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**Tales of Mheroun**  
rise of the raven club  
prologue

## TALES OF MHEROUN: RISE OF THE RAVEN CLUB [PROLOGUE]

By Hazim Haemoglobin

A brown haired man sat on the floor of his office, slumped against a cabinet checkered with various magnets, tokens from his worldly travels. A hand rested on a bent knee while the other twirled a slender object—a black feather—as his one green eye and one blue eye followed the twirling movement.

The apple shaped clock on the office wall ticked angrily an 11:46 reminding him how late it was and how much overtime he had been pouring in for the past few weeks. He scratched his mane of curly hazel colored hair and peered more closely at the feather. The object seem to marvel him with its intimidating black color and its sheath of simplicity, belying the wondrous complex mechanics of flight.

He had an idea. It wasn't a very good one. But he had to execute it. He slipped the feather into his gray work trousers, wrinkled from the day's grind. He glanced out the glass windows, eyes swallowed up by the night and the jagged looking skyscrapers lining it. The view was definitely worth working on the 20th floor.

The brown haired man, slender and broad shouldered, rolled up his work sleeves and cleared the desk of all papers, pushing them to the floor without care or concern. He rummaged through his desk compartments for several minutes before crying out 'Aha!' in a gruff yet delighted manner.

He placed the cerulean envelope at the center of the desk along with a single sheet of bare foolscap paper. Pulling in his swivel chair, he sat and bent over, ballpoint pen in right hand, left hand's fingers drumming against the desk. And then he wrote:

*Dear Cheyla,*

*I doubt this letter will ever reach you, but it helps keep my insanity at bay if I pretend it will. I have been holed up in this stuffy old study of mine, trying to figure out a way to actually meet you, to shake your hand, because I know that by the time I might have the chance to have a cup of Kanche berry tea with you, many will have done so, congratulating you on the bravery I always knew you'd demonstrate.*

*You are blessed to be living on the great island of Mheroun. It is a vast land of many cultures and creatures, from the massive giants that roam the valleys to the tiny nymphs that hide under the leaves of the Poplars. I have received word that you are about to embark on your second year of education in the art of magic. The same source has also informed me that you have done poorly during your first year at Murdock School for Magic which is why, I presume, you have been transferred to a better school. I do hope you take your second year more seriously and to snub out some of that stubbornness I know you keep in copious amounts.*

*As I have mentioned, Mheroun is a wonderful place to grow up in. There has never been a place more diverse. From the sprawling Otan Jungles of the south, gnarly, yet mystical with feys, bog bison, and thousands of nymphs to the cold harsh Haika Mountains of the north, the ferocious winds there relentless and unforgiving. When I was there, I was attacked by several of the yeti some people believed to not exist. We even had a cup of Kanche berry tea together. The great expanse of desert which lies to the east, the Bharrein Desert is just as unforgiving with its torrid heat and sand dwellers, almost always appearing with menace on the mind. Then there's the Valley Of Serenity, a most haunting place if you ever get the chance to visit. The frightening Zana gave me gruesome tales to*

*tell my friends here, most of whom, refused to accept it as nothing more than a tall tale.*

*The little islands dotting the side of Mheroun are like faithful companions, full of fanciful things and adventures, though definitely not as large as Mheroun. Flamingo Island is home to the most eccentric of beings and the most bizarre of creatures even by Mheroun's standards. Kopo-Kopo Island is rocky and old, but the few who have settled there do make it a point they welcome no intruders. You cannot mention Mheroun without talking about the two great cities, Krat and Krandells. The Providence of Krat flourishes under the regime of the elves and honorable wizards who have made it a metropolitan for aristocrats to thrive and flourish. Krandells is its less shiny, less intimidating twin brother, but rich in old Mheroun history, ruled by the very lovely Queen Hazel and her King Lars. Both cities have been struggling to persuade the island to unite under one flag, but both have also failed miserably. It is a fascinating thing to observe.*

*I want you to focus your efforts on doing well in school first before you decide to travel, but if you ever do get the opportunity, grab it and appreciate it, for Mheroun holds many wonders that even the oldest of wizards have yet to discover. I miss it much. I wish I could go back, but whether another chance will come or not, I have my doubts. There is still hope though and that hope lies in you, Cheyla Tilkich. I wish you all the best in your second year of schooling. And please don't get into any more fights.*

*Love,*

*Marcus Smith*

There. It was done. The man folded up the letter and carefully slid it into the cerulean envelope.

*"Bawakai"* he whispered and stared out into the night.

