

A Spectra Adventure: Choose Your Clan



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Please choose responsibly.

Welcome to the fantasy world of the Spectra! The native inhabitants are divided into six clans that determine their magical abilities. Which clan do you fit into?

This story is about you. At the end of each segment, you'll choose how to react. Your choices will determine which clan fits you best.

To skip to an overview of the six Spectra clans, [click here](#).

1.

Your front door crashes open. You look up from your dinner table. A military captain marches in, wearing a crisp gray uniform decorated with medals and marks. He points straight at you. “Arrest the rebel.”

You stand so fast that you bang your knee on the table. Your dinner dishes clatter, and your cup upends and spills water across the table and onto the floor. “I’m not a rebel!”

The captain doesn’t listen. Neither do the five guards who followed him into your house. They wear the same gray uniform, though undecorated and not as well cared for. They grab you before you can decide whether or not to fight back and force you out to their waiting carriage. One covers your mouth with a hairy, foul-smelling hand. You don’t know why they bother. It’s not like they were listening to you anyway. It’s all nonsense. You don’t deserve this treatment. But they won’t let you explain.

You’ve heard of rebels, fighting back against these Vangton soldiers. The rebels say that men hired from overseas have no bearing on your everyday life. You’ve never had a problem with them before, but maybe the rebels had a point after all.

The soldiers bind your hands and feet. You’re gagged with a soft silken cloth, a great upgrade from the soldier’s hand, but just as stifling. You want to ask if you can gather your belongings. You may need money for bribes, or at least a toothbrush if they keep you overnight. Surely, once they realize that you’re not a rebel, they’ll let you go home.

A man sits in the carriage, with even more medals and marks than the captain. A general, perhaps. “That’s a Spectra?” he demands.

The captain slams the carriage door shut and searches for eavesdroppers before he answers, “That’s what the reports claim.”

“The reports are garbage!” you say—or at least, you try to. Neither man pays you any attention. Spectra are native inhabitants of this continent, but you’ve never seen one, and most people believe they’re extinct. These soldiers, though, must believe otherwise. Stories claim that Spectra have all sorts of magical abilities, but you most certainly do not.

“I know Spectra look human, but this one seems especially normal,” the general says. “Did it attack you during the arrest?”

It? What does the general think you are, an object?

“I didn’t see any sign of magical powers,” the captain admits, “but they don’t like to reveal themselves in front of humans. This one may be holding back.”

Trust me, you think, if I had powers, I would not be putting up with this treatment.

“We’ll take the prisoner aboard our nearest prison ship,” the general says. “Keep a close eye out, in case it shows any sign of powers. Be prepared to subdue it if necessary. If it’s not a Spectra, what’s the loss of another rebel?”

The captain snickers. He shoves you onto the nearest seat and sits beside the general. The carriage starts out, but the windows are closed and you cannot see where you are being taken. The general and captain make small talk, completely ignoring you, as though you are only baggage to them. You’re not a Spectra or a rebel, but you feel sorry for them, whoever they are.

2.

Eventually the carriage comes to a stop, and you're forced out. You've arrived at a wharf, where seagulls cry overhead and the smell of salt permeates even your gag. The air is sticky and moist against your skin. People crowd other parts of the dock, but they give your carriage a wide berth. Their lively conversation feels distant. People keep their heads down, or look in another direction, and you can tell that none of them will help you.

A great black Vangton warship waits by the dock. Its sails are down now, so that its long empty masts seem to stab the sky.

Your home wasn't near the beach, so you've had a long, unpleasant journey with no food, little water, and incredibly awkward bathroom breaks. You've loosened the gag twice and tried to explain, but the two men tightened it instead of listening. They spoke about you during the trip, but not once has either of them spoken TO you.

Now they force you up the gangplank and throw you into a cell. Your hands are still bound behind you, and you land painfully on one shoulder. The door closes, leaving you in near darkness. The hold smells of sweat and urine and you cannot help but wonder who else might have been kept here, and what happened to them. The cell is tiny, and you wonder if you can even stand up fully.

A hand touches your face. Startled, you jerk back.

"Calm down," a woman whispers. "I'm removing your gag."

Your skin stings as she peels the material off of your face. It had been on far too long. You take great gulps of air, not even caring about the stench.

"Who are you?" the woman asks. She speaks with an unfamiliar accent.

You try to look at her but can see little in the dark. She has long dark hair and wears a form-fitting dress, but colors are muted in the dimness. You tell her your name and explained about the wrongful arrest.

"I'm sorry you were confused for one of us," she says.

You gape at what you can see of her. "You're a Spectra?"

"Yes, a Sprite to be exact."

"I don't know what that is."

"Sprites are one of the six Spectra Clans," she answers. "We have life-based abilities. The others can manipulate other elements."

You consider this. "Why are you telling me all of this? The general said that you hide your abilities."

She shrugs. "Their last prisoners didn't last long. The Vangtons gave them all sorts of nasty tests to try to force them to show Spectra abilities. I don't know what the Vangtons did with them once they failed, but I find it unlikely they're capable of spreading stories about Spectra. This whole project is supposed to be top secret."

You swallow. "What will they do to you?"

“So far, they’ve mainly forced me to heal their wounded, and their other test subjects,” she says. “I’ve tried to escape, but they are far too familiar with my weaknesses.”

You start to ask what her weaknesses are, but she hurries on.

“You, though, could help me escape. You’ll find that Sprites make excellent escape artists, but I need someone more familiar with human ways. And, of course, someone who isn’t afraid of fire, or dependent on sunlight.”

She must be desperate to reveal those weaknesses after all.

“I am familiar with the Sprite royalty. Help me, and they can reward you. In fact...” She leans closer and whispers right in your ear. “I know people who can give you Spectra abilities.”

“Which abilities would I get?” you ask.

She shrugs. “It’ll be something inherent to you, the one that fits you best. No matter which it is, you’ll be free and powerful, able to defend yourself and your friends, should the Vangtons target you again. What do you say?”

If you choose to help Hazel, [click here](#) or turn to section 4.

If you need more persuading, [click here](#) or turn to section 3.

3.

This strange lady is clearly insane. Everyone knows that Spectra died out centuries ago. Nobody can heal the wounded like she claims. And you're not letting go of hope that the soldiers will let you go. "Thanks," you say, "but I'm not guilty. As soon as the soldiers give me a chance to explain, I'll be going home."

"The Vangtons are not your friends." She growls—not a normal sound, but a deep guttural growl like a wild predator.

Yep, clearly insane. No normal person makes a sound like that. You edge backward, hoping that she isn't the dangerous sort. Maybe you should play along instead of offending her.

"I'll think about it," you say. "You don't have a way to cut my bindings, do you?"

She moves toward you, and you instantly regret asking. The further away she stays, the better. And what is she going to do, chew through them?

She grabs your sore shoulder, which still throbs from when you landed on it. Her hand is unusually warm, even through your shirt. She touches the binding at your wrists. Something sharp pokes your skin, though not hard enough to draw blood. She must have some kind of tool. After a moment, she peels the remnant of the ropes from your wrists. You expect your skin to sting, like it did when she removed your gag. It does for only a moment, and then the pain is gone. The pain in your shoulder is gone too. In fact, you feel more energetic than you have in your life, or at least since before you've been a prisoner. You're not even hungry anymore.

Hazel reaches for the ropes at your feet. The light is too dim for you to see what she has in her hands, but you can see the sawing motion she makes. Soon those ropes are off as well. Your socks minimized the chafing on your feet.

You climb unsteadily to your feet. "Thanks."

She nods. "Now, the next part of our escape."

"I didn't say I wanted to escape," you say quickly. "I'm glad to wait more comfortably, but I told you, I'm not guilty."

"Do you think they care?" she challenges. "Did they ever act like they care?"

You brush this aside. "They thought that I was something I'm not."

"So it's all right to treat Spectra like that, but not humans like you?"

You squirm and don't answer her.

Time stretches on.

Eventually the door opens. A soldier comes down, carrying a torch. Hazel scurries away from it. The soldier ignores her and grabs your arms.

"It's about time," you say. "Look, this is all a misunderstanding. I'm not..."

He throws you bodily upward, as though you're a sack of meal. You hit the edge of the door, and it scrapes against your side as you begin to slide back into the hold.

Someone else grabs you and pulls you into the light. You blink in the brightness. The sails are still down, but the ship is in the middle of the harbor instead of docked.

The sailors form a ring around you. The general stands in the middle, holding a whip. “You have a choice, Spectra,” he spits at you. “Show us what you can do, and we won’t hurt you. Deny, and we’ll experiment until you’re forced to defend yourself. Or, of course, you die.”

“This is a mistake!” you yell. “I’m not Spectra! I’m not even a rebel. I’m on your side.”

He smirks and raises his whip.

It’s too late.

That might not have been the answer you wanted! That’s okay. Let’s pretend that you chose to help Hazel at some point. Go ahead and [click here](#) (or move to the page), and you can get back into the story. This will be the only failure ending, I promise.

4.

“How do we get out of here?” you ask Hazel. “What do I have to do?”

Hazel crouches beside you. “I’m not the best planner, but I’m sure together, we can arrange something. I’ve got more energy than humans, and that can be turned into physical strength. I’m pretty sure I can break down the door—or even one of the walls, if I have to.”

You stare at the thick wooden walls of your cell. It seems crazy, but you’ve decided to trust her. “Won’t the sound bring soldiers running?”

Hazel sighed. “That’s why I haven’t managed to escape yet. I think we need to work together to get past the guards. Ready?”

“Not really,” you say. “We were still making a plan.”

“We’re running out of time! They could come for you at any moment!” She shoves. For a few seconds, nothing happens except that her muscles bunch up. They aren’t particularly bulky, and you begin to wonder if she’s insane after all.

Then the wood cracks. Splinters fly everywhere. You almost choke on sawdust as its scent fills the air. Sunlight and color flood into the room. You only have a second to take in details: Hazel’s dress is bright green, with veins and the shiny texture of leaves. You have no doubts that she is Spectra.

Hazel grabs your arm and pulls you through the hole. You end up in another cell, but this one has an open door. Feet pound on the boards above your head, and voices echo through the ship.

You find a ladder and reach the deck of the warship without being spotted. It’s huge, way bigger than you expected. The ropes and decks look like chaos to you, though you’re sure it’s all organized to the sailors. A big stack of crates sits nearby, probably abandoned by the sailors who are now searching for you. Quickly, you and Hazel hide among the crates.

Not all of the sailors are searching below. Quite a few patrol the deck as well. You keep your head down, but a gap in the crates allows you to see some of the searchers. They’re men of all ages, from boys to the elderly. Some of them must have been pressed into service by the Vangtons. One even looks familiar, possibly from your hometown.

The warship’s sails are still down, but the ship is now in the middle of the harbor. You catch a glimpse of the distant shore. One side is lined by a dock that lines the harbor, but other places have buildings all the way to the beach. Still another has a long, sandy beach that ends in wild hills. That would be the best way to escape, but how can you get to it?

Hazel eases into the open. “Come on,” she hisses.

You follow her to the rails. The ocean rests before you, quite away down, deep and dark. At least there are few waves in the harbor. She climbs up, and you suddenly realize she’s about to jump. “Just a minute!” you say.

“Trust me,” she says. “We can swim to shore. I can heal you if your strength gives out.”

You aren’t sure that’s such a good idea. If you survive the drop, it’s a long swim. You look around and spot a longboat half-filled with barrels. “Why don’t you hide in there, while I pretend to join the landing party?” you ask. “It looks like they’re preparing to row ashore. That way we don’t have to swim.”

She frowns as she looks at the boat, but she doesn't say no. It looks like the decision is up to you.

If you bluff the landing party and stow away on the boat to get ashore, [click here](#) or turn to section 5.

If you trust your swimming skills and jump in the ocean to swim to safety, [click here](#) or turn to section 6.

5.

You point out the boat, and Hazel climbs in. She ducks down low and disappears. You try not to stare, but you can't help wondering what she did to hide so well. The barrels weren't even disturbed.

You stand up and make your way to the boat, but you stand next to it instead of climbing in. You try to look like you belong.

"You!" someone barks. A captain confronts you—thankfully not the one who arrested you. "Why aren't you searching?"

"I've been posted here to make sure they don't escape in the longboat," you answer immediately.

"Ah. Excellent." He peers into the boat, and you hope that Hazel has hidden well. She must have, for he goes on, "I'll send the boarding party out immediately, and reduce that risk. We need those water barrels filled!"

Now you realize that all of the barrels in the boat are probably empty, waiting for refilling. The soldier marches off, but within a few minutes, others gather around you. No one questions as you step into the boat with them. You stay in the middle, trying to look like a dangerous guard, so they don't ask you to row and give yourself away. A weapon would make you look more convincing. You should have stolen one.

The boat is lowered into the sea, and the sailors begin to row toward a small ramp near the end of the dock, adjacent to the wild hills.

The ramp draws closer and closer. At last, your boat scrapes bottom. You and the sailors leap out and pull it up the ramp.

"Hey!" someone cries.

You straighten. The sailor is looking straight at you. "You can't be a guard! Where's your gun?"

Perhaps you should be grateful they took so long to notice. With no other option, you run for the hills.

As soon as you are out of sight in the hills, you duck behind a bush and collapse on the ground, trying to catch your breath.

A warm hand touches your shoulder. The pressure in your lungs fades instantly. You look up into Hazel's face. "Well done," she says.

You stand up beside her and notice that she's considerably shorter than you. Her skin is olive and her hair black. "How did you get here before me?" you demand.

