

CHAPTER 1

We all know the classic tale, where a magical fairy ventures out to find a legendary warrior in order to send him on a quest that will change their life forever. This is not that story. Well, not exactly. Let me take you to a land in a world of magic. The continent known as Levon, where the King of a nation called Nogard is preparing for his only daughter's 18th birthday party.

The kingdom of Nogard, situated on the east side of the great continent of Levon, is home to a great multitude of people, most any race can be found there, from the Fairies of Etirps, to the Goblins of Nilbog. As well as Humans of course.

It has a great deal of farmland, as the area has highly nutritious soil, and gets a lot of strong sunlight.

It doesn't have much in the way of big cities, except for its capital, Nogard. The capital is a busy place, with a population of around 500,000 people, which can make it difficult to get around the shopping districts, but the people of Nogard are a friendly sort, so nobody complains.

The kingdom has maintained a stable relationship with its neighboring kingdom of Susagep ever since 25 years ago when a treaty was signed so the crown Princesses of each country at that time must marry the crown Prince of the other. Yes, it was 25 years ago today, that Prince Radius Enclavius of Nogard married Princess Sharona Valence of Susagep, thereby creating a tight bond between the two neighboring kingdoms.

Inside the great castle Nogard on Thursday, the 14th of April, 499, King Radius frantically rushes through the corridors, confirming everything that needs to be done for the following day's celebration.

He walks up to his personal carpenter and discusses a venue that he wants constructed.

"Good, see that it is completed by this evening."

"Right away, your majesty!"

He turns away from his carpenter and walks very swiftly down the hallway until he reaches the kitchen.

He knocks on the door, "Chef Maso, may I enter?"

The chef in question responded almost immediately.

"Of course, your highness!"

He promptly entered.

"Do we need anything for the feast tomorrow?"

Chef Maso grabbed his checklist, "Let's see, the only thing we haven't got are those Cockatrice eggs from the Suka Farm. Besides them, we're all set for her big day."

"Splendid, I already got word from the Sukas that the eggs are on their way, so everything's set. I cannot wait!"

He chuckled as he left the kitchen and the chef returned to his own preparations.

King Radius smiled, as his next destination was the most important one. He moved from corridor to corridor until he reached a large, imposing door which just so happened to be bright pink. He knocked lightly on the door.

"Marissa, dear? May I enter?"

"Yeah, dad. You can come in."

His daughter's room was humongous, a normal family of humans could live in there with room to spare. But the one thing besides the size of the room that would catch the eye of even the most nearsighted of people upon entering the room was the sheer volume of the color pink it contained.

"Hey dad, whatcha want?"

Marissa Enclavius, the 17 year old Princess of the Nogard kingdom, was laying on her stomach, reading a book on her oversized bed. Her pink dress almost blended in with the rest of the room, but her long black hair stood out easily from everything else.

King Radius smiled cheerfully at her, "Just wanted to check in on my little girl

to see if she's excited for her big day tomorrow."

Marissa pouted, "Come on dad, of course I'm excited. Turning 18 means I'll be an adult. I'll be old enough to succeed you in ruling the kingdom!"

"H-hey now, I'm not ready to give up my throne just yet young lady."

"Yeah, maybe not. But at least I'll be old enough to do other things..."

At this she grinned creepily.

"Ermhrm! Honestly, I don't know where you got that foul mind of yours. I'll be sure to have your guidance counselor straighten you out after the festivities."

The King excused himself from his daughter's room and headed south towards the throne room for his daily duties.

Marissa closed her book, rolled over onto her back and sighed, "*sigh* So, tomorrow's the big day, huh."

King Radius entered the throne room and plopped down onto his throne. A stack of papers was sitting on a small table next to him, and he picked them up and started to inspect them.

Before long, the Queen, Sharona Enclavius, entered the room and took a seat at her throne. She was about the same height as her husband, with her brown hair in a bun.

"Is everything ready for tomorrow?"

