

The Four Powers

The Prophecy of the Elements



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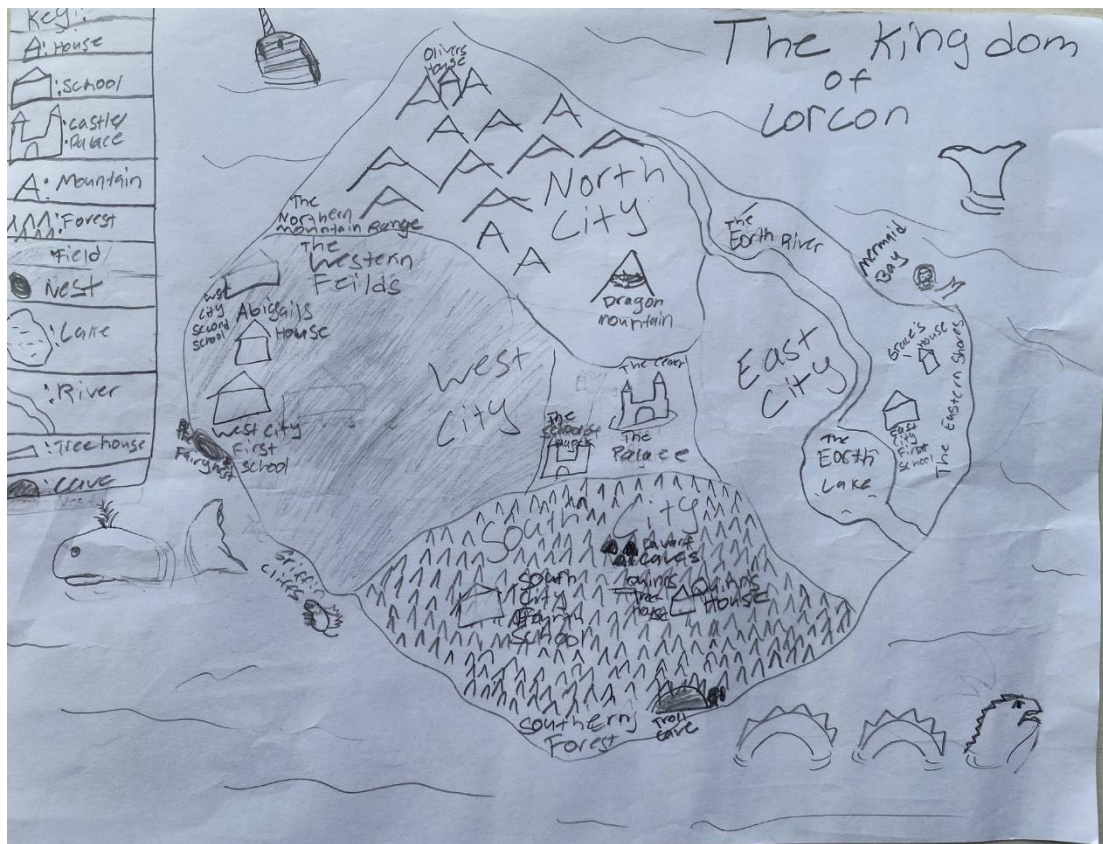
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Prologue

Once, there was a great sorceress who lived in the kingdom of Lorcon. She had the power of all the elements, with which she protected the world. But one day a great evil came. The sorceress split her powers so the evil would not get them. She created a prophecy that the powers would find four

individuals to live in and help them protect the world. She then fought the evil and both were destroyed. Or were they?

Chapter 1: Abigail

Abigail was riding in the School of Magik carriage. It was her first time in a carriage that was pulled by griffins, but she wasn't enjoying it one bit as they flew over the Western Fields. It had been one hour into the day's journey since she had left her home in the West City to go to the Center which meant they were probably twenty miles in.

She had always been good at geography, memorizing all the mountain ranges and how many miles it was from the North city to the South city. She wanted to go to West City Second School, so she could learn as much as she could. But then that day when the headmistress, Rebecca Chenale, arrived at her school announcing the names of the lucky 12-year-old boys and girls that were admitted to the School and off she went.

She wondered what power she had. Hopefully, something good and not something like the power to clear blocked toilets. She had heard of someone who had that power. Powers didn't show up until they were in contact with the Magik Ball. This made collecting the children with power harder, but the headmistress had a book which re-wrote itself every year with the names of each child that was 12 years old in the North, East, South and West cities that had a power.

She also wondered what type of staff she would get. There were six categories: Birch for the Arts, Pine for Nature, Ceder for Everyday things, Ash for Healing, Maple for Fighting and Oak for the Strongest powers, which were exceedingly rare. There were no known strongest powers, they were things like immortality, prophecy, and flight. But of course, there were also the powers of the prophecy. The four powers that the great sorceress wielded. The four powers destined to save Lorcon. Abigail dreamed of having one of those powers. But the sorceress lived over 5,000 years ago. There was no way.

So, most of all, she was wondering if she would have as many friends as she did at West City First School. She missed all of them. She wondered what they were doing right now. "They're probably enjoying their first day at West City Second School," she mumbled to herself. "It's about lunchtime at home. I wonder if they're eating those great sandwiches that everyone talks about."

Abigail pushed her golden hair behind her ear and sighed. She knew that they learned more than just magik at the School, but she doubted that the classes would be as good as the West City Second School.

Chapter 2: Quinn

"Get down from there Quinn!" That was all Quinn ever heard. He had always been climbing, from the moment he was born. Last year, he built a treehouse with his brother George, before he went off to South City Fourth School. The treehouse was where Quinn spent his time from breakfast to dinner. (He had yet to convince his mom that it was safe to sleep in.)

But now there was no stopping him from getting to high places! He was soaring over the Southern forest, high above the tips of the trees, in a carriage pulled by griffins! He peered out the window to see if he could see any unicorns. They lived in the Southern Forest, along with centaurs,

goblins, dwarves, elves, and trolls. Quinn was convinced he saw a faun once, but George said that they were extinct. Maybe he'd learn at the School.

He was so excited! He really hoped he had climbing powers, maybe then he'd be trusted to spend more time in the trees. Not that he needed climbing powers anyway. He was busy daydreaming when suddenly an Alicorn shot up from the forest. He couldn't believe his luck! A unicorn and a pegasus combined, and alicorns symbolized success, so maybe he would be a great student at the School. Or he would be successful in getting the power that he wanted.

Or maybe—. His last thought was disrupted by a sudden jolt. He looked out the carriage window and saw they were descending quickly. Suddenly a magikly amplified voice came over the carriage. "Attention students. Our main griffin has dropped. We are under attack, by elves!" Quinn peeked out the window again. There were arrows flying everywhere.

"So that's why the alicorn had flown in front of the carriage!" thought Quinn. How could he have been so stupid? Alicorns only meant success on the ground! In the air they meant danger! Then there was another jolt and the carriage crashed to the ground. Quinn only saw a tall, figure with a bow and arrow before he was out cold.

Chapter 3: Grace

Grace loved the water. Maybe it was because she was born on the shore of Mermaid Bay. Or maybe it was because she lived so close to the Eastern Shores and the Eorth River. Whatever it was, she loved the ocean. She would play in it all day long if she could. But now she was high in the sky. Far away from the waves and the sun that made her skin a light brown like a perfect roasted marshmallow. Heading to the landlocked Center, in the official Eastern City School of Magik Carriage.

Grace's older sister, Elizabeth had made it in five years before and loved it. Her power was she could get animals to do whatever she wanted. Grace envied Elizabeth for her amazing power. She hoped she would get something like it.

"Of course, it's not just the magik that matters, Gracie," Her sister had told her the day that the Schools Headmistress announced her Grace's name. "You have to get good grades too. That's the most important part."

Elizabeth herself had graduated with top grades and honors. Five years of them. Grace hoped she wouldn't be compared to her. After Elizabeth's perfectness, what was Grace? The silly little sister with the boring black hair and suntanned skin next to the elegant, more mature older sister with the beautiful brown curls and perfect pale skin. She wouldn't get a report card that was anywhere near Elizabeth's.

She sighed. She missed the water already. The only body of water she knew of at the School was the water that was in the moat around the Kings palace across the road from the School. And there were no dolphins, whales, or mermaids in the moat that she had heard of.

She would miss those mermaids. Sure, they were a bit vain, but not as much as the stories say. Swimming with the mermaids in the bay was her favorite pastime. She loved to hear them sing. It was the most beautiful thing she had ever heard. No one's singing could be compared to that of a mermaid. "Unless they had singing powers at the powerful level," thought Grace. "But even then, I don't know."

They had been flying for over an hour, so Grace looked out to see where they were. To her surprise and delight, they were flying over the Eorth Lake. "The Eorth Lake is named because its river

runs through the North and East Cities. Eorth is a combination of East and North,” Grace's geography teacher from East City First School sang in her head. “It is the only lake in all of Lorcon.” “Get out,” she told the voice. Then she realized that this was the last body of water she would see until she would return home for Winter break. A single tear dripped down her cheek. How would she ever make it through the year?

Chapter 4: Oliver

Oliver always wanted to see the world. From his bedroom window at his house in a valley in the Northern Mountain Range, his view was restricted to trees and the peaks. But now he was heading off for glory. Or the School of Magik. Whatever you want to call it. The night his name was announced, he took out his map of Lorcon and planned where he would go once he graduated.

“First, I’ll climb all the mountains in the Northern Mountain Range, then go to Dragon Mountain to see the last Dragons, then the Western Fields, the Gryffin Cliffs, and the Fairy Nest, then I’ll find every creature in the Southern Forest, then I’ll go up through the center and quickly meet the queen, then go on to the mountain where the Eorth River begins and sail down it to the ocean, then sail to mermaid bay, see the mermaids and come home!” he told his pet toad Fred.

“Ribbit,” Fred said.

“And of course, I’ll bring you with me.” Fred ribbited again in response. “Yeah, I know, you’re so excited. I hope you like the School.”

Finally, it was the day of packing, Oliver was packing Fred’s tank when his Mom came in. “What’s that for, sweetie?” his Mom asked. “It’s Fred’s tank so I have somewhere to put him,” answered Oliver without looking up from his task of cramming the tank into his bag.

His mom wrinkled her brow then crouched down next to him and broke the news.

“Oliver, Fred can’t come with you.”

“What!” cried Oliver, looking up from his bag.

“They don’t allow pets at the School. I’m so sorry honey.”

Oliver began to cry. “What will I do without him?” he asked, tears falling down his freckled face. “You’ll do just fine without him honey, you’ll see,” his Mom answered.

