HAHA, NETS! HOW CAN YOU BE FALLIN' ASLEEP ALREADY? YA ONLY JUS' WOKE UP!

CATS WEREN'T MEANT TO BE AWAKE THIS EARLY!

JUS' CUSNATCH IS ASL'P, DOESN'T MEAN THA'S TRUE!

MMPFF

AW, LET HIM SLEEP, CLAW!

HUh?

DEl, WHY'R YA CARRYIN' A BRUSH AN' INKPOT.?

Hee Hee.

DiD YOU PAINT SNACh?

Ah, a true Masterpiece!

WHY?

IF GAeA DIdN'T INTEND FOR HIM TO BE PAINTED, THEN SHE WOULD NOT HAVE MADE HIM WHITE!

RiGHt, NETTLe?

UH, I DON'T THINK THAT'S RIGHT.

DELTA, ARE YOU WAITING FOR ME TO SLEEP SO YOU CAN PAINT ME TOO?

Heheh, now that you're sly to it!

CLaW, IS DELTAA STRANGER THAN USUAL?

UH, MAYB'? I CAN' TELL.

SNACh DDoes LOOK REAL FUNNY PAINT'D UP LIKE THA' THOUGH!

IT'S A GOOD START TO THE WEEK, HM?

OH, WEn'D BetteR GET A WrigGLE ON OR We'lL Be LATE To CLASs. C'MON GUYS!

MAAHHH-

HMP, SNACh FACE FEEL FUNNY...

IT LOoKS FUNNY, TOO!

AHH, SURE!

SnACCh!
SO WHAT CLASS DO WE HAVE?

HEHEH, STILL DON'T HAVE THE SCHEDULE DOWN, HUH?

IT'S MATHS!

LUGH... RIHT...

HEH, TRY NOT TO SOUND TOO EXCITED!

TO MR. NEIL'S MATH CLASS, PLEASE!

LEFERS SHH

MH... I'LL NEVER GET USED TO THAT MAGIC.

AH, IT'S CONVENIENT, THOUGH! WE MIGHT NOT EVEN END UP BEING LATE AFTER ALL.

YEAH IT'D BE SUCH A PITY IF WE'RE LATE, THAT'S F'SURE.

HEHEH.

AH, JUST IN TIME, KIDS! COME ON IN.

NO MISTER TAIDE TODAY?

WELL, I'M BACK FROM THAT 'QUEST... TAIDE ISN'T QUITE PATIENT ENOUGH TO COVER THIS CLASS THOUGH, IS HE?

SNATCH, STARTING A BIT EARLY, AREN'T WE?

HUH?

FOOLS' WEEK IS NOT UNTIL NEXT WEEK!

HUH?

NO, THIS WEEK IS FOOLS' WEEK.

NO, I CHECKED THE CALENDAR THIS MORNING, IT IS DEFINITELY NEXT WEEK.

YEAH, THAT'S WHAT THE CALENDARS SAY—THEN THEY'RE WRONG. MY CALENDAR SAYS IT'S THIS WEEK. SO DOES WHATEVER THE HELL MOSKIL REPLACED MY TEA WITH...UGH...

HAHAHA!

NO, I THINK I AM RIGHT.

SUH!

THEN AGAIN, I COULD BE WRONG... JINX? ARE YOU OK?

S-SORRY I'M LATE, SIR.
SOMEbody must have changed the calendars...

TH-THAT'S A PRETTY GOOD TRICK....

MY apologies, it is Fools' Week. Jinx and Snatch, you need some time to clean up?

Huh?

SO, wha' is Fools' Week?

WHY Snatch wash...?

WAIT, people still celebrate Fools' Week?

Pft... what rock were you guys living under?

LIVE inside rock, it more like cave.

uh...

Now, now. Fools' Week is a rather laid-back tradition of playing pranks for a week.

LIKE so-

ClAW, your shoes are untied.

Thanks Mr Neil! I... uh, wait....

Heheh.

THAT'S what I thought, what my master taught me. But it's still celebrated?

IF the trickster God is in exile, why celebrate his festival?

Um... hm... well, it is not really Jake's festival, Nettle.

I have heard that long ago, it was started by him, but that is more of a myth than anything... I don't know why, anyway, it is certainly a secular tradition now. Seems like it always has been.

Only real crazy people refuse to celebrate it because of tenuous links to the God of Lies.

