

Action Awaits

Adeba A. Islam

Copyright 2018 Adeba A. Islam

Smashwords Edition

License Notes

Thank you for downloading this ebook. You are welcome to share it with your friends. This book may be reproduced, copied and distributed for non-commercial purposes, provided the book remains in its complete original form. If you enjoyed this book, please return to your favorite ebook retailer to discover other works by this author. Thank you for your support.

Guardian in Training

Golden fire blazed from the phoenix as it rose above the treetops. The setting sun cast its dying rays on the silver, serpentine heads of the snapping hydra. It hissed and spat black poison at the wild firebird. The phoenix plunged into a steep dive, narrowly missing the poison which splat onto a leafy branch.

Like a flaming arrow, the phoenix swooped forward and cut a hydra-head with its talons before setting the stump ablaze with its wings. The hydra screamed as the phoenix proceeded to attack another head.

Finally the hydra spat poison on the firebird's left wing. The phoenix tried to fly away but the hydra immersed it in more poison. A hiss and splatter drowned out its cry as the firebird fell. With a splat, the dying bird landed on the grass and suddenly the sticky mass erupted in scarlet flames. Soon the fire was gone, leaving behind a pile of ashes and a tiny, stirring baby bird.



Light flashed from the newborn phoenix. It transformed into a young male warrior in armor. The same light flashed from the watching hydra and it too transformed into an armored warrior, an older female.

“You did well, Ralnor,” she said.

Ralnor frowned.

“But I died.”

“But you learned. When I took the form of a hydra before, you would change into something with physical prowess, such as a dragon or a

griffin. This time you chose a survivor; a phoenix, which can rebirth if you fail. But if you die as a dragon, then it is over. That is why I never attacked so harshly before lest my training kills you.”

“I thought the hydra’s ability matches the phoenix in a way. The hydra regenerates infinitely, while the phoenix is reborn infinitely.”

“An astute observation.”

“Thank you, Aunt Saraera.” After a brief pause, he asked quietly, “when do you think I will be strong enough to protect the Tower?”

“Soon. Very soon you will be ready to join the rest of the family and become a guardian.”



Later that evening, Ralnor went into the forest to collect some herbs for a potion. He saw a strange creature emitting blue light in a distance. Stealthily, he moved closer. It was a giant eagle with sapphire feathers, drinking from a creek. Mesmerized, Ralnor inched forward. Suddenly a cold, dark liquid hit his face. It stung his skin as he struggled to wipe it off. But it was too late. He lost consciousness.

When he woke up, he felt the wind in his face and he was flying. He looked up and saw the beautiful eagle carrying him in its talons. Riding on the eagle’s back was a little fat man with pointy ears and nose, a goblin.

“Where are you taking me?” Ralnor said. He wanted to address the goblin but his eyes couldn’t leave the strong, shimmering sapphire wings. He forced himself to look down at the moonlit hills and listened intently.

“To my home,” the goblin said. “Where you will serve us.”

“Why should I do that?”

“Same reason why you still haven’t escaped. The fewoc’s power captivates you. And my master has a potion that will allow him to control your mind.”

“If you think controlling me is going to get you access to the Tower then you are sadly mistaken.”

“We don’t want that weapon in the Tower. You guardians can protect it for as long as you like. But we want one of you to work for us. A powerful wizard like you will help us win the war.”



Ralnor’s mind raced as the fewoc soared. He had heard about the fewoc as a child, but the creature was not as well-known as the phoenix. It had a powerful, magnetic quality that affected all who witnessed the creature. The intensity of allurements depended on the magical potency of the witness. The more powerful the witness, the more obsessed they became. Hence, the goblin was relatively normal while Ralnor was no

longer himself. He knew he should escape but he didn't want to. Some creatures weak enough to escape the fewoc's charisma but they cannot escape its talons. Suddenly an idea struck him.

Light flashed from Ralnor. The fewoc cried out and released him. As the white light vanished, blue light shimmered as Ralnor emerged. He had transformed into a fewoc.

