The Chronicles of Magic

The League of Light

Chapter 1

A Glimpse of the Universal War

“Run!” shouted a desperate voice from somewhere. “They’re coming!”

It looked like a battlefield, a city, a burning city. The sky was filled with hundreds of giant, sword-shaped starships that were advancing and raining down laserfire on the city – Earth’s Space Stormers were tearing down another rebel hideout. Then came the soldiers with Planet Earth’s black crown emblem stamped on their white breastplates, firing lasers everywhere, chasing a dozen people; by the cloaks and the bullets of light that their wands fired, it was instantly obvious that the chased were rebels, trying to escape the human Stariots down a collapsed street.  But even their spells couldn’t match the number of enemies as the Stariots finally brought most of them down with the red jets of light from their blasters and the others surrendered. The brought them to the city square, leaving behind the fresh corpses.

There were thousands of rebels there, rounded up by Stariots and being separated into two lines: soldiers in their steel armour and civilians in their fantastical clothes and the eyes that weren’t trained well-enough to hold the tears. The acidic smell accompanied the smoke as it rose into the heavens that slowly turned black. When the people of the Magical Universe were sorted, someone came. Between the lines was a tall woman with black braided hair and cat-like grey eyes. She had a serious and fierce look that made everyone feel like tiny mice, which were looking into the eyes of a giant cat, which was hungrily staring them down, yet remaining emotionless. Sinera Black, one of the highest-ranking generals and Planet Earth’s most ruthless warrior.

Her black lips and her malicious face perfectly came with her armour to complete the image of a battle-hardened, ruthless warrior. She was dressed in a sleek black battle dress with leather cuirass, faux mail sleeve and long black skirt – the uniform of the Hunters. She walked slowly, inspecting the lines of wizards and other creatures of magic. The air of a feared woman was following her like a shadow. She just passed a few people when something attracted her attention – a baby’s cry. A rebel woman was clutching her baby tightly, desperately trying to make it quiet. Sinera approached the woman.

“What is its name?” she asked, looking into the eyes of the trembling woman.

“A-Alen,” the woman answered. Her voice was so small as if it had to be squeezed from the deepest depths. The baby stopped crying as Sinera looked into his eyes.

“Why is he crying?”

“He’s cold, my lady. And I think he’s afraid,” the woman mumbled.

“Then he’s wiser than most,” the general said, leaning over to the woman. “I am the reason children are afraid of the dark. Many fear it but I cannot stand the light. I hate it; it must be snuffed out of the world.”

Sinera turned away, looking at her army and emotionlessly said, “They fought against us. Proceed.”

The Stariots instantly started a slaughter. Thousands of lasers were fired from the silver blasters, each one meeting its target. People’s screams filled the air and the woman ran towards Sinera, baby in her left hand, dagger in the other.

But Sinera proved too quick and in an instant, she was holding the woman by the neck. The Stariots ceased fire and looked at the scary scene along with the remaining rebels. They saw it; everyone saw how a dagger manifested in Sinera Black’s free hand and dug its tip inside the woman’s gut, while a wicked thing resembling a smile consumed the general’s face. Sinera Black rarely smiled but she was enjoying this, and the cries of the baby somehow made her smile even broader.

“You are brave. . . but that is not enough.”

She took out the dagger, dropping the bleeding woman and the baby on the ground. The rebels screamed and panicked as the general stared at them, her face back to being devoid of emotion and impossible to read. Then the Stariots killed the last of them.

“Quick, he’s about to land!”

The scene had somehow changed. A huge black tower in the centre of a wasteland valley, surrounded by a ring wall. Built in the foot of a mountain, the black tower was the thing that stood out the most: a giant structure, which curved and twisted in the oddest places, and looking at it made Spartak feel like he was looking at a piece of modern art. The likes of which make no sense and look like an accidental splash of paint. Varrosaba. The private fortress of Unetz Chort, the third most powerful person in the world after General Sinera Black and their leader, King Kerrasar.