But when the carriage for Northern City students took off, Oliver began to doubt his Mom’s words. He could never get along without Fred. “Maybe my power will be to convince people of things, so then I can convince Mom, Dad and the Headmistress that I can bring Fred,” Oliver thought aloud. The thought comforted him, but deep down he knew that there hadn’t been a convincer in a century and that the chances of him being one were very slim.

He sank into his seat. How were he and Fred supposed to see the world, without Fred being allowed to go to school with him. “It’s not fair!” he said, kicking the wall. “It’s not fair it’s not fair it’s not fair!” “Hey kid, stop that!” Said the person who was supposed to be watching them. “Or else you’ll be sent home!”

Oliver sank back into his seat with his arms folded and blew at his bright red hair. He and Fred needed each other. Why couldn’t anyone see that?

Chapter 5: After the Crash

Quinn groaned. His head hurt, but at least he wasn't dead. He was covered in dirt, from his brown hair to his black shoes, making his already dark skin even darker. He looked up to see the moon barely peeking through the thick canopy of leaves. He realized that he was lying next to a fire. He sat up and saw the other students, all covered in dirt too, and drinking something that smelled like a lukewarm fruity mixture.

"You were out for a while there," said someone behind him. He turned to see who had spoken. To his surprise it was an elf dressed in a green shirt, brown pants, a forest green cloak, a quiver full of arrows slung over his back and a horn tucked into his belt. "You bonked your head on the window pretty hard." "You-you-you're an elf!" exclaimed Quinn. "It seems that way," said the elf. "Specifically, my name is Turianello but you can call me Turi."

"Bu-But you shot us down!" Turi sighed "No. That was the Dwarves. They believe flying is unnatural, so they shoot down anything that is in the air. They've been copying our arrows, so people think that we're shooting at them. It's quite annoying actually."

"Oh," Quinn looked at the other students, embarrassed that he had thought that the elves shot the arrows at them. Then he noticed the absence of one of the people in the carriage. "Hey, where's the pilot?" he asked. "He ran away when I approached the crash," said Turi. "I think he thought that I shot them down."

Quinn nodded. Then he remembered where he had to go. "We have to get to the School of Magik before tomorrow morning!" he exclaimed. "Don't worry, the centaurs will take you there." "centaurs? What-" but before Quinn could finish his sentence, Turi blew loud on his horn three times and within a minute, about twenty centaurs came thundering to the clearing where Turi had brought them. Each centaur lifted two students up onto its back. "Farewell-" started Turi. "Quinn," said Quinn. "Farewell, Quinn," said Turi. "I hope our paths cross again."

And with that, the centaur, who Quinn and one other boy named Tim rode, galloped off into the woods to reach the School of Magik before dawn. Quinn turned to wave but saw that Turi had already disappeared, off to the secret elf fortress, then faced the front again, preparing for the ride ahead.

Chapter 6: The Power Ceremony

"Over here younglings, line up over here!" croaked an old woman with a cane at the front of the School of Magik. The carriages from the West, North and East Cities had just landed. "Make a neat line over here!"

All the first students, including Abigail, Oliver, and Grace, made a line at the entrance to the school. All the older students, second, third, fourth and fifth, made their way to their assigned tables in the mealroom. As they entered, they began to notice the absence of the South City students, with their golden S's glimmering on their robes.

People began to whisper. "Where's the South City?" Grace whispered to the girl next to her, who just so happened to be Abigail. "I don't know," she replied. "Maybe their Griffins had to stop for an extra water break." Grace frowned. She knew that one water break was more than enough for Griffins, they could fly all the way from the tip of Dragon Mountain to Troll Cave without stopping.

Just as people were beginning to panic, the doors were flung open and the centaurs with the South City students on their backs came galloping in. The next few minutes were chaos. Everyone wanted to know what had happened, why they were late, and the fact that there were twenty centaurs in the room, when finding one centaur in the forest was a rare and lucky event. Finally, the Headmistress got the students to settle down. (Since she had teaching powers, it was an easy task.)

Then the head centaur stepped forward. "These students crashed in the Southern Woods when their carriage was shot down by Dwarves," he said. A gasp ran through the room. The centaur paused, then continued. "When we found them, the pilot ran away, then we took them here." Quinn noticed that the centaurs didn't mention Turi at all. "Thank you, you may return to the forest now," said the Headmistress. The centaur bowed, then lead the other centaurs out the door.

"Now," said the Headmistress, returning her attention to the South City students who had just arrived. "Second, third, fourth, and fifth students please go to your tables. First students, please get in the line with the others." The students did as they were told and went to their places.

The Headmistress walked up to a pillar with the top covered by a cloth. "First students," began the Headmistress. "I am Professor Chenale. I will be your Headmistress for your years at this school. While you are here, please pay attention to the rules. They will be on the bulletin board in your dorm. You will be sharing a dorm with three other students from other cities, two girls and two boys in each dorm. Girl's rooms are on the right, boys on the left. There are separate bathrooms too. Now, let the power ceremony begin!"

Professor Chenale pulled the cloth off the pillar in a grand movement, revealing the midnight black Magik Ball that was beneath it. All the students oohed and ahd at the sight of one of the most powerful magik items. "One by one I will call you up here," said Professor Chenale. "You will place your hand on the ball. Then the ball will shoot out sparks that form the word of what power you have. When you get to your dorms your staffs will be on your beds. Now, Ana Tycleary of the South City."

Ana walked up and placed her hand on the ball. Within seconds, green sparks shot out and spelled the word **PLANT SPEAKER**. Everyone clapped as she went to sit at the first student's table. It went on like this, with random names being read, (It was an enchanted piece of paper, which had the names in an order that was not at all organized.) until the ceremony reached "Grace Merwicc of the East City." At this point the ball turned from midnight black, to a purple mist. And from this mist, a head appeared inside the ball.

Chapter 7: The Prophecy

Someone screamed. At least two fainted. Then the head began to speak.

After the fight had been fought at the Eorth

And the fighters are deceased

Four students from the North

The South

The West

The East

Far after the time of the Medieval

Will join together to fight great evil

Fire

Water

Earth

And Air

Will save Lorcon from all despair

After the head finished speaking, red, blue, green, and silver sparks shot out of the ball, and spelled out the words **Fire**, **Water**, **Earth**, and **Air**. Then some more shot out and grabbed Oliver, Grace, Quinn, and Abigail and pulled them up into the air. Then they placed each of them next to a word. Oliver next to **Fire**, Grace next to **Water**, Quinn next to **Earth**, and Abigail next to **Air**. They hung there for about thirty seconds before the sparks set them down at their table and the ball returned to midnight black.

Everyone stared at them, including Professor Chenale until she began the ceremony again, and even then, about half of the students still stared at them.

Oliver, Grace, Quinn, and Abigail stared at one another too. Abigail was wondering how it was kind of funny that before she was worrying about having friends and now, she was with three other people, destined to be together. Oliver was thinking about how Fred should've been here at this moment. Grace was thinking of how Elizabeth would react when she heard this news and Quinn was thinking that there really wasn't any stopping him from getting up high, now that he could convince trees to make sure he didn't fall out.

But most of all, they were all wondering how they, just four 12-year-olds, were supposed to protect Lorcon from evil. They were wondering this all through the rest of the ceremony, and the feast, and the climb to their dorm on the eleventh floor. (Naturally, magik put the four together because who wouldn't?)

The silence was broken when Grace said, "Well, hi, I guess. I'm Grace." "Quinn," said Quinn. "Abigail," said Abigail "Gregory Butloaf the third," said Oliver. Everyone stared at him until he said. "Just kidding, Quinn. Though it would be pretty funny if I made you call me Gregory Butloaf the third." Everyone smiled at the joke, since it was something to take their mind off the fact that they were supposed to save the world. But then they thought of it again and sat in silence for a few minutes.

"Well, I suppose we should go to sleep," said Abigail. "We have to get up early tomorrow." Everyone agreed and the boys and girls spit up. They removed their oak staffs off their beds, (They got the most powerful staff, of course.) and laid back. But it was a couple of hours before anyone got any sleep.

Chapter 8: Professor Emily

The next morning, Grace woke up early. She tiptoed out of bed, careful not to wake Abigail, who was sleeping on the other side of the room. She went into the main room, and to her surprise, found Oliver by the dying embers, drawing a picture of what looked like a toad or frog. It wasn't a particularly good drawing, but Grace could tell that Oliver obviously loved this toad or frog.

She sat down on the couch next to him and said "Hey." Oliver seemed to jump up in the air. He wasn't paying attention to what was happening. "Oh," he said when he found it was just her. "Hey."

“Who's that?” asked Grace, pointing at his drawing. “That’s my toad, Fred,” said Oliver. “He couldn’t come with me to the School.” Grace noticed that Oliver seemed sad when he said that. Then he began to sniffle. “Fred and I were supposed to see the world together. But now he’s not here and I miss him a lot.”

Grace felt bad for Oliver. She knew what it felt like to miss something. Every day she woke up, expecting to hear the ocean, then she remembered that she was at school, far away from the beach. “I know how you feel, Oliver,” she said. “I miss the ocean a lot. I love to splash in the waves and swim with the mermaids. When I got in, I almost didn’t want to go because I would miss it too much. And I would have Elizabeth hanging over me all the time.” Oliver seemed to forget to be sad for a minute and instead looked curious.

“Elizabeth?” he asked. “Who’s Elizabeth?” Grace sighed. “She’s my older sister,” she answered. “She graduated last year with all sorts of awards and perfect grades. I really didn’t want people to say that I’m not as good as her and that I need to work harder to be like her. Hello! I already know those things!”

Oliver snickered. “That sounds annoying,” he said. “I’m glad I only have Fred.” “Yeah,” agreed Grace. “But now I guess I’m destined to save Lorcon so that puts me a bit higher up on the spectrum of comparison.”

At this point Oliver could no longer control himself and burst out laughing. This woke up both Quinn and Abigail. “What’s happening?” yawned Abigail. “Yeah,” said Quinn. “I was having this great dream where I got a huge cake. But then the cake started laughing at me.”

“Nothing,” said Oliver, who was still snickering a little. “But we should get to our classes. Come on! Let’s go!”

Once they were all dressed in their uniforms (Which had shirts that were the color of the elements. Quinn disliked this saying, “Just what we need. Colorful shirts that make us stand out against the crowd of black. As if being in a prophecy weren’t enough!”) and had their oak staffs, they left their dorm and immediately every head in the hallway turned toward them as they walked to their first class together on the second floor.

“Look at this,” said Abigail. “We have our first class together. And our second. And our third, fourth, and fifth! For the whole week!”