## CHAPTER\_TWO

A stream of sunlight pierced through a single narrow stained glass window in the great expanse of dusty ancient shelves laden with scrolls and old books and journals. It bounded into the great library from the high stone ceiling to spotlight a lone dark mahogany table amongst the sea of shelves, giving the table a slight halo. Stacks of birch paper and a pile of strolls lay on a thick smattering of massive books on the table. A tower of these books on the bog oak study chair accompanying that table had collected several layers of dust. Volumes and volumes of manuscripts and publications were also laying scattered in defeated fashion, untouched and unopened in what must have been years.

Yet, despite that abandoned look, there lay a bearded figure a few feet away on the cold stone floor, sleeping not unsoundly, snores echoing off the walls, chest heaving under clasped set of hands. The small man laid there on his back, cloak covered in a tangled mess of cobwebs and balls of dust, oblivious to the Black Widow crawling across his large bulbous nose, searching for an ample location to weave a new nest. The nose twitched slightly to the surprise of the spider as it pattered over the mass of gray hair which matted his jaw and chin.

The sound of a loudly slammed door and the thud of several fallen books did not seem to stir the man from his sleep, as the snoring pressed on, almost rhythmically. There was the stomping of feet, which would have most definitely intruded on a normal human's dream state, but failed to ignite the slightest reaction from the sleeping bearded man.

"Sir!"

The voice belonged to a hooded figure lingering in the darkness of the large room. As there was no reply, the figure cleared its throat and called out to the resting man on the floor. The spider scampered off the body and into the darkness.

"Sir Odin, sir! Wake up sir! I have some news!"

A frustrated sigh filled the air before another round of "Sir! Wake up sir!" echoed off the walls. This produced no results except an unsatisfied "harrumph!" from the figure. The figure raised his hands in the dark and yelled out into the darkness.

*"Bohngun Dritodurr!"*

Several violet sparks erupted seemingly out of nowhere, showering themselves on the sleeping man. A smile crept up on the wrinkled face of the bearded man and he finally opened his eyelids to reveal two empty sockets where his eyeballs should have been.

"Good morning Bragi," he spoke aloofly into the air, "You should know, I am blind, but not deaf."

The figure stepped closer to the messy study table, the light revealing a pink cheeked young man, plump and round, with mousy brown hair topping off his plump face. The light seemed to pronounce the evident frustration strewn in his frown.

"Sir, I had to get your attention," he spoke, flustered, before adding, "and it's not morning."

Odin did not get up, but instead closed his eyes once more, seemingly drifting into another round of slumber.

"Sir! I sa-

"Just tell me the news, Bragi, I am listening," the old man interrupted slightly impatiently.

"It's happened. This morning. There was a slight commotion in the palace but they have managed to-

"Where is she?" Odin interrupted once more, eyes still shut.

"At the palace with her mother of course. Where is would sh-

"That is not acceptable!" thundered Odin with another interruption, this time bolting upright from the floor. The lines and creases of his years formed a very obvious look of fury on his wrinkled face. Startled, Bragi stumbled a few steps back, searching for something to say. Odin was glaring directly back at the sunlight pouring in, consumed in his own thoughts, while Bragi looked on nervously, having shrunk back into the darkness. After several moments of silence, Odin finally stood up, knees wobbling slightly, back hunched and frown still etched on his face.

"I need a quill. Hand me a quill Bragi," he spoke in between wheezes. Despite being blind, Odin was beckoning his finger in Bragi's direction. The pudgy young man had accustomed himself to his master's peculiar traits and abilities and rummaged through the piles and piles of books and scrolls, hunting for a quill and a bottle of ink. Odin was impatiently tapping his feet, leaning himself on the mahogany table.

"Magic Bragi! Use magic!" the old man ejected his hoarse voice into the large room.

Bragi paused for a moment, startled, before waving his arms in the air like an orchestra conductor, mumbling a series of spells. A few violet sparks sprinkled out and out of the darkness, a small bottle of ink and an eagle feather flew into his trembling hands. He set them down immediately on the table, pushing several piles of books onto the floor. The thundering noise of heavy works of literature hitting and echoing off the cold stone floor elicited another impatient reaction from Odin.

"Bragi! Never!" he warned, voice wavering a little, as he flailed his arms about, sending sparks of fuchsia ricocheting off the walls and floor. The fallen books and scrolls flew in the air and piled themselves neatly back on the table in front of a hunched Bragi who seemed terrified of the sudden outburst.

"I apologize sir, I didn't mean to-

"Address it to Ols," Odin cut in, "and let him know that I do not see it safe for her to be kept in the palace. Arrange for a meeting tomorrow at noon and we will discuss matters further. I dare not give details in this letter, Bragi."

