

# I Dub Thee...

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*Still in Hong Kong, the dragon council wishes to knight Rose for her efforts against the Dark Dragon. However, she has to pass a few trials before she can accept the honor, otherwise, her memory of the magical world will be permanently erased.*

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## 1 - A date cut short

-Victoria Peak, Hong Kong

It was a starry, moonlit night in Hong Kong. Along the summit of Victoria Peak, two young teenagers stood, admiring the view of the city lights and the moonlight, both of which reflecting off of the waters of the local harbor. One of the two teens was an Asian-American boy with spiky green/black hair; with him was a pretty, taller-than-him, Caucasian girl with blond-hair, blue eyes and a Dragon-shaped birthmark on her wrist and palm. They were Jake Long (the American Dragon) and his long-lost love, Rose, a former member of an evil organization called the Huntsclan (long story, all will be explained later). Rose and Jake stood there in a romantic silence, admiring their much-deserved moment of peace; Rose with her arms around one of Jake's. She gently sighed and said, "This is great, isn't it Jake?"

"Yeah," Jake responded, "It is nice to finally be done with it all,"

"Yeah," Rose answered, "No more secrets"

"No more lies"

"No more trying to kill each other"

"and the best part is," Jake said as he reached into a min-cooler he brought with him, "no more Huntsclan to look over our shoulders for every five minutes." He finished as he pulled out a pair of soda cans. "Or the Dark Dragon for that matter," Rose said as Jake handed her one of the drinks. "Tch, amen to that." Jake finished. "To victory,"

"To victory" Jake and Rose said as they clanked their soda cans together in a toast, then opened them and took respective sips. As both Jake and Rose finished their sips, Rose turned to see Jake, and knew that he was trying to hide an unpleasant feeling behind a silent expression. "Hey, you okay?" Rose asked, breaking the brief silence. "Huh?" Jake responded, "Oh, it's nothing." Rose obviously knew that something was bothering her fire-breathing sweetheart. "Jake, don't try to fool me, as both a former warrior of the Huntsclan, and a teenage girl, I know that something's bothering you."

"Well.... yeah ,l..uhh..." Jake stammered, but before he could finish, Rose interrupted with an assumption of her own. "Let me guess, it has to do with the fact that you're only here for a few days before you have to go back home to New York, and meanwhile I'm stuck here."

"Well, that wasn't what was bothering me until now." Jake responded. "Oh, heheh, sorry." Rose replied while scratching the back of her neck in awkwardness. "So what is bothering you?"

"Well....." Jake said, fidgeting his hands, but before he could finish, who else but the petit messenger fairy shows up to ruin the moment. "Message to Jake Long and 'what's-her-slayer'.."

"Rose"

"Right...from the Dragon council," The fairy pulled a scroll of parchment out of her bag, opened it, and began to read-aloud. "The dragon council demands the presence of the American Dragon and the young, female dragon-slayer to meet them and the Hong Kong convention and exhibition center..... IMMEDIATELY" When she finished, an ominous chill ran up the spines of both Jake and Rose after they heard that last part. An eerie silence fell over the two, which was broken when the messenger fairy asked, "I'm sorry, did I interrupt something?"

## 2 - The council's offer

Jake, in his dragon form, was flying over the city with Rose, in her new slayer-outfit (the one from “Hong Kong Longs”), riding on his back. Jake was in a noticeable nervous sweat, not to mention he was breathing nervously as well.

“Calm down, Jake. why are you getting so clammy?” Rose asked.

“Well, if you must know,” Jake started, turning his head to face her, “My track-record regarding my visits to the Dragon Council hasn’t been one where I get a plaque or a medal.” Rose raised one of her eyebrows in curiosity. “What do you mean?”

“Well,” Jake inhaled through his teeth before he explained, “during my first visit with the council, I practically got my head bitten off about a few foul-ups I made during my rookie-days as a dragon, and I had to perform a series of tests to make sure that I could keep grandpa as my dragon trainer. After my second meet with the council, I had my powers taken away because I threw a Halloween party with both magical creatures and humans; AS IF THE HUMANS COULD TELL THAT THE CREATURES WERE REAL!? And then there was the time when.... okay, so I sent them the exploding cake on purpose, but still...”

“Come on, Jake,” Rose interrupted, “I’m just as nervous as you are, but you don’t see me hyperventilating and breaking out in sweat.” Jake took a deep breath, taking her unsaid hint to calm the heck down. They had just reached the front entrance of the convention center, where Rose got off and Jake reverted into his human form in a flash of blue flame-like light. “You’re right, I should probably calm down and..” Jake stopped mid-phrase when he saw his grandfather, Lao Shi, his younger sister Haley, and his middle-school home-ec teacher/Haley’s dragon teacher Sun Park, AKA the Korean Dragon, carrying Jake’s parents, Jonathan and Susan Long, Jake’s friends Trixie Carter and Arthur P “Spud” Spudinski, and the 600-year-old talking cher-pei/ animal guardian, Fu Dog; all of them land in front of Jake and Rose.

“Let me guess? you got summoned here, too?” Rose asked. “Indeed we have,” Lao Shi said as he reverted to his human form. Jonathan just stood there staring as Haley and Sun morphed back as well. “I still can’t get used to the fact that my own kids can sprout wings and fly like that,” He whispered to Susan. She shrugged and replied with, “Eh, you’ll get used to it.”

“Soooo... what did you do to make the dragon council summon all of us here and have the word ‘immediately’ written in a large font-size?” Haley asked as she walked over and held up a copy of the scroll. “Did you break some kind of ‘maximum limit’ regarding how many human people know your identity? Or did it have something to do with ---”

“Haley...” Sun and Susan both started using serious tones. Haley just looked up to get the message to stop talking. “Look, I may not know much about dragon-business just yet,” Jonathan chimed in as he walked toward the entrance to the convention center, “but I’m sure that everything will be a-okay once we....” Jonathan stopped as he struggled to open the closed door to the building. After three tries with grunting, he stopped and panted “It’s locked.” Lao Shi began a frustrated grumbling in Chinese before he shouted out, “OF COURSE IT’S LOCKED! Do you know nothing about magic?!”

“Hello? I just found out about it yesterday!” Jonathan exclaimed back. Feeling a bit sheepish, Lao Shi chuckled, “Oh, my apologies,”

With that, Sun and Lao Shi stood on either sides of the door and each held their right arms forward and each began the same, complex incantation. As the incantation continued, their hands began to glow, and the doors to the convention center slowly morphed into a colorful, swirling vortex. When Sun and Lao Shi finished the incantation, the vortex became a portal with a translucent membrane over it, and on the other side was the councilors' hall of Isle Draco. Everyone else gave a unified "Whao..." in awe of what they had just seen. Lao Shi and Sun walked through the portal, the membrane shimmered and vibrated as their bodies passed through. Fu Dog made his way over as well, but before he entered, he turned to look back at Jake and Rose and asked, "You coming?" before entering the portal himself. Jake and Rose looked at each other with a sense of nervousness as Haley walked through the portal. As a means to help quell one another's unease, they firmly took one another's hands and walked through the portal at a partially rushed pace. After Jake and Rose made their way through the portal, Trixie and Spud tried to follow, but instead of entering, they hit the portal's membrane as if they hit a brick wall, "OW!!!" They both exclaimed in unison. "What the-?!" Trixie started.

"Dang!" Spud interrupted, "How could something so gelatinous be so painful?" He asked out loud as he ran his index finger across the surface of the portal's membrane. "Sorry kids," Fu stated as he turned around to face them from the other side of the portal, "but that magic-membrane around the portal ain't just for show, it's actually a safety measure to keep humans out. The only way a human can get in is if they are personally invited by the members of the dragon council themselves."

"But....."

"Sorry, you'll just have to wait until this little chew-out is over before we can give you the 411." Fu finished as the portal closed itself as he walked off.

– Hall of the Dragon Council

Jake and Rose walked across the hallway that lead to the council chamber, both of them nervous, with Sun, Lao Shi, Haley, and Fu Dog behind them. Both of their throats felt swollen from the tension. When they reached the chamber, Councilor Klude, Councilor Andam, and Councilor Omina were already seated at the councilors' table. When Jake and Rose walked to the appropriate distance, while the others stood behind them a distance, Dragon councilor Klude was the first to speak. "Ahh, the American Dragon, actually on time for once."

"I'll bet that you're wondering why you are here, as well as why we invited the girl?" Andam continued. Jake and Rose both gulped before answering. "Uhh, kinda," Jake answered, "am I in trouble for something...again?" he inquired in a nervous tone. "Surprisingly, you're not." Omina answered. "They're NOT?!" Haley, Fu, and Lao Shi asked simultaneously. "Well, now that is what I call a change of pace." Sun said out loud.

"In fact, we wish to thank you, the both of you," Klude continued, "If it hadn't been for Jake's, err, rebellious wit, all of the world's dragons would have been turned into the Dark Dragon's puppets. And if it wasn't for the Dragon-slayer here..."

"Ex-Dragon-slayer.." Rose intentionally coughed.

"Right," Klude went on, "the Dark Dragon would've destroyed us all."

Rose was flattered by her being acknowledged. "Well, to be honest, I never would've even shown up if Jake hadn't tried to convince me of my ...ummm.... altered 'histry'." She began scratching the back of her head in awkwardness. The room was silent for a brief moment before it was broken by Councilor Omina. "Yes well, we used a dream-drifter spell last night to see what you all knew about her, and we learned quite a bit." Rose put a nervous look on her face as Jake began to fidget. "But considering that her past as a member of the Huntsclan never technically existed, we won't hold it against you." Andam

finished. Rose and Jake both sighed in relief. "So, was that all that this meeting was about?" Haley asked, raising her hand.

"Actually," Klude began as he rose from his seat, "We invited Rose here to offer her the chance to become an official ally in the dragon order. A knight, if you will.."

"Knight?" Rose and Jake inquired. At that, Fu Dog exclaimed, "THE DRAGON COUNCIL IS OFFERING A KNIGHTING TRIAL?!?! Man, if I was drinking something right now, I would've sprayed it everywhere in astonishment!"

"Soo, with all due respect, what's a dragon-order knighting trial and why is it so important?" Jake asked, feeling awkward in front of the council. Klude pulled out a scroll from under his desk and opened it; a magic holographic image appeared from the parchment, and images formed accordingly with his words. "In the magical underworld, dragons are the only ones who are authorized to handle any disturbances and emergencies. In order to keep other magical creatures from getting in over their heads and attempting to do a dragon's work, we have bylaws against vigilante actions, meaning that if anyone wishes to partake in Peacekeeping within the magical world, they must have the authorized blessings from the dragon council." Councilor Klude closed the Scroll before finishing with, "You'd have known that if you had spent time studying the bylaws instead of sending us an exploding cake." He pointed upward to show some of the cake debris still stuck to the walls and ceiling. "I was wondering what that smell was." Rose murmured to Jake. "The reason that Jake Long's human friends haven't been required the trial is because they usually are there to assist him," Omina added, "and since Rose has no association with any local dragons....you get the picture, right?"

Rose hung her head and replied, "I understand, so unless I personally befriend the local dragon, or pass this knighting thing?"

"We recommend the knighting trial." Andam recommended. "So what is the trail anyway?" Rose inquired, scratching her head in curiosity. All three councilors answered in an alternating sequence; Klude, Andam, then Omina.

"The trial is a test that takes place in an inter-dimensional road---"

"....wrought with obstacles that will test you on---"

"...Skill, cunning, and honor,"

"Should you pass---"

"....You shall be considered a valuable ally to the magical world---"

"Should you fail..."

All three councilors finished this one in unison, "Your entire memory of the magical world shall be permanently erased."

Jake, Rose, Lao Shi, Sun, Fu, and Haley shared the same expression of shock; Rose went especially pale. She couldn't believe that she had to risk losing her recently reclaimed memories of her fighter-side, her inner warrior, and her boyfriend.

---- Back at the entrance to the convention center,

Susan, Johnathan, Trixie, and Spud were sitting on a nearby bench, passing the time with small talk.

"So...exactly how does Jake know this girl?" Jonathan was in the middle of asking when the portal reappeared. The sudden appearance of the portal startled Jonathan out of the seat, exclaiming accordingly. Jake, Rose, and the rest of the invitees walked out of the portal, Rose holding a pamphlet.

"So, how did it go?" Spud asked. Rose and Jake both bit their bottom lips in response.

### 3 - Hunts-Raid

-Hole in the Wall Restaurant,

“They wanna KNIGHT YOU?!” Spud exclaimed in astonishment. Jake, his crew, Sun, and his parents were sitting at the same booth table at the magical creature restaurant. Spud and Trixie were reading the pamphlet Rose was given by the dragon council.

“Dang,” Trixie started, “sounds like a big deal.”

“It is,” Sun Park said before taking a sip of her beverage. She swallowed and began to explain. “The dragon council hasn’t had the knighting trials in over five hundred years, usually due to casualties, as well as the fact that no human has ever been able to pass,”

“Wow,” Rose, Jake, Spud, Trixie and Haley said in unison. Sun then took a bite of her meal, allowing Lao Shi to take it from there. “It was said that the council had discontinued the trial, turns out that it was just put on a hiatus, until now,”

“and since Rose here got hand picked by the council, she’s gotta be worth something, aga-goo-goo-gogi.” Fu Dog finished.

“What is up with that noise Fu makes? Is it supposed to be some kinda laugh?” Jonathan quietly asked Susan, “is that supposed to be a laugh or... vocal tick?”

“I can still hear you, Johnny.” Fu Dog said.

Rose just poked at her food with her chopsticks, nervous about the event. Noticing her nervous demeanor, Jake asked, “You okay, Rose? You’ve barely said anything ever since we met with the council,” In response, Rose sighed, put her chopsticks down and answered.

“Jake, I’m not sure about his,”

“You? Having second-thoughts about a dangerous situation?” Trixie inquired in her usual sassy demeanor, “quit playin’ us, girl.”

“Yeah, I mean did you see yourself fighting that Dark Dragon?” Spud added.

“I know!” Haley chimed in, “She was all like, WAKKAKA-WHOOO-HIYA-HYAH!!!” She exclaimed while pretending to do kung-fu motions; after catching her breath, she sat back down and finished with, “I see why Jake decided to go after you for help.” Rose stared awkwardly for a moment, and then turned to Jake and asked, “Uhhh, who’s she again?” outraged by Rose not knowing who she was, Haley had a bit of a childish blow-out at Jake.

“WHAT?! YOU MEAN DESPITE WHATEVER TIME YOU SPENT WITH HER YOU NEVER TOOK THE TIME TO MENTION CUTE-LITTLE-ME?! YOUR OWN FLESH AND BLOOD?! YOUR ADORING YOUNGER SISTER, HALEY?!?! I AM ANGRY! FURIOUSLY ANGRY! THE KIND OF ANGRY WHERE I JUST WANNA—UGH!” Haley just threw herself back into her seat with an angry pout on her face and her arms crossed. A short period of silence followed, soon to be broken by Jake, “okaaayyyy, back on topic. So Rose, why don’t you feel confident about this?”

“It’s not that I doubt myself, its just that....uggghh,” Rose doubled over slightly and began rubbing the temples on the side of her head, and groaning in pain. “Uh, are you okay?” Lao Shi asked as Rose’s pain worsened; she began to curdle up on the booth seat she was on, leaning on Jake, basically hyperventilating through her teeth and letting out grunts of pain. “M-m-mi-g-graine .” Rose grunted as her pain seemed to get even worse. Everyone stood and stared helplessly for a moment before her pain passed. She slowly steadied her breath and got back up. “Sorry, I’ve been having those since last

night,” She paused to see a crowd of the other magical creatures staring at them. “What? If this was intended for an audience, we would’ve sold tickets!” Fu said to all of the unfamiliar spectators; with that, they all returned to what they were doing.

“Soo, does that happen a lot?” Jake asked as he helped Rose back into her seat.

“Only since last night,” Rose answered as she rubbed her head and steadied herself, “I’ve also been having these random dizzy-spells. I think that it comes from me having two sets of memories stored in my head at the same time.” Rose explained before she took a sip of her beverage to sooth her headache. “I have no idea when either one is going to come up, and when they do... well, you get the idea.”

“Is that why you’re doubting yourself?” Sun asked.

“Well, a moment’s hesitation could lead to a certain downfall,” Rose answered, “besides, I’m feeling a little understocked on weapons.” to that, Trixie, Spud, Jake, and Sun each lifted an eyebrow in curiosity. “Hey, it’s a knighting trial from the dragon council, and I highly doubt that one battle-staff will last me long enough,”

“She has a point,” Fu Dog added, “You see, this trial is inter-dimensional, and she may need more than that one staff.”

“Why?” Haley asked.

