looked very much like a pig and began to devour it.

I didn't know where to start. It wasn't until I remembered I was nearly dying of hunger that I finally chose a savory pastry that was filled with many different meats and vegetables and served with a blue fruit.

I took my first bite and the mixture of flavors delighted my tastebuds. It was delicious!

"Do you like it?" Amaia asked.

"Yes. I didn't realize your world had such delicacies."

We ate without speaking for a few minutes as we enjoyed the food, when suddenly the Queen broke the silence.

"Darek..." she said timidly, "you did not have to take that... oath. I want to apologize for calling on you... For putting you in a very difficult situation. You can still return to your world, if you'd like... We're at war, you know... You risk dying and never being able to return to your world..."

As I thought about what Amaia said, my mind whirled with all sorts of feelings. But I managed to pull myself together and declare, "My Queen, ... it would be a pleasure to serve your kingdom."

"Thank you. But do not feel you are obligated to help us."

"I will try with every ounce of courage I can muster," I promised.

"Thank you," she repeated.

We ate until we had cleaned our plates.

Though I was no longer hungry, I couldn't hide my fatigue. It took all my energy just to raise my glass to my mouth and take a drink.

"I see you are tired, Darek. I won't keep you here another minute. You may go to bed. Rajab will show you to your room."

"Thank you, my Queen," I managed to say through a yawn. "See you tomorrow."

"Goodbye Darek," said Amaia. The Dreamer, and I followed Rajab out of the dining room.

"Where are you going to sleep?" I asked Rajab.

"I have a room next to the Queen."

"You don't sleep with your family?" Rajab's face fell. He answered after a moment's hesitation.

"I don't... I don't have a family anymore," he murmured sadly. " My parents died many years ago defending Amaia's parents, the King and Queen. It all started when he stole the ancestral stone... Drovnos,- I mean," he clarified. I'm not sure why, but what he said sounded familiar.

"Once the stone was stolen, the kingdom fell apart. The stone provided a magical shield around the land that kept all evil out. Now, we are constantly at war with the Orcs and Drovnos's army. He uses the stone, or rather its energy, to create his army of Orcs," he explained sadly.

"Of course! It's the story of the kingdom that the Wise Man had told me about!" I suddenly realized with a rush of excitement.

"So now you understand. Tomorrow you can go see the Wise Man," Rajab said as he stopped in front of a door in the middle of a hallway.

"Here is your room. Good night, Darek."

"Thank you. Good night, Rajab."

## ***Chapter 13:***

I fell asleep quickly in my new room. I woke up the next day, thinking about my aunt and Ewans.

I had left them, without saying anything, and now, there was a chance that I would die without ever seeing them again. I imagined that they were tirelessly searching for me not knowing that I was not even in their world.

"What would they think of this if I were to go back and see them again one day? Maybe I didn't make a good choice? " But I knew that I would probably never go back so there was no point in regretting my decision.

After breakfast with Rajab, I eagerly headed to training. Eosirio congratulated me on my improved performance. By then I had already mastered several combat steps and protective measures. Rajab had told me the day before that I was to go to the Temple, so he accompanied me on my journey to visit the Wise Man of the Temple.

We took a Pegasus and flew through Dara Iris to a flat surface on top of a hill. A view of the entire city gradually appeared before us.

From that incredible perspective you could see that the cracks in the ground formed a beautiful rose window. At the center of the room the Wise Man, who had not changed from the other world, prayed calmly. We landed at his side.

"Hello Darek, hello Rajab!" he greeted us. "I knew you would come."

"Hello. But ... how did you know? " I asked.

"I just knew ... Incredible, isn't it?"

"Quite so. And why? "

" I am the ambassador between your world and this world. The ancestors of our worlds chose me. "

" Oh ... now I understand. When you told me the history of this world, it was to prepare me. You also said that we were going to see each other again because you knew what was going to happen, " I realized, and nodded.

"How is your training going?" he asked.

"Very well, I am learning many exciting things."

"Good. In fact, the Queen asked me to teach you how to use your powers."

"My powers? Do you mean my powers to control the wind?"

"Yes. I'm also going to teach you how to use them more deeply."

"What does that mean?" I asked.

"To draw from your inner strength and your lineage. But you will learn that later. For now, you will have to learn to concentrate," he explained.

"Concentrate?"

"Yes. All your powers are based on concentration. The more you concentrate, the more power and potential you will have. I'm sure you underestimate yourself enormously."

"Do you really think that?" I asked.

"Yes, Darek." Just then, the ground began to tremble. "I can control the earth," he said. "Amaia controls the water, Drovnos controls fire ... And you can control the wind. Presently, the four powers are united *again* in the same world, and soon, the four powers will be reunited in the same place."

