“NO PLACE LIKE HOME”
GOOD MORNING, DRAKE.

MMMPPH.

HOW WERE THINGS AROUND THE SCHOOL WHILE I WAS AWAY?

I'M A GREAT DEPUTY, SO... GREAT?

REALLY? SO HOW IS DARIUS?

MANA CAUGHT ME UP ON THINGS.

WELL, I DON'T KNOW THAT THAT'S ANY OF YOUR BUSINESS.

UNLESS YOU'RE JEALOUS THERE'S FINALLY SOMEBODY AT DHS I LIKE LESS THAN YOU.

*spit*

WHAT?

OH, UHHHHH....
DRAKE. MISS VALCROSS.

DARIUS.

WHICHEVER OF YOU IS CURRENTLY DEPUTY HEADMISTRESS, THIS MAY BE OF INTEREST.

WHAT IS THAT?

SOME SORT OF MONSTER, DELIVERING SOME SORT OF LETTER. IT WAS AT THE FRONT GATE.

THAT'S NOT THE NORMAL MAIL MONSTER...

BUT HMM. THIS LETTER APPEARS TO BE FOR MISS RYUSHIN. I'D BETTER TAKE IT TO HER.

WE SHALL HAVE TO CATCH UP LATER.

WEH.

SO... WE SHOULD TALK.

MMMPH...
Hey Azure...

Oh, hey. Loki, right?

Yeah, um... I just wanted to know what HH is like.

What? Eh, I dunno. It's a hero school. It's dumb and boring and stuff.

Yeah, that's about it.

It's pretty much like here, but different.

That... doesn't tell me much.

There's not much to tell...

Anyway, it's pretty dull around here now.

What do you people usually do on weekends, apart from hassling tricksters?

I'm not usually here on weekends, so I dunno.

Well what do you usually do on weekends?

What? Oh, uh, I stay home, and look after the monsters on my ranch.

Oh, right! Your racing monsters, huh? Must be a lot of fun!

Or at least time-consuming.

I wouldn't mind visiting and seeing that.

Um, y-yeah, sure... but another time, maybe.

This weekend's no good.

Sure, sure. We'll find something else to do in the meantime.

Like... homework?

Haha good one, scope.
MOMING, MANA.  AH, HELLO DHARFI!
ER... WHAT IS THAT?  A COURIER, I SUPPOSE. THERE'S A LETTER FOR YOU.
I DO HOPE IT'S GOOD NEWS THIS TIME.

Ah, it's a request for assistance.

ANOTHER QUEST TO GIVE THE STUDENTS, HM?
YES, THOUGH HOPEFULLY LESS INTENSE THAN THE PREVIOUS ONE.
IT CERTAINLY DOESN'T SEEM TOO BAD.
THEY WOULD LIKE TWO MONSTER CALLERS TO AID IN DRIVING AWAY SOME AGGRESSIVE MONSTERS FROM THEIR VILLAGE. SOUNDS FINE.

Indeed seems a bit odd to specify monster callers, but I see no problem sending Loki and Danni.

Hmm... another oddity...
The sender is one Ulani marble.
Oh? Hmm...
It's not an uncommon name, but I suppose we could ask Danni if they're related.

Would you like to fetch them or will I?

I think I would like to.

And er... what should I do with this monster? It doesn't seem to be from the regular mail service...

I suppose let it loose out of the front gate and hope it finds its own way home.

If it doesn't, it becomes somebody else's problem.
SO
UM...
I EXPECT YOU'RE STILL QUITE MAD AT ME.
UH, OF COURSE I AM?
YOU TRIED TO HAVE ME KILLED,
YOU LUNATIC.
NO, THAT'S NOT-
I TRIED TO HAVE YOU FACE JUSTICE FOR WHAT YOU DID,
IT'S NOT-

THE DEATH PENALTY AIN'T JUSTICE, MORON!
YOU COMMITTED A CRIME, I JUST THOUGHT-
WHAT DO YOU THINK I'D DO IF YOU WERE A WANTED CRIM, HUH?
UH... WHAT?
I DON'T-
I'D HELP YOU ESCAPE! I WOULDN'T DOB YOU IN, ESPECIALLY IF IT WAS A CAPITAL CRIME.

I'M A GUARDSMAN, THE LAW IS MY ETHOS.
YOU'RE AN IDIOT, BEING DUMB IS YOUR DAMN ETHOS.
DID YOU EVEN THINK ABOUT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN AFTER I'D BEEN CAPTURED?
I... MAY NOT HAVE THOUGHT THAT FAR AHEAD.
AND YET HERE YOU ARE DEFENDING WHAT YOU DID ANYWAY!

