

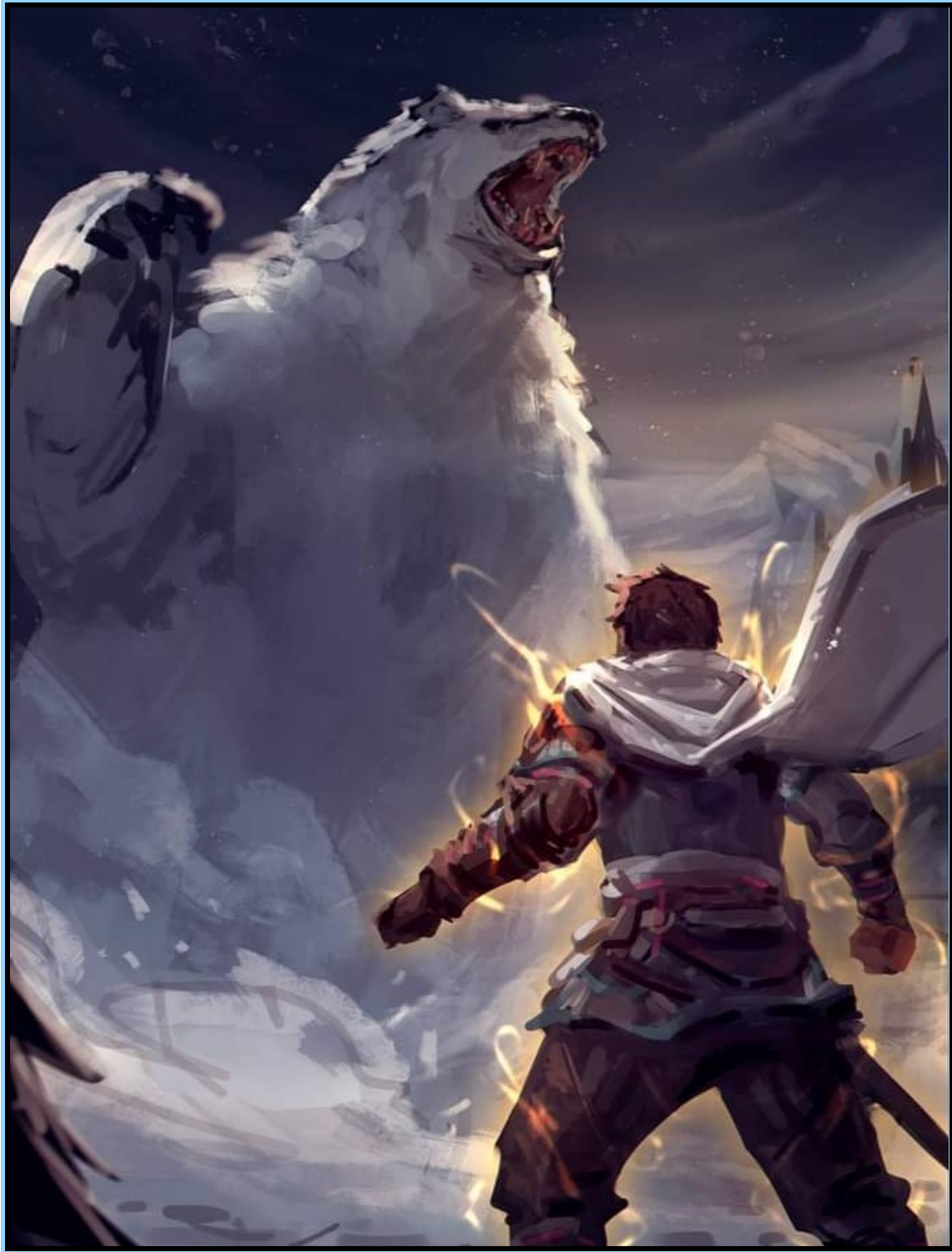
Chapter 1

“When are we leaving”

Nim caught sight of irregular movement on the horizon. *Is that...?* He focused his sight, cupping a hand around his eyes to cut out light from the setting sun. About three hundred feet away an Anvine bear was traipsing through the snow. *It is!* Nim squatted down and grabbed bits of snow, mashing them together into a ball the size of his fist. *Just stay put.* As he stood back up he channeled his luminescence. A translucent yellow aura engulfed his body. Within it yellow strands of light danced about, twisting and changing in size. His body now felt as light as the air around him.