"Sprite secret," she answers immediately.

A cool breeze makes you shiver. "Do you have any Sprite secrets for getting warm?"

"Not really." She scoops out a resting place in the sand. "Sprites don't travel at night, either. We'll just do our best for tonight."

Maybe you could build a fire. You prowl around nearby until you gather a sizeable pile of driftwood. You've even found a strike-stone that will help you start it. You begin to build your fire but then hesitate. The glow might give you away, and Hazel is afraid of fire.

While you hesitate, a large black bear crests the nearest hill. It pads straight toward you. “Just keep calm,” Hazel says. “We don’t know what it wants.”

You’re pretty sure you know what it wants. Its beady black eyes are fixed on you.

You step back and nearly trip over the woodpile. You leap back, but your mind is racing. Wild animals are scared of fire.

Hazel, though, is quiet and calm. Maybe you should listen to her and see what the bear does before acting.

If you observe the bear, [click here](#) or turn to section 8.

If you build up the fire, [click here](#) or turn to section 7.

6.

You'd rather trust the sea than those horrible soldiers. You join Hazel on the rail. She jumps first. You wait a few seconds and then jump after her.

The water is not soft. You hit hard and jerk upward. For half a second you hover between bouncing up and being dragged down, and you might have lost your dinner if you'd had any. Then gravity wins and you slide under the water.

You aren't sure how badly you're hurt. Your whole body aches, and you suddenly remember that pirates execute people this way. Before you can truly panic, your head breaks the surface. Hazel appears just a foot in front of you. Her long black hair clings flat to her head. Her eyes are a bright, vibrant green, standing out against her olive skin. She reaches a hand out of the water and touches your forehead. Instantly, all pain vanishes.

"Thanks," you say.

She nods and begins to swim. Her extra strength must help her go faster. You can only hope she'll come back to heal you as needed, because the beach is not close.

You glance up at the warship. The water in your ears muffles sound, so you can't tell if you were spotted. No one is hanging over the rail, at least.

You begin to swim. You concentrate on kicking without moving your knees and getting enough breath. Stopping to check your progress would slow you down, so you ignore the temptation and keep going.

Hazel again pops up beside you. With a single touch, your energy returns, and you put on a burst of speed. You don't bother to check if she's swimming beside you. Maybe she wants to keep her distance so that she has room to kick.

Or maybe she's keeping sharks away.

You wish that thought hadn't occurred to you.

The harbor must be deep, and you realize that you have no idea how much water—or other things—are right beneath you. The salt water is stinging your eyes and you can't search for tale-tell fins. You'll have to hope that Hazel's life magic can do something about sharks.

She heals you three more times before you look again. The beach is somewhat close. You slow, letting the current push you the last few feet. At last, gritty sand hits your knees. You crawl up the beach.

By now, the sun is low in the sky. Water drips from your clothes and collects on the sand beneath you. It's not unpleasant, but a cool breeze blows in from across the sea. Unless you can find shelter, this will be a miserable night.

Hazel appears at your side. She's not even winded. "That went well," she says.

"Do you have a place to stay for the night or are we walking until we warm up?" you ask.

"No to both." She scoops a bed straight out of the sand. "Sprites don't do things at night. We need the sun."

Maybe you could build a fire. You prowl around nearby until you gather a sizeable pile of driftwood. You've even found a strike-stone that will help you start it. You begin to build your fire but then hesitate. The glow might give you away, and Hazel is afraid of fire.

While you hesitate, a large black bear crests the nearest hill. It pads straight toward you. "Just keep calm," Hazel says. "We don't know what it wants."

You're pretty sure you know what it wants. Its beady black eyes are fixed on you.

You step back and nearly trip over the woodpile. You leap back, but your mind is racing. Wild animals are scared of fire.

Hazel, though, is quiet and calm. Maybe you should listen to her and see what the bear does before acting.

If you observe the bear instead of acting, [click here](#) or turn to section 10.

If you build up the fire, [click here](#) or turn to section 9.

7.

You gather the driftwood and strike-stone and bring them closer to Hazel. Not too close, though. You remember the torch that the soldiers used to control her.

It takes you several tries to make a spark and even more to get your driftwood to ignite. You have to gather handfuls of wispy dried grass to encourage the spark to grow, and blow until your lungs are tired. Finally, the fire bursts to life.

The bear takes a step back. So does Hazel. She's almost within reach of the bear now. You wonder if you should pick up a burning branch and help her. Perhaps you could drive the bear into the hills.

Before you can move, Hazel takes a step forward. She looks right into the bear's eyes, and growls. The sound is so much like a bear that you wonder at first which one made it. You try not to stare. Hazel is not a very big person, and the bear makes her look tiny. She can't possibly challenge a bear... can she?

The bear lowers its head first. It turns and lumbers back into the hills.

"How did you do that?" you ask.

She turns toward you. "Life-abilities can take many forms." She smirks as though this is an inside joke, though you're the only person nearby.

Soon your face is too hot, and your back is too cold, but it's better than nothing. You rotate slowly, allowing your soaking clothes to dry. It's difficult to tell when they're finished because the air is so wet, but at last you curl up on the sand beside it and try to get what sleep you can.

You wake when the world is gray with predawn light. The fire has burned down to faintly glowing coals, and everywhere else is covered in dew.

Hazel pads to you, though she keeps you between her and the fire. She's not wearing shoes, you notice. "Thank you for your help yesterday," she says. "Do you still want your reward?"

You hesitate. "What's involved?"

"I do need to get help from the Spectra rulers, but that shouldn't be too difficult. They granted a request once, not too long ago." She hesitates, then adds, "It is a bit of a journey. A couple days should do it."

That was a small price to pay for being able to defend yourself, you decide. You assume you'll start when the sun is all the way up.

"So, what types of powers are there?" you ask eagerly.

"There are six," she answers, "one for each color. Red is for the Coles. They manipulate heat, often including fire." She gives the remains of your fire a dirty look. "Orange is for the Nomes. They have abilities over earth. Yellow is for Lectrans, with abilities over lightning and innovation. Green is for Sprites, like me. That's life abilities, obviously. Blue is for the Mers, with water-shaping, and purple is for Muses, who use communication abilities."

You nod, but you hope you don't have to recite them all back. "Do all Spectra look like you?"

She laughs. “Not at all. We’re quite diverse. Those with the same abilities often have similar looks, but not always.”

“You mentioned rulers,” you say. “Are those over each clan?”

“Over each kingdom,” she corrects. “There are six kingdoms. They’re supposed to line up with the six clans, but you know, people are messy.”

“Hey, you there!” a soldier yells. You gasp. The light of your fire last night must have drawn the attention of the enemy Vangtons. Hazel stands up to run, but three soldiers are already too close. You could use a torch as a weapon. It wouldn’t be enough against men with guns, but Hazel’s strength and healing might help. On the other hand, maybe you can fool these men the way you did when escaping the warship.

If you try to fight the soldiers, [click here](#) or turn to section 13.

If you try to fool the soldiers, [click here](#) or turn to section 11.

8.

You decide to follow Hazel's example. You hold still, watching the bear come closer, fighting every instinct to flee. You may have read something about bears, but your mind is blank and you can't think of a single tip.

"Don't make eye contact," Hazel says. "Staring is a sign of aggression."

Your eyes immediately drop to its paws. That was a mistake. The claws are huge. Breaking eye contact does help you think, though, and you remember that black bears are scared by loud noises.

When it is a few feet away, Hazel steps forward. She looks right into its eyes, and growls. The sound is so much like a bear that you wonder at first which one made it. You try not to stare. Hazel is not a very big person, and the bear makes her look tiny.

The bear lowers its head. It turns and lumbers back into the hills.

Her growl was certainly loud. You wonder if that was what scared it, or if she could actually talk to it. What would a bear say?

You want to ask her, but she curls up on the sand and you don't want to disturb her.

You edge as close to Hazel as you're comfortable with. Soon, you're shivering. You still don't want to start a fire, but you might not have a choice. The weather isn't that bad, but all of the moisture in the air makes everything feel colder. You curl up on the sand and try to get what sleep you can.

Hazel's eyes open. She edges nearer and holds out her hand. You take it. The shivering goes away. You're still not comfortable, but you'll survive. "Wake me whenever you need," she says.

You nod. Eventually you drift off.

You wake when the world is gray with predawn light. Your eyes feel gritty with sand. So does everywhere else. You wonder if you will ever be free of it.

Hazel pads up to you. She's not wearing shoes, you notice. "Thank you for your help yesterday. Do you still want your reward?"

You hesitate. "What will it cost me?"

"It's a reward, not a purchase. I do need to get help from the Spectra rulers, but that shouldn't be too difficult. They granted a request once, not too long ago." She hesitates, then adds, "It is a bit of a journey. A couple days should do it."

That was a small price to pay for being able to defend yourself, you decide. You assume you'll resume your journey when the sun is all the way up.

"So, what types of powers are there?" you ask eagerly.

"There are six," she answers, "one for each color. Red is for the Coles. They manipulate heat, often including fire. Orange is for the Nomes. They have abilities over earth. Yellow is for Lectrans, with abilities over lightning and innovation. Green is for Sprites, like me. That's life abilities, obviously. Blue is for the Mers, with water-shaping, and purple is for Muses, who use communication abilities."

You nod, though you're not sure if you can commit them all to memory. "Do all Spectra look like you?"

She laughs. "Not at all. We're quite diverse."

"You mentioned rulers," you say. "Are those over each clan?"

"Over each kingdom," she corrects. "There are six kingdoms. They're supposed to line up with the six clans, but you know, people are messy."

"Hey, you there!" a soldier yells. You gasp. Somehow, they'd found you again.

Hazel stands up to run, but three soldiers are already too close.

Hazel gestures. "We have to run. Come on!"

You hesitate. Maybe it would be better to fool the soldiers, like you did when you escaped the warship.

If you run from the soldiers, [click here](#) or turn to section 14.

If you try to fool the soldiers, [click here](#) or turn to section 11.

9.

You hold still and watch as the bear ambles closer. Its eyes are fixed on you and you're certain it wants to eat you. To stop your panic from taking over, you look at Hazel instead. She's watching the bear too, but her body language is at ease. You wonder if she can talk to bears. That's a life-magic thing, isn't it?

Your eyes catch on the bear's huge claws. They make little puffs of sand with each paw step.

When the bear is a few feet away, Hazel steps between it and you. She growls, so much like a bear that you wonder at first which one made the sound. You try not to stare. Hazel is not a very big person, and the bear makes her look tiny. She can't possibly challenge a bear... can she?

Apparently, she can. The bear lowers its head, breaking eye contact. It turns and lumbers back into the hills.

"How did you do that?" you ask.

She turns toward you. "Life-abilities can take many forms." She smirks as though this is an inside joke, though you're the only person nearby. Then she curls up on the sand.

You edge as close to Hazel as you're comfortable with. Soon, you're shivering. You still don't want to start a fire, but you might not have a choice. The weather isn't that bad, but all of the moisture in the air makes everything feel colder, and you're still wet from your swim. You curl up on the sand and try to get what sleep you can.

Hazel's eyes open. She edges nearer and holds out her hand. You take it. The shivering goes away. You're still not comfortable, but you'll survive. "Wake me whenever you need," she says.

You nod. Eventually you drift off.

You wake when the world is gray with predawn light.

Hazel pads to you. She's not wearing shoes, and her footprints show clearly on the dew-covered sand.

"Thank you for your help yesterday," she says. "Do you still want your reward?"

You hesitate. "I don't have to do anything awful, do I?"

"Not at all. I do need to get help from the Spectra rulers, but that shouldn't be too difficult. They granted a request once, not too long ago." She hesitates, then adds, "It is a bit of a journey. Not too far. A couple days should do it."

That was a small price to pay for being able to defend yourself, you decide. You assume you'll start when the sun is all the way up.

"So, what types of powers are there?" you ask.

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“You mentioned rulers,” you say. “Are those over each clan?”

“Over each kingdom,” she corrects. “There are six kingdoms. They’re supposed to line up with the six clans, but you know, people are messy.”

“Hey, you there!” a soldier yells. You gasp. How had they found you? Maybe your footprints?

Hazel stands up. “Get into the water!” she cries. “We can hide there!”

She’s right. The water will ruin their guns if they try to follow. But you might not have time to get there. You could use a torch as a weapon instead. You still have dried grass and driftwood stored, and it wouldn’t take long to build the fire back up.

If you hide in the ocean, [click here](#) or turn to section 12.

If you try to fight back, [click here](#) or turn to section 13.

10.

You watch the bear come closer. Its amber eyes draw your attention, but you force yourself to look away. Your eyes immediately drop to its paws. That was a mistake. The claws are huge and make little puffs of sand with each paw step.

When it is a few feet away, Hazel takes a step forward. She looks right into its eyes, and growls. The sound is so much like a bear that you wonder at first which one made it. You try not to stare. Hazel is not a very big person, and the bear makes her look tiny.

The bear lowers its head. It turns and lumbers back into the hills.

“How did you do that?” you ask.

She turns toward you. “Life-abilities can take many forms.” She smirks as though this is an inside joke, though you’re the only person nearby. Then she curls up on the sand, as though this were no more interesting than shooing a fly.

You edge as close to Hazel as you’re comfortable with. Soon, you’re shivering. You still don’t want to start a fire, but you might not have a choice. The weather isn’t that bad, but all of the moisture in the air makes everything feel colder, and you’re still wet from your swim. You curl up on the sand and try to get what sleep you can.