The sky was dark above Varrosaba and two things went up in the air every few seconds – poisonous black fumes and hundreds of battleships, both Space Stormers and smaller fighter ships that were meant for only one pilot, called Annihilators. The valley had endless caves and warehouses where battle droids and war machines were manufactured for The War, hundreds of thousands in just a day from which the fumes came from.

Then an X-shaped space shuttle landed on a marked platform where Stariots were waiting. The beak-like cockpit and the black stripes on the grey surface, which formed the symbol of a black crown, King Kerrasar’s sigil – only the highest ranks were allowed to use this shuttle model. And surely enough Unetz Chort came down. A tall man with an unnatural smile that would haunt whoever saw it, forever. He wore a dark yellow tailcoat that reached his knees and had a popped collar. He had big amber eyes and short, messy hair, but his most striking feature was his necklace – it was made of teeth. Not just human teeth, but sharp and giant ones, looking like they belonged to mighty beasts. Some of them were still red with blood.

He energetically skipped across Varrosaba’s wasteland-scape, hysterically screaming, “I’m back, my darlings! Did you miss me?”

A squadron of Stariots were trying to catch up with him. “They’re ready, sir,” said the closest one, his voice robotic and croaky from behind the helmet.

Unetz frantically turned around. “Pass it here, dearie, pass it here! Come on!” he squeaked impatiently and his guard passed him a small remote, a droid remote. Unetz giggled as he turned around, facing a raised platform with hundreds of freshly made droids. He took the remote and pressed a big red button. The droids exploded in a symphony of chaos, shaking the ground.

Unetz was slowly spinning on the spot while the fluffy fire and smoke surrounded him, arms spread wide, smile even creepier than before, looking like he was greeting the destruction and chaos as if they were gods. That man had quickly built the image of a chaotic lunatic who enjoyed destruction and found everything amusing when he had been appointed by King Kerrasar as one of the most powerful generals. Despite that, his insanity did not affect his deadliness at all.

“Sir!” one of the Stariots shouted. The explosions had died out and Unetz looked at the Stariot seriously. “These droids took hours and valuable resources to produce! Why would you destroy them?”

“Because it’s fun!” Unetz shouted back. “Fun is above anything and everything, fun is the ultimate thing in the universes. Anyone who stands between me and my fun will be cut in pieces and then rearranged in the weirdest way to make the most hideous lifeform in existence, which I will find *very* entertaining!”

The Stariot had shut up and didn’t dare even blink, while Unetz’s crazy eyes were staring him down. His smile had vanished, but then re-appeared again as he and his six Stariots walked to the tower.

“Let’s put some music on!” Unetz cried suddenly, making his Stariots jump. “This is not a funeral; we need to shake it off. Come on, what music shall we put? WHAT MUSIC DO YOU LIKE?” he shouted and pointed at one of the Stariots, who was very short and frail-looking even with his white armour that inspired fear for both humans and rebels.

“Justin Bieber,” the small Stariot answered and Unetz’s face tensed.

“Execute him,” he said coldly, looking at his guards and pointing at the short Stariot, who was dragged away, screaming and begging for mercy. Unetz merely giggled, then walked to the black tower and Spartak followed him and his guards. Through a few corridors, down a few hundred stairs, around the corner and in front of a white iron door. The guards waited outside, while Unetz entered it, a wicked smile on his face. A bruised, wretched-looking man was lying on the dirty floor in grey pants and a tucked-in grey shirt. A prisoner’s uniform.

“Darling, darling, darling,” Unetz mumbled, shaking his head reproachfully. “You’re in a lot of trouble.”

The man instantly crawled to Unetz’s feet. “I haven’t done anything. I want to go, let me out!”

“Tom Macgregor, or as wizards’ call you, Omul Dosad.” Unetz said. “Betrayed your world at the beginning of The War and became our spy in exchange for safety and money. Betrayed your friends and hundreds of worlds, helped to massacre countless rebels and enemies of King Kerrasar. And they call me a monster.”

