YES, VALENTINA'S BEEN WORKING HARD TO GET THE LAST OF THE SCHOOL DEFENCES BACK UP, NOW THAT HER AND THOSE GRIFFS ARE ON GOOD TERMS.

PHOENIX CLAW IS TAKING QUITE SOME TIME TO COME BACK, BUT I SUPPOSE I'M NOT THAT WORRIED, SHE IS AN ELEMENTAL CLANNER.

BUT I CAN'T SHAKE THIS FEELING SOMETHING IS ABOUT TO GO VERY WRONG.

WHY, DO THINGS EVER GO RIGHT AROUND HERE?

AH BUT SERIOUSLY, I'M SURE IF IT'S SOMETHING, IT'S NOTHING WE CAN'T HANDLE. ...THOUGH THAT WAS A LOT MORE TRUE WHEN DHARFI WAS HERE. I DO HOPE SHE'S OKAY.

...DID YOU HAVE ANY KIND OF "WRONGNESS" IN MIND?

NO, JUST A GENERAL SENSE OF UneASE.

IT'S PROBABLY NOTHING.

YEaH.

PROBABLY NOTHING.
All this for a school with like 20-odd people? Seems like a waste of time...

The princess sure got his majesty's ear this time.

What? Don't be ridiculous.

There's more than that going on, think! It's full of tricksters, murderers, and sits within our borders while claiming to be totally independent.

It's an affront to his royal highness, even besides them snipping princess mia.

Pfft, ex-townies.

Geez, he's obsessed huh?

Yeah, but he's also right this time, so quit your complaints.

Yes sir!

It's more dangerous than you'd think. They have a saviour-hero, and a guardian. You'd do well to take it seriously.

Yes sir!

Yes sir!

Now where's my messenger...

Here, sir!

Here's his majesty's declaration. Take it to the headmistress. Darius will accompany you.

Is an escort really required...? Last time wasn't so bad.

He volunteered.

Ah.

I'm sure there will be no problems, but just in case...

It's best to hope for success, but prepare for failure.

Yes, sir.

Are those... the Gardenian guardsmen?

That's... weird okay then.
Whoah, hey! What’re you doing there, kid?
Uh, I live here.
Huh? I thought that manor was abandoned.
...It’s not. It doesn’t look abandoned, does it?

You can’t be here. We’re undertaking a military exercise in this area.
What, here? But there’s nothing here. What are you doing out here?
We can’t tell you that.

Hey, what’s going on over here?
S–Sir!

This kid says she lives here, sir.
Hmmm. I’ve seen you before. I’m sure of it... Are you a student of Dhark’s?
Yeah... Why?

O! Who’s got a copy of the bounty posters? This kid got one?
Huh??

No! She’s clean, sir!
What’s going on?!
Look, kid, you ain’t done nothing wrong, but we’re going to have to restrain you just for the duration of our activities in this area.
You what?!

S–Sir! One moment!
WHAT? BANAN? WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?
YOU KNOW THIS KID?

SURE'N I DO, SIR. WE DONE WORKED TOGETHER DURING THE MONSTER RACING SEASON WHEN I DON'T WORK WITH Y'ALLS. NO NEED TO CUFF HER.
YOU SURE ABOUT THAT?

SOMEbody TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON!
NO.

LISTEN KIDDO, YOU JUST NEEDA TAKE SOME TIME OFFA SCHOOL. THAT'S GOOD, AIN'T IT?
WHY...?

IT'S FINE. WE DON'T WANT NO ONE HURT, THIS AIN'T GONNA LAST REAL LONG-- THAT WILL DO, GROOM.
YES SIR.

WHERE ARE YOUR PARENTS, KID?

SHE'S AN ORPHAN, SIR.
AH, SORRY.

RIGHT. WELL THEN WHO OWNS THIS JOINT, WHO LOOKS AFTER YOU. I'LL TALK TO THEM.

HM. WELL I DON'T THINK-- IT'S JUST ME, SIR.

SIR, IF SHE AIN'T WANTED, AIN'T NO REASON SHE CAN'T JUST STAY AT HOME. I'LL BE HAPPY TO KEEP AN EYE ON HER.

I CAN'T HAVE YOU AWAY FROM YOUR POST, GROOM.

AH, BUT IT'S PERFECT, SIR. THIS KID'S A STABLE-HAND, AND THAT'S HER RANCH. WE CAN STABLE THE ANIMALS AND MONSTERS THERE. RIGHT KID?

...I GUESS SO.

ALRIGHT FINE. GET IT DONE.

YES SIR!
C’mon and give me a hand, kiddo.

I didn’t know you were in the Gardenian Army.

I didn’t even know you were Gardenian, your accent’s not!

Well, heck, I didn’t know you was at this Trickster School, sheesh!

You ain’t even a Trickster!

What? It’s not even a Trickster school though, what the hell?

What’s the Army even doing here—wait are you doing something to DHS?!

We’re the Gardenian Guard but anyway I can’t be telling you stuff like that... don’t worry, it’ll be fine as long as...

Nothing, it’ll be fine.

Bigger! Bigger! Make me bigger!

Hahaha yes!

I’m adding the finishing touches. Don’t you think it would be a little late for that?

What she say!

Frigging kids...

...xe?

Miss Miss...

It eyes glow.

Oh... is it meant to be doing that, Miss?
OH HEY, THOSE GUYS ARE FROM PRINCESS MIA’S POSSE.

GOOD DAY. I MUST SEE HEADMISTRESS RYUSHIN. I HAVE AN URGENT MISSIVE FROM—

ONE THING FIRST.

I HAVE RECEIVED REPORTS THAT THE MURDERER DRAKE PIPERION IS ON STAFF HERE. WILL YOU CONFIRM THAT IS THE CASE?

...WHAT?
DRAKE'S NOT A MURDERER! ....RIGHT?

AH.

SO IT'S TRUE, SHE IS HERE.

DARIUS, WATCH IT!

HEY!

KIRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR!!

SOMETHING THE MATTER, HEADMISTRESS?
Oh, for crying out loud—!

What is it?

Could I get you to gather the staff to the second-floor staffroom? I’ll meet you there later. There seems to be a problem...

Ah, okay.

I’d best get down there quickly... but jumping through the window again... so undignified.

Th—that escalated quickly, huh...

Danni Marble. When a cop asks you if you’re harbouring a murderer you say “no”.

Don’t they teach you anything here!!

