

**PARENTAL  
ADVISORY  
EXPLICIT CONTENT**

**Written  
by  
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# THE TOWER OF ABELL

**The Black Raven  
Saga**

# The Tower of Abell

The Black Raven Saga  
Volume 1

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The Black Raven Saga, Volume 1

Valerius Laborem

Published by Valerius Laborem, 2024.

This is a work of fiction. Similarities to real people, places, or events are entirely coincidental.

THE TOWER OF ABELL

**First edition. March 15, 2024.**

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ISBN: 979-8224225330

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About the Author

For my brother, without whoms enthusiasm this book would not  
have been finished.

In the age of gods and mortals, there stood a colossal tower piercing the heavens. This magnificent structure was the creation of Abell, the supreme deity, a being of immense power and wisdom. When Abell presented his creation, he vowed to grant a single wish to any mortal who could reach its summit. The challenge was laid, and the call to ascend the Tower echoed throughout the land.

—The Tower of Abell





# Chapter 1: Pain Works Best



## (Renald)

It is officially the first day of our journey to the Boss room and I sit at the front of our cart, steering the thunderhoof bison along the forest trail. Our doctor, Ironvine, a large, purple furred Chim-Chi, sits next to me. Glimmer, a three foot tall blue Snargle musician, sits in the back with Whisperclaw, a female Jackal. She has sandy brown fur with black spots and was locked up with me in the Vertalara prisons. I was only locked up for a bar fight, but I overheard Whisperclaw talking with Vesper, our Guildmaster, and apparently she was being charged with attempted assassination. We are traveling at a slow pace for right now, but Ironvine said we'll probably pick up the pace in a couple of weeks. When we first entered the Tower, there were at least three or four other large groups of adventurers ahead of us, but now I notice that the trail is surprisingly quiet, too quiet. Whisperclaw pokes her head out of the back of the cart right as I notice two men brandishing knives beginning to step out of the shadows in the forest on either side of the cart. Whisperclaw is the quickest to react, attempting to throw a dagger at the man on the left. He expertly dodges the blade. It instead embeds itself in a tree next to him.

“Bandits!” Whisperclaw yells, squeezing her way into the front seat, between me and Ironvine.

A sudden melody from a flute begins to come from the cart causing me to glance back momentarily. A giant blue Dire Wolf appears between the two men and the cart, one of Glimmer's Illusions. We haven't stopped moving yet, so I flick the reins for the bison to start running, hoping we can outpace them. Instead, the bison slows down, almost stopping completely.

“Gods dammit, not now!” I curse through clenched teeth. I am not drunk enough for this.

The bandit that Whisperclaw had thrown her knife at rushes past the Dire Wolf and attempts to leap onto the back of the cart, barely missing and

tripping himself up a little. His partner lets out a horrified yelp at the sight of the huge Dire Wolf.

“It's a mo-mo-monster!” He screams, turning to flee.

“Everybody just needs to calm down.” Ironvine yawns in his usual monotone voice. I didn't expect much from him anyway since he was a pacifist, and one of the worst kind too.

Just as quickly as she had climbed to the front, Whisperclaw disappears into the back again. I hear the sound of a dagger missing its target again and thudding into a tree.

“Dammit all! Stop the cart!” Whisperclaw yells at me from the back, obviously pissed.

“Renald, please don't stop the cart!” I hear Glimmer cut in, stopping his tube momentarily to move closer to the front before adding a new note. This note is sharp and within it, I hear the sounds of a Dire Wolf Pack moving through the forest. I know this is only Glimmer's illusions at work, but I don't understand how it all works too well. I assume it's similar to how my own powers work.

I snap the reins again, pleading with the bison to go faster. The leather snaps it on the backside and the bison lets out a cry before breaking out into a full on sprint.

“Grab the reins. I'll catch up with you.” I say, handing the reins to Ironvine. Then I climb to the back of the cart, preparing to jump.

The bandit closest to the cart attempts to grab the edge, but his fingers just barely don't reach, causing him to slip and fall fully on his face. I see his friend screaming his head off in the background as he makes a full on sprint for the Tower's exit.

“They can summon monsters!” the bandit screams hysterically as he runs away.

I finally hear Ironvine realize that he's in control of the cart.

“Renald!” He roars.

Thankfully, the cart maintains its course along the winding trail. I feel Whisperclaw place her paw on my chest.

“Don't worry about my knives.” She says.

I see Glimmer's illusions begin to fade away as the music stops.

“I'm not. I gotta see something.” I jump out the cart, doing a military roll upon landing, before swiftly standing up and drawing my old Knight's saber and shield from my back.

