

Eunoia

“Stop talking about it! Okay?”

“What’s wrong, Jen? Are you scared?”

“Yes, Andrew, I am scared.”

She turned and stared at Andrew and their other two friends. Since they left school, Jen, Chandra, and Isaac had mostly walked silently while Andrew carried on about his newest elaborate plan. His plans usually didn’t get them in trouble, and surprisingly no one ever got hurt, even when they jumped into the pool of water at the bottom of the quarry. But his plans had never involved being in a public building after hours, and they had certainly never involved setting a fire there.

Andrew looked surprised, maybe even hurt. “What’s there to be scared about?”

“How about breaking and entering for starters. Arson has gotten more than a few people in trouble with the law.”

He shook his head and smiled. “Nonsense. We’re not breaking and entering anywhere. We’ll be there when they lock the doors. We just have to stay hidden. And it’s not arson. We have to start a small, controlled fire.”

Jen took out her phone, pressed the mic and said, “Define ‘arson’.”

Her phone beeped and a robotic voice said, “Arson—the act of deliberately setting property on fire.”

“I forgot I was talking to the vocabulary queen.” Andrew scratched his chin. “I think that small earthquake this morning has you shaken up.” He giggled at his own pun. “Are the two of you worried?” He looked from Chandra to Isaac.

“This does seem like one of your riskier ideas.” Isaac said. “And I think that earthquake bothered all of us. We haven’t had one here for years.”

“Yeah,” Chandra agreed. “But it also sounds exciting. The magic. Not the earthquake. I mean, what if it actually works?”

“Not likely,” Isaac retorted. “Think about it. A magic spell that will transport someone into a book.”

“No, that’s not it at all.” Andrew massaged his temples. “It’s like you haven’t even been listening to me. The magic will actually teleport one of us to the time and place of the book. That’s why it has to be nonfiction. Some fictional places are real, but the rest of the story is made up. I suppose it’s two confusing for the magic.

“I know it sounds crazy, but before my uncle died, he gave me his diary. I put it on a shelf for a few weeks. I mean, I paged through it, but it looked like a bunch of stories from his

childhood. And nothing too interesting at that. But a few days ago, I paged through it again. I noticed some drawings and some words from a language I didn't recognize. He had notes written next to them. One said, "For luck." Another said, "Payback." There are more, but these are the two I've tried and they really seem to work.

"I didn't study for the math test last Tuesday. I tried the 'Luck' spell and I aced it. Then when Elsa said she wouldn't go to the dance with me because she was going with Jose, I used the 'Payback' spell. She missed the dance with a stomach ache."

Well, since you put it that way," Jen said, smiling for the first time since they had left school, "This sounds much more likely to work. And completely worth the risk of breaking into the library." She shook her head, "Either of those things could have been coincidences. You're good at math, and if you remember health class, sometimes girls get *stomachaches*."

"Maybe they were coincidences; maybe they were magic. But like I've been telling you, we're not breaking in."

"Oh, right." Jen let out a short laugh. "We're already going to be there. You haven't yet explained how we're going to pull that off."

"Simple," Andrew said. "You know the door in the back that leads downstairs to what used to be the Children's Library?"

They all agreed they knew the door he spoke of.

"Well I have it from a source that they don't lock that door, and I'll bet anything no one goes down there to check it out when they lock the doors."

"Who's your source," Isaac asked.

"Jason Valdez told me he and a girlfriend snuck down there once."

"He's lying!" Chandra interjected.

Her sudden response shocked Andrew for a moment. When he regained his senses, he asked her how she could be so sure.

"Because no girl would ever sneak anywhere with Jason Valdez."

They all had a good laugh before Andrew hurried them on toward the library.

They spent some time browsing the shelves before one by one sneaking through the door to the old children's library, which they found unlocked just as Andrew had heard they would. Once evening came, and the last footsteps exited the building above, they crept their way back to the main floor of the library. They each selected a book from their favorite period of history and gathered in the center of the floor. Andrew unfolded a piece of paper from his pocket and used sidewalk chalk to draw an elaborate design from the paper onto the carpet. It had a central circle with four circles at each corner. Each corner circle had a rectangle next to it. The rest of it looked like a bunch of half circles intersecting at random angles, but as they circled the image, they realized it looked the same from all four corners.

"Well, at least we don't have to add vandalism to our list of crimes tonight." Jen said. "This chalk will come off with a vacuum cleaner."

