

It is the Dark Ages. A Dying Sun Sets in the West. Man Becomes Shadow.  
Out of this Sunless Land Will Rise a Legend...  
Of the Starborn Child,  
Of the Great Cosmic War,  
Of the Sword of Power...

**SWORD FROM THE SKY BY R. JANVIER DEL VALLE**

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-ENTER THE STORY-

*"In good sooth, my masters, this is no door. Yet is it a little window, that looketh upon a great world."*

*-Phantastes*

# SWORD FROM THE SKY

(BOOK I: THE BLADE SCHOOL OF DAVÍ)



BY  
R. JANVIER DEL VALLE

Copyedited by Claudette Cruz  
Cover Art by Ronald Calica  
Frontispiece by Jason Cheeseman-Meyer

*“**B**lessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*

*-Matt 5:13*

Sword from the Sky  
Book I: The Blade School of Daví  
By R. Janvier del Valle

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*Star is the noble sign of the soul,  
and though nobly bright,  
must by law rise and fall with the sky.  
Thus the soul must by law rightly do the same.*

*This is known as revealed from hence on;  
which prevails as truth in our hearts,  
I, who was Druuk of Hads, being the scribe of Daví  
while it came to be known in our time.*

***-In the Sixth Epoch of Fire, in the Age of the Moon Ire.***

## Prologue

A *SHOOTING STAR* leaped across the purple horizon, seemingly racing down towards the bosom of an embracing dawn. The beauty of the cosmos flared in the distance, and the air swam in a mist of cold rain. Moments later, upon a great hill, a hound made its presence known. He was tall and slender, yet muscular, with a deep chest, something akin to a cheetah's body, as if he was made to run. The creature had large eyes and drop ears on a long and narrow head. His dark mane contrasted with his bright blue eyes, luminous and eternal. The hound sat under the backdrop of an early sunrise, staring intensely at the barren land.

Weary of the terrain, the hound stood idly, discerning the ominous landscape with his transcending spirit. The wet grass adorning the moors was of a bluish gray, as if it was painted over by the night sky. Dawn was settling far in the distance, yet most of the sky was dark. The only light came from a sullen moon, which hovered close to the ground, and some curious fireflies that fluttered amongst the grass, exploring the beauty of their world.

Without hesitating any longer, the hound took off running down the hill and into a large grassy field, racing across the horizon, on his way towards a large and dark forest. Upon reaching the wooded area, he stopped and hesitated before breaking into its borders. He surveyed the tall trees. They were all intertwined and entangled with each other, as if wrestling in an eternal embrace. His ears perked up, searching the chorus of noises emanating from the dense patches of shadow. At first, he only heard the sound of various nightly critters, but as he concentrated a little longer, in the middle of all the noise, the hound discovered what he longed for: the cries of a newborn baby boy.



And just then, a booming voice echoed across the moonlit sky. *I have appointed you for this task. Guard the boy with your life. The sunless land grows stronger by the hour. Time is now but a fleeting moment. Go now, Umbrador, and fulfill your destiny.*

Onward the hound went, dashing along the dimly lit wooded trails, honing his nose on that which it sought, straight into the heart of the darkened forest.

\*\*\*

# A Late Start

## TWELVE YEARS LATER

“AH!” the woman screamed as she threw the blankets up to the ceiling.

Simultaneously, twelve-year old Luca shared in her fright. “AH!” he also screamed, losing his balance and falling on the floor, for Luca had only one good leg, his right one to be exact. His left leg had been crushed right after he came out his mother’s womb and had been amputated just below the knee.

“Oh my heavens, poor child!” Sertu said, running towards him. Sertu towered over the average man, but she was as nurturing as a mother bear is to her cubs. She grabbed his hand and picked him up off the floor. “Why are you still here, Master Luca? You’re going to be late for the parade!”

“I’m sorry, Miss Sertu,” Luca said, wiping away the dark strands of hair from his eyes. “I was looking outside and I noticed that my roosters were gone. They were supposed to wake me up, but now they’re gone.”

“Oh dear, quite right,” Sertu said with a guilty look on her face.

“Do you know what happened to them?”

“Um,” Sertu stuttered as she stalled for some answers. “Well, it’s an important day, you know, and I think...I mean I might...it’s quite possible that they’ve found their way into—”

“Into what?” Luca said.

“Well, into a pot—they might have made their way into a stew, that is...for a party. I mean,

for your party, a feast—a celebration, that is. Today is a great day! Yes, today is a great day, and you’re late for it, Master Luca. We need to get you ready. Come on.” Sertu picked up the blankets and went through his wardrobe for his things.

“Into a pot?” Luca said. “Oh, that’s terrible, no? I mean, poor birds.”

“Master Luca,” Sertu said as she threw a shirt at him, which landed on his head. “Please focus.”