“Well, I guess we’re kind of supposed to have classes together, since we all share a destiny,” said Oliver. “Oh, here we are! Learning about your power with Professor Emily.”

They turned left into a small room. Inside they found the old woman with the cane who led them inside on their first day, which felt like ages ago, but really was just the other day. “Come in, come in,” the old woman creaked. “I am Professor Emily, and I will teach you about your power.” Abigail, Oliver, Grace, and Quinn all exchanged a glance, then sat at the four desks that were in the room.

“Excuse me Professor Emily, I don’t mean to be rude, but how are you supposed to teach us about our powers?” said Abigail. “The great sorceress lived over 5,000 years ago. Surely, you’re not that old. Unless-”

“I am an immortal,” creaked the old professor. “I was the sorceress’s apprentice. I have lived in this castle my whole life, waiting for you four. The school was built for you, you know. The School of Magik was the sorceress's palace.”

Chapter 9: The Other Classes

All four pairs of eyes widened at this piece of information. Their teacher was an immortal from the time of the sorceress, and their school was the castle of the great sorceress herself! They were having quite the eventful first few days.

“So,” said Professor Emily. “Shall we get started?” The next hour was a review of the prophecy that they had heard and what it meant. They learned about the elements and what limits they have when the bell dinged, signaling the end of first period. “That was awesome,” said Oliver as soon as they stepped outside. “I can’t wait to save the world now!” Quinn eyed him. He still wasn’t sure about what he thought of this whole ‘saving the world business’. “Our next class is the Proper use of a staff with Professor Hankerdy,” read Abigail. “It’s on the tenth floor, seventh door to the left.”

It was a long climb from the second to the tenth floor, but as soon as they made it, they wanted to turn right around and go back. Professor Hankerdy was a tall man with his face in a position that gave you the feeling that you had done something wrong, and he was going to find out about it.

“Take your seats,” he said to the four who had just entered the room. “Class has already begun.” He watched them as they sat down at the four desks that were left. “So,” he said. “For those who just joined us, we were looking at all the different types of staffs. Let’s look at the Cedar staff.” But nobody was looking at the Cedar staff. Instead, every single eye on a student was looking at Abigail, Oliver, Grace, and Quinn.

When he got to the Oak staff it was much worse. Professor Hankerdy walked right up to Quinn’s desk and asked, “May I have your staff please?” Every eye in the classroom locked on Quinn to see what he would say. Most people didn’t let anyone other than the staff inspectors touch their staffs.

“Ex-excuse me sir?” he asked, in a frightened tone. “I asked if I could see your staff, since you are one of the only students with an Oak staff,” he replied in an impatient tone.

“Well, I would rather you not handle it,” said Quinn, confidently, but you could still see that he was terrified. “Seeing that it is my staff and not yours.”

Every eye that was watching this widened, including Abigail, Grace, and Oliver’s. They held their breath to see what Professor Hankerdy would say in response. They felt sure that he would get detention, or worse.

“Very well then,” he said in a tone that told Quinn otherwise. “I will explain the properties without a staff.” Every eye was stuck on Quinn, since what had happened was not what anyone had expected. But as soon as the Professor started up the lesson again, the staring was widely spread amongst the four element holders.

It wasn’t much different in the other classes. In Curious Creatures with Professor Eppin, instead of watching the baby dragon she had brought from dragon mountain, everyone was watching the four as they took their notes on dragon eggs. In Seeing Stars, Professor Kraycle gave an excellent explanation of how the stars meet in the sky, but few people had their eyes on their star charts, and instead had them on Abigail when she went up for a replacement star chart because hers got wet and Quinn when he answered a question. Even in the mealroom everyone watched as they got their lunch.

The only time when they had a break from this was in Wild Smarts with Professor Glary. She was teaching them about what to do if you meet a goblin, showing all the features on the goblin she had brought in, like the venom in their claws, and Grace stood up to get a new inkwell. Immediately, every

pair of eyes turned toward her. “Your eyes should be up here,” said Professor Glary without turning around from the blackboard. “Grace is not the teacher of this class.”

That put an end to the staring in that class, giving it the position of Quinn’s favorite class. Later, Grace went up to thank Professor Glary. “Thank me for what?” she responded. “I was only regaining control of my class and you were only getting a new inkwell.” After that Grace never mentioned it again.

Chapter 10: The Fairy

A few weeks passed. The four kept busy with their schoolwork for all their classes. One morning, in mid-December, Grace woke up early again. But she was surprised to find that Abigail was already up.

“Good Morning,” said Grace, yawning. “Why are you up so early?” “I couldn’t get back to sleep,” replied Abigail. “I kept thinking of my home. I miss it. I wanted to go to West City Second School but then I got into here.” Grace felt the same for Abigail as she did for Oliver.

“Well,” she said. “There are a lot of classes here that they have in regular school,” she pulled their timetable off from her nightstand. “See? Today in second period we have arithmetic with Professor Dojin and geography of Lorcon with Professor Bernay in fourth,” she read “And tomorrow we have the history of Lorcon with Professor Jayle!”

Abigail sighed. “I know,” she said. “I just miss my home.” Grace nodded. “I do too. I miss the water. But hey! Now I can control water!” she picked up a glass of water. “Water, move!” she commanded it. Nothing happened. They both laughed. Then, suddenly, something flew in through the window that they hadn’t noticed was open. At first Grace thought it was a big bug, but Abigail recognized it as a fairy, since her school had gone on many field trips to the fairy nest since it was only about a mile away. All of a sudden, it dropped from the air, falling toward the ground, but Abigail reached out and caught it.

“A fairy!” exclaimed Abigail. “What are you doing here little one? You’re so far from the nest!” Grace peered in and saw the features that distinguished it from a bug. “Mu-mu-mu-” stuttered the fairy. “Mu-must fly!” it said jumping out of Abigail’s cupped hands. Grace and Abigail were surprised that it wanted to keep flying, after it had obviously had a long journey. “Wait little one,” said Grace. “Don’t leave! You need to rest.” Abigail settled the fairy into her pillow, giving it a comfortable place to sit.

“Why have you come this far?” asked Abigail. “You guys rarely go farther than a foot away from the nest.” “Bad things happen. I fly,” said the fairy, settling into the pillow. “What bad things? What did you have to fly from?” asked Grace, a bad feeling forming in her. “Please, we need to know!” The fairy shuddered. “Very bad things. Scary things,” it said. Grace’s bad feeling grew, and it spread to Abigail. They exchanged a glance.

“Please tell us exactly what happened,” said Abigail. “We can help!” The fairy closed its eyes. “*He* came. He thought he trick us, but us fairies see right through disguise. He tried get us join him. We say no. We never join him. Then boom and nest gone.”

Grace’s heart was now pounding in her ears. “Who’s he? What was he disguised as? Why did he want you to join him?” she asked frantically. But it was no use. The fairy had fallen asleep on Abigail’s pillow.

Grace and Abigail looked at each other. Whatever had happened at the nest was horrible, and they both had an idea of who was behind it. “The great evil,” breathed Grace. “The one from the prophecy.” Abigail nodded in agreement. “We have to tell the others,” she said. Abigail nodded. “Let’s go!”

They rushed into Oliver and Quinn’s room. “Oliver, Quinn, wake up!” shouted Grace. “There’s something important that you need to know!” Quinn groaned. “Couldn’t it wait a little longer?” he asked groggily. “The sun is *just* rising.” Abigail shook her head. “No, please, come with us!” Quinn reluctantly pulled himself out of bed.

“Oliver, come on!” said Grace impatiently. He rolled to the other side of the bed in response. Grace rolled her eyes, then grabbed his hand and pulled him onto the floor. He woke with a start. “Wait, what?” he asked, realizing he was on the floor with his dormmates standing around him. “We have to show you something,” said Abigail. “Come on!”

They rushed across their dorm to Grace and Abigail’s dorm. “Come on, it’s on Abigail’s pillow!” said Grace. But when they got there, there was nothing but a little dent in the pillow. The fairy was gone.

Chapter 11: The Book of Magik Powers

Oliver and Quinn looked at Grace and Abigail. “There was a fairy there! I swear!” said Abigail. “It told us that the nest had been destroyed by the great evil!” Quinn raised his eyebrows. “Did it actually say that?” he asked looking skeptical. “Well, it didn’t really, but it did say that the nest was destroyed by something bad!” said Grace. “Are you sure that you even saw the fairy?” asked Oliver. “It could’ve been a dream. Or just someone with illusion powers playing a trick on you.”

“But— but—” said Abigail. But she and Grace had already started to doubt themselves. Abigail sighed. “I guess it must’ve been an illusion,” she said. “Sorry guys.”

They all left the room, except for Grace. She had a nasty feeling in her gut that there were no illusionists at this school.

After they had had their first, second and third period classes, it was time for lunch. But instead of heading to the mealroom with the others, Grace made her way to the first door on the first floor, the library. She walked up to the desk where a tall, thin librarian with short brown hair and pointed glasses was sitting and reading a book behind a nameplate that read Ms. Jance. Grace cleared her throat as she approached her. Ms. Jance peered over her book and looked down at Grace.

“Yes?” she asked curtly, as if Grace had removed personal time from her. “Um, hi,” said Grace. “My name is Grace, and I was wondering if there were any records of the powers that students have at this school and if there are, could I see them please?”

“I suppose so,” said Ms. Jance, turning around to face the shelf behind her. “Here you go.” She dropped a big thick book on the counter that had the words **THE BOOK OF MAGIK POWERS; POWERS OF EACH STUDENT FROM THE BEGINING OF THIS SCHOOL TO THE PRESENT** written on the cover in front of Grace. “Thank you, Ms. Jance,” said Grace and headed off to the study tables in the corner of the library.

Grace plopped into a seat at the farthest table and began to flip through the pages until she got to the fifth years. She began to read, and when she was finished with that section, she moved on to the fourth years. She went on like this until she had flipped to the end of the book, with no signs of an illusionist.

Grace's nasty feeling in her gut grew. She hurried over to the "I" shelf and found the book **ILLUSONISTS OF THE SCHOOL OF MAGIK**. She went back to her table and flipped to her time again, hoping to find that there was an illusionist teacher at the school, but she was out of luck. The book stopped at Hannah Fole, who had died almost twenty years ago and lived in a small hut in the Northern Mountain Range.

Grace fell back in her seat. The fairy couldn't have been an illusion, which meant that it was real, that the fairy nest had been destroyed, and that the great evil was up and at it again. She had to tell the others, but would they believe her? Maybe they would if they read these books, but she had noticed that **THE BOOK OF MAGIK POWERS** had a purple tag on it, which meant it couldn't be removed from the library.