“We’re not allowed to tell you that.” Sun said, “Any pre-acquired knowledge of what is expected is considered as a cheat.”

“Oh,” Rose responded,

“but I can tell you this...” Sun continued, “You may want to stock up on some huntsclan arsenal,”

“Yeah, good luck with that,” Spud commented, “Jake’s dad blew up the Hong Kong franchise,”

“Well how was I supposed to know it was a secret lair with a self destruct button?” Jonathan interrupted. There was a brief pause before Rose asked, “Which one?”

– Victoria Peak Hunts-Lair

“I still can’t believe that the Huntsclan had a lair under Victoria Peak!” Trixie exclaimed in astinishment as she, Rose, Jake, Haley, and Spud entered the abandoned, underground complex through the automated double-doors.

“The clan built this place 300 years ago, knowing that the dragons met up at the top once every thousand years. This would have been the lucky year if not for the.... ‘convenient extinction’,” Rose answered as they approached the main weapons vault, “which is why they kept some of the more powerful weapons here.” When they reached the door to the weapons vault, Rose used the dragon shaped birthmark on her hand to open the door by placing it on the vault’s birthmark scanner.

“Identity confirmed.” a digital, feminine voice said before the vault opened. When the doors opened, everyone gawked in awe at the large amount of various weapons they saw before them; battle-staffs, land vehicles, hover vehicles, more than enough to carry out a full-scale war.

“Wow” Haley said, “The Huntsclan must’ve been ready for some massive .... I-don’t-know-what.”

“This is where the clan kept most of the latest weapons and gadgets,” Rose explained as she walked into the vault, everyone else followed. Rose went around and picked up some weapons, and put them in a small satchel, which seemed to hold them all perfectly, despite size. “Where did you get that?” Trixie asked as she saw Rose collect the weapons.

“What, this?” Rose responded as she held up the bag, “Sun gave it to me when I told her where we were going.” When she finished, Rose continued to collect a variety of weapons, including energy ninja-stars, retractable energy chain-whips, grappling hooks, small explosives, and staffs.

As Rose was collecting, a blaring alarm sounded with a flashing red light. At that, everyone turned towards the source of it; a nearby teleportation station.

"Incoming teleportation." declared the computer voice. Everyone gathered around the station at a safe distance as bolts of energy charged up to bring in the incoming teleporteers, Rose bracing herself for combat.

"I don't get it," Rose exclaimed over the blaring siren, "How can anyone other than us know that this place? My wish should've destroyed every member of the clan!"

"Uhh....yeah, about that..." Jake started, but before he could finish, the teleporter sent out a huge, smoky green BURST of energy. When the smoke cleared, two boys in Huntsclan-uniforms were in the chamber, sputtering and coughing. One was a tall, skinny, Caucasian kid with an over-bite, the other was a short, chubby, black kid. They were Huntsclan Sentries #88 and #89.

"Dude, he have GOT to do something about that smoke-effect," #89 sputtered, "I hear ya," #88 coughed in response; once the smoke cleared, he was able to finish, "But once we raid this place and ambush the dragons' thousand-year gathering, ALL MAGICAL CREATURES SHALL BOW DOWN TO.....!"

"That meeting was last night," #88 and #89 turned to see who said that, and saw none other than Rose. It took them a minute to recognize her.

"HUNTSGIRL!!" they both shouted in excitement as they ran over and threw hugs on who they foolishly thought was still their ally (relax, she didn't hug back). "We thought you were dead!" #88 exclaimed excitedly, "I'd kiss you if I weren't afraid that you'd pound my teeth out!" #89 added. "Well if that's the case.." Rose started gently, "THEN GET OFF OF ME!!" She shouted.

"Oh, sorry,"

"Yeah, my-bad"

#88 and #89 backed away from Rose as she dusted herself off from their glomp.

"Man, this is great!" #88 foolishly started, "with Rose's mad ski-zills, and our mad tech, THE MAGICAL UNDERWORLD SHALL ONCE AGAIN TREMBLE BEFORE THE VERY MENTION OF THE NAME OF 'HUNTSCLAN'! MUAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!!!!"

"Uhh, dude," #89 interrupted as he tapped on #88's shoulder, "correct me if I'm wrong, but wasn't Rose the reason that the Huntsclan went bye-bye in the first place?" It took #88 a minute to figure out what #89 meant, and when he did, a look of shock took over his face. "Oh yeah, she was," He whimpered, "then that must mean...." They both looked at Rose, who cracked her knuckles as Jake transformed into his dragon form,

"Bye-Bye." Jake and Rose said simultaneously; #88 and #89 both let out their most wimpy, and helpless screams of terror possible.

- 1.35 seconds later-

#88 and #89 were hanging in the Building's rafters, upside down, in their underwear, by their underwear, hands tied behind their backs by their belts, feet tied by their uniforms, phrases such as "kick me", "Mock me", "me am stupid", and "this space for rent" written all over their bodies. Jake, Rose, and everybody else left the complex laughing their heads off – Jake and Rose especially.

"Uhhhh, 88," #89 started, "what the heck just happened?"

"How should I know?" #88 answered, "I blinked."



## 4 - Devistating Dream

- Rose's apartment building

Jake and Rose were walking side-by-side, down the hall to her apartment, quietly laughing -still- at what they had done to #88 and #89. When they had reached the door to Rose's apartment, they both took a deep breath and ceased their respective laughter. "Well," Rose started, "that was fun,"

"Yeah," Jake replied, "So... you still nervous about your trial?" he inquired.

"Well, I already agreed to it," Rose answered, "and I don't want to back down on my word."

"You know, you can just..." Jake started to suggest, but Rose went on anyway.

"Besides, I highly doubt that the magical underground would be willing to trust some one with...this,"

Rose finished, holding up her right hand to show her dragon-shaped birthmark, which was also the symbol of the Huntsclan. Jake paused for a moment before he took a deep breath and answered with,

"You may have a point there."

"Also, the council said that the trial starts tomorrow at noon, don't they know that I've got school tomorrow?!" Rose exclaimed. She slumped over in stress letting out a frustrated sigh. Jake put his hand on her shoulder in an effort to comfort her. Rose put her hand on his, took a deep breath, and continued speaking, "Sorry, it's been a while since I've had to do anything like this."

"Rose, I'm sure that you'll be able to meet up to the council's expectations, I've seen you in action.

Heck, I've been on the other side of that action plenty of times." Jake said to comfort Rose, who responded with a light giggle. "Oh, by the way, I got this for you earlier today," Jake reached into his pocket and pulled out a necklace with magenta-colored water in it; within the water was a bead of rice with "J+R" written on it within a heart shape. Rose gasped as the sight of it. "Aww. thanks, Jake" She said as Jake handed it to her. "No big, just a good luck charm." Jake responded with surprising modesty. She gave him a warm and loving smile, and he did the same to her. "I know you're just as nervous as I am about his trial, but as long as you believe in me... I guess that's all that matters." Rose said to Jake, who blushed after hearing that. "Well, see you tomorrow," Rose said as she gave Jake a tender kiss to his forehead, "good night," she finished as she proceeded into her apartment. When the door was completely shut, Jake began to walk off, his facial expression changing from pleasant to worried.

As Jake left the building, he was completely unaware of the fact that he was being spied upon by a monkey in a yellow track-suit; none other than Bananas B, the hip-hop magical-animal-assistant monkey. He had a look of intrigue on his face as he made a quiet, evil chuckle to himself, with a sinister smirk.

- A cave at an unknown location

Bananas B rushed to tell his master, former-councilor Chang, of what he had seen and heard. Chang was sitting next to a wood-fire, holding an ice-pack to her head. "Yo! Changity-Chang!" Bananas B exclaimed as he approached her from behind. Chang held out her hand to indicate a "halt" gesture. "Before you speak, Bananas, keep in mind that my head is still throbbing from when the American Dragon's little sister threw me down the side of Victoria Peak. So whatever you have to tell me....." but before she could finish, Bananas B interrupted her to finish, "The Dragon Council wants to knight the

dragon-slayer who finished off the big double-d!" Chang's facial reaction to the monkey's exclamation showed a mixture of shock, annoyance, and outrage.

"What... was... that...?" Chang inquired as she slowly turned to look Bananas B in the eyes. The monkey was jittering with fear as he elaborated.

"Uh...yeah...um... you see...uhhh... th-the dragon council decided that the dragon-slayer chick would make for a valuable ally, so they..um, offered her the title..." Bananas finished off with a large, attempting-to-be-innocent grin.

Chang, irritated by the circumstances, rose from the log she was sitting on, and walked to the entrance to the cave to look outward at the night sky. "What is the magical world coming to?" She rhetorically asked, "First, we are forced to hide from humans, and now the councilors are letting a human into their ranks? The very type of human that drove us underground?!" Chang was clearly furious at the situation.

"THIS MUST BE STOPPED!!" She continued as she spun around to face her helper monkey, tossing her ice-pack aside, "That girl must be DESTROYED!!!"

"Yeah, well I doubt that'll be easy," Bananas B replied, "I mean, hows are we supposed to wax her? She took out the DARK DRAGON for Pete's-sake!! Who'd wanna even TRY to go up against her?"

Chang pondered the monkey's logic for a moment, and after a minute or two of thinking, she asked Bananas B, "Who much have you learned of the American Dragon's past enemies during your time as his substitute guardian?"

- Rose's bedroom, later that same evening

Rose was in bed, lights off, asleep. Unfortunately, she was tossing and turning, her face covered with beads of sweat as she grunted, ground, and softly keened. The reason for that, lied deep within her mind; her subconscious.

-Rose's dream

Rose was suspended between two large spheres by bolts of what looked like storm-variety lightning, screaming as they were pulling at her like a tug-of-war rope. The two spheres respectively contained amalgamated images of her two lifetimes in their separate realities. The one on her left was her normal life, while the one on her right was her Huntsclan life. Her left half was styled as the normal-life Rose, while her right was styled in her Huntsclan uniform; in short, half-normal/half-Huntsclan in appearance. She was screaming painfully as the binds of energy pulled at her from both sides; it was becoming increasingly unbearable for her to endure. Just as things were getting worse, her screams reaching their peak, the American Dragon flies in seemingly out of nowhere. "Rose!" He exclaimed as he saw her current situation. "JAKE!!" Rose cried out, "HELP!"

"What's going on!?" Jake asked as he approached to pull her from the energy binds that suspended her where she was. "I DON'T KNOW!! BUT MY HEAD IS IN MORE PAIN THAN THE REST OF ME!!!" She continued to scream over the crackling and thunderous sounds. Jake tried pulling her from her painful suspension, and when he looked up, he saw the memories being played like amalgamated home videos on the giant orbs. Surprisingly, it didn't take Jake long enough to figure out what was going on. "Rose!" He started, "I think I know what's going on!" Rose was straining to ignore the pain long enough to listen to what Jake had to say, "your mind is probably being pulled around by your separate sets of memories, your experiences!"

"MEANING?!" Rose cried out.

"You have to find a way to balance them out! Evenly!" Jake continued as he released her from his grip,

“CONCENTRATE!” Rose kept screaming from the pain that she was enduring, “I CAN’T” She screamed

“Yes you can!!” Jake responded. Rose took a few deep breaths to help herself mellow out. Afterwards, she almost strained herself to break from her bonds, and slowly and steadily, the energy bonds began to fade away, and Rose slowly levitated ground wards; then, finally, the giant orbs melded together and vanished. Rose just remained motionless, slumped on to her knees, quietly panting for breath. “Rose?” Jake said softly as he slowly approached his beloved blond warrior-girl, “You okay?” With that, Rose looked up, her face still divided into Normal/Huntsgirl left/right appearance; but then the two halves melded together until they were one again, leaving Rose in her new Hunts-outfit. “Well, my headache went away.” Rose answered. Jake reverted to his human form and helped her up. “Thanks, Jake.”

“No prob,” Jake replied.

“Still...” Rose pondered, “How did you know that would work?”

“I...actually didn’t,” Jake nervously responded, “I was just..kinda...wingin’ it.” Rose wasn’t very surprised. “And by the way, how did you get..?” Rose started to ask.

“I still kept the dream-charm you gave me...don’t ask,” Jake interrupted.

“Either way,” She continued as she took Jake’s hand in her’s, “Thanks.” She finished as she gently caressed his cheek with her free hand.

Jake smiled for a moment, but then his expression reverted to that of regret, “Jake, what’s wrong?” Rose asked. Jake took a deep breath-in and out- before answering. “Rose, I just want to say...that I’m ---”

\*“Rose?”\*

–woken world.

Rose stirred to the voice of her father coming in to check up on her. “Rose, I heard you making strange noises, is....everything alright?” Her father asked. Groaning as she woke up, Rose answered, “Don’t worry, it passed.” Rose’s father yawned and finished with, “That’s good to hear, good night.” He closed the door on his way out as he left, leaving Rose to drift back to sleep.

- Jake’s room in the hotel

“Aw, man.” He groaned as he lay half-asleep with the dream charm in hand

## 5 - Trial Prep

–the Streets of Hong Kong, The following morning

“Well, someone looks well rested,” Jake said in a sort of joking manner. “Thanks,” Rose answered with a grin, dressed in her school uniform. “It was nice of you to walk to school with me,”

“No prob,” Jake answered. They walked side-by-side as they made their way towards Rose’s School, pretty much enjoying the moment. “You know, it’s weird,” Rose started,

“What?” Jake asked.

“During my life with the Huntsclan, we never could enjoy a walk to school together.” She added

“Yeah, what with me being a dragon, and you having those muscle-heads watch your every move...”

Jake picked up, an awkward silence following. “Still,” Rose continued, “It’s a nice gesture.” another silence followed.

“So...when and where are we supposed to meet the council again?” Rose inquired. “Hong Kong Harbor at noon.” Jake answered. Rose let out a frustrated sigh in response, “How the heck are we supposed to get me out of school in time without raising suspicions?”

“Way ahead of you,” Came a familiar voice. Jake and Rose turned their heads to see Sun Park leaning against a nearby phone-booth with her hands in her pockets. “Sun?” Jake and Rose asked

simultaneously, “What are you doing here?” Jake asked.

“Well, Fu Dog said that he was going to try a fake-illness potion for some elaborate scheme, but I decided to go for a more...um... immediate approach.” Sun answered. She then pulled a small, empty jar from her pocket. Jake and Rose raised an eyebrow in curiosity. “So... what’s the jar for?” Rose asked.

“Actually, this is about what was in the jar, emphasis on WAS,” Sun replied. Jake and Rose still didn’t get it. With that, Sun just decided to say it up-front. “I planted lash-tongue beetles in Rose’s school, and now it is closed for fumigation.”

“Oh,” Jake and Rose said at the same time. “Wait, shouldn’t I have gotten a...” Rose started before she was interrupted by her cell-phone ringing. She answered it to hear an automated message tell her that the school was closed for fumigation; after hearing that, she hung up.

“Thanks Sun,” Rose said. Sun shrugged and responded with, “Eh, no problem. Now you two can spend some time preparing for the trial.” afterwards she walked off. Jake and Rose looked at each other, wondering how they were going to prepare for what they knew little about. Then Jake had an idea, “Yo Sun! Wait up!” he called out as he and Rose ran after her.

– Huntsclan Victoria Peak training hall

Rose stood at the beginning of an obstacle course dressed in her homemade Hunts-uniform. She was in an upright stance, braced for anything, holding a traditional Hunts-staff upright. Spud and Trixie were operating the training-field environment weapons, which included cardboard spring-ups and various firing weapons, from a high-up control center, Sun Park and Lao Shi standing further in the course, waiting for Rose to reach them. Jake and Haley were at the finish line of the course, ready to time her. Rose stood with her eyes closed, basically finding her center; when she opened her eyes, it was basically The cue for everyone to begin, which they did, starting with Spud.

He activated the motion-triggered cardboard spring-ups as Rose started. She was being tested on her judgement as she saw the cardboard figures spring up. She saw an ogre with a club, which she kicked off. She then passed a goblin with a violin, which technically wasn't a severely dangerous threat. Followed by a Krylock, which she blasted, a snarling werewolf, that she kung-fu chopped, a troll with flowers, she left it alone, a stragoi, a ninja-star to the heart, a cutout of their Milord Fillmore middle-school principal Hans Rotwood, which she kicked the head of just for giggles, and finally a cut-out of a kelpie, which she sliced down the middle. "Test of judgement, complete." Spud said over an intercom.