What is going on?

Whoah miss, where’d you come from?

This person ask about Drake. Then statue and he fight.

Yeah pretty much.

Valentina, can these new statues be called off like I asked?

Close the gate behind me, please.

Headmistress Ryushin?

You, stop.

Are you intending harm to someone in my school? I told you last time you were here--

I am here to arrest Drake Piperion! Delta Morningstar! And all the tricksters you are hiding here!

Darus...
IS THAT RIGHT...

AS I'M SURE YOU'RE STILL AWARE, MY SCHOOL IS NOT A PART OF GARDENIA, SO-

EXCUSE ME, MA'AM.

THAT'S WHY WE'RE HERE.

I HAVE A MESSAGE FROM HIS MAJESTY KING GARDENIA. WE WISH TO ANNEX YOUR LAND AND BRING JUSTICE FAIRLY TO THE REALM.

YOU'RE JOKING.

MA'AM, OVER THAT HILL IS HALF THE ROYAL GUARD, WE WILL ONLY ACCEPT ONE RESPONSE. BUT I'M SURE YOU CAN COME NEGOTIATE TERMS...

OH I SEE. VERY WELL. MY ANSWER IS NO.

DHARK'S HERO SCHOOL IS NOT FOR THE TAKING.

YOU ACT HASTILY, HEADMISTRESS.

DARIUS? SHE'S COMING WITH US. PERHAPS SHE WILL SEE SENSE AFTER SPEAKING WITH CAPTAIN ELLISON, AND OF COURSE-

STOP!

LET ME GO! OH FOR THE LOVE OF-

HMMPH!

WH-WHAT?!

KEHHH... WOW.

HOW DID YOU JUST-?

I HAVE GIVEN MY RESPONSE. GOOD DAY TO YOU.

COME, THERE'S WORK TO BE DONE.
Keh. Think they two cranky. To put it mildly...
I think they come back to attack.
Yes... I fear so.
I go tell chief.
We need to call an emergency assembly.

Yeah probably but-Miss Ryushin, how the hell did you walk through those bars?!
Language, Danni.
Sorry Miss! But really-what was that?!
It was magic. Forget it.
Really?
Yes.
Miss Traoré?
Don't ask.

We don't have time for trivialities. Danni, go and get the rest of the students.

Valentina, fetch the staff. They're on the second floor I believe.

We'll meet in the hall. Please do hurry.

Hey, Miss. Ryushin's not like... a ghost, is she? You gotta tell me if she's a ghost.

Better go get the students. Feels like things are going to go south. And soon.
Okay...

But you'd tell me if Ryushin was a ghost, right?
Just go already.
GUYS! QUICK! EVERYBODY'S GOTTA GO TO THE HALL FOR AN ASSEMBLY! WE'RE GETTING ATTACKED BY GARDENIA!

....WHAT???

YOU HEARD ME!

YEAH, BUT-

C'MON, C'MON!

WHAT... WHAT'S GOING ON?

AH, DON'T WORRY...

THERE'S NO SENSE IN PANICKING. WHATEVER IT IS, WE'LL GET IT SORTED OUT.

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IS EITHER, HUH?

...LET'S FIND OUT.
HEADMISTRESS?

I'M SORRY. THIS IS BAD.

THE GARDENIANS ARE HERE. THEY WANT TO TAKE OVER THE SCHOOL, ARREST ANYBODY WITH A CRIMINAL RECORD, OR ANYBODY THEY PLAIN DON'T LIKE.

THEY HAVE BROUGHT AN ARMY.

SO...

ANYBODY WHO WANTS TO LEAVE, CAN LEAVE.

IT'S NOT REASONABLE TO EXPECT YOU TO STAY.

BUT THIS IS MY HOME. I WILL FIGHT TO DEFEND IT, AND ANYONE WHO STAYS.
If you want to leave, you won't need to pass the Guardians. There are ways to sneak out, as a last resort, but...

Are you kidding? I can't leave! This is my home! My tree is planted here, and I'll fight to defend it!

If I leave I'll be arrested...

Where else would I go?

We can't let 'em just take over without a fight!

I think we should certainly stand our ground, but... it does sound dangerous. Isn't there a diplomatic solution?

At this point, I'm not sure...

If there's a good option between total surrender and war, I'll take it.

But anybody who's staying must be prepared to... uh...

One, two... We're missing a few students?

Phoenix claw is still out field, but Loki-?

I suppose she wouldn't be in, coming from home with the army in the way... Yes, I'm sure she's okay, she's a Guardian. Where is Snatch?

Nettle said he's cut back with the Griffs.

Uh, y-yeah, I did say that... Uh...

Looks like he snuck off to help Clay.

I see... if there's a school left when he returns, he's going to have a lot of detention to serve.
THE KING IS HERE!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!

SSH—THOSE LOOK LIKE ROYAL GUARDS.

AH, CAPTAIN! HOW DID IT GO? GOOD, I HOPE.
I EXPECT YOU WANT TO HEAD BACK TO THE CAPITAL SOON, YES?

GREETINGS, MAYOR.
HIS MAJESTY IS STILL IN YOUR OFFICE?

YES. THANK YOU.

KNOCK KNOCK?

MY LIEGE...PRINCESS.

ENTER.

CAPTAIN.

WHERE'S THAT WEIRD HEADMISTRESS?
YOU SAID YOU'D BRING HER HERE SO SHE CAN SURRENDER PROPERLY!

MY APOLOGIES, YOUR HIGHNESS. SHE WAS IN NO MOOD TO NEGOTIATE, I'M AFRAID.

OH DEAR.

SO GO DRAG HER BACK HERE! ATTACK THEM! RAze THE SCHOOL TO THE GROUND!

HMM, YES, WELL, I'D RATHER IT NOT COME TO THAT. THEY'RE JUST SCHOOL KIDS, AFTER ALL.

BUT THEY'RE MEAN! I WANT THEM GONE!!

DON'T WORRY, POPPET. WE'LL BRING DHS UNDER CONTROL.

CAPTAIN ELLISON, I'M AFRAID YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO ATTACK, TEAR DOWN THE WALLS. ARREST ANYONE WHO TRIES TO STOP YOU.

THAT SHOULD CONVINCE THE HEADMISTRESS TO RECONSIDER HER STANCE.

BUT—DO TRY NOT TO HURT ANY CHILDREN. IF YOU HAVE TO DEFEND YOURSELF, SO BE IT, BUT BE CAREFUL, WON'T YOU?