"Just about, I spoke with everyone, and the only thing we're waiting on is one ingredient Chef Maso needs, but besides that everything's just about settled. I can't wait!"

She cracked a small grin at him. She had had to marry him for political reasons, but she quickly grew to love him and his quirky personality. He was the type of King that made everyone in the kingdom feel at ease, not that he couldn't be scary when he needed to.

"Well, we best finish those papers up so we don't have to deal with them tomorrow. Here, give me some of them."

That night the castle staff worked around the clock, trying to make the Princess' birthday celebration the greatest thing the kingdom had ever experienced.

The chefs in the kitchen were working on their preparations for the great feast, the smells of all the rare and exotic ingredients would have been enough to make a full man hungry. The carpenters were putting the finishing touches on the venue for the party, making completely sure the stage was perfect. And the royal accountant and his secretaries were making sure all funds were accounted for and all payments were settled.

The night raged on and before they knew it, the big day had finally arrived.

At around 7:30 in the morning, the Princess' aides woke her up to begin her day. She promptly showered, put on her special dress the royal tailor had whipped up for the celebration, fixed her hair, and prepared for her speech during the festivities.

She stared at herself in the mirror and gave herself a pep talk.

"Okay, stay calm. Everything is going to be fine. You don't need to be nervous. Just go with the flow and everything should go smoothly." She slapped her face with both hands, "Okay, let's go!"

She exited her room and headed north towards the courtyard where the party was to be held. As she passed the library, she ran into another important member of the royal family, her brother Apex Enclavius was leaning against the wall, apparently waiting for her to pass by.

He was a rather tall man, 4 years older than her, his bright red hair stood in stark contrast to the golden armor he wore though there was no battle going on at the moment.

"So, sis, you all ready for your big party?" He grinned snidely at her, "You wouldn't want a repeat of your 16th birthday, now would you?"

He was referring to an incident during her 16th birthday when she stumbled over her words during her speech and ended up calling her father something quite rude by

accident.

"What do you want, big brother?"

"I'm just trying to make sure my dear sister has a flawless birthday party." He glared at her with his bright red eyes, "Just make sure you put in a good word about me in your speech. Later!"

He strutted off with a scheming look on his face. Marissa had expected something like this, her brother had always been a rampant narcissist and a bit power hungry.

Add to that the fact that her 18th birthday party was one of the kingdom's most highly anticipated events of the year seeing as the last of the royal family was becoming an adult. It was quite likely that soon after this she and her brother would be announcing similar betrothals like their parents had, to make political relations better. So putting a good word in for her brother would likely increase his popularity with the people for such a time. However, Marissa Enclavius was smarter than that...

The crowd at the party was immense, filled to the brim with all kinds of reporters, businessmen and officials from neighboring countries.

At the request of Princess Marissa, the festivities had been confined to the castle grounds. Which didn't keep people outside the castle from celebrating, but the festive mood was definitely lesser outside.

King Radius stepped outside and gazed at the large crowd that was still growing.

"Gahah! It warms my heart to see how much the people love my wonderful daughter." Just then, a woman walked up to him.

"King Radius, it is good to see you again."

The woman stood half a foot taller than him, with beautiful straight blonde hair and strong looking blue eyes. She was the crown Princess of their neighboring country of Susagep, Macadamia Valence.

"Is that you Macadamia? My, it's been years! Last time I saw you, you were only this tall." He held his hand at about half his height.

"Oh, dear me, I'm sure we must've met since then."

"How are things in Susagep? Is King Durian doing well?"

She rested her hand on her cheek with a slightly worried/disappointed look on her face.

"Oh, that father of mine... We all pleaded with him to take the time to come to the festivities today, but he was determined to settle matters with King Clydes before he did anything else."

"Ah yes. The dwarves can be a bit stubborn. Did anyone else from your family join us today?"

"Unfortunately, my mother and brother both had important local duties to attend to. So I'm by my lonesome today. Still, I wish Marissa the best!"

"Indeed, I greatly appreciate your attendance!"

They said their farewells and went their separate ways.