Trixie then activated the skill-test portion of the course. Rose was faced with multiple energy cannons of a wide variety, and a spike pit at least 20 feet deep, and 20 feet from one end to another with 5-foot spikes. As Rose kept running, the cannons started firing at her. Rose dodged the blasts with a series of ducks, sidesteps, and acrobatic flips. As she passed the first five small-cannons coming from the ceiling, she swung her hunts-blade, firing a wave of energy that destroyed all of them at once. Afterwards, she was caught between a line of wall-based cannons -six on each side- firing rapidly. She quickly gymnast-flipped between each pair of cannons, tricking them into destroying the ones across from each other. When she came across the two, large, ground-based cannons, she froze for a moment as the turrets rotated to face her. As they fired, she jumped up, using the shock from the impact of the blast to give her a boost upward. In midair, she reached into her weapon-satchel and pulled out another staff, then she through them both blade-first at the cannons, thus destroying them in a huge explosion as Rose landed. She continued to run until she reached the edge of the spike pit; thinking quickly, she pulled out another Hunts-staff, backed up, gave herself a running start, and then used her staff to pole-vault over the pit, firing it off at the upward thrust for that extra boost. She made it most of the way across the 20-foot gap, but noticed that she started to pull downward at 17 feet. Thinking fast, she threw her staff downward to stick it into the wall below her, only. Luckily, she was falling in a diagonal direction, thus she was able to land on top of the staff which was at least 6 feet from the spikes, and used it to spring herself high enough to grab the ledge and pull herself back up and move on. "Skill test, complete." Trixie declared over the intercom.

Then came the combat test. Sun and Lao Shi jumped out in front of Rose, both in dragon form, and in battle-ready stances. They all stood still for a minute before both Sun and Lao exclaimed, "Combat test, BEGIN!" They both flew at Rose with full force, while Rose charged at them full force, with an appropriate battle-yell. As Sun and Lao Shi did a dive bomb at her, Rose jumped upward to avoid the attack, then ran along Lao Shi's back as he kept flying until she could leap off. Once she landed, Sun doubled back in an attempt to ambush Rose from behind, but Rose was too quick for Sun. Rose quickly back-flipped and landed a kick right between Sun's wings with an appropriate "HYAH!", sending Sun flying downward with a yelp of pain as she involuntarily reverted back into human form, tumbling as she landed. "Oh, sorry," Rose apologized as Lao Shi managed to sneak up on her and wrap his tail around her in a constrictor-hold. Rose struggled to free her arms, but no luck. Lao Shi gave off a smug chuckle as he leaned towards Rose's face. "Give up?" He asked with a smug grimace; Rose's response came in the form of a fierce head-but to Lao Shi's forehead. The result of the impact left Lao Shi in a daze, allowing for Rose to escape and cross the finish line. "Combat test, pass." Lao Shi said dizzily as he swaggered back and forward.

Jake stopped the timer and let out a whistle of astonishment. "Not bad," He complimented. Trixie and Spud exited the control center to help Sun and Lao Shi up and out. Rose turned to see what she had

done to them and apologized. "Sorry you two, I guess I just got a little carried away."

"Well," Sun started, "At least we're still able to get back up. By the way, how did you know that kicking me between the wings like that would revert me to my human form?"

"I didn't," Rose answered, "I guess that I just got lucky,"

"Regardless," Lao Shi added as he reverted back to human form, "You are more than ready for the trial," Rose gave a grin of confidence.

– Main corridor

As everyone exited the training chamber, Lao Shi asked, "By the way, why couldn't you do the combat exercise with Jake?"

"Do you really need the answer to that?" Rose answered as Jake put his arm around her shoulder.

"Well then how about letting us down?" Came #89's voice from the rafters. Everyone looked up to see both #88 and #89 still hanging there the way Rose and Jake left them. "Yeah, come on!" #88 added, "We've been here all night! Could you please let us down?"

"Yeah, I mean were BEGGING here!" #89 continued, "AND HUNTSCLAN DON'T BEG!!"

Jake and Rose just rolled their eyes at that last statement. Then Rose decided to be clever, "Okay, I'll let you down...."

"YES!!!" #88 and #89 too soon exclaimed. "If..." Rose continued, "You can guess my last name." She finished with a smirk. Faced with the challenge, #88 and #89 both pondered for a moment, then #89, "I got it! It's killdragonosa, right?" Rose scoffed at the response, "Guess again," she answered. Then #88 spoke out, "Massey?"

"Nope," Rose, Jake and the others just left the base as #88 and #89 switched off between lame guesses.

"Goode?"

"Bennet?"

"Young?"

"Basco?"

"DiMaggio?"

"Tom?"

"Scholy?"

"Strong?"

"Baker?"

"Ullman?"

"Sprouse?"

"Finn?"

"Bruckner?"

"Oh?"

"Rugg?"

"Brown?"

"Whitman?"

But by the time they finished guessing, they realized that the others had already left. "Well this stinks," #89 said, "I know," #88 responded. After a brief silence, #88 foolishly asked, "Are you hungry?"

## 6 - the trial begins

-Hong Kong Harbor

The three dragon councilors, along with Jake's parents, Haley, and Fu Dog, were waiting at a dock in the Hong Kong harbor for the others. Jonathan took a look at his watch to see that it was 11:51.

"So, uhh, what happens if they're late?" He asked. Suddenly, Jake flew down from the sky with Rose on his back, following him were sun and Lao Shi, who were carrying Spud and Trixie respectively. The sight of all of that happening made Jonathan jump. "Whoa! Sorry, still getting used to that." He said. Rose got off of Jake's back as he reverted to his human form. Councilor Klude walked up to Jake and Rose and began to speak, "Well, you seem to have a bit of an early-streak recently, you have nine minutes before the trial begins," He turned to Rose and continued speaking, "You still have time to change your mind," Rose stood silent for a moment, then responded.

"My mind was made up when I decided to go through with this,"

"Keep in mind that most of the other humans who went through this very obstacle course didn't come back with their lives." Andam added.

"Most humans don't have fourteen years worth of Huntsclan knowledge and skill." Rose replied. She obviously didn't want to back down, and the council knew that. The councilors looked at each other and silently agreed to proceed. "Very well," Omina started, "but in order to proceed, you must have an animal guardian with you as you take the trial." Jake and Rose shared the same expression that screamed "oh, come on!", then Rose decided to ask, "and what if I don't exactly have one?"

"Then you may temporarily acquire one from an ally." Councilor Klude answered. With that, Jake, Rose, Trixie, Spud, and Lao Shi looked at Fu Dog with matching expressions that said "hmmmmmm". Fu Dog took one quick look around and got the hint. He gave out a nervous chuckle, and then asked, "Do I...er...have a say in the matter?" Lao Shi raised his eyebrow as a way to say no. Fu got the hint and responded with a frustrated sigh, followed by him muttering under his breath, "Why did I have to be born an obedient species?" and the walking to Rose's side. With the acquired animal guardian, weapons in the satchel, and the consent of the council, Rose was ready to begin the trial.

The three Councilors turned to face the summit of Victoria Peak, then Councilor Klude explained the trial. "Your task is to reach the spot where the Dragon Temple appeared before Sunset," He pulled a small, golden hourglass with glowing sand from his sleeve as he continued, "This magic hourglass will tell you how much time you have left," He handed it to Rose, who then put it in her pocket. While Rose had a look of quiet confidence, "This shouldn't be too hard" She said, only to eat her words when the council each held both of their hands out and began to chant something under their breaths. When the council finished the incantation, a portal opened to another dimension. "As opposed to your more conventional routes, you shall first cross the serpent's lake, pass through the ferocity forest, survive hostility city, and clear through riddle-mountain base." Klude continued. "Apparently those places were named a long time ago," Jonathan whispered to Susan.

Even though the names of the places sounded dangerous-if not cliché- Rose wasn't intimidated. Fu, on the other hand, was completely horrified. "Is it too late to back out?" he asked with obvious fear in his voice. His answer came with a group "Yes".

"Thought So," Fu Dog finished. The Clock read 11:59, leaving Rose with one more minute to mentally prepare for who-knows-what. She turned to Jake, who gave a reassuring grin and nod; that was all she

needed.

12:00 struck, "The Trial begins now!" Klude bellowed. That was Rose's cue to start. Both She and Fu Dog leaped into the portal, thus triggering the Hourglass to start running. Despite Jake's reassurance, he was also nervous about the outcome of the trial. He looked towards the sun's general direction and quietly said, "We have only until sunset to determine Rose's fate."

Just as the councilors were about to close the portal, they were struck in the back by throwing darts, and fell to the ground. Everyone gasped in shock at the sight. Just then, a small device fell in front of Jonathan's feet. He looked down to see what landed, but then it burst, covering the area in smoke. Everyone sputtered and coughed from the smokescreen that was created, not to mention that their eyes hurt from it. Jake managed to open his eyes and use his dragon sight just enough to catch at least a glimpse of the attackers. He managed to catch three silhouettes, all three of them wearing individually-styled hats, all three of them skinny, one with six limbs, one who's limbs and neck seemed boneless, and one carrying a large weapon-like object about the size of it's body.

"Hrruy! Beefor eht cciloursu cemo to! or jstu in aces eht adgnor-knpu accehst su!" was the bizarre language that Jake heard from the creature carrying the large weapon. Then in response, the boneless looking one yelled "MASSACRE!" and the six-limbed one yelled "Vandalize" with a digital voice. The three made their way to the portal through the smoke, but Jake tried to stop them. He ran towards the one with the weapon and grabbed his sleeve, but then it just kicked him off with it's remarkably large, black, three-toed foot. Jake accidentally managed to rip off a part of the creature's sleeved when he was kicked off, landing with his back flat on the ground. The three assailants made it into the portal, the one with the weapon entering last, looking back before he entered, saying, "Oruy defgiilnrr ahlls cemo abck a ceoprs, ceorstuy fo eht ehissw fo eht aelmt-ademr eno ew acll aemrst."

Jake had no idea what that meant, but he knew that it couldn't be good. The weapon-holding creature entered the portal, and then closed it with a bolt of energy from his staff.

Jake got back up, transformed into his dragon form, then used his wings to blow away the smoke. When the smoke cleared, everyone began to stop coughing.

"Should'a tried that earlier," Lao Shi said as he waved some smoke out of his face. Sun ran over to the out-cold councilors to see if they were okay, which they were. She pulled out the needle-darts from each of their backs. They each groaned as they came too.

"Ugh, what happened?" Klude asked as he got up.

"We were ambushed," Jake answered as he made his way over, "I saw three of them. One with four arms, one with a boneless-looking body, and one that spat some weird gibberish," Jake held up the piece of fabric he ripped from the creature's sleeve, "not to mention it wore burlap." The three councilors looked to see that the portal was already sealed off. "What should we do?"

"What can we do?" Omina responded as she got up, "Once the portal is closed, anyone else entering will automatically fail one participating the trial," The very sound of that made Jake boil on the inside, "All we can do now is wait," She continued as she pulled a small mirror from her sleeve, "and watch,"



## 7 - the lake obstical

Rose and Fu, after being shot through the wormhole to the trial dimension, roughly landed on terra firma, front first. After coughing out the kicked up dust, they got back on their respective feet and dusted themselves off.

“Remind me to stick to the teleport-system.” Rose said as she fully got up. Once the dust cleared, She and Fu gawked in awe at what the dimension looked like; it was a large, cool-colored void with levitating islands of terra firma as far as one could see. Rose gasped at the surreal wonder that surrounded her. She looked down at the void below her and asked, “How far do you think that it falls?”

Fu walked over and kicked a small rock off over the edge. They both watched as it fell, and kept falling until it was completely out of sight. “I’d say that this is one of those drops where there is no splat at the bottom.” Fu answered in a failed-comedic fashion. Rose gulped and pulled out the golden hourglass that she was given, and noticed that the sand started moving.

“We’d better get going,” Rose said as she walked off, following the forward-path, Fu Dog muzzled whatever guts he had and followed, wondering what would kill them first.

- “Hole in the Wall”

The dragon councilors, along with Jake, Lao Shi, Trixie, Spud, and everyone else in their inner-circle, sat in a private booth, watching the holographic projection of Rose and Fu in the trial dimension from the small mirror Omina had.

“So, this mirror lets us watch what Rose is doing while she goes through the trial?” Jonathan asked as he curiously ran his finger through the projection, incidentally distorting the image.

“Yes,” Klude responded, “now could you please not run your fingers through it?”

“Sorry,” Jonathan said as he quickly took his hand back. “But I don’t think that the mirror thing will be necessary with Rose’s trial already on Live news,” Andam and Omina almost choked on their drinks when they heard what Jonathan said.

“I beg your pardon?” Andam coughed. Spud basically got what Jonathan was saying and pointed to a TV over the bar that was broadcasting the exact same thing, but at a different angle of vantage, and at least dozen’s of magical creatures were deeply focused on it. Omina used her mirror to see where the footage was coming from by adjusting the vantage point of the image. She found two fairies flying as a distance from Rose, one male, one female, the male holding a news-camera, the female dressed in a reporter’s uniform and carrying a microphone. “Reporters?” Klude started, “How did those reporters get there?” he inquired.

“More than likely they got in while we were ambushed,” Andam suggested. At that note, Trixie noticed that Jake used his napkin to sketch out crude, stick-figure likenesses of the silhouettes he saw. “So, uhh,” Trixie started, “are those the ones you saw who ambushed us?”

“Well, kinda,” Jake answered. He held it up so that Sun and Lao Shi could see it.

“Hmm, they don’t look familiar,” Sun stated.

“Either way, we should probably worry about them once the trial is over,” Lao Shi added. Jake put the napkin down and sighed quietly. “I just hope that she can make it to the end of the trial.”

–Back in the trial dimension

“This is Lana T. Bell reporting live, here where a young human girl is attempting to pass a trial that hasn’t been ran in centuries.” The reporter declared. “We are reporting from an out-of-sight distance from the candidate, and are using a special sound-spell to prevent the Shar Pei from hearing us.”

- “Hole in the Wall”

“But they will be hearing from us.” Klude said.

- Trial dimension

“Now we sit back and watch quietly as the candidate makes her way past the first obstacle.” Lana finished

Rose and Fu Dog made it to the lake, and noticed a trail of large, parted rocks that swerved side-to-side like a snake. “Do you think that this is why they call it serpent Lake?” Rose asked Fu Dog, referring to the stones.

“I can only hope.” He responded. Rose took a look at her hourglass to see how much time they had. It was a lot, but Rose didn’t want to risk it. With that, she lifted Fu off the ground and said, “Lets get going,” as she leapt from one rock to the other, Fu exclaiming with each leap, “the sooner we get out of here, the better. I’m not liking the quiet vibes of this place.”

Rose leapt from rock to rock for what felt like hours, Fu just got more and more nauseous with each leap. When they were half-way across the lake, Rose paused for a moment when they landed on the next rock, or what seemed to be a rock.

“Thanks for the break, Rose,” Fu Dog said, nauseously, “I personally don’t handle sudden moves all that...”

“Shh!” Rose hushed Fu as she put her hand to the stone they were standing on to feel for something. After a freaky silence, Fu dog whispered, “why are we bein’ so quiet?”

“This rock is way to smooth and symmetrical to have been naturally shaped,” Rose observed.

“Same as the last buncha’ rocks you hopped ova, so?” Fu retorted.

“And do you feel a weird vibration?” Rose asked, “As if something is, breathing?” A disturbing silence followed, afterwards came the sound of something large rising out of the water ahead of them. Rose and Fu Dog slowly looked upward ahead of them to see that the path of large rocks in front of them, as well as the ones they were standing on, as well as some behind them, were the spinal ridges of a giant, green, sea-serpent. Rose’s and Fu’s eyes widened respectively as the beast turned it’s head to face them eye-to-eye, hissing between it’s razor sharp teeth. Rose put on a fearless expression while Fu Dog just gulped.

- “Hole in the Wall”

“So that’s why they call it Serpent’s Lake,” Spud said foolishly. Trixie just put her forehead to her hand, wondering why she hung out with him.

- The trial dimension

The Serpent stared at Rose and Fu dog with it’s large, yellow eyes as it raised it’s tail up from behind them. From head to tail it was at least a half-a-mile long. It slowly began to move in towards them, Rose just stood her ground and crouched to reach Fu.

“Uh, Rose?” Fu asked nervously, “what’re you doing?” Rose didn’t answer. She just kept her cool as the serpent roared, lunging toward the two, mouth agape. Using her ninja-like reflexes, Rose leapt out of the way, thus tricking the serpent into biting itself. It shrieked viciously at it’s pain as Rose and Fu

landed in the water with a splash. They were beneath the surface for a moment before they were topside again, Fu gasping for breath.