Leaning back to throw, the light around his arms and chest bolstered in size while the glow around the rest of his body diminished. Hurling the snowball into the air, it sailed towards the bear. Nim traced it's flight and watched as, just before landing, the bear moved it's head down to sniff the ground, causing the snowball to miss. POOF! Hearing the impact, the bear turned to it's right side looking away from Nim. *No!* Nim bent down to make another snowball. *At least it's still now.* He stood up and hurled the second snowball into the air. A second later...POOF! *Yes!* The bear let out a small roar, and turned to it's left. *Come on...*

The bear caught sight of Nim, and steadily made it's approach. It's eyes were wide and it's head still, as if locked onto his position. After closing half the distance between them, the bear picked up speed, charging towards him and letting out a loud roar. Nim studied it as it approached. *...is that a female?* The bear was moving full speed now, plowing through the snow, it let out another roar. Nim remained unmoving, silently watching the hulking mass as it approached. *I hope Maya's right about this.* Baring its fangs it lunged at him, tearing through the air with it's massive claws. Nim ducked low to the bear's left, moving around it's side. *Wait, how would she have even found out about something like this?* As he turned around, so did the bear. It stood up and it's massive frame extended into the evening sky. It raised it's right arm preparing to swipe down at Nim.



The bear's claws tore through the air in a downward swing. SWOOSH! Ducking left, Nim felt the wind from the attack move past his face. ...*just a bit*

below the ear! Nim repeated back the words Maya had told him. As the bear landed, Nim twisted his body as hard as he could, and sent his left fist flying into the side of the bear's head just a bit below its ear. CRACK! Air rushed out from the impact. Nim jumped back ready to evade, but the bear's body fell to the ground limp. ...*it worked?* Nim could hardly believe it. *She was right.* He looked around to see if there were any other bears. *I wonder how she found out about this?* He stopped channeling his luminescence, and the threads of light surrounding his body faded away. He stooped down next to the bear's mouth. Pulling back its lips he used the width of his thumb to measure the bear's teeth. *Two thumbs short.* He pushed the bear onto its side, and sat on its belly.

This is the end of what is talked about in the post. You may keep reading if you wish but focus on the above text for your editing.

A familiar sensation spread across the bottom of his face. *Again?* It was his beard. Reaching up, he gave it a scratch. *Are all beards like this?* As he scratched at his beard his other hand rubbed against the soft fur of the bear. An idea sprung into his head. He looked around, and seeing that the coast was clear, knelt down beside the bear. Taking his face he aggressively rubbed it against the side of the bear. *Ohhhhh!* Its soft fur eased the eachiness of his skin. After just a few seconds his entire face felt soothed. He sat back down on the bear's belly and looked up at the sky. *Sigh... At least the bear's warm.*

This mountain range was enemy territory. They had been traveling in it for two months now, and had been lucky enough to evade detection. It helped that the camp was small and only had about thirty occupants.

An hour passed and footsteps crunched in the snow behind Nim. Turning around, he saw his replacement.

"When did that happen?" The woman said, pointing towards the bear.

"About an hour ago."

"Is it a female?"

"Yep."

"Finally. Those males taste like leather."

She kneeled down and measured the bear's teeth just as Nim had.

“I bet she’ll be picked clean in a day.”

Nim smiled. Getting off the bear, he channeled his luminescence and grabbed onto one of the bear’s large teeth. With the twilight hours having just passed Nim was now allowed to sleep, but first he would have to take care of the bear. He pressed on dragging the bear’s large corpse through the snow towards the kitchen tent. Memories of him and his father working by the furnace began to fill his head. He missed the warmth. It all seemed so distant now.

Walking back to his tent, Nim passed by a dozen other soldiers. Each of them eyed the bear, but none of them said anything. Briefly meeting each of their gazes Nim took note of their eye colors. Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple, but no brown. Nobody here was normal, except maybe the guides.

Nim dragged the bear corpse up to the kitchen tent. He opened the flap.

“I’ve got one out here.” Nim said. Two women were on duty in the tent. They were both dividing up food portions. The older one stood up and came over to Nim.

“What is it.”

“Female bear. Where should I put it?”

“Female! Great! ...just drag it over there for now, we’ll get to it in a minute.”

Nim did so and started to leave but stopped at the door.

“About the first pick...”

“Oh yes, what part would you like set aside?”

“A tenderloin.”

“Alright, I’ll make it happen. What's your Name?”

“Nim.”

“Okay you’ll get it some time tomorrow.”