Hazel’s eyes open. She edges nearer and holds out her hand. You take it. The shivering goes away. You’re still not comfortable, but you’ll survive. “Wake me whenever you need,” she says.

You nod. Eventually you drift off.

You wake when the world is gray with predawn light. Your eyes feel gritty with sand. So does everywhere else. You wonder if you will ever be free of it.

Hazel pads up to you. She’s not wearing shoes, you notice, and her footprints are clearly distinct from yours. “Thank you for your help yesterday. Do you still want your reward?”

You hesitate. “I don’t have to do anything awful, do I?”

“Not at all. I do need to get help from the Spectra rulers, but that shouldn’t be too difficult. They granted a request once, not too long ago.” She hesitates, then adds, “It is a bit of a journey. A couple days should do it.”

That was a small price to pay for being able to defend yourself, you decide. You assume you’ll leave when the sun is all the way up.

“So, what types of powers are there?” you ask eagerly.

“There are six,” she answers, “one for each color. Red is for the Coles. They manipulate heat, often including fire. Orange is for the Nomes. They have abilities over earth. Yellow is for Lectrans, with abilities over lightning and innovation. Green is for Sprites, like me. That’s life abilities, obviously. Blue is for the Mers, with water-shaping, and purple is for Muses, who use communication abilities.”

You nod, but you hope you don’t have to recite them all back. “Do all Spectra look like you?”

She laughs. “Not at all. We’re quite diverse. Those with the same abilities often have similar looks, but not always.”

“You mentioned rulers,” you say. “Are those over each clan?”

“Over each kingdom,” she corrects. “There are six kingdoms. They’re supposed to line up with the six clans, but you know, people are messy.”

Marching footsteps in the distance call your attention. The soldiers have found you! Maybe they’re following the footprints. Few barefoot people would have come this way besides Hazel.

Hazel gestures. “We have to run. Come on!”

You hesitate. Hazel can outrun soldiers in the hills, but you’re not sure you can. Maybe it would be better to run to the ocean and hide in the waves. The soldiers’ guns would be ruined if they tried to follow.

If you run into the hills, [click here](#) or turn to section 12.

If you run to the ocean, [click here](#) or turn to section 14.

11.

“Play along!” you hiss at Hazel. Then you grab her wrists and twist them behind her back. She resists just enough that you know she could break free, easily, if she chose to.

A second later, a trio of soldiers come running through the door you came out of. “It’s all right,” you say. “I’ve got the prisoner.”

They hesitate. “You shouldn’t be alone.”

“I’m not,” you answer, with all the confidence you can muster. “The rest of my team is preparing our boat back to the warship. I think I saw the second prisoner running back toward the dock. You might find them if you hurry.”

The soldiers look at each other, but at last they nod and march off.

As soon as they disappear over the hills, you let go of Hazel.

“Good work. I think I’ll forgive you for grabbing me like that.” She takes a deep breath. “If we’re going to reach the rulers in time, I’ll have to carry you.”

You’re significantly bigger than she is. “I don’t think that will work,” you say.

“Oh, not like this.” She grins. “You’ll find I have a special gift with bears.”

She drops on all fours. At first you think that she’s acting out being a bear, and you wonder if this is some strange Spectra ritual. Then coarse black fur sprouts across her body, which is expanding and bulking up. You can’t help but stare.

The black bear looks very similar to the one you saw last night, but it—no, she—is a bit smaller, and there’s something different about the way she moves. Her lips part in a toothy grin, and you remember that she’s supposed to be carrying you. But you can’t be expected to ride a bear?

She steps nearer, head lowered as though she’s trying to look less threatening.

You swallow. “You’re still Hazel?”

She nods.

“And you want me to ride you?”

Another nod.

You don’t know which is worse, riding a bear or climbing onto something that is obviously sentient.

Somehow you manage to scramble onto its broad shoulders. She starts a slow, ambling walk. You start to tilt, so you grab fistfuls of her fur to keep from falling off. She doesn’t seem to mind. Every time you think you’re comfortable, she moves a little faster. Soon she’s all out sprinting, and you are clinging with all your might. The sight of the ground flying by beneath your nose makes you dizzy, and you close your eyes. She doesn’t stop after an hour, and then another. No real bear could sprint for so long.

At last, when the sun is lowering, she stops. You lose your grip and tumble to the ground. The smell of salt is long gone, replaced by an earthy scent that may belong to the scraggly sagebrush surrounding you. You’re in

the foothills of a huge mountain range capped by snow. To the east, the land is nearly flat. The purple-gray mass of a city stretches out before you.

Hazel taps your shoulder. You whirl around. She's back to her usual appearance and looking especially proud of herself. "I don't know about you, but I need to rest," she says. "I know you were uncomfortable on the beach the other day. Would you rather stay in the city?"

You hesitate, looking down into the mass of buildings below. An inn would be nice, though finding money would be tricky. On the other hand, Hazel looks much more comfortable out here in the wilderness, and you owe her quite a bit.

If you stay in the city, [click here](#) or turn to section 15.

If you stay in the mountains, [click here](#) or turn to section 19.

12.

You turn and run for the ocean. You're only a few feet in when you drop in, keeping as much of you beneath the water as you can. You can't see where Hazel went, but it's too late to search for her now. You can't hear because your ears are beneath the water, but you can see the soldiers. They're heading toward the sea, but they're not close yet. You swim further away, keeping splashing to a minimum and ducking beneath the surface as long as you can stand without taking a breath.

When you stop to check, the beach is empty. You gather your feet beneath you and stand up.

Immediately, Hazel dashes to you from somewhere across the beach. "I suppose that worked," she said, "but if we're going to reach the rulers in time, I'll have to carry you."

You're significantly bigger than she is. "I don't think that will work," you say.

"Oh, not like this." She grins. The she drops on all fours. At first you think that she's acting out being a bear, and you wonder if this is some strange Spectra ritual. Then coarse black fur sprouts across her body, which is expanding and bulking up. You can't help but stare.

The black bear looks very similar to the one you'd watched last night, but it—no, she—is a bit smaller, and there's something different about the way she moves. Her lips part in a toothy grin, and you remember that she's supposed to be carrying you. But you can't be expected to ride a bear.

She steps nearer, head lowered as though she's trying to look less threatening.

You swallow. "You want me to ride you?"

She nods.

"And you're not going to eat me?"

She huffs, but you don't give in until she nods again.

You take a deep breath and walk right up to it. Somehow you manage to scramble onto its broad shoulders. She starts a slow, ambling walk. You start to tilt, so you grab fistfuls of her fur to keep from falling off. She doesn't seem to mind. You find a pattern in her gait, and begin to sway as she does, helping you keep your balance. Every time you think you're comfortable, she moves a little faster. Soon she's all out sprinting, and you are clinging with all your might. The sight of the ground flying by beneath your nose makes you dizzy, and you close your eyes. She doesn't stop after an hour, and then another. No real bear could sprint for so long.

At last, when the sun is lowering, she stops. You slip from her back and straighten carefully. The smell of salt is long gone, replaced by cool, fresh air. You're in the foothills of a huge mountain range capped by snow. To the east, the land is nearly flat. The purple-gray mass of a city stretches out before you.

Hazel taps your shoulder. You spin around. She's back to her usual appearance and looking especially proud of herself. "I don't know about you, but I need to rest," she says. "I know you were uncomfortable on the beach the other day. Would you rather stay in the city?"

You hesitate, looking down into the mass of buildings below.

If you prefer to spend the night in the city, [click here](#) or turn to section 16.

If you prefer to spend the night in the mountains, [click here](#) or turn to section 20.

13.

You throw every possible onto the fire and then drop to your knees to blow. The flames burst into life. You grab a stick from the fire and face the soldiers, brandishing it like a sword.

“What are you doing?” Hazel cries, backing up.

“There’s no time to hide,” you answer. “I’m not letting them take me without a fight!”

“Put that down!” Before you can react, she snatches the torch and throws it into the sand.

The soldiers slow to watch, but they’re still advancing on you and Hazel.

“I’ll have to carry you,” she says.

You’re significantly bigger than she is. “Seriously?”

“Oh, not like this.” She grins, as though she’s not at all concerned about the men running at you, waving pistols. “Just don’t panic, and be quick once I’m done!”

Before you can ask what she means, she drops on all fours. She can’t possibly expect to carry you like that! Then coarse black fur sprouts across her body, which is expanding and bulking up. You can’t help but stare.

The black bear looks very similar to the one you’d watched last night, but it—no, she—is a bit smaller, and there’s something different about the way she moves.

The soldiers stop running. They stare, jaws open. Their guns would still harm a bear, but for the moment they’re too stunned to move.

You swallow. “You want me to ride you?”

She nods.

“And you’re not going to eat me?”

She huffs, but you don’t give in until she nods again.

Somehow you manage to scramble onto her broad shoulders. She takes off, sprinting into the hills. You yelp and concentrate on holding onto fistfuls of her fur. You don’t hear any gunshots, and those would be loud enough to hear even over the wind in your ears. The soldiers must have already fallen behind. You take a glance back and see nothing but wild hills.

The sight of the ground flying by beneath your nose makes you dizzy, and you close your eyes.

You know that a real bear can move pretty quickly, but they don’t have this much endurance. Hazel sprints on, hour after hour.

At last, when the sun is lowering, she stops. You lose your grip and tumble to the ground. The smell of salt is long gone, replaced by an earthy scent belonging to the scraggly sagebrush surrounding you. You’re in the foothills of a huge mountain range capped by snow. To the east, the land is nearly flat. The purple-gray mass of a city stretches out before you.

Hazel taps your shoulder. You whirl around. She’s back to her usual appearance and looking especially proud of herself. “I don’t know about you, but I need to rest,” she says.

You manage to nod. You had time during the run to get used to a friend who can turn into a bear, but you're still not used to the idea.

"You shouldn't build a fire up here in the mountains," she says. "The soldiers will still be all over, looking for us. Would you rather stay in the city?"

You hesitate, looking down into the mass of buildings below. You have no money for an inn, and soldiers could be searching in the city just as much as in the mountains. But you could have frozen last night without your fire, and you don't want to spend another night out in the cold.

If you choose to spend the night in the city, [click here](#) or go to section 17.

If you choose to spend the night in the mountains, [click here](#) or go to section 21.

14.

You bolt into the hills after Hazel, running as fast as you can.

A gunshot blasts behind you. You yelp, but they must have missed. Hazel keeps pace at your side, though you suspect she could go faster. “Can you heal gun wounds?” you demand.

“As long as death isn’t instantaneous.”

That is not comforting.

There’s another gunshot. This time you see the spray as it hits the ground in front of you. Apparently, they’ve decided that it’s better to kill you than let you escape... or this is another Spectra-powers test?

Hazel slows. “I’ll have to carry you.”

You’re bigger than she is. “I don’t think that will work.”

“Oh, not like this.” She grins, as though the guns don’t worry her at all. “Don’t worry, I have plenty more tricks up my sleeve.”

She drops on all fours. At first you think that she’s acting out being a bear, and you wonder if this is some strange Spectra ritual. Then coarse black fur sprouts across her body, which is expanding and bulking up.

A shout echos behind you. You glance back. The soldiers have stopped running. They’re staring, open-mouthed, at the bear beside you. That shock won’t last long, though.

The black bear looks very similar to the one you’d watched only a few minutes ago, but it—no, she—is a bit smaller, and there’s something different about the way she moves. Her lips part in a toothy grin, and you remember that she’s supposed to be carrying you. But you can’t be expected to ride a bear.

She steps nearer, head lowered as though she’s trying to look less threatening.

You swallow. “You’re still Hazel?”

She nods.

“And you want me to ride you?”

Another nod.

You don’t know which is worse, riding a bear or climbing onto something that is obviously sentient.

Somehow you manage to scramble onto her broad shoulders. She takes off, sprinting into the hills. You yelp and concentrate on holding onto fistfuls of her fur. You don’t hear any gunshots, and those would be loud enough to hear even over the wind in your ears. The soldiers must have already fallen behind. You take a glance back and see nothing but wild hills.

The sight of the ground flying by beneath your nose makes you dizzy, and you close your eyes.

You know that a real bear can move pretty quickly, but they don’t have this much endurance. Hazel sprints on, hour after hour.

At last, when the sun is lowering, she stops. You let go and slip to the ground, landing catlike on your hands and feet. The smell of salt is long gone, replaced by an earthy scent that may belong to the scraggly sagebrush

surrounding you. You're in the foothills of a huge mountain range capped by snow. To the east, the land is nearly flat. The purple-gray mass of a city stretches out before you.

Hazel taps your shoulder. You whirl around. She's back to her usual appearance and looking especially proud of herself. "I don't know about you, but I need to rest," she says. "I know you were uncomfortable on the beach the other day. Would you rather stay in the city?"

You hesitate, looking down into the mass of buildings below. There could be soldiers in the city, waiting to arrest you, and you don't have any money. But you don't want to spend another cold night outside, either.

If you try to find a place to rest in the city, [click here](#) or turn to section 18.

If you remain in the mountains, [click here](#) or turn to section 22.

15.

“I don’t have any money with me,” you say. “I’d hate to steal.”

Hazel smiles. “I have some very good friends who let me use their home when I’m in town.”

You let out your breath. “That sounds great!”

She leads you down the hill and into the streets of the city. You can tell she’s not comfortable there—she stops to look at every passerby as though she doesn’t trust any of them. Considering that the Vangton soldiers are still hunting for you, maybe she has a point.

You reach a small home. She walks right up to it and opens the door.