YES, YOUR MAJESTY. BUT DADDY—!
Well... at any rate. We must be prepared to fight... and to lose.

We can win! Y-Yeah-I um.

We can certainly put up a good fight. But they do have an army.

Ke, hearomistress!

Our army is here!

...excuse me?

This our home, all of ours! We all fight together to protect!

So, come see.

Wow.

Chief Ke'tc, you have quite a number in your flock.

Is good, no?

It... yes, that is good. But you are unarmed and unarmoured. I don't know how you'll do against the guard.

That's easy to fix at least! DHS has got an old armory. Thought you knew...

Bit of a rust-bucket, but it'll have to do.

Val! You and Drake can get the gear spiffed up with enchantments. Right? That'll help!

...this might work.

Nah.
If it comes down to it, they can always siege us. Our food won’t last forever.

It might not come to that. If we can show that we have strength, we might be able to negotiate on better terms...

I dunno if fighting at all is a good idea. Last I checked we ain’t got a healer.

Oh… Y-yeah.

Ah, that… is not a problem.

If it comes down to it, I have enough healing magic for whatever happens.

…you do? Huh, I didn’t know that.

So, what orders, headmistress?

Hmmm… have you griffs fought an army before?

Hah, no.

Of course, hrm… does anybody else have any of that sort of experience?

Miss? Let me help. I said my last school was like this one, but… uh… it was actually more of a military academy.

Wait, you were in the army?!

What? No, not yet, I’m not that old… it was kind of like… where they sent the delinquents. I was still learning, but it’s better than nothing, right?

Y-yeah, I guess.

I suppose you’ll need to help translate, then. Very well! Let’s get a move on.

We’d better get to it! We’ve got some time to prepare before the gardenians get here, we’d best make the most of it.

We’ll do the best we can.

Excuse me, miss?
What's wrong? Apart from everything? Haha...

I thought you should know... that human guard at the front gate? He went mental because Miss Piperion's here, said she's a murderer...

Ah... thank you for telling me.

Please join the others.

Uh, right.

Drake, Shauni? We need to talk.

Uh... OK?

We'll start sorting through the armory. Meet you there when you're done?

Yeah, sure.

Ppsst, Shauni. Should I be worried?

Oh what?

This better be important, Mana. We could be spending this time preparing the defences.

It is. You made yourself quite scarce the last time the Gardenians came around.

Yeah? So what. I am a trickster.

Yes, but your wanted poster... I wonder if it wasn't erroneous when it said you were wanted for murder.

There was a royal guardsman at the gate asking for you by name. He reiterated that point...

...That was Darius, wasn't it?

Now I see why you had Shauni stay too. To catch me if I lie, huh?

H-hey I never agreed to that...

Drake.

Well, guess the cat's out of the bag now.
Well, Ryushin, you're Headmistress of a hero school...

You ever see a Blackwing hero? Feathry, of course...

You must have, it's hardly uncommon. Once you past the initial revulsion, you think... that's unfortunate.

He's a hero, not a bad guy. So he must have had to kill someone in the course of his duties. So he's not a murderer per se, but-

Drake, you're no hero. What did you do?

...A nobleman killed my mother. So I killed him.

...I'm sorry.

However... Retribution is still murder...

Oh please, he was going to go after my sister next. Is that good enough for you?

I had to do it. It was justifiable.

...But... He WAS a nobleman.

There was a trial, I hear. I wasn't there for it, I was already in prison. I heard about it from another prisoner.

I got the death sentence, apparently.

Some tricksters helped me escape. So...

I see.

So what would you have done if I gave you a "wrong" explanation? Trade me to Gardenia for a bargaining chip? Or just kick me out?

...Did this happen in Gardenia?

No, it was in Aera.

Then I must also know... why is Darius so furious about it?
DARIUS... I'VE LIVED IN GARDENIA BEFORE. WELL... DARIUS AND I HAVE HISTORY. WE WERE QUITE CLOSE.

So after a while... I confided in him.

I decided I'd come clean about being a trickster. He didn't take it well.

So we came to a compromise.

He said if being a trickster was the black mark I had, maybe it would be okay. I agreed.

Then I left.

Darius is determined. I knew he'd find out about that nobleman... anything else?

...these are things that would have been good to know when I hired you, Drake.

Nothing else, huh?

I'll go help defend our home then.

Shaun!

I told you I'm not here as a lie detector. Drake's a fine teacher.

Honestly? She is, but...

The right choice isn't always the easy one.

Neither's easy! But... I guess we'll protect her too, then. Well, she is the deputy headmistress...

You look worried.

Shouldn't I?

It'll work out, we'll get through this.
BANA? SIR? ARE YOU IN HERE?

DID YOU JUST WALK IN WITHOUT KNOCKING?
THAT'S RUDE.

OH HEY DARIUS.

...DID YOU JUST CALL ME 'SIR'?

CAPTAIN ELLISON SAID I WAS TO ASSIST YOU.

BWAAHAAHAAH!

I FAIL TO SEE THE HUMOUR IN THAT... SIR.

AHAHA OF COURSE YOU DO.

ALRIGHT! THE FIRST THING YER GONNA DO IS APOLOGISE TO LOKI FOR NOT KNOCKING. THEN ASK HER IF YOU CAN STAY.

YOU... YOU'RE A STUDENT AT DHS!

OH YEAH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, SHE'S FINE. I'VE KNOWN HER SINCE SHE WAS TINY!

WE ALWAYS WORK TOGETHER COME RACE SEASON! WELL AIN'T REALLY "WORKING TOGETHER", WE IN DIFFERENT STABLES. BUT WE GOT A SHARED HATE OF THIS ONE GUY, WHO--

HANG ON A TIC...

LOKI, I HEARD YOU GOT EXPELLED!

WHAT? I'VE NEVER BEEN EXPELLED. WHO SAID THAT?

REALLY? OH GOOD, BECAUSE JOEL SAID THAT HE RECKONED THE HEADMISTRESS SHOWED UP DURING LAST SEASON TO YELL AT 'VAS AND THAT'S WHY YOU PULLED OUT.

THAT DOESN'T EVEN MAKE SENSE IF I WAS EXPELLED THEN I'D HAVE MORE FREE TIME TO RACE?? URGH, THAT JERK!!
I didn't get expelled, I got... suspended, briefly.

Haha dang! Whatcha do? Something stupid?

