

# Power Rangers Mystic Knights

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*Druids Professor Kieran Morgan and his daughter Mena prepare to open the way to Tir Na Nog, the mythical land of the Fairies with the help of the latest Gatekeeper, Neall Bly. Enzi Teague and Schylar Stapleton, daughter of the Red Lord, are there when things go horribly wrong. They all end up trapped in the Mystic Realm with the fate of magick resting on their shoulders.*

\*2031

\*Power Rangers/Mystic Knights tie-in/crossover

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**Chapter 1 - Welcome to Tir Na Nog**

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# 1 - Welcome to Tir Na Nog

2031, Ireland (Earth)

Tourists milled around Stonehenge despite the gray mist that drifted around them and diffused the sunlight into a hazy, almost ethereal glow. Among them, a surprisingly tall Asian featured girl with long dark hair falling over one shoulder in waves. Green eyes were hidden under the bill of her black cap that sported a geometric fire emblem. Jeans, tee-shirt, worn in hi-top canvas sneakers, and a long flannel over shirt, finished off the innocuous look. She was taking pictures with a digital camera and a backpack was slung over her shoulder.

Smiling slightly to herself, Schylar Stapleton left the milling group. To her they just looked like a ruined pile of big rocks. Unlike most people in the world, she didn't doubt they once held some of mystical significance, but they really weren't much to look at. She put her camera away and took out a map. Though she was hitting all the hotspots while in Ireland, her main goal in making the trip was a small town with a crumbling old keep. She'd seen pictures of it in an album her great grandfather had brought over from Ireland when he immigrated in the 1960s. She had no idea how to pronounce the town's name. Whenever she'd first asked for directions, her attempt earned her an odd look and laughter from an older woman.

When she explained that it was near the general vicinity of Kells in County Meath. That'd been more helpful and the woman circled a spot on her map. "Don't know why you're goin' there, lass. Place is almost empty," she'd been warned. Schy had just smiled and moved on.

Now glancing at her map again, she realized she had long bus ride ahead of her. After finding her way to the bus station, she found the right one, looked at her departure time and bought a ticket. She sat in the station's uncomfortable seats and pulled her bag into her lap. She took a moment to send quick message to her parents in Angel Grove, California. She was in that in between state of graduating high school and starting college. So she decided to take this heritage trip.

She wanted to come to Ireland because it was a little explored part of her family. Her Korean grandfather, Hawaiian Grandmother, and Japanese Great Grandfather kept those parts of her in the forefront. Especially the Japanese quarter, which dominated almost every aspect of her life due to the fact that her dad was the Lord of Shiba Clan, a group of Samurai charged with protecting the world from certain dangers. He also had a legion of Ninja followers that all swore fealty to the Red Lord. Aside from all that, he owned a martial arts studio, heavy on the Kendo and way of the warrior stuff. The Irish part of her was a mystery. Which prompted her terrestrial summer trip.

Other parents might have worried about their teenaged daughters tromping around a foreign country by herself, but not Schy's. Not only she was a black belt in karate, and a kendo champion, she knew enough of several other martial arts to be able to handle almost anything that came her way. There was no real need to worry about her. After an initial quick week-long visit, the whole family; Mom, Dad, younger twin brothers Tyson and Lucas, youngest sister Emmaline, and Grandpa Akira; they left her to herself. As much as she loved her family, and missed them, it was actually kind of nice to be on her own

for a few weeks.

"In a land where I can barely understand half of what people are saying and not a single Power Ranger or Next Gen in sight. It's so nice," she said to herself as she put her phone away.

"Huh, and here I was thinking the same thing."

Startled, Schy glanced up and met the gray gaze of a blond guy about her age sitting across from her. A really cute guy her age. Not Hart level cute, but pretty close. "Excuse me?" she said and stared at him.

He gave her a pretty, dimpled smile. "Sorry, was surprised to hear another American, then I heard what you said and I wanted to commiserate. Name's Neall Bly. I'm from Briarwood," he introduced himself.

"You're a Bly. You're eyes aren't green," Schy said stupidly.

Neall tilted his head. "No, I take after my mum. I'm the least Bly looking Bly in existence," he agreed.

Schy blushed and laughed at herself. "Sorry. I'm Schylar Stapleton. Angel Grove," she said.

Neall whistled under his breath. "You win," he said. "Where you headed?" he asked her, leaning forward slightly.

Schy looked at her map. "I have no idea how to say it. When some lady pronounced it, sounded like Sushi Clash," she said.

Neall switched to the seat beside her and glanced at her map. He chuckled and tried to enunciate for her, but all she caught was "Shan" "Cash" and "Carn". "Weird. That's where I'm headed. Kind of an out of the way place for you to visit," he said, arching an eyebrow slightly.

"Apparently that's where my Celtic blooded ancestors hail from," she said.

He looked her over. "Okay," he said simply.

Schy couldn't stop herself from laughing. "My great-grandparents were from Sushi Clash," she said, deciding that was what she was sticking with. "The rest of them came from Japan and Korea mostly," she explained.

Neall nodded with a slight smile. "Still, it's kind of strange. I come from Briarwood and not much phases me in terms of weird," he said.

Schy frowned. "I'm not sure I want to know why it's strange," she said quietly.

"Probably doesn't mean anything," he said and got to his feet as a flat bored voice informed them that it was time to board their bus.

Schy got to her feet. "I'm from Angel Grove and if there's one thing I know; nothing is a coincidence," she said, slinging her backpack over her shoulder again.

Neall nodded as he grabbed his duffel bag. "Yeah, that's what I was afraid of," he said and headed toward the bus ahead of her. Schy was quiet. They didn't sit near each other on the bus. Instead, Schy sat down next to a black guy sleeping with a hoodie thrown over him, his face partially covered by the hood.

Neall, sat toward the back, managing to get a window seat and watch the scenery fly by.

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Mena Morgan stood at the bus stop. She watched three people disembark from the bus that had just pulled up in front of the covered bench beside the long lonely road that stretched in either direction without much of anything else to say there was actually a town there. A bleary eyed black guy towered over the other the other two. He was lanky and slim but with absurdly wide shoulders. Short dark hair a cut closer on the sides of his head. He wore a hoodie to keep the mist at bay. Definitely not who she was expecting.

The slim, pale olive skinned girl in the cap definitely wasn't it either. So that meant that the blond boy was. And yet, three strangers had just appeared in place where no one ever came. In fact, most people were leaving the village little by little. Even her father had left for a time. Though, his duty brought him back, with Mena's pregnant mother in tow from India. "Are you the Gatekeeper?" she asked the blond boy, her dark brows furrowed dubiously.

Neall smiled. "That's me," he said. "Is there a problem?" he asked.

"Several. The first being that I've never heard of male Gatekeeper. The next being those two. Did you bring them?" she asked.

Schy raised her brows at the other's girl tone. "I'm not with him and I know nothing about Gatekeepers, male or otherwise. I'm looking for Professor Kieran Morgan," she said.

"Me, too," the black guy stated quietly.

Mena frowned. "I wasn't told to expect so many people," she said and rubbed the bridge of her nose. "This doesn't surprise me. Me Da is the very definition of an absent minded professor," she said with a sigh. "I'm Mena, Professor Morgan's daughter. You, what's your business?" she asked Schy, pointing at her.

"I'm Schylar Stapleton. I made arrangements to stay at his place for a week or so while I check out my family's old house place and looked at gravestones and stuff. Typical American genealogical visit stuff," Schy explained.

Mena nodded. "Right. I think I remember something about that," she said. "I just didn't realize that was this week," she said and rubbed her head again. "What about you?" she asked the other guy.

"I'm Enzi Teague. Professor Morgan will know why I'm here," he said.

Mena frowned again. Not at them but at the father who was miles away with his head in old books and scrolls. "Let's go," she said and gestured to the old pick-up truck parked nearby. "Two of you will have to ride in the back," she said and began leading the way.

"No problem," Enzi said.

"Yep. We'll ride in back," Neall said with a smile and slight bow toward Schy.

"Part of me wants to argue that even as a woman I am perfectly capable of sitting in the back of a pick-up truck for a while. But the rest of me doesn't want to keep getting wet. Water is not my element," Schy declared and slid into the passenger side of the truck.

