

VISNELLA

THE EMERALD QUEEN I: MEETING THE RUA ELVES,
UNDERWATER MAVENS AND CILEE FAIRIES.

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*I dedicate this book to my beloved daughter,
Beril Maya.*

This is a work of fiction. Events, places, and characters are the products of the author's imagination. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or actual events is purely coincidental.

THE VEILED GARDEN

It wasn't possible to tell from the silhouettes that the King and his cavalry were wandering around the forest as if they were lost. However, anyone who looked closely would've easily read both the fear and the hope simultaneously on their faces. It wasn't hard to figure out that they were looking for something. The forest seemed to have prepared itself for their arrival as if it had been expecting them. Even the trees seemed to be resisting autumn so they could watch these men pass by rather than shed their leaves. There was a moment; when the crunching sound continued even after the cavalry stepped onto the ground, and one look lasted minutes instead of seconds when the King noticed something. The sounds that seemed to be coming unnaturally slow and coming from behind had now completely stopped. He stepped forward without hesitation. He found himself passing through a transparent wall. He couldn't avert his eyes. He had never seen plants so beautiful, water so clear, or sky so bright. He faltered for a moment. He looked back; the transparent wall was there, and he saw his men. They were running back and forth in a great panic. He ran up to the see-through wall and started calling out to them. It wasn't long before he realized that they could not hear nor see him. That was when he heard a voice from behind. As he drew closer, his excitement grew, but he was still sneaking to be safe. However, it seemed like there was no one around to observe his awe. Suddenly, in a spot where the water had pooled, he saw them; a girl and that white horse... As he drew closer, he began to make out that the horse had a horn and a pair of wings. Then he saw the girl clearer and questioned if she was even a human. Upon closer inspection, he realized that the girl's hair consisted entirely of blue-black pearls. Her hair was fairly long, and her dress was soft as if it resembled silk. Her face was so enchanting that it would put all the beauty he'd seen on his travels to shame.

When he looked at her, he felt distanced from all mundanities. As if he shouldn't do anything at all... Even eating, sleeping, and talking were very unfamiliar needs to him at that moment. To preserve that moment, he might have even ceased breathing. He became someone who declared war on himself, which proved to be contrary to this garden. He felt like he could sway in the sweet breeze like a plant just to behold her face for a little while longer; and wanted to yield to his surroundings, to deny that his presence was by coincidence, but rather by right.

While the King was lost in thought, there wasn't a hint of the Unicorn's previous joy. It approached the girl that it had just played with in the water and extended its head forward as if it was telling her something. After that silent conversation, the girl started looking around. The King could find no reason not to reveal himself, but also, he was restraining himself from hiding a little longer since he didn't know what to do by showing up. Eventually, he decided not to prolong the situation and slipped out of the plants with a hesitant expression. Before taking more than two steps, he could feel the girl and the Unicorn's gaze already upon him. It was as if they were examining every cell of his body and were questioning why he was there. The thought of sharing his confusion about not knowing the answer to that question pleased him. That way, they'd have something to talk about. The King was a good conversationalist. He had a warm relationship with his people and was very much loved by them. He wasn't actually that far from the girl and the Unicorn; but while they watched him, it felt like no matter how many steps he took; he couldn't get closer. Every time he looked at her, he grew more and more convinced that this was a dream. She was too beautiful to be real. All the jewels she was wearing seemed to be competing to make her even more beautiful. It was as if her every move was designed to take away the ability to think from anyone before her. With what felt like the last of his waning sense, he put his hand on his crown to take strength from it and remind himself that he was a King. He pretended to adjust his non-crooked crown. Then he

worried about his action appearing foolish and started looking at his feet. He wanted to truly believe he was moving forward. No matter what, he couldn't ignore the excitement he felt, nor the fact that he was shaking. Thinking about that only doubled his excitement. Then he reminded himself that this was just a dream. Suddenly, his ears were graced with that velvety voice he'd never heard before.

“You're not in a dream... But how did you get here?”