I'M NOT TRYING TO EXPLAIN— I—-

I AM SORRY, DRAKE, I WAS... STUPID.
KNOWING YOU KILLED SOMEBODY, ON TOP OF BEING A TRICKSTER... I HAVE HAD TROUBLE COPING WITH THAT, BUT...

I KNOW THESE WORDS ARE EMPTY AFTER WHAT I DID. SO WHAT CAN I DO TO BEGIN TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT?
TCH. I DUNNO.
PLEASE, THINK ABOUT IT?
I did say I would try to touch...

You said you were willing to try to make things better, then spent the last few weeks flat-out avoiding me, being rude...

I am trying. It's been more difficult than I thought it would be.

Oh yeah, like you're the one that's been wronged. What's difficult admitting you've been a total moron?

You're not making this easier...

Fels, this never woulda happened if I hadn't had to go all truthful.

It's true that I didn't know you were a trickster when I married you. And I am trying to get past that.

How big of you.

I guess it's my turn to be big. I'll give you two choices how we're gonna go forward from here. You can give up, go back to your king, and we never have to see each other again.

...or?

Or... you can convert. Become a trickster too.

Wh- what??

That's-- do you know what you're asking?

I do, yes.

You're asking something terrible of me.

No.

You did something terrible. I ask something ridiculous.

Bye, Darius.

But--
AH, THERE YOU ARE.
HLH? WHAT?

GOOD MORNING, SATURN, DANNI. WHERE IS LOKI?

I HAVEN'T SEEN HER YET. SHE'S PROBABLY NEARBY THOUGH. CAN'T BE TOO FAR...

OF COURSE. CAN YOU COME WITH ME, DANNI?

UHHH I GUESS? WHAT'S HAPPENING?

THERE'S NO PROBLEM, DON'T FRET.

I JUST REQUIRE YOU AND MISS KBORN FOR A QUEST.

OH UH, OKAY...

SHE'S OVER THERE.

OH GOOD, LOKI! A MOMENT!

HUH? I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING...

YOU'RE NOT IN TROUBLE. I WOULD LIKE TO SEND THE TWO OF YOU ON A QUEST.

WELL, I WOULDN'T SAY NO TO GETTING AWAY FROM HERE FOR A WHILE.

WHAT'S THE QUEST?

YOU'RE REQUIRED TO GO TO BLUEVALE IN WEST GARDENIA, AND HELP DEAL WITH SOME AGGRESSIVE MONSTERS.

THAT DOESN'T SOUND AS BAD AS SOME OF THE OTHER QUESTS YOU'VE SENT PEOPLE ON...

UH... WHOOO SENT THAT REQUEST?
ULANI MARBLE. DO YOU KNOW HER?

CAN I PASS ON THIS QUEST?

WELL ER... NOT REALLY.

UNLESS YOU HAVE A SUPERLATIVELY GOOD EXCUSE, QUESTS ARE MANDATORY.

UHHHHHHHHHHHHH

WHAT'S WRONG?

UHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH...

BLUEVALE'S MY HOMETOWN. ULANI'S MY MA AND I HOPED TO NEVER SEE EITHER AGAIN.

OH. DO YOU SUPPOSE SHE SENT THIS KNOWING YOU WERE HERE AND WOULD BE SENT--?

NAH.

WHEN I LEFT HOME I HADN'T DECIDED TO COME HERE, SO SHE WOULDN'T KNOW I'M HERE.

HUH... THE VILLAGE IS REALLY BEEN ATTACKED BY MONSTERS...?

I SUPPOSE SO. PEOPLE DO NOT TEND TO MAKE THAT UP.

LGH!

YEAH, SHE WOULDN'T LOWER HERSELF TO ASK UNLESS THEY REALLY NEEDED IT, AND THOUGH I HATE ALMOST EVERYONE IN BLUEVALE... I GUESS I'D FEEL BAD IF ANYTHING TERRIBLE HAPPENED. I DO HAVE SOME FRIENDS THERE...

SO... I GUESS I'M IN. IF LOKI'S IN.

YEAH, ALRIGHT.

GOOD. THEN ONCE YOU'RE DONE PACKING, YOU CAN BE ON YOUR WAY. I WOULD SUGGEST RIDING THERE, MAKE IT A FAST TRIP

RIDING-- UHH. I DON'T WANT TO DEAL WITH MWALI. 

...HMM. HEY DANNI?

YOU TAKE CARE OF MWALI FOR ME, AND I'LL DEAL WITH ULANI FOR YOU. 

DEAL... WHO'S MWALI?
OHHH THAT BIG DRAGON, HUH? YEAH I'VE SEEN HER. SHE'S THAT BAD, HUH?

YOU HAVE NO IDEA.

ANYWAY, NO PROBLEM. JUST WALK IN, GET SOME MONSTERS, AND COME BACK HERE.