Mena gave a little laugh. Neall just chuckled as he and Enzi climbed into the back of the truck. The mist was getting drearier and the sky was getting darker. It wasn't really going to be a pleasant ride, but he didn't really mind. Enzi didn't say much either way. They began driving toward the mysterious town of Sushi Clash.

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It was full dark, and the mist had turned into a solid rain by the time Mena pulled up to a large manor house that was in decent condition but looked tired. The boys were soaked, so Mena hurried them inside. "Hollsy!" she shouted, her voice echoing through the house. Presently a thin older man with a nose and wild tufts of white hair appeared. "We have guests. Take them to their rooms. When they've had a chance to dry off and warm themselves, bring them to the library for tea," she instructed the old butler. "Da is in the library, right?" she asked.

"Deed he is, miss. Where else would ye be findin' 'im is what I want ta know," Hollsy answered and then turned his attention to Schylar and the boys. "Follow me," he instructed. They didn't argue.

Mena went to the kitchen. "Mrs. Byrne, please prepare warm tea and a late dinner for me, Da, and three guests in the library," she instructed the plump elderly housekeeper, who was watching something on her hand screen.

"Sure as will, miss," Mrs. Byrne answered absently, but Mena knew Mrs. Byrne would get it done efficiently despite her addiction to trashy television dramas.

Finally, Mena went to the library to find her father. He wasn't hard to miss. Long black hair was tied behind his neck. Tall, thin and with a long nose, he looked more like a Tolkien or Rowlings wizard than a university professor, which is what his profession usually was. The description was more than apt for a Druid of the Old Ways. "Da," Mena said to get his attention.

Kieran Morgan fixed his bright blue gaze on her and blinked. "There ya are. Where'd y'go?" he asked and scratched his head. He looked out the window and seemed startled to find it already dark.

Mena sighed. "I went to the bus stop to pick up the gatekeeper, but he wasn't alone. There was a girl on a genealogy tour and another guy who said you'd know why he was here. He said his name was Enzi Teague," she said.

"Yes! The Teague's kept the Chalice. The Gatekeeper will need it," he explained, seeming to collect himself. "Schylar Stapleton is the great granddaughter of Deirdre Driscoll," he said. "It's just lucky coincidence that she's here at the moment," he said.

"Lucky coincidence that a descendent of the Kings of Kells is here when we're trying to open the Gateway to Tir Na Nog," Mena said, a touch of sarcasm in her voice.

Professor Morgan gave a bemused smile. "Well, I didn't think it could hurt," he said.

Having not been very wet, it hadn't taken Schylar very long to change into less damp and travel worn clothes. "A descendant of what now?" she demanded from the library door.

"Don't worry. Old historical, mythic stuff," Mena said offhandedly.

"In my family there's no such thing as 'old historical, mythic stuff'. That's how my dad became the lord of a clan of Japanese warriors dating back over a thousand years," she declared.

Professor Morgan looked at her, eyes bright with interest. "Really?" he asked. "Fascinating," he said.

"Da," Mena said. "No getting side-tracked," she warned.

"Oh. Well, it's a pleasure to meet you, Miss Stapleton. After speaking with your father on numerous occasions, he sounds like a fascinating fellow. I should like to meet him sometime as well," he said.

Schy nodded and came into the library. If she wasn't quite so travel worn, she'd ask more questions. "What's Tir Na Nog?" she asked.

"It's the Land of the Fairies," Professor Morgan answered enthusiastically.

"Actually, it's part of the Mystic Realm. It's a very old name for the Mystic Realm itself," Neall answered as he too came into the library. And not too far from here is the original tear between the realms, but when it was sealed off, a thousand years ago, the Land of the Fairies was sealed off as well," he explained.

Schylar nodded a bit. "Sure," she said. Not disbelieving but not knowing what else to say. Schylar believed in a lot, and she knew about Briarwood and the Mystic Realm in an offhand sort of way but had never been there.

"The Gatekeeper!" Professor Morgan rushed forward to shake his hand energetically. "I would have loved to meet your mother, but it's delightful to meet the first male Gatekeeper as well. How did that happen?"

"I was born first and Xandra can't use the Tiara," Neall answered, extracting his arm before it was shaken off.

"I suppose that would explain things, though it's not a first born thing, from what I understand. Udonna

was older than your grandmother," he said absently.

"Don't ask me. Magic works the way it works," Neall finally answered.

There was metallic rattle that drew everyone's attention as Mrs. Byrne brought in several dishes of food, plates, cups and a teapot on a serving cart. Enzi Teague walked slowly behind her. He was carrying a small box. "The Chalice!" Professor Morgan exclaimed and claimed the box.

"I hope it's the right one. Took me and my Daddy ages to find out which plantation house belonged to the Teague's back in the day and track down what went where after the restoration," Enzi explained.

Professor Morgan opened the box and pulled out a silver cup with runic etchings all around. It looked both old and brand new at the same time. There was a gleaming emerald set on the face of it. It gleamed as if intelligent. "This is definitely the right one. The Eye of King Fin Varra, as gifted to Deirdre of Kells before the tear between the realms was sealed," he said in quiet admiration.

He beamed. "Now we just need to wait until the moon is full," he said.

"Until then, let's eat. I'm famished and I'm sure our guests are as well," Mena said and invited everyone to sit and have tea and have something to eat.

Schylar knew this was none of her business but knowing the things she knew, she had to ask. "Are you sure opening this place up is a good idea? Wouldn't it have been sealed for a reason?" she asked.

"It was sealed away to stop the misuse of fairy magic by humans," Professor Morgan answered.

"Gatekeepers have been trying to open Tir Na Nog from our side for generations, but we finally realized what we were doing wrong," Neall explained. "This side is where the seal exists. So we needed to find the original opening and we also needed something from Tir Na Nog itself," he said.

Schy nodded slowly and smiled. They seemed to know what they were talking about.

Enzi just seemed lost. He had no idea what was going on. Suddenly his Daddy was sending him on a quest all over Louisiana to find a cup his white, slave owning ancestors had once owned. Now he was in Ireland with a bunch of crazy people talking about fairies and magic. Schylar seemed a little saner than the others though. "You understand what they're talking about?" he asked. He was surprisingly soft-spoken given his size and his parents. His Daddy had a voice that could shake walls when he whispered and his Momma was just loud and crazy.

"Slightly," she answered. "If you'll all excuse me. I've been traveling most of the day and I'm exhausted," she said and left the library. Not long afterward, Neall and Enzi turned in as well.

Mena and her father were left alone quietly. "What if she's right? What if there's a reason we're not aware of for sealing off Tir Na Nog?" she asked.

"There's nothing in the old writings to suggest that," Professor Morgan answered.

"The old writings may not be complete. Not every Druid in our line was adept at keeping up with them," she said.

"I'm sure there's nothing to worry about. Besides you heard the boy. The Gatekeepers have been trying for generations to open the way as well. They wouldn't do it lightly either. Never worry. Why don't you get some rest? We have a lot of preparations to make," he said.

Dubious, still, Mena relented as well and went up to bed.

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Schylar walked through an old graveyard full of headstones of her ancestors. Every now and then she would stop and take a rubbing. Though she noticed a couple of familiar names in an older part of the graveyard. "Teague and Bly," she said to herself. "Why doesn't that surprise me?" she said and narrowed her eyes. She gathered up her supplies and headed back to Professor Morgan's manor. The village wasn't very large so she could easily walk wherever she needed to go. She paused slightly when she started to pass the ruins of the old keep.

She wondered what the story was with that. She got the impression that though it was a pile of rubble now, it'd once held some great importance. Shaking off a vague feeling of ice running down her spine, she started on her way again. Her samurai senses were telling her that there was more secret power lying in wait in those ruins than in all of Stonehenge.

She began walking again and nearly jumped out of her skin when there was movement near the ruins. She automatically reached under the back of her shirt and pulled out a telescopic baton that she sheathed against her back, which she flicked out to full length. It was the approximate length and weight of the swords she was used to using.

Neall put his hands up and stepped forward where she could see him better. "It's just me," he said. "I wasn't trying to scare you. I was just looking at the ruins. They give me the heebies," he said and gestured toward the pile.

Schy relaxed. She pushed the baton back into its original shape and it disappeared behind her back again. "Me, too," she finally said.

