

## PART 1

All my days are exactly the same.

I wake up early, eat breakfast, play with my pet dragon Drag, train in sword fighting and bow and arrow, eat again and then go to sleep. If you notice I forgot to mention “brushing my hair and my teeth” it’s because that’s usually how it goes haha.

And so the cycle continues. I take a bath from time to time, but only when I reeeeeeally sink and Drag doesn’t take it anymore. Why is he so judgy? He’s a dragon after all and that’s a constant burnt smell! He can’t talk, but I know he hates the smell when he just flies away for a few hours to the farthest side of the castle until I bathe and we can play again.

My castle is small and old and full of spiders that make me company. Fortunately, they don’t have a nose, so they’re okay with my smell. Did I forget to mention that the castle is full of magic? Because it is! Stairs and floor tiles move and there are three magic rooms: a kitchen, which magically produces food everyday; my bedroom, which always cleans itself and has perfect temperature and the third room... well, that’s a mystery. I haven’t been inside nor even had the chance to take a peek. A subtle light that comes out of it, but that’s all I know... Needless to say that the castle is a bit of a prick and always keeps the door locked.

I know my life seems cool, but the pet dragon, magic castle, and all the fight training get old pretty quickly when you are forced to stay inside the castle. Yes, I sound spoiled, but I’m 14 years old and I’ve lived here probably since I was 3 or 4. I don’t remember much about my life before it besides that my name is Anne and according to my parents there’s a big war, decade-long war going on outside between the sorcerers and the Kingdom, and whoever wins gets to rule all of Kingsvalley. My parents are the strongest sorcerers in the world, by the way, at least according to the annual *World’s Strongest Sorcerers* magazine covers they hang around the castle.

They say the reason I can’t get out is because I was born without any power and that’s so shameful, right? It’s like being the daughter of a talented painter and failing to draw straight lines so miserably they become full circles.

Ever since the war began, my parents only visit me once a year: on my birthday. They bring cakes and tell stories about how the Kingdom was brutal and plain bad, how they did everything in their power to suppress the freedom of sorcerers, and how sorcerers were fighting for peace across the whole Kingsvalley. Just when they’re about to say goodbye, I beg them to let me leave the castle and fight on their side. They always say the same thing:

—You’re too young!

— And powerless!

—And you also smell!

Okay, I made up the last one. However, I turn 15 tomorrow, and I'll finally be old enough to show them all my fighting skills and to brawl by their side. I might not be a sorcerer, but I am a warrior.

So the next morning I woke up like a 15 year-old girl! No, wait: A 15-year old warrior! That's better. I brush my teeth and hair and bathe because it's a special day. I eat breakfast, finish a training session and I suddenly ask myself ...."Why haven't my parents arrived?"

I walk around the castle in circles and ask the spiders about my parents, but they can't talk, so either they know nothing or they refuse to tell me anything. One hour goes by. Then two.

Three.

Four.

Ten.

The night is here, my parents are not. This has never happened before, so I do nothing but cry and cry. "What if something awful happened to them?" "Did the Kingdom win the war?" "Are they even alive?".

I rush to the door and beg the castle to let it open so I can seek my parents. Nothing happens.

So I continued to cry for hours until the sun rose again to heat Kingsvalley. I didn't sleep, no one came. I didn't eat. I didn't train. I just lied on the floor, which honestly, smelled worse than me and it should have self-cleaning powers too!

I suddenly felt a strength in me, woke up and swore to the sky:

—If you let me go out of this castle, I will seek my parents, find out what happened to them, and put an end to this war!

Like I had the audacity. Yet, in a split second, the floor tiles beneath me started moving and I moved along with them. They were leading me somewhere, but... Where? What was happening? Until I stopped right in front of a door: the third room, which emitted the most intense glow that I've ever seen in my life. I touched the doorknob... And it opened up for the first time.

I entered the room and realized that it was a normal bedroom with a bed, a bath, and a table. Nothing extraordinary... Except for a ball of light floating in the middle! I touched it and it disappeared immediately. But then I looked at my hands and they were glowing just as bright. Honestly, I looked phenomenal. I did not stop to hesitate and looked for the door that I knew led to the exterior world... Though when I tried to open it, nothing happened. So I closed my eyes, took a step back, and said to myself:

—"Open, now", while I made a slight hand movement in the air.

The door opened. And I started shaking like I've never shaken before. I glanced at my hands and the glow wasn't there anymore... But I knew exactly what it was. I saw the same glow in my parent's hands whenever they did magic. I also felt like a boss. That could only mean that the light in the room gave me sorcerer powers and now I was able to fight alongside my parents.

Drag was too asleep to witness the whole thing so I woke him up, got in his back with my sword, bow and arrow, and flew across the sky like I had any idea. "Fake it till you make it", I heard my dad once say.

Hours later, I descended on a river bed and drank some water, when two strange men approached while aiming their arrows towards my head.

—"Who are you?", said a fat, bald man with a mustache. "And how do you have a dragon?"

—"I'm Anne, daughter of sorcerers. I'm looking for them".

The two men started shaking and threw their bows on the ground.

—"Please, don't kill us!", plead a small guy with long hair and a baby face.

—"Yes! You already won the war! Don't take it out on two random men by the river?"

I was so confused. "What do you mean with 'you already won the war'?", I asked.

They looked at me now even more confused.

—"Girl, did you live under a rock and are you sure your parents are sorcerers? They won the war ten years ago".

I fell on my knees again. I cannot believe the audacity. The disrespect.

**THE END.**