Andrew shrugged. "The journal didn't say it had to be any special medium." He stepped back and compared the drawing on the paper to the one on the floor. "I think we're ready."

"What is supposed to happen now," Isaac asked.

"We start a fire in the center. We can use this metal trash can. We each sit at a circle with our book on the accompanying rectangle. I'll say this incantation," he sowed them the unfamiliar words at the bottom of the page, "then it sounds like the flames will lash out and take us to the time period of our chosen book."

"Did this spell have a title?" Chandra asked.

"Yes," Andrew said. "It's called, 'The Best'."

"And how do we get back here," Jen asked.

"That's the one detail I'm not sure about," Andrew said. "My uncle doesn't mention getting back, but he did get back."

Jen looked like she was about to leave the library, but finally said, "Whatever. Let's do this. It's not like it's going to work anyway."

They gathered on the floor around the drawing, each with their book in place. The only light in the room came from the flicking flames of the fire. Andrew began to recite words from the paper. The chandelier overhead began to sway.

"I think it's working," Chandra said.

The floor started to rumble, and some books fell off the shelves.

"No," Jen said. "I think it's another earthquake."

Andrew didn't seem to notice. He read the words in a trancelike state. A car alarm started blaring from the street outside. As Andrew read, the flames grew larger. They flashed so bright in the otherwise pitch-black room that no one could see anything else. Then the flame went out. When their eyes adjusted, they could see they were still in the library, but something was different. Only three people sat around the diagram. Each of them had a book that had drifted askew during the earthquake. But one person was gone and the book sat perfectly centered on its spot.

The teenagers all opened their eyes. The small fire in the pentagram center started to end.

"Is everyone all right? Wait where is Andrew?" Jen asked.

"I Don't know, he probably managed to travel to another dimension by magic. Or he could have disappeared and been changed as a spirit...", Chandra said, with stars in her eyes.

"That's rubbish, he likely lies and just wants to prank us with his strange notebook!" Jen declared. "Let's find him and come back home". At that moment, the three teenagers started

to look for their friend in the library.

But the person involved couldn't respond, because of the current situation. After having said the spell his eyes had closed and when he had tried to open them again, something had prevented him from doing it. When he finally succeeded, the boy understood that he was not in the library and because of the lack of light, Andrew was not able to locate this place. By touching the room's wall he realised that it was small, probably six square meters. At that moment, the boy started to panic because of his claustrophobia, and suddenly he heard a deep voice.

"Hello Andrew, like your uncle 27 years ago, you are traveling to Eunoïa. You look like him, you have the same disrespect for rules. Why can't humans just simply follow the notes?" He lamented his fate. "So as I told you, you are joining the kingdom of Eunoïa, we will see if you manage your quest or destroy this world."

"Wait..." started the boy but the floor collapsed under his foot, and before having the time to answer, he caught the notebook and felt himself fall without having the time to hear a response. When he opened his eyes, Andrew understood he was in the sky and that the ground was dangerously getting closer. He really thought that he was going to die but the voice said, exasperated, "Did you check the book before using magic? You are an idiot". Because of the wind Andrew had not clearly heard but in his current situation, he couldn't waste time.

"Help me, what can I do?" screamed the boy.

"Guess..." said the mocking voice.

"I don't have the time for a joke, tell me!"

"You're not funny" whispered the unknown voice. "Say 'fly' and you will see".

The instant the spell was pronounced, Andrew stopped falling as if he was wearing a parachute so he reached the floor safe, but afraid. Around him, many mountains dominated the valley. On the left side he glimpsed a strange forest. Next to him were a path and a little sign; he went closer and gazed towards the path to the nearest town that the sign indicated. Adventurous and curious, he decided to follow the way and after having walked for a moment, he arrived at the top of the mountain. The road continued but Andrew found his destination : surrounded by mountains in the col, a citadel was laying on a lake. Urged by curiosity, he walked towards the castle. A large stone bridge led to the fortress. The young boy started walking in the city's direction. Arriving at the road's end, he saw that many people with barrows were waiting. Then he looked in his notebook to see if he could learn something about this place. The whites pages turned in a sketch with some notes: "Market Day". Just like the road, the guardrail resembled a heap of books. A huge drawbridge guarded the city, because of the crowd Andrew managed to weave in and out the citadel without being seen by the guards and then a new world opened up to him. As if he had come back to the middle ages, the boy was surrounded by a lot of half-timbering houses linked by a grid arrangement. In fact all of those houses were bookshops. All the people were wearing old clothes from different fashion Eras but strangely nobody seemed to pay attention to it. Lost in a daydream, the boy didn't focus on the road, and after having walked for two minutes, he arrived in a vast square and noticed seven houses bigger than the others, with a lot of people standing up and reading books. "Where am I? What are those buildings?" thought Andrew. "It looks like Hogwarts houses, maybe I jumped in Harry Potter's world, but how could I have ? I chose a book randomly, I can't even remember its name." At the same time he arrived at the center of the place, a huge statue draped near him. Suddenly the boy heard some noises from behind. Two guards were standing up and staring at him. Andrew then realized that he wouldn't have to wait too long to get into trouble.