Neall grinned slightly. "Didn't know you were in tune with the mystical world," he said.

Schy shook her head. "I'm not. Just well trained," she declared.

Neall cocked his head at her. He shrugged. He didn't know enough about her or how she was trained to say that wasn't true but there was definitely a mystical energy given off by this place.

"There's something definitely off around here. This is the point where my great granny Queen Marie would be talkin' about bad voo-doo and making all kinds of hand signs to ward off evil things," Enzi said as he approached the ruins and the other two and just for good measure, he did actually make a couple of the hand signals toward the ruins.



Neall smiled vaguely. "Maybe we should ask the Professor about them. I bet there's an interesting story," he said.

"Good luck getting a straight answer from the nutty Professor," Schylar said. "Oh, yeah, you guys should check out the graveyard. Interesting names there," she said and walked away from the ruins.

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As moonrise approached on the night of the full moon, the Professor and Mena were very busy in the library doing who knew what. Even when Neall, the one who would actually be opening the way to Tir Na Nog, tried to help, they assured him there was no need.

"What do the sisters think about you opening this thing up?" Schylar finally asked Neall.

Neall blinked. "The sisters? You know about the sisters?" he asked.

Schylar cocked her head. "You didn't know? Zita's my godmother," she answered. "So, I ask again; what do the sisters think about this whole thing?"

"Who are these 'sisters'?" Enzi asked. They were all sitting in the main parlor of the manor house. Enzi, though quiet and soft-spoken, didn't really like sitting still unless he was sleeping, so he was pretty much prowling around the room.

"Three magical sisters who keep the balance among white magic, dark magic and chaotic or gray magic. They're the Magical Triumvirate. They have a lot of say in the Mystic Realm. And if they weren't on board, I wouldn't be here," Neall assured Schy. "Though, is Zita really your godmother? How did that happen?" he asked.

"That is a long and complicated story. There's cherry trees and first born child type stuff involved," Schy said off handedly.

Mena joined them in the parlor. "Is the Gatekeeper prepared?" she asked.

Neall got to his feet. "Ready as I'll ever be," he said.

"Okay, we'll be leaving soon. And, if you lot don't mind, we'd prefer to have no interlopers," Mena said to Schylar and Enzi. She motioned for Neall to follow her. With a quick backwards smile and wave, Neall followed Mena and the professor as they left the manor.

Enzi glanced at Schylar. "You have no intention of staying behind, do you?" he asked.

"There's no reason for me to be worried about this. Its Repulsa approved. Neall doesn't seem to be worried and he knows more about this type of thing than I do," she answered and bit her lip.

"Let's go," Enzi said and grabbed for his hoodie thrown over the back of a chair. He didn't know much about all this stuff but he came from a long line of shaman and voo-doo practitioners. Aside from all that, he knew how to listen to his instincts. His instincts were telling him to listen to Schylar's instincts even

more so than Neall. Neall seemed like an okay guy, but a little too trusting and easy going.

Schy got to her feet as well. They left the house.

Enzi's time in the Louisiana swamps and African plains were not only about visiting his respective family members. Learning to hunt, track and stalk no matter the terrain was a huge part of his early learning, even before the intensive martial arts training a future Sol Reaver was required to go through. Despite his size, he hardly made a sound as he moved in the darkness.

Schylar on the other hand, began the martial arts first thing. Moving without a sound, not disturbing anything around her was ingrained into her very being. Though her family was heavy on the samurai, her dad is also command a legion of ninja. She picked up a few things there as well. Every now and then, in the mottled darkness, Enzi could see her seem to flicker before the struggling moon rays could fully reveal her location only to reappear for a few moments well ahead of where she'd been only seconds before.

She suddenly put up a hand and they stopped. "What's wrong?" Enzi asked.

"They went the wrong way," she whispered and knelt down. "They're headed toward the ruins. That's not where they should be going," she answered.

"How do you know?" he asked, crouching as well, seeing the tracks for himself.

"I've been all over this area the past few days. I found the seal. It had the same runic etchings as the Chalice you brought. It's in a clearing a few miles to the north. We need to hurry," she said and began moving again. Before they were just following along at leisurely pace, but now they were in a hurry.

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Neall carried a silver circlet used to activate his Gatekeeper powers. He was following Mena, holding the Chalice, and Professor Morgan who had a bunch of papers. He glanced up at the sky. The moon would be at its highest point soon. But where were they headed? Surely not the ruins. "Professor? The seal isn't here, right?" he asked.

Mena glanced at him questioningly. "Why do you say that? Where else could it be?" she asked. "This area has the highest convergence of mystical energy," she said.

Neall nodded slowly. "Yeah, but I don't think its good energy," he said and scratched the back of his head.

Professor Morgan waved a dismissive hand. "It's just powerful, that's all. It's Tir Na Nog after all," he said.

Neall nodded. Maybe Schylar's pessimism was getting to him. His mother, the former Gatekeeper and current White Sorceress, and the Magical Triumvirate had all signed off on doing this. They trusted Professor Morgan's reputation and his ability. Who was he to question the experts? He was just a kid.

Soon enough they arrived at the ruins. Professor Morgan began to speak in an ancient Gaelic language and bright, floating runes began appearing in the air.

"Da?" Mena said and looked at her father with a frown. There was something off about the runes he was calling.

Professor Morgan ignored her and set the Chalice on low crumbling wall of the ruins. The moon reached its apex and the floating runes and Eye of Fin Varra began to glow brightly in the moon light.

"Now, Gatekeeper!" Professor Morgan said loudly.

Neall took the silver circlet and put it on his head. The moonstone in the center began to glow brightly. In a bright flash of light dark purple and silver robes appeared around him. His eyes glowed briefly like living moonlight. He moved his arms in a ritualistic way. "Power of the Shining Moon! Behold the Gatekeeper!" He held out a hand and a long ornamental staff appeared in his hand.

The Eye of Fin Varra began to glow, another moonstone at the base of the head of the staff began to glow as well. The runes began to swirl, forming a spiral in front of the ruins between the Chalice and Staff. Neall's eyes flashed again. An arc of energy connected the two stones. Neall glowed in the moonlight as he channeled his energy into opening the barrier between dimensions.

"Stop! This is wrong place!" Schylar skidded to a stop as she beheld the sight before her. Enzi stopped just behind her, eyes wide.

"What do you mean?" Mena demanded.

"The seal is in an overgrown glade a few miles north of here. You didn't know?" Schy asked the other girl.

Mena didn't get a chance to answer. "It's too late to stop the process now. Soon the barrier to Tir Na Nog will indeed be open, but so will the barrier to the Isle of the Lost," Professor Morgan stated with a calm grin. Though nothing about his appearance changed, the air of the absent-minded scholar was gone.

"Da! No! The Isle of the Lost? What are you doing?" Mena demanded and moved away from her father.

Professor Morgan gave a laugh. "Dear sweet, Mena, your father hasn't been at the helm for quite some time. Somehow fitting, though, that the descendent of the meddling old druid Cathbad was to be the vehicle for the return of the Dark Faeries and Queen Nemain," he said.

Neall, could feel something had grabbed on to his power and was trying to redirect it in a way they wanted it to go. Sweat covered his whole body as he struggled for control.

"Who are you?" Mena demanded.

The face of Kieran Morgan glanced disdainfully at the young woman. "In all your learning, you surely know about Midar, my dear. I am Midar and after a thousand years, Midar finally managed to make himself present in this realm. Druids aren't what they used to be," he commented off-handedly.

Mena gasped and covered her mouth, eyes wide with shock.

"Neall, is there any way to stop what you're doing?" Schylar demanded of the glowing figure of the young man. Neall couldn't answer. It was taking his entire concentration to stop his power from being redirected.

Dark shadows began to seep out of the now glowing portal between the Chalice and Staff. Schy reached for her baton and flicked it out to full length.

Enzi cracked his knuckles since he didn't really have a weapon. He was coming to a sleepy Irish hamlet and didn't expect this kind of trouble.

The shadows gained form, mostly black with strange blank white faces. "Shadow Wraiths," Mena stumbled back from the figures.

"Just the first of the vast army Nemain and Midar have acquired on the Isle of the Lost all these many centuries," the evil fairy formerly known as Kieran Morgan stated with a wicked smile. "What a delightful accident that the Princess of Kells can be the first to fall," he said with a wild glee to his bright blue eyes.