Luca tried desperately to put on his shirt while hopping on his one good leg. Sertu kept throwing various garments at him.

“What is it exactly that you’re supposed to wear to these things?” Sertu said while holding two types of pants in each hand.

As he hopped around the room with a number of garments covering his head, Luca blindly pointed to one of the pair of pants in her oversized grip.

“All right then,” Sertu said, placing the pants on the bed and turning around to reach for his sandals. It wasn’t long before she heard a big *thud* and noticed that Luca had tripped over his bed as he hopped around the room.

“Oh, dear, not again,” she said. She walked over to Luca, helping him onto his bed. She took all the clothes that she had unwillingly toppled on his head and threw them on the floor.

“I think it might be better if I did this by myself, Miss Sertu.”

Sertu folded her hands below her waist, and with a sad look apologized to Luca. “I’m sorry,” she said. “I’m nervous, that’s all. I just want you to do well.”

“I know, Miss Sertu,” Luca said, understanding her sentiments. “It’ll be all right, I promise—on my wooden leg, I promise.”

“Oh, well, that’s sweet,” Sertu said as she gave him a big hug.

Like most kids, Luca was not fond of hugs, especially from adults. “Ugh,” he said in a disapproving manner.

“Well, just hurry up, little master,” Sertu said. “I’ll be outside if you need me.”

Sertu exited the room, and closing the door behind her, left Luca to be by himself. After all, Luca was in for a big day, and it would do him well to have some quiet time to think and prepare for his upcoming trials. He hummed a tune while he finished getting dressed.

Luca lived with his father, Druuk. Their manor was situated a few miles from the walls of the palace. As the second prince, that is, the second oldest son of the king, Druuk was not allowed to

reside inside palace walls. That honor was only bestowed to the king, the first prince, and any of their immediate families and staff. Yet, Druuk had complete access to the palace at all times, and because he was still a prince, all reverence was given to him by the people of Bune, for it was his birthright.

As his son, Luca was also given certain privileges, such as being able to access the palace and enjoy some of its comforts, regardless of the fact that the king had never recognized young Luca as his legitimate grandson, for the king believed that Luca's mom, Evie, was nothing but a harlot who fancied herself as nobility. This tension between Druuk and the king had always bothered Luca, and he always blamed himself for the rift, although he kept this deep in his thoughts and made sure never to reveal it to his father.

That morning Luca did the same as all other mornings, which was to neatly place his clothes side by side on his bed and get dressed in an orderly manner; he always liked to be precise. After laying his things on the bed, he sat down beside them and took off his night garments. But before he could put on his training pants, he needed to secure the wooden leg onto his own.

Because of his status as a prince, he'd had access to the greatest craftsmen, and after some time, they were able to forge a durable and effective wooden leg made from the strongest of trees. As he grew older every year, a new one was made to compensate for his growth. The one he put on that day was especially made for him by his father's good friend, Vohro.

Vohro had been fond of Luca since the moment the little prince had been born and made sure to protect and care for him as if he was his own son. Yet, Vohro also had a son, whom he named Vehru, and Vohro loved his son more than anything. He made great efforts to keep Luca at Vehru's side so they could grow up to be good friends like he and Druuk were, and to watch out for each other, for one day they would have to do without the guidance of their parents.

This superior wooden leg that Vohro crafted for Luca was forged in a way as to be resistant to physical force and stress, so it was fitting for Luca to use it whenever he was required to perform physical feats or put great strain on the leg, especially when he trained with his blades. This wooden leg he was about to put on would be a great asset in helping him obtain his final blade.

For you see, Luca was a Davinian, that is, he was a member of the prestigious Blade School of Daví, a thousand-year-old school known for its legendary swordsmen. It was customary for all children of nobility to attend the school and learn all seven levels of blade mastery. Yet, due to his disability, Luca was initially denied entrance, for it was believed that he would not have the

ability to perform all the movements needed to become a Davinian master. But at last, Prince Druuk was able to persuade the Davinian masters to take in Luca for training on a trial basis, and he was admitted to the Blade School of Daví at the age of six to learn basic movements and concepts.

Surprisingly, after the first year, the masters witnessed a fire in Luca that existed in no other student, and though it came with great difficulty, Luca quickly learned all the movements needed to handle being a Davinian apprentice. He was not quick on his footwork, but to offset that, he became proficient with his upper body. He learned how to create a great center of balance, even with his disability. And his techniques, his slashing and counters, were all up to par and sometimes even surpassed others. Would he ever become a great master? Probably not, but the determination that bred inside Luca garnered him respect from the masters and also empowered his spirit, enabling Luca to advance from level to level. It wasn't long before Luca had earned all six of his lower blades and was ready to test for his final blade, his long sword, which all students must acquire before being recognized as a Davinian "Servantu," a master of blades.