“Thank you.”

The woman nodded her head and got back to work. Nim left, making his way back to his tent. Thoughts of the tasty meat that was to come filled his mind as he traipsed through the deep snow. Opening the flap to his tent, he felt a sudden rush of heat blow over him. A fire was burning in the middle of the tent, with a pan of water on top of it, and sitting next to the fire was Maya. She was short in stature with shoulder length black hair and red eyes. She wore the same white cloak that Nim and everyone else in camp Vale had been ordered to wear. As Nim entered, she got up and began putting on her sword.

“Any news from Greeves?”

“No, nothing new yet.” Nim replied. He took off his cloak and sat down next to the fire. After she was done putting on her equipment, she turned and exited the tent without saying another word. *Such a quiet woman.* Nim knew her name, but that was about all she had told him.

As Nim warmed himself by the fire he pulled out his weapons. He quickly examined them one by one but paused when he took out his sword. The shaky engravings on the side made him smile as he traced them, recalling the nervous babbling of his sister. *I wonder what she's doing right now?* He hadn't seen her in so long. For all he knew she could be dead.

Nim put the sword back and channeled his luminescence. Once again yellow strands of light extended out from his body. Nim stretched out his hand and gathered luminescent energy into his palm. The yellow strands gathered together weaving themselves into a shaft of light that grew out from Nim's hand. The shaft of luminescent energy kept growing, moving closer to the cup sitting above the fire full of hot water. Nim guided it, wrapping it around the cup. As Nim retracted the light back towards him the strands of light unwove themselves and the aura of yellow light around his body returned to its original size.

Leaning back, he took a sip and let the heat permeate through his body. *Ahhhh, I can't wait for that meat.* The entrance to the tent opened up and the cold air rushed in. A tall man with blonde hair and purple eyes stepped inside.

“When are we leaving this place? If we stay here too long, we're all going to freeze to death.” He said.

“I talked to one of the guides earlier today, and all he said was that the attack would happen soon.” Nim replied. The man sat down next to the fire, with a displeased look on his face. His name was Elias.

“Well, that’s helpful” Elias responded sarcastically, “What does soon mean, a day, a week? A few details would be nice.” He grabbed a cup and dunked it into the bowl above the fire.

“You didn’t have to come here.” Nim replied.

“Is that supposed to be an excuse. The majority of the camp is only here for the money”. Elias replied.

“No. All I’m saying is you should trust the commander more, he deserves it after everything he’s done.”

Elias didn’t respond.

“I can’t think of anyone else I’d rather have leading this attack.”

Elias let out a sigh.

“I do trust Greeves. All I’m asking for is some information.”

Elias took a sip from his own mug and smirked.

“I wouldn’t be here if I didn’t think he would pay up afterwards.”

“That’s....” Nim smiled. “What are you gonna use all that money for anyways? At least give me a hint.”

Elias became quiet. His smirk vanished.

“It’s a personal reason I’d rather not discuss it.”

“Fine, fine, keep it to yourself.”

There was a long pause between the two as the warmth from the fire was slowly erasing their fatigue.

“Is it gambling debt?” Nim asked with a grin.

“NO, and stop guessing. Why do you need to know anyways?”

“I don’t, it’s just that you’ve been trying to get away from the topic ever since I asked you. That would make anyone curious”.

“Obviously I don’t want to talk about it, so that means you should drop it. Didn’t anyone ever tell you it’s rude to ask people about their personal life.”

“Yes, but I’m still curious.” Nim said, looking at Elias expectantly. Elias had already considered telling him. He mulled it over for a second as he took another sip from his cup. *I could tell him, then he’d stop asking me about it, and I doubt he’d tell anyone else.* He continued to think about it as he looked across the fire at Nim, who was waiting patiently for a response. *I do trust him, I wouldn’t have continued our relationship if I didn’t.*

“Alright, fine. I’ll probably die before I get the reward anyways.” Nim’s eyes widened with excitement as he heard Elias’ reply.

“Alright then, let’s hear it.”

Elias channeled his luminesce. Purple strands of light extended out from his body forming an aura the same size that Nim’s had been. After a second the strands retreated back inside the body. Elias directed his luminescence towards enhancing his hearing. Everything instantly became louder, Each crackle of the fire sounded like the banging of thunder. Elias sifted through the sounds checking for anybody else that might be close enough to their tent to hear them. *Looks like there’s nothing to worry about.* He took a deep breath letting go of his luminescence.