"No! Don't back off!" the goblin shouted. "Capture him! It's just the wizard!"

But the fewoc would not attack its own kind. Free from its hold, Ralnor flew past the fewoc and was soon a twinkling blue speck in the night sky.

The Sentinel

Sanarir pushed away her game console and glanced at the screen displaying the edge of the Milky Way Galaxy. All was calm as usual, nothing alive drifting in space. She sighed and stared at the swirling black portal in front of her.

It was a portal to the Milky Way, the most desolate galaxy in the universe. All of the other portals she had watched over presented an occasional disturbance but not this one. She had felt so disappointed when she was assigned to it for the next three lunar months. But as a proud Sentinel, she had no choice but to take her duty seriously and make sure nothing passes through the portal.

She began to play again when the lights dimmed. Surprised, she looked up and saw the portal had grown so large that it nearly covered the light source. *The portal is opening! Someone is coming. Or something.*



Sanarir raised her laser gun. The portal grew ten feet in diameter. A small white object pushed out of the infinite blackness. It was a human hand covered in strange clothing. It was followed by an arm, then a head in a giant globe. *It's not a human like us, it's a human from Earth. That white attire, that's their spacesuit, it's an astronaut!* The astronaut emerged from the portal and reached for the laser gun at its belt. But Sanarir was faster. She shot at the gun and destroyed its trigger. The astronaut cursed.

Still pointing her gun at the astronaut, she switched on the *communicator* and set it to her own language and the most common language spoken on Earth.

“Who are you?” Sanarir asked. The communicator’s microphone picked up her words, translated them in the Earthling’s language and a robotic voice read out the translation. The astronaut answered.

“I am Will Bennet,” the communicator translated.

“How did you travel so far from your home?” Sanarir said.

“What sort of game is this?”

Sanarir blinked.

“Game? This looks like a game to you?”

“Enough! Just kill me already. I am done being hunted.”

“Who is hunting you?” Will glared. “Answer the question!”

“Your friends.”

Sanarir frowned.

“You are lying.”

“Then who hijacked my rocket? Who killed my partner? Who tortured me?”

A web of metal flashed by Sanarir and covered the astronaut. Blue sparks crackled as the metal net gave Will a mild electrocution, forcing him to his knees. Sanarir turned and saw another sentinel, Mrivolog, his arm outstretched, clutching a shooter.

“I was interrogating him!”



Mrivolog lowered his arm and shrugged.

“He is dangerous.” Mrivolog took off a translucent sphere from his belt. “He invaded a nebula maintenance ship, injured three crew members with a stolen laser gun and escaped through portal R-097.” He pressed a switch on the sphere.

“What are you doing?” Sanarir asked. “No wait, he has to go through trial-”

Mrivolog tossed the sphere at the astronaut. It cracked open in mid-air and a new dark wormhole transpired. Will gasped as the wormhole’s powerful gravity pulled him into its depths.



Sanarir shook her head.

“This is wrong.” She walked towards the wormhole. “I am going to bring him back.”

“No! Let him rot.”

Sanarir ignored him. Suddenly a flash of laser zoomed by, barely missing her. Stunned, she turned to see Mrivolog pointing his gun at her.

“Get back here, Sanarir.”

“What is wrong with you? I have never seen you like this. If I didn’t know any better, I would say you are afraid.”

“Just let it go.”

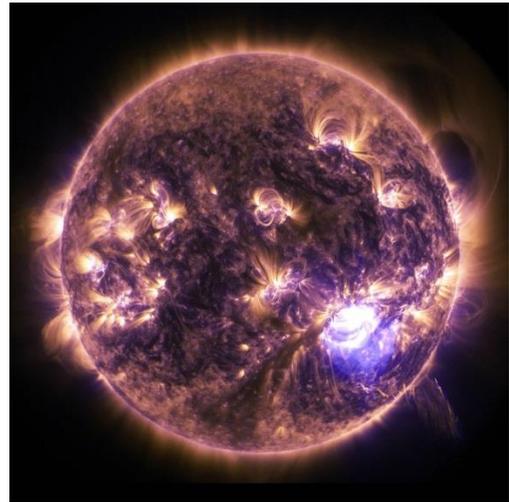
“Why?”