Grace groaned, why couldn't anything be easy? She supposed she would have to bring them all here to read the book. Which meant catching them at an open time. Grace sat up. She was determined to prove that the fairy was real. She would do anything to convince them.

Chapter 12: The Goblin

Meanwhile, back in the mealroom, the Oliver, Quinn and Abigail were beginning to worry about Grace. "She didn't tell us that she was going somewhere," said Oliver. "She would've told us if she was going somewhere, right?" "Maybe she had to go to the bathroom," said Abigail hopefully. "I bet she'll be back in a minute." "Yeah," agreed Quinn.

They all sat in silence for a few minutes until the doors opened and Grace came rushing in. She ran over to the table that the other three sat at, as the heads of each student turned as she passed them. "Where were you?" asked Quinn. "We were getting worried!" "Sorry," said Grace. "But come on, I have to show you something at the library!" She ran toward the door and Oliver, Quinn and Abigail followed.

"Will someone please tell me what happened?" asked Oliver. "Well I found a book in the library that said there are no students at the school that have illusion powers and in another book it said there are no teachers that have it!" Grace said very quickly, panting from running so hard.

"What?" asked Abigail. "Slow down, Grace!"

"Sorry," said Grace. "I found some books that said there are no illusionists at this school! So, the fairy was real!" Abigail brightened up. She had seen the fairy too, and thought it was real. "Really?" she asked Grace eagerly. "There really are no illusionists?" "Yup!" said Grace. "Now for the proof."

She led them into the library and to the table where she had left the books. "See?" she asked them. "There are no illusionists in the fifth, fourth, third, second, or first students." She opened the other book. "And there are no teachers with that power either." Quinn and Oliver raised their eyebrows. Maybe there really was a fairy!

"Wow Grace! I'm sorry—" started Quinn. But he was interrupted by the young woman who had just ran into the library. "Has anyone seen a goblin wandering around?" she asked. "Professor Glary says that one escaped this morning." The librarian looked up from her desk. "What does it look like?" she asked, clearly annoyed that she had been interrupted from her book again. The young woman sighed. "It is about two feet tall, with green skin and claws," she said. "Believe me, you would've known if you saw one." She left the room, continuing her search for the goblin.

Quinn turned back to the group. “Just a second,” he said. He reached into his satchel and pulled out a notebook. “She said that a goblin had escaped, right?” he asked them. They all nodded, wondering where he was going with this. “At the beginning of school, in Wild Smarts, Professor Glary taught us about goblins,” he said, flipping through his notebook. “She taught us about all the deadly features and how to avoid them,” he said, finding the page he wanted and holding it up to the others. “One of the things she told us was that goblins have illusion powers, luring their victims into a trap by disguising it. If the goblin escaped this morning, it might’ve wanted to have some fun, and created a fairy to fly in your window, Grace and Abigail.”

Abigail frowned. She really thought that the fairy was real! But goblins were mischievous creatures. It could’ve played a trick on her and Grace. She sighed. “I guess the fairy wasn’t real,” she said. But Grace wasn’t convinced. “How do we know that the goblin played a trick on us?” she asked. “All that we have is a guess. Plus, me and Abigail were up in the super early morning, probably before the goblin had escaped!” Abigail’s hopeful smile returned to her face. Grace really wasn’t giving up.

“Well why don’t we ask Professor Chenale if the fairy nest is still there?” suggested Oliver. “She hears everything that has happened. If she hasn’t heard that the fairy nest got blown up, which is hard to miss, it probably didn’t happen.” They all agreed to this and they ran off, hoping to catch Professor Chenale before their lunch hour was over.

Chapter 13: The Headmistress

Oliver was the first one to reach Professor Chenale's study. He knocked on the door until he heard the “Come in!” from inside. The four friends entered her study, which was filled with books everywhere. “Hello Professor Chenale!” said Abigail cheerfully. “We have a question for you.”

The Professor looked up from her desk. “Why hello students!” she said. “I’d be happy to answer your question!” “Great!” said Oliver. “We want to know if the fairy nest has been blown up in the past 24-hours.” He gave the headmistress a big smile. “That is a curious question,” she said, looking at them all with an expression that they all couldn’t read. “But I assure you, the fairy nest is still in one piece.” “Thank you, professor,” said Abigail.

“Now I have a question for all of you,” she said just as they turned to go. “What gave you the impression that the fairy nest had been blown up?” The friends all exchanged a nervous glance. They weren’t sure that they wanted the headmistress to know about the fairy. “Kids have been whispering it in the hallways,” lied Grace. “And we just wanted to check in to see if it had actually happened.” “I see,” said Professor Chenale. “Thank you. You may go now.”

The four nodded and left her room. “I’m sorry, Grace,” said Oliver. “But it looks like the fairy was just the goblin playing a trick on you.” Grace nodded and sighed. She had really believed that the fairy was real. “Well, I guess we’d better be getting to history,” she said and walked off, leaving Abigail, Oliver and Quinn running after her to catch up.

Abigail was the first to reach her. “Grace, I’m sorry, I really am,” she told her. “I believe you, that the fairy was real, but we have no proof that the goblin didn’t trick us.” “Yeah, I know,” grumbled Grace. “That’s why the fairy wasn’t real. Come on, Professor Marlay will be waiting.

She stormed off. Abigail felt bad for her friend. She knew it must hurt. She ran after her. She still believed in her, even if no one else did.

Chapter 14: Playing with Fire

Classes zoomed by as winter left and spring approached. Abigail and Grace thought less about the fairy and more about the incoming tests. “You guys *really* need to study more,” said Quinn. “These are the year exams in 15 weeks! They’re super important!” Grace rolled her eyes. “I thought I would have a break from Elizabeth here,” she whispered to Oliver. “Instead, I’m stuck with the male version of her!” This made Oliver crack up, putting an end to Quinn’s lecture.

In Professor Emily’s class, which they had begun to call Elements, she was teaching them to control the elements. “You may only practice in here and in the study room next door,” she told them. “So you don’t destroy the school.”

One day, early in the morning, Quinn and Oliver woke up. It was the day after Professor Emily had taught them the basic staff movements. “Eventually you will move on from staffs,” she told them. “Rare power holders, like you, can master hand magic. So, one day you might be able to do a hand motion and control your element.”

Quinn yawned. He was rarely up this early, he liked to wake up about one hour after the sun woke up. “Good morning, Quinn!” said Oliver cheerfully. “How did you sleep?”

Quinn shrugged and rubbed his eyebrows in response. “How long have you been up?” he asked Oliver. “Oh, about 5 minutes,” he responded. Quinn raised his eyebrows. He could never be as lively as Oliver five minutes after waking up.

“Interesting lesson yesterday, right?” asked Oliver. “I’d love to be able to just move my hands and have flames do my every command. Hey, watch this!” He cupped his hands together. “Oliver, I don’t think—” started Quinn. But Oliver didn’t listen. “Fire,” he whispered. He opened his hands and there was a small flame. Quinn leaned forward in awe. There was a perfect little fire right in the palm of his friend’s hand.

Suddenly, the flame started to grow. “Uh, Oliver,” said Quinn, panic growing in his voice. “Stop! It’s getting too big!” The flame now covered both of his hands. “I—I can’t!” said Oliver, the panic spreading to him too. “I can’t control it at all!”

The fire was now engulfing Oliver’s bed, forcing him and Quinn to move. “AHHHHHHH!” screamed Oliver. “Help! Help! Fire!”

The fire was still growing bigger and bigger. Oliver and Quinn were petrified with fear. Then, unexpectedly, the door to their room flew open. But instead of their dormmates entering, they were surprised to see Professor Emily standing there.

She raised her cane, which they realized was a staff, and shouted the words “Elem Corla!” A burst of blue energy shot out and the fire disappeared. She put her staff back on the ground, glared at the boys, then turned and hobbled out of the room mumbling “Study room only. Must learn staff first. Boys never listen. Oh, those boys.”

Oliver and Quinn looked at each other with wide eyes. “Let’s not do that again,” said Quinn. “Agreed,” said Oliver.

“Let’s also not tell the girls.”

“Also, agreed.”

Chapter 15: A Dwarf, a Centaur, and an Elf

The week of the year exams came extremely fast. Much faster than anyone wanted, even Quinn. Oliver and Quinn both kept their agreement and never mentioned the incident where Oliver almost burned down the school. Professor Emily hinted at it though, making Grace and Abigail very confused about what she was saying.

On the day of the history test, they moved all the tables in the mealroom so they looked like desks. Then they called all the first students in to take the test. The history test was the first test of the entire year, so there was much tension in the room.

The room was silent, except for the scratching of the pencils on the paper. Suddenly, a cry cut like a knife through the quiet room. "Snow!" they shouted. "It's snowing outside!"

Within a second, the whole room was crowded around the windows. None of the teachers could regain control. "Wow, it's so white!" said one kid. "It's like a cold white blanket!" said another. "Hey, what's that?" asked a kid standing next to Quinn. "It looks like someone is standing out there!" they pointed at a few figures making their way through the snow from the forest side of the school.

Oliver looked at Quinn. His eyes had grown super big. "Quinn?" he asked. "What's the prob—" but before he could finish, Quinn tore away from the window and raced outside.

"Turi!" he yelled. "Why are you here?" He ran toward his friend, but then stopped short when he noticed what the other figures were.

Turi was walking toward the school, followed by a centaur with a dwarf whose arms were crossed on his back. The dwarf looked much different than the dwarves he had learned about in school. It was wearing a deerskin dress, a belt with a sword hanging from it, two braids coming down to its waist, and a crown on top of its head made of rocks and a big ruby in the middle. Quinn realized this must be a girl dwarf, even though he hadn't ever heard of them before.

"Umm, who are you guys?" he asked them. "I'm Borin," said the centaur. "And on my back is—" But the dwarf interrupted him before he got the chance to finish his sentence. "I can introduce myself, thank you very *much*," she snapped. "My name is Princess Zanessa of the dwarf kingdom and this *elf* put me up here without asking me if I wanted to be."

Quinn noticed that she said the word 'elf' like it was a swear word. He wondered why. Then he remembered the elf and dwarf wars a couple thousand years ago. It was something about how the elves captured some dwarf princess named Foxa or something.

Turi rolled his eyes. "Only because we had to go very fast," he said. "Even I rode on his back! And dwarves aren't exactly known for being world class runners."

Zanessa crossed her arms again. "Fine," she said and hopped off, not seeming to mind that she landed on her bottom in the cold, thin layer of snow.