“Let’s hear it already.” Nim pleaded. Elias rolled his eyes.

“I was a smuggler...” He began calmly. Nim’s eyes widened.

“The last smuggling job I did failed horribly. It was high value cargo, and I lost it to the authorities. The person I was working for was furious and demanded I pay them back in full. I gave them what I had but that wasn’t enough. When they heard that I couldn’t pay it back in full, they sent some of their servants to attack me, so I ran.” Elias stopped and took a sip of his water. Nim was still wide eyed with a surprised look on his face.

“After I escaped the servants they put a bounty on my head. I still needed to find some way to provide for myself. So I joined the military. With my luminescence I figured they wouldn’t ask many questions, and I was right. I joined under a fake name and changed my look. I’ve stayed much longer than I ever thought I would, but I’m glad to finally be here. At this point either I’ll succeed and be able to pay off my debts, or I’ll die and I won’t have to worry about it anymore.” Elias finished, leaning back. *Alright let’s hear it.* He thought.

Nim didn't say anything, instead he was just trying to process everything.

"...nothing to say"? Elias said, leaning forward. "I'm surprised this is your reaction when you were so curious earlier. What happened to all that enthusiasm?"

"Well, I hadn't imagined you'd say something like that. I really thought it was gambling debt." Nim replied. Elias could tell Nim wasn't happy with the news, but he hadn't expected him to be.

"Well, I could have lied. Would you rather I had done that?"

"No, but...". Nim stopped. They were both quiet.

"Well, that's a shame." Nim said with disappointment hanging in his voice.

That's it? Elias had expected a bigger reaction. *Isn't he going to ask any more questions?*

"So what's your real name then?" Nim asked. Elias looked back up from the fire. He opened his mouth to reply but then stopped. A distinct memory had resurfaced. *...but Nim's not like that.* Elias' eyes met Nim's.

"You just said that you're most likely going to die. If this is the last time we're going to see one another I'd at least like to know your real name." Nim stopped waiting for Elias' reply. *This is different. I can trust him.* Elias thought.

"It-" Elias was cut off as suddenly the tent flap opened and a gust of cold wind blew into the tent. It was Maya.

"Commander Greeves just ordered a meeting." She said. Without saying another word she turned and left the tent. Nim and Elias immediately got up and started getting ready, putting on their weapons, and mentally going through their own checklist of equipment.

"Are you going to tell me? It's your last chance." Nim said, throwing his cloak back on. Elias finished getting ready first.

"No it's not. I plan on making it through this alive, and you should do the same." Elias said. Nim stopped for a second.

"...you're right. Let's both just focus on making it back alive."

Elias walked over to exit the tent, but upon reaching the exit he stopped, and let out a sigh.

“If we both come back alive, I’ll tell you then. I promise...” With that he pulled back the tent flap and walked out into the deep snow.

Nim smiled. He grabbed the pan of water that had been sitting above the fire and turned it upside down, dousing the fire. *Elias is more hopeful than I gave him credit for... I just hope he’s right.* He exited the tent walking out into the cold weather that awaited him outside. It was now snowing heavily and a cold wind was blowing through the camp. *Is this what Greeves was waiting for?*

As Nim approached the tent he could see that the whole camp was there. A multitude of whispers rose up as everyone wondered what was coming next. After another minute had passed, commander Greeves and Vice-Commander Kitzfield appeared at the tent’s entrance. The whispers quickly ceased, and all that could be heard were the footsteps of the Greeves and Kitzfield as they made their way to the center of the group.

Commander Greeves was tall and muscular. His size alone gave him an intimidating presence, and his red eyes made him look angry even when he wasn’t. His long black hair was turning grey, and had been tied behind his head. His beard was thick but trimmed, and had the same gray tinge as his hair. Currently though, he looked like a dead man walking. Dark bags shown under his eyes, and snot was dripping down from his nose. As much as he tried to give of his usual intimidating presence now he just looked like a corpse.

Vice-Commander Kitzfield was a stark contrast to Greeves. She came up to his shoulders at about five foot three, and had long blonde hair and blue eyes. Her hair had been tied back into a ponytail and was currently hidden inside the hood of her cloak. She was young, possibly in her early thirties, and had a surprisingly thin figure for someone in the military. Kitzfield wasn't famous but some of the soldiers had seen her fight before, and could attest to her strength. She was easily the second strongest fighter in Camp Vale after Greeves.

Greeves and Kitzfield stopped in the center of the group.