H-hey! I take offense to that....

Ah, present company excluded.
*SNIFF*

C’MON, SNATCH. LET’S GO CLEAN UP.

EH... WHY SNATCH...?

HAHA, COME BACK WHEN YOU CAN, BOYS.

AND YOU TWO CAN TAKE A SEAT. YOU’VE STILL GOT MATHS CLASS!

YAY...

HOW CAN YOU NOT KNOW WHAT FOOLS’ WEEK IS? SERIOUSLY!

I KNOW VERY WELL!

TCH, NOT YOU, AND YOU HARDLY KNOW.

AS SELF-IMPORTANT AS THEY ARE... IT’S NOT ABOUT TRICKSTERS.

YEAH, MY FAMILY ARE CRAAAZY SUPER PIUS ELEMENTALISTS, BUT THEY NEVER MISS CELEBRATING FOOLS’ WEEK!

YOUR WORLD HAS SOME BIZARRE CUSTOMS, JINX.

HEH, THERE ARE SO MANY GODS, AND THEY ALL LOVE FESTIVALS. THEY DO GET ODD SOMETIMES!

HAHA, PAINT ON THE DOOR JAMB? CLASSIC.

AAAHH IT KEEPS HAPPENING!

ER, JARED? WHEN YOU GO WASH UP, PLEASE FETCH FLINT OR CLASH AND ASK THEM TO CLEAN THIS MESS.

THE REST OF YOU COME IN FOR HISTORY CLASS. I HOPE THERE WILL NOT BE MANY MORE PRANKS.

I... ER...

HOW EVEN...?

IT IS GOING TO BE A LONG WEEK...
TODAY WE SHALL COVER THE ARAE CIVIL WAR...

HEY MISS DHARFI, WHAT ABOUT FOOL'S WEEK?

YES, THANK YOU DANNI...

I WOULD LIKE YOU ALL TO BEAR THIS IN MIND. IF THERE ARE ANY PRANKS IN MY CLASS, THE PRANKSTER WILL FACE A WEEK OF DETENTION.

UM.

ACTUALLY, WE WANTED TO KNOW FOOL'S WEEK'S HISTORY.

NETS RECKONS IT'S A TRICKSTER FESTIVAL!

I KNOW IT IS! MASTER SAFFRON TOLD ME SO!

SAFFRON?

TH-THAT'S RIGHT! IT IS A TRICKSTER FESTIVAL!

EVERY YEAR, I'M PRANKED THE HARDEST, BECAUSE OF MY EARS AND TAIL! BECAUSE I'M AN ENEMY OF THE TRICKSTER GOD, AND IT IS HIS FESTIVAL....

PFT, NO WAY. EVEN GRAMPS SAID--

-ER, WHAT....?

OHMM WHAT THE-? IS THIS HISTORY?!

WHO CHANGED MY SCHEDULE NOTES TO- OOH! BLOODY HELL! I HATE TRICKSTERS!

MM, I THOUGHT YOU WERE SAYING FOOL'S WEEK ISN'T....

SIT DOWN, PLEASE.

NOW, IT IS TRUE FOOL'S WEEK BEGAN AS A FESTIVAL OF THE TRICKSTER GOD JAKE, BEFORE HIS EXILE.

BUT IT BECAME MAINSTREAM VERY QUICKLY, AND LOST ALL CONNECTION WITH HIM.

THOUGH IT IS SO WIDESPREAD, I DO NOT KNOW IF TRICKSTERS EVEN STILL CELEBRATE FOOL'S WEEK.

YOU SHOULD ASK DRAKE, SHE CAN TELL YOU ALL ABOUT THAT.
Dharfi Valcross said what?! She said you'd be able to tell us how tricksters celebrate Fools' Week.

She-!!

...Did she say why?

No...?

Is it because you're an elemental battle mage and hunted tricksters?

Yessssss

Yes that is the exact reason!

I still say it is a trickster festival.

It was. It ain't now. Deal with it.

But it-

Ahem!

Tricksters celebrate it the hardest, yeah.

Huh, really? I had never noticed.

Maybe you'd notice if they always picked on you...

Of course, tricksters take the week very seriously, you know.

Or as serious as a trickster can.

If there's more than one trickster around, they compete to out-prank one another, always picking on enemies of Jake...

Ooh, and they also choose a 'big target'!