“I’ve done everything for the Black King! I’ve given you all the information you needed for your battles, why am I here?”

“You know, darling!” He laughed an insane laugh, while life shrank in Omul’s eyes. “Do you think we can be fooled? We know you’ve been giving information to the rebels. We don’t like traitors, not at all.”

Omul turned into a sobbing coward, almost resembling a giant rat.

“Don’t kill me, please!” Omul pleaded, crying in front of Unetz, whose smile was growing beyond creepy and unnatural. “I’ll do anything! I’ll give you what you want. I’ll spy for you, I’ll serve Kerrasar, I’ll bring down the Rebellion!”

“You think that’s what I want!” Unetz laughed his head off, while Omul stared at him, confused and scared. “No, dearie, I just want to watch the world *burn*. I want to pour down a giant tub of gasoline onto a burning planet and watch the flames grow!” Spartak pictured a man, watering his flowers and enjoying seeing how they grew, but Unetz’s twisted mind had turned this tranquil and beautiful image into one of destruction. “You know, something? Destruction is amusing! Suffering is hilarious! Chaos is rollicking! All of them combined make fun, all I do is for fun! And now, let’s make the situation hilarious.”

Unetz raised his hand and Omul’s teeth flew from his mouth, directly to the sadist’s hand. Unetz giggled, then waved his hand and. . . Omul’s face was cleaned. His eyes, mouth, nose, they were all removed as if a rubber had erased them. Omul screamed, but no screams came out, they couldn’t come out of anything, just horrible muffled sounds as he ran around the room, blind to the world around him, being laughed at by the crazy Unetz. And then, all in a flash, Unetz stabbed Omul with a wooden stick.

Spartak screamed, but no one noticed. Unetz giggled madly, but then he fussed like a little child. “Now look what you’ve done!” he shouted at Omul’s bleeding corpse. “I wanted this room yellow, now I have to paint it red. You have to compensate.”

He waved his bloody wand and suddenly Omul disappeared. Not exactly – he was on the floor, or rather a doll was. Omul Dosad was now a faceless wooden doll. Unetz giggled, picked it up and talked to himself. “My parents never allowed me to play. Because they knew I played rough. But they’re gone, now. I can play as much as I want.”

Then a Stariot came into the room. “Sir, the prisoners from the battle on Mallu are here.”

Smiling his unnatural smile, Unetz happily said, “Let’s play.”

The scene changed again.

There was a tall figure, standing on a raised platform, arms folded behind his back. He was looking at a besieged city, bombs tearing it apart while Space Stormers were taking the sky from a rebel fleet. A different city, much bigger than before.

“I’ve been struck with the thought that you don’t know who I am,” said a cold and grating voice. Then the figure slowly turned around and the bone-chilling smile of King Kerrasar was revealed. A man with brown hair and charcoal eyes, engulfing you like a chilling night and their darkness then becomes your biggest fear. His black and red armour gave him the air of regal elegance as he smiled wryly at the thousand rebel-soldiers beneath him. “I am Kerrasar, ruler and conqueror of the Magical Universe, leader of Earth and Commander of its infinite legions, the all-powerful Kamrak and the Black King.”

The army of rebels took battle positions, and Kerrasar’s smile vanished.

“You must know me because everyone knows me,” he said. “So I’ve reached the conclusion that you’re all demented since no sane person would dare go against me. And that’s why I’ll offer you a deal: Kneel before me, kneel before your king and I might spare *some of you*.”

One of the rebels stepped up, looking like their leader and fiercely said, “We know who you are, Kamrak. But you’re no king, only a mere servant of darkness. And we will never surrender to –”

“Yes, uh, I’ll stop you right there, I get the picture.” He rolled his eyes in annoyance. “Let’s get on with it.”

“Rebels Rise!” their leader roared their battle cry as they stormed forward.

