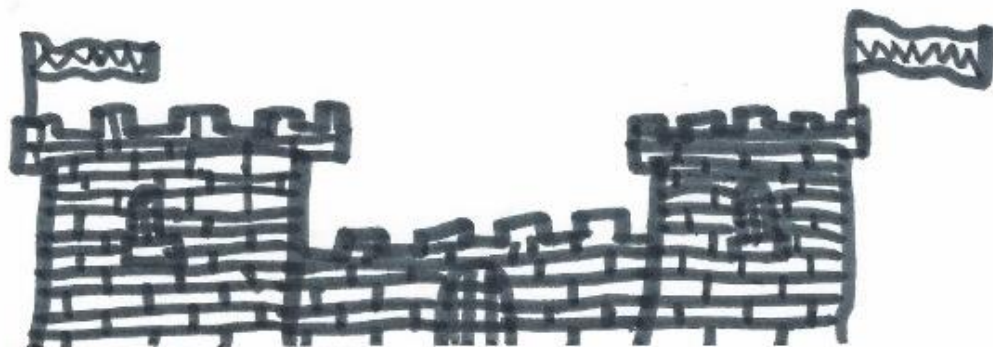


# The Defeat of the Evil King Ana'lok

By: Ethan K



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## **Prologue**

Arta'gan ran through the forest. He was pursued by a herd of Shraak bulls. They tore through the underbrush like it was merely a swarm of annoying fleas. Arta'gan was sure footed and had long strong legs. The sword at his belt was called Daarun. Soon he came to a clearing of dry grass.

“Azzer!” he shouted.

The grass burst into flames behind him, blocking the Shraak. Suddenly, a wall of solid rock blocked his way! He heard cackling laughter. A Da'rik descended on its mighty steed.

“You think you can stop me?” he taunted.

“I can stop any filth like you!” Arta'gan shouted in reply.

“Then you will learn defeat,” said the Da’rik.

An orb of energy formed in his hands. When he released it, the orb slammed into Arta’gan. He fell and didn’t get back up.

# Chapter 1

## The Stone

Dak looked up. A bright flash of blinding light made him cover his eyes. He couldn't see anything but whiteness. He backed up until his eyes adjusted to the light, but it had gone just as suddenly as it had come. He looked around, but didn't find anything out of the ordinary. He eventually got tired from all the searching and decided to head for home.

His mother and father were anxiously waiting for him to return. He decided not to tell them about the flash. He ate dinner in silence. He thought about how nice it would be to have a little more money. They had a small house with barely enough food to sustain them all. To top that all, they had to pay taxes to the not-so-good king Ana'lok. If you didn't pay, you went to the lava pit...

When he was done with dinner he went to his small bedroom. He looked at a painting of his brother that he

had never met. While Dak was fifteen. If his brother were alive he would be twenty. He eventually grabbed his bow and quiver to shoot at the old target. He hit smack dab center of the bull's eye. Then he split the first arrow down the middle with a second arrow. Then, he noticed a gleam in the sunset. He went closer to look. It was a fairly large stone the size of his hand, and it was blueish green. He took it inside to look at.

He concluded that he could sell it for a ton of money. Dak decided he would take it to Gand's shop and sell it for a ton of food and money. After a good night's sleep and a small breakfast, he set out. He took the old road that lead through his hometown Carven and out into the rest of Adur.

Gand's shop was in a small town called Slite. Dak went to the center of the town and found Gand's shop near Arew Square. It was in a street that had few houses and shops, but a ton of people going to work. He opened the front door. A bell jingled softly in a beautiful rhythm. Gand was putting away some things like food and hardware, but when he saw Dak he rushed to greet him.

"So, is there anything I could give you and your family?" he asked.

Dak replied, "Weell, I was wondering if I could trade this for some food." He pulled out the stone.

Gand moved forward to inspect the stone. "I don't think this would be worth much," gesturing at the shelves.

"Well what could I get?" asked Dak.

"You could get a single loaf of bread. Or you could get a flask of wine," he replied.

"I don't think I'll get anything, but thank you," said Dak.

"Anytime," said Gand.

He went outside and decided to look around Slite. He went inside every shop, asked questions to everyone he passed and finally decided to go home for lunch.

"How did it go?" asked his father.

"Did you buy anything?" asked his mother.

"No," Dak replied.

"So not even a sliver," said his mother exasperated.

# Chapter 2

## The Discovery

Dak turned the stone over in his hands. It was practically as hard as diamond. He tapped here and there but found no access to the center. It was now bleak to him, but when he had found it the stone had shimmered like the sun. Eventually, he went to dinner. He kind of poked at his food but otherwise didn't eat much.

When he was done, he went to his room. He sat on his bed and stared into space until his mom called him to do some of the laboring work in the fields. He thought about the stone in his bedroom, and how it would be nice to have found a diamond. When he got done plowing, he decided to try to gain access to the center of the stone.