Big target...?

Ayup! Whoever's around that looks important. Could be a local lord, a priest, a hero, or- hm...!

Ah yes, a warning is in order!

Congratulations, Nettle! I suspect you will be chosen as this year's target!

I- what?!
I'm the biggest target, huh?

Guess that makes sense, since as a guardian, you have Gaia's power, right?

The creation goddess is considered the most powerful...

Um, I would have had claw picked as the biggest target. Huh?

Why'd ya-?

No offense, but a servant of one of the elemental gods, the ones who exiled Jake? It's kind of obvious.

I dunno, Dharfl'd be a bigger target than that. I heard she fought guardians at the breaking of the world.

Ok first of all, I doubt it's the same Dharfl.

Second... I thought the legend went she fought alongside nature powers...

Huh? I heard she was defeated by them...

Oh, there are dozens of conflicting tales about the Worldsplit. I guess only those who took part know how it went!

Well hey Nettle, just don't trust that Miss Drake knows who a trickster would go for.

Only tricksters know, and on the off chance there's more than one, they might not agree anyway.

That is a relief... I suppose.

Heh, I bet Jinxy'd know more about 'it'n Drake.

But, just in case... in your experience, what does being a big target really entail?

Oh uh- nothing that does not wash off...

Though, um, sometimes it can take a few rinses...
OH C’MON, C’MON! I KNOW THAT DISGUISE IS HERE SOMEPLACE...

AHA! MY MASK AND CLOAK. NICE.

HUF-FREAKIN’ WINGS...

GEEZ, THE HORNS ARE A DEAD GIVEAWAY.

EASILY SOLVED, I GUESS...

OH GEEZ. ILLUSIONS JUST ARE NOT MY STRONG POINT.

IT’LL HAVE TO DO. I GOTTA GO FIND THAT OTHER TRICKSTER... SUSS OUT MY COMPETITION.

MAKING IT LOOK LIKE AN ENTRANCE IS ELSEWHERE? SOOO OVERDONE.

THERE’S ANOTHER TRICKSTER AT DHS?!

PFFFFT, IF YOU CAN CALL YOURSELF A TRICKSTER WITH SUCH PUNY PRANKS.

OH YEAH? I CAN OUTPRANK YOU, WHOMEVER YOU ARE!

YOU’RE ON, KID.
GOOD MORNING, EVERYONE!

BUT HOW...?

MAN IT IS WAY TOO EARLY FOR THIS JUNK.

HEYA JINX!

HUH?

HERE, I BROUGHT AN UMBRELLA FOR YOU. FIGURED WITH YOUR LUCK, YOU'LL NEED ONE THIS WEEK.

OH, T-THANKS, LOKI. THAT'S KIND OF YOU...

HEY, WATCH IT!

HEHE, PLUS I THOUGHT THE COLOURS'D SUIT YOU.

AIN', CUTE!

SO WHY ARE WE ALL STANDING AROUND HERE, ANYWAY? I MEAN, I'M ALL FOR SKIPPING CLASS... BUT YOU KNOW...

OH, THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THAT CORRIDOR.

HUH?

WHA' IS THIS?! IT'S LIKE THIS IS A SOLID WALL! GYAAARGH!
SO... WHAT... DO WE DO? SKIP CLASS?

THAT'S YOUR ANSWER TO EVERYTHING, LOKI.

MF... SNATCH WISH WAS STILL ASLEEP...

OH, HEY, SNATCH! WATCH OUT F'R TH'-

WAAAAALL?

HUH? WHAT'S THE MATTER... OH?

THAT LOOKS LIKE A SOLID WALL, AND THIS LOOKS LIKE GRASS. IT'S CLEARLY GRAVEL.

THIS IS CERTAINLY THE CORIDOR. MUST BE A TRICKSTER ILLUSION, RIGHT? SOME SORT OF PRANK. IT IS WELL DONE, I SUPPOSE...

GUESS THAT MEANS THERE IS A TRICKSTER IN THE SCHOOL. KEEP YOUR GUARD UP, JARED.

IT-IT WILL BE OK... I HAVE AN UMBRELLA.
THE DAYS PASSED...

AAAAND THE FURNITURE IS ON THE WALL. MY, HOW NEW AND EXCITING.

GYARGH! SPIDERS!!

OH! I LOVE THIS UMBRELLA!

MOWR?