Ha, yeah... I kind of fought the magic teacher.

Hm? Who is your magic teacher?

Ugh... Miss Piperion.

Miss Piperion?! You can't be serious, you-ugh!

Well yeah, it was pretty dumb.

It's not that-!

It's- hmm...

Magic teacher, ugh...? You know Drake Piperion is a trickster, right?


Most of your school are. Drake, the woman with three eyes, your headmistress...

You're not a trickster, are you?

Ey watch it dar, she's a kiborn, comes from a long line of light powers.

That all sounds a bit paranoid.

Okay, if Mana Ryushin is not a trickster, how would you explain her changing her appearance so dramatically? What could that be if not illusion?

Well, she's not a... she's... she's a...

Oh my goddess! You see?
YES, HEADMISTRESS RYUSHIN IS—

SHE’S A GHOST!!!

I— WHAT?

IT EXPLAINS EVERYTHING! HOW DIDN’T I SEE IT BEFORE?...WAIT... DID I THINK ABOUT THIS BEFORE?? I FEEL A BIT OF DÉJÀ VU...

ARE YOU TRYING TO RIDICULE ME OR—

...I DID SEE HER WALK THROUGH A SOLID OBJECT.

AHA! I TOLD YOU!

NO. GHOSTS ARE NOT REAL...

OH YEAH?

OK STOP BEING CRAZY FOR A TIC AND BRING ME SOME FRESH TEA, WOULDYA?

FORGET YOUR TEA!

DON’T ANY OF YOU PEOPLE KNOCK?!

OUR ORDERS HAVE COME, WE NEED TO MOVE IN.

OKAY, OKAY.

WHAT’S GOING ON?!

YOU KNOW I CAN’T TELL YA.

OI DAR, KEEP AN EYE ON HER, WOULD YA?

.....YES SIR.

YOU GONNA TELL ME WHAT’S GOING ON THEN?

OF COURSE NOT. MAAAAAAAAAAAAAN!
OH NO, THE GATE!

MOVE IN, QUICK!

YOU OF THE SCHOOL!
SURRENDER OR FACE DESTRUCTION!

CRASH!

L-LOOK OUT ABOVE! GRIFFS!!

HMM... HOW'S IT LOOKING?

NOT GREAT.

DID YOU KNOW THEY HAD AN ARMY OF GRIFFS? I DID NOT KNOW THEY HAD AN ARMY OF GRIFFS....

WELL, I SAW ONE GRIFF EARLIER...

WE'VE STILL GOT ENOUGH FORCE TO BEAT 'EM.

THANKFULLY HIS MAJESTY ORDERED THE FULL ROYAL GUARD.

IT MIGHT TAKE LONGER, BUT WE'LL WIN.
HAHA MAN, KAZ WAS REALLY WRONG ABOUT HOW CLOSE WE WERE, HUH? IN HIS DEFENCE THIS IS OUR FIRST TRIP IN GARDENIA.

HEH, THAT'S ALRIGHT. I'M GLAD I NEARLY BE BACK.

WHA?! THERE'S UH... A BUNCH OF ARMED FOLK IN UNIFORM UP AHEAD. I THINK THEY'RE ATTACKING THE SCHOOL...

STOP THE WAGON, LET'S TAKE A LOOK. PRINCE, BE CAREFUL.

CAPTAIN, THERE'S A WAGON APPROACHING.

WHAT? WE DON'T WANT CIVILIANS ON THE BATTLEFIELD, OR NEAR THE TENTS!

HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? WHO ARE YOU? GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE I HAVE THE LOT OF YOU ARRESTED!

NOW THAT'S SOME WELCOME.

I AM WRATH. THIS IS KAZ, AND SNATCH. AND THIS IS PRINCE PHOENIX OF REI.

THAT'S MY SCHOOL....

....WHAT?

THAT... UH....

HROOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOUMMMMMMM.... IS THAT A HORN--?

WHAT THE--

PULL BACK! YOU HEARD IT!

KE!! LET THEM RETREAT!

WHAT'S THAT ABOUT...?
WHAT'S THAT NOISE?!
THEM AGAIN?
WHAT? THEY CAN'T DO THAT!
WHY ARE THEY DOING THAT?
CAPTAIN ELLISON'S ON HIS WAY, YOUR MAJESTY!
HE HAD BEST BE COMING WITH A GOOD EXPLANATION.
MAYBE THEY WRECKED THE PLACE ALREADY...

YOUR MAJESTY, YOUR HIGHNESS... THERE'S BEEN A ER... COMPLICATION.

CAPTAIN.
MAY I?
YOUR MAJESTY KARDEN NIA, PRINCESS MIA, IT IS AN HONOUR. MAY I PRESENT MY LIEGE, HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE PHOENIX OF REI.

ER, YOUR MAJESTIES...
HE IS A STUDENT OF DHARK'S HERO SCHOOL.

OHHH. HMM.

SO LITTLE PRINCESS PAIGE MADE IT HOME? A DELIGHT TO HEAR SHE WAS A GUEST OF OUR COURT FOR SOME TIME, YOU KNOW.

NOW, DO FORGIVE ME FOR BEING INDELICATE...

BUT THAT SCHOOL IS SAID TO HAVE A FEW TRICKSTERS. SO UNFORTUNATELY I CANNOT JUST TRUST YOUR WORD, MY DEAR BOY.

OH, R-RISH. I GUESS IF Y' NEED PROOF...

HERE.

PRINCE-!
YOU HONOUR ME, PRINCE PHOENIX OF REI.

TO TRUST ME WITH YOUR CROWN IMMEDIATELY...

PRINCESS PAIGE—ER, THAT IS, REI IS LUCKY TO HAVE YOU.

UH, THANK Y’...

YOU LOOK A LITTLE FAMILIAR... HMMM... DID WE MEET LAST TIME? BUT I DON’T THINK WE DID. ...DO YOU HAVE A SISTER?

HIM I DO REMEMBER.

OH YES, SORRY, YOUR HIGNESS! THIS IS SNATCH, I AM KAZ, AND THIS IS WRATH.

THANK YOU FOR MAKING HIM WEAR CLOTHES THIS TIME.

WHAT?

YOU’RE WELCOME, YOUR HIGNESS.

MOWR?

WELL... PLEASE SIT DOWN, MAKE YOURSELVES COMFORTABLE.

MISTER MCLEAN, PLEASE FETCH US SOME TEA.