Kerrasar charged at the rebels. The archers released a rain of flaming arrows and spells but Kerrasar dodged them easily or grasped them with his power, firing them back at the rebels. He attacked the soldiers, ferociously slaying them. A mighty clash, a sea of corpses, a legendary massacre.

After a few seconds, Kerrasar stood amidst the corpses of a thousand slain rebels, obviously enjoying himself. “Oh, that sure feels nice. Still, it’s a shame there aren’t more. Oh, one’s still alive.”

The rebels’ leader, injured, his entire face covered in blood, arose from the sea of bodies and sternly looked at the Black King.

“Will you kneel, now?” Kerrasar said slyly.

“Go back to whatever abyss you crawled out of, you filthy demon!”

And then Kerrasar nailed the rebel to a spike he conjured from his hands. He walked away, then stopped. As if he had just saw something for the first time, the Black King ran, dug his arm in and–

Spartak Anderson woke up screaming, still feeling the cold hand gripping his heart.

His sodden sheets were stuck to his skin. He took some deep breaths, trying to relax as he felt how his heart was nearly going to jump out of his chest. He put his hand on the chest, just to make sure that it was still there. It was. Then sunlight hit his brown eyes and he walked to the window; it felt like a long journey because of the sleepiness: out of the huge oak bed, stepping on the white carpet, past the black sofa and the giant TV screen and to the large and high windows; it was dawn. For some reason as soon as the sun was up he was up, always, every single day of his life. He saw how the sun’s rays shined upon the giant city of New York, which covered all of North America.

Spartak looked at the clock on the midnight-blue wall, and there was at least an hour and a half before he could have his breakfast, so he spent it in his favourite way – drawing. This always brought relief. No coloured paintings, only black and white pictures. They were his speciality.

He sat down on his cloud-soft chair in front of his oak desk, his sketchpad waiting for him. He looked up at the wall and saw his hundreds of other drawings: maps of magical worlds, scenes of battles, ruins of once huge buildings, castles, King Kerrasar, his minions and two people. For some reason, they were his most common drawing, the two people. A tall man with copper-brown hair, bright-blue eyes and tanned skin, and a beautiful woman with long golden hair, olive skin and captivating green eyes. He didn’t know why but he had called them Aaron and Isabel, just two names that had randomly jumped into his head while drawing them. He always associated the names with those two people. Weirdly, he particularly liked the necklace Isabel had, of the sun and the moon.

He started drawing.

. . .

“Spartak, time to wake up!” he heard the housekeeper’s croaky voice and looked at the clock; it was already seven o’clock. Time always flew when he drew. “Spartak!”

“I’m coming!” Spartak yelled. He stood up, slapped on a red t-shirt and a pair of jeans, put on his father’s leather jacket, and faced himself in the mirror. He styled his hair into a quiff and then looked at his necklace. It was the only thing he had from his real parents and he never took it off, not even when he slept. It was a symbol of the sun, and it was partly the inspiration for Isabel’s amulet.

It was Thursday and today was his seventeenth birthday. He hated his birthday, nearly more than everything else. The only thing he hated more was Malia Ashworth, his classmate. He had big plans for her today, ones that were going to hurt her.

He walked down the huge corridor, sketchpad in his hands, headed for the elevator. There was a line of floor-to-ceiling windows, which made Spartak’s six-foot body look puny. He passed some droids, who were cleaning the marble floor and said, “Good morning, Master Spartak.”

He passed the metal clunks, ignoring them and entered the elevator, which was the size of a standard living room and that’s what it looked like. Spartak pressed the button, labelled F1. It would take time to reach the first floor since his room was on the ninth (out of the thirteen floors of the mansion). He sat down on a red sofa, touched the glass-flat surface of the table in front of him and a soda instantly came from the table. He’d drank it by the time he reached the first floor, the ride coming to a shaky end.