Luca grabbed the wooden limb and hooked it onto his leg, and where it met his own, he wrapped a strong and flexible adhesive bandage to secure it nice and tight. He put a thin, yet durable, metal brace around the area and snapped it shut. This part always brought him discomfort, and that day was no exception; he gave a pained sigh.

The last thing he wrapped around his leg was a long leather strap. His father had always told him the leather strap had belonged to his mother, and Luca found the leather strap to be comforting when secured around his leg, as if he was constantly in his mother's embrace, even if it was just his leg. Luca had never been fond of hugs, but a hug from his mother would've been something he would have truly welcomed, for Luca never knew his mother; she died during childbirth, when she and Druuk were attacked by a horrendous beast.

He took the strap, which measured about four feet in length, and starting from one end to the other, wrapped it around where the wooden leg met his own.

*"When all is done and you run it through—all five toes you'll have—and round and round it goes—and if it makes you cry you'll know—soon those tears will dry because—you will have all you wished for—as you lay dreaming dear boy—for now you have a foot to call your own—and all five toes you'll have,"* he quietly sung as he wrapped the strap around his leg.

Finished, Luca closed his eyes and sat there in silence. He always liked those quiet moments

to himself, especially when thinking about his mother.

After he finished dressing, there was only one thing left to put on, the thing that he always looked forward to every morning, the thing he always wore with great disbelief: his Davinian vest. The sun had been hitting it all morning, and the leather was warm to the touch as he grabbed it and put it on.

His six Davinian blades were in a long wooden case atop his night desk. The case had a carving on top that told a story, one of a heroic warrior who led great armies against the evil king. It was a fable his father used to tell him over and over when he was just beginning to comprehend stories. He'd always been fond of that one. Luca opened the case, and the steel breathed with life, all six of them, and when Luca picked them up, he could hear the songs in their teeth.

One by one, he took each blade and put them in their appropriate slot in the vest: two on his back, two on his chest, and two on his belt resting on his hips. The one that was missing, his long sword—an empty sheath awaited it on the middle of his back.

After all the blades were perfectly snug in his vest, he grabbed his *Davinian Ren*, which was a shorter, sleeveless version of the traditional Davinian robe, and his soft, wide-brimmed hat, and made his way towards the door. But before leaving, he stopped and stared at a drawing hanging up on the wall next to the door. It was a drawing of his mother that his father drew of her a long time ago. She was dressed in silver, and her long, curly hair was of the fairest color. Her eyes sparkled like two stars, while her cheeks were the color of the sun's kisses, and she sat along the bank of a river, with her feet splashing on the clear waters. Druuk always made it known to Luca that his mother had fancied the things of nature—she loved, as Druuk put it, the “act of breathing.”

Luca reached for the drawing and took it. He rolled it up and placed it inside his pants pocket. He left to start his perfect day.

Stepping out of the manor, he ran to the front gate, where his carriage stood waiting. The day was radiantly lit up by the sun, and the sky was clear of any blemish. The wind was whistling the softest anthem, and the air was crisp and clean. Luca enjoyed every ounce of his breaths.

All three of the manor's housemaids waited outside to bid him well. Sertu approached Luca with a small bag. “Here are some things to nibble on while you make your way down to the school,” she said. “I know it's a long ride.”

“Thanks for that,” Luca said, grabbing the bag.

“Oh, boy, you know it’s my job to keep you fed,” Sertu said, knowing she did it because she loved him.

Luca smiled first at Sertu but suddenly turned serious. “Oh...”

“What’s the matter, Master Luca?” Sertu said.

“I forgot—”

“Forgot what? What!” Sertu said.

“I forgot to give you a hug,” Luca replied sweetly as he put his arms around Sertu, knowing that she was fond of hugs.

“Oh, you—stop it!” Sertu said. “Now go on, you’re already extremely late. Hurry up and come back so we can celebrate!”

That day *was* a perfect day for a celebration, and Luca rushed up to the open-air carriage, climbing inside. Luca’s driver was asleep—at least, he pretended to be.

“Gertred,” Luca said. “I’m ready.”

But the driver kept still; he was funny that way, always playing practical jokes on Luca.

“Gertred, we need to get a move on it,” Luca said as Gertred kept his eyes closed, smiling. Luca reached inside his ren and gently brushed the handle of the blade on his right chest, and it made a soft, yet clear sound, splitting the wind in two. “Would you like another haircut, Gertred?”

And as he said this, Gertred snapped forward, quickly displaying a fullness of life. “Sorry, Master Luca,” Gertred said. “I was only messing with the master. Please forgive me. I thought you might like a good laugh this morning, seeing you’re late and all.”