“Shouldn’t we ask?” you say.

“They’re rarely home. I have an arrangement with these people,” she answers. “They’re Spectra too—Lectrans.”

You try to remember which clan Lectrans were. “Yellow with lightning abilities?”

“Exactly.”

You enter a simple foyer with a couch made up like a bed. You start to offer it to Hazel, but before you can speak, she curls up on the wooden floor like a dog. No, you think with a smile. Like a bear.

You lay on the couch and nestle into the thick woolen blanket. You fall asleep immediately.

The next day you wake up well rested and ready for another day’s journey. Hazel is awake before you, lying in a patch of sunlight in front of a window. She stands when she notices that you’re awake. “Ready to go?”

“Is there any breakfast?” you ask.

She enters the rest of the house and returns a moment later with a small sack of traveler’s bread. It’s not much, but better than nothing. You eat it as quickly as you can without being impolite. You won’t be able to eat while riding a bear.

Soon you’re on your way again. Hazel leaves the foothills and follow a trail deep into the mountains. Leaves rustle as you rush past. You’re almost getting used to traveling bareback. The pun makes you smile.

Suddenly she stops running. A group of people is blocking the trail. There are six of them, with every skin tone and coloration you can imagine. Their clothes are all different, too. Each wears one of the six rainbow colors, and you guess that this represents their Spectra kingdom. You wonder where they were staying. They’re standing in the middle of a wilderness trail.

“Why are you bringing a human so close to our secret space?” a king in brown demands. You guess he’s supposed to be orange, but he’d look ridiculous in most shades of it.

“This human helped me escape the Vangtons.” Hazel faces the green king, who has the same olive skin, dark hair, and even leaflike clothes as she does. “You owe me a favor, cousin.”

“I’m willing to offer a reward,” the green king answers. “What did you promise?”

“Spectra abilities.”

Dead silence follows her words. None of them look happy.

“I suppose we have done it once before,” the purple king says, “and that went well enough.”

“And we’re not making a habit of it!” the brown king snaps back. “Hazel, you should never have told a human that we’re able to do that! We have only two options—give them Spectra abilities and put them under oath never to tell how they got them, or execute them.”

You stare at him. “You can’t execute me for helping another Spectra!”

“We’ll have to think about it.” The king points to a tiny hut that you hadn’t noticed before. “Stay in there while we discuss it.”

You ought to be in the discussion, you think, but you don’t want to disobey them either. If Hazel can carry you for two days, who knows what the others might be able to do?

You enter the hut, and the door clicks behind you. All sound cuts off. There’s a small bed and a few tools lying around.

Somehow you hoped that these Spectra would be nicer than the Vangtons. At least they aren’t threatening torture.

You wait for a few minutes in the darkness, hoping that the Spectra rulers will back off and talk somewhere further away from the hut. Then you walk over and examine the door. There’s a big open lock that doesn’t look too difficult to pick. Maybe you should pick the lock. Then again, if you escape, you won’t get your reward. It might be better to wait to talk to the Spectra rulers.

If you wait to talk to the Spectra rulers, [click here](#) or go to section 28.

If you try to pick the lock, [click here](#) or go to section 25.

16.

"I'm afraid I don't have any money with me," you say.

Hazel smiles. "Neither do I, but I do have some very good friends we can stay with."

You smile. "That sounds great!"

She leads you down the hill and into the streets of the city. She eyes everyone as though they might attack her at any moment. She'd sacrificed more than you realized, coming here instead of staying in the wilderness.

You reach a small home. She walks right up to it and opens the door.

"Shouldn't we ask?" you say. "Or at least knock."

"I have an arrangement with these people," she answers. "They're rarely home, so they let me use their home whenever I'm nearby."

You enter a simple foyer with a couch made up like a bed. Hazel avoids it and instead curls up on the wooden floor. You might as well take the couch, then. You lay down and fall asleep immediately.

The next day you wake up better rested and ready for another day's journey. Hazel is awake before you, lying in a patch of sunlight in front of a window. Her leaflike clothes glimmer in the sunshine. She stands when she notices you. "Ready to go?"

"Almost," you say. "Is there any breakfast?"

"I'm sure they wouldn't mind if we take a little something." She enters the rest of the house and returns a moment later with a small sack of traveler's bread. It's not much, but better than nothing. You wish you had coins to leave for it.

Soon you're on your way again, riding the bear. You leave the foothills and follow a trail deep into the mountains. Leaves rustle as you rush past. You're almost getting used to traveling this way.

Suddenly she stops running. You take a minute to see why. A group of people is blocking the trail. There are six of them, each with different features and coloring. Each one wears one of the six colors, and you guess that this represents their Spectra clan. You wonder where they were staying. They're standing in the middle of a wilderness trail, the last place you'd expect to see a bunch of royalty.

"Why are you bringing a human so close to our secret space?" a king in brown demands. You guess he's supposed to be orange, but he'd look ridiculous in almost every shade.

"This human helped me escape the Vangtons." Hazel faces the green king, who has the same olive skin, dark hair, and even leaflike clothes as she does. "You owe me a favor, cousin."

"I'm willing to offer a reward," the green king answers. "What did you promise?"

"Spectra abilities."

Every voice cuts off. The blue queen gasps.

Silence follows her words. None of them look happy.

"I suppose we've done it once before," the blue queen says. You can't quite tell if she approves.

“And we’re not making a habit of it!” the brown king snaps back. “Hazel, you should never have told a human that we’re able to do that! If humans knew, we’d be in incredible danger. We have only two options—give this human Spectra abilities so that oaths are binding or execution.”

You stare at him. “This is supposed to be a reward! I helped you.”

“We’ll have to think about it.” The blue queen points to a tiny hut that blends into the nearby rocks. “Stay in there while we discuss.”

You don’t want to obey, but you don’t think it’s a good idea to get any further on their bad side.

You enter the hut, and the door clicks behind you. All sound cuts off. There’s a small bed and a few tools lying around.

Somehow you hoped that these Spectra would be nicer than the Vangtons. They aren’t threatening torture, but this isn’t much better.

You wait for a few minutes in the darkness. Then you walk over and examine the door. There’s a big open lock that doesn’t look too difficult to pick. Maybe you should pick the lock. But you don’t know that the royals aren’t right outside, and there’s still a chance you’d get a reward. It might be better to wait to talk to the Spectra rulers.

If you wait to talk to the Spectra rulers, [click here](#) or go to section 27.

If you try to pick the lock, [click here](#) or go to section 25.

17.

"I couldn't grab any money before the soldiers arrested me," you say.

Hazel smiles. "I don't have any either, but I do have some friends we can stay with."

You let out your breath. "I guess that works."

She leads you down the hill and into the city. The streets are filled with people, and Hazel is clearly on edge. Considering that the Vangton soldiers are still hunting for you, maybe she has a point.

You reach a small home. She walks right up to it and opens the door.

"Shouldn't we knock?" you say.

"These people travel a lot. They're rarely home," Hazel says. "I have an arrangement with them. They're Spectra too—Lectrans."

You try to remember which clan Lectrans were. "Something about lightning?" you ask.

She gives a half-shrug, and you get the idea that she doesn't like Lectrans very much—which seems strange considering the 'friends' who lent her their house.

You enter a simple foyer with a couch made up like a bed. Hazel walks right past it and curls up on the wooden floor like a dog—or perhaps like a bear.

You lay on the couch and fall asleep immediately.

You wake up much better rested and ready for another day's journey. Hazel is awake before you, lying in a patch of sunlight in front of a window. She stands when she notices that you're awake. "Ready to go?"

"Is there any breakfast?" you ask.

She enters the rest of the house and returns a moment later with a small sack of traveler's bread. It's not much, but better than nothing.

Soon you're on your way again, riding the bear. You leave the foothills and follow a trail deep into the mountains. You're almost getting used to traveling this way.

Suddenly Hazel stops running. A group of people is blocking the trail. There are six of them, each with different features. Each one wears a different rainbow color, and you guess that this represents their Spectra clan. You wonder where they were staying. They're standing in the middle of nowhere.

"Why are you bringing a human so close to our secret space?" a king in brown demands. Brown isn't a rainbow color, but you suppose he'd look ridiculous in orange.

"This human helped me escape the Vangtons." Hazel faces the green king, who has the same olive skin, dark hair, and even leaflike clothes as she does. "You owe me a favor, cousin."

"I'm willing to give a reward," the green king answers. "What did you promise?"

"Spectra abilities."

Silence follows her words. None of them look happy.

“We’ve done it once before,” the red queen says.

“And we’re not making a habit of it!” the brown king snaps back. “Hazel, you should never have told a human that we’re able to do that! We have only two options—give them Spectra abilities and put them under oath never to tell how they got them, or execute them.”

You stare at him. “You can’t execute me for helping another Spectra!”

“We’ll have to think about it.” The king points to a tiny hut. “Stay in there while we discuss it.”

The red queen gives you a sympathetic smile, but she doesn’t invite you to join in.

You enter the hut, and the door clicks behind you. All sound cuts off. There’s a small bed and a few tools lying around.

Somehow you hoped that these Spectra would be nicer than the Vangtons. At least they aren’t threatening torture.

You wait for a few minutes in the darkness. Then you examine the tools. You have a thin rod that you could use to pick the lock. There’s also plenty of straw that could help you start a fire with the strike-stone you saved. You wouldn’t want to burn down the hut with you in it, but it could be used to scare off the other Spectra. Maybe they’re all as afraid of fire as Hazel.

If you try to start a fire, [click here](#) or go to section 23.

If you try to pick the lock, [click here](#) or go to section 25.

18.

“Can we find somewhere to stay when we have no money?” you ask.

Hazel smiles. “I do have friends we can stay with—or at least, stay in their house. They’re usually not home.”

You nod. “That makes sense.”

She leads you down the hill and into the streets of the city. You can tell she’s not comfortable there—she stops to look at every passerby as though she doesn’t trust any of them. Maybe she has a point—the Vangton soldiers must still be looking for you. You wonder why they targetted you in the first place.

You reach a small home. Hazel walks right up to it and opens the door.

“Shouldn’t we ask?” you say.

“I can tell there’s no one home.”

You decide not to question her.

You enter a simple foyer with a couch made up like a bed. You start to offer it to Hazel, but before you can speak, she curls up on the wooden floor like a dog. No, you think with a smile. Like a bear.

You lay on the couch and fall asleep immediately.

The next day, sunlight streams through a window, waking you up. Hazel lies in the patch of sunlight at the foot of the couch. She smiles when she sees you’re awake. “Ready for another day of travel?”

The warm sun feels invigorating against your skin. “Yeah, let’s go.”

Your stomach rumbles, but a touch from Hazel’s hand quiets it.

Soon you’re on your way again, riding the bear. You leave the foothills and follow a trail deep into the mountains. Leaves rustle as you rush past. You’re almost used to riding a bear, but the thought of it being someone you know still makes you squirm.

A group of people appears in the trail ahead of you. Hazel stops running. There are six of them, each with different skin tones and other features. Each wears one of the six colors, and you guess that this represents their Spectra clan.

“Why are you bringing a human so close to our secret space?” a king in orangish brown demands.

“This human helped me escape the Vangtons.” Hazel faces the green king, who has the same olive skin, dark hair, and even leaflike clothes as she does. “You owe me a favor, cousin.”

“I’m willing to honor your promise,” the green king answers. “What did you promise?”

“Spectra abilities.”

Silence follows her words. None of them look happy.

“I suppose we’ve done it once before,” the green king says.

“And we’re not making a habit of it!” the brown king snaps back. “Hazel, you should never have told a human that we’re able to do that! We have only two options—give them Spectra abilities so that oaths are binding, or execute them.” He scowls at you, as though he’s already made up his mind.

You stare at him. “Some reward!”

“We’ll have to think about it.” The green king points to a tiny hut. “Why don’t you stay in there while we discuss it? It may be safer.”

You decide not to disobey. If Hazel can carry you for two days, who knows what the others might be able to do?

You enter the hut, and the door clicks behind you. All sound cuts off. There’s a small bed and a few tools lying around.

Somehow you hoped that these Spectra would be nicer than the Vangtons. They aren’t threatening torture, but this isn’t much better.

You wait for a few minutes in the darkness. Then you walk over and examine the door. There’s a big lock. You might be able to use some of the tools to pick it. You also notice a high window near the roof, and glimpse tree branches framed against the sky.

If you try to climb out the window, [click here](#) or go to section 26.

If you try to pick the lock, [click here](#) or go to section 25.

19.

"I'd rather stay in the mountains, just in case we run into soldiers in the city," you say.

She smiles in relief, and you realize that she must really dislike cities. "I know where there's a cave you can stay in. It won't be as comfortable as an indoor bed, but it should help."

"I'm sure it'll be perfect," you say.

She leads you further into the mountains. She lets you set the pace, so you keep at a fast walk, not wanting to hold her back too much. The dramatic crags around you excite the imagination.

Soon you see the cave. It's more of a gap between two huge boulders, with a loose sandy floor. It's huge, just the right size for you both to stretch out without being awkward.

The next day you wake up well rested and ready for another day's journey. Hazel is already awake. She's sitting in the sunshine in front of the cave, stretched out on the ground like a cat. She stands when she notices you.

"Isn't it a beautiful morning?" she asks.

She's right. There are leafy shrubs everywhere, and birdsong fills the air. Dramatic cliffs reach high above your head, topped with snow. The rising sun gives everything a pastel, friendly glow.

"Do we need to get going?" you ask.