YES, YOUR MAJESTY.

AND CAPTAIN ELLISON?

YES, MY LIEGE?

YOU HAD BEST APPROACH THE HEADMISTRESS AGAIN AND HAVE HER COME HERE.

YES, YOUR MAJESTY.

KAZ, WHY DON’T YOU GO WITH THE FINE CAPTAIN? GIVE HIM A HAND WITH THAT.

THANK YOU. I’D APPRECIATE THAT.

SO, PRINCE PHOENIX! YOU MUST TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF, ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL!

AND YOU MUST TELL US WHY YOUR PEOPLE WERE ATTACKING IT, YOUR MAJESTY.
HEARDISTRESS RYUSHIN—?

I AM LEN ELLISON, CAPTAIN OF HIS MAJESTY'S GUARD. WE DID MEET LAST TIME... I HAVE COME UNARMED, HIS MAJESTY HAS REQUESTED YOUR PRESENCE SO HE MAY SPEAK WITH YOU.

YOU ATTACKED MY SCHOOL.

Y—YES. AND NOW HIS MAJESTY WANTS TO NEGOTIATE WITH YOU—RATHER URGENTLY, MA'AM.

I SEE. I HOPE IT WILL BE MORE CIVILISED THAN THE LAST NEGOTIATIONS?

WELL, OFFICER DARIUS WON'T BE THERE.

THIS IS WHAT YOU WANTED, RIGHT? GO ON.

IT'S STILL A LITTLE INTIMIDATING...

KE, LET'S GO. CHIEF YOU AND CHIEF ME WILL GO MEET THIS CHIEF MAJESTY.

OH YES, CHIEF KE'TC MAY COME AS WELL, RIGHT?

ERMM...

HE IS THE LEADER OF THE GriffS.

...VERY WELL. NO WEAPONS THOUGH, OKAY?

OF COURSE. THEN, LEAD THE WAY... WATCH YOUR STEP, CHIEF.

UMMM.... THAT QUIET FELLA WERENT IN GARDENIAN UNIFORM, RIGHT?

HUUH?
Ah, you must be Headmistress Ryushin! It's a pleasure to meet you, after all you've done for us. I really do have to thank you for allowing one of your students to go on that quest.

...hm?

Presenting His Majesty King Antoine Gardenia, Her Highness Mia Gardenia, and His Highness Prince Phoenix of Rei...

Of course, my apologies.

You're not Gardenian, are you?

Reinan!

Headmistress Ryushin, is it? It is very good of you to join us.

And this is Headmistress Mana Ryushin and Uh- Chief Ke'Tc.

Oh, Prince Phoenix... I am glad to see that you have returned safely.

Uhh, y-yeah...

What a delightful student you have in the young Prince.

If he was there when I visited, I bet you people would not have been so rude, and we wouldn't have had to retaliate!

Mmph.

I-I like I said, I'm real sorry 'bout me classmates. You'll forgive 'em, right?

Oh I suppose...

I had no idea there was a Griff colony at the school either, Chief Ke'Tc!

Hope we can be allies, Chief King.
...May I be blunt, Headmistress?

Certainly...

Setting aside how you treated dear Mia, I cannot have a self-proclaimed independent school full of criminals in my country.

So, let us take the criminals of your hands. Your school will become a part of Gardenia, and that will be all.

Hmmm, well, last I checked, your people had me listed as a criminal.

And as for “self-proclaimed”... Dhark’s is older than your country, your majesty. It was founded before the Worldsplit by five legendary heroes.

Yep, Dana, Hind, Ahm, Keith, and Reis.

Hang on... Hind an’ Reis? Y’ mean like—

The heroes Hind and Reis, who would then go on to found Rei after the Worldsplit.

With Rei recently free, we would love to see our friends at DHS remain free, and to forge a bond with Gardenia.

Ah, Chef Headmistress. What sort of criminal is you?

A trickster, they all are.

Hmmm? What that? Why it’s bad?

I am no trickster, but if some in my school are, that should never make them criminals.

Hmph! Well besides that, your traipses kicked me!

We are real real sorry aboli’ tha’ though, yer highness... you’ll forgive her, right?

Princess Paige nice. She would.

W-well... Hmph!! Fine!

Chief King, ke, ye, forget all nonsense. What can do to make both step back, everything go back to normal?

Very well. Let us negotiate your surrender.
SURRENDER?! WE CAN HEAD RIGHT BACK AND RALLY THE FORCES AGAIN. CHIEF KET'C?

PAIGE WON’ BE HAPPY...

KE KE, SURRENDER SOME MORE. YOU MAINLY MEAN NEGOTIATE, RIGHT?

YOU’RE SHARP, CHIEF.

SO, START WE FORGIVE YOU, YOU FORGIVE US.

A GOOD START...

WAIT... "FORGIVE"... YOU’LL GIVE US AMNESTY FOR ANY OF THOSE SO-CALLED CRIMES?

I SUPPOSE I COULD PARDON SUCH THINGS.

OUR MAGIC TEACHER HAS A BOUNTY ON HER FOR KILLING SOMEONE. YOU MUST INCLUDE THAT.

AH, DID IT HAPPEN IN GARDENIA?

I BELIEVE THE BOUNTY IS FROM ARAE, THERE’S WANTED POSTERS ALL OVER, I HEAR.

OH GOOD, WE DON’T USUALLY EXTRADITE THERE. A BOUNTY IS ANOTHER ISSUE THOUGH.

CAPTAIN, SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT HAVING ANY BOUNTY POSTERS OF THAT KEPT OUT OF HERE.

YES, MY LIEGE.

AND OF COURSE, TRICKSTERS... WE MAY HAVE A FEW. I CANNOT HAVE THEM IN TROUBLE JUST FOR THEIR FOOLISH RELIGION.

MM, WELL....

THE ROYAL FAMILY ARE DEVOUT TO THE GOD OF CHANGE. THE STATE DOES NOT TARGET TRICKSTERS, IT’S NOT STRICTLY SPEAKING ILLegal... BUT IT’S NOT ILLEGAL FOR THE ELEMENTAL CHURCHES TO DO WHAT THEY FEEL THEY MUST.

OF COURSE USING TRICKSTER MAGIC ON MY GUARDS WOULD BE ILLegal... SO, IF YOU CAN CONTROL YOUR TRICKSTERS, I SUPPOSE WE CAN ALLOW THAT. IF YOU HAVE TO DEFEND YOURSELF, SO IT IS. BUT I THINK YOU’D MUCH RATHER BE BETTER AT KEEPING SECRETS.