I DON'T REALLY KNOW HOW TO HANDLE RACING MONSTERS, SO THAT MIGHT NOT BE SO SIMPLE.

ALSO IF I DO THAT ON MY OWN I'M GONNA LOOK LIKE A THIEF.

UGH, YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT.

RIGHT. LET'S MAKE THIS QUICK. WE'LL GET THE TACK FROM THE STABLES...

THE MONSTERS'LL BE OUT FIELD. IF MWALI'S THERE I'M SAYING NOTHING, YOU TALK TO HER.

ER, SURE.

AH, LOKI, THERE YOU ARE. I KNEW YOU WOULD RETURN. PACKED TO GO, ARE YOU?

ER... UH, HI, YOU MUST BE MWALI.

HM?

WE'RE SORT OF IN A HURRY? WE'RE ACTUALLY GOING TO MY HOMETOWN. NICE TO MEET YOU I GUESS? BYE?

HMMM?

LOKI... IS THIS WHY YOU DID NOT WANT TO LEAVE YOUR SCHOOL?

IS THIS YOUR GIRLFRIEND?
HEH.

That is not at all the case. We're both heroes-in-training, so we've got to go do something heroic.

So it's sort of urgent, we need to go now. So you either get out of the way or help us round up some monsters to get us there quickly... please?

Wow, I cannot believe she helped us...

Same!

That dragon's a bit of a weirdo. What was all that about?

Nevermind.

Oh well. My ma's worse than that and we'll have to deal with her for longer probably. So I got the better deal...

Your mum's worse than a dragon?

Hey, you said it.

Sorry about Mwall. HaHa... I probably could've told you more so you were a bit better prepared for her.

Oh well, worked out fine.

Um...

I guess I should probably say stuff about my hometown...? I don't really want to, though.

Up to you if you want me to be surprised when we get there instead.

AHAHA... I'd rather nobody knew about my family and hometown and um...

Guess that's not really an option though.
UH... I KNOW WE DON'T ALWAYS EXACTLY GET ALONG GREAT, BUT THANKS FOR COMING ALONG TO HELP.

THING.

DEPENDS WHAT IT IS.

PLEASE, WHATEVER YOU LEARN IN BLUEVALE... DON'T TELL ANYBODY.

WHY, WHAT AM I GONNA LEARN IN BLUEVALE?

PLEASE?

YEAH, SURE, WHATEVER.

THANKS, THAT MEANS A LOT TO ME.

MWALU'S THE REASON I MOVED INTO THE DORMS.

HUH?

LAST TIME I SAW HER, SHE TRIED TO DRAG ME OUT OF THE COUNTRY SO I WOULDN'T GO BACK TO DHS. SHE PROBABLY WOULD HAVE, BUT THEN MANA SHOWED UP AND SHE BACKED DOWN.

OH... THAT SUCKS.

TELL ME ABOUT IT. ANYWAY, IT'LL BE NICE TO TAKE A SHORT BREAK FROM BOTH HER AND DHS, ASSUMING EVERYTHING GOES WELL.

UH, YEAH...
WELL... I DUNNO IF MY HOMETOWN IS LIKE, BAD BAD, OR IF IT'S JUST BAD FOR ME.

MY MA'S LIKE... WELL, SHE HAS A REALLY PARTICULAR IMAGE IN MIND OF WHO I AM.

AND WHEN REALITY DIVERGES FROM IT... SHE GETS MAD.

AND IT CONSTANTLY DOES, BECAUSE SHE HAS NO IDEA WHAT THE HECK.

MMMMPH...

SHE'S THE VILLAGE CHIEFTESS. SO SHE THINKS WHATEVER SHE SAYS IS RIGHT AND NOBODY HAS THE RIGHT TO CONTRADICT HER.

SHE'S REALLY JUST...

COMPLETELY TERRIBLE TO BE AROUND. SO HOPEFULLY WE BARELY HAVE TO SEE HER.

WHAT ABOUT THE VILLAGE ITSELF, THEN?

I'M A BIT WORRIED THAT THEY ACTUALLY ASKED FOR HELP.

IT'S A VILLAGE WHERE THE MAIN SORT OF CULTURE I GUESS REVOLVES AROUND MONSTER CALLING. EVERYBODY WHO'S ANYBODY HAS TO LEARN HOW TO CALL OR SUMMON MONSTERS, THE STRONGER THE BETTER AND EVERYBODY WHO CAN'T DO IT IS CONSIDERED LESSER THAN...

I DUNNO WHY THEY'D NEED HELP, OR STOOP TO ASK FOR IT... THEY'RE BIG ON PRETENDING THEY'RE BETTER THAN EVERYONE.

CAN'T BE TOO BAD, THEY ONLY ASKED FOR TWO OF US.