King Radius wandered about through the crowds of people, greeting them and having a blast. He passed by a family of jugglers his people had hired, and flipped a coin into a hat they were using to collect tips.

Everything was set up perfectly.

As he was walking by the refreshment tables, something small hit his stomach. He then heard a light *thud*

"Hmm?"

He looked down to see a small fairy lying on her back on the ground in front of him.

She promptly shook off her confusion and got up.

"O-o-oh my gosh, I'm sorry your highness!!!"

She started frantically bowing.

"My dear, don't worry about a thing! Are you alright?"

"U-um, yes! I-I'm alright!"

"I'm glad. Now, be careful where you're flying. There's quite a lot of people here, if you're not careful, you could get stepped on!"

"Y-yes, Th-thank you your highness!"

As the King walked away from her, she noticed a couple of other fairies flying by, snickering at her.

"There goes the klutz again." One of them said.

As she stayed there on the ground, she felt incredibly embarrassed about what just happened, and a tear threatened to form in her eye.

Her name was Ginko Chiyosei, she worked at the castle as a royal translator, as King Radius wasn't very proficient in languages outside Nogardian. She stood about a foot high, and had long silver hair, her little wings reminiscent of dragonflies. She had been absentmindedly perusing the dessert table when she had smacked into the King. She had dressed up nice for the party, but now her dark green ballgown was covered in dirt.

Dejected, she flew back into the castle to clean up.

The royal chefs had really gone all out with their banquet. Studying all kinds of recipes from lots of different countries.

One by one, the rest of the royal family entered the courtyard, and the crowd went wild. They greeted everyone as they passed by them, and made their way to the stage that the royal carpenters had built.

The royal family sat in a row up on stage, the King and Queen wearing their golden crowns and the Prince and Princess wearing silver ones.

The King picked up a device that resembled a microphone, that was powered by the user's magic energy.

"Ahem, welcome everyone, to the royal celebration of my daughter, Princess Marissa Enclavius' 18th birthday." The King announced to the crowd's cheers.

"Before we begin, my lovely daughter would like to say a few words."

Marissa got up from her seat and took the mike.

"People of Nogard and people from elsewhere, thank you all for coming. You don't know how happy this makes me, all of you coming here just for me." She smiled cutely.

"I know I have a lot to live up to when compared to the greatness of my parents the King and Queen, and even my Wonderful Big Brother." Apex shot her a grin.

"I don't know what I'd do if I didn't have my Wonderful Big Brother here!"

She set the mike down and gave her brother a great big hug.

The audience 'awwwed'.

See, she understood that a cute girl playfully admiring her dashing big brother was much more likely to win points for her rather than her brother. But at the same time, she was doing what he had requested of her, so he had no room to complain without seeming petty. So he just smiled and flipped his hair with his hand for some reason.

The King picked up the mike, "Now, now, you two, settle down so we can begin the feast."

"Okay, daddy!"

"Now then, we have a wide variety of dishes from all across Levon for you to enjoy, if you can't find the dish you want, just check this sign." He pointed to a large sign which had a diagram of the party venue and had markings noting where the various dishes were located.

"So, without further ado, let us begi-"

RUMBLE

"What?"

RUMBLE *RUMBLE*

"What the devil is going on?"

Suddenly, the gate to the courtyard blew open and the area was soon filled with smoke.

"Everyone stay calm! Guards, find out what's happening!"

The King quickly turned to make sure his family was alright.

"Sharona, dear, are you alright?"

"*cough* Yes, I'm alright, what about the kids?"

"Apex, Marissa!"

"Ugh, you don't have to shout, father. I'm fine, and Marissa's right...here?"

The smoke started to clear, but Marissa Enclavius was nowhere to be found.

"Marissa!!!"

He jumped out of his seat and began to search the area for her, but the Prince called out to him.

"Father, look here!" Apex pointed to the table they were sitting at, it had a note pinned to it with a dagger, the note read as follows:

"Dear King Radius of Nogard, the Trolls of Tenretni have taken your daughter to Vanishing Cave just west of Nogard. If you want her back, have 20 million keel brought to the cave by the first of the month."