I slowly walk up to the bandit and stab down on his leg. He screams out in agony and tries to crawl away but my saber is pinning him to the dirt.

“Arghhh, you monster!” He writhes in agony.

“You attacked us first, so really, you're the monsters. Besides, you pissed me and my friends off while I was sober.” I sneer at him, twisting the saber, “Now tell me who you work for.”

“I-I work f-for a Sa-Sa-Saber named Blackthorn. That's all I know! Really! He told me that new parties would be coming through and that they're easy pickings!” Now he's starting to tell the truth. Pain works best during interrogations, something Whitecoat never agreed with me on. I suck my teeth out of slight irritation.

“Where is he? Tell me or I'll kill you, and by the Gods, I swear I'll do it!” I say sharply but in a low enough tone that the moving cart can't pick up my voice.

“Your shield, you're supposed to be a Knight! I've never seen a Knight act like this before!” The bandit pleads desperately with me.

“I'm not a Knight. Now tell me where I can find this Blackthorn.” I twist my saber some more.

“His party set up camp near the waterfall, you know, the one closest to the Boss Room, just, please don't kill me!” The bandit answers quickly, so as to stop the pain in his leg, tears rolling down his face.

I pull my saber out of the bandit's leg before aiming right at his throat.

“Flee. Go tell this ‘Blackthorn’ that Renald and the rest of the Black Raven Guild are coming for him. Then, I want you to quit adventuring forever. You understand?” I command, trying my best to sound menacing.

The bandit is visibly terrified and all he can do is nod his head in agreement before limping himself back into the forest. I notice that both of the bandit's had dropped daggers similar to Whisperclaw's, which were still embedded in two different trees. I grab all four of them and stuff them in my bag.

I turn to begin back down the trail towards the cart, and I see it far off in the distance. Ironvine had indeed kept the cart moving that whole time. With no time to waste, I unfolded my leathery, bat like wings, which had been hidden beneath my cloak until now.

I take off, soaring through the air and then land back on the front of the wagon, allowing my wings to fold back underneath my cloak again. The first to say anything is Glimmer.

“Woah, that was pretty cool, Renald. You've had wings this whole time?” He asks, peeking his head through the back.

“It still doesn't excuse you for suddenly handing me the reins and then leaving. What if I wouldn't have been able to keep control? We could've lost the cart and all of our supplies!” Ironvine bares his fangs at me.

“Did you get my daggers?” Whisperclaw chimes in her question from behind Glimmer.

“I got your daggers, they're in here.” I toss my bag to Whisperclaw, who catches it and begins rummaging around, looking for her weapons.

“I'm sorry I just handed you the reins all of a sudden, but it didn't look like you were doing much anyway, Ironvine.”

“I can't believe you! You know I'm a pacifist, Renald.” Ironvine snaps back, astonished at the accusation, “I was ready to step in at a moment's notice if any of us got injured.”

“Sure you were, big guy.” Glimmer laughs, placing a hand on Ironvine's fur covered shoulder. Me and Whisperclaw break out into laughter as well.

We travel for another couple of hours, pretty much silent the whole way. When the sun had begun to fully set, we pulled off the main trail and into a clearing in the forest. We attempted to set up camp, but as me and Ironvine were going through our supplies, we realized that we forgot to pack tents.

We eventually came to the conclusion that we would each take turns sitting watch while the others slept in the cart. I chose the first watch, Glimmer's next, then Whisperclaw, and finally Ironvine.

Nothing of interest happened during my watch, so I spent some time thinking about what Whitecoat had said to me right before she told me to leave.

*“Is this how you think you're supposed to act? Fine, if that's how you're going to be, you are no longer a Knight of Ardent! On my authority as a Captain, I strip you of your rank and title...”*

I shake her voice out of head. Definitely not a day I want to remember right now. I get up and stretch before heading over to the cart and attempting shaking Glimmer awake. He doesn't budge no matter how hard I shake him. Not really feeling that tired, I sit back down again, leaning up against a tree. I could take his watch for him, he's probably tired from playing that flute anyway.

As I'm beginning to relax, I begin to hear the sounds of a chilling howl/screech that sends a chill down my spine.

*Moonhowler Owlbears.* Just great, I thought, fear bubbling up inside of me. I slowly begin to rise and make my way over to the cart. Right as I start to reach inside and shake everyone awake, I feel something heavy slam into me, knocking me to the ground on my back and simultaneously knocking the breath out of me.

Under the moonlight, all I can see was the outline of a large, bear-like creature, with the wings and face of an owl. It tries to slam its beak down on top of me, but I manage to shift my chest out the way just in time as the beak hits the dirt. It lets out another screech before slashing its claws across my shoulder, tearing through my armor. I feel the warmth of the blood beginning to pump but fear is overriding every joint in my body. I try to scream for help but the words don't come out. I will my hand to reach for my saber but my body refuses to move.