Out of the elevator, into a giant corridor that was the size of a house. If all the decoration in it were sold, the hunger in the galaxy would end; everything was gold and silver, more valuable than the jewellery in the national museums. Spartak walked past the portrait-lined, kilometre-long hall and saw some of mankind’s most valuable paintings: Mona Lisa by Da Vinci, Starry Night by Van Gogh, The Creation of Adam by Michelangelo and many others. His mother had bought them, along with the critics that chose them, the servants, both humans and droids that were passing by him and countless other things Spartak couldn’t be bothered to remember. She knew nothing of art, she couldn’t even name the things she had bought, but she enjoyed telling everyone that some of humanity’s most valuable possessions were possessed by her.

Spartak sat on an oak chair in the dining hall and put his book on the marble-smooth table, avoiding the servants’ eyes as they served breakfast. As always, there was more than enough food to feed a small town for a month. Spartak’s mother always wanted to have everything he liked at breakfast so that he can choose and then throw away anything he didn’t like. Just because they could afford it.

He started drawing, barely finding any room for his sketchpad on the overflowing-with-food table. His little brother, Peter, came down the stairs, rushing to see Spartak’s drawings, as he did every morning. His smile was a ray of sunshine painted all over his face, which brought more light to Spartak’s life than the sun, moon and stars combined together. People couldn’t help but love him; he was purer than a fresh raindrop and his sparkling blue eyes made people smile.

“Wow, this one is amazing,” Peter said, sounding a bit too impressed. He was looking into Spartak’s drawing of the woman, Isabel, looking out of a castle window, holding a rose in her hands. She was beautiful. “I wish I could be as good as you. Maybe one day I will be!”

Spartak smiled and gently said, “No, you’ll be better.” Just when Peter least expected it, Spartak grabbed some icing from one of the cakes and painted it all over his little brother’s face. The little boy crossed his arms, over-exaggerating his anger in the cutest way possible. “I’ll get you one day, Sparky,” Peter said, knowing this will annoy his brother, which it did, but only because Spartak wanted it to. He ruffled Peter’s fluffy brown hair and together they sat to enjoy the breakfast.

Then they heard the hoarse voice of their mother, shouting at someone. “You let it slip! If they find out, we’re dead. You… Who gives a damn you have four children and you’re a single mother? I don’t and they won’t when they ruin our lives. I’m coming in an hour and you better pray they haven’t found out, otherwise I’ll strangle you myself!”

And there she was, their mother, Catherine Anderson, a tall woman with short blonde hair and sharp green eyes. She was already dressed in a red blazer and an official skirt, her hair straightened and her makeup on; Spartak didn’t recall ever seeing her un-officially looking, she always had the air of a businesswoman around her. And as always, she was staring at her rectangular, glass portscreen and talking to someone.

People often said she was beautiful, probably because of the many surgeries she’d had, yet her beauty looked perfectly natural. Yet her beauty wasn’t reflected upon Spartak who looked nothing like her, definitely because he was adopted.

He hated her. Ever since the New York raid on November 9th, 4789, eight years ago, she had done the thing that made Spartak hate her – she hated Peter. She blamed him for her husband’s death.

On the night of the battle, on the night of Spartak’s ninth birthday, thousands of rebel ships and hundreds of thousands of rebel troops besieged New York; nothing like this had happened before and the city wasn’t ready. Spartak’s dad was a General and was called to fight, but he never reached the fight. While they were running for the bomb shelter in the garden, Peter, only five years old, ran back to the house to get his biggest treasure – a rabbit Spartak had given him as a birthday present. Their dad followed him into the house, while Spartak and his mother watched as a bomb fell on it. A few minutes passed and they stood tightly hugged, paralyzed, but then the small figure of Peter emerged and Spartak ran to hug him. But his mother had stood in front of the shelter, crying, unable to even breathe, realising that Peter would be the only one to come out.