Five minutes later, Andrew was arrested by the two military and now they walked over the street and came into one of the big properties which looked like a barracks. Inside the boy discovered different rooms in which groups of soldiers were training, the strange thing is that they didn't grab weapons but small books. Brusquely he felt something hurting his neck then nothing. When he woke up, the teenager had left the barracks and was in the center of a bright room. It was the coldness of the marble that had woken him up and seven thrones were now facing him. All of them were empty except the biggest in front of our protagonist, in which a tall man dressed like a king was sitting. The two other men surrounding the king were looking at Andrew who didn't know what happened. "How dare you stand up right in front of the great king" inveighed the one who looked like a general toward Andrew.

"Peace and quiet please, Byron.", said the lord."I am sorry as the army major, Byron is often a sticker for principles. Might I introduce myself, I am Cyrus, the king of this world. You must be a bit confused but you are here in Eunoia, the citadel which unites all of the books that have ever been written. The people that you see here are some of my counselors who took up the kingdom's economy and army. What a fool am I, you don't even know our world, did you?" "Let me show you our beautiful citadel.

" You better not, Your Highness, the city is full of danger, especially during market day. You know that the rebels could be everywhere." Byron insisted.

"That's enough general Byron"started Cyrus,"I can defend myself and I know all of the outside dangers and nothing, especially not some troublemakers will prevent me from seeing my people." With that, the king joined Andrew and they left the room together. Andrew and the king walked through the door and arrived in what seemed to be the future, many robots and futurist innovations flew near Andrew's head, the futurist architecture made him feel like in a utopia.

"You may think you are in the future, but you are not." started the lord. "Here, It's the science fiction book section specializing in sciences and technology development. You can also find medicine labs added to the citadel's hospital."

"Might we be hurt or have diseases even if we are in a fictional world?"asked Andrew.

At the same time, a black man came out by greeting the king. He had strange white lines tattooed on his face.

"Of course you may have diseases everywhere, there is no world without medical issues, what a strange idea!" answered indignantly the comer.

"Andrew, let me introduce Frank Shelley the king of this section.", intervned Cyrus.

"Andrew... You must be the chosen one, pardon my behavior. As you are unknown to our world let me explain it to you. You understood that Eunoia is a little bit different from your world. You have already seen that magic is all around you but a power gets a price. If you don't use magic with a good purpose you will pay the consequences. In some situations it becomes a weapon which can hurt and leave traces, its power depends on the user's powers. We can also use magic to protect ourselves, here scientists try to work on magic

and find solutions to control and understand it."Andrew's curiosity was hanging on King Shelley's words. But a scientist arrived and begged Frank Shelley to come into the chemical department, so the black men took leave of Andrew and Cyrus.

"Let's continue" proposed the lord.

Following the streets and after having gone through a huge door embedded in the wall, they arrived into a magnificent verdurous meadow. Andrew felt like he was in the old European countryside. In the center of the district, there was a big glass greenhouse.

"Here, we are in the slice of life and psychology books section, the magic of these people is based on fauna and flora. The greenhouse that you see here is the castle of the most popular king of Eunoia, or I rather should say "the most popular queen of Eunoia", Jane Austen.

"You mean, the famous author of *Pride and Prejudice*?" asked the boy, shocked.

"Yes indeed" confirmed lord Cyrus.

They arrived at the castle and entered through an old oak door and discovered a tropical painting. In front of them were many flowers and tropical trees, all of the colors created a flabbergasting rainbow. Andrew's eyes were enthralled by all of this flora, so he explored this enchanting room. More and more the boy discovered flowers he couldn't imagine even with all of his imagination. He found himself facing a labyrinth entrance surrounded by bushes walls. After having walked for a few minutes in this tree maze he found out the most beautiful place he had ever seen in his life, an enchanting white fountain with a marble woman statue ornament which was streaming peacefully. Focused on the scenery, Andrew didn't notice that someone was coming.