The Owlbear tries to hit me with its beak again, but I just manage to roll out the way. I feel another slash cut across my back as I do so, sending me flying further away from the cart and into a nearby tree. I hear a flute begin to play in the background and manage to catch a glimpse of Glimmer climbing out the back of the cart out of the corner of my eye. A strange blue mist floats out the end of his flute as he plays, transforming into another Owlbear, this one blue in color. It lets out a screech before beating its chest at the real Owlbear. The Owlbear that was attacking me turns its focus towards its blue counterpart.

Suddenly, from within the cart, I see a dagger fly out and through the blue Owlbear and towards the real one, which simply smacks the puny dagger away and immediately eyes something inside of the cart that I can only assume is Whisperclaw. The thing is, the only thing standing between the Owlbear and Whisperclaw is Glimmer.

I rush to my feet and dash as fast as I can towards Glimmer, sliding in between him and the large creature.

"Hey, over here ugly!" I yell, spreading my arms wide, trying to look as big of a target as I can.

Me and the Owlbear lock eyes momentarily before it charges me, slashing wildly with its claws. I side step and pull my shield off of my back, just as the Owlbear's beak slams into it throwing me back against the cart. I feel the cart jolt and begin to pull away from me. I look over and see Glimmer try to hop back into the cart only to trip over himself in the scramble. Before he can hit the ground, Whisperclaw leans out the cart and

snatches Glimmer back in. The blue Owlbear lets out another screech, drawing the attention of the one that was attacking us. The real Owlbear lashes out furiously at its fake counterpart, to no avail. All of its attempts to peck and slash the illusion fade right through and I use the opportunity to climb into the back of the cart.

“Is everybody ok?” I ask, looking around. Nobody else looks injured but me, good.

“You look like you took the worst of it.” Glimmer said, stopping his tune temporarily, then changing it to a low pitch screech.

The air is filled with the sounds of a Wyvern closing in, its wings beating as it soared down upon us. The Owlbear looks up in fear before screeching loudly. When the sound of the Wyvern begins to grow louder, the Owlbear takes off into the forest opposite to us.

The cart is still moving at an extremely slow pace, so I clasped Glimmer on the shoulders before heading to the front.

“Good man.” I said to him, the music finally stopping along with the sounds of the Wyvern and the Blue Owlbear within.

“What, what’s good? I thought I heard the sounds of a winged beast, didn’t you?” I hear Whisperclaw asking Glimmer as I crawl into the front seat, next to Ironvine, who is manning the reins for once.

“Is the Owlbear gone?” He asks, snapping the reins and causing the Bison to pick up the pace.

“For now, it seems so.” I wheeze, the pain from my shoulder and back finally kicking in.

“You look terrible my friend. Here, take these. You can chew on them if you need to.” Ironvine hands me 2 small pills filled with a glowing green liquid then says, “you’ll have to wait 6 hours before you can take some more, so don’t be overdoing it.”

I nod and take the pills, popping them into my mouth and swallowing them whole. My whole body gets filled with warmth which spreads to my back and arm. The cuts from the Owlbear begin to glow green and when the glow is finally gone, so is the pain and the wounds themselves.

“Thanks doc.” I say jokingly. He huffs and turns away from me, facing the trail as we approach it.

“We’ve got over 80 days left of traveling to do before we reach the Boss Room for this floor. Then, if we even beat it, we’ve got 99 more floors to

climb.” Ironvine mumbles, his tone serious, “Try and make it to the end alive for me, alright?”

A wave of guilt hit me in the gut for some reason as I listen. I can use a drink so badly, but Vesper made me promise I would stop if she bailed me out.

“Alright, alright, stop with mushy mushy stuff man. I've been through worse than this before, we can handle it.” I say, trying to appear confident.

“You were terrified back there, when the Owlbear was about to charge the wagon. You thought Glimmer was going to get hurt, didn't you?” Ironvine continues anyway.

To make matters worse, he had seen right through me. I clench my teeth.

“So what? I'm going to bed.” I spit the words like venom, climbing into the back of the wagon and laying down inside of my sleeping bag.

I can see Glimmer and Whisperclaw watching as I lay down.

“What's wrong with him?” I hear Glimmer ask Whisperclaw.

“Just leave him alone for a little while...” I hear Whisperclaw answer, “..he's probably just tired and sore.”

Everybody goes quiet after that and as I drift off to sleep, I can hear the sound of rain beginning to hit the roof of the cart.