“COULD YA WARN A DOG!?!” he exclaimed. But before Rose could answer, the serpent saw them and began to chase after them, particularly Rose. As she tried to paddle away, it grabbed her by the ankle and tossed her several hundred feet into the air, Rose exclaiming accordingly. As she began to fall back downward, she saw the serpent’s mouth wide open, and that she was plummeting toward it. Thinking fast, she quickly pulled a hunts-staff from her satchel and aimed it in a side-direction and fired it at a level high enough jolt her to the side enough to change her direction of falling. When she saw that she was safe for a water landing, she quickly assumed a diving position and took the plunge, but that didn’t stop the serpent from trying to follow her.

- “Hole in the wall”

Everyone in the restaurant was cheering and/or exclaiming about what they were seeing. The councilors, however, were not very happy that public media decided to exploit Rose’s trial for ratings. Jake, however, overheard two trolls chortling about Rose’s situation.

“Heheh, I’ll bet that human chick won’t survive for five seconds against that serpent.” one troll said.

“What’cha bet?” The second one asked.

“Every gold tooth in my mouth, and that’s the entire left half of my mouth.” The first troll grinned to show his golden teeth. Jake, however, wasn’t too fond of them making wagers against his girlfriend, but he didn’t speak up, knowing that telling them off would only make them think that he was going to be something. In fact, a lot of the less desirable creatures in the building, along with some leprechauns and some respectable creatures, were making bets and wagers of their own, wether it was over a pot of gold, a gem, or a spell book, most of them were betting against Rose. The only thing that Jake could, that he would focus on, was what was going on in the trial as Rose continued to battle the serpent.

- the trial dimension

The Serpent kept trying to chomp on Rose, but she kept dodging it. After the serpent’s third try, it reared it’s head for a fourth; leaving Rose a chance to strike back. She reached into her satchel and pulled out a small bomb. She pressed the red button on it to arm it. As the serpent dove back downward, she threw it at it’s eyes. The bomb exploded, unleashing a cloud of a combination of tear-gas and pepper-spray. The stinging pain of the gas made the serpent shriek in pain. Rose thought that it had incapacitated it, but her confidence was cut short when the serpent still managed to catch her in it’s mouth entirely in one bite.

- “Hole in the wall”

Everyone gasped at what just happened. Jake almost went pale.

- The trial dimension

The serpent slowly lifted it’s head from the from the water, then looked at Fu, who was still floating in the middle of the water. Fu was just about ready to make a warm-spot when the serpent began to twitch at the lips, as if there were something in his mouth causing him pain. It then spat out something with a green discharge to it, which skipped across the water for at least three jumps before it was fully under the water. When it resurfaced, it turned out to be Rose, and he was carrying a large, rotten tooth.

“ROSE!” Fu excitedly exclaimed as he paddled toward the sputtering Rose. “Oh, thank goodness, for a second there I thought that he actually ate you,”

“Although it wouldn’t have killed that guy to just open and say ‘aw’,” Rose exclaimed when she caught her breath.

“Well excuse me for not having a clear diction when in pain.” There was an awkward silence for a moment before Fu and Rose turned to see that it was the serpent that just spoke, and with an odd European accent. “Yes, I can speak, and I do thank you for relieving me of that sour tooth, its been agitating me for ages. I do hope that I didn’t cause any scrapes or bruises.” Fu and Rose were still silent until Rose broke it.

“Uhh, no serious injuries.” She said.

“Oh here,” The serpent said as he swam towards them, “Let me carry you to the shore, you must be exhausted after your bought with me,”

- Hole in the wall

The room was silent at the moment. Apparently no one saw that whole “tooth-ache” thing coming. “Did anyone see that coming?” Haley asked. Jake looked to notice that the councilors were writing something down on a sheet of paper that they each had respectively. He then turned to see those two trolls again, who were bickering about the wager they made. Then he saw one troll pull out a set of plyers.

“This is gonna be fun,” Jake thought in his head.

-the Trial dimension

Rose and Fu were riding the back of the serpent across the lake to save time. Rose checked her hourglass to see how much time they had left. Meanwhile, trailing behind the serpent’s were a small groups of dorsal-fins following them

## 8 - Interference

-the Trial dimension

Rose and Fu dog were riding the back of the serpent to get to the other end of the lake, although they were beginning to regret it since he kept yammering on about his past experiences with other knight candidates.

“... and usually they’d just pummel me until I could ignore the pain in my mouth, other times they’d chicken out and run, and....”

Rose and Fu stopped paying attention to him a while back. Fu Dog was just plain bored out of his mind; Rose, however, despite her boredom was still aware enough to sense if there was going to be any danger coming, which there would be.

“Is it just me, or is it quiet out here?” She asked, and awkward pause followed.

“Excuse me,” The serpent started, “but I believe I was talking,”

“And talking, and talking, and talking, and talking.....” Fu mumbled.

“What I mean is the type of silence you sense when you’re being watched or followed.” Rose finished.

Fu and the serpent then shared the same look of caution as they glanced left and right.

“Do you think that they’re onto us?” Reporter bell asked her cameraman, who just shrugged in response.

When Rose reached for her weapon satchel for good measure, she was snagged at the feet by a set of tentacles and yanked under the water. She could only give out a small yelp before she was completely under. The tentacles, which belonged to a squid-like leviathan pulled her all the way to the bottom of the lake, and held her to the ground by her legs. Rose, holding what little breath she was able to get, struggled to relieve herself of the creature’s grip. She looked up to see that the leviathan was beginning to reduce in size and alter in shape. As it turns out, the leviathan was in fact the infamous Kelpie.

“Well, well, well, look what we have here...” He said with his a smirk on his face. Rose wondered what he meant by “we”, then looked to see that there was a small group of sharkmen, their ring leader sporting an eye-patch, and a two-pronged hook-hand.

“Ah, the American Dragon’s la noviacita,” He said before he snapped his fingers; accordingly, two of the half-dozen sharkmen grabbed Rose’s arms and held them behind her back. “Allow me to introduce myself, me llamo Tiburon, and I believe that you have already met my associate, the Kelpie.” The Kelpie hissed out an evil chuckle.

Well above the surface, Fu paced the serpent’s back frantically as the Serpent had his head under looking for Rose. Meanwhile, the reporter fairies were giving the scoop.

-“Hole in the wall”

“The knight-trial candidate, after conquering the serpent, has just been pulled into the water by an unknown creature. Is this part of the trial? Or is it interference?” Reporter Bell announced on the TV. Every other creature in the restaurant was in a flurry of vocal commotion. Councilor Omina, thinking quickly, used her mirror to get a visual of Rose in the lake. When she finally got a visual of Rose being held prisoner, Jake and Lao Shi gasped in shock.

“Kelpie and Tiburon?!” Jake exclaimed, “How’d they get there?”

“The trial would automatically be cancelled-out if anyone entered AFTER the portal closed” Klude stated.

“So they must’ve gotten in before Rose somehow.” Andam added.

“But who aside from us even knows how to so much as open the portal?” Omina inquired. Jake paused for a second before answering with a question, “Does anyone know what happened to Chang during the battle at the millennium temple?”

- Back in the trial dimension

Rose, her face almost ready to change color, struggled to get out of the respective grasps of the sharkmen and the Kelpie. “What’s the matter, child?” Kelpie insincerely asked, “Running out of air?” Tiburon chuckled as he stepped forward and raised his hook hand.

“No te preocupes, chica, I shall put an end to your suffocation, BY GUTTING OUT YOUR LUNGS!!” Tiburon exclaimed as he raised his hook-hand above his head, ready to slice Rose open like a mackerel.

“WAIT!” The Kelpie shouted, causing Tiburon to pause. “I say that we let her drown, the slow and mentally painful way.”

“Boring!” one of the big mouthed sharkmen said.

“Hah! yeah, boring.” said the hammerheaded one. The Kelpie was clearly did not agree with Tiburon, so he got up and stormed up to Tiburon to get face-to-face with him.

“Listen here, Jaws, I do not remember anyone putting you in charge!” Kelpie exclaimed, “And I don’t see why you of all beings should be in charge. I mean after all, I am the one who gains more and more power with each feeding!” The argument was interrupted by the sound of kicking and yelps of pain. They turned to see that Rose, still holding her breath, was standing on top of a pile of out-cold sharkmen who each had boot-shaped impression on their snouts.

“You’re also the one foolish enough to let the little ninja-girl’s legs go.” Tiburon said with a cocky smirk. The Kelpie just growled and said, “She can’t hold her breath much longer anyway, lets just get her!” Kelpie and Tiburon charged at Rose, teeth bared, swimming at full speed. Rose quickly pulled her staff out of her satchel and fired it at the ground, thus giving her an upward thrust off of the ground and creating a smog of kicked-up sand at the same time. The two sea-villains incidentally hit their heads on one another as they tried to nab her. Rose swam upward as fast as she could, but it wasn’t fast enough.

-“Hole in the wall”

Everyone watching from Omina’s magic mirror was beginning to perspire in tension. Jake was gripping his teeth on the collar of his jacket.

- Trial dimension, under the lake’s surface

Tiburon caught up with Rose and tried to take a swing at her with his hook-hand; she blocked it with her hunts-staff, kicked him in the chin, then sliced off the hook-part of his hand. Kelpie swam up and tried to bite her, but she swatted his bite in another direction, and then forced it on Tiburon’s arm. Tiburon screamed as the Kelpie’s icy bite slowly drained his essence. While that was going on, a small plastic ball slowly drifted down with “Magic air-capsule, from fu” written on it. When Rose grabbed the air capsule, the Kelpie yanked Tiburon from his bite, letting his out-cold body drift to the bottom. As the

Kelpie approached Rose, slowly taking the form of a shark-man, Rose poked a hole in the air-capsule and sucked in the amount of air that she needed, then through the capsule, containing what was left of the air, into the Kelpie's throat. The Kelpie choked on the air that was being forced into it's gills, leaving Rose to escape.

-Surface

Fu was focusing on the surface of the water, just waiting for Rose to come back up. When he was beginning to doubt his efforts, Rose burst out from then water, taking in a huge gasp of air.

- "Hole in the wall"

Everyone cheered when Rose got back out, although the cheers of Jake, Trixie, Spud, and the others were somewhat more subtle.

-Trial dimension

"Rose! You're alive!" Fu exclaimed, but Rose was too busy recovering from her near-drowning. She made her way to the edge of the serpent's body, and after climbing back on, she caught her breath. "What happened down there?" Fu asked. The response came in the form of the air-capsule container flying in and landing in front of Fu. He looked up to see that the Kelpie had also surface, taking heavy breaths recovering from his aquatic choke. "The Kelpie!?" Fu exclaimed.

- "Hole in the wall"

"Okay, I have a question," Jonathan started while watching the broadcast, "If that Kelpie-thing can survive in and out of water, then why did it choke on the air-capsule?"

"It can only survive breathing air when it isn't currently using it's gills." Omina answered. After a short silence, Jonathan responded with a simple, "Oh"

-Trial dimension

Kelpie began to approach Rose and Fu, snarling with a foaming mouth. When he got close enough, he leapt out of the water, ready to dive-bomb them. Just when he was about to get them, the serpent caught him in his mouth, turned to his head to face away from Fu and Rose, then spat the Kelpie long distance like a high-school variety spit-ball. The Kelpie screamed accordingly as he flew out of sight. The Serpent chuckled as he continued to swim to shore.

-the Shore

"Thanks for the help!" Rose said loudly as she waved good-bye to the departing serpent. Fu shook off the water that he was covered in. "Well, looks like you caught your breath," He said. Rose took another look at the hourglass.

"And hopefully with enough time to spare," Rose responded as she put the hourglass away. "So waht was up with that...Kelpie? And how did you know him?" Rose inquired as the continued to walk on.

"The Kelpie was an enemy Jake fought once," Fu responded.

“Oh,” Rose answered, “and what about that shark-thing? Tiburon?”

“Tiburon was there, too!?” Fu reacted, “Okay, something is definitely fishy here!” Rose gave Fu an odd look in response, “No pun intended.” Fu added

- “Hole in the wall”

Jonathan was withholding a snicker. “Is there something that you find amusing, sir?” Councilor Klude asked.

“Sorry,” Jonathan answered, “It’s just that no one ever told me that Fu was so funny.”

Everyone who knew Fu Dog raised an eyebrow in astonishment. “Somehow I’m not surprised,” Sun whispered to Susan.

- Trial Dimension, Ferocity forest

Rose and Fu Dog were making their way through ferocity forest. She used her staff to cut through the vines that were in her way. Fu trailed close behind her, not to brave in the environment of creepy noises and peering eyes from the shadows. Rose, however, maintained a face of fearlessness. As the noises of multiple beasts and creatures began to accumulate around Rose, meaning that they were surrounding for a group attack. Rose stopped walking when she predicted what was in store.

Before Fu could even finish his gulp, the creatures that surrounded them, which turned out to be a Manticore pack, began to pounce all at once. The eavesdropping fairy reporters both cringed at the violence and melee they were witnessing.

-Hole in the wall

Everyone was flinching and cringing at the sight of the onslaught. Jake, Spud, and Trixie were doing the three wise monkeys (Jake covered his eyes, Spud covered his ears, and Trixie her mouth); Sun and Susan had to cover Haley’s eyes. When the sound of fighting stopped, there was a moment of shocked silence.

- Trial dimension

Fu Dog was gawking mouth agape. He was really surprised that Rose was able to beat down that entire manticore pack, and the only damage done onto her was just a small nick in her hair. She took a deep breath and wiped some sweat off of her forehead. “Piece of cake,” Rose nonchalantly declared.

“Oh, but that was just the appetizer,” Came a female voice from the behind the bushes. Rose and Fu Dog quickly turned to face the mysterious speaker as she stepped out. It turned out to be a teenage girl with an hourglass body, long purple/black stripped hair, with a skirt patterned the same way, knee-high boots, thick-rimmed glasses with magenta lenses, gloves, a zip-up shirt that didn’t cover the midriff, and around her neck was a Blue, sea-shell necklace. There was a moment of curious silence. “Do I...er... know you?” Fu asked, “I mean, your scent is familiar, er, but...er” The Girl wasn’t taking the lack of recognition too well.

“VICKY FICKLY! It’s me Vicky! You know, the Siren?!” She exclaimed.

-Hole in the wall

Jake, Spud, and Trixie, who had taken a sip of their drinks, sprayed them out in astonishment.



“VICKY?!” All three of them exclaimed at once.

“You... know this girl?” Jonathan asked.

“Some sci-fi siren nerd-girl who didn’t take it to well after a bachelor-auction incident.... long story,” Jake responded.

“Thing is, I don’t remember her being so....hot.” Spud added, hesitantly. Trixie just gave him a raised eyebrow.

-Trial Dimension

Rose stood at ease while Fu looked like he was ready to pounce. “What do you even want with me?” Rose inquired.

“Does ‘out of the way’ qualify as an answer?” Vicky answered. Rose didn’t get it. “I hear-talk that you have the American dragon’s heart,”

“I’m not one to brag, but...guilty as charged,” Rose retorted as she pointed the blade-end of her battle-staff to Vicky, who got the hint of the challenge. Vicky quickly pulled out a sci-fi-style battle-staff and began to twirl it around in her hands in a show-offy fashion. “I must warn you, little-miss-thang, I’ve studied every fighting-style of the galacta-trek series, as well as that of every other convention-variety sci-fi martial arts, so I don’t think that I’ll even need my song to conquer you!” Vicky bragged. Rose just put her staff back into her satchel, showing that this wasn’t going to be a challenge. Vicky let out a shrill sci-fi warrior, and then charged at Rose full force. Rose just crossed her arms and raised her eyebrow at Vicky. Then, just when Vicky was close enough, winding up for a swing of her staff, Rose put her left hand behind her back, and used her right index finger to swat her glasses upward. “HEY! What the..!”

“It’s not in me to his a girl with glasses.” Rose said wittily. She then used that same index finger to quickly jab a sensitive nerve area within Vicky’s shoulders, thus knocking her out and causing her to fall backwards; as Vicky’s glasses fell back down from the air, Rose used her right index finger to flick them back onto Vicky’s face, evenly aligned with her eyes, ears, and nose.

“Okay, wow, just.....wow.” Fu stated quietly.

-Hole in the wall

Jake let out a low-pitched whistle of astonishment. Jonathan and Susan starred mouths agape, as did Haley. “Well, I hope that Jake knows what he’ll be in for if he forget’s their anniversary,” she said.

-the Trial dimension

Rose and Fu made it out of the forest and hopped across a small trail of large, levitating land-masses. Rose took another look at her hourglass to see that Time was dwindling. “We don’t have much time left,” Rose stated, “Where’s the next stop?”

“Yonder,” Fu pointed. Hostility City was on a terra-firma on the other side of a large trial of smaller landmasses. Rose was not pleased at that; between the time they had left and the distance that they still had to travel.

“Oh, great,” Rose moaned, “what’s next?” Her answer came when a bolt of energy came down from over them and hit the ground in front of them, knocking them backwards by the explosive force, incidentally landing on their backs; A sinister cackle soon followed.