“Listen up” Greeves’s voice was deep and powerful, but held a scratchiness due to his sickness. Everyone channeled their luminescence and enhanced their hearing.

“We cannot afford to wait any longer. Winter is coming to an end, and we may not get another chance like tonight. I thank you for your patience up till now, but

unfortunately my condition has not improved, I will have to go into the fight as I am.”

Worried looks spread throughout the soldiers. Greeves was supposed to be their ace. With him fighting at less than his normal strength many felt there was no way they could win the upcoming fight.

“I have received confirmation, from our scouts, of Damascus's location in the city of Levaris. He is still staying in the keep near the center of the city. Our plans remain the same. Once we leave camp, I expect complete silence from everyone except myself and commander Kitzfield. We're heading out in five minutes, get into your squads, and wait for my orders to move out.”

Soldiers began moving around and forming into their squads that had been coordinated earlier. Greeves coughed loudly into his arm. Many of the men pretended not to notice, but it caused fear to surface in their hearts. Nim walked around with Elias till they found Maya.

“Do you have everything you need?” He asked her. Maya nodded. *Still as quiet as ever, that woman.* The three waited together as Greeves and Kitzfield came around to each of the squads. Kitzfield stopped in front of their squad.

“Who's throwing?”

“I am.” Nim said, stepping forward. Kitzfield handed him one of the steel spears she was carrying, and continued on to the next group. Nim slowly twisted it over in his hands, looking for its center of gravity. Finding it, he made a mental note of its location. Most spears Nim had handled before had been seven to eight feet long, but these spears were about six feet long. They were constructed entirely out of steel since wood couldn't typically handle the forces a high class luminescent produced. For this reason most high class luminescents just carried a sword. Their swords were typically a little larger than normal ones too.

The last of the spears were handed out, and everyone gave Greeves and Kitzfield their full attention. Greeves gave all of the squads a look over.

“Move out.” He ordered. The small army of about thirty soldiers began moving west down the mountain at a steady pace. The only noise that could be heard was the crunch of their feet against the soft fresh snow.

They quickly arrived at the base of the mountain, when Greeves ordered the group to halt. Everyone channeled their luminescence into enhancing their sight.

“There’s about thirty of them”. Kitzfield said to Greeves. Greeves turned around, to face the group.

“We’re being followed by white wolves. They’ll attack anyone who starts to fall behind so stay close.” Those on the outside of the group drew their swords. Greeves turned around and began moving again. Everyone followed behind just as they had before. They were now navigating through a dense forest with trees heavily weighed down by snow. Suddenly a few wolves lunged forward, attacking the soldiers near the back. The soldiers quickly spun around and slashed at the wolves. Their cuts effortlessly tore through the wolves killing them instantly. As the group continued on, the heavy snowfall camouflaged their approach to the city. They would be there in just a couple hours. *It won’t be long now.* Nim thought.

...

Stopping roughly two miles outside of Levaris, Commander Greeves and Kitzfield went ahead to scout the area. After confirming the forests surrounding the city were clear, everyone continued forward. Each squad moved to their designated location, while staying hidden in the forest just outside the city's walls. The trees that surrounded the city’s walls had been cut back about three hundred feet. With the thick snowfall Nim and the others had to channel their luminescence to just barely make out the top of the wall. The tree line they were hiding in only surrounded the north, west, and southern sides of the city. The eastern side was connected to a river.

Damascus is in there. Determination built up inside of Nim as he recounted everything that had happened in the last two and half years. *Tonight either we die or Damascus dies.* Nim’s grip tightened on his steel spear. Unfortunately, he and the others from camp Vale were tired, hungry, and cold. All that they could hope for was that the fight would be over quickly. With Greeves in the shape he was in, many of the soldiers felt the battle was already lost, but they kept this feeling to themselves. Holding onto whatever hope they could gather.

Greeves looked around, and saw everyone was ready. Each squad had three class five luminescents in it. The first two members would throw the third member up onto the wall from the edge of the forest. Each of the members that were thrown had a steel spear that they would then use to quickly eliminate any watchmen they saw patrolling the top of the walls. Commander Greeves and Captain Kitzfield would lead the remaining soldiers that hadn’t jumped, through the north and south gates once the wall jumpers had opened them.

Greeves started to channel his luminescence, which was the signal to start the attack. Everyone else quickly followed suit channeling their own luminescence. Dazzling colors of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple began to engulf each of the soldiers. Everyone enhanced their strength and balance as they flung their designated wall jumpers into the air. The jumpers rocketed through the air, flying towards the city's wall at incredible speeds.