YEAH, I GUESS THAT'S TRUE...

ANYTHING ELSE TO SAY ABOUT THE TOWN BEFORE WE GET THERE?

UMMM. I DUNNO. SEEMS PRETTY NORMAL. IT'S LIKE, ONLY GOT HUMANS THOUGH. IS THAT WEIRD?

...NORMAL?? THAT IS THE FURTHEST THING FROM- THAT IS SO COMPLETELY WEIRD.

I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE? I HAVEN'T SEEN ANYPLACE LIKE THAT SINCE I LEFT. WEIRD. SO WEIRD. UHHHHH WE SHOULD PROBABLY FIND SOMEPLACE TO CAMP.
GOOD MORNING.

ULLUHHHH....

YOU DIDN'T SLEEP WELL? YEAH. CAMPING OUT SORT OF SUCKS FOR SLEEPING. YEAH...

GUESS WE'D BETTER GET READY AND GET GOING... ZIPPY! CARA' UP! UP!

SHOULDN'T BE MUCH FURTHER... YOU NERVOUS?

EH... AT LEAST IT SHOULD BE EASY ENOUGH. YOU'RE A GOOD SUMMONER.

I AM!

AND SO MODEST.

I'LL LEND A HAND TOO THOUGH, IF IT COMES TO THAT...

I'M SURE THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY.

HAH.

SIGH~

HOPEFULLY THIS WON'T TAKE LONG.

IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG TO GET HERE, SO IF NEEDS BE WE CAN ALWAYS JUST BAIL...

THAT'S NOT ESPECIALLY HEROIC.

SO WHAT?

THAT'S IT UPHILL. REMEMBER, YOU GOTTA DEAL WITH MY FAMILY... YOU READY?

SURE, WHATEVER.
THAT'S MY BROTHER...
RELAX, I GOT THIS.

HEY, WE'RE THE HEROES FROM DHARK'S.
WHERE'S YOUR PROBLEM?

OH MAN... IS THAT? HOLY HELL...
IT IS YOU!

DUDE... LOOK AT YOU... HAH.

AND I THOUGHT AFTER THAT STUPID LETTER
YOU LEFT YOU'D NEVER BE COMING BACK.
AND LOOKING LIKE-- PFFFFFT!

HEY MA! YOU'LL NEVER GUESS
WHAT HERO'S IN TOWN!

WELL...

LOOK AT YOU
NOW, MY-

HI, I'M LOKI KIBORN. YOU MUST BE ULAN?
YOU ALREADY KNOW MY COMPANION. WE'RE
HERE TO SOLVE YOUR MONSTER PROBLEM.

HMPH. IF I'D KNOWN THEY WERE GOING TO SEND
AMATEURS I NEVER WOULD HAVE BOtherED.

LADY, YOU ASKED A
HERO SCHOOL FOR
TRAINees, YOU GET
TRANEes.

THAT'S CHIEFtESS TO YOU, YOU-
WHOAH HOLD ON, DID YOU
SAY LOKI KIBORN?

YEAH.

HMMM. SHE'S A MONSTER RACER OF SOME
REGARD. GUESS THAT COULD BE OKAY.

AH.

WELL, IF YOU'RE ALL THEY'RE SENDING... I
SUPPOSE YOU HAD BETTER COME INSIDE AND
GET BRIEFED ON THE SITUATION.
Take a seat. Hmm, I think we're both fine standing.

Kiborn, would you like some water?

I think we both would, after travelling so far.

Here you are. Let's begin.

...Sure.

Recently the village has been under attack by a large mob of well-organised, powerful monsters.

We've been able to hold them off without any real difficulty, but we need somebody to go to their nest and drive them out. We can't defend and attack at the same time.

What kind of monsters are we talking about?

You've arrived too late to mount an attack today. You'll rest now and tomorrow you can go up the mountain and do your job.

We have one guest room here in the village centre. However...

I'm sure your school's principal wouldn't approve of you two sharing a room.

Right, thanks for the briefing.

I'm sure we don't want to put you out, chieftess. We'll find somewhere to camp.

C'mon, let's go.

A ditch seems a lot more welcoming.
Sheesh, what's her problem?

Hah, she was way nicer than usual. Must have been trying to figure you out.

Anyway, forget about it. Not like I came here for her... I've got a friend who'll let us stay with her for sure.

Sounds good, lead the way.

What's with all the rubbernecks?

...Just ignore them.

Pfft, what am I expecting from an all-human village but a bunch of weirdos?

Hah.

Here we are... knock knock.

Hello?

Hey Luci, I'm back—Danni?!

Oh my god you look fantastic!

I'm so glad you got everything worked out at the Change Temple! Uh... Ix-nay—

Feels like it's been so long since I saw you!! This place sucks without you!

