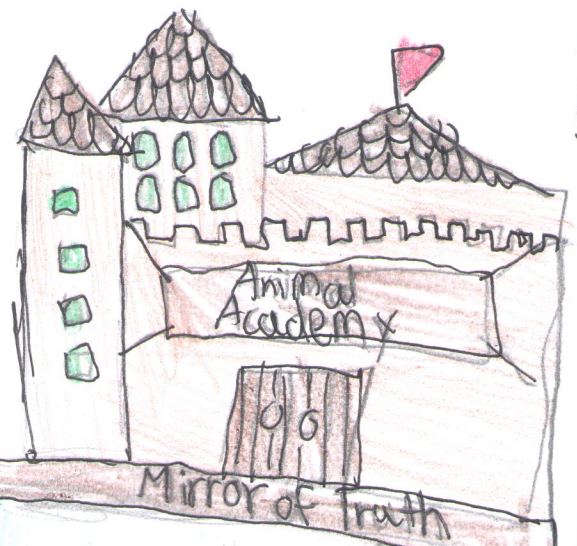


Jackson Park



By Elizabeth Lu

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Prologue

“Is it done?” Zeke asked me. “Yes,” I whispered. “Father and mother will be really pleased.”

“Great,” said Zeke, with a sigh of relief. I relented a little. Zeke was quite a small supporter of my father, the Dark Lord, and was beaten often.

This was his last chance to prove himself. And I, the Prince of Evil, aka, Drake, was supervising him.

It is hard to be a son of the Dark Lord. I have a lot of brothers and sisters, but I am my father and mother’s favorite.

It wasn’t easy, for sure. I had to overcome a lot of challenges and a lot of losses. My favorite sister, Clo. My younger brother, Sid. And above all, my older brother, Arthur.

We all looked up to him. But he was the closest to me. I remembered all that fun training with him and joking around.

But now, he is dead and I am now the model. All because of a griffin called Sarth. He had killed Arthur.

It had been a few years since Arthur was dead, and his wife had given birth to two little griffins called Jackson and Ronald Park.

One of them is said to one day kill the Dark Lord. Zeke and I are trying to prevent that from happening.

Just thinking about this made me sneer. “Uh,” said Zeke, looking uncomfortable. “Let’s go,” I said roughly, pushing all my sad thoughts deeper into my brain.

We stepped out of the small, dark corner that we had been standing in. Even though it was night, there were a lot of pedestrians littering the streets.

When they saw us, though, they ran away screaming. I chuckled quietly. I loved it when they did that.

Zeke and I stood there. We were waiting for our transportation to the temple of the Dark Lord.

Finally, there was the sound of chopping blades, and a helicopter landed right in front of us.

We got in and the helicopter swooped us away, and all my thoughts about Arthur were gone.

Chapter One: Drake Has Some Serious Problems with Me

Nobody thought that griffins were powerful enough to have two powers. At least, that was until I came along.

This is a dangerous story, I warn all who are reading this very book. It is very grim, and it is a story about me, when I was a young lad.

Hi. My name is Jackson Park, but my people call me Jack. This story started all in the year of 1989. I USED to be a griffin (an animal that has the head and front body of an eagle, and the back and tail of a lion). Then, everything changed so suddenly that my life was thrown off course.

I happened to have a different body, have a sibling, and— No. I shouldn't tell you this right now. If you read on, then you will find out what happened but right now, let's start at the very beginning.....

It all happened like this.

One day, it was a glorious day and I was flying to school. My mum had kissed me on the cheek and handed me my lunch bag.

My mum is the best cook in the world. She makes the best blueberry pies, peach smoothies, and bug salads. You see, we griffins only have a diet of fruit and bugs. Everyone in the tribe knows her because she makes the best food. Mum always gets invited to parties to cook.

Anyway, I was feeling exhilarated as I soared in the sky. Then, I stopped to rest on a field of yellow flowers. (I'm pretty sure they are called dandelions or something).

I am not good at naming plants and flowers. Of course, there is a plant class at school, but I spent most of my time trying not to get hit by the razor sharp spitballs that were thrown from my classmates.

Some of the flowers are also white and puffy.

While I was inspecting the field of flowers, a shadow loomed over me. I looked up, expecting to see dark clouds.

My village is a storm magnet. When I was one, there was a tornado. When I was two, there was a hurricane. My pop was killed in the hurricane. I've resented and feared storms ever since.

My pop was a kind looking griffin that was very handsome. He had blond hair (like me!) and was very big and muscular (unlike me).

We still have some pictures of him at home in gold frames.

He was out gathering food when the hurricane hit. He tried to fly back to our house, but the winds and rain were too strong.

He flapped around endlessly until he had used all his strength up. His body was found in the middle of the village.

I could still remember his funeral. There were blue flowers everywhere (pop's favorite) and mournful music everywhere.