"No," she answers. "The royal Spectra don't want you too close to their mountain hideaway. They're coming here."

You straighten up as best you can and shake sand out of your clothes. You're sure you still look horrible. If only the soldiers had let you grab a toothbrush!

Soon a group of people come walking up a trail and stand in front of you. There are six of them, each with different skin tones and features. Each one wears one of the six colors, and you guess that this represents their Spectra kingdom.

"Why did you bring a human so close to our secret space?" a king in brown demands. You guess he's supposed to be orange, but that wouldn't look very regal.

"This human helped me escape the Vangtons." Hazel faces the green king, who has the same olive skin, dark hair, and even leaflike clothes as she does. "You owe me a favor, cousin."

"I'll honor your promise," the green king answers. "What is it?"

"Spectra abilities."

Silence follows her words. A queen gasps. The green king refuses to make eye contact with anyone—especially Hazel.

"We have done it once before," the purple king says.

"And we're not making a habit of it!" the brown king snaps back. "Hazel, you should never have told a human that we're able to do that! We have only two options—give them Spectra abilities and put them under oath never to tell how they got them, or execute them."

You stare at him. “You can’t execute me for helping another Spectra!”

“We’ll have to think about it.” The purple king points to your cave. “It’ll be safer if you stay in there while we discuss it.”

You aren’t so sure. If they decide to execute you, you’ll be trapped. But the brown king stares as though he’s already made up his mind, and you decide to get out of sight for now.

You enter the hut. The brown king shoves a huge heavy boulder into place, trapping you inside. Darkness descends. You whirl around, and find a third boulder blocking your way out.

Somehow you hoped that these Spectra would be nicer than the Vangtons. They aren’t threatening torture, but this isn’t much better.

You wait for a few minutes in the darkness. Then you kick at the loose sand. It would be easy to dig in. There’s a gap between the two boulders, and you think it will be bigger lower down. Maybe you could find a way out. Then again, you’re in here for your safety. It might be better to wait to talk to the Spectra rulers. Even if they choose to execute you, you may be able to convince them otherwise.

If you stay and wait to talk to the Spectra rulers, [click here](#) or go to section 28.

If you try to dig out of the cave, [click here](#) or go to section 24.

20.

"The mountains are probably safer," you say.

She smiles. "I know where there's a cave you can stay in. It's dry and pleasant. It won't be as comfortable as an indoor bed, but it should help."

You let out your breath. "That'd be great."

She leads you further into the mountains. She lets you set the pace, so you keep at a fast walk, not wanting to hold her back too much.

Soon you see the cave. It's more of a gap between two huge boulders, with a loose sandy floor. It's just the right size for you both to stretch out without being awkward. You gather sticks and start a small fire—on the opposite side from Hazel. Soon you are warm and comfortable, and you fall asleep immediately.

The next day you wake up well rested and ready for another day's journey. Hazel is already awake. She's sitting in the sunshine in front of the cave, stretched out on the ground like a cat. She stands when she notices you.

"I do like it better here than in the city," she admits. "Isn't it a beautiful morning?"

She's right. There are leafy shrubs everywhere, and birdsong fills the air. Dramatic cliffs reach high above your head, topped with snow.

"Shouldn't we get going?" you ask.

"No," she answers. "The royal Spectra don't want you too close to their mountain hideaway. They're coming here."

You straighten up as best you can and shake sand out of your clothes. It's not much, and you're sure you look dreadful.

Soon a group of people come walking up a trail and stand in front of you. There are six of them, each with different coloring. Each one wears one of the six colors, and you guess that this represents their Spectra clan.

"Why did you bring a human so close to our secret space?" a king in brown demands. You guess he's supposed to be orange, but he'd look ridiculous in it.

"This human helped me escape the Vangtons." Hazel faces the green king, who has the same olive skin, dark hair, and even leaflike clothes as she does. "You owe me a favor, cousin."

"I'm willing to offer a reward," the green king answers. "What did you promise?"

"Spectra abilities."

Silence follows her words. None of them look happy.

"I suppose we've done it once before," the blue queen says.

"And we're not making a habit of it!" the brown king snaps back. "Hazel, you should never have told a human that we're able to do that! We have only two options—give them Spectra abilities and put them under oath never to tell how they got them, or execute them."

You stare at him. "But I helped you!"

“We’ll have to think about it.” The blue queen points to your cave. “Why don’t you stay in there while we discuss it?”

You ought to be in the discussion, you think, but you don’t want to disobey them either. If Hazel can carry you for two days, who knows what the others might be able to do?

You enter the hut. Darkness descends. You whirl around, and find a third boulder blocking your way out.

Somehow you hoped that these Spectra would be nicer than the Vangtons. They aren’t threatening torture, but this isn’t much better.

You wait for a few minutes in the darkness. Then you kick at the loose sand. It would be easy to dig in. There’s a gap between the two boulders, and you think it will be bigger lower down. Maybe you could find a way out. Then again, if you escape, you won’t get your reward. It might be better to wait to talk to the Spectra rulers.

If you stay and wait to talk to the Spectra rulers, [click here](#) or go to section 27.

If you try to dig out of the cave, [click here](#) or go to episode 24.

21.

"I'd rather stay in the mountains, especially if we find somewhere sheltered where I can have a campfire," you say.

She smiles. "I know where there's a cave you can stay in. You can build a fire there without anyone seeing. It won't be as comfortable as an indoor bed, but it should help."

You let out your breath. "That sounds great!"

She leads you further into the mountains. She lets you set the pace, so you keep at a fast walk.

Soon you see the cave. It's more of a gap between two huge boulders, with a loose sandy floor. It's just the right size for you both to stretch out without being awkward. You gather sticks and start a small fire—on the opposite side from Hazel. You watch the mesmerizing flames create shadows on the wall. Soon you are warm and comfortable, and you fall asleep immediately.

The next day you wake up well rested and ready for another day's journey. Hazel is already awake. She's sitting in the sunshine in front of the cave, stretched out on the ground like a cat. She stands when she notices you.

"I do like it better here than in the city," she admits. "Isn't it a beautiful morning?"

She's right. There are leaves everywhere, and birdsong fills the air. Dramatic cliffs reach high above your head, topped with snow.

"Shouldn't we get going?" you ask.

"No," she answers. "The royal Spectra don't want you too close to their mountain hideaway. They're coming here."

You straighten up as best you can and shake sand out of your clothes.

Soon a group of people come walking up a trail and stand in front of you. There are six of them, each with different skin tone and features. Each one wears one of the six colors, and you guess that this represents their Spectra clan.

"Why did you bring a human so close to our secret space?" a king in orangish-brown demands. You guess he's supposed to be orange, but he'd look ridiculous in it.

"This human helped me escape the Vangtons." Hazel faces the green king, who has the same olive skin, dark hair, and even leaflike clothes as she does. "You owe me a favor, cousin."

"I'm willing to offer a reward," the green king answers. "What did you promise?"

"Spectra abilities."

Silence follows her words. None of them look happy.

"We've done it once before," the red queen says. "I'm willing to try again." She smiles at you.

"We're not making a habit of it!" the brown king snaps back. "Hazel, you should never have told a human that we're able to do that! We have only two options—give them Spectra abilities and put them under oath never to tell how they got them, or execute them."

You stare at him. “You can’t execute me for helping another Spectra!”

“We’ll have to think about it.” The king points to your cave. “Stay in there while we discuss it.”

You ought to be in the discussion, you think, but if Hazel can carry you for two days, who knows what the others are able to do?

You enter the hut. Darkness descends. You whirl around, and find a third boulder blocking your way out.

Somehow you hoped that these Spectra would be nicer than the Vangtons. They aren’t threatening torture, but this isn’t much better.

You build up your fire, and its light penetrates the darkness. Then you kick at the loose sand. It would be easy to dig in. There’s a gap between the two boulders, and you think it will be bigger lower down. Maybe you could find a way out. If not, you’re ready to pick up a torch and fight. Maybe they’re all as afraid of fire as Hazel.

If you stay and wait to fight with Spectra rulers, [click here](#) or go to section 23.

If you try to dig out of the cave, [click here](#) or go to section 24.

22.

“Honestly, I’d prefer to stay in the wilderness,” you say.

She smiles. “I know where there’s a cave you can stay in. It’s not perfect, but it should be comfortable.”

You let out your breath. “That sounds great!”

She leads you further into the mountains. She lets you set the pace, so you keep at a fast walk, not wanting to hold her back too much. Squirrels pop out of the undergrowth, and freeze until you pass.

Soon you see the cave. It’s more of a gap between two huge boulders, with a loose sandy floor. It’s just the right size for you both to stretch out without being awkward. Soon you are warm and comfortable, and you fall asleep immediately.

The next day you wake up well rested and ready for another day’s journey. Hazel is already awake. She’s sitting in the sunshine in front of the cave, stretched out on the ground like a cat. She stands when she notices you.

“I do like it better here than in the city,” she admits. “Isn’t it a beautiful morning?”

She’s right. There are leafy shrubs everywhere, and birdsong fills the air. Tiny wildflowers grow near the trail. Dramatic cliffs reach high above your head, topped with snow.

“Shouldn’t we get going?” you ask.

“No,” she answers. “The royal Spectra don’t want you too close to their mountain hideaway. They’re coming here.”

You straighten up as best you can and shake sand out of your clothes.

Soon a group of people come walking up a trail and stand in front of you. There are six of them, each with different coloring. Each one wears one of the six colors, and you guess that this represents their Spectra clan.

“Why did you bring a human so close to our secret space?” a king in brown demands. You guess he’s supposed to be orange, but this color is much nicer.

“This human helped me escape the Vangtons.” Hazel faces the green king, who has the same olive skin, dark hair, and even leaflike clothes as she does. “You owe me a favor, cousin.”

“I’m willing to offer a reward,” the green king answers. “What did you promise?”

“Spectra abilities.”

Silence follows her words. None of them look happy.

“I suppose we’ve done it once before,” the green king says.

“And we’re not making a habit of it!” the brown king snaps back. “Hazel, you should never have told a human that we’re able to do that! We have only two options. We give them Spectra abilities so that oaths are binding, and put them under oath never to tell how they got them. Or execution.”

You stare at him. “I helped a Spectra! That’s not a reward!”

“We’ll have to think about it.” The green king points to your cave. “Stay in there while we discuss it. It’s safer.”

You ought to be in the discussion, you think, but disobeying kings may be dangerous. If Hazel can carry you for two days, who knows what the others might be able to do?

You enter the hut. Darkness descends. You whirl around, and find a third boulder blocking your way out.

Somehow you hoped that these Spectra would be nicer than the Vangtons.

You wait for a few minutes in the darkness. Then you kick at the loose sand. It would be easy to dig in. There’s a gap between the two boulders, and you think it will be bigger lower down. You step aside, looking for the best place to start, and a flash of light catches your eye. There’s a gap in the rocks high over your head, and you catch a glimpse of tree branches.

If you try to climb to the gap, [click here](#) or go to section 26.

If you try to dig out of the cave, [click here](#) or go to section 24.

23.

You start your fire. You have to keep it small, so that it won't hurt you too. Hazel was afraid of even small fires, though, so you might be able to use it.

You hear shuffling and rattling. Someone is moving your door. You stand, tense, just behind your fire.

A figure appears in the doorway. "Oh, fire again!" Hazel complains.

Your relief is short-lived. "Am I about to be executed?"

"Not yet," Hazel said, "although it does look suspicious that the Vangton soldiers caught up with you."

"What?" You hurry into the sunlight.

No one is there, but you hear shouts and gunshots nearby. The soldiers must have found the Spectra royalty. You aren't sure you should interfere, but the only way you know of to get off this mountain is past the fight.

You edge closer until the battle appears in sight. Smoke billows overhead, confusing everything. The soldiers use guns, but the Spectra use their abilities. The red queen stands out in the chaos. She's surrounded by bright orange fire that catches your eye. Soldiers and Spectra alike give her a wide berth.

You step forward, trying to move around the battle. Between the chaos and the smoke, hopefully you won't be spotted.

Two figures emerge from the chaos right in front of you. The captain who arrested you is holding a long saber. He must have run out of ammunition. He's cornering the red queen. Her face is flushed beneath a layer of soot. You don't know what Spectra limits are, but she seems to have hit hers. There are still miniature fires around her feet, but they aren't enough to stop the captain. She's holding a dagger too, but that won't do much good against the longer blade.

You back up, and your foot brushes an old, dry branch. Without thinking you pick it up and thrust it into one of the tiny fires. The dried bark ignites. There's no time for technique, so you fling it as hard as you can toward the captain.

The flaming branch hits his fighting arm. He whirls toward you, brushing it aside. All you did was draw attention to yourself. His eyes light up with recognition and he swings his sword toward you.

Then he keels over. The red queen has driven her dagger under his ribcage. The captain collapses, dying.

"Thank you," she tells you.

Everywhere else, the fighting is dying down. The soldiers left are fleeing. The Spectra look completely uninjured, and you remember that some of them can heal.

The red queen puts a hand on your shoulder. "Everyone," she calls. "We need to finish rewarding my new friend here."

They gather around you. The brown king scowls and looks around, but no one else seems to object. "This had better be the last time," he growls.

The rulers form a circle around you. You can't see all of them at once, and it makes you uneasy. Hazel isn't part of the circle, and you wish you could see her behind the others. The red queen and brown king are side by side, which suits you. They are the two you wish to face, though for opposite reasons. A faint glow emanates from their bodies.

Energy explodes through you. It's not quite pain, but so overwhelming that you cannot move.