I’M SURE THEY DON’T LIKE TO ADVERTISE THEIR RELIGION, THEY JUST KEEP... HM? IT JUST OCCURRED TO ME, I THOUGHT BEING A TRICKSTER WAS ILLegal IN GARDENIA. I READ THAT IN A STRANGE LITTLE COMIC...

OH? AHAHA! HEADMIS-TRESS, YOU DON’T READ THOSE "TRICK TRACTS", DO YOU?

THEY ARE HARDLY A SOURCE OF UNBIASED INFORMATION!

I SEE. SO... IF YOU DO THIS FOR US... WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM US?
I WANT YOUR SCHOOL.

ALL THE CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR, INSULTS AND VARIOUS HERESIES WE CAN BRUSH ASIDE, BUT IT STILL PAINTS A PICTURE OF YOUR SCHOOL AS BEING OUT OF CONTROL. IF WE BRING YOU UNDER GARDENIA'S POWER, WE CAN ENSURE YOUR STAFF AND STUDENTS BEGIN TO ACT... APPROPRIATELY.

GIVE MY SCHOOL TO YOU? THAT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN.

KE, LITTLE PRINCE: THESE PEOPLE BAD AT NEGOTIATE, PON'T YOU THINK?

UH, YEAH, LOOKS LIKE...

IF ONLY WORRY IS STOP BREAK LAW, THEN CHIEF HEADMISTRESS, WHY NOT THAT? AND CHIEF KING, WHY NEED TO TAKE OVER?

GARDENIAN LAW ONLY APPLIES TO GARDENIA.

AND DHS IS NOT PART OF GARDENIA.

RIGHT... BUT YER TH' BOSS. Y' C'N SAY WHA' LAWS APPLY OR NOT.

WELL OF COURSE, BUT-

KING GARDENIA, CAN'T Y' WORK WIT' HEADMISTR'SS RYUSHIN WUTHOU' HAVIN' T' TAKE OVER TH' WHOLE PLACE?

I MEAN Y' PRETTY MUCH WAN' TH' SAME THING AT HEART - NO MORE TROUBL', RIGH'? SO IF Y' C'N JUS' TRUST EACH OTH'R...

I SUPPOSE... WE COULD GIVE YOU ANOTHER CHANCE, BUT WE NEED A SMALL CONCESSION. YOU WILL LET US PLACE A GUARD AT YOUR SCHOOL, TO KEEP AN EYE ON THINGS.

BESIDES THE MATTER OF TRUST, IT WOULD GO A LONG WAY TO ASSUAGE THE FOLK IN MYLENOR, SHOW THEM THAT THIS HAS ALL BEEN HANDLED.

HEADMISTRESS?

...I MUST ADMIT THIS IS GOING BETTER THAN I HAD EXPECTED.
Griff's accepts.

...and I suppose I do as well...

Oh, good!

That's all well and good, but I'm not sure Rei would be happy to have the Gardien Royal Guard constantly in close proximity to the prince...

Uh, it's okay.

Headmistress, would it be okay for a Reinan guard to stay as well, to keep a Reinan presence too?

Uhhh-

Yes, I could see no problem with that, Mr. Sinclair.

Fantastic!

Very well, then! Let's get an accord written out and signed.

About that guard... who did you have in mind to stay at my school?

Hmmm...

Captain, would any of your men or women volunteer?

Well, I don't think... um, there is one fellow, but-

Good, good. Have your messenger bring them here.

Y-yes, my liege.

Seriously what are you soldiers doing here? It's really... abnormal...

I cannot say, but honestly I thought it would be obvious.

Well, I'd hate to think my own country's army would be doing something so hugely immoral as attacking a school.

Technically we're the Royal Guard.
OH WOW, DID YOU LEARN HOW TO KNOCK?

IS DARIUS HERE?

HM?

YOUR PRESENCE IS REQUESTED IMMEDIATELY.

O-OH.

HUH? DOES THAT MEAN YOU'LL LEAVE ME UNSUPERVISED?

UMMM...

I DOUBT CAPTAIN ELLISON WOULD APPROVE.

I'LL GET BANA, YOU'LL NEED TO GO TO THE ROYAL TENT QUICKLY, THOUGH.

LOKI, WAIT HERE.

SLAM

AW MAN.

NOW, THERE WAS ONE OTHER THING...

YOU BRING THIS UP WHILE SIGNING? YOUR MAJESTY.

OH, IT IS NOTHING BAD, HEADMISTRESS!

IT IS ONLY...

YOU HAVE A ER, RATHER SMALL COHORT OF STUDENTS AT YOUR SCHOOL. WHILE WE ARE HELPING EACH OTHER, WHY DON'T WE SEE THAT SOMETHING GETS DONE ABOUT THAT?

A MID-YEAR INTAKE? THAT'D BE A BIT PECULIAR.

I SUPPOSE IT'S NOT TOTALLY UNUSUAL FOR SCHOOLS NOT TO FOLLOW THE CALENDAR YEAR. HAVING OVERLAPPING STUDENT YEARS WOULD BE A LITTLE FIDDLY, BUT DOABLE. AND... IT WOULD BE NICE TO HAVE MORE STUDENTS THAN STAFF FOR A CHANGE.

YOUR MAJESTY, YOUR HIGHNESS, CAPTAIN... ER, HEADMISTRESS? I WAS CALLED FOR?

..CAPTAIN ELLISON YOU MUST BE JOKING. YOU THINK HE SHOULD STAY AT DHS?

STAY AT-EXCUSE ME?!
NO, I MERELY SAID DARUS WAS LIKELY THE ONLY ONE WHO WOULD VOLUNTEER.

VOLUNTEER?!

WHY, IS THERE A PROBLEM WITH MY GUARD, HEADMISTRESS?

ERR... I... DON'T USUALLY USE MY SURNAME...

OFFICER! ANSWER YOUR KING!

Y-YES SIR!

I WOULD RATHER A VOLUNTEER IF POSSIBLE. HMM. WHAT WAS YOUR NAME, SOLDIER?

DARUS, YOUR MAJESTY.

DARUS WHO?

ERR- I... I DONT USUALLY USE MY SURNAME...

OFFICER! ANSWER YOUR KING!

Y-YES SIR!

PIPER!- OH...