"Wait, wait, wait, wait," said Quinn. "Turi, why are you working with a dwarf? I mean, they've been copying your arrows, right?"

When he said that, Zanessa looked incredibly angry and Turi sighed. "Well, it turns out," he said. "That—"

"That we didn't copy their arrows," finished Zanessa. "Everyone assumes that we are elves because they think that only elves can shoot arrows, which isn't true!" she directed the last part at Turi.

“And since the elves know that we’ve been shooting arrows and since humans claim that elves have been shooting at them, elves think that dwarves have been copying their arrows and shooting them at anything that flies, which is another lie!

Quinn could easily see that dwarves and elves did not like each other. “So, if you didn’t shoot at us because we were flying,” he said. “Then why did you shoot at us?” Zanessa glared at him. “*Because*,” she said, like Quinn was stupid, which Quinn did not like at all. “We were shooting at the Alicorn which just so happened to fly right in front of you!”

Quinn nodded. “Ah,” he said. “I see.” He looked at Turi, who just shook his head. Apparently, she’d been like that the whole way.

“So, why did you come here?” asked Quinn. “I mean, elves usually stay in their fortress, dwarves usually stay underground, and centaurs just stay away from humans in general.” Borin looked at Turi, who stepped forward.

“That’s why we’re here,” he said. “You see, the first human in 100 years stepped into the elf fortress.” Quinn’s eyes widened. No one knew where the secret elf fortress was hidden, much less how to get into it. “He asked us to join his cause. We said no, we wouldn’t team up with any human, especially one who broke into our fortress. He got very mad. Suddenly there was banging on the drawbridge. A guard told us it was a huge army of what looked like skeletons. We sent out a call to the centaurs, who came. Somehow the dwarves came too—”

“We did *not* come because we wanted to,” interrupted Zanessa. “We came because we didn’t want skeletons to attack the dwarf caves, so better they be defeated at the elf fortress.” Turi rolled his eyes. “Yeah, whatever,” he said. “*Anyway*, it ended up as this huge battle. Near the end, the human somehow blew up the elf fortress.”

“WHAT?” exclaimed Quinn. “He blew up the elf fortress? But the elf fortress is indestructible!” “I know,” said Turi sadly. “So, after he blew it up, he proposed again, but this time he could say that more would be destroyed.” “So that’s when I grabbed Turi, and Zanessa and ran.” finished Borin.

“But why did you grab them?” asked Quinn. “You could’ve just run away.” “Well,” said Borin. “I knew we needed to tell others what happened, and I thought it would be helpful to have a dwarf, a centaur and an elf all telling the story.”

Quinn thought back to the fairy that Abigail and Grace had told him about. Maybe they had been telling the truth after all.

Suddenly his friends rushed out to meet him. Oliver had found Abigail and Grace and told them about how Quinn had run away so they went after him. “Quinn are you alright?” asked Grace. “Whoa, who are these people?”

Quinn grinned. “Friends,” he said. “Meet Turi, Borin and Zanessa.”

Chapter 16: Meeting and Leaving

Quinn filled Abigail, Grace, and Oliver in on what had happened. How Turi saved him. About the elf fortress. And most of all, he told Abigail and Grace he was sorry for not believing them. “It’s fine,” said Abigail. “Why would you believe us? We had no proof. Plus, that thing about the goblin, I mean that discouraged *me* a little!”

Quinn nodded. “Well, what are we waiting for?” asked Oliver. “Come on! Let’s go kick some evil skeleton butt!” He started to run off toward the forest, but no one followed him. Instead, they just stared at him like he was crazy, which they did think he was.

“Are you out of your mind?” asked Grace. “Yeah,” said Zanessa, who had taken a liking to Grace. “You can’t just run off! You still have school!”

“School, shmool,” replied Oliver. “We have to save everyone!”

Abigail rolled her eyes. “Oliver,” she said. “How do we defeat skeletons controlled by the great evil, with no sort of training whatsoever? We’d make tiny little flames, rivers, rocks and gusts of wind attack them!” she told him. “And the last time I checked; those don’t stop evil dead people!” she added sarcastically.

Oliver looked down at the ground. “Yeah,” he said sulkily. “I guess so.” He perked up a bit. “Maybe we can ask Professor Emily if she can teach us advanced element work!”

“Maybe,” said Grace, “But right now we should be getting back to the test. They’re probably wondering where we are.”

“Well, I guess we’ll go too then,” said Turi, tuning to go. “Come on Zanessa.” Zanessa frowned. “An elf does *not* get to tell me where to go!” she grumbled under her breath, but reluctantly turned to join him and Borin.

“Wait! Where are you going?” asked Quinn frantically. “Please stay here so we can help!” Borin smiled. “Don’t worry,” he assured him. “We’ll only stay in the edge of the woods, if you need us, look there.” And with that, he galloped off with Zanessa on his back and Turi racing behind him.

Quinn waved goodbye then turned to go back to the school. But before they even started, Professor Hankerdy came storming out, his black robes billowing out behind him. He reached the group and grabbed Quinn by the arm. “You are in big trouble, Forwyse,” he told him. “Very big trouble indeed.

Chapter 17: Detention

Quinn stared up at the Professor. “What? Why?” he asked. “What did I do wrong?” Professor Hankerdy looked down at him. “You ran from a test,” he told him. “Fleeing a testing room is against the rules. Just because you have a rare power doesn’t mean you can defy the rules.”

Quinn struggled against his tight grip. “But they came out too!” he cried, gesturing to his friends. The Professor sniffed. “They came out to talk sense into you and get you to come back,” he tugged him along. “Come on now, we can’t stand here in the snow all day! You three had better get back inside too, before I change my mind.”

Quinn gave one last struggle then was pulled away by the professor. “So, what exactly are you going to do?” he asked him as they entered to school. “I mean, you just told me I was in trouble.”

Professor Hankerdy glared at him. “You will receive detention for the next week,” he told him. “And you will have to take your History of Lorcon test again.”

Quinn sighed. There was no way of convincing this professor that he had done nothing wrong. As far as Professor Hankerdy was concerned, Quinn was a dangerous criminal who needed to be brought to justice.

They rounded a corner and Quinn was tugged into a small room which consisted of only two desks and a big blackboard hung at the far end of the room. Professor Hankerdy turned and locked the door before turning to Quinn.

“Sit,” he told Quinn, pointing at the smaller desk. Quinn sat and the professor made his way to the desk near the blackboard. He began grading some papers that students had turned in, while Quinn waited impatiently for the detention to end.

“So, how long is this going to take, exactly?” he asked. The professor looked up from grading his papers long enough to give him a glare and tell him “One more hour,” then he looked back at the papers. “And absolutely *no* dozing off.”

Quinn sighed and put a hand on his chin. It was going to be one awfully long hour.

About twenty minutes into the detention, Quinn was ready to snap, when he heard a loud sound from the front of the room. *Snoooork. Snoooork.* Quinn looked up to see what the strange noise was. To his surprise, it was coming from Professor Hankerdy, he was snoring!

Quinn was bewildered. What was he supposed to do now? He couldn't escape because the door was locked and there were no windows in the room. But he knew that he couldn't spend another minute in the room.

Suddenly, there was a creaking noise behind him. He turned around and saw the knob turning, and the door swung open.

Chapter 18: Permission for Mission

Right after Quinn had been dragged away by Professor Hankerdy, Abigail, Oliver, and Grace, rushed back into the mealroom to avoid also getting detention. When they got there, they found that everyone was dismissed for the rest of the day because not even Professor Chenale could restore order in the room.

“We have to get Quinn off the hook,” Abigail told Grace and Oliver. “I don't want him to spend a week in detention with a horrible teacher who hates him and put him in there for ‘fleeing a test room’. I mean, is that even a thing?”

“It has to be the worst punishment ever,” agreed Grace. “Yeah,” said Oliver. “I can't *imagine* sitting at a desk until your butt is sore for a week.” He bounded a few steps ahead of the girls. “So, what are we waiting for?” he asked them. “Let's free him and *then* go off to kick some evil skeleton butt!”

Abigail and Grace exchanged a glance. “Sure!” said Grace, which made Oliver stop in his tracks, so surprised that she actually agreed with him. “Let's do it!” “Yes!” said Oliver, celebrating his victory. “Awesome!” He punched his hand in the air, psyched that they were going to 'kick evil skeleton butt'.

Abigail looked at the two of them with her eyebrows raised. “Guys,” she began. “We—” Oliver cut her off by putting his hand out in front of him.

“Yeah, yeah, yeah,” he told her. “We don't have enough training, we're not ready, we can't defeat them, blah blah blah blah.”

Abigail hmped and crossed her arms in front of her. “Well, what do you propose we do?” she asked him. “I'm pretty sure—” but Oliver cut her off again.

“Abigail, look,” he told her. “We have to stop this 5,000-year-old evil wizard guy. Who knows what he’ll destroy next? Or if he’ll rally anyone to his evil cause? You don’t want to wait another 5 years, by which he’ll have destroyed everything that is on Lorcon shores. Please Abigail, please. We need to do this. For Lorcon. For the School. For the creatures. For everyone. For the great sorceress.” He looked at her with pleading eyes begging her to say yes.

Abigail looked down at the ground then looked back up at Oliver and Grace. She had found courage in his words.

“Alright,” she told them. Grace grinned from ear to ear and Oliver whooped with joy. “As long as we go to Professor Emily first,” she told them, trying to raise her voice over Oliver’s celebration.

Grace nodded, still grinning. “No problem,” she told her. “We’re only one floor above her classroom. Abigail gave a short nod, excitement bubbling up inside of her. She was beginning to enjoy the idea of going on a quest to destroy an evil person.

The three friends raced down the stairs to the room. They rounded a corner and ran straight into the professor.

“Professor Emily, we need to talk to you!” panted Oliver. The old woman glanced around the hall. It was empty since most of the students were spending their break in their rooms.

“Come,” she told them, motioning for them to follow her into the classroom. “We’ll talk in here.”

They followed her and burst out as soon as she closed the door. “Weneedtogoonaquest!” said Grace, speaking so quickly it sounded like her sentence was just one word.

“Thegreatevilisback,withanarmyofskeletons!” said Oliver, at the exact same time. To make it more confusing, Abigail spoke at that moment too saying “ThegreatevilisdestroyingplacesalloverLorcon! Weneedtohelp!”

The old professor slowly leaned back into a chair with the assistance of her cane/staff. “Slow down,” she creaked. “These 5,000-year-old ears can’t take in all of that.”

Oliver took a deep breath and began again. “The great evil is back,” he told her, looking at Grace and Abigail. “And he’s destroyed the fairy nest and the elf fortress, and he has an army of skeletons!”