After he got inside, he heard a scratching sound coming from his room. He went to check it out. He found out that it was coming from the stone. It was wobbling on his dresser and about to fall off. He caught it just as it

was about to fall off. Jagged cracks appeared on its surface, and a tiny head wormed its way out of the stone that Dak now believed to be an egg. The creature was a beautiful green, with scales that interlocked perfectly. The creature looked at him, cocking its head and without warning jumped into his palm. It was warm, and nestled into his palm. Suddenly, he could hear all (or most) of the creature's thoughts.

It said in its thoughts, "What shall you name me?"

"What?" said Dak, he was completely taken aback.

"I said, what shall you name me?" said the creature.  
"I'm a dragon."

"Well, how about Firestone?"

"No."

"How about Stonefire?"

"No."

"How about Sireftone?"

"Say that again and I'll bite you."

"Make a suggestion," said Dak, desperate to find a name for the dragon.

"How about Sinjer?"

“No.”

“How about Dike?”

“Fine.”

So Dike was the dragon’s name and he seemed pleased with it. Dak, figuring his parents wouldn’t be so pleased if they found out that he was keeping a dragon, took Dike to the forest near his small piece of land. For the first few meals, he took a bit of meat for Dike, who grew very fast. Dak hunted for increasingly larger animals to satisfy Dike’s hunger. Soon Dike was big enough to hunt for himself. By the end of the week, he was as big as some of the small pines that were near their coming of age. Dak decided that once Dike was old enough, they would go looking for the Darson, the rebels of the king.

# Chapter 3

## Say Hello to the Mysterious Person

One day, Dak went to Slite to get some medicine from the town's healer, Thane.

When Dak went inside, Thane said, "You need to leave, it's not safe for you. One man came yesterday, and said he was looking for a strange blue stone. There was something about him that gave me chills...I have a bad feeling things are going to get intense."

Dak hesitated, "Well, do you think I'm in danger?"

"Hard to say, but better to be safe than sorry. We definitely don't want you killed."

"Can I quickly buy some medicine?"

“If you can hurry.”

“Well, I need Cabon, Thyre, and Resn.”

Suddenly, someone pounded on the door. “They’re back! Let me in! Let me in!”

The door burst open. A man came rushing in and said, “They’re searching the shops!”

They could hear cries coming from the other side of Slite.

“Help!”

“They’re stealing my food!”

“They’re destroying my home!”

“I need to get the medicine as fast as I can,” said Dak.

Thane handed over the medicine. “Don’t bother paying, just run!”

Dak didn’t need telling twice. He dashed out the door as soon as the medicine was in his hand. He ran, only stopping for about ten seconds to catch his breath. He didn’t slow down again until he reached the front door of his small house.

“Mom! Dad!” he shouted.

He quickly explained that the men would be looking for him, and that they would probably go to their town next. His parents didn't waste a moment to tell the rest of the town. They set up a mud wall around the town, using trees for its skeleton. They placed archers around the city, and hoped for the best. They also had the town's smith and some volunteers ready their swords, spearheads, and shields. It took seven men to make a gate for the wall. They posted a group of swordsmen at the gate. Eventually, they heard a series of cries coming from the main road.

"Dak, you need to leave," his parents said.

"I will stay and fight with my village," Dak said.

"You will leave," said his parents firmly.

Dak finally packed up some food, water skins, and leather. He bade farewell to his parents and went on his way. He first went to the woods. He found Dike laying in a clearing.

"We need to leave now," said Dak.

"Where are we going to?" Dike asked, telepathically.

"I don't know."

"Well, let's be off."

So Dike unfurled his majestic wings and with 3 flaps, they were off. At one point, Dak had to sew a saddle from the leather that he had packed to make it more comfy. Dike flew days and days until they reached a towering mountain. Dike found a flat clearing to land.

“We’ll wait out the evil men here.” Dak said.

To pass time, they explored every nook and cranny, but found nothing other than rocks, trees, and dirt. They talked the whole while. They often conversed about how the village was doing, and what they could do.

# Chapter 4

## Village? Gone.

The villagers were under attack. Imperial soldiers came from every direction. The wall barely held to the bashing of the thousands of soldiers. Dane, Dak's father was surrounded by dozens of soldiers. There were just too many. He was soon killed. The wall was breached soon after and the village inside couldn't hold. When the soldiers were in control, their commanders, the Da'rik, took everyone prisoner and took them to the main castle as slaves.

Far away, Dak could see the villagers in chains. "No," he whispered. "No."

He turned and cried into Dike until he could cry no more. "Let's go," he finally said. "We'll find the Darson if it's the last thing we do."

So once more Dike unfurled his wings and took flight....

To Be Continued