“Don’t apologize, I’m just nervous,” Luca said. “But I appreciate the gesture. Now, if it’s no trouble, Gertred, please do your best to get us to the procession line as fast as possible.”

“As you command, young master,” Gertred said, tugging at the horses’ reins. “Go on! You heard the master!” And with Gertred’s yell came a roar from the horses as they sped out and made their way down the road, spitting up dirt and grass in the air while Sertu and the other maids waved them goodbye.

Luca sped off in his carriage, on his way to the annual “Spadas” celebration, or “testing of blades,” ready to embrace his destiny and compete for the final rite that would make him a Master of Daví. The Spadas parade was about to begin, as all of the students from the provinces

of Esterra had arrived from their long journeys, lining up along the entrance to “Ave’s Path.” The Blade School of Daví was situated at the end of this great mile-long road, and as an annual event, the Spadas parade drew large crowds, and all manner of life ceased to be, if only to accommodate this important and joyful occasion.

After some time, Luca’s carriage disappeared into the horizon on its way down the long path that cut through the hills of the barren moors. The path went down a few miles, leading to the lowlands where Ave’s Path was located. Luca flirted with the wind, and it forced all the strands of hairs on his head to flop in every direction imaginable, and in the midst of all this chaos, he managed to peek through the dark strands engulfing his vision. He saw Ave’s Path situated just below the hills about a mile away from them. He noticed a dance of collective nervousness, like a multitude of ants readying themselves for war. The vision of this communion between warriors gave him a yearning to join in the fellowship with the students; he was eager to be part of this utopian chaos.

The massive line of students and carriages were consumed by a spectrum of colors. Glimmering in the sun, with all shapes and sizes, varying in materials and quality, the students’ formal wear exhibited the colors of their homelands, the provinces. It was a sharp contrast to the bleak moors that cradled the lengthy procession line; anemic they were, as if all matter of sustainable life had broken down and deteriorated the many cells that made up the life source of the sloping moors.

Though, this was not the case when it came to the moors that embraced the southern part of the kingdom of Bune. The northern lands, where the palace and school resided, were like an evil twin to the south’s enchanting canvas of green pastures and crystalline rocks. But this northern land Luca called home, and as long as the sun stood above the land and showered him with its majestic warmth, he was satisfied with the flaws of his kingdom, a beauty he once called a *dreary romance*.

The Spadas was a time for merrymaking and profit earning. The Bunish people would set up camps and shops along Ave’s Path, peddling their goods and trades to the hundreds of people that had traveled from all across the land to enjoy the splendor of the annual ceremony and to cheer on their native students.

In Esterra, there existed a number of provinces. A province was considered a region of Esterra known to entertain a certain culture and lifestyle that was particular to that part of the



land. Each province had its own commonwealth or body politic, and all provinces worked together in the overall ruling of Esterra.

Only two of the provinces were of noble status, the Royal Province of Bune, which covered the southern region of Esterra and housed the Blade School of Daví, and the Royal Province of Corco, a massive, imperial-like city which made its home in the northern region. All other provinces were referred to as the *noble commons*, meaning they were respected by the noble provinces though they were of common status.

It was customary for the provinces to cheer on a Davinian student during the annual Spadas. Students from all over looked forward to the chance of advancing in the levels of blade mastery, especially Luca. He had dreamt of this day ever since he joined the Davinian Order.

Luca and his carriage neared the procession line with about half a mile still to go. As Luca began to prepare his things, he sensed an uneasy feeling creeping up behind him, something that, all of a sudden, terrorized his inner senses. He turned to the northern horizon, to the farthest peaks of the Bellowing Mountains, and he saw a dark lining slowly overtaking the slopes of the forest-infested terrain, and for the first time that day, he felt insignificant, like a pestering bug ready to be smashed into oblivion.

"Oh, look, Master Luca," Gertred said as he pointed down towards the mass of people heading towards the parade. "The ones in silver, they must have come from Corco."

Luca's focus was broken, and the feeling that he'd had just seconds before quickly abandoned him. He turned to the people down below and stared in amazement. "I see them," he said. "They must have traveled for weeks, don't you think?"

"Oh, yes, Master Luca," Gertred said. "Just the journey across the Bellowing Mountains must have taken them at least a week, and that's without sleep."

"Look at those," Luca said, pointing to a mass of people holding a huge flag of purple and white colors. "Where do you think they're from?"

"If my mind serves me right, I believe they're from the woodland realm of Janvai," Gertred said. "Master Luca, that's where the young Mister Jenóu hails from."

"I didn't forget," Luca said. "He's the youngest ever to become a seventh-blade."

How could Luca forget? He had admired Jené Jenóu for some time now, for he was extremely fast with his blades, something Luca always strove for. But he never could remember where Jené was from. "Janvai," Luca said with wonder. "Hurry up, Gertred."

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