

The Shattered Crown

Plot:

An ancient crown, said to grant the power of a dark god long lost, was ridden of its power transferred into 7 crystals and scattered across the land. A young, stubborn heir, whose kingdom is under siege of a mysterious shadow, must assemble a team of unlikely allies—including a treasonous knight, a cursed mage, and a talking fox—to retrieve the pieces before a tyrant does. Each crystal is hidden in a deadly location, guarded by forgotten horrors.

***character names not finalised yet, except the Dragon-lords.**

Preface:

This story takes place in a world long gone, very different from this one. Various peoples existed then other than humans. The 7 races of people: Human, Elf, Dwarf, Goblin, Halfling, Shifter, Draken were united against the Dark God hundreds of years ago and have stayed united ever since. But now they are at the risk of being torn apart at the return of the Dark God.

This tale primarily takes place in the capital kingdoms of each race:
Kingdom of Knights, Gardens between the Mountains, House of the Clouds, Caves of Shadow, Lordless Hills, Shifting Bridge, Mount Scale.

The Races of People:

Humans: They are a race of innovators, excelling at the craft of war, building crafts nearly of the stature of those of elven and dwarven realms with the limited resources of their Kingdom of Knights.

Elves: They are beings that avoid war, though they excel at it when they have to, but usually prefer to be keepers of wisdom and lore in their Gardens between the Mountains.

Dwarves: They are master craftsmen, a secretive people, mining substances from the deepest, most dangerous depths of the earth and crafting them into all kinds of tools in the highest peaks of their House of Clouds

Goblins: They have the ability to live best in the dark and are the most witful of the races, due to which they have a reputation as scheming people living in the Caves of Shadow.

Halflings: They are a lordless race, friendly, but preferring to live in comfort among their own people in the Lordless Hills.

Shifters: They are a race of people that can mimic other living beings, being sensitive to change and hence being very effective as seekers, being the only ones able to withstand the forces of their Shifting Bridge.

Drakens: They were once humans, elves and goblins who were enslaved by dragons and are the only link between the rest of the world and the feared dragon lords of Mount Scale.

Other Races:

Dragons: Lords of the realm of birds, beasts and people, feared by all, their slaves the Drakens being the only beings they consider “high” enough to speak to them.

Chapter 1: The Siege

There were clouds all over the land. A storm was raging. But not of the elements but one of death. A storm of swords with a rain of arrows. The tall brick city walls of the Land of Knights and its Fortress had been breached by a shadow. The shadow traveled through land and corrupted all it touched, turning all into a shen grey. Humans, animals, not even plants were spared. And whatever the shadow caught destroyed all in its path indiscriminately. But in time the great gates of the city were closed. Only two people escaped. The heir prince of the land and a knight accused for treason.

"Where do we find refuge now?" said the young prince grimly.

"Our nearest chance is the Lordless Hills. The Shadow has spread turmoil all over the kingdoms. The lordless hills welcome all and have no king. They are naive, perhaps too naive. They're our best bet," said the knight hopefully. "Follow me, prince, I know the way."

"Why would I trust *you*, treasonous knight?"

"I have not done anything," sighed the knight. "Besides, would you rather go back to that gate of hell? I am your only way to safety."

"And my only way to save my kingdom. Lead the way, knight," The prince slightly unsheathed his sword, letting it shine in the sun. "If you try to play any tricks, my sword is at your heart."

The prince and the knight continued on their road through the barren wasteland outside of the Land of Knights. They travelled for two hours without silence. In the barren wasteland with only a few dead trees and boulders. Though the Land of Knights could still be seen under the dark cloud that had spread over it. At length, the prince halted. He looked back to his kingdom and lamented in his mind.

"It took *200 years* to build this kingdom out of this barren wasteland. So many generations of our ancestors have spent their entire lives raising the greatest of the free houses out of nothing!" said the prince. And then a fire in his eyes turned his grim face full of rage. "Whoever is responsible for this will meet the wrath of the only heir of the Land of Knights!"

The knight, who had continued walking, halted too. "Don't look back, Prince. We have a long journey ahead of us," he said, stoically.

"What do you mean, *don't look back!*," cried the prince. "Do you realise what I, what hundreds of people, hundreds of families have just lost! Do you not have even a fragment of the honor of the Land of Knights left in you?"

"The shadow is spreading, prince. If we don't get off here right now, there will be no one to save this land."

Right then and there both of them heard a shriek in the sky and looked up. There was a dragon right above them, moving towards the Shadow. It was a common dragon and its wings only spread out a little more than 11 feet. However this one was black, pitch black and its eyes seemed a bright green as it looked down at the prince and the knight. It had something in its claws, however. A figure in a black cloak holding a wooden staff. The dragon swooped down, seeming to have targeted the prince. But in time the cloaked figure chanted something that was not of the common tongue and generated a small storm. It was enough to distract the dragon and let the sorcerer escape its claws and return to land and so he did. The dragon fled once the figure escaped its grip. The knight looked at the cloaked figure in awe while the Prince walked up to him. The cloaked figure was completely covered by his cloak, including almost his entire face. Only his mouth was exposed along with his two scaled, blue forearms, which showed that he was a Draken.

"Identify yourself. Are you an ally or an enemy?" the prince commanded the figure.

The cloaked figure hesitated, but eventually he spoke. "I do not know what luck I may bring you," said he in his low and deep voice. "But I must warn you. I am cursed. I will help you. But where you will end up, I do not know."

The prince unsheathed his sword and pointed it at the Draken. "What is happening? How did you get here? Explain yourself!" he demanded.

"The shadow that entered your kingdom has travelled all the way from the Spider's Thorns, to the Caverns of Shadow to your Land of Knights. But this shadow, as I have seen it, is mindless. Taking anything it can get its claws on. But the shadow that has taken my land - Ours is treacherous! It contemplates its next target. And then it gets you. First it got Lord Frost, then Lady Terra, then then it got the Draken Mages. Now. you must have wondered who I am. I am Starshadow, Shadow of the Light, Prime Mage of Dragon-Lord Star!" said the cloaked figure, uncloaking himself.

He was blue of skin, and scaly, but having the shape of a human, elf or goblin with red marks across his body. His clothing was made mostly of materials harvested from animals and plants, looking amalgamated but unbroken. His wooden staff glimmered and then burst, revealing its wooden exterior to be merely a disguise, being in reality a staff of gold.

To be continued ...