Nim channeled his luminescence into enhancing his strength and sight. *THERE!* At the apex of his jump he saw one of the watchmen, and tensed up his body. Pulling the spear back he targeted the watchman's torso. *NOW!* He threw it forward as hard as he could. As it tore through the air with tremendous force, a vortex of snow followed in its path. *SHUNK!* It pierced clean through the watchman's torso, only stopping after slamming into the stone wall.

Nim landed on the wall, and ran over to the dead watchman. Pulling out his spear, he enhanced his sight scanning the top of the wall for any more enemies. The rest of the watchmen had met a similar fate. He saw two friendly soldiers retrieving their spears just as he had done. Beneath the wall, inside the city, three enemy soldiers had caught sight of Nim and the others.

"W-We're under attack! Notify the com-" The man was cut off as Nim's spear pierced through his chest killing him instantly. Two other spears shot through the air at the remaining two men, one of them found its mark, while the other was evaded. Nim and the two others he had seen drew their swords and jumped off the wall racing towards the remaining soldier, who drew his sword and channeled his luminescence, as he began running towards one of the houses.

"Help! There's enemy soldiers! Help!" He yelled. Nim caught up to him. *Class two. No danger.* He slashed at him, and the man brought his sword up to block the attack. As their swords collided the force threw the sword out of the enemy soldier's hand. He turned pale and tried to run, but Nim slashed again cutting through his neck. The man's body fell to the ground limp crunching into the soft fresh snow. The two other wall jumpers caught up with Nim, continuing to sprint past him grabbing their spears as they ran. Sounds started to come from inside some of the houses. Grabbing the dead man's body and severed head, Nim threw them back at the base of the wall. He then kicked and shuffled some of the snow, trying to hide some of the blood. *Maybe this will buy us a few seconds.* He grabbed his spear and started sprinting towards the center of the city.

Greeves and Kitzfield, along with the non wall jumpers, had entered through the main gates at the north and south sides of the city. As they ran through the streets

towards the center of the city, more and more enemy soldiers were starting to wake up to what was happening.

Moments later, inside the keep a man burst into Damascus's room.

"We're under attack, the enemy is already at the keeps wall!" He shouted. Damascus had been asleep, but instantly shot up out of bed.

"What, what are you yelling about!?" He shouted.

"It's the Armen's sir. They're attacking the keep."

"WHAT!" Damascus ran over to a window facing the front gate.

The battle at the front gate was nearly over. The forces of camp vale had completely annihilated the enemies at the gate. Nim took a head count. *Twenty five...* Greeves and Kitzfield ran forward leading a charge towards the keep's large steel door. Everyone followed behind them with their spirits high. Greeves and Kitzfield, along with a couple others, rammed against the keep's steel door. It flew open as if it had been unlocked.

"RELEASE"! A dozen full steel arrows sailed across the room. Greeves and Kitzfield reacted just quickly enough to throw up some small luminescent shields and jump out of the way, but many of the other men weren't so lucky. An arrow shattered one of Greeves' luminescent shields, and twisted in the air bluntly smashing into his leg. Pain shot through his body as he landed on the ground.

He looked back, taking a quick head count. *Fifteen. Prak!* On the other side of the keep, ten men were standing in a crescent formation in front of Damascus. Knowing that a second volley would just be dodged, They quickly put down their bows and pulled out their swords. Outside enemy reinforcements were approaching from the keeps front gate. Everyone from camp Vale piled into the keep, quickly shutting the door behind them. Nim and Elias braced it shut, as enemy reinforcements tried to make their way inside. Everyone else charged towards Damascus.

"That's him, don't let him escape!" Greeves shouted. The guards around Damascus braced themselves. Four of them had massive luminescent auras, similar in size to that of Greeves and Kitzfield. *Four!* Nim thought watching from the front door. Four class six luminescents was going to be a problem. Not to mention the other six guards, all of whom appeared to be class fives. Everyone from camp vale paused for a moment. *Did the plans leak, was this a trap*, Greeves wondered? The

soldiers on his left and right were breathing heavily. *Prak. It doesn't matter. I can't afford to drag this out any longer.*

"Come any closer and you will all die. If you surrender-". Damascus was cut off.