"Yeah, well, assuming you mean me, I don't fall so easily," Schylar said and ducked as a Wraith came at her. She cracked the baton against its back and whirled to take on another one coming at her.

Wraiths also fell upon Enzi and Mena. The tall boy may not be armed, but a solid punch cracked through what appeared to be a brittle exoskeleton and out the back of one of the beings. It dissolved into shadows and he rounded another one and head-butted it, crushing its face.

Mena's main line of defense was watery healing magic. It wasn't much, but the Wraiths didn't seem to like it when she flung the energy at them. Still they kept coming. Enzi noticed her situation and jumped in front of her to cover her the best he could.

Meanwhile, Schy ran toward Neall. "We're going to try something. It may not be magic, but my spiritual energy should give you a boost," she said. Neall barely managed a nod. Schy took several deep breathes and calmed herself despite all that was happening around her. If there was one thing she knew how to do well, it was channel her ki.

"What are you doing? Stop!" Midar shrieked.

Neall felt Schylar's energy join with his as howling wind blew through the area. He was finally able to break free of whoever was trying to control his magic on the other side. Unfortunately it was too late to completely close the barrier back down. He only had one option and he went for it.

The people of the village of Sushi Clash could have sworn a horde of banshees descended upon them that night as wails and shrieks filled the air and a light like the moon exploding could be seen from the old ruins. Then all was silent as the moon disappeared and the mist crept in.

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Angel Grove, California

Tai Stapleton sat in his office of the Watanabe Bushido Studio making phone calls. It's been over twenty-four hours since he or anyone else last heard from his eldest daughter and he was worried. When he tried calling Professor Kieran Morgan, all he got was panicked servants who didn't know where their master was much less their young house guests.

After hanging up with the Irish authorities, he nearly broke his phone as his genetic super strength kicked-in without meaning too. Not only was his daughter missing, but so was Professor Morgan and his daughter and two other young men. No one knew what happened and all the locals could say was banshees and will-o-wisps. It was frankly frustrating. Someone knocked briskly on his door.

"Yeah," he called.

A man dressed in a black suit bowed to him when he opened the door. "Sir, Mistress Zita and an Ifetayo Teague are here to see you," he said.

Tai raised a brow. "Well that certainly is interesting," he said. "Let them in," he said even as Zita Repulsa was already pushing her way past the man in black.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah. No time for that, we have a problem and my goddaughter is smack dab in the middle of it. I suppose her son is as well," Zita said without preamble and gestured to the other woman.

The two couldn't be more different. Zita Repulsa was a slim Asian featured woman with a dark pseudo-Victorian sense of style. Not short or tall, yet she gave off an air of power.

Ifetayo Teague was a tall, statuesque black woman in an expensive looking suit. Her hair was a cacophony of braids that were pulled into a single thick plait. She eyeballed Zita warily. "What do you know about my son, space witch?" she demanded.

Zita raised a brow. "Don't you know, Reaver, I haven't been a space witch in ages," she remarked.

Tai sighed and rubbed the bridge of his nose. "Okay," he said sharply, gaining both women's attention. "Fey, welcome to the Studio. It's been awhile. I didn't realize the young man Schy mentioned was your son. Zita seems to have answers, so let's hear her out," he said calmly.

Though Fey was nearly a decade older than he was, she obeyed and sat down in a couch in the small seating arrangement on the other side of his office. Zita sat as well, opposite her. Tai joined them, sitting at the bend of the u-shaped arrangement. "Does this have something do with what Schylar termed "weird magicky stuff" that she thought was kind of dodgy?" he asked.

Zita sighed. "She is your daughter isn't she?" she said with a slight smile. "Honestly, there shouldn't have been anything dodgy about it at all. I don't think it was the magic she found dodgy. I think it was Professor Morgan," she said.

"Are you going to explain in a way that makes sense?" Fey demanded.

"I'm just as worried about Schylar and Neall as you are your son," Zita told her sharply. The two glared at each other.

Tai cleared his throat. "Zita, please," he said patiently.

Zita fidgeted. "It was a simple task. There's a part of the Mystic Realm that's been sealed off for over a thousand years. It's called Tir Na Nog and is the oldest part of the Realm. We were trying to open it. Mother, my sisters, myself and Clare all did the research and discovered the barrier was in the terrestrial realm. We discovered Professor Morgan was the Druidic Guardian of the seal. His ancestor, the King of Tir Na Nog, and the Gatekeeper at the time all worked together to close the way to stop the misuse of fairy magic by humans."

"So, what went wrong?" Tai asked.

Zita shook her head. "My sisters and I investigated. We were betrayed by someone, and my educated guess is Professor Morgan. Instead of the actual seal to Tir Na Nog, he instead had Neall open a gateway to the Isle of the Lost, which is where Dark Fairies and evil human magicians were banished to," she said.

"Which prompted the whole, seal it off to stop the misuse of fairy magic, I'm guessing," Tai said. "So what happened to my daughter?" he asked.

"And my son?" Fey added sharply.

Zita frowned. "From the traces we've been able to ascertain that some dark magic began to seep through, but someone joined their power with Neall's and he was able to seal the Gateway behind him, but not before everyone in the area was sent to Tir Na Nog," she said. "So, good news is that they're all probably alive. Bad news is that the gateway there can never be reopened again. More good news, the way to Tir Na Nog is open in the Mystic Realm. Bad news is that the Mystic Realm is huge and we don't have airplanes. It will take a while to get to them, find them and bring them back. More bad news is they probably landed in a war between Good and Evil." She tried to smile brightly and add one more positive note. "Good news is that Neall's a wizard and Schy is your daughter! If anyone can survive a war between good and evil it's them!"

Fey deflated slightly. "You really think my boy is alive?" she asked the crazy former space witch.

Zita nodded. "I'm positive. There was nothing to indicate that they're not alive. They're just hard to reach right now," she assured the other woman almost kindly.

"Who's this Neall you keep mentioning?" Tai asked.

"Oh, he's the Gatekeeper and the son of the current White Sorceress of Rootcore," Zita answered. "I just wanted to let you know that Schylar was alive and that we're sending a party to find her and everyone else trapped in Tir Na Nog," she said.

Tai got to his feet and walked out of the office. Zita and Fey hurried and followed him. "What are you

thinking?" Zita demanded.

He stopped and turned toward her. "I'm going to Briarwood, but I need to make a few arrangements first and whoever you send, I want one of my people in the party," he stated.

"Me, too," Fey said.

"Neall's a Bly," Zita told Fey. "Hayden is probably already aware of things and is meddling as we speak," she said.

Tai stopped and turned toward Zita. "Are you telling me that all three of the missing kids who have just been plunged into a war between good and evil are Legacies?" he asked.

"Well, technically, Fey's son--"

"Is blood related to Nyo, Wood and TJ. He is a Legacy. You better than most people know that coincidences like this do not happen for no reason. We aren't sending a rescue party. We're scouting auxiliary Power Rangers," he stated and walked out of the Studio to the outdoor practice area where students in gray gi-like outfits were attending a lesson on the dual Sword technique. The black trim on the gray uniforms told him that they were very advanced students.

Leading the lesson was their guest instructor, a young man with black hair and blue eyes and the stamp of a Hart written all over his pretty face. He stopped mid demonstration when he saw Tai and Zita and the other woman he didn't know. Just Tai and Zita were enough to make Max Hart motion for the students to be at rest and bow to their master. Tai bowed back and motioned for Max them.

"Doesn't he work for S.P.D.?" Zita asked as she eyeballed him.

"I do. What's wrong? Is this about Schy? Did you find her?" Max asked Tai. He had to admit to being rather wary around Zita. His last dealing with the sisters still left an impression.

Tai held up a hand to silence him. "I'm not sending Max," he told Zita. Max had to be back to work at the end of the week. It was just luck that since Max was stationed on Earth, he was able to devote a couple of weeks each summer to teach the class. The boys are with Grandpa in the mountains and Em's too young, so I need a recommendation," he told Max and nodded toward the crowd of advanced students.

Max understood that whatever was happening, he couldn't help. It sucked since Schy was like a sister to him, but he had his duty to S.P.D. as well. "Well, there is someone. It's probably the same someone you're thinking of," he said. Max knew Tai well enough to know that he didn't miss anything.