HAHAHAHA, LOOKS LIKE YOU WON'T BE NEEDING THAT NEW LINGO TEACHER ANYMORE, HUH?

W... WHAT KIND OF INK IS THIS? IT SMELLS SO BAD...

UH, THIS IS MY CLASS.

NO, IT IS MINE, I CHECKED THE CALENDAR AND I--- OH.

YOU AGAIN? CAN'T YOU SEE I'M TRYING TO-

YEAH I SOOOO DO NOT CARE. LISTEN, WE'VE ONLY GOT TWO DAYS LEFT, AND NO MAJOR PRANKS TO SPEAK OF.

...SPEAK FOR YOURSELF.

HEY SHUT UP. WE'VE BEEN TOO UNFOCUSED. WE SHOULD BE WORKING TOGETHER TO PULL ONE AMAZING TRICK.

OH, I DON'T LIKE THAT WHOLE 'BIG TARGET' THING. SO OVERDONE. IT'S KIND OF LAME.

SHUT UP. WE'RE GOING AFTER NETTLE.

NAW, WE SHOULD GO FOR CLAW, IF ANYONE. DID YOU LOSE THE LEAF ON YOUR MASK?

AGAIN? SHEESH. THOSE DECORATIONS ARE SO FRAGILE. UGH.

...YOU KNOW, IF YOU JUST USE A REAL LEAF--

SHUT UP. ANYWAY. NO POINT GOING FOR CLAW, SHE'S JUST SO DAMN HARMLESS.

...FAIR ENOUGH, HOW ABOUT DHARFI THEN?

NONONO, STEER CLEAR OF HER, SHE... KIND OF KNOWS WHO I AM.

WE'RE GOING FOR NETTLE, THAT'S THAT.

HUH--?! HE SLEEPS IN A TREE OUT HERE?

...SHOULD HAVE EXPECTED THAT, HE'S A GUARDIAN, AFTER ALL.

HUH?? SOMEBODY CALL ME?

SHH! STAND STILL!

UH? NOTHING THERE... I MUST BE IMAGINING THINGS.
AH, I'M SO GLAD IT'S THE WEEKEND...

NO CLASSES ALWAYS HELPS! BUT FOOLS' WEEK IS FUN!

HAHA, WASN'T AS BAD AS DRAKE MADE IT OUT T' BE!

DRAKE PIPERION IS ALL HUFF AND PUFF. WHAT'S SHE BEEN SAYING NOW?

AW, NOTHING MUCH.

UM, MR. ELLIOT... IS THIS FOOD... BRIGHT BLUE?

UH, YEAH. TRUST ME, IT'S JUST REGULAR OLD BREAD WITH CAULIFLOWER SOUP.

SOME JOKER SNUCK BLUE FOOD DYE IN WHILE I WASN'T LOOKING.

BUT I ASSURE YOU, IT'S STILL VERY EDIBLE.

WHEN I FIND THE TRICKSTER THAT DID IT, I'LL--!

EHHEH... THANKS MR. ELLIOT...

SO, UM, HOW ARE YOU HOLDING UP, NETTLE?

NO PROBLEM, JARED! I GUESS I AM NOT A BIG TRICKSTER TARGET AFTER ALL!

EITHER THAT OR THE TRICKSTER AROUND HERE IS A WUSS!

EHHEH, OR THEY HAVE NOT STARTED YET...

UM, TODAY IS USUALLY THE QUIetest DAY. PEOPLE RUN OUT OF IDEAS FOR PRANKS. BUT TRICKSTERS SPEND THE DAY REGROUPING. THE LAST DAY OF FOOLS' WEEK IS WHEN THEY PULL THEIR REAL PRANKS... BE CAREFUL...

AH, COME ON, JARED! WHAT'S THERE TO WORRY ABOUT?

BE VERY, VERY CAREFUL...

OKAY, OKAY! FINE! I WILL!

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

I WILL ALSO... BE CAREFUL...
Uh... is Jinx okay?

Um, mostly.

Oh, are you still worrying 'bout Fools' Week?

I... I kind of am now.

Aw, don' worry! On'y one more day left!

Mm-hm...

Just one more day.

You there! What do you think you're doing?!

Gyeeep!

Oh... it's just you again.

You come 'round to my side yet, kiddo?

Eh, I dunno.