The professor’s brow creased. “Oh dear,” she said worriedly. “This is bad, very bad.”

“Yes, it is,” said Grace. “That’s why we came to you. We wanted to tell you that we wanted to go and stop him.”

“Hmmm,” mused the professor, stroking her chin. “I suppose you must. You are ready. Put trust in your powers, and more in your friends. Do not go alone, gather what you can, but no other students. Free Quinn. I give you my permission for your mission. Good luck.”

She thumped her staff/cane on the ground. The trio all gave short nods then turned to leave the room.

“Ok,” said Oliver “Who knows the way to Quinn’s detention room? Because I have no idea where he is.”

Grace snorted then said, “Come on,” and ran down more stairs to the first floor. She turned a few corners then reached the door to the room.

Oliver tried turning the handle, but with little success.

“Locked,” he told them, frowning at the little keyhole.

“Stand back,” Abigail told her friends. “This is going to be a breeze.” She pointed her staff at the keyhole and summoned the power of the air. A small stream of air shot out of the center and entered the keyhole. The door swung open, revealing the room to them.

Chapter 19: Escape

Quinn screamed. You can imagine this was not a pleasant surprise for Oliver, Abigail, and Grace, to open the door and find somebody screaming, so they too, began screaming. Combined, they sounded like ten alarms going off.

Finally, after a few seconds of screaming, Quinn realized that they were his friends and were no harm. He breathed a sigh of relief. “You scared me!” he told them, out of breath from the screaming session.

Grace laughed. “Really?” she asked sarcastically. “I had no idea!”

Quinn grinned. Grace had gotten him. They all shared a laugh for a few seconds, but they heard a sound from the back of the room.

“Yaahh. No dozing off Forwyse!”

Quinn’s eyes widened in fear as Professor Hankerdy sat up from his nap. His eyes snagged on the four standing in the doorway.

“You!” he snarled and sprang up from the desk. “No escaping!”

“Uh oh,” said Oliver. “Guess we’d better get going! Come on!” They raced out of the room with the professor trailing behind them.

“We got to get to Turi, Borin and Zanessa!” Abigail shouted to her friends. “We can ask them if they will help us! They can get their armies!”

“Good idea!” Quinn shouted back. “But first we’re going to have to lose him!”

Oliver rounded a corner in an attempt to get further ahead. But to their surprise, Professor Hankerdy was already there, waiting for them.

“Well, hello,” he purred. “How nice of you to drop by!”

Oliver turned around, making another effort to lose him. But he was there too!

“You don’t know what my power is, do you?” he asked them, approaching them. “It’s to turn invisible. And it just so happens that I am also a world class runner, isn’t that interesting?”

Grace pointed her staff at the professor, but before she could do anything, he turned invisible and picked it up right out of her hands.

“No magik in the halls,” he scolded her. “My, my, my! You need to read the rules again!”

He started toward them, but Grace stood her ground. She put her hands in front of her and harnessed the power of the water.

“What the—” said the professor, looking up just before a huge water ball hit him, knocking her staff back into her hands. “Urgle, burble, glub!” he shouted at her from inside the water ball.

Without missing a beat, Abigail shot a blast of frigid air out of her staff, freezing Professor Hankerdy in a giant ice cube.

“Helb!” shouted the professor from inside of his icy prison. “I’n trad!”

Oliver stared at the frozen professor. He stared back, unable to move anything but his eyes. “Come on,” Abigail beckoned. “Before anyone else tries to stop us.”

Oliver nodded, and the quartet raced out of the school, with Professor Hankerdy yelling. “Helb! Helb! Helb!” from inside of the ice cube.

Chapter 20: The Gathering

The friends ran out into the snow covered clearing at the edge of the Southern Forest. The sun was beginning to go down and it gave the already dark forest an eerie look. They stared into the dark abyss wondering if their friends were really in there. Even if it was on the edge, it seemed too spooky to spend any time in.

“Are they there?” asked Oliver, peering into the darkness. “I don’t see them.”

Suddenly a yell echoed through the forest. “Keep your hands to yourself, ELF!”

“Yup,” said Abigail. “They’re there.”

Grace took a deep breath and stepped into the forest. Her friends followed soon after, with Oliver tiptoeing cautiously at the end.

“I can get over this brook myself, thank you very much!” said Zanessa’s voice, followed by a loud splashing sound, implying that *maybe* she needed a little help.

Quinn attempted to hold in his snicker, with little success. Laughter erupted from his mouth, startling a nearby flock of birds into flying away.

“Who’s there?” asked Turi’s voice from the darkness, followed by a few arrows whizzing through the air and hitting a tree trunk just above Quinn’s head. Oliver yelped in fear, ducking for cover behind the nearest thing, which was Abigail.

“Turi!” cried Grace. “Don’t shoot! It’s us, Abigail, Oliver, Grace and Quinn!”

The arrows ceased, and Turi stepped out of the darkness, followed by a sopping Zanessa carrying a basket of wet berries.

“Hello there, friends,” said Turi. “What brings you here so early?”

Quinn stepped forward. “We um, need your help,” he explained to him.

Turi raised his eyebrows. “Already?” he asked. “I thought you would last longer.”

“Well, yeah,” replied Quinn. “It happened pretty fast, but we’re going to fight the great evil. And we need you, Zanessa and Borin.”

Abigail cocked her head. "Wait, where is Borin?" she asked, just noticing that the centaur was not with them.

"Oh, he's setting up camp a little way over there," said Zanessa. "Me and Turi were gathering food. We need to be prepared if we're going to stay here for a while." She looked the group up and down. "Well, I guess not a while now."

"So, we kind of need you to help us by gathering more dwarves, elves, and centaurs to fight the great evil," said Abigail. "Are you willing to do that?"

"Of course," said Zanessa. "The dwarves would be happy to help! As long as the elves keep their hands to themselves." she cast a blaming gaze at Turi.

"The elves would be glad to go too," said Turi, avoiding Zanessa's glare. "Borin and I will go and get the elves and centaurs, since the centaurs are letting the elves stay with them. Zanessa can get the dwarves. It's only an hour's walk away from here," He looked at Zanessa. "Just stay on the path then turn right when you see the—"

"I know how to get there!" said Zanessa in an annoyed tone of voice. "What do you think I am, an elf?"

Turi sighed. "Just bring them back to camp in two hours," he told her. "Then Abigail, Grace, Oliver and Quinn can explain everything to them."

"Okay then," said Zanessa, turning around in the direction of the dwarf caves. "And I'll be there in an hour and a half."

They parted and Turi led the four back to their camp. When they got there, they quickly explained to Borin what was happening, and he agreed to go off with Turi.

"I hope they come back soon," said Oliver. "I want to destroy some bad guys!"

Quinn raised his eyebrows. "Hopefully, we'll be destroying just one bad guy. I really don't want to have to destroy several," he said, keeping an eye on the forest for anyone coming their way.

Suddenly, there was a noise like thunder. "What's that?" shouted Grace. "It's the centaurs and elves!" Abigail shouted back to her. "They've come!"

The centaurs burst into the clearing with elves on their backs. Some looked mildly annoyed that they had someone on their back. The elves on those centaurs were the first to get off.

Leading the group was Borin with Turi on his back. Borin trotted up to the group and Turi jumped off. "This is all we could gather," said Turi pointing to the thousands of centaurs and elves. "Sorry we couldn't get more."

The four friends were staring at the huge crowd with awe. "This is great, guys!" Grace told them. "It's more than enough, and Zanessa is still getting the dwarves."

Oliver shook his head. "She is going to explode when she sees that you got here before her," he told them. "She'll try to defeat the great evil herself just to outdo you!"

Turi laughed. "I'll keep her away," he told him. "You guys get to do the 'saving the world' part."

Suddenly another loud noise came from the forest. “Come *on!* The elves will’ve won the whole battle at this rate!”

“Uh, oh,” said Abigail. “She’s here.”

Zanessa burst out of the trees followed by an army of dwarves. When she saw the centaurs and elves gathered in the clearing, she looked like you could fry an egg on her forehead.

Startled by the sudden appearance of the dwarves, the elves and some of the centaurs pointed their weapons right at the dwarf army.

“Whoa, whoa, whoa,” said Turi, stepping in between the two armies. “There’s no need for that. The dwarves—ow!” He looked down to find that Zanessa had stomped on his foot. “What was that for?” he asked her.

“For being taller than me,” she replied, then turned to rejoin the army.

Turi sighed and rolled his eyes, then looked back up at the elf and centaur army. “So, as I was saying,” he continued. “The dwarves are on our side. They’re going to help us fight the great evil.”

A mummer ran through the crowd. “The great evil,” whispered some. “Is he mad?” whispered others.

Grace stepped next to Turi. “We need to fight him,” she said. “We need to protect Lorcon.” She took a deep breath. She knew that these next words would generate wide eyes and whispers, but she was ready for it.

“You see,” she began. “My friends and I are the prophesized four. The ones with the element powers. The ones destined to destroy the great evil.”

As she predicted, many were astonished with this piece of information. She could hear whispers spreading through the crowd. She stood there awkwardly until Abigail, Oliver, and Quinn joined her.

“It’s true,” said Abigail, shooting a small breeze out of her staff.

“Yeah,” agreed Oliver. “I’m a skeleton-kick-butt-master!” Quinn snorted when he said this, but not loud enough for everyone else to hear.

“Please help us,” said Grace. “This is our duty. Our purpose. Our *destiny.*”

“Okay,” agreed a dwarf in the front of the army. “But where do we find this ‘great evil’ with his skeleton army?”

“Well—” started Quinn but broke off because he had no idea where to find the great evil. “We just—”

But he was interrupted by a loud crash not so far away. “He’s here,” breathed Abigail. “The great evil is here.”

Chapter 21: The Battle of the Dwarf Caves

Abigail and Grace rode on the back of Borin, while Oliver and Quinn rode on another centaur named Jeron. They led the armies with Zanessa and Turi racing behind them.

“Do...we...have...to...go...so...fast?” panted Zanessa. “Yes,” replied Quinn without looking back at her. “Unless you want your home to be destroyed.” Zanessa sighed, then continued to run along with the group, trying to beat Turi to their destination.

They rounded a corner and found that they had reached the dwarf caves, with an army of skeletons waiting for them! There were also goblins and trolls in the crowd, suggesting that the great evil had been successful in getting others to fight in his army.

Oliver’s eyes widened at the sight of the great evil’s army. “Okay,” he said. “Those skeletons are creepier than I expected. I’m not sure if I want to get close enough to kick any of their butts.”

