



## CHAPTER

# 1

Hiding in the dense foliage of a maple tree, Kyria and Kai waited patiently for the creatures below to pass. Kyria watched the warriors intently, and although they were dressed differently, she recognized them instantly as hobgoblins, the creatures from her very first vision.

It seemed like only yesterday that she was a normal girl, living a peaceful life in the small fishing village of Arkham. She and her best friend Nezbith would always envision small adventures and quests that they could go on. Things like raiding a hill and claiming it as their own, searching the tall grasses of Arkham for hidden treasure, or, if they were particularly daring, journeying to the rocky shores in search of imagined villains.

Then she had her first vision, and things gradually began to change. Not all at once, but things cer-





## THE IMPERIUM SAGA: THE ADVENTURES OF KYRIA

tainly did change. Her first vision was of a pink-skinned elf defending an elven city named Xylona from creatures very much like the ones below. Considering this to be nothing more than a dream, Kyria had continued her daily life with little regard for the images that were permanently etched within her memory.

The second vision, Kyria recalled, had been much more frightening. Not that seeing one man fighting an army of hobgoblins was tame, but this time, she herself was in the dream. She had found herself trapped on an island with rocks so sharp and jagged that every move was agony to her. In this vision, like the one at Xylona, she once again saw pink-skinned elves; this time, though, there were several of them chanting. The chanting had suddenly stopped, and the elves had turned to look upon her. She remembered how unsettling this had felt. Then, one of the elves smiled and spoke to her.

Kyria remembered waking up with a startle; but the scariest thing of all was that when she had tried to stand up, she collapsed in pain, as if the injuries she received in the dream were actually there.

She recalled how the following day she had wanted to forget all about these visions and just return to the life she had always known. She had forced herself to go out and play, swirling between the tall grasses



## THE AWAKENING

in the fields of Arkham. For a few moments, she had managed to forget her visions; but that was when the darkness came.

From the Carrion Mountains, she had spotted a shadow that stretched out and approached her. It had crept into her town and began possessing all of the adults in Arkham. Why the children were spared, she never learned. Life became quite harsh, as the adults had become focused on revenge against Danchul for something that had happened decades ago in the Great Wars. The worst part was that many of the parents became harsh and abusive.

Even this new darkness in their village could not prepare her for what happened next. One night, she helped Nezbith home and had become trapped beneath his kitchen table to avoid being seen by his father, Guldán. Guldán spoke to the shadows, and an icy voice, one that sent chills down her spine and would haunt her dreams forevermore, responded. That terrifying voice belonged to Zoldex.

When she fled, Zoldex had pursued her in a misty shroud of darkness. Finding her, his embrace had been frigid, and in an instant, all hope seemed to seep right out of her. When he finally tried to consume her, he had pulled away with a shriek of agony. She had never determined how or why that had happened,



## THE IMPERIUM SAGA: THE ADVENTURES OF KYRIA

though to this day, she has been very grateful for that unexpected reaction.

The adults left soon after, abandoning the children to fend for themselves. It was then that Kyria had recalled Master Atsan, a Mage Master who had visited their school one time, telling her that if ever she needed him, to merely call his name. When he arrived, he had tried to comfort her and alleviate some of her worries. He had also provided her with enough information to realize that the visions she had been having were real, and not just the dreams she had assumed they were.

When she had told him of Zoldex, he grew very quiet and concerned. He had placed a protection spell on her so that no mystical powers could harm her, and then returned to the Mage's Council to seek his leader: a man he claimed had once known Zoldex.

The children of Arkham then banded together under the joint leadership of Kyria and Nezbeth's older brother, Nerellin. They assigned tasks and responsibilities to all of the children and began to rebuild their own community. However, they soon came to the frightening conclusion that there was not enough food to support the entire village.

Under Nerellin's guidance, several individuals, herself included, trained to become fishermen. They then went out on a desperate mission to try and find



## THE AWAKENING

enough food for them all to survive. They named their ship the *Last Hope*, though she recalled a few referring to it as ‘*Lost Hope*’ as they found little success with fishing.

Something terrifying, but in the long run quite fortunate, happened then. A sea monster known as a drelenkin was tracking its prey, a large school of swordfish. The drelenkin was at least one hundred feet long, vicious and more than capable of destroying their ship. In fact, Kyria had been swept overboard and far from her ship before the creature’s tail knocked her unconscious with one swipe.