Well, here are some good reasons for you to. I'm bigger than you, I'm older than you, I'm smarter than you, I'm better than you, and more up-yourself. Don't be jealous.

Pfft, I don't see how that.

Hey!!

Um, has anything, uh, to do with -

Ah... hi there, bluff.

W-what're you-?

Hey-!

Heyyy bluff... relax before you hurt something.

You're tricksters, aren't you?! Tell me what you did wi' -

...you can't hear me, ca... you...?

Gyack! Hey! Aargh!!

Score one for the school's statue defense system.

Hey! I know you kidnapped Jinx! Where is he?!

I... I hope you can understand this sign language...
Wow, Bluff really IS terrible at sign language... maybe Dhark’s does need a new Lingo teacher...

What’d he say...? Something about us? Nabbing? Grabbing? He said we kidnapped Jinx.

Hahaha! No way! Oh, that’s awesome! Well what happened? Shut up. Hahaha. Just so we’re clear, I’m a real trickster, not one of those lousy isolates, got it?

Oh, um... okay?

Then why...? Haha... your carelessness has given me a really good plan.

You’re calling me careless?

Nettle is... hm! About the right height!

Okay...?

Since you can vanish, I assume you’re good at using illusions for disguises.

Very good, yep.

I may regret asking this but... what’s your plan, then?

Uh... I’m not so sure that’s going to...

I don’t remember asking your opinion, kid!

You do the illusions, and I’ll take care of Bluff and Nettle. I assume you can take care of Jinx.

By “take care”, you mean...?

I don’t care what you do, just give me a half-day free, at least.

“Okay”.

And stop with the air-quoting already, you colossal dork!

“no”.
WHAT?! MY HANDS!

THEY'RE HUMAN AGAIN! WHAT KIND OF LUCK IS THIS?! FIRST WITH THE TIME GODDESS, AND NOW I.... WAIT... THIS ISN'T RIGHT....

...THESE AREN'T MY HANDS.

ISN'T THAT... JINX'S TAIL? WHAT IS GOING ON?

MORNING, JINX! HEH, I HAD THE WEIRDEST DREAM LAST NIGHT... YOU WERE KIDNAPPED BY THESE TWO HOPELESS TRICKSTERS IN MASKS.

HMF! IT MIGHT LOOK LIKE SKIN, BUT IT STILL FEELS LIKE I'VE GOT MY FUR UNDERNEATH.

AND MY HAND GOES RIGHT THROUGH ALL THIS FLUFF.

MUST BE AN ILLUSION....

...JINX?

I CAN'T SPEAK?? WHY?!

THAT WAS NO DREAM! I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BUT YOU'RE NOT JINX!

HEY.

UM.... YEAH, IF I WASN'T SURE BEFORE.... WOW, YOU'RE KIND OF FURRY-FEELING, IT'S WEIRDING ME OUT.

HEH! WHAT'S HE DOING?!
UGH! HOW LONG ARE YOUR FINGERNAILS?! THAT REALLY STINGS! WHY'D I BLOCK WITH MY HAND, AHHHH...

Huh?

What?

......What?

Gyah! Not again!

Come on, really? What is this? What have you boys been up to?

Jinx and Bluff, you two are dormmates, and friends besides, aren't you? Why have you been fighting?

That's not Jinx! It's a trickster!

He started it!

I don't even--!

Friggin' muteness.

...Something strange is going on, isn't it?

I think I'd better go fetch Drake.

Um, ok.
Meanwhile, on the road to Dhark's Hero School...

...The effects of Fool's Week are also being felt...

Bahl! Why do I always travel during Fool's Week?!
Every signpost in the country has been messed with!

Hey, lady, are you lost?

Yeah! Hey, are you a student from Dhark's?
I'm trying to find it and I'm already horribly late.

Yeah, sure.

Hey! I know you!
Your that idiot that wasted a wish from Cerir in Mylenori!

Hey! I know you!

Good luck finding the school, jackass!

Man, what's her problem?
This place is freaking huge! I've been wondering the halls forever. This isn't the only door I've tried. It's been labelled 'Headmistress' either.

Damn Tricksters...

Hello?  Come in!

knock

knock

You know what... I'm too tired to point out how wrong this looks. I'm Shauni San... The new Lingo Teacher.

Oh! I'm sorry. I was expecting someone else!... Who are you?

Oh! so they found someone dumb enough to take the job.