A voice could be so pleasant and powerful at the same time. It was clear these were questions. He wanted to form a proper sentence and was worried that hesitating too long would seem strange. He forced himself to speak by opening his mouth, and after pausing for a few seconds, he said, “Greetings,” to buy time.

They ignored that answer, widening their eyes and raising their brows to make it clear that they expected him to continue. The King, as he always did, wanted to say a few elegant sentences with all sincerity, but he was infuriated because nothing came to his mind. He suddenly decided not to look at the girl. Pretending as though something had caught his eye in the water, he pushed out a few simple sentences with the most muffled tone possible

“I was walking, I mean, in the forest... I passed through the wall. I had my cavalry with me. They got left behind the wall; my horse is there too.”

He chanced a surreptitious glance to make sure they were listening to him. What was with that horse? He had no doubt it understood his words. At that moment, he realized that he couldn't think about the Unicorn. If he had any capacity at all, he'd spend it on thinking about the girl and spending the rest of his life as a plant watching her. If he were to form a new sentence, ‘Where is this place?’ would've been suitable. However, before that became necessary, he began hearing the same confusion and coldness hidden in the girl's authoritative, velvety voice in his bones.

“This is a reflection of the Emerald City. I do not know how you have entered here, but there must be an explanation.”

The girl turned to the Unicorn as if she expected this explanation from it, and the creature approached the King as if to find one. It didn't take long for the Unicorn to start circling him. How many laps had it been, five or ten? The King, who was already dizzy, was the last person that could have counted. He actually felt like he was full of redundant patience that would allow him to wait for years. The Unicorn mumbled something and began flapping its wings. It was evident that even the girl couldn't piece together what that action meant.

“Unica, enough!”

Unica reluctantly respected the request. However, it suddenly took off and started flying enthusiastically while continuing to mumble. It was off to share its excitement. Before Unica disappeared into the sky, they faced one another. Surprisingly, the King was the first to speak. He looked at the girl's wrists, which were almost completely covered in jewelry, at her elegant crown that was rivaled only by herself, and the rest of her jewels that were obviously chosen meticulously.

“You, my Queen...”

His sentence was interrupted by the approach of the girl's hand. The Queen closed her eyes inches away from a spot between the King's shoulder and his heart. The King looked at the girl as though begging for this momentary experience to last a little longer. Conversely, the girl started talking like she didn't have a moment to lose.

“King of Northa, I am Arya Visnella, Queen of the Emerald Realm, Bearer of the Emerald's Light and protector of realms. The Emerald City reveals itself once in a lifetime to an important person that requires aid. That is why you are in this dimension. It may be difficult for you to understand...”

The girl took another step back and said, “Astora tudi swodita,” and an icy-blue shield with an emerald in its center appeared in her hand.

In his surprised state, the King wasn’t aware a shield was being handed to him, so he had to be warned verbally.

“It is time for you to leave, King of Northa. Keep this by your side.”

This sentence was not what the King, who was hoping to transform into a garden plant rather than leaving, wanted to hear. He was driven mad with the thought that he would’ve given all his fortune to stop time so he could stay with her a little longer, but he knew the reality was that his fortune would’ve been insufficient. On the other hand, he knew that his people needed help, and he was worried for them. What suited him was to think about his people and leave as soon as possible. With that realization, he felt like a young boy who was forced to take on the responsibility of the entire household. The dismal state he was in grinned quite a bit at the positive response he gave to her.

“Of course, my Emerald Queen.”

When he called her ‘my Queen,’ he flinched with a thought. Since she was a Queen, that meant she must’ve had a husband. The Queen consoled the King – at least, that was how he saw it. “Go now; I know what you are facing.”

The King was devastated by the thought of leaving that he couldn’t find the strength to ask the Queen any other questions. What was he expecting? To stay with her, somewhere he doesn’t belong.