Tai looked over the group. Most of the advanced students were older than Max's nineteen. Most in their twenties, some in their thirties. That's how it'd been as long as the Studio began offering the advanced training courses. Only one student had about a month ago who was about the same age came to the Studio and signed up for the advanced classes. Tai had rarely seen specs like his in recent years and was intrigued enough to test the kid himself. If there hadn't been a nearly twenty-five year gap in experience and knowledge, the kid would have been quite formidable.

Instead of being belligerent that a guy in his forties so easily bested him despite all his training, he'd just grinned and bowed down and asked to be his apprentice. Jarrett Donovan was an odd kid, but a likeable one. Tai thought of himself a good judge of character and the kid had character.

"Jett!" Max called out to the crowd. He motioned him forward. "Bring Schy home safe," he said to Tai and went back to the practice area, effectively trading places with Jarrett Donovan.

Not overly tall, but not short either, Jett was of mostly Korean descent. His eyes were dark and slightly too long hair was pulled away from his face. He was wide at the shoulders and athletic looking. He bowed to Tai. "You wanted me for something, seonsaengnim?" he asked, still bowed slightly.

Zita had been eying him before Max ever called him forward. "How do you feel about going on a quest through a mystical realm to rescue a princess?" she asked him.

Jett looked up at them, confusion written all over his face.

"She's joking, no princesses to be rescued," Tai said.

Zita shook her head. "Oh, no, Red Lord. I'm perfectly serious. According to the records we found at Professor Morgan's house, you're the King of Kells," she said. "Thus making my god daughter a princess. It's fitting. My god daughter should be a princess, after all," she added with a smirk. "I like this one. He'll be a fine knight in shining armor for her," she said. "Pack your bags, kid. You're off to Briarwood," she told him.

Tai rubbed his forehead. "Lord of Shiba Clan, King of Kells. If you tell me I'm the Emperor of the Galactic Empire at this point, I won't even blink," he said and walked off to find Lani and let her know everything that was going on.

"I wouldn't doubt it myself!" Zita called after him with a laugh.

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2031 Tir Na Nog (Mystic Realm)

Schy groaned and opened her eyes. Sunshine poured down on her through the leaves of trees. She was laying on her back in the middle of a forest. She blinked her eyes and sat up. Her head pounded and she grunted in pain again. She tried to get her bearings and remember what happened. She got to her feet, putting aside the pain throbbing behind her eyes. She saw movement nearby but when she turned her head, whatever or whoever it was was out of sight. She rubbed her eyes and found her baton.

She looked around as she put it back in its holster. She didn't see anyone else, but surely she wasn't alone here, wherever this was. She cracked her fingers and slashed the air. Briefly a character shimmered there and then wind swirled around her as she brought sounds to her. By combining Shiba Clan and Elemental Ninja techniques she was able to use her ki to control the wind. She could hear small animals, whatever creatures were watching her, and finally the sounds of three other people breathing and their hearts beating.



She began running toward the nearest breather. It was Enzi. She shook him gently. His eyes popped open. He was gripping the silver Chalice in one hand so tightly it was nearly crushed. He sat up groaning. "What happened? Where are we?" he asked.

Schylar shook her head. "I'm hoping Neall can tell us when I find him. Can you get up? Hurt anywhere?" she asked.

Enzi got to his feet and shook himself like a huge dog. "I'm a Teague. We can take more than that," he said and gave a wide grin.

Schy nodded. "Come on," she said and began heading toward the next nearest person. Mena was sprawled face down in a clearing. She had a few cuts and scratches but was otherwise in one piece. She didn't respond when Schy tried to wake her up, so Enzi just scooped her into his arms and continued following Schy, who at least seemed to have some idea what she was doing.

Neall was further away than Enzi and Mena had been. She finally found him in a clearing and for a brief moment, she saw several small faces watching over him before disappearing. She ran over to him and crouched, checking his breathing and pulse. He was very pale but everything else seemed ok. What was left of his circlet was nearby. It was blackened and cracked, but the moonstone seemed intact. Enzi lay Mena down nearby. "You see the tiny people, too, right?" he asked Schylar.

She nodded. "I see them. I'm guessing their Fairies and we somehow ended up in Tir Na Nog," she said. "What worries me a bit is that I don't hear Professor Morgan or whoever he claimed to be anywhere close," she said. "We need some water," she said. "Watch over them, I'll find some," she said. She slashed the air again, and closed her eyes. Wind swirled around them, she closed her eyes and searched for the taste, smell or sound of water. She finally found it. She grabbed the Chalice, since it was pretty much still cup like.

Enzi watched as she seemed to flicker away. "That girl is something else," he declared in admiration. He jumped out of his skin when Neall suddenly bolted upright, eyes glowing wildly for a moment.

He blinked several times and the glow faded. He looked around, seeing Enzi and Mena, and his gaze finally landing on the circlet. He slowly reached for it, aghast. "Hundreds of Gatekeepers before me, and I'm the one who breaks this," he complained. He fished the moonstone out of other pieces and put it in his pocket.

Schylar came back with the water. "Good, you're awake, maybe you can tell us what happened," she said to Neall as she knelt beside Mena. She lifted her head and carefully gave her some water. Mena sputtered and came awake at that. She looked around wildly. Schylar then passed the cup to Neall, who took a healthy drink before passing it to Enzi to finish off.

"Yeah, sorry about that. I kind of had to make a call and seal off the Gateway before it opened fully. From this side and everyone got sucked in with me. I sort of threw Professor Morgan toward the dark magic that was trying to manipulate my power, and tried to fling the rest of us in the opposite direction," he explained.

"So does that mean we're trapped in another realm?" Enzi asked.

Neall shook his head. "No. I managed to connect Tir Na Nog to the rest of the Mystic Realm again. But the Wood is a long way from here," he answered. "There's also the Isle of the Lost problem," he added.

"Yeah, what is that?" Schylar asked.

Mena sighed. "It's where Dark Magicians and Dark Fairies were banished to a thousand years ago when Tir Na Nog was sealed off. Somehow Midar's influence managed to seep through and possess me Da," she explained sadly.

"How was that possible?" Neall demanded. He felt stupid and angry for being used like that.

Schy stood. "Scratch at a stone wall for a thousand years and you're bound to make a hole," she stated and stretched. "We should find some food and then figure out which way to go to get home," she said. "Anyone know how to make or use a sling?" she asked. She wondered if it was possible to summon a blade here.

Neall and Mena objected at the same time, earning curious glances from Enzi and Schy. "You can't kill and devour the flesh of animals in Tir Na Nog. It's an insult against nature," Mena said.

"Do I look like somebody that can survive on nuts and berries?" Enzi asked and gestured to himself.

"Just until we leave the boundaries of Tir Na Nog, you'll have to. I'll start foraging," Neall said.

Enzi sighed. "I'll help," he said. He was used to making due in the swamps or the savannah and sometimes meat wasn't an option. The two boys left the clearing.

Schylar sighed and sat back down next to Mena. "Sorry about your dad," she said lamely. Mena just nodded vaguely. She wrapped her arms around bent knees and rested her head on them.

Figuring that conversation wasn't in the offing, Schy got to her feet again and began to test the limitations of her ability to summon things here.

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Schy was discouraged some time later, after a feast of fruits, nuts and roots and futile attempts to summon anything close to a weapon. It was also just sad, because that meant she was just too far away from her Dad, the Red Lord and his connection to whatever made Character Power work. Luckily, she was taught never to depend on the metaphysical, when the real world provided answers. Using a strip of material from her over shirt and several rocks, she managed to fashion a crude but effective knife.

After she'd fashioned the knife she cut some firewood for the night to come and the forests around them provided several good branches to fashion spears and staffs. Those were easy enough with her ki control. Stripping bark and smoothing the wood with blades of air was a cinch. Mena was watching in silent fascination the whole time. "Are you preparing for war?" she asked finally.

"I'm in a strange place with an unknown amount of hostiles. Yes, I'm preparing for war," Schylar

answered and passed out her make-shift weapons.

Neall was impressed. "How'd you learn how to do this kind of thing?" he asked. He took a sharp spear and a sturdy staff that was about the size of the one he'd wielded as the Gatekeeper. "Wow," he said and gave it a couple of experimental swings.