“Surprised to see me?!” came a female voice. Rose and Fu looked up to see a dark-magenta-like dragon carrying a staff, and sporting a monkey in a track suit on her shoulder.

“Chang...” Fu said in a quiet, dramatic fashion.

## 9 - Flying the final Stretch

-Hole in the wall

Everyone in the restaurant who was watching the trial was deeply locked into the trial now. Not just there, but other places across the magical world where they get newscasts, from the Megas bazaar, to the New York leprechaun district, to the Florida Keys, to the bunyip reservation of Australia. Bets were being made like crazy from one creature to another.

-Trial dimension

“This is Lana T. Bell, reporting here where former member of the dragon council, Chang, is apparently challenging the candidate. I’ve heard that this girl took out the Dark Dragon, but that still doesn’t make the outcome of this obvious.”

-Hole in the wall

“Chang.....” Lao Shi and Jake said with the same hateful tone.

“Well, at least now we know how the others got in there.” Omina stated.

-Trial dimension

Rose got up, pulled out a pair of Hunts-staffs from her satchel, and took a battle stance. Chang flew down to the ground and assumed her human form. “Well well well, if it isn’t the Hong Kong Huntsgirl.” Bananas B said as he leapt from Chang’s shoulder to the ground.

“Don’t call me that,” Rose said sternly as she crossed her staffs; apparently, she didn’t want to be addressed as a part of her that she disliked. Chang chuckled, amused at Rose’s dislike of that nickname.

“I don’t think that she likes that, Channgity-chang,” Bananas B timidly stated, “she’s the one that took out the Dark Dragon, ‘membah?”

“Please,” Chang scoffed, “If she really had the potential to slay the Dark Dragon, or any dragon for that matter, the Dark Dragon would’ve been done for before the temple even disappeared,”

“Y’know, she’s go’ a point,” Bananas B chimed in. Rose raised her eyebrow and tightened the grip on her staffs.

“Are you underestimating me?” Rose inquired as she struck a fierce battle-stance.

“Mmm, maybe,” Chang retorted as she transformed back into her dragon form. “Care to prove me wrong?”

“Bring it!” Rose exclaimed, charging her staffs until they gave off a discharge of green energy.

Chang flew at Rose, claws barred, growling accordingly. Rose reacted by quickly by performing a high front-kick to knock Chang’s head upwards, thus exposing her underbelly for a direct roundhouse kick to send Chang flying back-first into a rock. Chang quickly got back to her feet and snarled, holding her staff out in front of her. “Had enough?” Rose asked. Chang answered by firing a small flurry of energy blasts from her staff at Rose, who repelled it by spinning one of her staffs in front of her. When the blasts stopped, Rose noticed that Chang was above her, swinging her staff down for an overhead assault; fortunately, Rose was able to block it with her staffs, and then she forced Chang off of her. Upon

retaliation, Chang blasted one of Rose's staffs from her hand, and then charged at her again. Soon after, they were locked in a blade-staff dual, their weapons clashing with each swing at one another.

Suddenly, Bananas B tried to ambush Rose by jumping her from behind, but was stopped when Fu grabbed the hip-hop monkey's tail with his own teeth, causing Bananas B screamed in pain. Fu then hurled Chang's simian assistant in the opposite direction. When Bananas B hit the ground Fu charged at him, but Bananas reacted by leaping onto Fu's back and covered his eyes.

"Doggy don't see what monkey do!" He exclaimed.

"And people say that I've got the lousiest quips," Fu retorted. Fu started to flail around in an attempt to get the monkey off of his back like a blindfolded bronco.

Meanwhile, with Chang and Rose's dual, Chang tried to impale Rose, but a quick parry solved that problem. Rose followed up by doing a double jump-front kick to Chang's head, sending her flying backwards at least two yards. "You're the one who sent those three fish-freaks out to get me, aren't you!?" Rose cried out after landing. Chang got up, realigned her jaw, and began to chuckle.

"Took you that long to figure that out," Chang replied, "I am also the one who used a beauty spell on that siren-girl,"

"I'm surprised you didn't use it on yourself!" Fu yelled from a distance, only to get kicked by Bananas B.

- Hole in the wall

"Well, that explains a lot," Spud said.

-Trial dimension

As Rose and Chang continued their dual, Chang flew skyward to gain distance between her and Rose. Rose, assessing the situation, reached into her satchel, pulled out at least a dozen huntsclan energy-ninja-stars, and then threw them at Chang. Reacting accordingly, Chang swung her staff, unleashing a wave of energy that burnt all of the ninja-tars to a crisp. "HA!" She exclaimed confidently, "Who do you take me for?! Your pitiful boyf-OOF!!" Chang was interrupted by a leap-front-flip-kick straight to the spot between the wings by Rose, and fell to the ground with heavy impact, dropping her staff. Rose soon landed next to Chang in a crouched pose, sticking a perfect dismount. When Rose got straight up again, She noticed that Chang didn't revert back to human form, like when she did the same thing with Sun Park earlier when practicing. "I guess I didn't hit her hard enough, or in the right spot," Rose thought. She approached Chang to see if she was still conscious, and found out that she was... the hard way. Chang quickly came to and wrapped her tail around Rose's body like a boa, and began to tighten it, attempting to choke her to death. "HA! You think that you're so great, Don't you?" Chang taunted as she got back up, "You're noting but a hard-headed fool, just like your little boyfriend..." In response, Rose reared her head back, and then SLAMMED it into Chang's forehead; the sound of the impact between the two skulls was enough to cause an echo.

-Hole in the wall

"OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOH!" Everyone in the restaurant exclaimed in unison, cringing accordingly.

"That's gotta hurt," Spud started.

"Tell me about it,"Lao Shi added, rubbing his forehead, "I still feel mine from this morning."

"I think I felt that," Sun said, rubbing his forehead.

"Ditto," Jake, Trixie and Haley added in unison.

-Trial Dimension

Chang wobbled around in pain from her cranial impact with Rose, trying to restore her balance, accidentally releasing Rose, letting her collapse to her knees. "Thanks for reminding me," Rose jokingly said after catching her breath, rubbing her forehead. Chang soon lost her balance altogether and just fell backwards. After her forehead pain passed, Rose dusted herself off and got back up. She turned to see Bananas B Holding Fu in a full nelson, Fu staining to get out and Bananas monkey-chuckling in confidence. Rose fired a blast from her staff at Bananas B, grazing his hat. At that, Bananas B and Fu stopped what they were doing and turned their attention to Rose. "Consider that your only warning shot, monkey," Rose declared threateningly, "So why don't you just take the hint?" Rose glared at the hip-hop monkey, who in turn saw that Chang was regaining consciousness and getting up, recovering her staff; He decided to play along.

"A-a-alright," Bananas B convincingly stammered as he let go of Fu to put his hands over his head,

"I-I-I'll just side step off o' da doggy," He continued as he sidestepped off of Fu.

"Yeesh, talk about gettin' the monkey offa' your back," Fu comedically stated after letting out a sigh of relief. Bananas continued to sidestep away from Fu, but Rose began to sense something fishy going on. Then, after a brief silence, Bananas made it al obvious.

"She's all yours, Changity-Chang!" The Monkey yelled. Suddenly, Rose turned to see that Chang was flying at her. Reacting quickly, Rose back-flipped over Chang, letting Chang Fly directly beneath her; upon landing, Rose fired a direct, stun-shot from her staff at Chang's wings, thus immobilizing them, then finished it with a straight kick. Chang, still being carried by her momentum, tumbled across the ground, and was going straight for the edge. Just as she was about to fall over, she quickly used her staff to fire a glowing snare at Rose's feet. Suddenly, Rose was pulled down and quickly dragged to the edge, trying to get a firm grip on the ground, but she couldn't stop herself from being dragged over the edge. When she was finally pulled over, she began to scream as she fell. Fortunately, she was able to think quickly enough to reach into her satchel and pull out a pair of Huntsclan energy daggers. She then jammed the daggers deep into the side of the hovering terra firma to create drag to slow down her fall; unfortunately, she stopped too close to the bottom of the land-mass, which was 20 feet bellow the flat surface.

- Hole in the wall

"Is that a close call? Or is she in deep now?" Jonathan asked Lao Shi.

"I believe that this time it's both," Lao Shi answered.

- Trial dimension

Rose kept her grip on her daggers while Chang dangled bellow, cackling like the madwoman she is. "Foolish child!" She shouted from below Rose, "Did you really think that you could defeat me that easily?!"

"Actually, no." Rose answered. She then pulled one of her Daggers out and used it to try and slice off the net-snare.

"What are you doing?!" Chang cried out when she noticed Rose sawing at the snare around her ankle. Chang started to climb up her staff and snare-net in an attempt to stop Rose, but then a part of the

snare's fibers snapped and the line jerked down a bit, causing Chang to flinch for a moment. She snarled at Rose and began to slowly and carefully continue climbing the lengthy snare, ignoring the fact that she was afraid of plummeting into the bottomless pit due to her immobilized wings

"No worries Chang, I'll save—YAHH!" Bananas B tried to rush to Chang's rescue with a small potion-bottle, but Fu stopped him by tackling him and pinning him to the ground. Fu tried to grab the potion from Bananas, but he held it out of reach. Fu saw that the potion read "Essence of Dragon fl-", he couldn't read the last words because Bananas B's fingers were covering the rest of the label, so he assumed it meant "Essence of Dragon Flight".

"Gimmie...that...thing!" Fu grunted as he struggled with Bananas B.

Meanwhile, Chang was almost within arm's reach of Rose, and Rose was almost done cutting the snare. Chang didn't want to risk falling, so she leapt up with her claws beared in an attempt to grab and/or maul Rose. What Chang didn't know was that Rose had anticipated that move. Suddenly, just as Chang was within mauling reach, Rose used the hand she was sawing the snare with to deliver a painful back-fist strike to Chang's face, thus sending her to plummet down into the pit, screaming.

"I thought that I could defeat you THAT easily," Rose said with a smirk.

"CHANG!" Bananas B cried out as he peered over the edge to see for himself, only to be pushed over by Fu Dog. The monkey fell shrieking as Fu grabbed the potion he was carrying.

"You okay down there, Rose?!" Fu asked from the 20 feet he was above Rose.

"I'm fine," Rose said as she swiped her dagger across the snare on her ankle, cutting it off and letting the staff fall into the pit, "and for the record, I could've done that at any time."

"You need help gettin' back up?!" Fu shouted, "I nabbed this potion from the money and...!"

"That's okay!" Rose said as she jabbed her free dagger into an un-scratched area of the terra firma, at least half an arm's length in distance above the first, "I can climb!" She continued the alternating pattern to pull herself back up to the flat top of the land mass.

-Hole in the wall

"This is Lana T. Bell, reporting to you live where the knighting candidate has just survived a tussle with the fierce, former dragon councilor Chang, and is courageously scaling the side of the terra firma to continue her trial." Lana Reported on the TV.

"Rose seems to be doing pretty well for herself," Councilor Klude said. The others nodded in agreement and began to write more things down on the same sheets of paper as they did before.

Suddenly, they heard a blast and an explosion from the TV and everyone in the restaurant began to exclaim in shock and astonishment. When the councilors looked back up to the TV, they saw a cloud of dust and smoke from the explosion. When it passed they saw Rose dangling from the damaged Land mass.

"Rose!" Jake quietly exclaimed. Everyone else was in a commotion wondering what was going on. Despite the noise, Jake was able to hear a familiar language.

"Adnr! I deimss!" came the voice from an out of range distance from the TV.

"That voice..." Jake whispered to himself, "that sounds like the same guy who..." Omina once again used her mirror to get a clear visual on what the camera didn't get. When Omina conjured the image at the best distance and angle, all it showed was a burn mark on the ground, as if a burst of energy took place.

-Trial dimension

Rose, considering that she lost her daggers in the explosion when nearly falling to avoid it, was holding onto a piece of rock that was relatively weakened by the explosion. She tried to use her feet to boost her upward, but the rock beneath her feet just broke, causing her to slip.

"Uh, Fu?" Rose called out with a hint of intimidation in her voice, "whatever you had in mind to use to help me before, now would be a good time to use it!"

"You got it, Rose!" Fu called back as he pulled out the potion bottle he took from Bananas B. Suddenly, just as he was about to uncork it, he felt it get violently slapped from his hand, resulting in him dropping it. It bounced across the ground and then fell over the edge. Luckily, Rose was able to catch it when it fell to her location.

"GOT IT!" Rose called out to Fu when she caught the bottle. Suddenly, out of nowhere a glowing, beeping ninja-star was launched and landed right above Rose's head. When Rose looked up, she saw that the ninja star was an explosive device. Before she could even complete a full gasp, it detonated.

**BOOM!!!!!!**

The explosion was more than enough to force Rose off the side of the land-mass, and fall screaming.

-Hole in the wall

"NO!!!" Jake exclaimed, his face pale and clammy from what he had seen. The three dragon councilors silently bowed their heads in respect.

- Trial Dimension

Fu was blubbing up a storm.

"WHY!!!!!!?????" He cried out, "The kid's gonna saute me for sure," He continued to sob, "I can still hear Rose's screams echoing through that void," oddly enough, he really could, "Only, these screams sound like Jake when he was first learning to....." he was interrupted when he saw Rose rocket straight upward at high speed, screaming at the top of her lungs in panic. "...fly," Fu finished with a flat voice. Rose was frantically swerving and spinning around and out of control in the air. She soon was able to aim herself at the land mass, but she wasn't able to control herself all that well, thus a crash-landing was imminent.

"INCOMING!!" Rose yelled when she realized that she was on a collision course with Fu. All Fu could do was sit and watch wide-eyed as Rose flew in for the inevitable collision.

"Oh geez," was all Fu had time to utter before Rose crashed into him with tremendous impact. While Fu was just knocked over backwards from the impact, Rose tumbled and rolled a few feet after hitting the ground until she came to a complete stop, face up with her back on the ground.

"Okay.... ow," Rose muttered after a second of silence. Fu got back up and rushed to Rose.

"ROSE!" He exclaimed, "You okay?" Rose slowly lifted herself back up, dusted herself off and got back onto her feet.

"Don't worry, I'm fine," She replied, "Your potion worked just fine, take a look." She pointed out a four-set of fanned-out insect wings, coming from her back. The sudden sight of that startled Fu to the point where it made him jump.

"How did that-?" Fu started, but his answer came quickly when Rose presented him with the bottle's label, which read "Essence of Dragonfly", which surprised Fu. "Ehehe, sorry, I thought it said 'dragon flight'," Fu chuckled nervously, "at least side-effects liquified essence exposure is only temporary,"

-Hole in the wall

"I did not see that coming," Jonathan stated.

"Who cares, she's alive!" Jake said excitedly.

"Oh sure, she gets a pair of wings, and I GET A TROLL FACE!!" Haley exclaimed, referring to a time when she was exposed to essence of troll.

"Don't ask," Sun told Susan and Jonathan before they could ask any questions.

-Trial Dimension

While stretching to recover from her crash, Rose flexed her wings up and down, and in and out to make sure that she could get a hang of them, and then pulled out her hourglass to see how much time they still had.

"Uh oh," She gasped.

"What?" Fu asked.

"We don't have a lot of time left." She answered as she showed Fu the Hourglass.

"Yikes!" Fu exclaimed, "guess time sure flies when you're fighting for your life, agu-gi-gu-WHOA!"

Rose cut Fu's laugh short when she ran by and picked him up.

Rose was really booking it at the speed she was running at, which seemed to be a bit faster than most humans. The reason for her speed was because she was flapping her dragonfly wings to buzzing point to give her a boost. When she got to the trail of smaller land masses, she leapt from one land mass to another, using her wings as a medium to increase the height of her jump, and soften the speed of her fall. She kept doing that for at least six jumps. When she got to the seventh jump, she leapt, but didn't descend; instead, she flew straight over to the land mass that had her next destination on it: Hostility city.

"I think I've gotten the hang of these things," Rose said to Fu, referring to her wings. When they got to the entrance of the city, Rose landed and put Fu dog down.

"Why we stoppin'?" Fu asked.

"I wasn't raised to take shortcuts," Rose answered. She looked up to see that hostility city definitely lived up to it's name. It's buildings were torn apart by it's own residents, which consisted of the least desirable of magical creatures: biker trolls, gangster goblins, as well as a variety feral creatures, ".....even if those shortcuts avoid risky paths." Rose finished nervously. There was only one road that lead to the exit of the city, so Rose and Fu took deep breaths and walked through it. While Fu was trembling with fear as he walked, Rose kept a calm, fearless expression, partially because she knew that she had the know-how on how to clobber most of them, and also because she didn't want to draw any attention to herself and cause a fight. Unfortunately, she was too busy trying to avoid conflict that she didn't see where she was going, and bumped into a large Biker Troll.