The King was pretending as if he was distracting his mind with an answer to a question that he didn’t care to know and was stubbornly refusing to ask how he was supposed to leave. When

he looked around, he was pleased to see that the way he came had changed. That made him feel a little better. His conscience was clear because his goal was to leave that place, but his heart rejoiced that he didn't know the way. When the Queen pointed him in the right direction, he luckily had the presence of mind to mutter his appreciation. He was internally hoping to watch the Queen from a nook in the distance for a little longer while he searched for an exit. That way, he could've quenched the longing and adoration he now knew for certain would stay with him forever, if only for a little bit. As he was lost in those thoughts, a silhouette appeared in the distance. This silhouette that was closing in belonged to the Queen's right hand, Head General Alron. It didn't take long for Alron to reach their side with all his imposing splendor. The Head General seemed worried but also arrogant, though the look in his eyes suggested that he didn't want to hide these feelings but rather proclaim them. Without removing his eyes from the King, he asked, "My Queen, is everything alright?"

"Dretoka poaret!"

The Head General had no sooner finished his words than the Queen's silken dress replaced itself with a formal dress. This man's presence had immediately awakened a sense of discomfort in the King. The anger he felt towards the man increased to a whole new level when he saw that this man thought himself important enough to make decisions for the Queen. Then he unwittingly glanced up at the man's head. He was looking for something like a crown. Head General Alron looked elegant and majestic, just like the Queen yet wearing fewer precious stones. On his head, he was wearing something he'd never seen before, nor could he identify it. It seemed to extend down to his nose, ears, and neck, but it was too fancy to be a helmet. The jewels that were embellished on it were too pretty and shiny contrary to the spirit of war. His body was enveloped in a similarly dark, gleaming, gray metal. This metal appeared to be draped down over his back, like a cloak, down to his ankles. The King of Northa tried to avoid lo-

oking at the jewels the man was wearing, even around his ankles. What kind of man wore jewels on his ankles? With thoughts like these, he was sure that the man was a flamboyant kind of King when he began speaking. He spoke in the same tone of voice as if to remind them that he was also a King.

“Emerald King, I am Engor, King of Northa. The Queen gave me the necessary explanation.” He presented the shield. “I am grateful for this valuable kindness. I am leaving.”

Instead of making a statement that he was not the King, General Alron gladly turned to the Queen and asked her something about the shield; when he heard the Queen’s statement, that put his mind at rest.

“The Emerald King has not yet been chosen. It is time for you to leave.”

The Queen didn’t know why she gave that explanation, but clearly, she resented and was annoyed by her clothes being changed without her consent. Without waiting for the King of Northa to leave, she turned to the General and proceeded to reprimand him.

“Head General, return to the Palace immediately and wait for me! I’m going to summon Unica and spend some more time here.”

Having heard the words ‘Head General’, Engor was enjoying the relief and joy that washed over him. He even unintentionally mumbled “Head General...” to himself.

Head General Alron had no intention of leaving this foreigner with the Queen, so with a swift motion, he pointed the long and decorated staff-like object with a receptacle on it, which he had been holding, to a spot close by and said, “Orkadora!” And with that, a circle of light that resembled a portal materialized beside them.

“Of course, my Queen, as you wish. The King of Northa may use this portal. Please.”

Despite this fait accompli, The King of Northa glanced at the Queen for her approval. The Queen nodded to suggest that he may leave. Then the King gave Alron one last stern look before entering the portal.

It was the garden of the Northa Palace. How many steps had he taken? One or two? He wasn't sure. He felt a weight in his hand. It was the shield that the Queen had given him. When he looked upon the emerald in the center of the shield, he couldn't help his joy being overpowered by his longing.

“So, it was real...” he said.

“What was real, sire? We didn't expect to find you here. We've been searching for you tirelessly for days. Actually... some were starting to think you'd been taken. I put them in their place, of course; we didn't stop looking for you.”

“Wait! You said days...”

“Yes, sire. It's been days since your last trip to the forest.”

The King didn't keep his advisor talking for much longer. The questions he was going to ask would likely take too long to answer for the King, who wanted to be alone at that moment. Having understood from the King's body language that he wanted to leave, Mitaro, his advisor, gazed at the interesting shield the King was holding for some time as the King walked away. Then he turned to the Palace guards and told them to tighten the security measures around the Palace.