Nerellin managed to rescue her, and fate must have had a hand in it as well, for lightning struck the drelenkin several times, and it retreated deep within the oceans depths. The lightning was not naturally occurring, for they soon discovered that it came from a pirate ship known as the *White Squall*.

The pirates were not as bad as she would have expected. Their captain, an aquatican named Kor, had helped them fill their barge with swordfish that had been trapped in their trawl as they tried to flee the drelenkin. Before he left, he gave her a necklace with a pendant of a woman riding a dolphin and holding a trident. He said that it was a symbol of a great and royal family of Aquatica and that she would be protected in



## THE IMPERIUM SAGA: THE ADVENTURES OF KYRIA

the oceans of the world as long as she wore it.

As she recalled this, she brushed her hand against her chest and clasped the necklace, smiling as she did so. After that day, their little community had little worry. They had enough food to last them for months, though they had to make sure that the fish were properly stored so that they would not spoil.

The children did not have to wait months. The adults soon returned, and though their haggard and disheveled appearance left something to be desired, their attitudes were back to normal. For a while, things had seemed to return to normal; but as with most things in life, it didn't last.

Kyria remembered how she and Nezboth had been playing on the hills one morning and saw Imperial ships in the harbor. Hoping to warn the village in time, her efforts were in vain. She could not recall what had happened, for she had been struck down as the first wave of artillery hit Arkham. When she regained consciousness, Kai, her elven companion told her that the village had been destroyed.

Glancing at the pink-skinned elf next to her, Kyria recalled how she had had the strangest visions about this woman. Rather than simply observing or being present as in her other two dreams, she had three visions where she had actually *been* Kai.



## THE AWAKENING

In the first, she had found herself fighting a tragon, a giant three-headed dragon, alongside Warlord Braksis and Solara. This was in the town of Comonor, the capital city of Suspinti; and coincidentally, the kingdom that they were currently in.

Kyria had stood alongside of Lord Braksis and Solara again in the second vision, but Thamar, a dwarf from Vorstad, had also been present. They had fought a band of warriors who were trying to prevent Braksis from reaching his destination.

She fought against a koxlen in the final vision, a very ferocious feline predator. In this vision, Kyria remembered the pain and injuries that Kai had suffered; but as she studied her companion now, she did not find a single mark upon her, though she was wearing an outfit crafted from the pelt of the koxlen.

Kai had light-pink-pigmented skin with long, flowing crimson hair and greenish-blue eyes. The head of the koxlen was positioned upon her chest with its mouth open, as if roaring in defiance; her belly was bare below the jaws. The silvery mane of the beast covered her shoulders and hung down her back. Underneath the hair was koxlen fur covering her back and right arm, the one she used to fire her bow; her left arm remained bare. Her brown leather pants were cut down to shorts, with koxlen fur fringing the edges. Around



## THE IMPERIUM SAGA: THE ADVENTURES OF KYRIA

the top of her boots, she had laced some of the silvery mane as frilled decoration.

Kyria still had so many questions, and she knew that her new companion would be able to help her answer them; but when she first woke up and found herself here, they did not have time to truly talk much because they heard grunting and the snapping of branches in the distance. Those sounds had turned out to be hundreds of hobgoblins making their way into the Suspintian Forest.

Watching them below, she wondered where they were going. Perhaps, like in her vision of the attack on Xylona, these warriors were heading for battle. If so, she wished whoever it was luck; against enemies like these, they would need it.



## CHAPTER

# 2

Kyria was itching to get out of the tree after the last hobgoblin had left the area below. Her muscles were aching and her legs had fallen asleep hours ago. As she tried to move them, she felt the sensation of little pins pricking her.

Finally, Kai nodded that it was all clear and they both climbed back down the tree. They had been hidden up there throughout the night, and both were anxious to be anyplace else.

“Will we see them again?” Kyria asked.

“I hope not,” Kai replied. “I am concerned though.”

“About what?” Kyria asked.

“Their outfits,” Kai gasped, biting her lip in prayer that she was wrong. “Did you notice the light-yellow pelts with darker slashes that many of them had wrapped around themselves?”



## THE IMPERIUM SAGA: THE ADVENTURES OF KYRIA

Kyria thought back to the hundreds of hobgoblins marching below her. They were far different from the ones she had seen in her first vision, though clearly of the same race. This group had charcoal gray hides and wore red shirts, chainmail, spiked helmets, and, as she thought back, yellow pelts with slashes either wrapped around their chests or torsos.