Shut it big blue. not in the mood.
Ah, welcome Shaulin-san. We expected you yesterday... but that's all right.

Wait!

You can hear me?!

Yeah, I can hear you just fine. No need to shout!

Oh... you don't have a mouth. I guess hear and shout are inaccurate?

That's why you need a new lingo, teacher, huh?

I'm glad to see you are qualified.

Well, I haven't seen anything like that before, but I do perceive more than other people, so I always get by fine.

Ah, you are blessed by Jude, God of Knowledge.

You got it! Gave me a third eye and everything!

It's quite handy. I can read minds with it! Mhaha, well... to some extent, anyway.

Oh, that's... interesting.

And I can see straight through an illusion like that! Come on now!

...Really?

And I can tell who people really are at a glance! You're the headmistress, even though you look like a kid! And you are—...

Oh... gee, my condolences... eesh, how did that happen?

Hey, go back to the illusion part!

Yeah, it's a pretty good illusion, no doubt about that!

Reminds me of a joke I once read! In a bar, there's a trickster, an off-worlder, and a gh-

Sorry, mana!

—And... and a walking storybook hero?

Mana, Drake Piperion is... missing. And— who is this?

I must be more tired than I thought, I'm seeing things.

...Wait, did that lady just call me a...?
This is Shauni San, our new staff member.

I am Dharfi Valcross. A pleasure, I'm sure.

Did you call him a trickster?!

I'm not a trickster!!

Um... Shauni?!

Well - Look, I dunno, he's a little orange catboy all illusioned up to look like an enemy of the Trickster god. What else would he be but a trickster?

...Nettle? Is that you?

It must be a prank of some sort. Nettle is most definitely not a trickster. He's a guardian, a servant of Gaea.

He is??

Hmm, I don't see it.

But looking through illusions always makes me crosseyed! I could be wrong.

He's got some trickster spell on there to keep him mute, too. Weird sort of prank, but I guess it's all pretty harmless.

Harmless except for bluff attacking me...

I would not worry about it, illusions that good tend to wear off quite quickly. Just enjoy your day, boys.

Wait - if that's Nettle...

Where's Jinx?

That... that could be a problem.

Ack! Jinx!!

I'll alert the staff. Dharfi, check Mylenor!

Boys, stay out of trouble!

Hey! Wait! What about me?!
I can't believe there's a trickster here...

And you know, it could be anyone!

I'm... not sure why that's such a big deal.

It's... geez, claw. I mean, c'mon! Tricksters! You don't even know who to trust...

First, it could be anyone of us... but second, anyone might not be who they seem, they could be wearing an illusion!

I bet Delta's a trickster, though. I mean, she is a traitor. You always hear stories about tricksters using that disguise as a cover.

I wouldn't be surprised if Saturn is a trickster. She is always talking so loudly about her elementalist family... seems almost defensive, you know?

Do you think Claw could be a trickster...? She's kind of... not very good at pretending to be an elemental clanner.
HMM... SOWING CONFUSION AND DISTRUST IS VERY TRICKSTERLIKE TOO, ISN'T IT?

OH YEAH?! JUST WHAT ARE YOU IMPLYING, DELTA?! I'M NOT A TRICKSTER, IF ANYONE HERE IS, IT'S YOU!

HOW DARE YOU!

MORRRR...

I HAVE NO IDEA...

WE CAN'T JUST STAND AROUND! WE GOTTA FIND JINX!

LET'S FIND JINX, THEN WE CAN FIND OUT WHO'S BEHIND ALL THIS!

I CAN'T TALK... SO HOW TO MAKE HIM UNDERSTAND ME...? I DON'T WANNA TRY PHYSICAL FORCE AGAIN...

IF WE GET INTO ANOTHER FIGHT, I THINK HE'D WIN...
Hey, guys!

Hey Blue, you wanna find your friend Jinx? That orange guy does too.

Let’s go.

Hey, wait! Hold on a sec!

I should’ve asked where the staff quarters are before. I told him that... oh well, I guess I’ll have to find them myself. How hard could it possibly be?

Soon....

...What?? Back here?

How even...?

Ugh. I hope those two mute kids are at doing better than I am...

This way!

Hmph. We’ll never find Jinx going that way.

I won’t back down! It’s this way!

Think... what would Master Saffron do?

You see Nettle! Compromise can be wonderful!