Instead, I see another group of griffins flying to school. Suddenly, they make a dive and land in front of me.

One was in the front and leading the other griffins. I recognized him immediately. He was Drake Delango, the biggest bully at school. Even the teachers are intimidated by him.

His fur was blond and his head had long, blond, shaggy hair that was slicked back with I think oil. I could see his muscles rippling in the wind that was just starting to blow.

I groaned. Drake was my archenemy and we've been so since we were little griffings. He had a big group of followers. I could remember all too vividly what happened on the first day of preschool.

My mum just dropped me off for preschool. The teacher told us that we could do anything we wanted. I went straight to the building blocks. Drake came towards me and said in a gruff voice, "I want to play with the blocks too." I gave him half of the blocks to play with. "I want more," Drake said with a snarl. "But I'm playing with the blocks," I said. "Fine," he said and turned to go find something else to play with.

Then, as fast as lightning, Drake quickly turned and ran at me. I shrieked as he punched my beak. I felt searing pain in my beak. Drake gave me another punch, this one even harder and at my neck. Luckily, it didn't hurt much.

I was in too much pain from my beak to pay attention to everything, but I remember a cold, high pitched laugh and teachers rushing to my side. I fainted not long after that.

I woke up dizzy in bed. My mum was holding my hand and was squeezing it tight. "Mum?" I asked and tried to sit up. My body wracked with pain. "Sit down," my mum said. "You are really hurt. I've been worried about you for a long time. You have been asleep for a week."

"What happened to Drake?" I asked and winced as the effort made the gash on my neck bleed again. "He got punished severely," my mum said. "Anyway, promise me that you won't tangle with him again." I promised my mum that.

"Jack, stopping on the way to school," Drake sneered and pulled me out of my thoughts. "Even though you are on the flying team in school. Are you too tired, or is there just something wrong with your wings?" The others all laughed.

I was the captain of the flying team in school, which is a great privilege. You get to race in dangerous races with the other flying team. If you win most of the rounds, your team will be the flying champions. Drake is the captain of the other team. Today is the championship. Today, we will battle to see who will win.

Anyway, I could feel my face going red. I did not like to be teased. Then, Drake barreled into me and I fell over. "Sorry Jack," he smirked. "I didn't see you there."

I flew off before he could say any more, but something long and slimy landed on my shoulders. I looked down at myself, and saw a cobra twisting around me.

Drake had it behind his back!

Drake and his group roared with laughter as I dropped down and down and down. I landed on the ground with a thump and the cobra started squeezing me. I almost couldn't breathe because the cobra was squeezing so hard.

"Drake!" a voice behind me yelled. "What are you doing?" I just managed to turn my head to see Mrs. Fletcher (the librarian) from my school standing behind me.

I wanted to ask her what she was doing on the way out here, but I was too relieved that someone was here to help me than to think about it.

“Help me,” I gagged out before something was flung from behind Drake’s back and attached itself to Mrs. Fletcher.

Drake and his group laughed even harder.

“Drake Syleluis Delango,” a voice boomed overhead. “Set them free.” Drake’s father, a stern and scary old man, told Drake. I was glad he came because he was the only person who Drake was scared of.

“Okay,” Drake whimpered and set us free. “Now go to school, all of you!” Drake’s father yelled and we (even the librarian) rushed off to school.

The first thing we had to do at school was get ready for the contest. Drake and I first went to separate locker rooms to change into our tracksuits.

“Scared,” Drake whispered to me as we went to our locker rooms. “Never,” I whispered back. “You should be,” Drake said. “I’m going to beat you within a swipe of my claw.” I grew really, really angry. I punched him on the beak, but it didn’t hurt him much. He punched me back and I screamed.

He really injured me this time!

I fell down because of the pain.

Somebody screamed from my left. “Call 911!” commanded one of my teachers calmly. “This match will have to be rescheduled.” She then crouched next to me and held my beak on.

A few minutes later, an ambulance came and rushed me into the hospital. The last thing I remember before I fainted was people rushing around me.

For the SECOND time, I woke up in the hospital with my mum sitting beside me because of Drake. I looked in a mirror at my side and saw a griffin with a lopsided beak.

“You were very brave,” my mum said. “Look under your pillow.” I was just strong enough to lift my pillow. Under my pillow, I found a new tracksuit for my race. “Oh!” said my mum. “I forgot! The race is next Tuesday, when you are better.”

For the next week, I slept, ate steadily, and took time to become better. On Monday, when I was almost fully recovered, Drake was forced to come to say sorry.

He looked very grouchy as he slunk in. "Sorry," he said in a gruff voice, avoiding my eyes. My mum was next to me and told him to look into my eyes.

Drake became very angry and punched me again, this time in my eye. It didn't bleed, but the punch made me half blind. He punched me again on the arm. I had a broken arm.

This time, Drake was given a thrashing by his father. A thrashing was being hit about hundred times.