-Signed Troll Elder Locke

The kingdom went into a state of national emergency and closed off exit from the country to anyone not approved by the King himself.

The village of Trolls, Tenretni, home to the bluish grey skinned, tusked, husky people, was located to the southwest of Nogard, and had never had a close relationship with them.

There were a handful of Trolls living in Nogard, but it was quite uncommon. At the very least, the two nations had never had a reason to go to war like this.

Things moved quite quickly and by about noon, the King was holding a meeting in the throne room on what he planned to do about this whole tragedy.

He had been frantically rushing around, trying to figure out the best course of action. And his normal attitude had long gone out the window.

After finally managing to calm down the King, the royal accountant, Ghorm Philliaemon, made his worries clear, "Your majesty, I must point out that we can hardly afford to give these fiends 20 million keel. We could build a whole other capital city with that kind of money!"

The Keel! The national currency of Levon, is quite the valuable one. One keel is worth about 10 pieces of gold and is in a circular shape. There is also the Edge, which is about half the value of the keel and square, and the Horn, which is a fifth of a keel and triangular. However, the keel is by far the most commonly used.

"Yes, that is quite a large sum of money, but we obviously can't just let those monsters run off with my daughter and get away with it... What about the Royal Knight Corps? We can send them to rescue her!"

Hugo Anders, the royal strategist, reminded him of the current state of the corps.

"Most of them have been sent to Sitnalta for a training exercise with the merpeople and they won't be back for at least a month."

"Ah, that's right... I wish Buster hadn't insisted on it when he knew Marissa's birthday was coming up."

He was referring to the captain of the royal knights' Squad 3, Buster Hardy, a man who prioritized training exercises over social occasions.

"It is quite unfortunate, but this will surely garner better relations with the Sitnaltans."

The King groaned in frustration.

"Yes, yes. But surely not all of them have left! I seem to recall at least one squad captain requesting to stay back. How many knights do we have available?"

Anders flipped through his files.

"Ah yes, captain Koyosei of Squad 10 requested that her squad be allowed to stay back to defend the capital, but that still only leaves us with less than 50 knights. If I may speak freely, captain Hardy was being quite reckless with his request to take the entire corps out of the country during this time."

"Very true, but I trusted his judgment. I seriously wish I hadn't at this point..."

The King sat and pondered the situation while the officials discussed the current state of affairs.

"If only I were more skilled in combat, I would go myself...Grr, darn it!"
King Radius stood, "Assemble the Royal Casters!"

The Royal Casters are an elite group of magic users appointed to the defense and protection of the castle and those in it. As they specialize in defensive magic, they are not great at winning battles on their own. The group had been absent from the opening ceremony of the party as they were putting the finishing touches on a barrier spell around the castle to serve as a placeholder until they returned from the party.

10 minutes later, the entire squad of 50, save the 2 appointed to general defense for that day, were gathered in the throne room and knelt in front of the King. There were all kinds of races there, from merperson to dwarf, and they each wore a grey robe with a big dragon's eye pattern on the back.

"Men, as you know, my daughter, Princess Marissa Enclavius has been kidnapped by a gang of vicious trolls. We don't know how they got past your barrier, but we know what they want. They demand 20 million keel by the start of the month or else."

The King paced back and forth, restlessly.

"You may also be aware that our royal knight corps has, for the most part, gone on a training exercise to Sitnalta. We would call them back, but it would take them at least a month to get here, and that's if they headed for home immediately! We still have squad 10, but we need more than a measly 50 people if we're going to rescue my daughter from these trolls AND protect the kingdom! So this is my plan, I need you all to search the city for the strongest warriors alive! We shall gather a makeshift army to combat these foes. Do not fail me!"

The squad acknowledged.

The royal casters immediately spread throughout the kingdom, gathering the strongest warriors the kingdom had to offer. After they found all they could by sight, they and members of the castle staff, including King Radius himself, pooled their magic and activated a high level scanning spell to find any people they missed, so that they had literally every powerful person in the country. This came to be known as The Great Scan.