But... I thought you were never coming back?

Um. Oh! Who's your friend? Those are some neat monsters.

Oh! Wait, you should come in! Sorry!
BE GOOD AND WAIT HERE, OKAY?

HEY....

MUM, DAD, DANNI'S HERE!

WEE....

DANNI! OH WOW, IT'S SO GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, AND LOOKING SO WELL!

IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU ALL AGAIN TOO!

OH, UMMM...

WHAT BRINGS YOU BACK HERE?

LUCI, MR AND MRS COSTA, THIS IS LOKI.

HELLO.

WE'VE BOTH COME DOWN FROM DHARK'S HERO SCHOOL.

WE'VE BOTH COME DOWN FROM DHARK'S HERO SCHOOL.

OH, YOU'RE HERE TO STOP THOSE MONSTERS?

HUUU... YOU LEFT TO JOIN A HERO SCHOOL?

OH, YOU'RE HERE TO STOP THOSE MONSTERS?

HUU... YOU LEFT TO JOIN A HERO SCHOOL?

NO OFFENCE DANNI, BUT YOU DIDN'T STRIKE ME AS THE HEROIC SORT.

NO OFFENCE DANNI, BUT YOU DIDN'T STRIKE ME AS THE HEROIC SORT.

HAHA, RIGHT? IT WASN'T ON MY MIND WHEN I LEFT.

BUT IT'S GOING REAL WELL, Y'KNOW?

BUT IT'S GOING REAL WELL, Y'KNOW?

GLAD TO HEAR IT!

YOU TWO ARE WELCOME TO STAY HERE. I WAS JUST ABOUT TO GET DINNER STARTED. SO PLEASE SIT DOWN AND MAKE YOURSELVES COMFORTABLE.

YOU TWO ARE WELCOME TO STAY HERE. I WAS JUST ABOUT TO GET DINNER STARTED. SO PLEASE SIT DOWN AND MAKE YOURSELVES COMFORTABLE.

YOU MUST BE THIRSTY AFTER TRAVELLING ALL THE WAY HERE, LET ME GET YOU BOTH A DRINK.

THANK YOU, MA'AM.

WE SHOULD HAVE COME HERE FIRST, TOTALLY IGNORED THAT MESS AT THE VILLAGE CENTRE.

O-OH DEAR, YOU SAW ULANI...?

HEH, YEAH REALLY.

WE SORT OF HAD TO, SHE'S THE ONE WHO CALLED FOR HEROES. THANKS.

ARE YOU OKAY, HON?

BETTER NOW I'M HERE!
THANK YOU FOR DINNER, IT WAS DELICIOUS.
YOU'RE VERY WELCOME!

ARE YOUR MONSTERS OK OUTSIDE?
SURE, THEY'RE FED AND SETTLED, THEY'LL BE FINE.

I'M SORRY WE DON'T HAVE A SPARE BEDROOM FOR YOU, BUT HOPEFULLY THE LOUNGES SHOULD BE COMFORTABLE ENOUGH.
NO WORRIES, THAT'LL BE GREAT, THANKS!

FOR REAL, YOU GUYS HAVE DONE SO MUCH FOR US, THANK YOU!

IF YOU'RE GOING TO SAVE THE VILLAGE FROM THOSE MONSTERS, IT'S THE LEAST WE CAN DO.

OH, ABOUT THAT... WHAT KIND OF MONSTERS ARE THEY? LULANI DIDN'T SAY, AND IT WOULD HELP TO KNOW IN ADVANCE.

SORRY, I DON'T KNOW. I HAVEN'T SEEN THEM.

HUH, REALLY? UH... THESE MONSTERS ARE REAL, RIGHT?

I MEAN... I DIDN'T SEE ANY MARKS ON ANY BUILDINGS, BUT THEY'VE BEEN ATTACKING THE VILLAGE?

THEY'RE REAL. WHY WOULD SOMEBODY MAKE THAT UP? WOULDN'T BE MUCH USE TO IT.

GOOD POINT ON THE BUILDINGS THOUGH... I'M NOT SURE WHY THEY'RE UNDAMAGED...

MAYBE THEY'RE DUMB MONSTERS AND DON'T KNOW ABOUT HOUSES.

HEH, HOPEFULLY THEY'RE DUMB.

I'D REALLY LIKE TO KNOW WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST, BUT SUPPOSE WE'LL FIND OUT.

STATE: BETTER CALL IT A NIGHT THEN. WE'LL GET UP EARLY AND GET THINGS SORTED.

THANKS AGAIN FOR LETTING US STAY.
ANYTIME! SLEEP WELL!
...are you asleep?

Nah... guess I'm not that tired yet.

I was wondering... about what Luci said about the change temple?

...