Bragi was scribbling clumsily but furiously with his quill.

Odin had hobbled over to a shut window buried underneath a jungle of cobwebs and dust, which elicited a loud sneeze. Rubbing and pinching his pinkish bulbous nose, Odin groped the window for the latch and opened it, the sunlight swarming his sense even through his blindness. He pushed the creaky window out further, forcing several potted magnolias to topple off to the sidewalk below.

"Watch it!" yelled the voice of a boy below. Taking no notice of this, Odin peered out, taking in the magnificent city of Krandells.

"Ah, it is sunset, is it not?" he remarked, basking in the orange glow of the setting sun. He let the rays seep into the folds of his wrinkled skin. It had been a while since he had felt sunlight. It was wondrous. The aged elder felt almost new again as he soaked in the dawn. Mheroun had the most wonderful weather, he remarked in his own thoughts. If Bumians could learn to appreciate the island, there would be a slight chance he could allow them on, but as it was, they only seek self-gain...

Odin remembered something. Odin's hands plunged into the pockets of his robes, frantically hunting for something. Something soft on the outside and coarse at the center...he finally pulled out a sleek black feather. A spark was ready to burst out of him. Could it still be functioning? It had been a while, but...there might be a possibility. He jammed the feather back into the pocket and held out his hands.

"*Bawakai!*" he erupted, Sparks flew off the tips of fingers. Then nothing. Bragi looked on nervously.

Suddenly the old man's legs began moving, one wobbly step after wobbly step. Odin disappeared into an ocean of old bookshelves. Bragi abandoned his task and pattered after his master. Odin began sprinting now, defying his years, faster and faster among the rows and rows of bookshelves,

deeper and deeper into the darkness of the vast ancient library, the only light visible emanating from the fuchsia colored sparks sizzling and blinking violently from the old man's hands. Bragi sprinted as well, as fast as his unfit round body could, pausing a few times to crouch and pant off his exhaustion.

After several moments of rhythmic but furious running, Odin came upon a clearing amongst the forest of books and shelves. In the middle, Bragi saw, as he caught up, peering behind his master in between pants, a massive and towering wooden structure. Bragi stood rooted in awe of the erected structure, his mind fumbling over efforts to decide what exactly that structure was.

It was rectangular. An enormous rectangle, more than five times as tall as Odin who was now approaching it with brittle hands outstretched, no longer shooting sparks. Bragi noticed there was a sort of frame of stained mahogany, the very tip reaching out to touch the high library ceiling. There were intricate detailing of Mherounian creatures carved into the grains of the frame and..that's when Bragi's eyes spotted the massive rusty hinge. Then the other massive hinge further up. Instinctively, his eyes searched the great expanse of the structure, settling upon a lavish golden privacy knob. This mammoth object was a door.

He stared up the whole length. Chunks of curiosity pelted his brain. Why was this door here? Had it been here all these years? Why did Odin suddenly rush to this door? What was the significance of this huge door?

Odin ran his hands along the carvings on the surface, singing to himself.

*Aapabilanda maileehat,*

*Aapabilanda maineekmaitee,*

*Mheroun, O' Mheroun*

His strange tune echoed off the walls and ceiling as Odin crouched slightly, his hands dipping to the bottom portion of the great door. Bragi hurried over, thinking his master had fallen, his robes dipping into the layers of dust on the floor. To his surprise, Odin was singing louder with his slender crooked fingers in the small space between the door and the cold floor. He was trying to pry something out, it seemed.

"Master, do you need any help?"

Odin shook his head still singing, a smile spreading across his face.

"Ah! Bragi! I have found it!"

Bragi looked down at his crouching master Odin and then at the cerulean colored envelope in his hands. The letter seemed to glow and throb slightly as Odin held it. Bragi stared up the intricately designed wooden door, the length of which disappeared into the darkness. Then he glanced at Odin who was rocking back and forth in a kneeling position, oblivious to the clouds of dust that sprang up like angry bees as he disturbed the settled dust. He tried to read the expression etched on his master's face. There was a smile but his brows were slightly furrowed, and a teardrop escaped Odin's closed eyes to make its way down the map of wrinkles, only to fall to the floor.

Then Bragi allowed himself a visual study of the cerulean envelope, throbbing and pulsating in Odin's hold. Something big was about to happen, he decided. Something that Odin had been waiting to happen to Mheroun. He shuddered slightly.

Tales of Mheroun

is part of a short story by Hazim Haemoglobin

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