"Isn't it magnificent?" questioned the person behind him. Andrew, afraid of the unidentified voice, shuddered and then turned back to see who it was.

King Cyrus in the company of a beautiful woman was making fun of him. The surprise effect passed, Andrew who took offence but hid it. The woman understood the boy's discomfort and broke the silence by reviving the conversation.

"Let me introduce myself. I am Jane Austen, the author of, notably, *Pride and Prejudice* but I also wrote many different publications. I am the queen of the slice of life section too. Here we focus on people, we work on psychology and of course as you can see we have huge bounds with plants."

"What a pleasure to meet you,» declared the boy before the king could start."I have been reading some of your books. I can't believe I am meeting you." Andrew had shining eyes, which amused the two adults.

"I am glad to hear that even boys enjoy reading my books. We can talk about it longer if you want with a cup of tea and biscuits." said the woman with a kind smile. The boy smiled back. "Pardon me for interrupting your discussion, but Andrew and I have many parts of the city to visit and we are getting late." intervened King Cyrus.

Disappointed, the teenager looked at the king and for the first time, found him less fascinating and less interesting. But he didn't want to offend him so Andrew greeted regretfully the queen and followed Cyrus. They left the slice of life section and as before walked through a new door again.

Andrew was discovering another landscape almost opposite to the previous district. This new section looked like the citadel entrance. Here a lot of people were running or walking fast in every direction. Above them, papers flew like birds from the center to the other buildings. They arrived on a wide square, in the center an immense tower seemed to touch the clouds. It was surrounded by buildings looking like libraries. Andrew recognized the famous library of New York or the antique library of Alexandri

"This section is Eunoia's historical center. You already know that books are the most important part of our society," continued the lord." It enabled the bound between all of the books that exist here and in your world." The boy looked at the king, surprised.

" So you mean that all of the books are linked, even if they don't have the same subject, even when it leads into conflicts or if they don't take place in the same reality."

"Are you sure books never come from the same world? Who was already sure of this?"asked the lord. "By following your reasoning, if we take for example: *The Great Gatsby* written by F.Scott Fitzgerald and *Stardust* by Neil Gaiman. They are both linked and related to Eunoia's world. Right?"

" Of course they are.'answered Cyrus."Furthermore they don't belong to the same library, you will find the first one in the History library and the second in another. All of the books are studied by all of the experts we train in our schools, after spending some school years, teenagers have to choose between many specializations and have to study to become a teacher or an expert and join a library based on their choices."

Andrew was impressed by the organization of this kingdom's system. He couldn't imagine a society like this could even exist.

"So like the other district, I guess it may have a director? " he interrogated.

"For sure, you are beginning to understand the system. His name is Sir John Falstaff..."

"Like Shakespeare's character? The preceptor of lord Hamlet."exclaimed Andrew.

But as soon as the boy realized that he had just cut off the king of Eunoia's speech. 'O pardon me your highness, I didn't want to interrupt you.... and....". The teenager, ashamed, couldn't watch Cyrus in the eyes. The great king, surprised, started to laugh out loud.

" Don't be ashamed, I have already forgiven you."The lord laughed again." Don't use this title with me, call me by my name. You are the hero of the most famous of Eunoia's legends, you are the only one that can save this world. That makes you my friend so let's just continue and act like it, would you?" Andrew blushed a little bit, yesterday he was nobody but now the Great king of an entire kingdom, made him his friend. This journey delighted the boy more and more.

After this discussion they came back to the market place where all of the stands liven the huge citadel up. Many craftsmen were selling books, Cyrus showed Andrew another part of the city in which they found illuminators, graphic designers, book binders, illustrators...and so on. Everywhere they came, people were happy to see the great king. In the population's mind, the monarch was loved and respected and that was mutual.

While they were walking, one part of the market became agitated and sounded like a storekeeper row. The great king decided to go through and make sure of the outcome. Him and Andrew walked fast and discovered a violent display. A man was arguing with two tall men. Andrew couldn't see their faces because they were turning their backs from his sight, he just saw that they had red hair and defeated the culprit who was already unconscious on the floor.