...YOU KNOW MISS PIPERION AT SCHOOL?!

MISSUS PIPERION...

MY WIFE.

OFFICER PIPERION. WE'VE MANAGED TO NEGOTIATE A PEACE WITH THE SCHOOL... WE WILL BE WORKING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT IT NOW, AND I NEED ONE OF MY GUARD TO STAY THERE TO ENSURE THAT PEACE IS KEPT.

A-AND THE SCHOOL'S CRIMINALS...?

HAVE BEEN PARDONED.

DARUS, YOU'RE AWARE OF WHAT THIS MEANS, RIGHT? THAT'S THE KING. TO NOT SUPPORT HIM IN THESE DECISIONS WOULD BE TREASON.

ONE OF THESE REINAN SOLDIERS WILL BE THERE TOO, YOUR BEHAVIOUR WILL NEED TO BE IMPECCABLE. IF THERE IS ANY PROBLEM YOU CAN REPORT BACK. DO YOU VOLUNTEER?

I WILL FOLLOW YOUR ORDERS, MY LIEBE... BUT...

MAY I ASK A QUESTION?

VERY WELL.

ISN'T THAT GIRL ONE OF THE DHS STUDENTS? WHY IS SHE WEARING A GOLD CIRCLET?
WH-- WHAT?! HE IS A STUDENT OF DHARK'S. HE IS PRINCE PHOENIX OF REI AND HOW DARE YOU?! ER- YOUR VOICE IS SO DEEP! YOU- YOU'RE A MAN AS WELL?! EXCUSE ME?!

I'M SORRY- SORRY! I MUST HAVE BEEN MISTAKEN, I JUST THOUGHT THAT-

APOLOGISE PROPERLY, SOLDIER!!

MY- MY HUMBlest APOLOGIES YOUR HIGHNESS, PLEASE FORGIVE ME...

YOUR MAJESTY? YES, HEADMISTRESS?

I AM STILL CONCERNED ABOUT DARLIS.

WE HAVE STATUES THAT SENSE DANGER AND ATTACK ANYBODY WHO WOULD HARM THE STAFF, STUDENTS OR SCHOOL.... WHEN HE FOUND OUT HIS WIFE WAS THERE, THEY ATTACKED HIM.

...IS THAT SO-?

OFFICER PIPERION!

YES, YOUR MAJESTY?

CHIEF KE'TC, HEADMISTRESS RYSHIN, PRINCE PHOENIX... IT HAS BEEN AN HONOUR. I HAD BEST LET YOU BE ON YOUR WAY THOUGH, I THINK WE ARE ALL DONE HERE.

I DO HOPE THAT NEXT TIME WE MEET CAN BE UNDER MORE PLEASANT CIRCUMSTANCES.

I WILL WITHDRAW THE TROOPS, AND SEND A GUARD UP LATER TODAY FOR THAT POSTING, AS DISCUSSED.

...NOT DARLIS?

WE SHALL SEE, I WILL ENSURE THEIR SUITABILITY.

GOODBYE, PRINCE PHOENIX!

UH, BYE, PRINCESS, IT WAS NICE MEETING YOU...?

CAPTAIN ELLISON, MIA DEAR, PLEASE LEAVE OFFICER PIPERION AND MYSELF FOR A MOMENT, WE HAVE MUCH TO DISCUSS.
Hey kids!

Oh hey Mr. Wolfe... what's going on?

Lose? Um... yeah. Technically.

Practically, though... heh, we did okay. Wait, seriously?? But they only just attacked us!

Yep. I'm no history teacher, but that might have been the shortest war on record.

What happened?

Well, er... Phoenix Claw's back.

Are you saying Claw saved us?? No way.

Welllllllllllllll

Um. How to put this...

You'd better come see... only.

Don't say anything. Her entourage might take offence.

Bluff? You okay?

Argh! After all that preparation we didn't even get to fight!

That's... good though.
SO THAT'S ESSENTIALLY ALL... IF WE CAN KEEP OUR HEADS UP THAT SHOULD BE THE END OF THOSE PROBLEMS...

AH, HE COMES TO HELP WITH THE REST OF THE STUDENTS.

OH ER... 'SCUSE US?

BO ON, PRINCE.

H-HEY GUYS, BEEN A WHILE!

SNATCH! CLAW! I'M GLAD YOU'RE SAFE!

WHAT'S WITH THE FANCY GETUP?

SNATCH, YOUR WINGS ARE SO BIG NOW! CONGRATS! THANKS!

ER... COULDN'T Y' CALL ME PHOENIX F'RA WHILE? IT'S A LONG STORY...

IS THAT A CROWN? WHAT, YOU SOME SORT OF PRINCESS NOW?

LH... PRINCE?

OH... HUH...

PRINCE PHOENIX?? THAT'S GOING TO REQUIRE A LITTLE MORE EXPLANATION...

HAAA, NICE ONE, CLAW.

SSSSSH! I'LL TELL Y' EVERYTHIN' LATER. BUT THEM TWO ARE REINAN GUARDS.

THEY DON'T KNOW I AIN'T A BLOKE, AN' I'D RATHER KEEP IT THAT WAY F'RA NOW...

KIDS, GATHER ROUND, I'D BETTER GIVE YOU THE FULL NEWS... QUICKLY NOW.

GRIFTS BEST GO, CHIEF. WE KEEP ARMOUR, KENGE... MAYBE NEED NEXT TIME?

HOPEFULLY THERE WON'T BE A NEXT TIME, BUT YOU'VE CERTAINLY EARNED IT.

BYE LITTLES! HAVE TO MEET SOMEONE WHEN NO FIGHT, EH?

BYE EVERYONE! BYE CHIEF KE'TC!
Thank you all for behaving so calmly through this day...

Officially we've surrendered to Gardenia, but realistically not very much will change. We're still independent. Everything has gone quite well, everyone who has a criminal record, warranted or not, has been pardoned.

I must ask that none of you attack any more princesses though, I cannot guarantee your safety if you do...

At any rate, there will be a few immediate changes. We will have a Reinan and a Gardenian guard on school grounds.

We'll have to introduce the Gardenian when he or she arrives, but as for the Reinan... Mr. Sinclair—?

Hi everyone! I prefer just "wrath". I'll stay while Kaz here sends word to Princess Paige, then she can send someone more suitable.

...Oh no, you don't mean—

Headmistress, the guard I'm thinking of has a family, two young kids. You wouldn't mind if they all stayed, would you?