Two days later, the group gathered by the casters were assembled in the throne room surrounded by the royal family and guards lining the walls.

The King announced his plan of attack.

"Warriors of Nogard, I have requested your audience due to the recent tragedy in which Princess Marissa was kidnapped by trolls. As your King, I recognize your individual powers and plead from the bottom of my heart that you attempt her rescue. Please, save my daughter!"

A pale-skinned merman in the crowd raised his hand.

"Yes, what is it?" The King acknowledged.

"**&***^&***%*%*^*, *&***&&\$\$\$%&&^***?"

The King snapped his fingers, "Translator!"

A small fairy flew up to assist him. Her name was Ginko Chiyosei, the fairy that had bumped into the King at the party. As the other translators had contributed their magic to the great scan, she was the only one available at the moment. She wore a pretty green and pink blouse/skirt combo, and had her hair in a ponytail.

"Y-yes, my King! Uhhh... He asked, 'What kind of compensation do we hope to get from doing this for you?'"

The King rested his face in his hand, "Yes, of course. You shall be rewarded handsomely. At the very least I can offer you residence at the castle with all of the benefits that come with it."

Seemingly satisfied with that, the merman made no further fuss.

"Now, we obviously need to move quickly, so if you will all please follow Anders, my royal strategist, he will address you on the plan of attack. That is all."

The crowd thinned out, following Anders to the battle room.

"Thank you Ginko."

"O-oh, of course, your majesty! I will take my leave now."

"Very well, I shall call for you if you're needed again."

Ginko flew out of the throne room and headed for the common room for the fairies that work at the castle. It is kind of between the ground floor and the 2nd floor, as they can fit into smaller spaces than other races.

Ginko brewed a cup of tea and relaxed on the large(for fairies) sofa in the center of the common room.

"Phew, I did it, I helped the king!" She muttered to herself.

"So, the great Ginko actually got a real job for once."

"Eek!" Ginko jumped in her seat, nearly spilling her tea. "S-stop scaring me like that Murasako!"

The fairy that had just entered was Murasako Koyosei, an acquaintance of Ginko's who also worked at the castle as a translator. She was a few inches taller than Ginko and had straight purple hair. Her clothes were all the latest trends, the type Ginko would be embarrassed to wear.

"You realize the only reason you had any work today was because the rest of us were exhausted from lending our magic to that scanning spell. You can't even use any magic other than that lame one you were stuck with! The only reason you got this job is because you're cute."

"Y-you take that back! I'm useful..."

Murasako was chuckling at her when something hit the back of her head.

"Ow!"

"Stop picking on Ginko, Murasako. You're embarrassing yourself."

A few more fairies had entered, having finished recovering from the drain of the great scan in the infirmary. The one who hit Murasako was Aoko, the strongest of the castle's fairies by far and also Murasako's older sister. Though she was shorter than her younger sister, she commanded far more respect with her solemn attitude and cool demeanor, as well as her prowess in a fight, which earned her the only spot held by a fairy in the royal knights corps. Being the captain of squad 10. Her short blue hair matched her personality perfectly and made her quite popular with the other fairies.

Incidentally, she had also contributed her magic to the great scan.

Murasako scowled at Aoko and drifted off to her room, which, as with the rooms for the other fairies, was down a hallway connected to the common room.

Aoko turned to Ginko, "You shouldn't listen to her, she's just sour because she failed the royal knight exam for the fifth time."

"R-right, I know. But it is true that I'm not good for much."

"That's not true, everyone has something they're good at."

"But I couldn't even help out in the search, I can't locate strong people with my magic, I can only find people that may become strong in the future. I couldn't even help out with the scanning spell because I was told it may have affected the results."

"Well, I don't think you're useless."

With that, Aoko left for her room. Ginko looked up toward the ceiling and wondered if her magic really could be good for something.

END OF CHAPTER 1