Stand by your convictions. Trust your instincts.

Daffodils really are lovely flowers.

Thank you, master...

I guess I’d better just follow him for now...

...No sense standing around doing nothing.

...This isn’t working.
WE'LL NEVER FIND JINX LIKE THIS...

WISH I COULD SPEAK, THEN I COULD JUST USE MY GUARDIAN POWERS AND ASK ONE OF THOSE BIRDS IF THEY'D SEEN ANYTHING.

BUT AS IS... I GUESS I COULD TRY SOME BASIC TRACKING.

I'D BETTER START AT THE DORMS, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO PICK UP A TRAIL FROM THERE.

HEY! NETTLE, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

OH, THE DORMS? YEAH, GOOD IDEA. I CAN GET OUT OF MY PYJAMAS.

MAYBE WE'LL GET LUCKY AND FIND A-

OW!

OW-?

YOU J-JUST OPENED THE DOOR IN MY FACE! B-BE MORE CAREFUL!

HEY, THAT SOUNDS LIKE-

JINX?

HUH? BLUFF?

T-THAT REALLY HURT, AND I-... I-

T-T-T-TRICKSTER!

EYAH!

ACTUALLY, THE THING IS-

HEY! I'M NOT A TRICKSTER!
HA, THAT'S MUCH BETTER! HOW DID YOU DO THAT?

H-HA... IT'S THE SORT OF THING YOU PICK UP QUICKLY WHEN YOU GET ENOUGH EXPERIENCE DEaling WITH TRICKSTERS LIKE YOU.

OH, NEAT! THAT'S-

WAIT! I'M NO TRICKSTER! I'M A GUARDIAN, YOU KNOW THAT!

OH? THEN EXPLAIN... THIS!

A MIRROR?

I DON'T GET IT. WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO-

HEY!!

MY MARKINGS! WHERE DID MY MARKINGS GO?!

Y-YOU TELL ME, TRICKSTER!

JINX, CAN ILLUSIONS BE CAST ON TOP OF ILLUSIONS?

H-HH-HH! OH... Y-Yeah, I GUESS, BUT, UM...

THEN THIS HAS GOT TO BE ANOTHER ILLUSION! NO DOUBT I'M A SERVANT OF GAEA! SOME TRICKSTER JUST HID MY MARKINGS...

I... I DON'T- IF YOU REALLY ARE A GUARDIAN, PROVE IT!

UM, JINX, WOULDN'T IT BE MAKING AN ILLUSION HIDING HIS MARKINGS LIKE... AUTOMATICALLY PROVE THAT?
OH SURE! NO PROBLEM! HERE, I'LL PROVE IT!

ONE GUARDIAN SPECIAL FOR JINX!

NOW... CAN YOU PLEASE REMOVE THIS ILLUSION?

OH! Y-YES!

SORRY, NETTLE...

DRAKE PIPERION! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?!

HUH?

IT'S MY DAY OFF. I WAS IN TOWN.

OH... OF COURSE. SORRY, IT IS JUST... HAVE YOU SEEN JARED STONE?

YEAH. RIGHT THERE.

NO, THAT IS NETTLE. NO, THAT'S NETTLE.

OH. I GUESS ALL'S WELL. THAT ENDS WELL, THEN.

DRAKE! HERE YOU ARE!

I KNOW YOU'RE BEHIND IT.

BEHIND... WHAT?

DON'T PLAY DUMB.

DHARFI... IS THERE SOMETHING YOU WANT TO TELL ME?

I AM SORRY, MANA. PERHAPS SOMEWHERE PRIVATE?

DHARFI IS A TRICKSTER.

IS THIS TRUE?... NO

N...YEEES, BUT, AH, I DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH KIDNAPPING JINX! THAT WAS DHARK'S OTHER TRICKS-...TER.

...AND... THAT WAS MEANT TO BE A SECRET. A BIG ONE. DAMMIT.
I'M SORRY, NETTLE.

AW, THAT'S OKAY JINX! I KNOW YOU GET UPSET ABOUT TRICKSTERS, WHICH IS REALLY FAIR ENOUGH. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT!

UM, NO... NOT THAT...

I CAN'T GET THAT ILLUSION OFF YOU. THERE IS CERTAINLY ONE THERE, I CAN F-FAINLY FEEL IT... B-But... whoever put it there must be strong.