"Oh sorry, I didn't see you there," Rose said nervously. The troll looked down at her with a stern look.

"What'cha lookin' at?" The troll asked in a deep voice.

"Nothing," Rose answered.

"You callin' me not'in'?" The troll replied in a threatening tone, cracking his knuckles.

"No, I was just saying that I wasn't looking at anything in particular, just focusing on the general area and not a specific thing in particular," Rose finished her response with a wide and nervous grin. The troll continued to leer at her for a second before responding with an "Okay," and walking off. Rose and Fu let out a sigh of relief.

"Y'know, the last guys that made it this far just tried to beat us all up." the Troll continued.

-Hole in the all.

“She definitely knows how to avoid unnecessary conflict,” Omina stated. The councilors nodded in agreement.

-Trial dimension

Rose and Fu got out of the city in one piece. After they left city limits, Rose picked Fu up again and quickly began to fly forward. She had really managed to learn how to control herself in midair pretty well. In no time at all, after swerving through a large thicket of trees, they were at the base of riddle-mountain. Standing in front of the mountain were a pair of cloaked goblins, and said goblins were standing in front of two tunnel entrances that were in the mountain’s side. Rose landed in front of them to see what she had to do.

“Greetings,” They both said in unison. “We are the riddle-goblins of this mountain,” They continued at the same time, “One of these tunnels leads to your doom, the other leads to a safe path to the other side of the mountain,”

“I think I know where this is going,” Fu mumbled as Rose put him down.

“We’ll tell you if you ask,” One said on it’s own.

“But keep in mind,” Said the other, “one of us is honest, and one of us is a liar, you’re allowed one question each, and each question should be chosen very carefully.”

“Ask wisely,” They finished in unison.

- Hole in the wall

Everyone in the restaurant was tossing ideas back and forward about what she should ask, but no one could agree on anything.

- Trial Dimension

Fu was also trying to figure out what they were supposed to ask. “Okay, If we first ask who lies and who’s honest, then we’ll be at a dead-end question since the liar will never admit to being the liar since he’d then be telling the truth, soooooooooo..... got anything Rose?”

“As a matter of fact...” Rose replied with a smirk. She picked up Fu and flew straight upward, then started to fly around the mountain.

“HEY WAIT!!!” One goblin shouted.

“YOU HAVEN’T PICKED A TUNNEL YET!!!” The other finished.

“YOU NEVER SAID THAT I HAD TO!” Rose called back before she was completely gone. The goblins looked at each other in surprise.

-Hole in the wall

“Doesn’t the whole ‘pick-a-tunnel’ part go without saying?” Spud asked the councilors.

“Actually, listening for the details was part of the test.” Andam answered.

“And seeing as that was the last test of the trial, we must now go to Victoria Peak for Rose’s final judgement,” Klude stated. Everyone was getting up out of their seats, stretching from their prolonged lack of motion, and heading for Victoria Peak. What they didn’t know was that Rose’s troubles were not



over yet.

## -Trial Dimension

Still airborne, Rose and Fu were excited about finishing the trial. The Final Stretch was a tall, uprising hill that was topped by an arched rock with a swirling vortex within it, i.e., the way out. "WOOOHOOO!!" Fu cried out in excitement, "We did it! Sure, you did most of it, but still... WE'RE ALIVE! WOOHOO" "I'm excited too, Fu Dog," Rose calmly interrupted with a hint of joy in her voice, "But you don't see me cheering loud enough to knock the closest person into vertigo."

Suddenly, a loud laughing noise came in out of nowhere and completely through Rose off balance, causing her and Fu dog to plummet to the ground. They landed with heavy impact, kicking up a small cloud of dirt when they hit the ground. Rose and Fu tried to get back up, but both their vision and balance were distorted; just trying to see what had happened almost made Rose puke from dizziness. She shook her head a bit, then opened her eyes to see what had happened. She was surprised to see that there was nothing there, but she was still braced for anything sudden. Unfortunately, she wasn't braced enough to protect her from being smacked three feet across the ground. She got back up to see that some of the grass was pressed down in a weird foot shape. Assessing the situation and thinking quickly, Rose reached into her satchel and pulled out a small device and threw it. The device in question was a dye-pack, which sprayed a green ink everywhere, which helped Rose find whatever entity was smacking her around. After it was sprayed, the creature revealed itself to be a large, clown-like being standing at fifteen feet in height with a big, bent over, purple top hat, vest and puffy-pants, black gloves and shoes, spiral eye pupils, black/yellow stripes neck, arms, legs, and waist, black pony-tailed hair what ended in curled ends at the mustache, sideburns, eyebrows, and pony-tail, it also had a long and pointy black nose, and it's wide grin of razor sharp teeth was decorated with purple makeup.

"A clown?" Rose asked.

"MASSACRE!" The clown shouted as it reared it's arms over it's head. It's arms stretched to an incredible length before speeding back down, ready to slam Rose. Before they made contact, Rose remembered that she could fly, and she used that ability to dodge the clown's giant fists. Unfortunately, the clown was persistent, it started swinging a flurry of stretchy punches that seemed almost spring loaded, giving Rose a reason to start playing on the defense. Utilizing her ninja-like reflexes, she used her battle staff to block the rapid punches. After two dozen failed punches, the clown-creature spread it's arms sideways, palms open, then swung them in on Rose in an attempt to flatten her like an insect. Then, just before the clown made contact, Rose turned her staff sideways so that the blades faced side to side; When the clown made contact, he accidentally slammed his palms on the blades, then recoiled his arms in a screaming pain. It whimpered as it's grin became a toothy frown of pain.

"Sting enough for you, clown?" Fu jokingly asked. The clown looked to see that there was a wet-spot on his shoe. "Sorry," Fu continued, "I needed to drain the plumbing and, uhhh....." Fu was turning pale at the sight of the clown's anger.

"Mmaaaaaassssssaaaaaaaacrrrrrrre!" The clown growled as his spiral pupils straitened into vertical slits, and it's teeth bared in an intimidating snarl.

"Oh, Geez," Fu peeped in fear as the clown stretched it's neck upward and extended it's jaw to at least three times the size of it's face. Then, like a sling-shot, it launched it's head at Fu, ready to chomp; luckily, Rose used her wings to speed over and use an adhesive Hunts-grenade to shut the clown's mouth, who then struggled to get it off.

"Are you prone to ticking off large carnivores?" Rose asked Fu.

"Eh, it's not always a carnivore," Fu answered jokingly. Suddenly, the clown broke the adhesive using it's laugh. Reacting quickly, Rose reached into her satchel, pulled out a handful of ninja-stars, and

through them at the clown with great skill. Surprisingly, the ninja-stars were knocked out of the air in mid-flight by a flurry of throwing needles.

“What the—?” Rose stammered before a flurry of ninja-stars flew in her direction. She quickly spun her staff to bat them to the ground. “Where did those come from?” Her answer came when a pair of wooden hands with razor-sharp metal fingers and wires on the wrists fired themselves from under the clown’s hat, and took a firm grip on the ground in front of Rose. Rose and Fu visually followed the wire up to the underside of the clown’s big hat. Then, a pair of unjointed wooden fingers lift the rim of the hat to make room for the one under it to get out. The creature under the clown’s hat was revealed to be some type of wooden, puppet-like creature with six limbs (four arms, two legs). It slowly glided down its wrist wires into the clear, wires attached to its feet from its ankles still under the hat, revealing more of its features: a short top hat, short black hair, a pointy metal nose, a black vest over a grey, tattered, long-sleeved zip-up shirt, tattered black pants, a bat-like red bow-tie, razor-sharp metal teeth, the second set of arms having three non-opposable digits on each hand, its right eye was yellow with an X-shaped pupil and a dark circle under it, the left eye was just a big screw. When reached its hands on the ground, it grappled back its “feet”, which were like four-metal-fingered hands, from under the clown’s hat and snapped them back into place. It then sprung itself into an upright position, standing slackly, grinning viciously only because his wooden head didn’t have any flexible lips.

“Vandalize,” The puppet said in a slow and ominous digital voice.

“Yeesh,” Fu muttered, “looks like Tim Burton puked on Pinnochio, agu-gah-gu-gu-gu, WHOA!!” The puppet opened its jaw to reveal a bundle of revving buzz-saws. It tried to take a chomp out of Fu, but Rose grabbed Fu and flew backwards to dodge it. Growling, the puppet pulled out ninja throwing-knives from metal opening hatches on its hands, and threw them at Rose with incredible skill. Reacting quickly, Rose tossed Fu upward, who screamed accordingly, and used her staff to slice the incoming knives in half with just one swing, then caught Fu as he fell back down.

“Ugh, could you give a dog a little warning?” Fu said with a hint of queasiness.

“Sorry, I needed my hands free for— LOOK OUT!” Rose was interrupted when She saw the puppet creature fire a small flurry of throwing needles from its mouth. Thinking quickly, she swung her head to swing her braid in front of her to catch the needles, and then -before the braid hit her face- swung it in the opposite direction to fire the needles back at the two creatures. While most of the needles hit the puppet in the face, one nailed the clown between its teeth.

“Wow!” Fu exclaimed, “that was pretty awesome to watch,” He finished as Rose put him back down.

“VANDALIZE!!” The Puppet yelled as it pulled the needles out of its face, rotating eyebrows arched. Rose attempted a flying jump-side-kick, but the puppet creature used its secondary set of hands to grab her leg. Rose tried to use her free leg to finish the kick, but the first set of hands grabbed it.

“This is bad,” Rose stated. The puppet opened its mouth and ran the buzz-saws within it. It slowly lowered Rose’s legs to the blades, ready to make mincemeat out of her. Thinking quickly, she shoved her staff into the blades, jamming them and making the puppet creature spazz out and drop her. Taking advantage of the puppet’s current condition, Rose delivered a powerful spin-kick to knock the puppet’s head off of its body. While the head made good distance, it was still attached to the body by a mess of thin, black, wires. When the head began to pull itself back onto the puppet’s body, Rose and Fu tried to make a break for it.

“An invisible clown, a psychotic blade-puppet, what’s next!? A mime?!” Fu exclaimed as he and Rose ran for it. The answer came when a flash of green energy burst in front of them. They stopped to see what had appeared in front of them; It was a tall, skinny, scarecrow-like creature hanging on its mount with large four-fingered hands and three-toed feet in black, wearing all burlap clothing, a long, tattered cape, long, yellow hair that partially covered its face, a goatee, a pair of peering yellow eyes, a curled, stitched pointed hat with a wide rim, and a mouth that was covered with cloth, but had a row of vertical

opening slits that signifies the shape, and stitches under the eyes.

"Mime, no. Scarecrow, yes." Rose said as she pulled out another battle-staff. The Scarecrow looked up at Rose and stepped off of it's mount one limb at a time. When the scarecrow was completely off, he gripped a handle on the top, causing the foot and arm racks to retract into the main pole. The foot bars were replaced by a pair of large, quarter-moon shaped frames that were soon filled with green energy to form an ax.

"Mutilate..." The scarecrow-creature said ominously as it swung the ax over it's shoulder.

"We're in trouble!" Fu exclaimed as the scarecrow creature wound up to swing the axe at them.

Luckily, Rose grabbed Fu and flew them both upward just before the axe made contact. The creature snarled and looked up at it's airborne prey.

"Egt abck eehr ouy aalmms!" The scarecrow creature shouted, waving it's fist.

"I have no idea what you just said!" Fu shouted back, "but I know that you can't reach us, so NYAH!"

Fu finished it by pulling his cheeks and sticking his tongue out.

"Real mature," Rose said under her breath. The scarecrow growled as it reached for the part of it's mask that covered it's mouth, reached it's fingers into the center crease, and pulled open the mouth portion of the mask to reveal three large and long flailing green tongues. Rose and Fu both let out a yelp of surprise at the sight of that.

"Didn't see dat comin'!" Fu exclaimed. The scarecrow used it's long tongue to snag Rose by the ankle, then slam her and Fu to against the side of the hill that lead to the exit, causing Rose to drop Fu on impact. Then the scarecrow creature flung Rose over it's head, then slammed her back in front of it and the other two creatures. Upon seeing her, the clown cracked it's knuckles at the same time that the puppet let out from it's mouth and upper hand palms razor-thin black wires.

"Massacre,"

"VANDALIZE,"

"Mutilate," The scarecrow-creature picked it's axe back up.

"Get a vocabulary!" Rose exclaimed as she charged the blade of her staff with an energy discharge. She used that charged blade to send an energy current up the saliva-covered tongue as a means to stun the scarecrow into letting go of her. When Rose's ankle was released, she grabbed the tongue and swung the scarecrow into the clown's mouth, and pulled them both down on top of the puppet. Rose checked her hourglass, and gasped when she saw that the top was almost empty. She attempted to fly away, but the puppet creature squirmed out from under the clown, and fired an acupuncture needle from it's mouth, which nailed Rose right in the center of her four wings, causing her to yelp in pain and fall to the ground with heavy impact. As she got up, the three creatures got back up and started charging at Rose; The puppet running on all six of it's limbs, the scarecrow swinging it's axe in front of it between steps, and the clown just stretching it's own upper body in towards Rose's direction. When Rose got back to her feet, she plucked the needle out from between her wings, grabbed her battle-staff with both hands, took her stance, and quietly said "Bring it on," in a threatening tone. The three creatures leapt to pounce Rose.

- Victoria Peak

The Dragon council, Jake, and the others waited for Rose to appear. Jake was pacing the ground, Trixie and Spud were watching Jake pace back and forward, Lao Shi, Sun, Susan and Haley were busy with a magical creature flash card game with Jonathan, and the council was just standing patiently.

"What's keeping her?" Jake asked, finally breaking the silence, "Shouldn't she have been here by now?"

"He has a point," Haley added, turning her attention to Jake and the council, "It's not like she has to

fight anyone else, right?" That last query spark something in Jake's memory.

"That's it!" He started, "Remember when the portal was opened and we were attacked?"

"Yes," The three Councilors answered dryly at once, remembering the needles that stunned them.

"There were three guys that entered the portal," Jake reached into his pocket to pull out the napkin he sketched their likenesses on, "But we didn't see them the entire time Rose took the trial, but I think I heard one of them when the side of the cliff blew up, and it was spittin' some weird gibberish." Omina pondered what Jake was saying, then used her mirror to see what was keeping Rose, and then gasped at what she was seeing. She projected the image so that everyone could see the combat between Rose and the three creatures. With all of them attacking Rose at once, it could've been anyone's battle.

-Trial Dimension

"MASSACRE!!" The clown shrieked as it backhanded Rose across the ground with one slap; Rose retaliated by sticking her staff into the ground, and using it as a spring-load to launch herself back at the clown, using her wings to carry her the rest of the way, but the puppet was there to stop her.

"VANDALIZE!" It cried out as it fired its upper hands like grabbling hooks at Rose's ankles and grabbed them to stop her. It then slung Rose in the direction of the scarecrow, who was holding its axe over one shoulder.

"MUTILATE!" It shouted as it knocked Rose upward in the chin with the handle of its axe, then delivered a kick to her stomach that sent her hurdling in the other direction, then tumbling across the ground; she stopped dazed and face up. When she snapped out of it, the scarecrow creature slammed the axe to the ground so that the staff part of the axe had her pinned to the ground. She tried to lift it back out, but the scarecrow creature put his foot on it, pushing it harder on top of Rose. It laughed loudly in pride as the other two gathered around Rose. Rose strained herself to try and get out, but had no luck.

- Victoria Peak

"Can't anyone do anything!?" Jake cried out in panic over the well-being of the girl he loved.

"Jakey!" Trixie chimed in with a tone of surprise in her voice, "Why can't you show any confidence for your own girlfriend?!"

"IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T BELIEVE IN HER! It's just..." Jake exclaimed, then calmed down to finish, "it's just that I don't want to lose her again." Jake finished.

"I've been meaning to ask about that..." Jonathan started.

"It is a long story," Lao Shi interrupted. Jake was still focused on Rose's current situation, his fingers crossed for her (figuratively speaking).

-Trial dimension

The three creatures her laughing triumphantly at catching Rose, except for the puppet who revved its blades as a sign of laughter.

"I acnt' beeeilv ahtt eht eno-deey aiorrrw adn eht oru aelmt-ademr aemrst ghostu ouy as a aceeghlln, I ddint' eenv aehv to esu my adeht-abehrt no ehr." The scarecrow creature said.

"I don't know what you just said, but whoever is going to kill me, do it quickly," Rose fraudulently pleaded. The puppet creature extended its claws, as well as a pair of stabbing weapons from the hatches on its upper palms, it also ran the buzz-saws in its mouth, ready to maul Rose. As the puppet reared its weapons to strike, the scarecrow shoved it away.

