

Chapter One: Alize

THAT'S IT, YOU
UGLY RAT, YOU'RE
GONNA GET IT!

UGLY RAT? I LOOK
JUST LIKE YOU, YOU
DOOFUS!

THE DAY BEFORE I WAS LOCKED
AWAY IN A TOWER, MY YOUNGER
SISTERS - WHO ARE TWINS - HAD
AN ALL-OUT BRAWL.

I HAD TO PUT MYSELF BETWEEN
THEM JUST TO KEEP THEM FROM
TEARING EACH OTHER APART.

STORY: Jeremy Whitley

ART: Kaitlin Jann

LETTERS: Brett Grunig

AND I GOT PUNCHED
RIGHT IN THE FACE.

THAT WAS WHEN
I DECIDED I WAS
LOOKING FORWARD
TO BEING LOCKED
IN A TOWER.

WHATEVER A TOWER HAD FOR ME,
IT COULDN'T BE WORSE THAN LIVING
BETWEEN ANDREA AND ANTONIA.

AND FOR THE FIRST DAY
I WAS THERE, IT SEEMED
I WAS ABSOLUTELY RIGHT.

UNTIL THEY
BROUGHT MY
GUARDIAN.

SHE WAS A GIANT GOLDEN
DRAGON. I DON'T KNOW IF
IT WAS THE DESERT, OR
ME, OR JUST SOMETHING
WRONG WITH HER...

...BUT THAT DRAGON
TRIED TO KILL ME.

I HAD TO WAIT UNTIL THAT
THING FINALLY FELL ASLEEP.

I SNUCK OFF INTO THE
DESERT, DETERMINED TO GET
BACK TO MY FATHER AND TELL
HIM WHAT HAD HAPPENED.

COVER: Kaitlin Jann

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AS FATE WOULD HAVE IT, IT TURNS OUT I
HAD BEEN A *PRINCESS* MY ENTIRE LIFE.

I KNEW NOTHING ABOUT
NAVIGATING THE DESERT.

I KNEW NOTHING
ABOUT SURVIVAL.

AND I'D FAILED TO
BRING EVEN THE MOST
BASIC RATIONS WITH ME.



AND SO, I COLLAPSED IN THE
MIDDLE OF THE DESERT, WITH
NO CHANCE OF SURVIVAL.

BUT I NEVER SO MUCH
AS HIT THE GROUND.

SOMEONE
CAUGHT ME.



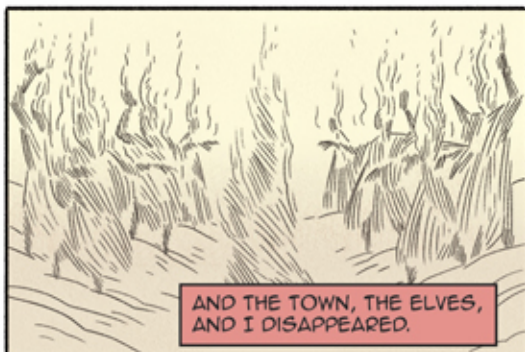
AND WHEN I WAS
AT MY WORST AND
ON DEATH'S DOOR,
SHE TOOK ME IN.

SHE WAS ONE OF THE
DESERT ELVES I'D
BEEN TAUGHT TO FEAR
MY WHOLE LIFE.

I'D BEEN TAUGHT
THEY WERE DEVILS
AND TRICKSTERS.
THAT THEY'D TURN YOU
INSIDE OUT FOR FUN.



BUT SHE CARRIED
ME TO HER HOME.



AND THE TOWN, THE ELVES,
AND I DISAPPEARED.





AFTER THE FIRST FEW DAYS, I FELT WELL ENOUGH TO LEAVE THE TENT AND WOULD JOIN SHIELD FOR MEALS.

THE ELVES BARELY HAD ENOUGH PROVISIONS TO SUPPORT THEMSELVES, BUT THEY NEVER HESITATED TO OFFER ME HOSPITALITY.

YOU LIKE THE SPREAD MADE FROM THE HEARTPLANT? IT WAS ALWAYS MY DAUGHTER'S FAVORITE.

I'VE ALWAYS PREFERRED SAVORY TASTES TO SWEET ONES. IT HAS GOOD TEXTURE.

CAN YOU EXPLAIN WHAT THEY'RE DOING?

THEY MAKE US INVISIBLE.

BY DANCING?

ESSENTIALLY. IT'S A SPELL. IT IS PERFORMED BY DANCING.

THE STRONGER THE DANCE, THE STRONGER THE SPELL.

IF I LEARNED THE DANCE, COULD I DO THIS MAGIC?

I'M AFRAID NOT. THINK OF IT LIKE THIS.

THE MAGIC IS IN OUR BLOOD. THE DANCE IS A WAY OF HARNESSING THAT LATENT MAGIC.

YOU COULD BE THE BEST CARPENTER IN THE WORLD. BUT IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A HAMMER, YOU CANNOT BUILD A HOUSE.

I DON'T KNOW. I'M AN EXCELLENT DANCER.

SO WAS MY DAUGHTER. SADLY, SHE COULD NEVER GET OUR SPELLS TO WORK.

SO...NOT ALL ELVES HAVE...HAMMERS?

SHE IS ONLY HALF ELF. HER FATHER WAS A HUMAN.

WAIT! YOUR DAUGHTER HAS A HUMAN FATHER?

YOU KNOW, YOU REMIND ME A LITTLE OF HER.