"What is happening here?" shouted the domineering monarch. "Astreos, Auskelis ! What are you doing here?" Surprised the men faced the king with a huge smile.

"We do our best to establish justice" said the first one.

"Especially in our domain" continued the second one.

"We will talk about that later." whispered Cyrus before speaking out loud. "You don't have to worry anymore, thanks to the kings Astreos and Auskelis. I proclaim that aggressiveness is not allowed in Eunoia's citadel. Everyone who demonstrates a violent or dangerous act will face up to the consequences from a foreword to an exile. We mustn't succumb to madness like this rebellious group called 'Hope Authors', the only hope we can ever find is this citadel. Those troublemakers only desire to reduce our lives to ashes. I promise as a king to let those rebels take its course, with all of the other kings and queens we swear to always protect you rather than act out of self-interest."

"As Astreos and Auskelis, kings of the media section, we swear to protect the population's lives to the death' declared the twins at the same time before greeting the crowd as comedians after a performance." The people surrounding the display started applauding and gradually dispersed when the kings joined Andrew.

"Rumors were right, you are the prophecy's chosen. I thought you would be older, you are not exactly what I expected. Don't you think, Auskelis?" questioned Astreos to his brother by staring at the teenager.

"Astreos, I think exactly the same thing" mocked Auskelis. "At least we have a headline for tomorrow's newspaper. I have already imagined it: "Andrew the hero that we weren't expecting !".

"Enough boys" Cyrus got fed up. "Sorry for that Andrew, they are always like this, even during crisis meetings. They both are directors of the media district in charge of Eunoia's broadcast chain and news paper, sometimes investigators and sometimes business managers. As you can see they are indiscernible except their different coloured pupils are reversed."

"Do not reveal our secret!" exclaimed the twins at the same time. "We would like to tease him."

"However that is

not the point, we must find a solution for the rebel issue.”sighed the high king.“ We need a meeting.”

“If I might, ” started Andrew. “Why don’t you make peace with those troublemakers.You are the high king, they can’t just wipe out your opinion!” said the teenager.

“For sure, we have been trying to do that for so many years but nothing has changed.”, answered the monarch.

“And what if I try to get the rebellion leader to listen to reason, with a peace treaty approved by yourself. As the prophecy hero, I might have a chance.” assured Andrew by looking in Cyrus' eyes. He smiled and the twins, who were standing back, looked at the King and Andrew in turn with a strange look.

In order to complete his mission, Andrew left the citadel to meet the rebellion. The boy carried his way on by following the ground path, surrounded by ancient trees. He was a little bit uncomfortable as if the forest was observing each move he made. After having walked for a long time, the teenager took a break and sat next to an old oak rooted near a small lake. Exhausted by his travel he started to fall asleep. A few hours later, the teenager woke up because of a sudden voice. As he couldn't identify whose voice it was, he stood up and investigated the place but didn't succeed in finding him. Then he looked up and on one of the old live oaks branches, a girl was sitting and hummed a mysterious melody. Her long dark hair hid her face, until the zephyr lifted it up in dark, silky waves that revealed her honey skin tone and her almond brown eyes which were staring at him.

“Hello sleeping beauty” sated the girl by descending from the oak.

“Who are you?”questioned Andrew, suspicious.

“What the matter ? And what about you?”she turned around the teenager.“Let me try, probably one of Cyrus' spies? No, you're not strong enough. You are maybe a young equerry or a soldier who wants to have more power or being remarked upon by the Great king.”

“Nothing like that, I want to meet the leader of the Rebellion to deliver him a message from the king. He told me that he wanted to make up with you, isn't peace what everyone wants? I swear that no one will get hurt” declared the boy.

“Why should I believe you? You surely try to persuade me and hope for a guide that will take you to the Rebellion camp. Wrong?” asked the girl.

“My name is Andrew, many people see me as the hero of Eunoia's prophecy, if I don't succeed, your world is heading for a fall. To be honest I arrived here not so long ago but I already like it and if I can save it by any way at all, I will.” The teenager swore by looking on the unknown eyes.

“You seem kind, maybe I can trust you... I am Mystra, a rebel as you understood. I will show you the camp but we are never too careful...” She had barely finished her sentencewhen she threw a tiny needle in Andrew's neck. All of his senses left him and the hero fell unconscious.