The Wise Man had said 'again'. That piqued my curiosity as to what had happened 'before'. But I would have to wait for this understanding. At nightfall we said goodbye and returned to the mountain.

## ***Chapter 14:***

Before I knew it I was back at training. Eosirio was piling the lessons on at a crazy rate. While daydreaming, I sensed danger and moved aside just as Eosirio's sword pierced the exact place where I had been standing a split second before. I turned to my right and hit my sparring partner, a giant, hard on the sword in the free space he had created. Effortlessly, the giant speedily counterattacked.

It was only because of my powers to control the wind that I had enough velocity to jump on top of the weapon pointed at my left knee, but the attack made me lose my balance, and seconds later, Eosirio's sword was touching my throat.

"Good job. It was better than the last time, but you have to work on your balance, " said the giant.

"All right," I responded, disappointed that I had lost for the fifth time in a row. It had been a week since I had arrived here, and I had settled into a routine. Every day I went to training and then to see the Wise Man. Rajab would come to visit me sometimes and we would chat while he dined with the Queen and other important people and creatures.

Sometimes, I thought about my life in the other world and missed Ewans and my aunt. It was very strange for me not to see my best friend for a whole week.

Tonight, for the first time since I had arrived, the Queen asked me to come to her room. When I got there, I was surprised to find several creatures visiting with the Queen. They were all gathered around a large table. They spoke in serious tones and no one was smiling. It was obviously an important and solemn meeting.

" Hello Darek, " Amaia said as she motioned for me to sit at a chair next to her. "We are establishing a "Plan of Defense" against the enemy and I thought it was important for you to know what is going to happen."

I nodded in agreement as I settled down and the creatures began to speak all at once.

" We should give up! " exclaimed one creature.

"Never!" cried another.

"We could make an escape! " proposed another creature.

" Everyone calm down please!" said the Queen. "We will not flee the very city that our ancestors so lovingly built for us. If we did, Drovnos

would immediately destroy it. It is unacceptable for us to surrender!" she exclaimed. "I have a plan."

## **Chapter 15:**

The day we feared arrived. Drovnos and his army had appeared and were waiting behind the mountains. The night before Queen Amaia had summoned me to her room.

" Darek, I have to tell you something," she started. An incredibly strong feeling of anguish came over me. " I hope you'll take it well and one day you'll forgive me for hiding it, but, I met your parents. "

At the sound of her words, I sank deeper and deeper into the abyss of confusion, frustration and disappointment that had become my new reality. " It could not be possible. My parents lived in my world. How could the Queen of this world know them? "I pondered.

- " I was just a little girl when they died ... Your parents were the best people I had ever known. They were powerful, magnificent, generous and incredibly honorable. Your dad was my father's best friend and I remember him telling me stories when I was little. When you were born, the ancestral stone was stolen by Drovnos and the Canilobos attacked us. Then, your parents went to the other world to hide there and protect you. But, their allegiance was to defend this Kingdom and they returned to this

world without you. In fact, if it weren't for them, I would be dead. They died sacrificing themselves so that I could escape and therefore, the kingdom could have an heir to the throne. Since that fateful day, I have felt responsible for their painful deaths, as well as those of my parents, and I have lived a life of shame and sadness. ", she whispered as she lowered her head. " Until that day, I was completely unaware of the duty I was meant to fulfill, to tell you the truth ... sorry Darek, and ... ", but she did not have time to finish because Rajab abruptly entered the room.

- " My Queen, they are beginning the attack!

- "Now?".

- "Yes, my Queen. The Orcs are advancing. "

- " All right, I'm coming. ", and she headed toward me. " Darek, it's time to put all your training to the test. Go prepare yourself and we'll talk later. ' She exited the room, calling all of her allies together and the Kingdom began to come alive.

Now, was the time to test our plan.

## ***Chapter 16:***

As the, not thousands, or ten thousand, but hundreds of thousands of troops of Orcs were approaching the city, fear began to overtake me. I imagined it was normal to feel that way, so I allowed myself to process it. My adrenaline kicked in just as I saw in the distance, and in the darkness of the coming night, what seemed like a giant mass of people moving like a giant herd of sheep.

I wore a bluish steel armor encrusted with diamonds that the Queen had given me at a dinner party, and the creature Filandira was in a skirt fastened to my jacket under my armor.

The troops of Eosirio already had dispersed into the first walls in front of the three main bridges and many of the creatures that flew in the kingdom were ordered just behind the wall.

Soon, the alarm signal would sound and then ... it would be chaos!

The Orc troops were approaching between the mountains and the first lines were almost on the bridges.