"Ehy!" It started in its own language, "ahtw aekms ouy hiknt ahtt ouy aehv eht ghirt ot almu adn

mutilate ehr? I dhlosu be eht eno oy ikll ehr! I'M GHNRUY !” The puppet buzzed and clicked as a method of talking back to it, but then the clown interrupted by using honking and laugh-like noises as a means of communication. Pretty soon, they were all arguing over who was going to finish her off. “Hey, excuse me,” Rose interrupted, the creatures just shot glares at her, “Uh, yeah, could you take this argument somewhere else please? I feel caught in the middle.” After a brief pause, the three creatures walked a short distance away, leaving Rose unguarded and without the pressure of the scarecrow creature’s foot, allowing her to lift the handle off of her and slide out as they were arguing. As she attempted to sneak off, the scarecrow was first to notice that she was making a break for it. “EHY!” It yelled, “EHSS’ EGGITTT AAWY!” reacting to that, the puppet creature launched it’s left upper hand like a grappling-hook, a black wire still attached to it, and landed it right in front of Rose. The creature then firmly gripped the ground with it’s grappled hand, then retracted the cable, pulling himself in front of Rose. She tried to double back, but the clown stretched it’s entire body to give it a 50-foot size all around, expanding it’s hands, feet, torso, pelvis, and head in proportion with the rest of it’s body in the process and stomped it’s foot in front of her to block her escape. The scarecrow creature just ran over and picked up it’s axe, and ran to block Rose’s remaining escape route. They had completely triangulated around her. Rose gripped her staff , and turned to see everyone around her. The clown was cracking it’s knuckles, the scarecrow was salivating, and the puppet whirred the buzz-saws in it’s mouth.

“So is anyone going to do anything?” Rose rhetorically asked, trying to get them angry. The clown reacted by throwing a punch in Rose’s direction, but she used her wings to dodge it, then used a ray her staff to freeze it to the ground. All three of them were surprised by that. “Oh yeah, didn’t I mention?” Rose started as she landed on top of the clown’s arm, “I acquired this gear from the Victoria Peak Huntsclan fortress. In other words, custom made.”

-Victoria Peak

“There’s a Huntsclan fortress here?” Klude asked.

- Trial Dimension

Rose ran up the clown’s arm to get to the face, her wings buzzing to give her extra speed. Noticing her approach, the clown stretched it’s neck to move it’s head towards Rose to attack her. Also, the puppet and the scarecrow pursued Rose from the other side. Rose noticed that she was being pursued from both ends, and that the clown was opening it’s jaws to attack, so she spread her wings and flew off of the arm to allow them to collide with each other. The puppet launched it’s head attached to a bundle of wires at Rose in an attempt to bite her, but instead got the rim of the clown’s big hat; meanwhile, the clown almost bit the scarecrow in half, but it reacted quickly enough to use it’s axe/pole to keep it’s jaw open.

“OUY ANRST-ADEILMNNOS MNOOR! OUY ALMOST CDEHMOP EM!” the scarecrow shouted. The clown honked an apology, then spat out the scarecrow to it’s frozen hand. After hitting the ground, the scarecrow creature got back up, and used it’s axe to break the ice, letting the clown pull it’s hand back. Noticing that Rose was flying off, the puppet (who was still on the clown’s arm) fired a throwing needle from it’s mouth that was aimed at the spot between Rose’s wings in an attempt to immobilize her, but Rose’s reflexes were too quick for that. She used her staff to bat the needle to a tree that was a moderate distance behind the clown; the needle ricocheted off of the tree and hit the clown at just the right nerve-point to make it lose all mobility in it’s body, and collapse on top of the other two, who screamed as it was falling. When the clown was completely

“That was easy,” Rose chuckled as she continued to fly to the exit portal.

“WOOHOO! Way to show'em ninja-girl!” Fu cheered. Rose pulled the hourglass from her satchel, and gasped to find that they had less than a minute to get out of there, so she just high-tailed it to the portal. The scarecrow, however, managed to dig itself out from under the out-cold-clown's armpit. It looked to see that Rose and Fu were moving for the portal, and decided to stop them. Using it's two side tongues to hold the cloth mouth-seems of it's mask open, it used it's middle tongue to reach out, grab Fu, and drag him into it's mouth. Fu was thrashing and screaming to get out.

“ROSE!!” He cried out, “I KNOW DAT FINISHIN' THIS IS IMPORTANT TO YA, BUT WOULD YOU MIND HELPIN' BE AVOID WHAT THE INSIDE OF A DEMON SCARECROW LOOKS LIKE!?!?” Fu was panicking at the sight of the scarecrow's wide, and toothy jaw, while Rose was panicking on her ultimatum; Save her memories of the magical world, or save her boyfriend's animal guardian. “ANY TIME NOW!!!” Fu was gripping the ground, trying to slow down the pull. Just when Fu felt done for, Rose flew in, used her staff to stun the scarecrow, grab Fu, then fly out through the portal.

-Victoria Peak.

When the portal to Victoria Peak from the dimension opened, Rose and Fu flew out screaming and tumbled across the ground from the force of the wormhole. When they finally stopped, Rose got up panting to face the three councilors. Omina, Klude, and Andam turned their gaze to show Rose the sunset; getting the hint, Rose pulled the hourglass out to see that she had run out of time. Her face turned pale at the situation.

## 10 - Final Judgement

Rose was shocked at what had happened; she failed to reach the exit in time. Jake and the others were equally shocked.

"Rose," Councilor Klude spoke grimly, "I am sorry, but you have failed to exit the trial dimension before sunset," Rose and Jake shared the same look of worry on their faces as the portal behind Rose closed. A tear began to form in Rose's eye, believing that she failed to pass the trial. Suddenly, killing the depressing mood, a witch-like cackle was heard echoing across the area. Then, a violet portal appeared behind Rose and Fu; emerging from it were Chang, Bananas B, Tiburon (his hook reattached with tape) and his shark men, the Kelpie, and Vicky.

"So, despite it all, YOU FAIL TO PASS THE TRIAL!" She finished with a sinister cackle, joined in by the respective evil laughs of Vicky, Bananas B, Kelpie, Tiburon, and the shark men. The councilors looked at each other with straight faces and raised eyebrows.

"We never said that she failed the trial," Omina stated, causing the evil laughter to altogether halt. Everyone was surprised by that.

"Say what?"

"Say wha'?"

"Ssay what?"

"Say WHAT?"

"?Que Que?"

"Say whuh?"

"Say HUH?"

"Say what now?"/"Excuse me?" Jake and Rose finished in unison.

"You see," Klude started, "it wasn't a test on how fast she could get through it, but on what she would do to surpass the obstacles." Rose's spirits were being lifted.

"The serpent was a test of assessing reason for a problem and finding a solution," Omina added.

"The forest was a test on knowing what to strike and when," Andam continued.

"The city was a test on avoiding unnecessary conflict," Klude joined in.

"While the mountain was a test on avoiding a less obvious trap." Omina stated.

"But over all, the main idea of the challenges was to not take anything in face value. A basic fundamental of any legitimate dragon, which is also expected of a knight of the dragon order."

"Well, what can I say? I'm pretty open minded," Rose stated before turning to face Jake, "Besides, if it wasn't for Jake in my past reality, I'd still be taking the things in face value." Jake blushed at the comment. Meanwhile Chang's rage was at the boiling point.

"In fact," Andam continued, "Your interference actually gave her 'extra credit'," At that point, Chang snapped.

"This is UNACCEPTABLE!!" Chang roared as she transformed into her dragon form, "I will not have this..this.. HUMAN into our RANKS!" She flew at Rose at full speed, but was intercepted by Jake, who assumed his dragon form, and used his tail to whip Chang away to the ground. When she got up, she saw Jake in front of Rose, growling. "Stand aside, American Dragon, this is between me and the dragon-slayer."

"EX-dragon slayer," Rose corrected, "or is it 'never-been' dragon-slayer? Ugh, my head hurts just thinking about it,"

"Welcome to the party," Spud said jokingly.

“SILENCE!!” Chang demanded before turning her attention back to Jake. “As I was saying...”  
“Correct me if I’m wrong,” Jake interrupted, “but unless I miss my guess, you don’t have a say over me anymore,”  
“He’s right,” Klude added as he took his dragon form, “So you have two options, Turn yourself in quietly...or face the rest of us.” The other councilors transformed into their dragon forms, as did Sun, Lao Shi, and Haley.  
“I’m flattered by what you’re doing,” Rose whispered to Jake, “but I can still take these guys,”  
“That’s okay, Rose,” Jake replied, “you don’t have to prove yourself now.”

Feeling intimidated, the others thought of different excuses as to bail out.

“Uhh, I just remembered, we have that thing to do... in that place that’s, uhhh.... not here,” Tiburon said as he backed off. The other shark people overlapped each other with statements of agreement as they all backed away.

“Uh, yeah... there’s this comic-convention being held in not here,” Vicky lied as she backed away slowly, “So, uh...yeah, I’m just gonna....” She finished it by running off screaming. Chang looked at Kelpie in a way that asked if he was going to stay.

“Hey, I’ve sunk my teeth into more than enough morsels to take on a group of dragons!” The Kelpie snarled as he morphed into a stone golem.

Just then, a flashing, green energy vortex appeared right above and behind Chang and the Kelpie. Leaping out of it, attempting to make an entrance, was the puppet creature, who came in upper-body first, then retracted it’s lower body from the vortex by pulling the wires that kept them attached; following it was the clown creature, slithering out of the vortex, it’s smile all that was seen at first, followed by it’s eyes, the black stripes and makeup, then the rest of it as it rose to it’s feet laughing. Finally, the scarecrow creature’s pole flew out and hit the ground, sticking into it, followed by the scarecrow leaping out and landing on top of it, striking a martial-arts style balancing pose.

“Oh look,” Fu started, “Chang brought in her reinforcements,” Kelpie, Chang and Bananas B were all equally confused.

“Did...you invite them?” Bananas asked Kelpie.

“I thought you invited them.” Kelpie pointed as Chang.

“Hold on,” Haley interrupted, “if those three were the ones that attacked us, then they can’t be working with Chang, otherwise they wouldn’t have had to ambush us to get in.” There was a brief silence when everyone thought about it.

“I see her point,” Susan said.

“Who cares!” Bananas B exclaimed, “As long as they be on our side, then I ain’t complainin’”

“Aehy, abotu ahtt,” The scarecrow creature said as he stepped down from his pole. He took a deep breath and exhaled heavily, releasing a swamp-green cloud of gas that engulfed Chang, Bananas, and the Kelpie. The three of them coughed, sputtered, hacked, and wheezed as they choked on the gas. Soon after, the coughing stopped, and falling from the cloud were Chang, Bananas, and the Kelpie in his original form, but their bodies looked shriveled up, as if someone sucked them skinny with a bike-pump. Still wheezing, Chang tried to get up, but barely has the strength to so much as blink. The scarecrow creature took big steps to approach Chang. It picked her up by the back of her neck and said, “Eoruy’ ckluy ahtt I dnot’ aehv a aestt for adgnors, and ahtt I Inoy aet ehnd def,” Chang could only wheeze a scream as the scarecrow tossed her up for the clown to grab; he did the same with Bananas B and the Kelpie. The clown stretched it’s arm at least 20 feet behind it before violently throwing the three in the direction of the Hong Kong Harbor. Both it and the scarecrow chuckled menacingly as they turned to face everyone else.



"I don't think that they were on Chang's side," Jonathan stated as the three approached. He and the other humans started to back away while the dragons, Fu, and Rose stood their ground.

"Dragon council, ATTACK!!" Klude declared as the three leapt in to battle the three. Unfortunately, the clown used its vertigo-laugh to knock the councilors to the ground, followed by the puppet firing a glowing net at each of the councilors. Once contact was made, the councilors were forcibly reverted to their human forms.

"Sphinx hair!" Andam exclaimed as he struggled to get out. Unfortunately, whenever a councilor would struggle to escape, the net would get tighter.

"Ist' on esu, adgnor ccilnou," the scarecrow creature stated as he walked up to the councilors, "ehost enst illw Inoy egt eghirtt eht emor ouy egglrstu. Bdeess, hist is jstu beeentw su adn eht ehrtu. " the scarecrow stood itself back up to face everyone else, "EFIR!!" The creature demanded. At command, the puppet creature fired more nets, this time capturing Jake's parents, Trixie, Spud, Sun Park, Fu Dog, and Haley, leaving out Jake and Rose. "Eth der adgnor illw jstu be eeht as a bnusu." it finished as it pulled its staff out of the ground, this time transforming it into an energy scythe.

"Any idea what he just said?" Rose asked as she pulled another staff out of her satchel.

"No idea," Jake replied, extending his claws. There was a momentary stare-down, Jake and Rose switching gazes between the puppet and the scarecrow. It lasted long enough for them to realize that they were one shy. "Hey, weren't there three of you guys?" Jake asked, noticing the absence of the clown. Rose answered his question by back-fisting the space behind them, and successfully getting a yelp of pain. The clown faded back into visibility, rubbing its hurt nose. "Thanks Rose,"

"No Prob," Rose shrugged as leapt into the air and delivered a flurry of kicks straight to the clown's face, successfully rendering him senseless; Jake finished it off by doing a spin-tail-whip to its chin, knocking its head skyward before it fell to the ground out cold. They both finished it by tying the clown up in a series of knots like a distorted balloon animal. "Okay, who's next?" Rose rhetorically asked, giving them the staff-twirl-taunt.

"MUTILATE!"

"VANDALIZE!" The puppet and the scarecrow charged at Rose and Jake respectively. The puppet unhinged its secondary set of wrists and swung them like small maces while the scarecrow swiped its scythe/pole across the ground.

"You take the ugly one, I'll take the one with bad breath!" Jake declared as charged for the scarecrow, leaving Rose with the puppet.

The puppet swung its lower hands at Rose, but she used her two staffs to catch them by the cables and wrap them up like spaghetti, and then she flung it high up against the side of a large rock wall, creating a loud crack leaving an impression. Following that, Rose threw the same staffs at the puppet's sides, keeping its arms crossed and its body stuck to the wall.

"Well, marionettes ARE meant to hang," Rose said wittily as she used her wings to fly over to face the freaky figure, to her own dismay. The puppet creature used its hand-like feet to grab Rose's upper wings, then it opened its mouth to let out a pair of metal whip-like cables; it used those very cables to shred Rose's wings, causing her to scream in pain, and fall to the ground.

Jake, who was currently struggling to keep the scarecrow's scythe out of his own face, overhead the loud scream.

"ROSE!" He exclaimed, redirecting his attention, only to get kicked in her direction by the scarecrow creature's foot. He was hurdled at least halfway to Rose's location before he hit the ground face down. As he tried to get back up, the scarecrow creature leapt into the air and landed on top of Jake's back.

"Aww, eht adgnors' aeht is his acdiinostt," it said as it reared its scythe over its head, "allow em to

deemry ahtt.” it finished. Before it could swing it’s weapon, Jake used his tail to grab the creature by the neck, pick it up, and slam it to the ground. With that out of the way, Jake flew to Rose to see if she was okay.

- the others

Fu was using his canine teeth to try and free everyone, starting with himself.

“Come on Fu doggy-dog!” Trixie commanded in a frustrated tone, “Hurry it up!” she grunted.

“I’m trying here!” Fu reacted with the netting between his teeth. Jonathan was just worried on how his son and Rose would get out of this one.

-back to the battle

Jake got to Rose, hoisted her arm over his shoulder, and helped her up.

“You okay?” He asked as he helped Rose get to her feet.

“Aside from having my wings sliced off and falling from a height, dandy.” Rose answered. They both turned their attention to the puppet, who got itself off of the wall, and climbed down to the ground. It faced Jake and Rose, untangled the wires from the staffs, and used it’s buzz-saw mouth to shred the staffs into nothing but shrapnel.

“VANDALIZE!” the puppet creature extended all of it’s claws, whirred the buzz-saws in it’s mouth, drew the metal stabbing weapons from the hatches on it’s hands, and extended some of the metal wiring from it’s wrists and began to charge, swinging as spinning each weapon.

“Oh, the heck wit’ it.” Jake said before taking a deep breath for a fire-breath. He let out a large torrent of fire on the puppet, making it scream and flail from the heat of the fire. The blast went on for a second before Jake stopped. Hoping to see a pile of ash, Jake was surprised to see that the puppet was still intact; no burn marks on it’s bark, no singes on it’s clothes, and no searing in it’s hair, but the metal in it’s mouth, nose, eye, hands and feet were glowing red hot. Jake and Rose stared awestruck and mouths agape, during which the stubs of Rose’s wings fell off.