Since that day, his mother detested Peter and she had not shown any signs of love for him. For that reason, Spartak hated her, even though she loved him and tried her hardest to reach him. To her he was the most perfect human on this planet, every mistake he did was ignored and often blamed on Peter, which was one of the many injustices done to this little boy. Spartak praised his little brother for one thing: staying happy all these years, while his mother tormented him in every way.

Spartak once loved her. But his love for her was sleeping like a bear in the winter, and this sleep would not end, ever.

He returned to reality when his mother’s voice stopped and he noticed that her conversation was over. She sat down.

“Sorry,” she apologised, still staring at her portscreen. “Some idiot has shown information to the competition, and if they find out the business is a goner.” She then took some toasts, spread some butter, chocolate and strawberry jam on four them, but threw the rest away. The fact that she was as rich as anyone could get had made her too wasteful and that was another thing Spartak hated. She was the owner of one of the most successful highly-advanced-weaponry factories and The War had made her one of the richest people on Earth, if not in the entire galaxy.

“Well, what do you want to do on your birthday, sweetheart?” she asked, taking a sip of coffee. “We have a week to plan it, so you can choose anything you want. I can get you out of school if you want.”

Spartak groaned quietly so she wouldn’t notice. “It’s today,” he said and she nearly choked on her coffee. *She could’ve at least remembered his death*, Spartak thought angrily to himself. Then he remembered that all the meetings and the stuff that was going on in her factory was driving her crazy; that was also a good thing because she paid little attention to her sons and they were left alone, in peace.

“Oh, I’m so sorry!” she cried, looking as though she had committed a crime. “I’ll compensate. I’ll buy you the new *Hoverscooter, S82L Model,* I know you’ve always wanted one! I can get you some ice cream and anything you want.”

“Can I come too?” Peter asked sweetly and his mother gave him a death stare. One of freezing fury that replaced her guilty expression.

“Well, have you done something to deserve it?” she asked, smiling wickedly, walking to the little boy who now stared at his porridge to avoid her glare. “Have you been just as perfect as your brother? Oh, no, you haven’t. You’ve just been a tiny spiteful thing which deserves nothing!”

Spartak wanted to stand up and punch her, as he saw how Peter raised his little head, his eyes sparkling with tears as he was about to cry. “I’m sorry,” he said, nearly sobbing, not even knowing what he was sorry about. His mother raised her hand as if she was about to slap him and he cowered in his chair. Spartak stood up and went to hug him; he felt Peter’s shaking.

“I know you are,” their mother said, kneeling down to look Peter in the eyes. “I am sorry for many things, too. But my biggest regret is that you’re here.”

Spartak’s face tensed and he was about to shout, but he only said, “I just remembered: I hate ice cream. I’ll be out with friends, so you can forget about the family afternoon.”

His mother backed away, realizing her mistake. While she was walking away, a small and murderous voice whispered, *Kill her,* and echoed in Spartak’s head. It often happened – when he was angry or sad the voice, a familiar yet foreign and cold voice whispered things in his mind. Dark things. Death, murder, revenge.

The voice faded away in his head and then Spartak was able to hear his brother’s sobs. Peter looked up and revealed his broken face. Spartak’s anger grew bigger but he covered it, knowing he had to use his kindness to comfort his little brother.

He rubbed his hands through Peter’s fluffy hair, hugging him tightly, feeling the heat coming from his tiny body; Peter was almost like a torch, which refused to stop glowing and to emit warmth from his entire being, despite the freezing darkness of his mother’s hatred. Then Peter removed his head from his brother’s shoulder, while Spartak looked into the watery, red eyes, filled with pain; he managed a smile and wiped the falling tears from Peter’s face.

“Listen, you are not alone and you never will be. People love you. I love you, more than anything. And you will always have me.” Peter hugged his big brother, resting his little head on Spartak’s big and broad shoulders, letting tears of mixed feelings slip. Spartak felt the heat of the little body as if Peter was an electric blanket.

Peter removed his head and Spartak saw how a tear was falling down from his red eyes; he wiped it off with his fingers, and said, “Want a piggyback?”