A hand clenches on your arm. The energy recedes to something manageable.

The hand belongs to the red queen. You don't realize that you've fallen until she helps you up. "Welcome," she says.

You nod. "But what happened? I don't feel different."

"You are," she assures you. "Watch."

She raises her other hand, and a small fire dances without fuel on her palm. She grabs your hand with it. For a moment, you panic, certain that you'll be burned. But the fire isn't burning. You open your hand, and the flame creeps onto yours. The warmth is pleasant, not painful at all.

The red queen grins. "Welcome to the Cole clan."

Congratulations! [Continue here](#) or turn to section 29.

24.

You begin to dig, pulling the loose sand with your cupped hands out into the main part of the cave. The gap between the boulders gets a little wider the further down you go. Eventually you'll be able to squeeze through.

You're only a foot below the floor when you hear shuffling and grating. Someone is moving the boulder that serves as a door. Your escape is too late. You stand in front of your hole, hoping it won't be noticed.

A figure appears in the doorway. "Are you all right?" Hazel asks.

"Fine," you say, but your relief is short-lived. "What'd they decide?"

"They haven't yet," Hazel answers. "The Vangton soldiers caught up, and they're busy fighting. If you need to escape, this is the time."

"What?" You hurry into the open.

No one is there, but you hear shouts and gunshots nearby. The soldiers must have found the Spectra royalty. You aren't sure you should interfere, but the only way you know of to get off this mountain is past the fight.

You edge closer until the battle appears in sight. Smoke billows overhead, confusing everything. The soldiers use guns, but the Spectra use their abilities. The brown king holds a huge stone club with jagged obsidian spikes. The soldiers give him a wide berth.

You step forward, trying to move around the battle. Hopefully you won't be spotted among the chaos. The jagged slopes force you nearer to the battle, but you stay as far away as you can.

Two figures emerge from the chaos right in front of you. The Vangton captain who arrested you is holding a long saber. He must have run out of ammunition, if he had a gun to begin with. He's fighting with the brown king. Their blades glint in the sun as they fight. The brown king is sweating and he's moving slower than the captain. Lifting the heavy club must be weighing him down.

You don't like either of them, but the brown king seems more likely to help you. At least he didn't enter your home or put you in a gag. You snatch up a rock and throw it at the captain with all of your might.

The stone hits his arm. He grunts and drops the saber. He whirls toward you, and his eyes flash with recognition.

The brown king takes advantage of his distraction and strikes. The captain collapses, dead.

The brown king looks at you. "Thanks," he says gruffly.

Everywhere else, the fighting is dying down. The only soldiers left alive are fleeing. The Spectra look completely uninjured, and you remember that some of them can heal.

The brown king waves the others closer. "We'd better give the reward."

The rulers form a circle around you. You can't see all of them at once, and it makes you uneasy. Hazel isn't part of the circle, and you wish you could see her.

A faint glow emanates from their bodies. Energy crashes through you. It's not quite pain, but so overwhelming that you cannot move.

A hand clenches your arm. The energy recedes to something manageable.

The hand belongs to the brown king. You don't realize that you've fallen until he helps you up. "One of us," he says.

You nod. "But which clan?"

"One of us," he repeats. "You're a Nome like me." He sets a huge rock in your hand. You squeeze it, and the rock responds to you, reforming into a new shape.

The brown king nods. "Welcome to the Nome clan."

Congratulations! [Continue here](#) or turn to section 30.

25.

You grab the small rod and work it into the lock. You wriggle until something catches. Then you twist. Something clicks, and the door swings open.

Hazel stands right in front of it. Her eyes travel from the door to the rod in your hands. “I was coming for you,” she says. “I was going to open it.”

You smile, pleased that you managed it first. “They’re going to reward me, then?” you ask.

“I’m not sure,” she admits, “but just in case, I thought you should wait somewhere... safer. You know, just in case they make the wrong choice.”

“I see what you mean.”

You leave the hut. You expect Hazel to lead the way, but she stands as though frozen, staring back the way you came from. Then you hear it too. Shouts, and gunshots. The soldiers must have found the Spectra royalty. You aren’t sure you should interfere, but the only way you know of to get off this mountain is past the fight.

You edge closer until the battle appears in sight. Smoke billows overhead, confusing everything. The soldiers use guns, but the Spectra use their abilities. The air smells of sulfur. The nearest fighter, the yellow queen, slaps a soldier’s leg. Something snaps, and the leg stops moving. The soldier crumples, stunned.

You step forward, trying to move around the battle. Between the chaos and the smoke, hopefully you won’t be spotted.

Two figures emerge from the chaos right in front of you. The captain who arrested you is holding a long saber. He must have run out of ammunition. He’s cornering the yellow queen. Her face is pale, and she seems to have hit the limit of her powers. She’s fiddling with her pockets, as though she has something useful hidden there, but she’ll never get to it in time.

You’re still holding your lockpick. It’s nothing compared to a sword, but you throw it anyway.

It hits the captain’s fighting arm. He whirls toward you, brushing it aside. All you did was draw attention to yourself. His eyes light up with recognition and he swings his sword toward you.

Then he keels over. The yellow queen stands triumphant. She’s found what she was looking for in her pocket: a dagger.

“Thank you,” she tells you.

Everywhere else, the fighting is dying down. The soldiers left are fleeing. The Spectra look completely uninjured, and you remember that some of them can heal.

The yellow queen puts a hand on your shoulder. “Everyone,” she calls. “We need to finish rewarding my new friend here.”

They gather around you. The brown king scowls. “This had better be the last time,” he growls.

The rulers form a circle around you. You can't see all of them at once, and it makes you uneasy. Hazel isn't part of the circle. The yellow queen and brown king are side by side, which suits you. They are the two you wish to face, though for opposite reasons. A faint glow emanates from every body.

Energy surges through you and your entire body tingles, as though it's fallen asleep. It's not quite pain, but you can't move.

A hand clenches on your arm. The energy recedes to something manageable.

The hand belongs to the yellow queen. You realize that you've fallen and allow the queen to help you stand up.

"Did it work?" you ask.

"I believe so, but let's test it out." She raises her hand. "Try this." She snaps her fingers.

You mimic her. Tiny white sparks pop into existence, and disappear again.

The yellow queen grins. "Welcome to the Lectran clan."

Congratulations! [Continue here](#) or turn to section 31

26.

You climb toward the light, heaving your body up as best you can. At last you squeeze through. The leaves brush against you, but you shove past. You reach the open air and pause to breathe in the fresh mountain air.

Hazel pops up beside you. “Nice,” she says.

You fidget, but she doesn’t look like she’s going to rat you out. “Some reward,” you say.

“Sorry!” she says. “I honestly thought they would want to help you! Especially the king. He’s my cousin, and I work for him, bringing him news from the furthest away Sprites.”

You don’t want to argue, so you make your way back to the ground.

Hazel beats you there. You wait for her to show off, but she doesn’t move. She’s staring at the trail behind you. Then you hear it too. Gunshots, and people yelling.

“They followed us,” Hazel groaned.

You have every intention of sneaking around the fighting and getting out of there, but Hazel gestures you to a nearby outlook. The entire battle becomes visible.

You edge closer until the battle appears in sight. Smoke billows overhead, confusing everything. The soldiers use guns, but the Spectra use their abilities. A flash of bright green tells you that the green king is darting through everything, healing each other. You wonder why the Vangtons bothered to fight. There’s no way they could win when their enemy constantly heals.

The Spectra seem to have everything well in hand. You don’t really deserve a reward, anyway. You and Hazel helped each other, and she did most of the work.

Then you catch a flash of orange light. The green king scrambles back in your direction. The captain who arrested you follows close behind. He’s got a torch and he’s waving it in the green king’s face. The green king tries to run but ends up cornered inside of the space where you were locked up.

If the healer is defeated, all of the other Spectra lose too. You snatch up a stick and throw it at the captain.

The stick hits his shoulder. He turns to look up at you, and his eyes flash with recognition. His grip on his torch loosens.

A green blur darts from cover. The green king doesn’t even need a weapon. He shoves with all his might. The captain goes flying, skidding across the rocky ground, until he slips over a cliff and disappears.

The green king looks at you. “Thanks,” he says gruffly.

Everywhere else, the fighting is dying down. The soldiers left are fleeing.

The green king leads you down to the others. “By saving the healers, this human saved all of our lives,” he says. “I say we give the reward.”

No one argues, but the brown king scowls. “This had better be the last time.”

The rulers form a circle around you. You can't see all of them at once, and it makes you uneasy. Hazel isn't part of the circle, and you wish you could see her behind the others. A faint glow emanates from their bodies.

Energy grows through you. It's not quite pain, but so overwhelming that you cannot move.

A hand clenches your arm. The energy recedes to something manageable.

The hand belongs to the green king. He helps you to your feet. "No wonder you bonded with Hazel," he says.

Hazel beams at you. "Try this!" She scampers up the nearest cliff in seconds.

You follow. At first you feel amazing. Then you lose your grip and fall down. The landing knocks the wind out of you, but you aren't hurt. You can self-heal.

The green king grins. "Welcome to the Sprite clan."

Congratulations! [Continue here](#) or turn to section 32.

27.

You're not leaving without a reward, not after coming all this way, and you'd like to give those Spectra royalty a piece of your mind. You settle down on the sand. It's not uncomfortable, and you can use a bit more rest after traveling so much.

Suddenly the door crashes open. Hazel is framed inside it. "Are you all right?"

"Yes, thank you," you say. "Did they decide to let me out, then?"

"They haven't yet," Hazel answers. "The Vangton soldiers caught up, and they're busy fighting. If you need to escape, this is the time."

"What?" You hurry into the sunlight. The sound of gunshots and shouts come from nearby. You're surprised that you hadn't heard them earlier.

"The soldiers followed us," Hazel says grimly.

You groan. This looks bad, as though you lead the enemy straight to the Spectra on purpose. You hope they'll believe the truth, not like the Vangtons who ignored every word you spoke, but you shouldn't base your actions on hope.

The only way you know of to get out of the mountains is to go past the fight. You edge closer until the battle appears in sight. Smoke billows overhead, confusing everything. The soldiers use guns, but the Spectra use their abilities. The blue queen appears, shimmering in the sunlight. She wields a sword of pure white that you suspect is ice.

You step forward, trying to move around the battle. Hopefully you won't be spotted in the chaos.

Two figures emerge from the chaos right in front of you. The captain who arrested you is holding a long saber. He must have run out of ammunition, or dropped his gun or something. He's fighting the blue queen. Her face is turning gray and rivulets that used to be ice run down her hand. She's at the limit of her powers. With one more direct impact, her blade might snap.

They don't deserve your help, but you can't stand to see her killed. With no time to think of anything else, you leap forward and spit in the captain's face.

He whirls toward you and knocks you aside. "You!" he snarls. "I knew you were Spectra all along! Now I'll..."

You never found out what he would do, because the queen's ice blade impales him.

The blue queen watches him fall with a disgusted look, as though she's just smashed a cockroach. "Nasty man," she says.

You have to agree.

The fighting is dying down everywhere. The few remaining soldiers flee. The Spectra look completely uninjured, and you remember that some of them can heal.

The blue queen gestures to the rest, and then at you. "I suppose we should reward this human."

No one objects, though the brown king scowls. "This had better be the last time," he says, but everyone ignores him.

The rulers form a circle around you. A faint glow of pure white light emanates from every body.

Energy floods through you. It's overwhelming, not painful, but you still can't move.

A hand touches your arm. The energy recedes to something manageable.

You realize that you've fallen and rise to your feet. The person who had touched you is the blue queen.

"Another one," she says. "Interesting."

You don't feel any different. At least, not in a way you can define.

"Another what?" you ask.

She sets her hand on the earth. Groundwater seeps into her cupped hands and grows into a round sphere. Without warning, she tips it into your hands.

It doesn't spill. The giant droplet bobs in your grip. You look up at the other Spectra, and find them all smiling at you.

"You're another Mer," the blue queen says.

Congratulations! [Continue here](#) or turn to section 33.

28.

You're pretty sure you can talk things out with the Spectra. One of them threatened you, but the rest seem reasonable. In the meantime, you can use a bit of rest after traveling so much. You settle back into your sleeping place from last night.

Suddenly the door crashes open. Hazel is framed inside it. "Are you okay?"

Her concern is touching. "Yes, thank you," you say. "Did they already decide to let me go?"

"Not yet," Hazel answers. "The Vangton soldiers caught up, and everyone is fighting."

"What?" You hurry into the sunlight. The sound of gunshots and shouts are quite loud. "The soldiers must have followed us."

You'd hate to think what would happen if the Vangtons got their hands on Spectra royalty. You don't want to think of them being controlled or tortured like they tried to do with you and Hazel either. You don't have a weapon, but you need to at least see what's going on.

You edge closer until you can see the battle. Smoke billows overhead, confusing everything. The soldiers use guns, but the Spectra use their abilities—fire, ice, even lightning. At least the purple king is using a normal sword. You catch a glimpse of him, and it's clear he knows how to use it.

You wish you could do something to help. After all, the soldiers were following you when they discovered the Spectra royals. You can't think of anything you can do, though. You certainly can't shoot fire, and you don't have a decent weapon.

Two figures emerge from the chaos right in front of you. The captain who arrested you is holding a long saber. He must have run out of ammunition. He's fighting the purple king. They're both clearly tired. It's only a matter of time before one of them makes a mistake, and you know which one you want it to be.

You do have a weapon after all. You have your words. "Captain!" you yell. "Over here!"