When he woke up the boy noticed that he was in a wood bed in a tent. The teenager decided to get up and find somebody that could help him. When Andrew left the tent he

discovered another universe. All around him many tales creatures were learning how to fight or just doing casual stuff. His curious green eyes were observing everything that they could, even the beautiful landscape. The camp was surrounded by a huge forest and faded into the background. Sometimes, Andrew crossed paths with dramaturges or poets full of inspiration. Sometimes, he also saw elves who were playing guitars and dancing in circles. After having walked, a bit the teenager arrived in front of a huge red tent which had a gold escutcheon embroidered. It symbolized a book like Andrew's notebook, surrounded by seven symbols. While he was focusing on the tent ornament, the oak's girl and a man went out of it.

"You must be Andrew, Mystra has already met you but that's not my case." indicated the man. 'I am Achilles the leader of the Hope Authors's Rebellion, maybe you want us to discuss more precisely.'"asked the man.

At first, the teenager had moved back because of what had happened earlier but when Achilles started to talk he relaxed and felt as if he was safe. The interlocutor seemed friendly, he was very tall, maybe around 5 '9 feet tall with mid-length dark grey hair. His sandy skin surely due to his outside life was well matching with his ruby red eyes, he wore a black oversized shirt which made him look like a fallen prince. Andrew noticed that both people strangely had a book at the waist as if it were a sword. As soon as they entered the tent, the teenager remarked differences with the tent he had woke up in. A round table presided in the middle of the room, on the right he also noticed on a chair, a roman helmet with the initial 'A'. On the table with a lot of papers with detailed military plans, Andrew also found a map of what seemed to be Eunoïa, with a plan of the Citadel and each king's and queen's personal details.

"Before anything else," started Achilles. "This camp is a refuge for all of the people that don't fit in the mold created by Cyrus. When he took power, his project destroyed Eunoïa's balance that the king Dušan had been creating. All of the creatures that belonged to fantasy books and all of the free minded people have been persecuted by the army for around 27 years. The people you see here are the last survivors. Our only hope of change is you and now that you are here..."

He was going to continue but they heard strange sounds, in panic they left the tent and discovered a frightening sight. Soldiers were attacking the camp, the lights of spells flew all around and the rebels tried to run away. Mystra reacted very fast by grabbing her book and started to protect a group of young fauns surrounded by fighters. At the same time Achilles grabbed his book too and with a latin spell created a huge water gate to protect the rebels and their families. Andrew's face crumpled when he finally understood that Cyrus has lied and had pulled his strings with the aim of finding the camp location and getting rid of these people. The "hero" was guilty, he had betrayed the last hope of Eunoïa.

Suddenly, an explosion brought him back to reality, the chaos was all over him. In front of him a little girl was crying so the teenager plucked up his courage to save her. He ran in the victim's direction and tried to reassure her, he told her that he could take her to a safe place. But while he was doing this, he couldn't notice the soldier trying to kill them. The only sounds that broke the silence were the swords that banged together, Mystra had been seeing the scene and came to rescue. After managing to hide themselves in an ancient roman temple in the mountains, what was left of the survivors took care of their wounded comrades or left in search of something to eat. Achilles tried to direct the angry rebels and Andrew, ashamed,

brought the little girl to his mother who thanked him. While he was fully aware of his actions, the teenager bumped into a minotaur who seemed not friendly at all.

“That’s you, the supposed hero!” yelled the minotaur. “If I remember well, you were supposed to save us not cause the rebellion’s downfall! While saying that, he tried to hit Andrew, but Achilles stepped in and saved Andrew who went backward.

“That’s enough , Kieran, you can’t only blame him, we’re all responsible for what happened but now the past is the past. We need to move forward and work to regain our territory, but without dangerous behaviours, like yours.” said the leader.” Achilles dropped the minotaur’s hand and walked back. However the minotaur decided otherwise and tried to attack him from the back. His hand barely made contact with his book when two invisible ropes tied him and a knife stood under his neck. “In your situation, I wouldn’t do that.” said two voices Andrew had already heard. In front of the minotaur, Mystra was threatening him, escorted by Astreos and Auskelis who were holding the creature with the spell. When Andrew met the eyes of the two kings, both winked at him. After this incident, Mystra, the twins and Achilles invited Andrew to join them to implement a counterattack plan.