“Enough! You ask too many questions. You-hey!” White fumes spewed between them, causing Mrivolog to cough and back away. During their conversation, Sanarir had discreetly deployed a smoke screen. By the time the smoke cleared, Sanarir was nowhere in sight. She had slipped through the wormhole.

A river of molten rock flowed just beside her. She was standing at the edge of a volcano in a rocky plain. A star cast its scarlet rays over the barren landscape, with jagged rocks spilling long dark shadows on the ground. The place looked familiar somehow. Sanarir looked up at the stars, searching for a known constellation that would indicate her location. Finally she spotted one. *Great, we are on Zlenos, which orbits a dying red supergiant, its core had already begun fusing silicon. We have only minutes, if not hours, to get off this planet before the supernova.* She looked around and saw a group of the planet’s inhabitants gathering around a white object. It was Will. He was recoiling from the jaws of alien predators.



Sanarir shot the creatures with her laser gun. Some of them turned to her and snarled, baring enormous fangs. They were human-sized bipeds with backward-bending knees, eight fiery red eyes and horns protruding from their bat-like wings. *Cridons*. A dozen Cridons flew towards her, claws raised. She fired at them and rushed towards Will. A Cridon swooped down and scratched her arm. She ducked behind a large rock and shot it down. The scratch on her arm hissed. Cridons had holes in their claws for injecting acidic liquids. Luckily the acid did not burn right through her suit, it only weakened the material.



She ran to Will, shooting Cridons along the way. She dropped to her knees beside him and unlocked the metal net that was binding Will's arms.

"What are you doing?" he said.

Sanarir shot three more Cridons.

"Saving you, what else?" She handed him a spare laser gun. "Aim for the head."

They shot many Cridons but more and more began to appear. They were being overwhelmed. *We are losing ammunition.*

Will cried out. Sanarir looked back and saw a Cridon carrying Will away in its clutches. He had lost his gun somehow and was struggling to free himself. She ran after them but was forced to stop when she came to a river of molten rock.

She glanced at the lava flow, the Cridon was hovering above it. She took aim.

"No!" Will shouted. "Don't shoot! Don't shoot!"

She shot.

Will screamed as he and the dead Cridon fell. The creature dropped into the glistening lava. Will landed on a large rock beside the sinking carcass, in the center of the lava flow.

By this time the other Cridons had reached Sanarir. She was firing at them when she finally heard Will.

“Don’t ever do that again!” he said.

“You are welcome,” Sanarir said. She ducked out of a Cridon’s way and shot it. “Can you come to this side?”

“Hope so.” She looked back and saw Will jump onto another floating rock. The rock carried him further down the lava flow. Finally he summed up the courage to jump onto land and run to Sanarir, Cridons chasing him.



Suddenly all of the Cridons flew away.

Will stopped beside Sanarir.

“Why are they leaving?” he asked.

Sanarir glanced at the star briefly. *It is time.*

“We have to go.” *This suit will not withstand such intense gamma-rays.* She pulled out another sphere. *We cannot go back to the station. Mrivolog is waiting for us. We need help.* She tossed the sphere. “Now!”

Blinding light flashed everywhere. The supernova had begun. Sanarir pushed Will towards the wormhole. The last thing she heard were the screams of Cridons.

* * * * *

Weeks later, Mrivolog and a group of rogue Sentinels were imprisoned for kidnapping, torturing and murdering weaker life forms (including Earthlings) for recreation. Will was returned to Earth safely on the condition that he would never speak of these events again (he did not mind, since no one would believe him anyway). Sanarir was praised for her bravery and as the years went by her numerous adventures finally made her Guardian of the Nevorius Supercluster.