She handed a spear and staff to Enzi. She'd actually used a young tree for his staff for the weight and size. Enzi was impressed. "How'd you know I used a heavier weapon?" he asked.

Schy gave a wan smile. "Knowing how to make weapons is part of the family business. So is sizing up allies and opponents," she answered vaguely. She didn't bother giving Mena a spear, and her staff was light and slim. "I'll show you some basic moves later. It'll be dark soon," she said.

"I should probably try and place some protective wards," Neall said, though he knew he was low on juice. Closing the Gateway had all but drained him.

"I can do that. You should rest more," Mena said and got to her feet. She could at least do this much to be useful. She was glad that none of the others seemed to be blaming her for any of this or what her father did. She let out a squeak when she started toward the forest and stumbled back. Neall, Schy and Enzi were on their feet. Small people around two feet tall were surrounding them.

"Are you really humans?" A small woman dressed in browns and oranges flew toward them on gossamer wings. "After so long?" she circled them.

"We are. I'm Neall. I'm the Gatekeeper and a wizard of the Mystic Realm," he greeted. "Who are you?" he asked.

"I am Aideen," she said and curtsied mid-air. "We'll send them to the Court!" she called to the other fairies. They all began to take flight and glow and sparkle. They began circling the humans, enveloping them a cage of fairy magic that both blinded and disoriented them before presently disappearing them from the clearing and leaving no trace of them behind.

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Schy was getting tired of waking up in strange places after strange events. At least this time it was comfortable. A small stone room, a cushy bed, a breakfast of oatmeal and toast and orange juice waiting for her, a hot bath and even a change of clothes. Fairy Land had its perks. She took advantage of the bath and happily discarded her old crusty clothes for the ones provided for her. Supple leather boots, supple leather pants, a supple leather corset even that appeared to be reinforced with something to give her some added protection. Over that she threw a dark brown-pink overdress that had a hood and fell around her legs in four panels to allow her ease of movement. Over that was a thick leather belt.

She found a set of weapons waiting for along with a pack that seemed to hold much more than the small bag should have. Extra clothes, food, water skins, blankets, and anything else someone might need for the road was packed easily inside. Her weapons consisted of the staff she'd cut for herself, only had been stained a cherry color and intricately carved with Celtic symbols, but it felt like the one she picked out. There was a sleek single bladed sword that was approximately the same length and weight of her

preferred sword back home. There was even an accompanying tanto. These were sheathed in a harness that went over her back.

She looked in the back again and eventually found her baton. She felt better with a sword on her back. She slung the pack on her shoulder opposite her new sword. "Time to meet my hosts and find the others," she said to herself. She opened the door and stopped short. A tiny woman was waiting for her.

"Greeting, your highness. King Fin Varra would like you and your friends to join him in the main hall." she said with a small courtesy.

Schy nodded slowly. "Your highness? What?" she asked as she followed the woman now fluttering ahead of her on gossamer wings. She didn't receive an answer. In fact she had to hustle to keep up with the woman.

They finally entered what appeared to be a main hall of a castle or keep hewn from rock and golden wood. It was richly decorated and giant fireplaces seemed to keep the temperature at an optimal level. On a dais stood a small, pudgy man in golden robes with a shock of white hair and a pointy white beard. Standing before the man were her three new companions. They were all freshly cleaned, newly attired and well equipped.

Mena wore a light colored dress with flowy sleeves, a good and laces in the front over a darker blue under dress. She carried a pack and her staff, which had also been stained the color of ash and intricately carved, but no other weapons. Her long dark hair was being intricately braided by small excited women even as she stood waiting.

Neall and Enzi were attired similarly. Supple leather boots, linen pants in earth tones, lighter colored shirts under protective leather vests with hooded over jackets that were part shirt, part cloak. Enzi's was a mottled, dark tan/yellow and Neall's was an earthy maroon. Their staffs had undergone the same treatment as the others. They'd also been armed. A double-bladed European sword hung at Neall's side with an elegant hilt and handle. Several throwing daggers decorated his belt on the other side. Enzi had a quiver of arrows and a large, intricate bow lung across his back.

Fin Varra spotted Schy approaching and brightened. "Your Highness! Good, you're all here now," he said.

Schy gave a polite bow. "Greetings to our host," she said.

The little man clapped his hands and gave her bow with quite a flourish. "King Fin Varra, Princess. 'Tis a right pleasure to make your acquaintance," he said jovially enough.

Schy shook her head. "I don't know about this 'princess' and 'your highness' business," she said. "My name is Schylar Stapleton," she said.

Fin Varra was nodding. "Aye. I understand. Schylar Stapleton, Princess of Kells," he agreed.

"No, sir. No titles. Well, future Vassal of Heaven--"

"Aye, daughter of the Red Lord, King of Kells; daughter of the Vassal of Heaven, Queen of Kells," Fin Varra was nodding again. "I am aware," he said as if Schy wasn't trying to argue with him.

She pressed her lips together and just gave an accepting nod of her head. Neall gave her an amused grin, Mena was expressionless and Enzi just seemed confused.

"Now then children," Fin Varra said, suddenly serious. The chatter and tittering of the fairies in the hall went quiet. All eyes swung to Fin Varra. "As I am sure ye all are aware, the barriers around the Isle of the Lost were opened recently," he said and gave Neall a look. It wasn't an accusing look. It was rather gentle and understanding. He passed the same look to Mena now. Her dark skin went dusky and she looked at the ground.

"What do we do about it now?" Schy asked before he could start speechifying. Her dad was the king of speechifying. She recognized it coming from a mile away.

Fin Varra seemed ruffled for a moment. He cleared his throat. "I know 't isn't right to ask ye, princess, or ye Master Enzi, to get involved in this fight, but we need humans to fight this battle and ye be the only humans to step foot in Tir Na Nog in o'er a thousand years," he said.

Schy held up a hand. "Just tell us what we need to do now and what we're fighting and how we're fighting it," she said.

Fin Varra harrumphed quietly. "Dark Fairies, led by Midar and a human sorceress by the name of Nemain were banished to the Isle of the Lost when Tir Na Nog was sealed away. They haven't been idle and we're nae all together sure what all they've done o'er there, but I do know that Nemain wants to get back to the Terrestrial Realm and conquer it and Midar wants Tir Na Nog.

"Now they're free to leave the Isle. Forces are already beginning to converge on us, but we believe the majority of the Lost are headed to the only way out of Mystic Realm now."

"The Wood. Are you saying that because of me, an army of unknowable Dark Things is heading toward the Wood?" Neall asked, abashed.

"Not because of you. Because of me Da," Mena said quietly.

Fin Varra shook his head. "'T isn't the fault of any of you. All blame can be placed upon the head of Midar," he declared. He took a deep breath and puffed out his small chest. He tugged thoughtfully on his beard. "Though not all the forces are turned toward us, 'twould be enough ta pave the way for Midar to take over Tir Na Nog when he was ready. For a Dark Fairy to sit me throne, 'twould poison all magic in this Realm and the Terrestrial Realm. Even the Sisters, the White Wizard and the Librarian would be affected," he said.

"Wow. You're well informed about things for being sealed away for a millennium," Neall commented.

"We have our ways," Fin Varra said demurely.

"I guess it would be bad if these people were affected?" Enzi asked Neall quietly. Even Mena was

looking at him with some confusion.

"Well, as we told you before, the Sisters keep the magical balance. The Librarian is a powerful alien sorceress who's basically only on the side of Good because people she loves are. As for the White Wizard going dark..." Schy trailed off and bit her lip.

"Every active Power Ranger in the universe would be affected by extension. He's the magical bridge between physical existence and the Morphing Grid," Neall summed up grimly.

Enzi gave a low whistle. Mena's eyes grew as big as saucers.

"But is it really possible for Taran to go dark? I mean, he was Z-Waved," Schy asked.

Fin Varra paced a few moments. "He wouldn't turn evil. His magic would be effected. He'd either have to completely cut us off from the Grid or every Power Ranger would be Dark," he explained. "Aye, 'tis a tricky situation to say the least. That's why we're needin' ye," he said once he finally stopped pacing.

Enzi nodded. "You have us. Me, anyway. This kind of thing, I've been training for it my whole life," he said and took a knee.