“Yes,” Kyria responded. “I did see that. What is the significance?”

“Upon my journey to find you, I came across a proud race of tribal warriors known as the tigrel. I have befriended them. The skins some of these hobgoblins were wearing are tigrel hides. I fear for my friend Hr’Sheesh and her people. I pray that they are all right.”

Kyria had never heard of the tigrel before. Admittedly, if not for her visions, she would not know anything of hobgoblins, either. Generations ago, the Seven Kingdoms found themselves in a war where each of the races struggled for power. Humans had claimed victory and now had control of the lands. As a twelve-year-old girl, she had never been exposed to these other races, though within the past few months, she has now seen aquaticans, hobgoblins, a Madrew elf, and through her visions, dwarves, elves and a mystral.

“These hobgoblins must be traveling west from



## THE AWAKENING

the Dimmu Forest, the home of the tigrel,” Kai surmised.

“Would you like to check on your friend?”

“I would, but no,” Kai replied. “My first priority is to keep you safe. We shall head north, cross the Drynan River into Dartie, and further away from the hobgoblins.”

“Why am I so important?” Kyria asked. “I don’t understand what is going on.”

“We should not remain here. The hobgoblins may return.”

“Kai, please?” she implored.

As she regarded the small blonde-haired child, she nodded in assent. “Very well, I shall tell you some, but not all. We really must be going soon, though.”

“Thank you,” Kyria replied.

“My people are known as the Madrew elves. We come from a land far from here, across what is known as the Forbidden Regions.”

“What is that?” Kyria asked. “The Forbidden Regions?”

“The Forbidden Regions is difficult to explain; it is somehow a divider of the world, so dense and murky that any ship that enters is destined to run aground.”

As Kyria listened, she began to recall her vision



## THE IMPERIUM SAGA: THE ADVENTURES OF KYRIA

of the island. In that dream, she was unable to see even her own hand directly in front of her face. This, she presumed, had to be an island within the Forbidden Regions.

“Generations ago, my ancestors were visited by a stranger from a far-away land. Twelve others accompanied this stranger, each possessing mystical abilities that defied reason. These men declared themselves as gods, and ruled my people from then on. Temples were built in their names and our entire civilization turned into a slave-race living only to satisfy the whims of our gods.” As Kai said the word ‘god,’ Kyria could hear a sneer of disgust in her voice.

“One day my people had had enough and we began to rebel. To our surprise, they were no gods, but men, and they fled before our combined efforts. For a time, peace returned to my homeland.

“That was before the evil-horde appeared. They swept the land like a plague and we were forced to flee. The few surviving Madrew journeyed into the Forbidden Regions, where we still remain, clinging to one hope.”

Kai paused and looked into Kyria’s light-blue eyes. “That hope is you.”

“Me?” Kyria asked dubiously.

“Yes, you are the Chosen One,” she calmly ex-



## THE AWAKENING

plained. “The one that has been prophesied to be the savior.”

“The savior of what?” Kyria asked.

“Of life everywhere,” Kai answered with respect.

Kyria watched the elf for a moment. She did not understand how she could ever save life everywhere. Sure, she had had some visions, and even managed to perceive the shadows and darkness that engulfed her people, but how could she possibly save all life everywhere?

“I don’t understand,” Kyria asked. “How am I supposed to save everyone? I’m just a kid.”

“For now,” Kai agreed. “However, you shall become a great warrior and leader, the most powerful Mage in the entire world: it has been foreseen.”

“I’m not a Mage, though,” Kyria said. “Master Atsan told me so.”

“I am one of the Triad,” Kai informed her. “Three Madrew who volunteered to protect and guide you. Each of us went through a transformation, becoming the key to unlock the potential within you.”

“Unlock the potential within me?” Kyria asked, not certain what Kai meant.

“Yes, it is a process called the ‘Awakening,’” Kai answered.



## THE IMPERIUM SAGA: THE ADVENTURES OF KYRIA

Both stopped talking as they heard a rustling of bushes close by. Kai reached back, removing her bow and an arrow. Glancing down at Kyria, she nodded. “I shall not allow anything to happen to you.”

Before Kyria could answer, a hobgoblin lunged from the bushes, charging towards them.