Risk

Amir climbed onto the railing of his balcony and jumped. The moonlit garden below flashed across his vision as he hurtled towards it. Swirls of dark vapor enveloped him. A second later, the vapor vanished and a ten foot tall, muscular, black dragon emerged. It spread its wings wide and gracefully switched from nose-dive to steep ascent. The dragon grinned. *Awesome as always*, thought Amir.

During the day, Amir was just a student living alone in tiny apartment near his university. During the night, he was the secret guardian of his country. He was part of a dragon clan that protected people from malicious magical beings.



The cold air cut across him as he gained speed, invigorating him. He loved the clear sky, the full moon, the howling wind and peaceful landscape spread out far below. These were the few rare moments in life when he really enjoyed himself. He dived, he swerved and he spiraled; pulling off stunts with enough skill to shame an eagle.

Suddenly his dragon senses detected trouble. He rushed off towards Chittagong. A fierce thunderstorm had struck but it was caused by excess discharge of magical energy. He flew past the harbor and found the creature responsible: kraken, a colossal squid-like sea monster with sharp spikes on its tentacles.



The sea was at its roughest near the kraken, giant waves crashing as the creature reeled towards the harbor. Amir flew as low as he dared and breathed fire. The kraken stopped. Its tentacles shot out of the water and lashed at him. He swung out of the way and breathed fire. More lashing tentacles appeared. The gale and heavy downpour made flying difficult. Amir managed to dodge most attacks but got a few slashes.

He flew up and noticed the tentacles reaching for him. This gave him an idea. He dived then spiraled and twisted around the lunging tentacles. Soon the kraken entangled itself. As it tried to loosen the knot, Amir breathed fire. The kraken's shrill cry of pain was mostly lost in the storm.

Wait, a voice spoke in Amir's mind. It was the leader of his clan, Bilal. All dragons could establish telepathic connections with each other at will. *It's too dangerous*, Bilal said.

I've got this, Amir replied.

He gave one last dive and breathed fire at the kraken. Suddenly the knot unraveled and the kraken sprang at him. A tentacle smacked him from behind, another wrapped around his left wing. Pain shot through

him as the kraken pulled him straight into the sea. Water rushed into his lungs, robbing his fire-breathing advantage. He struggled but the kraken pulled him down further into the dark depths. *Help me.* Darkness took over.

* * *



Amir opened his eyes and saw light. He blinked and realized he was lying on a bed. Daylight streamed through the windows beside his bed, lighting up the small apartment, which he finally recognized as his own. He shoved his blanket away, the sunlight had filled his apartment with warmth. Gingerly, he sat up. He was in his human form.

What happened? Amir asked.

You were unconscious when Nasir pulled you out of the water, Bilal answered. *We sent the kraken back to its realm afterwards. Then we healed you. Do you realize how reckless you have been? That kraken would have killed you if we were a few moments late.*

I thought I had it under control. Amir insisted.

And you nearly lost your life. Anger simmered from Bilal's words. *Is this a child's game? Is this a place to break rules?*

But Dayyan fought a troll last week! He didn't listen to you. And you didn't say anything to him.

That troll was already in the city. Dayyan could not wait for backup. He had no choice. But the kraken was still far from the harbor and you had it distracted. That was all you needed.

I thought I had the advantage. It couldn't move when I tangled its tentacles.

Amir, orders are given for a reason. You cannot disobey without endangering yourself and the entire clan.

But some of the greatest dragons in history won battles without following rules.

They did it because they saw the flaws of those rules in their situation. They also knew the risks. They didn't do it for glory.

Amir bowed his head sheepishly as if Bilal were reprimanding him in person. Bilal was the oldest member of his clan and like an elder brother to him.

I know you want to be like Dayyan, Bilal added gently. But follow his principles, not his actions.

I guess I have a lot to learn.

Bilal made no reply. He ended the telepathic connection, leaving Amir alone with his thoughts.

His gaze fell on his table, at his class assignment. Suddenly he realized he had forgotten to pass it to his friend, which meant he had to go submit it himself. He glanced at his watch. Ten minutes left. He rushed out of his house within two.

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