"Don't falter now! Take him down!" Greeves yelled, charging forward. Kitzfield, and the remaining soldiers followed behind him. Both forces collided with everyone pushing themselves to the limit of what their abilities would allow. As a blade swung towards Greeves, he spun, blocking it with the edge of his sword. Pushing back he released a torrent of slashes upon his enemy. Each attack put Greeves' attacker more and more on the defensive. Pulling back Greeves left an opening for his opponent to retreat. As the man took it Greeves thrust forward, catching him off guard. The blade dug into the man's midsection. Greeves' opponent fell to the floor grasping at the wound, but Greeves didn't stop for a moment, quickly pulling his sword out he thrust it into the man's heart to finish him off. The man's body went limp and Greeves looked around.

His vision was blurry and his head and leg were throbbing. A cough escaped him. *Varrit!* He rushed towards the closest class six who saw him and responded with a thrust towards his head. Greeves pulled back, narrowly avoiding the blade. *I'm so slow right now.*

"GHH!" Halfway across the room Kitzfield let out a moan, as an enemy's sword sliced along her left side. But the wound hadn't been received for nothing, her sword was pierced straight through her opponent's chest, who fell to the floor dead. Kitzfield stumbled back and fell to the floor as well. Between the exhaustion and her new injury her body had had enough. She lost consciousness just a moment later. A brief feeling of terror rolled through Greeves, that he immediately pushed out. *There's only two class six left, we can still win.*

He rushed forward, grappling the class six in front of him. Pain surged through his leg from where the arrow had slammed into it earlier. The other enemy class six approached Greeves and thrust at his left side. Greeves pulled himself forward, narrowly avoiding the thrust, and lifted his right knee ramming it into the class six he had grappled. His opponent lurched back in pain, stunned from the impact. Greeves released his left hand and threw his elbow back slamming it into the other class six that had attacked him. Greeves then twisted his body as hard as he could, and sent a powerful kick into the side of the class six he had grappled. Greeves' leg, already damaged by the steel arrow, snapped from the impact, while his opponent's ribcage shattered.

“GAHHH!” Greeves stumbled back, barely able to remain standing. The remaining class six slashed at him. He pulled away, avoiding the attack, but pain shot through his leg causing him to fall backwards onto the floor. His opponent attacked again, and Greeves pulled his legs back out of the way of the attack, grimacing from the pain as he did so. *I can't stay on the ground.* Extending some luminescence outside of his body he created a thin cast around his injured leg and jumped back up into a standing position. His vision was a complete blur now. He did his best to block and dodge, but he couldn't stay on the defensive forever, time was on the enemies side.

Nim saw a desperate scenario unfolding in front of him as he and Elias continued to push against the keep's door. Ideas frantically ran through his head. *Come on! Come on! There must be something, anything!* He watched as another one of the men from Camp Vale was pierced through with an enemy spear. *The initial assault had been so easy.... Wait! .* He looked around the room frantically. *What's a weak enough point...THERE!* His gaze rested on a circular array of small windows about thirty feet above the door they were currently bracing. He looked at the ground where a couple of the men from earlier had fallen. *No spears...but we can use this.* Nim shot out luminescence from his hand and quickly grabbed one of the fallen men's shields.

“What are you-”

“Take it.” Nim cut Elias off, handing him the shield, who took it with a puzzled look.

“I have an idea, but we'll need to get outside.”

“WHAT, are you insane, what could we possibly gain from going out there?”

“If I jump through that window, I'll have a clean line of sight on Damascus.” He motioned to the window with his eyes. “They'll be too distracted to block a spear right now.”

“What spear? You don't have one.”

“A couple of the men who died from the arrow volley earlier still had theirs. They should be just outside the door.”

“Should be?”

Elias looked up at the small array of windows, while Nim continued to talk.

“If you can push the enemy back for just a moment I can-.”

“Nim, that window’s reinforced, if you just jump at it-”

“Then throw me.”

“WHAT!”

“Like we did for the wall.”

“That impact could kill you.”

“Only if you miss.”

Again, the enemy soldiers pushed against the keep’s door, but Nim and Elias held firm. Elias looked forward at the remaining soldiers. *We’re losing...* . He looked down at the shield and then back over to Nim.

“Alright, fine. We’re out of options.” He took a deep breath. “I’ll push them back as much as I can, but I can’t make any promises”. Nim nodded.

“Once I grab the spear, I’ll jump towards you. Throw me back towards the window with that shield”.

“Okay. We’ll go on the enemy’s next push.” Elias replied.