“Huh, guess he’s the kind of wood that doesn’t burn,” Spud said jokingly.

The puppet looked at Jake and Rose, parted it’s bottom Jaw at the chin like a mandible, moved them aside, and lowered it’s buzz-saws, all red-hot and revving.

“This could be bad,” Rose said as she reached for her satchel. Then, the puppet creature slung one of it’s red-hot buzz-saws at Jake and Rose like a yo-yo. They leapt in opposite sideways directions as to avoid the blade, and let it hit the ground between them. When the puppet pulled the blade back, both Jake and Rose saw the heat mark it left in the ground, as well as the fact that it wasn’t as deep as they would have thought. Rose turned to see the blade just before it was completely drawn back into the bundle, and noticed that it looked like something ground out the serrated edges. Then she got the idea.

“Jake!” she called out as she pulled a pair of energy knives from her satchel, spun one in each hand, and then pointed them at the puppet, “Keep you’re dragon fire on him!”

“Why?!” Jake replied, “I don’t think he’s gonna burn!”

“Who said anything about burning him like wood?” Rose answered. After a look at the puppet’s metal nose, noticing that it looked a little curved downward as if it were beginning to melt, Jake got the idea. He took another deep breath, and shot a heavy current of fire at the puppet. The puppet was fighting the force of the fire with it’s claws at the ready, knowing that he would eventually run out of breath.

Unfortunately for it, Jake’s fire kept coming, and it’s metal body parts were beginning to melt. It’s teeth

were beginning to melt together, it's nose was dripping and running, the buzz-saws were melting and dripping down it's body, it's metal digits were melting, it's metal eye was oozing out of it's socket, and inside it's body all of the melted hidden weapons were oozing to the bottom, making it heavier and heavier. By the time Jake ran out of breath, the puppet creature was crawling across the ground in a puddle of it's own red-hot metal. "Perfect," Rose said as she turned a dial on her energy dagger. She fired a ray from her dagger, which flash-froze the puppet's hot metal, thus immobilizing it.

"Wow, she's good." Haley said.

"Sweet!" Jake exclaimed after he caught his breath. "Okay, so that's two down, and one to..."

"MUTILATE!!" Jake and Rose turned their attention skyward to see that the scarecrow was coming down at them with the energy scythe over it's head.

"Oh crud!" Jake and Rose exclaimed at the same time as they saw it. It was coming down to attack Rose, but she was able to leap out of it's landing path. It then swung it's scythe at Rose's feet, but she simply jumped up to dodge it, then delivered a round-house straight to it's face, causing it to stumble backwards. It then used a free hand to hold open the mouth seams of it's mask to let out it's side tongue in an attempt to grab Rose, but was stopped when Jake flew over and used his tail to grab the scarecrow creature by the neck, and toss it in the direction opposite of Rose's.

"Let that be a warning!" Jake exclaimed, "Keep your tongue away from my girl!" an awkward silence followed. "Wait, that didn't come out right." the scarecrow got back up and ran over, dragging it's energy scythe across the ground. Rose gave Jake one of her daggers, and then they both charged at the creature to attack. The scarecrow tried to slice Rose with it's weapon, but Jake used his dagger to block it at the blade, allowing for Rose to deliver a devastating kick to it's face to knock it back. Then the creature recuperated and then tried to slice Jake, but then Rose used her dagger to block the scythe's blade, allowing Jake to use a tail-spin-uppercut-strike to knock the scarecrow upward in the chin, incidentally knocking it off of the ground slightly, allowing for Rose to give it a swift kick in the stomach to send it flying backwards. Basically, every time one would block an attack, the other would deliver an attack on the scarecrow, then switch off.

"Wow," Trixie started, "Those two really work well together for a pair who haven't seen each other in heck-if-I-know-how-long."

"Yup, totally," Spud replied.

The Scarecrow was once again knock to the ground back first.

"Y'know, kickin' yo but like dis gets borin' afta the third cylce!" Jake Chuckled wittily. The scarecrow got back to it's feet and made a blood vessel bulge in anger.

"AHTT IS IT!!" It shouted, "I AM DENO FGILNOO ADNORU HITW OUY ABSTR!!" it took a breath deep enough to puff up it's chest, then it exhaled it's cloud of swamp-green gas at Jake and Rose. Jake reacted quickly by using his own dragon breath to counter the creature's breath. What neither of them expected was that the scarecrow creature's breath was flammable. The flames from Jake's breath traveled across the cloud of gas to the scarecrow's face before it completely exploded. When the explosion occurred, Jake quickly flew Rose to a safe distance from the blast, considering that the explosion was similar to lighting a gas pump on fire; the scarecrow, however, was shot fifteen feet into the air from the burst, and landed two yards from where it was originally standing.

"You okay?" Jake asked Rose, whom he was carrying in his arms.

"Okay, and you?" Rose replied. Jake landed and let Rose back onto the ground. They heard the

scarecrow moaning in pain, and turned their visual attention to it. It was lying back first on the ground; it was currently dazed from the explosion. Its weapon nowhere in sight.

"Ehy," It started as it lifted itself at least an inch off of the ground, "Ahs aennoy eens my...?" it saw the scythe falling down at it from above, spinning as it fell, "...oh" what all that it had time to mutter before it landed... in its right eye... blade first.

Its screams of pain echoed all the way up and down the hills; Everyone who was seeing it cringed in pain and tried to look away.

"Ohhh, that's gotta hurt." Spud said, closing his eyes and facing away in an attempt to not look at the unpleasant sight. After a short while of screaming, the scarecrow vanished in a flash of green lightning, as did the puppet and the clown. Everyone was as perplexed by what had happened. "Hey where'd they go?" Spud asked.

"Don't know..." Rose started.

"Don't care," Jake finished as they both made their way to everyone wrapped in the nets. Jake used his claws to free his parents, Lao Shi, Fu Dog, and Trixie, while Rose used her dagger to free Haley, Sun, and Spud. Then they both freed the three councilors.

"I would've gotten out eventually," Fu said as he tossed the net off of himself.

"Thank you, both of you," Klude said humbly to Jake and Rose as he and the other councilors got back up. "And Rose, as the other councilors and I were saying before, you pass the dragon council knighting trials." Jake, Rose, as well as everyone else there cheered in delight and excitement. Rose just glomped a hug on Jake from the side, giggling with joy; Jake smiled, reverted to his human form and hugged her back.

"And there you have it, folks." Lana T Bell announced, still there long enough to have caught the hole thing. "The first dragoknight on known record, a clash with the unknown, and..." Lana and her cameraman turned to see Andam glaring at them from behind. "... a major citation from the dragon council." She signaled the cameraman to stop rolling, which he did.

"Your knighting ceremony shall begin in one and a half hours," Klude announced, "You'll be knighted at the isle Draco, arriving by the portal at the convention center,"

"And worry not, it won't be a formal-dress affair," Omina added, "But do try to look decent anyway." Omina finished as she and the other three councilors walked off, taking the news fairies with them.

Rose took a deep sigh of relief and purposely fell backward onto the ground.

"You okay?" Jake asked.

"Just...beat," She answered, putting her hands behind her head.

"I'd imagine so," Jake added, laying down next to her, except his head was facing in the opposite direction, although they were still face level. They looked at each other with soft smiles. A short silence passed before someone spoke up.

"Uhh, I think that they want some time alone," Fu suggested. Everyone nodded and backed away politely. Lao Shi, however, stood there for a moment, but only because something about the nets struck him as familiar. "Uh, gramps," Fu whispered, "I said they wanted alone time." Lao Shi managed to snap back to reality and respond.

"My apologies, Fu Dog." He whispered back, "But there is something familiar about the way that the nets are woven."

"Big deal," Fu whispered back, "you see one net weaving, you see 'em all." He finished before walking off. Lao Shi was concerned, but didn't want to concern Jake or Rose, so he followed Fu. Meanwhile, Jake had Rose's hand in his, and was tenderly kissing the back of it, Rose softly giggling to it.

-Later that evening, at the Isle Draco

Dragons from all over were seated in bleachers that stretched from the entrance at the island shore to a large circle in front of steps of the central hall. And oriental fanfare was being played alongside an elfin drum-line. Between the bleachers was a velvet carpet that started at an open portal, and ended at a trio of podiums centered in a large, golden circle on the ground. Jake, Trixie, Spud, Lao Shi, Haley, Sun, Fu Dog, Susan, and Jonathan were all seated in a VIP section, literally hovering above everyone else. Appearing in front of the podiums in a small purple teleportation cloud was an elf.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the dragon council!" the elf announced before disappearing again. The councilors flew from the main halls in their dragon forms, and theatrically flew in fancy spiral-like patterns at least 30 feet above their respective podiums. They reverted to human form, and landed smack-dab on their feet behind each podium. Everyone cheered at the spectacle, then stopped when the three councilors put up their hands as a gesture to request silence from both the audience, and the fanfare. "Welcome dragons, one and all," Andam announced, "we have gathered you all here to witness a rare event, the knighting of a human into the dragon order," He directed everyone's attention to the portal at the opposite end of the long carpet. Stepping out of the portal was Rose, wearing her uniform. She felt nervous about being there, being marked a dragon slayer on an island full of dragons, but she was comfortable because she knew that Jake was there.

"Rose, come forward." Klude politely ordered. Rose humbly, and calmly approached the councilors with dignity.

"You may kneel," Omina requested. Rose got on one knee and put her head down politely.

"Rose," Klude began as he and the other two councilors each lifted their right hands, which started to glow, "You have proven yourself both against the Dark Dragon at the millennium temple, and today in the knighting trial. You have proven yourself worthy of an honor we thought that we would never bestow upon any human. Thus, we do hereby dub thee...." The councilors held their right hands at Rose, and caused the golden ground beneath her to create a spiraling energy chrysalis around her. Everyone stared in awe at what was happening. After a while, the chrysalis faded, allowing Rose to emerge from it, this time with new accessories. "... Lady Rose. alias, Dragonfli" Klude finished.

Rose was awestruck by her new appearance. She still had on her outfit, but now she sported oriental-esque armored plating on her shoulders, her thighs, chest, back and her upper and lower arms; She also had facial armor that covered the lower half of her face (eyes still visible) , metal protection on the bottoms of her boots, as well as her weapon satchel; to top it all off, the armor on her back had four special gems that allowed Rose to conjure golden energy wings with red markings. Everyone on the island cheered, especially Jake.

"You may now rise," Andam said politely. She did as he said, and then bowed in respect. The cheering continued as a display of fireworks commenced in honor of the new Dragoknight.

- the Skies of Hong Kong, not too long later.

Rose was flying through the sky using her new wings, enjoying her new power. Jake was following a short distance behind in dragon form. It didn't take long for Rose to notice that she had company. "Oh, Jake!" She started, coming to a halt so that Jake could catch up. "I didn't know I was being

followed.”

“It’s okay,” Jake replied as he caught up. “I just...wanted to congratulate you personally...”

“Again?” Rose rhetorically inquired with her hands at her hips and a raised eyebrow.

“I also wanted to say...” Jake took a deep breath and exhaled before continuing, “... I’m sorry,” Rose was surprised.

“Sorry? About what?” she asked.

“About pulling you back into this,” Jake answered, “I gave up everything that we had, our entire history together, just so you could have a happy, normal life, and then I come in out of nowhere and pull you from it!” He hung his head and sighed, “I’m no better than the Huntsman.” Rose was just astonished by Jake’s attitude towards himself.

“Jake, don’t ever compare yourself to him like that,” Rose responded, putting one of her hand’s on his shoulder and using the other to lift his head by the chin so that they could meet eye-level. “You’re better than that by miles,” Jake’s spirit was lifting a bit. “You gave me the life that the Huntsman took from me, and at a personal expense. That’s the sweetest thing any guy could do.” Jake put on a soft grin. “And, I know his is going to sound corny, but my life wasn’t entirely perfect.” There was a brief quiet moment.

“Why...?” Jake asked curiously.

“Because I never met you.” Rose answered. Jake gave a loving smile as a tear almost came to his eye. “And if anyone should be apologizing, it should be me,” Rose said softly and sadly as she de-conjured her facial armor, and with a tear dropping from her eye. “I tell you that I’d never forget you, next thing you know I get my parents to call the cops on you for...”

“Shh,” Jake interrupted, putting his finger on her lips. “Let’s not think about that,” Jake said as he reverted to human form, keeping his wings and tail to maintain flight and balance. Jake put his hands on Rose’s cheeks while Rose put her hands on his cheeks; they then slowly and softly pulled each other in for a long, soft kiss. They were in so much bliss, that they didn’t care if they were in plain sight for anyone to see.

-Hotel room balcony.

“Awww,” Haley said as she was spying on her brother and his girlfriend through the zoom lense on a video camera, “This is just too beautiful to use against him,” She put down the camera before she continued talking, “although I’ve never noticed how much taller she is than him. That must be awkward on her behalf.”

-another Room in another hotel

“Ugh, sickening.” Jake and Rose were being spied on through a telescope by a sash-masked, raven-haired Japanese woman amidst her twenties. She put the telescope down and forced the curtain to the window she was looking through. She and a man with long black hair, an overcoat, goggles, and a metal mask within her age-group were in a poorly lit room. The man she was with was performing a type of surgical procedure on the scarecrow creature’s face where the scythe hit it. The man’s left hand held a flashlight to the incision area to see what he was doing., while he used his right hand to... actually, there was no right hand, just a bundle of small mechanical digits operating small tools.

“I apologize for my minions’ failure,” The man said through a voice changer in his mask, “Just say the word and Huntsgirl’s apartment has a ‘mysterious’ gas-leak.”

“I never asked for an apology,” The woman said as she turned her gaze to her associate her one visible eye gleaming in an intimidating way, reflecting what little light there was in the room. “Your minions did

just what I wanted them to do.” She turned to see that the clown was trying to work itself out of it’s own knots, while an android was trying to chisel out the puppet from it’s own melted metal.

“And that was?” the man asked as he put the finishing touches on the scarecrow’s new robotic eye and sealed the incision.

“To test her,” The woman answered, “To see if she could pose a threat. The bad news is that she passed.” The scarecrow regained consciousness in time to hear what the Japanese woman had said, and was obviously angered that he was only sent after Rose so he could be her punching bag, but was in no shape to attack.

“I ahlls deoruv ahtt chitw at eht first accehn I egt.” The scarecrow quietly threatened.

“Knowing her, you’d have a better chance of surviving a shower of battery acid,” The man told the creature, referring to the woman. “So what do we do know that she passes as a threat?” he asked the woman.

“Simple,” the woman answered, “use her in our plan.”

“How?” the man inquired.

“Some weapons are better left in enemy hands,” She replied, “That way, the blow is more devastating when it is turned against them.”

“ I doubt that she’ll be willing to join us.” The man stated as he got up. The android that was attempting to chisel out the puppet gave up and walked over to the man. The man’s mechanical tools retracted into his wrist as the android transformed into a mechanical right hand. The mechanical hand then reattached itself to the man’s mechanical arm at the wrist.

“Worry not about her joining us,” The woman continued as she pulled out a velvet satchel. “All shall be revealed in due time.” She pulled a glowing crystal orb from the satchel and began to chuckle softly, and menacingly.

-“End credit Gag”-

Jake, Rose, Trixie, and Spud were all in the Hot tub; Rose in a blue Bikini, and the others in their traditional swimsuits, while Jake was now sporting his own rice-grain necklace similar to Rose’s, but with blue water instead of magenta .

“Here’s to my honey, the dragon order’s new, if not only ever, knight!” Jake announced as he raised his smoothie glass. Everyone else raised their smoothies and clanked the glasses before sipping out of them.

“So, does anyone here feel like we forgot something?” Spud asked after he finished sipping.

“If it’s about explaining to Jonathan how Jake knows Rose, I’ve got it covered!” Fu called out from the other room.

“No not that, but something else. Something I can’t quite put my finger on...”

“Now that he mentions it, yeah.” Rose added, “But what?”

-Victoria Peak Hunts-lair

#89 and #88 were still hanging by the rafters, desperately calling out for help alternatively.

“HELP! HELP US!”

“SOMEBODY PLEASE HELP US!”

“WE’VE BEEN HERE SINCE I-DON’T-KNOW-HOW-LONG-IT’S-BEEN!”

“I’M HUNGRY”

“I CAN’T FEEL ANY OF MY LIMBS!”

“I’M GETTIN’ DELIRIOUS!” There was a brief pause.

“Really?” #89 asked.

“Yeah,” #88 answered, “I can see a tiny green platypus in a hat starin’ at me like it’s gonna eat me!”  
there was another awkward silence.

“You’re crazy, dude.” #89 finished.

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The End