BUT! THAT'S MY MARKING! IT SHOWS WHAT GUARDIAN I AM!

AH... IT... IT'll BE F-FINE... ILLUSIONS WEAR OFF....

BUT IF I DON'T HAVE MY MARKINGS, WHO WILL BELIEVE THAT I AM A NATURE POWER?!

WH-WHO WOULD BELIEVE THAT ANYWAY?...

HM...? WHAT DO YOU MEAN, JINX?

UH... S-SORRY, IT'S JUST... MY UNCLE SAID NATURE POWERS, UM, GUARDIANS, ARE MEANT TO LIVE DEEP IN A FOREST, AND REALLY HATE PEOPLE... N-NO OFFENCE....

OH, WELL, YEAH, THEY DO, MOSTLY...

MASTER SAFFRON ALWAYS TOLD ME THAT WE CATS ARE DIFFERENT TO THE OTHER GUARDIANS. FROM WHAT I'VE SEEN, IT'S TRUE.

THE OTHER GUARDIANS ARE CRAZY, I'VE SEEN 'EM...

PROMISE YOU WON'T TELL ANYONE!

UM, S-SURE.

WELL, MASTER TOLD ME THAT WE CATS USED TO HAVE A FOREST... HAHA... BUT IT BURNT DOWN. IT'S KIND OF EMBARRASSING...

I GUESS YOU COULD SAY MY MASTER WASN'T VERY UM, GUARDIANLIKE. BUT HE TAUGHT ME EVERYTHING I KNOW. WHICH IS ALSO... KIND OF EMBARRASSING.
Oh... you talked about your master before, right? Where is he— if you don't mind me asking...

Um, he's dead.

Oh! I'm sorry, Nettle...

Don't worry about it. There's only ever one of each guardian at a time, so he raised me to take his place.

As well as inheriting my master's power... I also inherited his enemies, heh...

Please don't tell anyone!

I'm... kind of—haha, well, it is convenient for me to stay here, because I won't be bothered by this one other guardian... she has been after master saffron awhile.

Hrrk—! No way!

Lots of nature powers don't like people, but I like 'em just fine.

Even if there are tricksters with their illusions who pull mean pranks on me.

U—um...

I don't know how long... but that illusion will wear off... um, if it isn't re-cast...

Maybe until then you could, um, part your hair the other way?

Mm, I guess... just for now.

It—it's not a big deal to hide it a little. No one will know it's not there, then.

And nobody will know it's there either... hmph. I hate to hide my markings, but I guess the choice was made for me.

I haven't really been a servant of gaea for very long...

I wonder if I make a good guardian... ha-ha, probably not. But I guess I am following in my master's footsteps. There's nobody left to teach me now, anyway.

U—um... you're at dhark's hero school now, so even if—well... you can learn to be a hero, w—which is good too...

Thanks, jinx.
DRAKE, DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY FOR YOURSELF?

YEAH! YOU CAN'T FIRE ME! THAT'S RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION, YO!

NOMBER CARES - YOU'RE A TRICKSTER. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING RELEVANT?

UM....

YOU'LL NEVER FIND ANYONE AS QUALIFIED AS ME!

HOW'S THAT?

WHY, I CAN DEMONSTRATE ANY SPELL THERE IS!

YOU MEAN YOU CAN FAKE ANY SPELL.

YEAH YEAH. MY POINT BEING THAT YOU'LL NEVER FIND SOMEONE WHO CAN DO ALL THAT AND WOULDN'T GO FOR A STUDENT IF HE OR SHE HAPPENED TO BE A TRICKSTER...

EXCEPT FOR A TRICKSTER...

AND HERE I AM.

HM... I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN, DRAKE.

MANA-

YOU'RE NOT FIRED.

YET.

CONSIDER YOURSELF ON PROBATION. DHARFI WILL SIT IN ON YOUR CLASSES TO KEEP AN EYE ON THINGS.

WHAT?

WHAT?!

ONLY UNTIL I CAN FIND A SUITABLE ASSISTANT FOR YOU... OR REPLACEMENT.

HEY, I KNOW A GUY-

NO TRICKSTERS.

HAHA YEAH GOOD LUCK WITH THAT.

SHALINI?

CAN SOMEBODY PLEEEEASE TELL ME THE WAY TO THE STAFF QUARTERS? I'M SO TIRED... AH...