



RUNESPEAKER

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FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS, THE SPEAKERS-- MAGICIANS WHO SPEAK TO NATURE-- OF ETREL HAVE BEEN VANISHING WITHOUT A TRACE. WITH THE THREAT OF RESTLESS NEIGHBORING KINGDOMS LOOMING OVERHEAD, THE CROWN SEEKS TO CONSOLIDATE ITS REMAINING POWER IN PREPARATION FOR DISASTER. THE QUEEN OF ETREL HAS ISSUED A DECREE SUMMONING ALL OF ETREL'S RUNESPEAKERS TO THE CAPITAL. THIS IS A MOVE NOT WITHOUT RISK-- ETREL WILL WITHER WITHOUT THEIR INFLUENCE. THE CASTLE ITSELF IS STEEPED IN THE SUBVERSIVE MOTIVES OF THE COURT, MANY OF WHOM SEEK TO USE THE SPEAKERS TO FURTHER THEIR OWN POWER.

SABRIEL, A TRAVELING RUNESPEAKER DESPERATELY TRYING TO BALANCE HIS DUTY TO HIS ADOPTED LAND AND TO HIS SISTER'S HEALTH IGNORES THE SUMMONS. HOWEVER, HIS SEARCH FOR A CURE FOR HIS SISTER HAS SO FAR FAILED, AND HE WILL STOP AT NOTHING AND GO TO ANY LENGTHS TO SAVE HER, EVEN IF IT MEANS RETURNING TO THE LIFE THAT NEARLY DESTROYED HIS FAMILY.

HAYTHAN, AN OLD FRIEND OF SABRIEL'S AND A MEMBER OF THE COURT, CONVINCES HIM TO RETURN TO THE PALACE TO SEEK HELP FOR HIS SISTER FROM THE OTHER SPEAKERS THERE. A DESPERATE SPEAKER IS JUST WHAT THE POWER-HUNGRY COURT WANTS, AND SABRIEL IS FORCED INTO THE TREACHEROUS WATERS OF COURT POLITICS TO SECURE HIS SISTER'S SAFETY. HOWEVER, ONCE SABRIEL UNCOVERS THE TRUTH BEHIND THE DISAPPEARANCES OF ETREL'S SPEAKERS, HE REALIZES THAT HE MUST MAKE CHOICES THAT PIT EVERYTHING HE LOVES AGAINST EVERYTHING HE BELIEVES IN.

SABRIEL

Sabriel is a traveling runespeaker who uses magic to assist the people of Arro Valley. He works as a healer for the most part, but through magic is also able to improve the health of crops and livestock.

As a runespeaker not controlled by the crown, Sabriel works on his own time. He travels where he wants and when he wants. He is not paid in the traditional sense, but townspeople are always quick to offer him and his family food and shelter any time they need it. Sabriel is well loved and well known within Arro Valley. Outsiders, however, are not privy to any information about him, as Speakers are jealously guarded by the people of the region they travel.

When the crown decrees for the second time in a decade that all of Etre's Speakers are to report to the palace, Sabriel ignores the summons. After the disaster that happened last time the Speakers were recalled, Sabriel has no intention to be involved in the mire of kingdom politics.

FAMILY

Sabriel's father disappeared, presumed dead, during a devastating fire at the royal palace of Etre ten years before the start of this story. Sabriel's mother, Serya, fled the disaster with Sabriel and his year-old sister, Mielle. His mother's fears about the crown's intentions toward Speakers led Sabriel to continue the self-imposed exile even after he left home. Recently, Mielle contracted a disease untreatable by runespeak, and she and Serya joined Sabriel in his travels in hopes that they might find a cure.



HAYTHAN

Haythan is the son of Advisor Davan Orel, the king's advisor on security. He is well trained and educated in the manner of most other young nobles. Following in his father's footsteps, Haythan has a special interest in the unrest in adjacent kingdoms.

As a young nobleman, Haythan's life is filled with entertainment and frivolity. He frequently hunts, jousts, and attends palace functions with his peers. Recently, he was assigned to work under Court Speaker Ania to oversee the relocation of Etre's Speaker population to the palace. Haythan is one of the nine people in the palace actually aware of the true reason behind the recall of the Speakers.

Since so few Speakers arrived at the palace in response to the decree, Haythan formed several small teams to find out which Speakers were just being recalcitrant and which were missing. To his dismay, he found that many more were missing than the crown had suspected.

COURT POSITION

Haythan's best friends growing up were the children of the two Court Speakers, Anias and Anslém. Anias died trying to prevent the palace fire that occurred a decade ago, and his wife Serya disappeared with their children, Sabriel and Mielle. Anslém continued to work as the Court Speaker until he vanished without explanation a year before the events of the story. His daughter, Ania, succeeded him. Haythan's friendship with Ania was a deciding factor for his assignment as her second. While Ania is in charge of the accommodations for the Speakers arriving at the palace, Haythan is the one who travels Etre to retrieve them in the first place.



RUNESPEAK

Runespeak is a language used to speak to nature. Everything non-sentient, from rocks to cows to time itself can understand runespeak. Humans can learn to speak, write, and understand the language, but are not subject to its compulsions. Learning the language does not give the speaker the power a natural-born Speaker has. Runespeak is technically only a language, and has no power in and of itself. Speakers are people capable of transferring their life energy back into other areas of nature. This ability, though required for one to be considered a Speaker, is not always necessary when employing the abilities of a Speaker. For example, if a Speaker were to ask the wind to lift a rock, the wind might comply, or it might demand an equivalent exchange of energy from the Speaker.

Often, energy is only demanded if the area is not familiar with the Speaker in question. Territory is very important to the operation of Speakers. A given area of land only responds to its own Speaker, frequently demanding energy from or even blatantly ignoring any other Speaker who arrives in the area. Removing a Speaker from their area of influence drastically reduces their power as well as the prosperity of the land they lived on.

Birds are strongly linked to Speakers. Out of all animals, birds most frequently utilize the relationship between a Speaker and their territory. They go to Speakers when they are injured or need food and offer feathers as a token of their appreciation. This tendency is so prevalent that the number of feathers a Speaker owns is often used to indicate the level of power a Speaker has.