Your distraction works. The soldier turns toward you. "I knew you were one of them!" he snarls.

He raises his saber, but far too late. The purple king has taken advantage of the moment, and the sword runs him through. The king bows his head with a tired sigh. You take a step back to give him space, but he looks up and meets your eye. "Thanks," he says.

The fighting is dying down. The few remaining soldiers run away. You're surprised it took them this long. The Spectra look completely uninjured, and you remember that some of them can heal.

The purple king gestures to the others. "Gather here, please."

They all gather around.

The king smiles at you. "This human joined the battle and helped us even after we imprisoned them. I say we should give a reward."

No one objects, though the brown king growls, "This had better be the last time!"

The rulers form a circle around you. A faint glow emanates from every body.

Then energy courses through you. You feel more alive and awake than you ever have before. The six rulers, and Hazel behind them, are staring at you, and you can read more from their expressions than you've ever noticed. Every tiny movement means something.

The purple king claps your arm. "Welcome," he says.

At first you don't understand him. You study the others again. Each feels different, distinct, in a way you can't describe. On the second look, you realize that they aren't distinct after all. Hazel and the green king have the same feel to them. Both Sprites, you realize. You study the purple king again, and realize that he feels familiar. You're kin.

He doesn't have to say it, but he does anyway. "You're a Muse."

Congratulations! [Continue here](#) or turn to section 34

29.

You admire the fire dancing on your palm. “Does this make me your subject?” you ask the red queen.

She smiles at you. The rest of the rulers wander away. “I am Queen Rosalin of the Cole Kingdom, but kingdoms and clans don’t always line up nicely. There are plenty of Coles in other parts of the continent.”

“So, our color is red and we control fire, right?”

“Yes, but it’s a bit more complicated than that. We control heat. That often comes in the form of fire, but not always. Some are better at driving heat out of things—in other words, making them cold. Still others can use heat to create windstorms.”

You raise your eyebrow. “Fire and air?”

“I guess you can look at it that way,” she says, “but wind is created by temperature changes, you know.”

You try to summon wind, but nothing happens.

“It’s a rare skill,” she says, “and even the few who can manage it must practice and train for years.”

Maybe in time you’ll figure it out. “Can you do it?”

“No,” she admits, “but some in my family can. My half-sister Anila, for one.”

You look around the mountains. “Is your kingdom around here?”

“In a way,” she answers. “The kingdoms are arranged something like the spokes of a wheel. They all touch here, in the center. So a tiny corner of my kingdom is ‘around here’, as you put it. Most of it is further north and east, though. Most of it is desert. Would you like to come see it?”

“Maybe,” you say slowly. “I need to head back home first and make sure everything is in order.”

“You’ll have to be careful. The soldiers still know where you live.”

You nod.

“And we will insist on an oath of secrecy,” she says. “Now that you’re Spectra, your oaths will be binding. Be very careful about making them.”

“If they’re that dangerous, why are you making me give one?” you ask.

“Because this information is also dangerous,” she says. “We’ve recently dispelled the Secrecy Treaties that insists that Spectra hide their abilities. It’s no longer a crime for us to reveal ourselves to you. But the information that we can grant abilities must remain secret! We’d be overwhelmed by requests, and we wouldn’t have time to judge which ones come from good people.”

“What about Hazel?” You ask. “She told me.”

“Her king will have to deal with her,” Queen Rosalin says.

“Hazel shouldn’t be punished,” you say. “I’ll defend her.”

She smiles. “I’m glad. We’ll probably put her under the same oath that you will be.”

That makes sense. You’ll have a tough time explaining or hiding abilities from anyone you care about, but you’ll figure it out.

Congratulations! Coles are pretty cool.

This story takes inspiration from [The Seventh Clan](#), a Spectra Crowns Tale. You’ll meet Queen Rosalin there and catch a small glimpse of her half-sister Anila.

If you’re interested in any more [Spectra books](#), *Mira’s Griffin* has Runa the fire-shaping Cole and Hemming the wind-shaping Cole. *DreamRovers* has a father called Smiddy who uses fire for blacksmithing, and a 3-year-old girl who isn’t old enough to use abilities, but is still immune to being burnt up. *Keita’s Wings* has several Coles, including Scarlet (Carli for short), one of the main character’s best friends. Carli is in most of the *Keita’s Wings* book, but she is especially important in book 5, The Spectra Upended, which takes place in the Cole kingdom.

30.

You're not sure what you think about this man being your king. He was the one who suggested they might have to execute you. He still doesn't look thrilled, and you wonder if you should just leave him alone. But you don't know much about your abilities, and he's the best one to ask. "Are you my king?" you ask.

"Depends on where you live," he answers. "Kingdoms are geographical, not tied to clan—although that may change someday if *some* of my colleagues get their way." He glares at the others, but you're not sure which ones. They back off to give you more space. "I am King Tanner of Nomelands."

You're not sure if you should bow, or what. You settle on a bit of a nod.

"So, we shape rocks?" you ask, holding up the rock he'd given you.

"We have various abilities, but they all have to do with earth and rock," he answers. "My cousin turns sand into sandstone, creating instant shelters. She also has a perfect sense of direction. She knows exactly where on the continent she is at any time."

"That sounds awesome." You look around the mountains. "I'm not sure I've got that one, though."

He chuckles—not very much, but it makes him seem much friendlier. "I don't either. I have a sister who can create miniature earthquakes, and her husband is big in the mining business."

He's listed several family members, but not himself, you realize. "What about you?"

"I have limited abilities," he admits. "I can shape rocks into different shapes, but that's a baby skill. Even you can do it."

You frown.

"I mean because you're new, not inferior," he says. "All skills take training and practice. I chose to study discipline and military order instead of abilities."

That sounds boring. You look around again. "Do you live somewhere nearby?"

"In a way," he answers. "The kingdoms are arranged something like the spokes of a wheel. They all touch here, in the center. Most of the Nomelands are further east, though. We have lots of mountains, and lots of desert. Will you come see it?"

"Maybe," you say slowly. "I need to head back home first and make sure everything is in order."

He frowns. "I'd hoped to keep an eye on you."

You'd rather he didn't, but you don't want to risk offending him.

"You will give us an oath of secrecy before you go," he says. "Now that you're Spectra, your oaths will be binding. Be careful about making them."

"If they're that dangerous, why are you making me give one?" you ask.

“Because we need to keep the knowledge of gaining Spectra abilities a secret,” he says. “We’ve recently dispelled the Secrecy Treaties that forces Spectra to hide their abilities. It’s no longer a crime for us to reveal ourselves to you. But the information that we can grant abilities must remain secret! Everyone would pester us, asking for powers, and I have much more important things to be doing!”

“What about Hazel?” You ask. “She told me.”

“Her king will have to deal with her,” King Tanner says.

“Hazel shouldn’t be punished,” you say. “I’ll defend her.”

“Very loyal of you,” he says approvingly. “I won’t insist on punishment as long as she makes the same oath you do.”

That makes sense. You’ll have a tough time explaining or hiding abilities from anyone you care about, but you’ll figure it out.

Congratulations! Nomes are pretty awesome.

This story takes inspiration from [The Seventh Clan](#), a Spectra Crowns Tale. You’ll meet King Tanner and his son Mica in the middle of the book.

If you’re interested in any more [Spectra books](#), *Mira’s Griffin* has Garth, a stone-shaping Nome. *Keita’s Wings* has several, including Sienna, the main character’s best friend. She’s in every book in the series. Tanner is in there too, but he and the main character don’t get along very well. The first Keita’s Wings book, *The Spectra Unearthed*, takes place in Nomelands.

31.

You snap your fingers again and again, enjoying the popping sound that the sparks make. “So, does that make you my queen?” you ask the yellow queen.

“Not necessarily,” she says. “It depends on where you live. Kingdoms and clans are not exactly the same. I am Queen Solana of Lectranis.”

You wonder if you should bow, but she seems so friendly, too ordinary to be a queen. “So, Lectrans are yellow and we do lightning stuff?” you ask.

“Some of us do ‘lighting stuff’, as you put it,” she answers. “That’s one of our more flashy abilities—if you’ll pardon the pun—but it’s not very practical. It’s impossible to scale down, and you can only do it once or twice a day. Some of us make smaller sparks, or a current that paralyzes, or sometimes we’re just particularly good at inventing things—like that lockpick you created. Everyone is different, but our abilities always tie into lightning or innovation in some way”

You wonder how she knows about the lockpick, and decide to change the subject before she gets you into trouble. “Is your kingdom close by?”

“Yes and no,” she answers. “The kingdoms are arranged something like the spokes of a wheel. They all touch here, in the center. Most of Lectranis is further south. We have farmlands and some open prairie, but mostly big cities. Why don’t you come see it? You can be my guest.”

“Maybe,” you say slowly, “but I need to head back home first and make sure everything is in order.”

“Of course,” she says, “but you’ll have to give your oath first that you won’t tell how you got your abilities. It might be safer not to tell people at all. You don’t want to risk breaking that oath.”

“What if I do?” you ask.

“You’ll die.”

Before you can panic too much, she adds, “Or you might just lose your new ability. Or go mad. Who can say?”

You decide not to test it.

“It’s harsh, but we need to keep the knowledge of gaining Spectra abilities a secret,” she says. “We’ve finally gotten rid of the pesky Secrecy Treaties, so Spectra no longer have to hide who we are. But the information that we can give people abilities must remain secret! Everyone would pester us, asking for powers, and I have much more important things to do!”

“What about Hazel?” you ask. “She told me.”

“Hopefully her king will go easy on her,” Queen Solana says.

You look around for Hazel and her king. “Where are they? I’ll stand up for her!”

She sets a hand on your shoulder and beams down at you. “Lectrans are well known for our loyalty,” she says. “Don’t worry. Hazel will be all right. We will probably insist on putting her under oath as well.”

That makes sense. Your mind races ahead, trying to figure out how to balance your new life with your old one.

Congratulations! Lectrans are electrifying!

This story takes inspiration from [The Seventh Clan](#), a Spectra Crowns Tale. You'll meet Queen Solana and her niece Marigold there.

If you're interested in any more [Spectra books](#), *Mira's Griffin* has Tilda, a Lectran. *Keita's Wings* has several, including Avie, the main character's little sister. Avie was raised among Sprites and struggled to find her place, but she discovered it in Lectranis. *The Seventh Clan* takes place in Lectranis.

You stand up and swat dirt from your cloths, trying not to look too embarrassed. You'll have to practice before you get the hang of it. "Can I turn into a bear?" you ask eagerly.

"Perhaps, in time," the green king answers.

"It takes practice, but all Sprites can take at least one animal form," Hazel says.

"Which animal—"

"It'll depend," Hazel interrupts. "You have to have an affinity for it, plus go through training and study."

You can't wait to experiment. Maybe it'll be your favorite animal.

"Sprites have a lot of other potential abilities too," Hazel says. "Usually we don't have all of them, but specialize in something or other. Like healing. Or shaping wood. Our green clothes help us harness energy from the sun. I'll teach you how to do it."

The green king clears his throat. "I can get them a teacher."

"This is my cousin, King Glen," Hazel adds.

He nods without speaking.

You hesitate. "Are you my king?"

"Not necessarily," Hazel answers before he can. "Kingdoms and clans are not exactly the same. There are plenty of Sprites who aren't his subjects."

The green king mutters something you can't understand.

"Is your kingdom nearby then?" you ask.

"Yes and no," Hazel answers, before the king can. He doesn't seem to be very talkative. "The kingdoms are arranged something like the spokes of a wheel. They all touch here, in the center. Spritelands is west of us. It's mostly unsettled, with a variety of habitats. Why don't you come see it? You can be my guest."

"Maybe," you say slowly, "but I need to head back home first and make sure everything is in order."

"We need your oath before you go anywhere," King Glen says. "You can't tell how you got your abilities."

You remember the rulers saying something about an oath. "Why not?"

"Breaking oaths can kill you," Hazel answers, "or take away the ability you just got."

"No, I mean, why can't I tell?" you ask. "Why do I have to take the oath?"

"Everyone would want powers," King Glen says, "and not all those people are good ones."

"At least the Secrecy Treaties are gone," Hazel says. "A few months ago, you'd be punished for showing your ability in front of people."

“You still might want to do that,” King Glen says. “It’ll be tough to explain to your friends without breaking an oath. You don’t want to test it.”

He’s probably right.

King Glen turns to Hazel. “You’ll have to take the oath too. You can’t keep offering gifts to humans.”

“Fine, fine,” she says with a dismissive wave of her hand. It seems like a very casual way to treat a king.

Your mind races ahead, trying to figure out how to balance your new life with your old one. No matter what, it will be an exciting adventure!

Congratulations! Sprites are pretty wild!

This story takes inspiration from [The Seventh Clan](#), a Spectra Crowns Tale. You’ll meet King Glen there. The love interest of *The Seventh Clan*, Allee, is a healing Sprite with a bear form.

If you’re interested in any more [Spectra books](#), *Mira’s Griffin* has Ket, a Sprite healer with a raven form. *The Captain’s Dowry* has Alstin, a healer. Keita from the *Keita’s Wings* series is also a Sprite. She’s an exiled princess struggling to restore all six kingdoms after enemies took control.

33.

You bounce your hand and watch the giant droplet in your hand wriggle around. Eventually you move too harshly, and it bursts in a spray that splatters everyone nearby. The blue queen doesn't seem to mind, though. Her blue dress is so shiny that it looks like it's permanently wet, and so is her dark skin.