Oh, that would be fine, we've certainly the space. Perfect!

So, I'll let you all have the rest of the day to yourselves. Take it easy...

I will be cancelling classes for the rest of the week, but tomorrow morning we really need to start cleaning up this mess.

We will also try to bring in some new students soon, with the support of Gardenia. That about covers everything. Does anyone have any questions?

Why'd they attack?

DID THE PHOENIX REALLY STOP THEM?

Are we gonna get a new gate?

Okay, okay, one at a time...

Oh new students means I get my apprentices...!

Hey three-eyes, any clues on what guard's coming up?

Looks like Mana doesn't know, so no idea why you worried it'll be your husband?

You're married!! Dangit, Shauni! Oh c'mon, you couldn't keep it secret forever!
OH MY GOD, SO YOU'RE ENGAGED??
THAT'S SO SWEET! CONGRATULATIONS!
WHAT A WONDERFUL QUEST, HUH?

UM, EXCEPT FOR THAT DYING BIT,
THAT SOUNDS PAINFUL...

HEH, YEAH.

SO PAIGE KNOWS,
BUT NOT THE GUARDS? Bummer
ONE OF THEM IS STAYING, THEN.

BUT... THAT MEANS YOU'LL HAVE TO
STAY IN THE BOYS' DORMS, HUH?

WHAA-?

OH GEEZ, I HADN' EV'N THOUGHT' ABOU' THA'.

DON'T FRET,
THERE'S PLENTY OF SPARE DORMS.

YOU'RE JUST HAPPY
YOU'LL GET TO HAVE
YOUR OWN ROOM,
HUH DEL?

STOKED!!

HEHEH, I'M SURPRISED YOUR QUEST TURNED
OUT LIKE THAT THOUGH! AND KIND OF
JEALOUS! MINE WAS THE OPPOSITE...

WHY, Y' Wanna MARRY PRINCESS MIA? Haha.

URGH, NEVER!!

...WHY COULDN'T GARDENIA HAVE A NICE
PRINCE INSTEAD. OH WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN...

EXCELLENT TIMING
ON THE WAY BACK,
CL- UH, PRINCE.
GOOD THING NO-
ONE RECOGNISED YOU.

HAHA, I KNOW, RIGH'? EVERYTHIN' COULDA GONE
TERribly WRONG! MAYBE I USED UP ALL MY BAD
LUCK IN GRAY, WHA' WITH DYIN' AN' ALL THA'.

OH... HRIIIII.. AN' WITH ALLA GRAY
THINKIN' I'M A GOD NOW.

UGH, WELL... I'M GLAD T' BE BACK,
HOPE THINGS'LL BE QUIET F' A BIT.

THEY C'N SEND SOMEBODY ELSE NEXT QUEST, I JUST' Wanna SLEEP!
Still waiting for that Gardenian?

Lum, yes. There's no need for you to wait with me.

May as well. I am the Deputy Headmistress. ...For now.

I hope Dharf gets back soon.

She's a butt, but I must admit it would have been handy to have her 'round today.

Heh, I'm sure she'd love to hear you admit that.

So... This going to be Darius? Because I--

I don't know. The captain of the guard recommended him, but I expressed some concerns to King Gardenia.

Suppose we'll see soon. Someone's coming up the slope.

Soon? Fels... I can tell who that is from here.

Good evening...

Headmistress Ryushin... And... Lum....

......

Well, I--

Shush.

Would you give us a moment, Mana?

I would rather not.

I'd rather so.
DRAKE...

MR PIPERION.

ER, IT'S OFFICER PIPERION NOW, I SUPPOSE...

WELL I'M DEPUTY HEADMISTRESS PIPERION.

REALLY? WHAT HAPPENED TO MISS VALCROSS?

LONG STORY...

HM... TALKING CIVILLY IS A GOOD START. SO YOU'RE THE GARDENIAN GUARD WHO'S STAYING?

I AM, YES...

IF THAT IS ACCEPTABLE...

IF YOU THINK YOU CAN HANDLE THAT.

YOU - YOU'VE BEEN PARDONED, YOU KNOW, YOU-

Duckie, wait!

I'm sorry.

...ME TOO ABOUT EVERYTHING.

*Sigh* LOOK... I DON'T TRUST YOU, AND WHATEVER YOU SAY, I'M SURE YOU DON'T TRUST ME. AND AFTER EVERYTHING, WELL...

...BUT I GUESS IF YOU'RE WILLING TO TRY... GIVEN TIME AND SPACE, I GUESS WE CAN SEE WHAT HAPPENS.

MEANWHILE-

Hmm... hope whatever I missed today wasn't that important. guess I'll find out tomorrow.
MROARR... WE THERE YET?
NOT YET, BUDDY. I'LL LET YOU KNOW.
WE CLOSE?
HAHA, NOT REALLY.

...I MISS PAIGE ALREADY.
NO PROBLEM, WE CAN TURN AROUND!
HEH... I SHOULD GO BACK T' SCHOOL THOUGH.

OKAY PRINCE, BUT IF YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND, JUST LET ME KNOW.
HAH, SURE.
SCHOOL'S PROBABLY VERY BORING, I TOTALLY UNDERSTAND TURNING AROUND.

TCH, Y'SAY THA', BUT NAH IT'S NOT BORIN'. IT'S LIKE... WEIRD STUFF, ALL TH' TIME. IN FACT I BET SOMETHIN' WEIRD'S GOIN' ON RIGH' NOW.

WELL THEN IF IT'S TOO EXCITING AND YOU NEED A CHANGE OF PACE, WE CAN ALWAYS TURN AROUND.
I wish Dharfi were here, she'd be able to solve this right away...

We wish to annex your land and bring justice.

You're joking.

Hahaha.

It's been a while since I've fought a whole army. Let's go.

Uh-oh.
Oi Darla, there's a whole heap'a soldiers up by that Hero School. Any idea what's up?

Suppose it's to do with the King? He's in town, after all.

He is?! Hot dang that's way more exciting than soldiers!

...Hang on. You reckon he's ordered the soldiers on the school? Oof, you don't think it's about those bounties, do you? Hope Neil's alright...

I hope he's okay, I don't know. Lore, what do you think?

...Lore?

I think I'm trying very hard to ignore this situation until it resolves itself.
There's no doubt I've lost Lavendar by now...

I really should get back to work soon.

Hey, relax a bit!

Consider this a holiday!