Engor entered his Palace; he shut the door of his room and drifted off into deep thought. Over and over again, he recalled his time in that garden, everything he did there, and by his cal-

culations, he couldn't have spent more than a few hours in it, and then there were all those curiosities... And Unica, and the Queen, the Queen, the Queen... Unsurprisingly, the only thing he didn't want to remember about that garden was the Head General. He told his guards not to let anyone into his room. He needed to think. He didn't need to close his eyes to see the Queen's face. At that moment, he was startled by the realization that he was neglecting the responsibility that he had been given. He wanted to pull himself together, but his soul was like a child's; he couldn't stop his thoughts. He immediately began to think that all colors and jewels found meaning only with the Queen's existence; without her, all beauty in the world was incomplete. He looked at the antique, meticulously embroidered cloths around the room. Who knew how many artists worked to make them? How many thousands of precious stones were in the Palace? With the Queen so far away, their shine was lacking and lost all meaning. Worrying about losing his mind, he jumped up from the bed he was lying on. He headed to the balcony; he wanted to watch the people in the surroundings, hoping it would calm him down. He watched his soldiers and his guards. They were doing their daily duties or conversing and laughing as they usually did during their idle time. If he hadn't returned with the shield, he would've been doubting his sanity because of what he'd just experienced.

He turned his eyes to the sky. It was a quiet, cloudless day. He imagined Unica's gliding away.

He felt strongly in the depths of his heart that he would see the Queen again.

ORDINANKT

The old man walked towards the water in his steel robe, reaching down to the floor. If a spy were watching him, he'd know it. One couldn't help but admire the mastery in how he held his staff and the way he was focused. His staff was a lengthy one with a receptacle, sculpted from Otronto steel, just like all the other Emerald Thymvors had. He appeared not to be walking, but his will to move forward was shaping the earth beneath his feet to obey his command. With each motion, he declared his unity with nature and pressed forth with his unique ostentatious silence. Ordinankt, in his lifespan of more than a century, was more ready than ever to face the water. As soon as he was close enough to see the Riverta Stream, the wind began to blow with a force that announced the coming conflict. Ordinankt slammed his staff into the ground at that moment and said, "Darekotamas."

Right after, he watched, as all the creatures other than him began leaving the Riverta Stream patiently and then forming a circle around the light emitting from his staff. He planted his staff into the ground and floated through the air until he reached the water. He recalled his prior trials. Then, he thought of Karathdor challenging the Emerald City and the armies of *Darkness* approaching their borders. He knew this day would come. He was well aware that the union of his soul with water was the last endeavor that completed his preparations. Putting all his thoughts aside as always, he concentrated. A few minutes of meditation was enough to get him to feel light as a feather. He couldn't help but float a little higher afterward. When he decided that he was ready, he opened his eyes. He raised his hands up so that his palms faced the water; synchronously, the water in the riverbed raised to his height. This could be called a form of greeting. Ordinankt closed his eyes for the next stage and visualized the threat that the Eme-

rald City faced. This visualization was actually a message given to the water. Now he had to prove to the water that he could cross into the astranta plane. In his imagination, he conjured up the northern border of the Emerald City. That was the closest border to the coming attack from the Dark Thymvors. He extended his hands forward and created a transparent, spherical cluster of light. Now, he could see the northern hills of the Emerald City in all their glory from end to end. Then he felt the energy at his fingertips, in his whole body. After a few seconds, his body was covered in millions of crystal particles, and his second body appeared right next to him. He chose to use a portal to go to the northern border, which was a long way away, rather than risk getting lost in thoughts. The sphere of light had disappeared from his hands.

“Orkadora.”

And with that, his astranta form passed through the portal and emerged at the northern border in a blink of an eye. With his astranta form, he examined the magnificent-looking Gorkham Hills. It was one of the places where the Emerald City’s glorious beauty began. He was looking around in awe as if he hadn’t already been living there for years. These hills that glistened with precious diamonds practically lit up the north of the city. He couldn’t resist the feeling that led him to the highest peak. Since traveling through the plane of thought only took seconds, he arrived at his destination immediately and gazed off into the distance, where he saw the thin, dark line. So, they were this close already. Without faltering, he said, “Sorclatadsuvare.”