“You’re all here for a reason, began Achilles. “Everyone here is necessary, even you Andrew”. The boy felt a bit ashamed. “If the prophecy chose you, it is very likely that you are necessary in our Liberation plan. We don’t have enough time so let me present you my strategy” Achilles explained the plan and when it ended, the countdown had begun. During that time, Andrew had learned a lot of things. The first week, he discovered all of the history secrets with Achilles. The second week, Mystra who was the most powerful sorceress of the camp, taught him how to use his power with the notebook and it went like that for seven weeks. The day before the counterattack, everyone was ready and Andrew had made considerable progress. Achilles ended the preparations and all of the rebels went to bed. But someone couldn’t sleep because of the anxiety and the adrenaline. The hero left the temple and observed the sprinkle night sky. The sun was rising up on the citadel, the shops were opening one after the other, and like every Market day the daily sounds overwhelmed the city, while some quiet footsteps were crossing all around the rampart. In the throne room the seven kings gathered for the daily meeting, when Charles Butler, the administration king was arguing with the general Byron about the army budget, all of the monarchs heard a strange sound. Something was hitting and the guards were yelling. Exasperated lord Byron was going to open the front door to find out what was happening but when he stood up, a water wave throwed a guard throughout the entire room.

“What do you call "guards"?” questioned a female voice.

Mystra, Achilles and Andrew were in front of the kings without an ounce of fear. Cyrus and all of the other kings stared at the rebels, then the great king started to nervously laugh. Everyone was staring at him without understanding what was going on.

“That’s all you found to say.” asked Cyrus. His expression suddenly became threatening. “What are you doing here? Two of you have been exiled to life and as for you Andrew, you disappointed me so now you will face the consequences” The king started to walk in Andrew’s direction but Astreos and Auskelis interposed themselves to protect the teenager.

“You’ll have to go over my dead body,” said Auskelis.

“And over mine too” completed his other half.

"I have known that you are the rebellion's moles for a while. Get out of my way!" shouted the great king. It created a shock wave that knocked down everyone apart Mystra. "I guess it was written. The fallen princess against the great king."

The magic duel between Mystra and Cyrus has begun. The man threw his cape on the throne and by doing this he grabbed his book and pronounced a spell in a language which seems to be ancient Norwegian. Then a dark grey wolf spirit appeared and tried to attack Mystra but she slipped away and hid herself behind a throne. The girl decided to use a sword and after fastly sketching it, the weapon got real. She faced the wolf and tried to kill him. Because of his height the spirit managed to scratch Mystra's shoulder which drew from her a cry of pain which echoed in the entire room.

"Mystra" screamed Achilles, he ran to help her but couldn't because of the dome Cyrus had been creating not to be disturbed. He hit the glass cupola to join her, but the structure was so strong that his fist bled. While the duel was raging inside the dome, the rebel valiantly faced the king. After defeating the wolves, thanks to her reflexes and her fight abilities, she cut Cyrus's cheek and shoulder. Coming near him she punched the monarch on the nose and immediately went back before he could catch her. The blood injected eyes of the great king reflected the madness of the man. With a psychopathic smile, he looked at Mystra and used a spell which choked her. The more the body of the girl raised, the more she had difficulties to breathe, her jerky respiration was slowing down, the pain got through her entire body from the head to the toes but she kept looking Cyrus in the eyes.

"By a strange twist of fate the daughter and the father will meet their death in the same case, in the same room and will be killed by the same person."

"How dare you talk about my father! You are the one who killed him and you took possession of his kingdom. And I am not going to die yet." Mystra hissed between two shrill breaths.

"Really," said the tyrant by strengthening his hold. "I would like to see that."

"As you wish" whispered the girl. Then her dark hair turned to withe, a sort of mystical power invaded the dome. From the outside, the magic's intensity dazzled everyone. When he finally managed to open his eyes, Andrew noticed that Mystra was laying on the floor as well as Cyrus. Achilles threw himself at the girl's side and checked if she was alive. And she was. They both stood up but Cyrus woke up and attempted to kill them with a sword. The sword fell with a metallic noise, the only sound that broke the deadly silence, and the sacrifice of a pure and courageous soul, tore the stars apart.

"Achilles!" screamed Mystra. She managed to catch his bloody body before he hit the floor. Achilles's breathing was shivering. Leaning above him Mystra was crying.

"Why...Why did you do that?" questioned the girl with difficulty because of her shaking voice. "You promised me that we would always be together"

"I am sorry, I can't keep my promise." The coughing fit extracts pain from his body. "Before dying, I want to tell you..." He gouged blood again.