Nim nodded, and they let go of the door, readying themselves. *If he misses I’m dead.* Memories of their previous battles together flashed through his head. ...*Nim’s good with a spear.* Determination started to burn inside of him. *He won’t miss. Just push the enemy back.* Elias dug deep, pulling on his luminescence as hard as he could. *He’s not going to miss.* The brace on the door snapped as the door swung open and enemy soldiers rushed forward. *End this Nim!* Using the shield as a battering ram, Elias launched himself into the soldiers with every ounce of energy he had. The luminescence surrounding his body swirled and twisted. Purple light enveloped him expanding outward in an explosion of luminescent energy. New luminescent energy coursed through his body as he shot forward with even greater speed pushing through the enemy soldiers like a battering ram.

Nim dashed forward, grabbing a steel spear as he went. The enemy soldiers stopped for a second, blinded by the bright burst of light. In that split moment, Elias turned and Nim jumped towards him. Nim landed on the shield and Elias flung him up towards the glass window. Nim soared into the air, and focused on enhancing his sight and strengthening his upper body. Putting his right arm forward he braced for the impact that came just a second later. *SMASH!* His body crashed through the window. Several of his bones snapped, while large glass shards cut into

his body. His adrenaline allowed him a brief moment of clarity as he searched frantically for his target. *THERE!* He tensed up his body, and aimed the heavy steel spear. Then using all the strength he could muster, he hurled it down towards Damascus, who realized what was happening one moment too late. The spear streaked through the air with astonishing speed before reaching its target. SLAM! It nailed Damascus to the ground with incredible force, snapping his neck in the process. Nim continued falling, and tried to brace himself, but as he landed a sharp pain shot through his left leg. The fighting in the keep slowed to a halt as everyone realized what had just happened. Enemy soldiers turned pale and soon found themselves unable to channel their luminescence. Everyone stood still, inside and now outside of the keep as well. Greeves saw his chance.

“Surrender to us, the fight is over.” He channeled his luminescence to increase his voice. Cautiously looking around he gauged the enemy's reaction. The remaining enemy class six in front of him spoke up.

“Við munum aldrei gefast upp!” He yelled. Then the remaining enemies inside of the keep attacked. Greeves and what was left of the others from camp Vale, cut them down instantly. Outside the keep the enemy soldiers were staying put. Between the loss of their luminescence and the brilliant flash of purple light they had just seen, many were apprehensive to continue attacking. Greeves walked over to the entrance of the keep.

“Damascus is dead, if you do not fight against us I guarantee your safety.” He shouted. Unfortunately, most of the enemy soldiers didn't speak his language. They looked around at each other, waiting for someone to respond. What seemed like an eternity passed, before someone else spoke up.

“lækkaðu vopnin þín!” Was shouted by one of the men. One by one the enemy soldiers slowly put back their weapons and started to relax their stances. Greeves and what remained of the soldiers from camp Vale did the same. A high ranking commander from amongst the enemy soldiers stepped out and slowly approached Greeves. He stopped just a couple feet away from him with a stern look on his face. He opened his mouth and spoke slowly, doing his best to pronounce every word.

“We...talk terms.” His accent was thick but Greeves still understood him.

“Yes we will, but first we must take care of our wounded.” The enemy commander entered the keep and looked around. Everyone was still tense as they waited for orders.

“...Yes.” He turned and walked towards the soldiers who were waiting outside.

“Baráttunni er lokið. Enginn ykkar á að ráðast á þá. Ef þeir biðja um hjálp með særða sína, gefðu þeim það, eins og við hugsum um okkar.” The men outside relaxed even more, and Greeves turned to see who from camp Vale was still standing.

“Put away your weapons. We’ll make a base here in the keep. They shouldn’t try anything, but I’ll stand guard while we tend to the wounded.” The remaining soldiers of camp Vale put their swords away and started to help those who were injured.

Greeves relaxed himself but kept his sword out. Elias came inside and found Nim unconscious but being tended to by another soldier. They were bandaging up his cuts from the glass window.

An enemy soldier outside the keep studied the situation intently, taking notes of whatever names and faces he could pick up. Then he casually made his way into the main town. The main town was in a panic as people were rushing through the streets. They kept asking what had happened, since many of them had not seen Damascus’s death for themselves. The soldier got onto his horse, and started to ride out of Levaris, heading towards the south. He worked for the fifth realm, and had been tasked with gathering information on Damascus and his forces, but it seemed none of that would matter now. The enemy's last realm gate was gone.