Now, I looked like a griffin with a lopsided beak and a broken arm. Luckily, I could still compete tomorrow in the race.

At school tomorrow, I was supervised and always accompanied by a teacher until the big race. One even accompanied me to the locker room! Meanwhile, Drake was ALSO supervised so he doesn't beat me up again.

My outfit for the race was a red, yellow and gold tracksuit with a number 1 on the front and back. Drake's was a green, silver, and purple outfit also with a number 1 on the front and back.

We went out onto the field where there were stands everywhere. The audience chanted Jack, Jack, Jack over and over again. Drake scowled and muttered, "They won't be saying that for long."

The course we were flying was a rocky landscape. We had to fly over a desert while dangers were hiding everywhere, waiting to pounce, and fly backwards over the ocean. People were keeping watch everywhere, so you couldn't cheat.

"Racers ready," said the announcer. "Get set, go!" Drake barreled past me, but I was on his tail. We raced through the countryside and finally reached the desert.

As soon as we reached the desert, arrows suddenly raced out. I was small and quick so I didn't get hit. But Drake was big, bulky, and slow, so he got hit by many arrows.

He was falling very quickly, screaming "Heeeeeeeeeeeeeelp." I couldn't leave him to fall to his death; the ground was rocky and spiky. I dove down and caught him. I scanned the ground for a flat spot. There!

I went down, still carrying Drake. I pulled out all the arrows I could see and checked for more. Then, Drake suddenly pushed me into a hole and took off.

“Bye bye,” he snarled at me as I fell, and flew off. I fell and fell into the darkness for a long time. Finally, I reached the bottom. I looked up to see where the hole to the surface was, but it disappeared!

I kept looking up, and saw the tunnel. I flew up for a long time until I reached the surface. I flew up the track, flying as fast I could, but Drake had a big head start. Then, I entered a tunnel that was dark and grimy. I heard something screech and felt it fly past my nose.

It was creepy in here. Something grabbed me, but I pulled it off. “Ohhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh,” something moaned to my left. I jumped midair. “Ha ha ha ha ha,” someone laughed.

It was Drake! “You are soooooo easily scared,” he sneered. He then zoomed past me. I followed him in the darkness. I was almost in front of him.

A spear suddenly dropped from a wall and Drake and I had to swerve off our course. After that, darts sprung from the wall and a carnivorous bat chased us.

Luckily, I got away with those. We reached the ocean and I started flying backwards, but Drake didn't. Something suddenly flew at our bottoms. I managed to swerve, but I didn't have to. It was heading towards Drake. It stuck to him and he howled. Then, he fainted and fell.

I dove down there for the SECOND time to save DRAKE'S life. I managed to catch him, but he was too heavy. Seriously, that guy needed to lose some weight. I only managed to slow down our fall.

We plunged into the icy water and I struggled to the surface for breath. I almost got there when something slammed into me and pushed me down.

I tried to go up again and I got a gulp of air before the thing pushed me down again.

This time, I got a good glance at the thing. It was Drake, trying to push me down under the surface so he could get all the air. “I don't think so,” I thought to myself.

I suddenly burst out of the ocean and started flying backwards as fast as I could go. Drake went out, too and started chasing me to the finish line.

As we got closer, I could hear the crowd cheering for us. Wait a second, the crowd wasn't cheering for us - they were cheering for ME.

We were getting closer and closer to the finish line. Drake was just a little in front of me. As we crossed the finish line, I stretched my tail out to give me a chance to win. The crowd was silent as the judges debated who had won.

Finally, the judges announced who the winner was. It was ME! The whole school was partying (except for Drake and his group). There were banners everywhere showing my face and saying things like Lets go Jack and Support Jackson Park. There was good food everywhere and plays, shows, and even a circus in my honor.

The trip home was nice, too. Drake only got to punch me once for winning, and he was so mad that his punch wasn't that hard. At home, I wrote in the first page of my diary about today. It went like this:

Dear Diary,

Today was an amazing day. First of all,

I won the flying contest at school!

Can you believe it? I didn't think I

would beat Drake (the person who I

was going against). He was pretty angry after the contest and demanded a rematch, but I had won, fair and square. After I had won the match, there was a big party in the school because I had won over Drake. Nobody much likes Drake because he and his group of friends are the biggest bullies in school. Anyway, at the party, there were posters everywhere saying things like "Jackson Rules" and "Support Jackson Park." I'm glad that the school

favors me, but I have to be careful not to mention it in front of Drake or else he'd go ballistic. There were also a lot of things to eat at the party. My mum personally made all these things for the party! I had a lot of my favorite food: peach jam with bug bread and lemon lime flavored juice. I also didn't have any homework because I won the competition and Drake has extra homework! Well, today has been a long

and exciting day at school. Now, dear diary, I have to go to sleep.

From,

Jackson Park

I went to sleep straight after that.