Zanessa and Turi ran out right after Borin and Jeron. Zanessa was annoyed that Turi had left the forest one second earlier than her, but no one paid any attention to that. Instead, their eyes were all drawn to the army, with the skeletons and their appalling appearance.

“Is that what we’re supposed to fight?” asked Zanessa, finally realizing that no one was listening to her rant about how there were too many rocks on the path and how they slowed her down because she was closer to the ground. “This is a *lot* bigger than the battle at the elf fortress.”

“Well, they’re worried about Oliver, the skeleton-butt-kick-master,” said Abigail in a teasing tone of voice. “So, they sent extra skeletons so they wouldn’t *all* suffer from Oliver’s masterful skeleton fighting techniques.”

This helped lighten the tension a little bit, but no one was able to give more than a small smile. They were all too worried about the large militia in front of them.

“Where’s the great evil?” asked Quinn. “We can’t defeat the great evil if he’s not here to defeat!”

“We’ll find him,” Borin assured him. “He’s probably hiding out in the caves, watching the action, but not putting himself in too much danger.”

Quinn nodded, still eyeing the army nervously, as though he expected the great evil to pop out at any moment.

“So, what’s the plan?” asked Zanessa. “Or are you one of those dumb people who say, “the plan is: there is no plan!” and then they go off and get killed? That seems like an elfish thing to do.”

Turi rolled his eyes. “You never stop, do you?” he asked her. “Nope!” she replied. “I never do.”

He put a hand on his forehead and shook his head. “Well, yes there is a plan,” he told her. “We fight these bad guys, and these guys,” he said motioning to Abigail, Grace, Quinn, and Oliver, “Will go destroy the evil bad guy. Is that enough of a plan for you?”

Zanessa narrowed her eyes. “Fine,” she said. “As long as they do it *without* blowing up my home.”

Abigail laughed. “Don’t worry,” she told her. “We won’t.” Borin eyed the approaching army of skeletons. “Well, you’d better get started,” he told them. “Before the battle is here.”

Grace nodded. “Be safe,” she told them. “Don’t get yourselves killed.”

Turi laughed. “Only if you do the same,” he told them. “Without you, we wouldn’t stand a chance.”

Oliver smiled. “Good luck,” he said. “Go kick some skeleton butt for me.”

“We will,” said Borin. “I’ll do it literally, just for you.”

“You’ve got to come back,” Zanessa burst out, for the first time sounding like her age. “You’ll come back, and the great evil will be gone.”

“Of course,” said Quinn, smiling down at her. “We’ll come back.”

Zanessa looked up at all of them with teary eyes. “Goodbye,” she said, backing away from them. “When you come back, be sure to tell me *all* of the details.”

Abigail nodded, then grasped Grace’s and Oliver’s hands. Grace held on to Quinn and Abigail whisked them up with a little breeze, carrying the group up into the air, above the battle, just before the first skeletons charged, starting the battle of the Dwarf Caves.

Chapter 22: Great Evil

The four flew into the air, high above the battle that was taking place. They saw Turi, Zanessa, and Borin lead the elf, centaur, and dwarf army into the battle. Zanessa rode Borin because she would’ve been trampled if she went on foot.

“We should get to the caves,” said Grace. “We can’t spend all day watching this battle.”

Abigail nodded, then directed the breeze they were riding on down to the caves. They landed just in front of the main entrance. Quinn peered into the darkness.

“This seems like a place that an evil person would hide in,” he said. “But I’m not sure that I want to go in there myself.”

“Hmm,” said Oliver, examining the cavity. “I think I can fix that a little.”

He focused on sending element energy into his staff and out of the tip, and soon there was a bright flame burning on the tip of his staff, illuminating the cave.

“Well, here goes nothing!” said Abigail. She took a step into the cave. Once they entered, Oliver lit the torches on the wall with his staff. The glow of the flames flickered around the cavern and glistened off the gold and jewels scattered around.

They turned a corner and entered what was obviously the throne room. There were piles of gold coins and jewels embedded into the walls all around. In the center of the room, there was a big throne made of pure gold and rubies. Standing in front of it was a tall woman. When they entered, she turned around to face them.

“Professor Chenale?” asked Oliver, befuddled by her presence. “What are you doing here?”

“Oh, so you haven’t figured it out?” she asked in a voice that was not her own. “I suppose being in a prophecy is not enough. You need to be smart to figure out things like this. *I* am the ‘great evil,’” she told them. “But I just go by Iceron.”

“But how?” asked Abigail. “How can you, the headmistress of the school, the school that was once the home of the great sorceress, be the great evil?”

Iceron smiled an evil smile. "I'm not actually this silly, old professor," she said. "I can shapeshift into anyone, as long as I have them trapped in my special room where I keep all of my forms I can shapeshift into. This is my real form."

All of a sudden, the great evil left the headmistresses body and revealed his true form. It was a large figure with a black cloak that floated behind him in a ghostlike way. You could see nothing under the hood but two green, glowing eyes that looked like a skeleton's. He floated above them, casting a dark shadow over the group.

"You see," the great evil growled. "I can't walk around like this. So, I use some people to help me. This is my usual form," he said, shifting into a man with black hair. He smiled evilly. "But I'm sure that you didn't come all this way to have a friendly conversation."

He raised his staff high in the air then slammed it back down on the ground. A crack split the ground right under Oliver open. For a brief, terrifying moment, he hung in the air, before falling into the ravine.

"Oliver!" cried Abigail. She sent a breeze out of her staff like a lasso and caught Oliver with it. She hauled him back up to the surface and released the wind lasso. Quinn made the ravine close back in on itself, so no one else would fall down it.

Iceron narrowed his eyes. He pointed his staff at some swords hung on the wall and used his magik to fling them at the group. But before they could hit them, flames surrounded the four like a wall, melting the flying weapons as they passed through. Oliver released his grip on his staff and slumped down on the ground, exhausted from falling into a crevasse then using a lot of magik to protect him and his friends. Abigail flung herself over him, to protect him from anything the great evil might do.

Iceron used this moment when they were distracted to send axes flying at them, but Quinn was too quick for him, growing a wall of rocks out of the ground, causing the axes to fall harmlessly to the ground.

They were tiring the great evil, who let out a growl and melted all the gold coins into a river of molten gold. He shapeshifted into his real form and shot up to the top of the cavern so he would not be harmed. Just as the river was about to reach Abigail, Grace, Quinn, and Oliver, Grace created a hollow water ball and put them right in the center of it.

"Guys, I can't hold this for long," she yelled to her friends. "We need something else!"

"I'm all out of ideas," called Abigail frantically. "We can't hold him off for much longer, and we need to get Oliver somewhere safe!"

"It's failing!" cried Grace. "We need to do something!"

Suddenly the water force field gave way and they fell toward the ground covered in molten gold. But just before they reached it, they stopped and hovered right above the ground. Iceron morphed back into his normal form, hardened the gold, then looked to see who had just entered the room and saved Abigail, Grace, Quinn, and Oliver. It was Professor Emily.

Chapter 23: The Magik Battle

"Well, well, well!" said Iceron, startled by her sudden appearance. "Looks like someone else needs to stop me. So sad that the 'prophesized four' can't!"

He swirled his staff above his head, creating a storm cloud on the ceiling of the cavern. Lightning shot out of the cloud, striking the ground below it. Professor Emily released her hovering spell on Abigail, Grace, Quinn, and Oliver, and shot purple sparks at the cloud, making it disappear.

Grace, Quinn, and Abigail watched the fight from the side, trying to get Oliver somewhere safe. Iceron and the professor sent sparks and spells flying at one another, each blocking the other's charms.

Abigail took a sharp intake of breath as a red beam of light just narrowly missed Professor Emily. Quinn ducked his head when sparks flew right over the professor. The old woman seemed to be tiring out, but she kept at it, blasting enchantments from her staff.

The three finally managed to drag Oliver behind a stalagmite, keeping him away from the great evil's spells. Professor Emily noticed the three getting up from behind the rock formation. They grabbed their staffs, so they could help if they were needed, but without leaving Oliver's side.

Noticing that the professor was distracted, Iceron raised his staff. "Catrum Elaren!" he cried, and a blast of blue light shot out of his staff and hit Professor Emily square in the chest, sending her flying to the other side of the cave.

"No!" screamed Grace, as she dashed over to her side. "You can't die, you just can't," she sobbed, tears dripping down her cheeks.

"Child, child," soothed Professor Emily. "Don't cry, it's time for me to leave anyway."

"But we need you!" cried Grace. "We need you to teach us to use our powers!"

"You have learned much, Grace," said the old professor. "And you will still learn more. I will never leave you. I will always be watching."

Grace embraced her professor and watched as she turned into a ball of light and shot up into the sky. She turned back to her friends, who were both also crying as they watched. She saw that Iceron had been blasted to the other side of the cave after the big spell. She and her friends exchanged a wordless conversation and made their way over to him.

"You!" he growled jumping up. "Looks like there's no one else here to protect you, what are you going to do now?"

Grace glared at him. She sent a blast of water straight at his face. As soon as she stopped, he raised his staff, only to find that a little whirlwind was picking it up. He grabbed on just as it was starting to fly away and took off dangling in the air.

"Get me down from here!" he yelled as he slammed right into a stalactite. He tried to free his staff, but he only managed to let go and fall toward the ground. He landed in a pile of gold coins, untouched from his earlier melting of them. Suddenly, he was surrounded by flames. Grace, Abigail, and Quinn noticed this and looked over to where they had left Oliver.

He was standing up, pointing his staff right at Iceron.

"Oliver!" said Grace, grinning at him. "You're alright!"

"Of course I am," he said, also smiling. "I wouldn't want to let you guys kick some evil guy's butt without me!"

“Well, we still need your help,” said Quinn. “Exactly *how* do we destroy this guy?” He thumped his staff on the ground and some rocks flew at Iceron, just narrowly missing him. “Because what we’re doing isn’t exactly working.”

Abigail’s face suddenly lit up like a lightbulb. “We’ve only tried fighting him one at a time,” she said. “But the prophecy said that we’ll ‘join together to fight great evil’. Maybe if we work together, we might destroy him.”

“Sounds good,” said Quinn. “Let’s do it. For Professor Emily.”

“For Professor Emily,” echoed Grace and Abigail. “For Professor Emily,” echoed Oliver, “and has anyone noticed that the great evil is trying to escape?”

The great evil was, indeed, trying to escape, but failing miserably. “Okay guys,” said Oliver, “I can’t keep him trapped in there forever. So, what are we going to do?”