"So, are you my ruler?" you ask her. "Do I have to bow or something?"

"You may not live in my kingdom," she says stiffly, "but I am still a queen, Queen Marsha, and I would hope that you show some form of respect."

You lower your head. "Of course."

She doesn't look impressed. She doesn't seem eager to talk either, but you need more information. "So, Mers are blue and work with water?"

"Yes," she says. "It can be any form of water—liquid, gas, or solid. We've noticed that unlocked humans seem to be able to manage only one of the three phases, though. We'll have to get you some training and see what you're capable of."

You nod. "Is your kingdom close by?"

"Yes and no," she answers. "The kingdoms are arranged something like the spokes of a wheel. They all touch here, in the center. Most of the Mer kingdom is further west. We have a lot of coastline, as you'd expect, and a few broad rivers, as well as our beautiful cities. Are you coming to visit it?"

"Maybe," you say slowly, "but I need to head back home first and make sure everything is in order."

"Of course," she says, "but you'll have to give your oath first that you won't tell how you got your abilities. It might be safer not to tell people at all. You don't want to risk breaking that oath. Otherwise you'll die, or perhaps just lose your new ability."

She doesn't look entirely disapproving of the idea. You decide not to test it.

"It's harsh," she says, "but we need to keep the knowledge of gaining Spectra abilities a secret. We've chosen to repeal the Secrecy Treaties that prevent Spectra from revealing their abilities to humans." She looks a bit sorry about this. "But the information that we can give people Spectra abilities must remain a secret! Everyone would bother us, asking for more power, and most of them cannot be trusted!"

"What about Hazel?" you ask. "She told me."

"That is for King Glen to make the final call," Queen Marsha answers. "Since they're close cousins, I expect he'll just ask for an oath not to do it again."

You nod. You'd hate to see her punished after all the two of you went through together. Your mind races ahead, trying to figure out how to balance your new life with your old one. However you manage it, it will be an adventure!

Congratulations! Mers are pretty cool!

This story takes inspiration from [The Seventh Clan](#), a Spectra Crowns Tale. You'll find Queen Marsha and her daughter Innis there.

If you're interested in any more [Spectra books](#), *Mira's Griffin* has Calder, a Mer who can control the currents of the sea. *Keita's Wings* has several, including Zuri, one of the main character's best friends. She lost most of her family in an attack by humans, which is why she and Queen Marsha are a bit prejudiced.

The purple king smiles at you. "I'm King Brian. Welcome to the Muse clan."

You wonder if you're supposed to bow or something, but you decide not to try in case you get it wrong and make things worse. "Are you my king?" you ask.

"It depends on where you live," he answers. "Kingdoms are geographical, not tied to clan—although that may change someday."

You nod. "So our color is purple," you say, "and our abilities are with communication? That doesn't seem very flashy."

"You're right," King Brian says. "Our abilities tend to be more subtle, but that doesn't make them any less powerful. They can be extremely varied, too. I can read and influence the emotions of people around me—though I am very careful about using it." He looks vulnerable, as though he fears you will judge him for this.

"I don't know if I can do that," you say.

"There are many other abilities you may or may not have," he says. "All of us can speak mind-to-mind over any distance with people we're close too. I'll have to teach you that one later. There are also more individualized abilities. Artists are common. Others can speak with animals or translate languages. A few can travel through dreams, but thankfully that's rare."

"Why thankfully?"

"Because the ability tends to run in outlaw families, and people often abuse it."

You wonder if he's prejudiced, but this doesn't seem the time to challenge him on it. "Is your kingdom nearby?"

"In a way," he answers. "The kingdoms are arranged something like the spokes of a wheel. They all touch here, in the center. Most of the Muse kingdom, called Castalia, is north and west of us. Our capital, Castalia City, is straight north and a relatively short distance. Would you like me to show you?"

"Maybe," you say slowly. "I need to head back home first and make sure everything is in order."

"I understand," he says, "but don't forget the oath of secrecy before you go. Now that you're Spectra, your oaths will be binding. Be careful about making them. Breaking oaths can kill you."

"If they're that dangerous, why are you making me give one?" you ask.

"I don't request oaths lightly," he says. "We must keep the knowledge of gaining Spectra abilities a secret. We've recently dispelled the Secrecy Treaties that forces Spectra to hide their abilities. It's no longer a crime for us to reveal ourselves to you. But the information that we can grant abilities must remain secret! Everyone would pester us, asking for more power, and not all of them deserve it."

"What about Hazel?" You ask. "She told me."

"Her king will have to deal with her," King Brian says.

"Hazel shouldn't be punished," you say. "I'll defend her."

“Very loyal of you,” he says approvingly. “I won’t insist on punishment as long as she makes the same oath you do.”

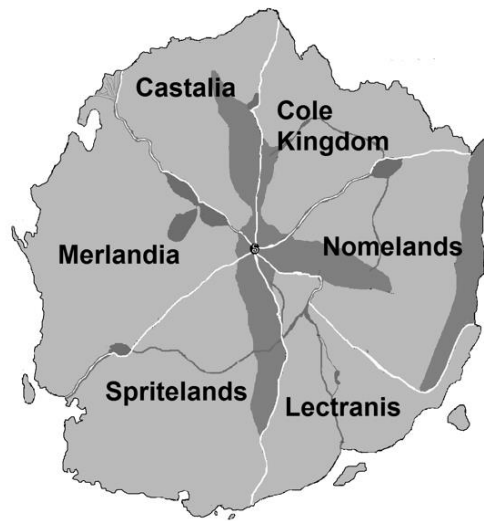
That makes sense. You’ll have a tough time explaining or hiding abilities from anyone you care about, but you’ll figure it out.

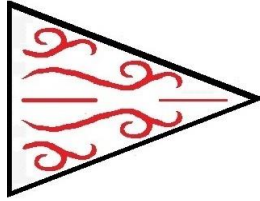
Congratulations! Muses are pretty awesome.

This story takes inspiration from [The Seventh Clan](#), a Spectra Crowns Tale. You’ll find Queen Marsha and her daughter Innis there.

If you’re interested in any more [Spectra books](#), Mira of *Mira’s Griffin* is a Muse, specifically a translator. *Keita’s Wings* has several, especially Brian—yes, the same as King Brian in this story. His ancestors and the dreamrovers didn’t get along, and you can read about that in the *DreamRovers* trilogy.

MEET THE CLANS





COLE

Kingdom: The Cole Kingdom, northwest.

Abilities: Heat

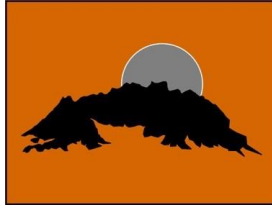
Color: Red

Characters:

- Scarlett Kelvin “Carli”, [*Keita’s Wings series*](#)
- Griffin and Reid Pensier, [*Keita’s Wings series*](#)
- Runa and Eldinn, [*Mira’s Griffin*](#)
- Smiddy Filsona, [*DreamRovers trilogy*](#)
- Rosalin and Anila Kelvin, [*The Spectra Crown Tales*](#)
- Mason Smelt, [*The Spectra Crown Tales*](#)

Books set in this kingdom:

- [*The Spectra Upended*](#) (Keita’s Wings 5)



NOME

Kingdom: Nomelands, west

Abilities: Earth

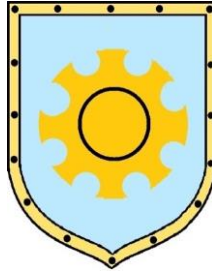
Color: Orange/Brown

Characters:

- Sienna Agate, [*Keita's Wings series*](#)
- Tanner Smelt, [*Keita's Wings series*](#)
- Garth, [*Mira's Griffin*](#)
- Clifton, Marjie, and Mica Smelt, [*The Spectra Crown Tales*](#)
- Terra Pensier, [*The Spectra Crown Tales*](#)

Books set in this kingdom:

- [*The Spectra Unearthed*](#) (Keita's Wings 1)
- *The Masters of Wishes*, A Spectra Crowns Tale



LECTRAN

Kingdom: Lectranis, southwest

Abilities: Electricity

Color: Yellow

Characters:

- Savanna Sage, [*Keita's Wings series*](#)
- Wyatt Tesla, [*Keita's Wings series*](#)
- Tilda, [*Mira's Griffin*](#)
- Marigold, [*The Spectra Crown Tales*](#)

Books set in this kingdom:

- [*The Spectra United*](#) (Keita's Wings 2)
- [*The Seventh Clan*](#) (A pectra Crowns Tale)



SPRITE

Kingdom: Spritelands, southeast

Abilities: Life

Color: Green

Characters:

- Keita Sage, [*Keita's Wings series*](#)
- Ket and Tapiol, [*Mira's Griffin*](#)
- Alstin Andres, [*The Captain's Dowry*](#)
- Auralee Pensier "Allee", [*The Spectra Crown Tales*](#)
- Robin Sage, [*The Spectra Crown Tales*](#)

Books set in this kingdom:

- [*The Spectra Uprooted*](#), (Keita's Wings 3)
- [*The Seven Sages*](#), A Spectra Crowns Tale



MER

Kingdom: Merlandia, east

Abilities: Water

Color: Blue

Characters:

- Azura Neried “Zuri”, [*Keita's Wings series*](#)
- Calder, [*Mira's Griffin*](#)
- Carina and Lyra Filara, [*DreamRovers*](#)
- Innis, Dylan, and Irvette Neried, [*The Spectra Crown Tales*](#)

Books set in this kingdom:

- [*The Spectra Unfurled*](#), (Keita's Wings 4)
- [*The Cousin Pact*](#), a Spectra Crowns Tale



MUSE

Kingdom: Castalia, northeast

Abilities: Communication

Color: Purple

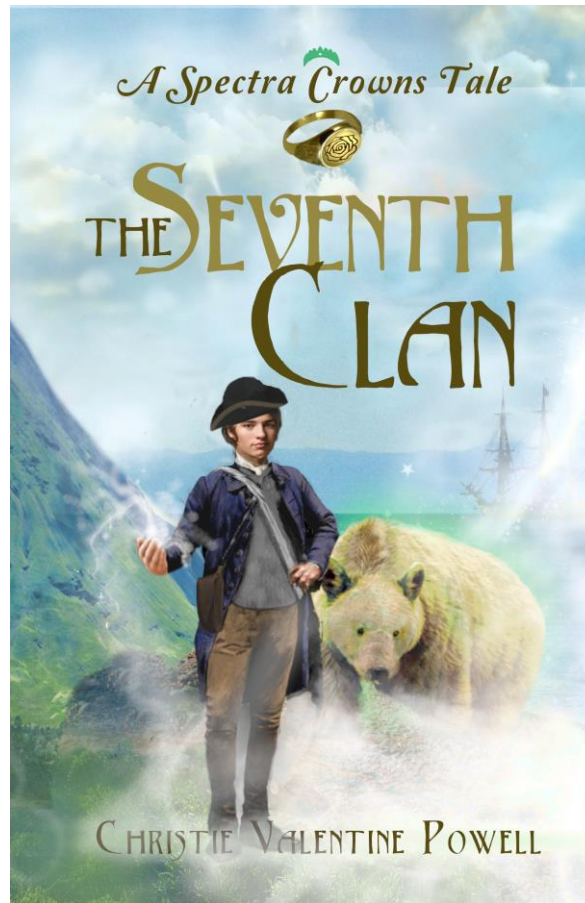
Characters:

- Brian and Teague Pensier, [*Keita's Wings series*](#)
- Mira, [*Mira's Griffin*](#)
- The Bridgley family, [*DreamRovers*](#)
- Lilac, Aura Bryn, and Minnea Pensier, [*The Spectra Crown Tales*](#)

Books set in this kingdom:

- [*The Spectra Undaunted*](#), (Keita's Wings 6)
- [*Mira's Griffin*](#)
- [*DreamRovers*](#) trilogy
- [*The Dream Realm*](#), A Spectra Crowns Tale

The adventure continues!



The empire tore apart Perrin's family and destroyed his future. All he has left is the revolution. The Spectra, a race of people with unusual abilities, could save his cause, but they are long believed extinct.

Allee needs Perrin to keep from being trapped as a beast, but her people's laws forbid her from associating with those without abilities. Perrin and Allee must unite their people, before the empire subjugates them both, to have any hope of victory.

Inspired by Beauty and the Beast and the American Revolutionary War

Works in the Spectra Universe:

[**The Spectra Crown Tales**](#)

Spectra have hidden their abilities from humans for centuries, but the world is changing.

[**Keita's Wings series**](#)

In the generation before The Spectra Crown Tales, an exiled princess must unite six elemental kingdoms to save her world.

[**Mira's Griffin**](#)

Caught between griffin captors and human rebels, a girl and griffin must teach their species to communicate before both sides are destroyed.

[**DreamRovers trilogy**](#)

A found family seeks refuge from persecution. Their crime? Their ability to travel through dreams.

[**The Captain's Dowry**](#)

The captain has no idea that his new bride is his cabin boy, and she won't wait quietly at home.

[**The Centaur Chase**](#)

Across the sea from the Spectra world, centaurs have their own difficulties with humans. If a centaur and young woman can grow past the piling tragedies, they can find a new start with each other.



Christie Valentine Powell wrote her first story in second grade and has been writing ever since. She published her first book in 2015 and has gone on to write many fantasy books in the same universe. Her other hobbies include making small crafts, hobby farming, and bragging that she has seven sisters. She lives near the sunniest city in the world with her husband, five children, and way too many cats. Connect with her on most social media as “TheSpectraBooks”.