“Stop talking, you're in pain. Can anyone help?” begged Mystra, she was crying so hard that her sight scrambled. With his last forces Achilles touched her cheek full of tears.

“Please, Mystra, I want you to keep in mind that your kingdom needs you. I have loved you since we've met, you're my north, my south, my east and my west all that I ever could dream. In the end we will all become stories...” in that last breath the hero Achilles passed. Mystra's scream echoed throughout the entire citadel. After a while, she closed the eyes of her hero and stood up in front of all of the kings. One of the twins used a spell so that Mystra's speech would be broadcasted all around the citadel.

“Everyone, pay attention to me, even for a second. For 27 years we have been fighting against a tyrant who wanted to oppress us. Look around you, the utopia in which you are living is just a name. The district system, what does it bring you ? Despite having a job, how many people have been losing their families or friends because of laws? We can't talk about freedom. This usurper destroyed what my father had been creating for so long. So as king Dušan's daughter and Achilles's love, I should honor their memory by bringing peace to Eunoïa's Kingdom”. A deathly hush hovered the place and finally everyone started applauding the people warrior. At that very moment many things changed, Mystra became queen and instituted a freer system. But all the stories must end, so Andrew left the citadel after saying goodbye to Mystra and all of his new friends. He already knew that he would miss them a lot. By walking on the stone bridge Andrew heard a voice: “Eunoïa is not in ruins, so I guess you succeeded in your quest, hero?”

“It sounds like you didn't believe in me, from the beginning” smiled Andrew.

The voice started to laugh and regained his seriousness after a few moments.

“The past is the past, what you have to think of now, is your choice!”

“I know: magic always gets a price,”complained Andrew. Anyway, what should I do now ?”

“Eunoïa's magic rules are strict, if you want to come back to reality you must know that you will probably never come back again. In fact all of Eunoïa's memories will be erased of your mind. But you have a second choice, you can decide to remain in Eunoïa's world and spend the rest of your days with all of the friends you have been meeting. However if you choose Eunoïa, you will lose the memories of your realm. You have the choice...”

“ Eunoïa is a wonderful world but I need to come home to apply all I have been learning here. Therefore i will try to make my world a better world, just as Eunoïa is full of liberty, respect and books.” Andrews took a breath: “I chose reality.”

“As you wish”whispered the voice, then the boy felt his body falling on the floor, in panic, the boy could just ask: “By the way, what is your name ?” But the voices had already disappeared. A few instants later, he was waking up, sitting the same way as before his travel, Andrew was confused and all of his ideas were rushing in his mind. When he opened his green eyes, he found out that all of his friends were staring at him.

“It seems like your magic spell doesn't work Andrew,”said Chandra.

“Of course it doesn't work, I have already told you that magic doesn't exist Chandra.” retorted Jen.

“Are you alright Andrew, you seem uncomfortable?” asked carefully Issac.

“You are probably right.... whispered Andrew, barely being heard by them. Sure, I am okay Issac, don't worry”.

But Andrew's brain was thinking about all of his travel experience. He tried hard to remind himself of Eunoia, Mystra's charm, Achilles's bravery, the twins's jokes or all of the knowledge he had been learning during his adventure. But the more he thought of it, the more his memories slipped through his mind. Issac brought his friend out of his memories by shaking him.

“Come on Andrew, we need to come back home or my mom will kill me. Let's go before the guardian finds us.”

The boy decided to overlook his brain and got a grip on oneself. The four teenagers put away all of the stuff and books they used, that's when Andrew realised which book he had been taking, *The Chronicle of Narnia* by C.S.Lewis, one of his favorite books because of his uncle. During Andrew's childhood his uncle used to read him this book, the joyful memory made him smile. Before leaving the library the teenager took his notebook. All of sudden, he noticed that there was something in it, a red book mark which was not here earlier, Andrew took it and saw Eunoia's escutcheon on it. Then he noticed something strange. On the book, a note was being typed by someone but Andrew was grabbing the book and he was alone in the room. Suspicious he read out loud the note:

“Because of your courage that saved so many lives,
Because of your wisdom that was above the knives.
The prophecy brilliantly managed,
A new chapter of Eunoia paged.
In spite of the success,
The hero still has to progress.
In order to take off your mask.
You will just have to say “Comeback”Mystra.”

As he read the signature, all of Andrew's memories came back. With a wide smile he joined his friends, thinking that he just had to come back.