Grace whispered to them what she had in mind. “Okay,” said Abigail, and they all rushed off to their places. Oliver extinguished the flames surrounding Iceron and called. “HEY! You big evil guy! Over here!”

Iceron turned into his real form and left the pile of gold he was trapped on. He soon found that he was surrounded by Abigail, Grace, Oliver, and Quinn.

“You think you can defeat me?” he laughed. “Nice try, little kids, but I’m afraid that you’ll be destroyed just like your old professor.”

Grace glared at him. “Just watch us,” she said to him. “Now guys!”

All four of them sent as much element energy as they could muster through their staffs and right at the great evil. He only had time for his eyes to widen in realization before he was blasted into a million little pieces.

Chapter 24: The Sorceress

Abigail, Grace, Quinn, and Oliver all stared at the spot where the great evil had been standing. Grace was inhaling deeply, and Oliver leaned back onto the dwarf king’s throne.

“I. Can’t. Believe. We. Just. Did. That,” panted Quinn. “I mean, we destroyed the great evil! That is a major accomplishment.”

“Yes, it is,” said a voice from behind them.

They all swung around to see who had spoken to them. It was a tall woman, with a long, flowing white dress, and long black hair that seemed to be floating. Her skin was the color of freshly baked bread and she had a pale blue tinge around her. She had a sapphire necklace sparkling on her neck and in her right hand she gripped an oak staff. Without a doubt, she was the great sorceress.

Abigail, Grace, Oliver, and Quinn gaped at her in amazement. The great sorceress smiled. “I’m so glad to meet you,” she told them. “My name is Elria. What are yours? Sadly, my prophecy didn’t tell me that.”

“I-I’m Abigail,” stammered Abigail. Grace gave a small wave. “Grace,” she said. “Quinn,” said Quinn. “Gregory—” started Oliver, but he stopped when he saw his friends looking at him. “I mean, Oliver, just Oliver.”

“Lovely,” said Elria. “It’s so wonderful to finally see you. I can’t tell you how long I have looked forward to this.”

“How are you here?” blurted Grace. The others had been wondering that same thing, so they looked at Elria expectantly.

“This is the last thing I did before I went to fight Iceron,” she said, “I cast a spell to appear to you four once you defeated Iceron. I wanted to meet you desperately, tell you all the things I wanted to tell you, so I created the magik ball. I put a little part of me inside of it,” she gave them a sly smile. “This isn’t the first time you’ve met me though.”

Abigail gave a small gasp. “The face in the ball,” she said, “That was you, wasn’t it?”

“Correct,” said Elria. “I wanted to tell you personally that you were in my prophecy,” she looked at them with a twinkle in her eye. “Although, I suppose I could’ve done more than just my face, that might’ve scared some students.”

Oliver laughed, then asked his question he had. “Um, Elria,” he said, “Who’s going to teach us now? I mean, Professor Emily—” he broke off, unsure of how to finish his sentence. The others had filled him in while planning.

“Don’t worry, Oliver,” Elria told him. “You will get someone. Rebecca will find a good teacher, and speaking of Rebecca,” she shot gold sparks into the air with her staff. “There,” she said. “Now everyone that Iceron had captured is free. And when you get back to your school, you will find that you have your headmistress back, free of enchantments.”

Abigail, Grace, Quinn, and Oliver smiled at this, until Quinn’s eyes grew wide. “Oh no!” he said. “We’ve missed the exams!”

Elria laughed. “I’m sure Rebecca will understand,” she told him. “She won’t make you do them.”

Everyone seemed relieved, though Quinn had really wanted to pass with high marks. “Now,” said Elria, “Let’s get back to your friends.”

Chapter 25: Returning

They exited the cave, finding that night had already fallen. They were glad to see that it looked like the elves, dwarves, and centaurs had won the battle. They saw the glow of a campfire in some of the trees so they headed that way. They found many dwarves, centaurs, and elves sitting together around multiple fires.

Suddenly, Zanessa came running up to them. “You’re all right!” she cried, hugging Grace’s knee. “I knew you’d be alright!” she turned toward some trees. “I told you they’d be alright,” she said.

Turi stepped out from the shadows smiling at them. He was followed by Borin, whose big grin took up half of his face.

“It does seem that you were right,” Turi told Zanessa. “But I think we could guess that the moment all of the skeletons fell to the ground.”

Surprisingly, Zanessa didn't respond to his sarcasm with a feisty comment. Instead, she just laughed and stepped back to look at the group.

Her eyes suddenly widened when she saw Elria. "Did you befriend a ghost?" she asked them, eyeing Elria.

Abigail laughed. "No," she told her smiling. "Zanessa, Turi, and Borin, this is Elria, she's the great sorceress."

Turi, Borin, and Zanessa's response to this wasn't much different than what Abigail, Grace, Quinn, and Oliver's had been. They all stared at her with wide eyes, speechless.

Elria smiled. "How nice to meet you," she told them.

"N-nice to meet you too," stammered Borin, who was the only one who could get his words out of his mouth.

Elria smiled at them, but then frowned at Turi. "I understand," she said, speaking to him. "That Iceron has destroyed the elf fortress."

"Ye-yes," stammered Turi, wondering what she was going to say.

"I find it unfit for the elves to live with the centaurs, while they used to have such a beautiful place," said Elria. "So, let's fix that."

She swung her staff around her head, engulfing the group in an iridescent bubble. When the bubble burst, they were standing in a part of the Southern Forest where the trees were farther apart and let in more light. In the center, there was a large clearing with some kind of leafy blanket covering it.

Turi's eyes widened as Elria thumped her staff on the ground, sending out a shower of silver sparks. The silver sparks built up in the middle of the clearing, and after one last shimmer, they transformed into a grand fortress.

It looked as though it had been made from pure light. Vines twined around the walls and on the tops of towers. They could see houses and markets from the outside and could only imagine what it looked like inside.

"Miriya," breathed Turi as he stared at the fortress. He turned around to thank Elria, but she held up her hand.

"Don't mention it," she told him. "It's the least I could do after Iceron destroyed it."

Turi nodded and smiled. Elria then clapped her hands twice and all of the elves appeared. They all looked confused but entered their fortress without one glance at Elria.

"Really, thank you," he told her, then he turned to Abigail, Grace, Quinn, and Oliver. "Thank you, too. I'm going to miss you."

"Us too," said Abigail, with a big smile but sad eyes. Oliver, Grace, and Quinn nodded in agreement, and then Quinn broke away and embraced his friend.

"Farewell, Turi," he said, quoting Turi from the first time they met. "I hope our paths cross again." Turi laughed and waved goodbye as he turned to join the elves. The group was sad as they watched their friend leave.

“I was just starting to like that elf,” said Zanessa with a touch of emotion in her voice as she watched him enter the fortress.

Elria smiled as she looked down at her. “You should go too,” she told her. “You need to get back home.”

Zanessa nodded sadly and they all said their goodbyes, then Borin picked up Zanessa and galloped away, back to the dwarf kingdom. Abigail’s eyes filled with tears as Borin and Zanessa disappeared into the trees.

“Don’t cry, Abigail,” Elria told her gingerly. “You will all see them again. I’m sure of it. Just as I’ll see you again.”

Before they even knew what was happening, Elria snapped her fingers and a bright white portal appeared. They waved goodbye as they stepped through it, and the last thing they saw before they transported back to their school was Elria slowly fading away until they couldn’t see her at all.

Chapter 26: Homeward

The light faded, and the group found themselves standing in front of the magnificent School of Magik. The sun was just rising over the horizon, filling the sky with a brilliant shade of rose. They entered to find the headmistress rushing over to them.

“You’ve done it!” she told them. “You’ve defeated the great evil!”

“Yeah,” said Oliver, like he had just realized what they had done. “We did.”

Grace laughed. “Sorry we ran away from school, Professor Chenale,” she told the headmistress. “And sorry about freezing Professor Hankerdy.”

“It’s fine,” Professor Chenale told her. “It was about time somebody trapped him inside of a giant ice cube anyway. I’ve also decided to cancel the final exams for you four.”

Abigail, Grace, and Oliver celebrated, while Quinn looked horrified that he wouldn’t be able to have top grades.

“Now, if you return to your room, I’m sure you’ll find a rather large fan club waiting for you. Just to warn you.”

They all smiled, then made their way to the eleventh floor, all grinning from ear to ear.

One week later, they all were busy packing their bags. Grace was sitting on her bed watching Abigail, who was folding her shirts, trying to cram them all into her bag. Grace had already finished, with much struggle of finding somewhere to put her staff. She knew they couldn’t practice magik at home, but they also couldn’t leave their staffs at the school.

“How’s the shirt wrestling match going?” Grace asked Abigail after she had managed to fit two shirts into her bag.

Abigail smiled. “Not great. Maybe I should rethink my strategy. How do you think my parents would react to underwear coming down the chimney and shirts flying through the door?”

Grace laughed, but it died away at the thought of Abigail going home.

“I’m going to miss you,” she said, in a tearful tone.

“Me too,” said Abigail.

Abigail stopped packing and crossed the room to sit by her friend. She wrapped her arms around her and squeezed tightly. Tears came like raindrops splashing onto the bed and Abigail’s shoulder.

“Guys! We have to hurry! It’s ten minutes ‘till the carriages take off!” yelled Quinn. Grace pulled out of the hug. “Thanks,” she told Abigail, wiping her cheeks with her sleeves. “I needed that.”

They both finished packing Abigail’s shirts into her bag, then left the room to join the boys.

“I’ll miss you guys,” said Oliver when they came out.

“Me too,” said Grace.

“Same,” agreed Abigail, looking at all of her friends.

“Yeah,” said Quinn, right before he pulled all of them into a big hug. Tears filled their eyes as they all squeezed each other.

Tweet! Suddenly, a whistle sounded, announcing that there were only five minutes left before the carriages left. They all released one another, picked up their bags, and exited the room. They ran down the steps so they wouldn’t miss their carriages.

When they got to the front, all four carriages were waiting there. They quickly boarded them, their tears falling as the griffins took off into the air. They each watched as the other carriages turned into dots disappearing into the distance. They each knew that they would see one another again. After all, they each were only a quarter of the full four powers.

Epilogue

Deep within Dragon Mountain, where rivers of lava flowed, a hooded figure made its way down thin, stone stairs carved into the wall. It leaped across a lava river to reach a pillar with a small ebony stone atop it.

“The stone of darkness,” hissed the cloaked figure, fingering the stone in its hand, making it catch the orange light the lava gave off, before pocketing it and turning around to return to the surface. “They have not defeated us, master. We will return. The great evil shall rise again.”