It was time. The sound of a horn echoed in the valley, and all the soldiers shouted in response. It was my turn to start the battle. I inhaled

a huge mouthful of air and began to concentrate as the Wise man had taught me.

" Courage Darek! You can do it and you must do it! ", I heard him repeating to me in my head, and little by little, I began to create a tornado that gained strength until it measured 33 feet high.

Suddenly, the earth began to tremble, and the enemy troops stopped. The mountains around the Orcs began to move and crack as our enemies were crushed by thousands of landslides. The river that surrounded the city left its bed and brought thousands of Orcs to drown. Those who tried to get out of the death trap were projected into the sky by the tornado, and at the second whistle, everything stopped. The city was filled with an unpleasant silence while the enemy troops recovered from our violent assault.

The attack was very effective, but it did not totally eradicate the Orcs as there were still around twenty thousand of them. Along with them were the knights and blood wizards of Drovnos who had been left behind in the battle. Unfortunately, when we planned the attack, we imagined there would be around five thousand survivors and now, the Wise Man, the

Queen, and I were exhausted from the magical energy we had each expended. The only good point was that the palace and the enemy troops were wet, and it would be much harder for them to use fire as an effective weapon.

Unfortunately, the Orcs did not lose their determination and they returned to the charge once again. It was now time to execute plan B and the horn was sounded again.

The Orcs, arriving at the bridges, rushed barbarically to the doors to enter into the city.

We had to use land to fight the enemy. Why not take advantage of the thin bridges that served as the only access? At that point all of the flying creatures that had gathered behind the wall had taken off in a jet stream and were flying towards the Orcs.

Unfortunately, I quickly began to see creatures falling from the sky like mosquitoes.

- " What's going on? ", I got scared and then I realized that some of the Orcs that had been left behind were firing arrows.

" We must do something! " I said panicking.

" Darek, our plans will no longer work. "Rajab answered sadly by my side. " We cannot help you. "

The truth was sobering nothing could be done. Innumerable creatures had died and we watched the horrific spectacle until the rain of corpses ceased and the failed plan was completely unraveled.

At that moment, I was beginning to lose all hope, thinking about the fall of the Kingdom, and the many unavoidable deaths ... But I knew that we should not give up. There was no point in waiting. We had to devise a new plan.

## ***Chapter 17:***

The bridges were filled with Orcs as the soldiers on the wall did their best to repel the enemy. Now, the three bridges were overflowing with raging Orcs and repeatedly Orcs fell into the river because they were overcrowded on the bridge.

In front of the main doors, a wall of corpses of Orcs was formed while the Dara Iris Army, or more like the army of Eosirio, fired endless arrows and projectiles toward the remaining Orcos. The corpses of their own soldiers blocked the Orcs in their advance, and suddenly the horn resounded.

Troops hidden under the bridges emerged at each end and the Orcs on the bridges were surrounded.

Then the massacre of the Orcs had begun ...until the Blood Knights appeared at the bridge entrances and the tide turned again.

The Blood Knights rode skeleton horses while their bodies were hidden in long red cloaks. I had goosebumps watching them, killing the poor creatures on the bridge one by one, cutting off their heads with agility as their horses from hell galloped forward.

Soon, the bridges were covered with a carpet of corpses and silence settled in. At that point there should have been no more than five thousand Orcs, and maybe one hundred Blood Knights, and, of course, Drovnos. For our part, we had lost more than two thousand creature soldiers. All we had left were Eosirio's Army, Rajab and his companions, Queen Amaia, the Wise Man, and me.

Having lost most of our armies, we had to retreat so we wouldn't be obliterated, although, at that time I didn't believe that we would ever be able to save ourselves from a massacre.

We ordered a retreat to the second wall, leaving a large part of the city to the enemy. We desperately needed to regroup and reorganize while the Orcs were steadily penetrating our city.

They burned all the buildings and the valley transformed into a massive bonfire illuminating the night that could be seen hundreds of miles away. In the distance I saw Orcs overtaking the place where the Wise Man had trained me the last few days. Now, what had been the work of centuries to build, the Kingdom's capital, was destroyed in minutes.

The enemies didn't t attack any more during the night, allowing the soldier creatures some precious time to recover their energy.

## Chapter 18:

The night was short but provided sufficient time to replenish at least some of our much-needed energy. As the sun rose the city awakened while, on the horizon houses inhabited only a few hours earlier, appeared completely demolished. Now, the valley returned to a demonic apparition in the fog, and it was only at the last moment that I saw an arrow fly in the direction of my head. Fortunately, I managed to dodge it and took refuge on the wall behind me.