Neall took a knee as well. "Blame who you want, but this is partly my fault and the Mystic Realm is part of me," he said.

Mena quickly knelt. "I'll do everything in my power to fix the damage my father caused," she swore.

Schy knelt last, not that she was unwilling, but that she rarely took to the ground for anyone besides Dad and Grandpa. She didn't lower her head either. "As you noted, your fairness, I'm the daughter of the Red Lord. I know my duty in situations like this. What do we do now?" she asked.

Fin Varra clapped his hands together again. "You have been equipped with weapons that suit your individual styles. A healer, a hunter, a warrior-wizard and a samurai. Leave your packs here. Once you defeat those encroaching 'pon our home, we'll be needin' ye to wake the Cosantoir. They will guard Tir Na Nog while you travel toward the Wood to stop Nemain and Midar from escaping. The Cosantoir will also give you aid when you need them. They are nae easily won over, especially Pyre," Fin Varra explained.

Suddenly a fairy in armor flew in and landed in front of the King. "Sire, the Lost are getting closer. We need them now," he said urgently.

Fin Varra sucked in a deep breath and let it out slowly. He waved a hand and runes shone in the air above each of the humans. "Light from you. Forest before you. Earth beneath you. Water around you. Air above you. Fire within you," he said like a blessing or a prayer. The runes glowed brighter and became cloudy gray orbs. The humans stood and each took an orb. They glowed brightly and became braces upon their upper arms.

"Your journey begins now. If you've looked in your packs, everything you need has been provided for. Sir Neall, you know the Mystic Realm best. We provided a map for you. Once you pass our borders,

Master Enzi, you may eat meat once again," Fin Varra said with a slight smile. "Druid Mena, do not dwell so upon the sins committed by Midar while wearing the face of your father. Remember, you and he are both descendant from a line of powerful Druids and you both now within the Mystic Realm. You're magic comes from nature and not fairies. Even now, a battle may be raging for control of Professor Kieran Morgan," he said with the assurance of a kindly uncle.

Finally, his bright blue gaze found Schylar. "The people of Kells and Tir Na Nog have always had an inter-connected destiny. Be the Princess and lead your people. Be the daughter of Red Lord and the King of Kells. Believe in yourself, your comrades and magick," he said gravely.

Schy nodded firmly. She spun on her heels, the tails of her overdress flapping with the movement. "Let's go protect the universe," she said to the others. The warrior fairy zipped ahead of them to lead the way of Fin Varra's court.

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A small battalion of dark figures could be seen from a distance. Upon leaving King Fin Varra's Court, a backward glance revealed nothing but a green glade with sunlight shining upon it. The armored fairy had assumed full size. He led the four humans to where the warrior fairies were gathered.

"What's the situation?" Schy asked a warrior fairy that seemed to be in charge.

"Shadow Wraiths, a few Golems, a contingent of Elite Dark Warriors and three Dracon," he answered.

Enzi was studying the movements of the enemy. "Weaknesses?" he asked. "In particular weak spots," he amended.

"Most Dracon have tough nearly impenetrable scales, but if you can get them in the eye or inside the mouth, they'll go down. They aren't as large as dragons, but the smaller size makes them a harder target. With Golems, the only way to stop one is to tear it apart enough that it can't reassemble itself and the magick holding it together disperses," Neall explained.

The Fairy General nodded. "Shadow Wraiths are fast but mindless. They'll fight until you stop them," he explained.

"We found that out the hard way," Schy said dryly. "What about these Elite Dark Warriors?" she asked.

"Dark Fairies trained to be soldiers like us. We'll take care of them," the General stated.

Schy was silent awhile as she counted the fairies in black armor. "What if you can't?" she asked.

Mena sighed. "What the General actually doesn't want to tell you is that Nature Magick is the best defense against Fairies, Dark or otherwise," she stated. The General made a disgruntled sound but didn't disagree.

"You mean elemental stuff?" Schy asked. Mena nodded. "Right then," she said. "Enzi, do you have a position scouted?" she asked.

Enzi gave smile. "How'd you guess?" he asked and unslung the bow from his back and pulled a string out of pouch. Though it seemed impossible, he bent the bow enough to string it. He left the group to get in the best position to fire his arrows.

Mena was a little surprised. "You lot do realize I don't know how t'fight?" she prompted.

Neall didn't face her when he answered. "You heard Fin Varra. You're in the Mystic Realm now. You're magic should be stronger than you ever imagined. I don't know much natural magic, so you stay close to me. Right flank?" he asked Schy.

Schy nodded. "I'll take the left. Be wary though. These kinds of situations, there's a trump card down there somewhere," she stated. She glanced at the General. "We have the advantage if we go now. If they get any closer, it could be very bad," she said.

The General nodded. He gave a signal with his hands and from each end of the line of warrior fairies, a horn sounded. The line began advance with weapons drawn. The Elites drew weapons as well and began advancing faster. Like sleek black lizards, the dracon slipped through the line. One raised its sinuous head and prepared to snap its strong jaws at one of the warrior fairies. A sound like a giant fly preceded a large arrow thunking hollowly into the red eye of the creature.

Schy left the dracon to Enzi. She had her eye on the golems. Ten foot tall and made of earth and stone, they were slow and ambling, but strong. Swipes of their disproportionately large, club-like hands sent warrior fairies tumbling through the air, and not an intentional way. She drew her sword and dove into the battle. Wraiths swarmed around her. She slashed them with her blade and kicked them away. The Wraiths were a nuisance. The Golems were the problem.

Several Wraiths converged and knocked her sword from her grasp and she took several hits, going down hard. She grabbed one's leg and pulled him off balance, making him crash into another. She sprang into a crouch and spun around several times, using her hands to balance a series of sweeping kicks that cleared a general area around her. She stood slowly and glared at a Golem.

It tilted its head and glared back. Even though its eyes were rocks she knew it was glaring. He swept a hand at her. She tried to dodge but he wasn't as slow as he seemed. She landed on her back near her sword. She stood up, gritting her teeth and gripping her sword. "Hey, lunkhead, let me show you what it means for me to be daughter of the Vassal of Heaven," she said and ran forward with a shout. She jumped high and began to spin really fast and channel her ki at the same time, creating a funnel of air. She went down hard, using her sword to slice him in two while the tornado she created blew him away like dust.

"Golem dispersal; check," she declared. Whether the warrior fairies would admit it or not, they needed help so she ran to their aid against the Elite Dark Warriors.

Once Enzi took out the first Dracon, a sharp eyed Dark Fairy pointed out his location and sent a bevy of Wraiths his way. He slung his bow over her shoulder and used his staff to take out the Wraiths coming at him. He needed a new position. The Dracon were doing some serious to the Fairy Forces and the warriors weren't having much luck scoring a hit.



Enzi scaled a thick trunked tree with strong limbs. He'd almost seemed to be running away from the battle. In reality, he'd gotten a better sense of his new bow's capabilities. He unslung it and drew a heavy arrow from the quiver. If he wasn't currently watching a battle between fairies, living dirt creatures, and small dragons, he'd wonder how the fairies knew what his capabilities were. They were fairies. He figured that was enough of an answer for him.

He drew back the string. He took a deep breath and watched for a moment as one of the Dracon ravaged one of the warrior fairies. Though he longed to interfere, he held still, waiting for his chance. They would be better served for him to get a shot, not wasting his arrows. When the Dracon lifted his head triumphantly, Enzi let his breath and released the arrow. The Dracon let out a sick roar and collapsed.

Dark Warriors began firing their own arrows at him, but he was already on the move again. The warriors weren't what he needed to be worried about. The final Dracon seemed to have realize that it was in danger and he was the danger. Abandoning the buffet of good fairies, it came at Enzi directly like a streak of oily black lightning.

It lashed out with its tail and sent him flying in one direction, his bow and staff veering off in opposite directions. Enzi grunted and tried to reclaim his breath. The Dracon watched him with wicked intent. A forked tongue flicked out in a snake-like manner. The corners of Enzi's mouth stretched, revealing his teeth at the creature. "I've wrestled bigger gators than you in my great grandmammy's back yard," he stated. He charged the dracon.

The dracon roared and charged him right back. They collided and went rolling down a hill. The dracon kept trying to bite and swipe at him, but had a hold on its head. When they stopped rolling, the dracon began to thrash around, trying to break the young man's hold on him.