Look, it's not exactly some big secret, but the two of us don't really know each other that well, so I don't want to talk about it. Okay?

Fair enough.

Umm... hey, what do you think about those three HH students?

HUH? I don't know. They're a bunch of weird tricksters.

Why?

Um... maybe I shouldn't say.

Well now you got to say it.

Heh...

I feel like an idiot, but you know that Feathry, Azure? ..I kind of have a crush...

Haha what? No way, I didn't even know you liked girls!

Yeah but like... she's got dark wings. And worse... she's a trickster. Ugh!

Also she's kind of a jerk I hear - guess that gives you two something in common!

Pfffttt.

Heh, could be worse-

Hm?

Could be crushing on a dark power instead.

Ugh! Don't even joke about that, you'll give me nightmares!
You still awake? Yeah...
It's weird to be back here.

This is a weird place.

Ulani said the monster nest is up the mountain. You know where that would be?

Yeah...

Good, in the morning we can set out without meeting up with her again, then just go home once it's sorted.

Yeah...

Home... well...

So, why did you go to DHS? To be a hero?

I had to go somewhere and it was close, and it's free.

Which is probably the same reason Ma hired from there.

...not really.

Why is she such a massive jerk? Why is anybody anything?

Tch. The village would be better without her in charge, slightly.

Who was chief or chieftess before her?

Grandma was, but that's before my time.

Oh, it's a matriarchal thing?

Coincidental. Whoever's the strongest caller gets to be in charge.

Oh goddess! You mean I could beat Ulani and become chieftess?

Hahahahaha!

That would rule so hard, heh. But then you'd be stuck here.

Everybody here would be stuck with me!

Hahaha.
Y’know... everyone around here, much as they never liked me, they sort of expected me to take over as chief one day.

YOU....?

YES.

CHIEF?

...YES.

HMMMM...

Wow, this village must be full of terrible monster callers, maybe I really should beat ‘em and take over.

YEAH, ABOUT THAT...

WHAAT? There’s no way you’re secretly and awesome caller...

HAAAHA, WELL....

I’M NOT A FANTASTIC MONSTER CALLER RIGHT NOW....

BUT-?

But... I was really close to my grandma - the only good person in the family. Like I said, she was the old chiefess, but retired before I was born. She was real powerful...

SO, YOUR GIANT BLUE MONSTER?

FURY? My grandfather gave him to me.

HUUH, WELL, MY GRANDMA HAD SOMETHING SIMILAR.

TOTALLY DIFFERENT SORT OF MONSTER, MIND, but equally big and impressive. She gave it to me a few years ago.

...YOU DON’T HAVE IT ANY MORE?

NOPE. I had to sell it to afford... tch. Change temples can be pretty pricey.

AH, SO IT’S RELATED TO THE THING THAT’S NOT A HUGE SECRET but also that I shouldn’t tell anyone?

...YES.
Anyway... it's a good thing DHS is so close. That place can be annoying sometimes, but hey it's better than being out alone.

Yeah.

Anyway, giant monsters huh? They're so annoying to summon and control, ugh.

Still... Sigh.

Pfft you're one to talk, Loki!

Hahaha...

Guess we'd better call it a night for real this time.

We'll figure out that whole monster thing in the morning. Goodnight.

Sleep well...

Sigh.

I don't need Gran's monster to take care of things here.

I've got my own. And maybe there's not great, but they're mine and I'm working on getting 'em better.

Whatever. We'll finish this dumb quest tomorrow, one way or another.

Then we'll go, and I'll never come back here again.
YOU SURE YOU KNOW WHERE WE'RE GOING?

...MOSTLY.

ARE YOU SURE WE SHOULDN'T HAVE TAKEN ZIPPI AND... WHATSOEVER YOUR OTHER MONSTER IS CALLED?

ABSOLUTELY.

RACING MONSTERS RUN AT THE FIRST SIGN OF DANGER.

GREAT FOR RACING, TERRIBLE FOR THIS SORT OF THING. WE'LL HAVE TO WALK IT.

...OR WE CAN BAIL AND GO HOME.

HAHA TEMPTING, BUT WE'D BETTER HELP LUCI OUT AT LEAST.

OH YEAH...

I WONDER WHAT KIND OF MONSTERS WE'RE UP AGAINST? I HOPE IT'S SOMETHING HILARIOUS, LIKE A BUNCH OF OYAN OR SOMETHING.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT IS, SO PROBABLY IT WON'T BE?

HUH?!

DID YOU SEE THAT?!

...HUH?

I COULD SWEAR THAT SHADOW LOOKED LIKE A-

DRAGON.
H-HEY, UMMM... HI? WE WERE JUST--

GROOOAAR!!

GAH!!

I THOUGHT DRAGONS WERE LIKE PEOPLE!
WHY IS IT SO AGGRESSIVE?