" They are re-launching the attack! " I shouted. " Everyone to your places! ", and the wall was once again full of life.

Suddenly, the few Orcs that remained with the Blood Knights entered our field of vision. But we did not have time to react because the Blood Magicians lined up and threw fireballs in the direction of the large door that blocked their access. Soon that door no longer blocked them, and they entered the innermost part of the city.

Still a little sleepy, I realized the seriousness of our state. If we did not intervene soon ... It would be the end.

Without hesitation Rajab, his companions and I went running in the direction of the enemies, knowing that it was most likely suicide.

Courage triumphed over reason and fear, and we charged against the army of disorganized Orcs.

I pointed Filandira towards our enemies and just before reaching them, I launched a gust of wind that allowed us to take advantage of the first charge while slashing an Orc with my sword.

The Orcs were humanoid creatures of fairly small brown green skin but they had incredible strength and yellowish fangs.

Although quite resistant, the Orc died immediately splashing me with its black blood, and it was so that I killed Orcs until the small group was slaughtered by the intensity of our team. Rajab helped kill some of the Orcs by biting them, scratching them, or simply breaking their bones. Only two of the creatures like Rajab died, but we had killed about fifty Orcs. Just then I had a frightening thought... the Blood Knights and Blood Wizards would soon find us.

In fact, I realized that we still had not seen Drovnos.

" If he is going to use a surprise attack to beat us, we'd have to use some spectacular tricks as well. ", I thought, and a scheme came to mind.

" We have to lure him toward us. "

## **Chapter 20:**

We met up with Queen Amaia and the Wise Man inside the mountain while what remained of the Eosirio's army had cornered the Orcs in a central square.

To lure the Blood Knights and Blood Wizards to another square we simulated a fight. Drovnos, seeing us alone in the square, implored his army to try to destroy us. and I realized that that was exactly what happened when a large silhouette accompanied by knights and wizards of blood appeared between the houses. Soon, we were surrounded by enemies and tension began to rise.

- " Hello my Queen. ", Said the silhouette sadistically. " Hello Darek and Lord, the Wise. It's a pleasure to see you. ", He enunciated, laughing.  
" Are you here to surrender? " The person asked. It was hidden under a red cloak.

- " Never! " Amaia replied dryly. " Why make peace with a demon that exterminates thousands of people? "

- " I have he ... Then, could I have the honor of knowing why they stay here? " He said when he took off his hood and we saw his face. He

had a hideous scar in the middle of his forehead and his little black eyes were watching us. His face was familiar to me: I immediately recognized Orpheus!

Suddenly, the earth began to move as it had never done in the past. The buildings began to fall and, in the distance, cries and cries were heard followed by a creepy sound that became little louder.

With the earthquake created by the Sage, the aqueducts had fallen, and now, controlled by Amaia, an impressive destructive torrent flowed in our direction. At this moment, I went into action when I projected the Queen, the Sage, and I in heaven, and a second later, the current passed where we were taking Drovnos and his army.

"Were they all dead, had we rejected Orpheus Drovnos and his troop?" I asked myself as the torrent dissipated.

Now, the square was empty ... Except for one person: Orpheus Drovnos was here, in front of us, under his magic shield, while Amaia and the Sage collapsed because of the effort each one had made. Drovnos grimaced furiously:

- " You have destroyed my army! They will pay the consequences!  
", And a fireball appeared in the hands of Orpheus Drovnos, who threw  
without hesitation.

At this moment, I saw my life parade, and I imagined what it would  
be like after death. But something took away the light created by the  
fireball from my eyes and I heard a violent shock.

Something had received the ball instead of me, and I was filled with  
sadness when I saw the inert body of the Wise Man in front of me. He had  
thrown himself in the path of the ball sacrificing himself to save Amaia and  
me.

That man had no right to do that ... And when he launched a second  
ball of fire, which was surely going to kill us, it was deflected by something  
invisible.

It was the wind ...

And a person had summoned wind against the ball ...

And there was a person to my right ...

And that person was Ewans.

## **Chapter 21:**

Orpheus Drovnos threw one last ball, a ball the size of a person, and ten times stronger than the penultimate ones.

Ewans and I, coordinately, as friends in fact, joined forces against our worst enemy, and wind against fire, it was in that way that we rejected Orpheus Drovnos.

Later, the Orcs were completely eradicated from the city.

Ewans told me that one day he would tell me his story.

Thousands of other poor creatures died, but, the kingdom of Amaia, the city of Dara Iris, and her Queen, survived.

And, the last words of the Sage before dying were:

- " Darek ... Drovnos will return. We need the ancestral stone. When you think is in order, you no longer have hope, survival remember that flows in your veins. "