

## Epics of Isavoire

### Chapter 4: Terra Firma

Flying to the surface for the first time was a scary act for Helah, and even scarier was how far she was from her home in Heofonia. She had never seen the green grass of the ground up close or ever touched the ground.

She landed gingerly at first, surprised how firm it was compared to the somewhat soft surface of the Heofonia clouds. She walked on it and looked around, watching leaves on the breeze and noticing trees. The sights were all so new to her, and she had landed in a plain where several large boulders were. In the distance she saw a path that led to a village.

“So, this is the ground?” Helah asked herself. Her only response was the cawing of the crow. She saw it perched on a tree’s branch, staring at her. “Hm, it’s different than looking at it in a book. I can see why you wanted to come back.”

“I should warn you birds don’t make for the best conversationalists. You might as well be talking to a brick wall.”

Helah turned and looked around, surprised by the sudden speech. “Who said that?”

“I did.”

The black winged angel turned to look at her crow. “Was it you?”

The bird turned its head quizzically, but flew over to one of the nearby stones, which immediately began to rise and shift. The boulder’s shape changed as it became more apparently like that of a person. The arms were large and bore

carvings, while the body was well formed and wide. The head of the stony creature was gray, the eyes, mouth, and nose of it like a statue.

“Blasted thing, my head is no perch!”

“You’re a golem!” Helah shouted in surprise.

“Yes, and you are...A winged human?”

“I’m a Heofonite.” Helah stared at him annoyed.

“Oh, the sky people! I thought you would look more like birds.” The golem laughed before rising fully, his size causing him to tower over Helah. She noticed that on his body was a fair bit of moss, hanging particularly on his shoulders and atop his head. “The name is Seffred, I live in this plain.”

“It is nice to meet you. I apologize about the crow sitting on your head.”

“Could have been worse, he could have left me an unwanted present,” Seffred smiled. “What brings a child of the sky down to the solid earth?”

“I wanted to be sure that this crow made it home safely. Somehow, it made it to my home and I’ve been nursing back to health for a few weeks.”

“That was kind of you. It seems it took a liking to you in that time.

“It has. I’m glad for its company, though.” Helah smiled at the bird, which flew over to her shoulder and landed there gently. “I hope I won’t have to say goodbye to it, but Heofonia is too high for this one to fly safely.”

“Then what will you do?” Seffred asked before sitting upon a nearby stone.

“Will you come back to visit it?”

“...No. If I go home, I’m not sure when I can visit again, but I would love to stay around.

“Then do so. See some of what the firmament has to offer, after all, mother Gaia created it for the purpose of travel.”

Helah thought on the offer. She had a life in Heofonia and her job as a scribe, but this was her first time away from home. “Maybe...Maybe I should stay, but I need a place to rest.”

“From what I hear the nearby town has a shelter, though you are also welcome to rest in this field, should you desire it.”

“Maybe I will.” Helah smiled. There were a lot of maybes, but she knew that she wanted to see more of what was on the world. “Do you have music?”

“None that I have heard personally. My kind aren’t known as the best of singers.”

“I’m not much for singing myself, but I do play. I have my harp with me, if you would like to listen.”

“You have listened to me, I shall do the same in return.”

Smiling gently, Helah produced her harp and began to play, plucking the strings skillfully, producing an energetic, fast paced tune. Her eyes closed and her music came out naturally, surprising Seffred. She played for several minutes, until she ended with a final strum.

“Impressive, perhaps you could be a wandering musician.”

“Thank you. I’d love to keep playing for others.”

“Then I’ll be happy to listen, though allow me to give you something that may help. Before you head towards the settlement, lift the stone to my right.”

Curious, Helah put her harp aside and lifted the boulder beside Seffred with ease, tossing it a fair distance away. Beneath it was a small hole, where Helah saw a single, shining black stone. "What is this?"

"Obsidian. I traded for it a few years back and I planned to collect other gems, but I feel it would be better to give it to you. You should get a decent price, should you decide to sell it to a jeweler."

"No...I think I'll keep it." Helah smiled as she picked up the stone and stared at it. "I thank you for it."

"You're welcome, Helah, though I don't suppose you could take that boulder you threw and place it back?"

"That's easy, I could lift its weight and yours if need be."

Seffred laughed. "I like your confidence, girl. It will take you far in this world."

"If that's so, I'll go as far as I can." With a newfound feeling of happiness and encouragement, Helah began moved Seffred's stone back into place and thanked the old golem before sleeping in the field, hearing him hum the tune she had played before in his deep, constant tone. In the tree, she noticed that her crow was nesting, making itself as comfortable as Helah was on the firm, stable ground.

The next morning, Helah woke, greeted by the sight of dawn, she moved ahead to the village he had pointed out. At first, she thought to fly, but instead, she wanted to walk ahead. Helah had spent so much time looking down, far and away from the world, but now she wished to experience what was upon it for herself. Walking on confidently, with the obsidian in hand and her pet bird flying above, Helah grinned happily.