PEOPLE CAN BE PRETTY AGGRESSIVE...

GRRRAAA....

ANOTHER ONE?! F-FELS... SHOULD WE FIGHT?
WHAT DO WE DO? HEY! WE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING!
WHY AREN'T THEY SAYING ANYTHING--?

NOT ALL DRAGONS SPEAK LINGO...

GRRRRAAGH!NN...

ER, DO YOU SPEAK DRAGON, THEN?

UMMM....

GRRRAGH?

GRRRROOOOOOOAAAAAR!!!

WHAT DID YOU SAY?!

ER...

ER...

WHAT DID THEY SAY?!

UM...

I GUESS THEY WANT US TO GO WITH THEM?
GROOOOWL...

HAIL, HUMANS.

OH THANK SOLA, ONE OF YOU SPEAKS LINGO...

WHERE IS HE?

WAIT WHA-

THOU CANNOT FOOL ME THOU COMEST FROM THE HUMAN VILLAGE, AND THOU REEK OF DRAGON.

I ASK AGAIN, WHERE IS HE?

W-WE'RE NOT REALLY FROM THE VILLAGE AND SHE'S GOT DRAGON FRIENDS, AND-

HE-?

WHO ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

DID THOSE IDIOTS IN THE VILLAGE DO SOMETHING? IF YOU CAN SMELL THE DRAGON ON ME THEN YOU CAN ALSO SMELL THE LONG JOURNEY THAT TOOK US HERE, TOO. WE'RE NOT WITH THOSE VILLAGERS.

TELL US WHAT'S GOING ON. MAYBE WE CAN HELP YOU WITH WHATEVER IT IS.
GRRR?

One moment do not move. Or thou wilt be attacked.

Graah?

Grrrrrrrrr...

I get the feeling that those villagers gone and did something incredibly daft.

Sounds about right.

This is giving me serious ke'tc flashbacks.

Hah, at least we haven't been poisoned yet, that's a bonus.

Grraaargh!

Thou... doth not lye?

We only just got here yesterday.

Very well...

The humans of yon village stole one of our young. We hath been unable to rescue him.

Fffftttttt

That's terrible. Bunch of freaking... right! We'll go get him back right now.

Indeed. One of thou shalt.

One of thou shalt stay here. In case anything doth go...

Ayyyyyy
I did say I'd handle Ulani, since you helped me with Mwal.

Sir, I accept your quest. I will return to the village, and rescue this young dragon. My companion will stay here.

Y-yes...

Wait what?! Then thou must stay. White-hair, brown-hair will go.

I trust thou not...

However, white-hair doth speak draconic better, for thou to stay.

But- it would really work much better if she went, for like, a bunch of reasons!

Be on thine way.

But...

Nothing else for it, dragons are stubborn.

Can I at least get one of you to come with, as backup?

Thou art aware that doth sound like a trap?

Ugh... fair enough.

Thou shalt be returned to where thou was taken from. The rest is up to thou.

Uh... good luck?
C'MON DANNI.
YOU CAN DO THIS.
...NPFH.
I REALLY WISH I WAS A TRICKSTER, THEN I
COULD JUST STROLL INTO TOWN PRETENDING
TO BE LOKI OR SOMETHING.
SIGH.
ALRIGHT, FOCUS!

WELL, WELL, WELL....
LOOK WHO FINALLY DEIGNED TO SHOW UP.
SLEEP IN, DID WE?
WHERE'S YOUR FRIEND?

WHERE'S THE DRAGON?

WHAT'S THIS NOW?
OH YEAH, LIKE THERE'S SOMETHING THAT BIG
GOING ON AND YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT IT?

WELL I DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, DID I?
WELL MAYBE IF YOU EVER LISTENED TO-

NO. WE ARE NOT TALKING ABOUT THIS RIGHT NOW.

WHERE IS THE DRAGON.
WHAT DOES IT MATTER TO YOU?
YOU WANT ME TO STOP THE MONSTERS ATTACKING
THE VILLAGE, YOU TELL ME.

IF YOU MUST KNOW, IT'S INSIDE.
I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO BREAK IT TO CALL IT
YET. BUT I WILL. WHEN IT'S FULLY-GROWN, IT
WILL BE A POWERFUL MONSTER INDEED.
YOU CAN'T DO THAT!

OH?

THERE'S MONSTERS APPROPRIATE FOR BINDING FOR SUMMONING, MAINLY DUMB ONES, ONES THAT ARE OK WITH WORKING WITH PEOPLE. BUT DRAGONS?! THEY'RE PRETTY MUCH PEOPLE, THAT'S NOT OK! YOU CAN'T DO THAT!

LET ME TELL YOU WHAT YOU CAN'T DO.