A blue beam of light emerged from two hundred meters beyond the last of the diamond-encrusted Gorkham Hills and drew a wall around the bordering hills that reached up to the sky. There was no doubt that the wall, which was taller than any Emeraldite wouldn’t be able to measure, peaked among the clouds. Ordinankt was pleased with himself. Finally, with this trial, he’d been able to reach deep astranta.

With another “Orkadora!” the portal reopened. He approached his physical body at Riverta’s shore and left astranta to return to his prior self. His heart was pounding like he was young again, and he couldn’t hide his excitement. He looked down at the water with pride and started talking.

“Emeralddasuvare.”

“Talevartinants.”

“Suvare dale mour.”

This was a directive given to the water to protect the Emerald City. Only the ancient Thymvors could stir the water to activate. Moving the water was an ability that only the ancient Thymvors had. A Thymvor who did not reach the last stage of astranta could never genuinely understand the energy of water. Ordinankt gazed upon the large and clear body of water that was the Riverta Stream with hope in his eyes. The water began lifting from the ground, so much so that it reached the sky. Ordinankt, pleased with this development, felt at peace for a few moments. Then he couldn’t help the questions that emerged in his mind. What about the other borders?

“Darekopatas,” he said, and the circle surrounding the stream disappeared. He plucked his staff from the ground and said, “Orkadora.”

Now he stood at the outskirts of the Yesilta Woods, at the west border of the City, glancing at the vast area. The stone trees of the Woods glistened brilliantly and seemed to be saluting the land of ancient creatures. He crouched to the ground and grabbed a handful of dirt.

“Flipenriya,” he said.

The dirt slipped from his hands and separated into tiny particles in the air before starting to circle around Ordinankt. Then he slammed his staff into the ground and said, “Yesilta.”

“Emeralddasuvare.”

“Sodesoillas.”

“Tretasla moventum.” With those words, a wave emerged from his staff, dispersed through the earth, reached under the trees then traversed through the Woods until they were all set free.

Now, the stone trees of Yesilta began shaking back and forth in a rough manner that contrasted with the elegance of the precious stones atop them. They looked like rookie princes attending their first ball. Ordinankt closed his eyes as if to put an end to the conflicting image and raised his free hand, saying, “Sodesoillas.”

The words pronounced like this belonged to the Thymeium language; it was a language that was used to activate thymeium energy when combining one’s mental abilities with the energies of various gemstones that had interacted with the thyme plant. The mentalist people learned this language, from the one who discovered this land; Ordinankt. He had learned it during the years he was an explorer, from the various races that lived in the realm. Of course, it wasn’t truly necessary to use this language to create thymeium. After all, Ordinankt had created his first thymeium while on Earth with high meditation and had reached the dimension of this realm. However, the Thymeium language was essential to sort the different applications of thymeium energy and to concentrate easier while guiding the energy. Ultimately, the words were used to help concentrate while distinguishing the different thymeia and guiding their energy. Nevertheless, each race had its own version of the Thymeium language, in addition to the universal version. Because fundamentally, each race had its own distinct way of crafting thymeium.

“Otronto tude tretasta,” he said.

With that, the earth that had just been brown turned into a dark metallic silver and began making its way up the trees’ roots and covering them. Anyone who looked closely would’ve seen that Ordinankt’s cloak and the earth had turned the same color and texture. This was Otronto steel, one of the strongest materials in the universe and also one of their aces in the hole against the Dark Thymvors. After the earth covered all of the trees with Otronto steel, Ordinankt looked upon Yesilta Woods. Who could have claimed that the apple of the Emerald City’s eye, Yesilta Woods’ bewitching trees, now looked like oafs adorned with steel armor? There was still something missing. Ordinankt closed his eyes and raised his staff. The handful of dirt circling him suddenly fell to the ground, and a strong wind started to blow.

“Suurratresta,” he said, and with that, the light that shone from his staff covered the trees like a thin shelter, from their branches down to their roots; and so, the trees came to a consciousness of the mastery of transformation.