Enzi straddled the dracon's neck and used his upper body to keep his head pinned to the ground. With his freehand he reached for an arrow and drove it through the top of the creature's head and into the ground. It finally stopped thrashing. He sat up and wiped his forehead with the back of his hands. All the dracon were down but he could still hear the battle. It was time to stop playing the long game. He began running back up the hill to rejoin the fight.

Mena discovered the beauty of her staff. The way it had been cut and weighed was perfect for a novice who seemed to only know how to swing and jab. Primary school rounders games were starting to resurface in her memory as well. Though shaped differently than a bat, she remembered she'd actually been pretty good at it. The runes that had been carved into it, also had a practical use than just making it look pretty.

Like Neall had said, she could feel that she was more powerful than she had been before. Sometimes when her staff connected with an enemy, a bluish light would cause much more damage than just her blow alone would have.

Neall set his staff aside and drew his sword. He gave it an experimental slash and twist. It was perfectly designed for him and his style of sword fighting. He slashed through the Wraiths that surrounded him. A few Dark Warriors came at him as well but he managed to fend them off. Warrior Fairies came to his aid

with them. He also guarded Mena's back. They recognized her as a novice fighter very easily.

The Wraiths and the warriors were less of a problem than the two Golems that decided to pick on the two of them. One used a big hand to swat them. Neall managed to avoid and cut off the hand that came at him, but Mena was sent flying. Neall tried to move quickly enough to catch her, but he was too slow.

Luckily, Enzi was just coming up the hill after killing off the final Dracon. He caught Mena against his chest. She honestly wasn't sure of hitting the ground would have been better. He set her on her feet. "Thank you," she said.

"No sweat," he assured her.

Neall watched the handless Golem's hand reattach itself. He glanced at Mena. "I have an idea," he said. He said a few words in a language in a language that was a little like Latin but also little like Gaelic as he held out a hand. Flames bloomed in his hands and he ran forward and threw it one of the Golems. It hit the chest and the creature exploded with a boom.

Mena knew that spell but she'd never known it to be so powerful. She held out a hand and said the words herself. A wild whirlpool of water began to swirl in her hands. She flung it at the other Golem, discus style. When it hit, it became much larger and more and more water began pulling apart the dirt creature until nothing was left except clumps of wet mud. Mena gasped. "I've never produced anything like that before," she said.

Schylar joined them, sheathing her sword. "It's probably because you're in the Mystic Realm. I might be too distant from my dad for Mojikara to work for summoning objects, but my elemental control seems to have been magnified," she said. The fight was dying down now. Very few Elite Dark Warriors were left and the golems had been turned to top soil and the Dracon into oily black spots on the ground.

Suddenly a horn sounded, a hair raising cacophonous sound, and suddenly the Lost forces drew back. A fairy in more important looking armor strode forward. "This battle is not won. Midar will have Tir Na Nog!" he declared. He began to change shape, his features and body twisting and distorting into something monstrous. Pig like, with three tusks jutting up from its lower jaw. Beady red eyes peering wildly from above a pig-like snout. More Shadow Wraiths began to appear. "Surrender to General Trifang and you may yet live!" he shouted.

"Is this the trump card?" Enzi asked Schylar. "I've seen some ugly aliens in my day but this might top 'em all," he commented.

"Have you ever seen a troblin?" Neall asked. Mena just made a small noise.

"This is the escalation," Schy stated. She strode forward. "We will never let Midar have Tir Na Nog," she said and used her right hand to touch the jewel on her left upper arm. "Air above me!" A glowing white rune appeared in front of her, clearly meaning "air". It wrapped around her forming a skirted power suit. It was mostly gray with a white area through the torso like a tunic. White topped gray boots and gloves formed. A white and silver belt with a runic design appeared. The silver bands remained on her upper arms. Lastly a very generic gray helmet formed. Silver surrounded a slightly angled visor and a v-shaped mouth-piece formed below it. Over her heart a circle emblem appeared with her elemental Mystic Rune

embossed upon it.

Following her lead Enzi swiped his hand over his jewel. "Earth beneath me!" An "earth" rune appeared and enveloped him, forming his power suit and helmet.

Mena let out a quick breath and followed the motion. "Water around me!" A "water" rune appeared and enveloped her, forming her power suit and helmet.

Neall swiped his hands over his jewel. "Fire within me!" A "fire" rune appeared and enveloped him, forming his power suit and helmet.

Each suit was a slightly different shade of gray, as if whatever color they were supposed to be was gray scaled. Their helmets were also all the same with no variation except for color. Each elemental rune over their hearts was different. "Mystic Knights! Defenders of Tir Na Nog!" they proclaimed together.

"This was unexpected," Fire Ranger declared as he glanced down at himself and glanced at his comrades.

"A bit," Air Ranger agreed. "No time to worry about it now," she said and ran toward the monstrous Dark Fairy General. Though he was armed with a large double-bladed axe, she held out a hand. Her staff flew to her hand from wherever it'd been dropped. "Mystic Rod, Heavenly Sphere!" she called. It glowed momentarily and transformed into a long red rod tipped in a sphere made of a bladed disc dissected by another. Wind energy began to make it spin. She spun around and swung into the Wraiths as she made her way toward the General.

Fire, Water and Earth Rangers weren't far behind her. Fire summoned his staff. It changed into a long red rod tipped in a slightly curved blade. "Mystic Rod, Furious Blade!"

Water summoned her staff. It changed into a long red rod tipped in wide, somewhat bell-shaped blade. "Mystic Rod, Pacific Spade!"

Earth summoned his staff. It changed into a long red rod tipped in a triangular spearhead. "Mystic Rod, Stoic Spear!"

The four of them fought their way through the Wraiths and lower soldiers trying to get to the General. When they broke through the ranks and were about to charge, he suddenly gave a squeal of laughter. He slashed his axe several times in the air. Each time he did, blades of dark energy flew toward them in rapid succession. It hit, sending up sparks and sending them flying in a circle around him.

"So much for Fin Varra's human champions," Trifang snorted. "You can't defeat me," he crowed.

Fire got to his feet. He stuck his Rod in the ground slightly behind him. "That's what you think," he said. "Mystic Circle!"

Water was the first to understand and scrambled to her. Though Air and Earth weren't especially sure what the deal was, they were on their feet as well. Fire planted his feet. He placed his hand over his heart and his rune. "Fire Within Me!" His rune glowed before him and he began channeling all his energy

into it holding out both hands now.

"Water Around Me!"

"Earth Beneath Me!"

"Air Above Me!"

The four Mystic Runes grew larger and boxed Trifang in. He began to squeal in panic, slashing at the runes ineffectively. Suddenly the Runes exploded toward him, hitting him full force. He exploded with a spine tingling squeal.

The battle stopped as the Dark Warriors realized their commander had fallen. A horn sounded. The Shadow Wraiths disappeared and the Warriors shrank to their usual size and flew away in a retreat. Fin Varra's warrior Fairies cheered.

Air sighed. She passed a hand over her Rune and her morph disappeared. The others followed suit. The Fairy General and several others approached them. They brought their packs. A couple of small pages even brought Enzi his Bow and arrows he'd used on the dragon.

"We cannot express our thanks enough," the General stated. He got down on one knee, bowed his head and crossed a hand over his heart. The rest of his soldiers followed his lead.

Schy nodded. "Are you sure it's safe for us to leave?" she asked when they regained their feet.

"After this defeat, it will take time for them to regroup and plan another attack, especially since they are on the move. The best hope for Tir Na Nog now is for you to waken the Cosantoir," he explained.

"We understand," Neall said.

"Which way do we head now?" Enzi asked.

"The closest Cosantoir is Oceaheus to the west. Follow your map, it will lead you to him," he said. He gave them another slight bow and he and his fairies retreated to Fin Varra's Court.

Left alone the foursome looked eastward. Schy sighed and shouldered her pack. "Let's get going. I know we're tired, but we need to find a place to make camp before nightfall," she stated and began trekking east. The others quietly followed. Four strangers in a mystical fairy land charged with the protection of two Realms and the fate of not only magic but the safety of the known universe as well. It was a burden to bear, but one they would, each of them, bear until the last.

~~~End~~~