H-HEY!

NO! THIS ISN'T ABOUT THAT! YOU HIRED ME TO HELP FIGHT THE MONSTERS ATTACKING THE VILLAGE, SO HERE I AM!

I WOULD NEVER HAVE HIRED YOU.

WELL TOO BAD! YOU DID!

THOSE DRAGONS ARE ONLY ATTACKING BECAUSE YOU HAVE THEIR KID!

I KNOW. SO WHAT?

THAT'S EXACTLY WHY I ASKED FOR SOME HEROES TO HELP DRIVE THEM OFF.

GO FIND YOUR FRIEND AND TAKE CARE OF THE PROBLEM, YOU USELESS BOY.

YOU THINK YOU CAN COME HERE LOOKING LIKE THAT AND WE'LL FORGET WHO YOU ARE? HOW USELESS YOU ARE?

THIS IS WHO I AM. AND I'M TAKING THE DRAGON.

HMMMPH. I SUPPOSE I COULD TRADE FOR IT.

IT WOULD HAVE TO BE FOR SOMETHING VERY GOOD...

OH, HOW ABOUT THAT LOVELY MONSTER YOUR GRANDMOTHER GAVE TO YOU?

I DON'T THINK SO.
If you refuse to trade, I suppose there is another option.

If you really think you can stand up to the Chiefess, we can battle for it.

Yeah.

Alright.

Call!

That's what you're leading with? Hah!

Hahahaha

What?

Slam!

Hey!!

We don't have much time. Split up, search the rooms. We're looking for a little dragon.

Yell if you find anything. Go!
C'MON WHERE'S SHE HIDING IT...

HRR!!!!!

FOUND HIM?!

HRINN!

OH THANK GODS!

HEY LITTLE GUY.

GRRR...

HERE...

GRAH!

THAT'S OK, I KNOW YOU'RE SCARED.

WHERE ARE YOU?!

FELS, NO WAY OUT...

HRLLL...

NO, THAT WINDOW'S TOO SMALL...

...DON'T WORRY, LITTLE GUY.

OPEN THIS DOOR!! NOW!!

@CRASH!

HRMM, I WONDER WHERE THAT DRAGON IS?—
WE'LL DISCUSS HOW YOU'LL REPAY ME FOR THE DOORS LATER. FOR NOW, HAND OVER MY DRAGON.

HE'S NOT YOURS, AND I DON'T HAVE HIM.

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU'RE FOOLING? HAND IT OVER.

NO!

WHAT THE-?

HA... HAHAAHAHAHA!

WHERE THE HELL IS MY DRAGON?!

GRRRAAH...

I TOLD YOU, I DON'T SPEAK DRAGON REAL GOOD.

WHY DOST THOU SPEAK Draconic AT ALL? TIS MOST PECULIAR.

YEAH WELL, IT'S A LONG STORY.

DEPENDING ON HOW LONG YOUR FRIEND IS, THOU MAY HAVE TIME TO TELL IT.

GRR!!

RAAAAAR!

GRARRRR!

NEVERMIND. IT APPEARS THOU MAY LEAVE. TAKE THIS AND GO.

SURE THING!
ALRIGHT, LUM...

SORRY, DIDN'T CATCH YOUR NAME. AND DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT KIND OF MONSTER YOU ARE... ONLY REALLY KNOW RACING ONES. HAHA. ANYWAY, SHALL WE HEAD BACK TO TOWN? I'M GUESSING THAT'S WHERE DANNI IS...

HRRR!!!!

YOU SURE ARE IN A HURRY...

DOES THAT MEAN SOMETHING WENT WRONG?!

HEY! WAIT UP!

YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A THIEF!

AND YET YOU STEALING A DRAGON FROM ITS FAMILY IN THE FIRST PLACE IS... GOOD?

YOU CAN'T-

SLAP

HEY.

YOUR MONSTER PROBLEM IS SORTED. DANNI AND I ARE LEAVING RIGHT NOW. BEFORE ANYTHING... UNFORTUNATE... HAPPENS.

DANNI? HA! THAT'S NOT EVEN HIS NAME, HE-

WHAP

ANYBODY ELSE?
This is a village of callers, girl.

You will not disrespect me!

Dinni, got all your monsters, ready to leave?

Yup.

Summon!

Fury, please escort me and my friend out of here.

You—your headmistress will be hearing about this!!

I should hope so.

...you alright?

Been better.

But I am really glad to be leaving.

Same.

DID THE DRAGON GET HOME SAFE?...

Yeah, otherwise I'd still be stuck up there. Good job getting him free.

...do you think Miss Ryushin will be mad?

Oh yeah, she'll be ropeable...

...with Ulani like any normal person would be. Sheesh, your mum's terrible.

My only regret is that I only hit her with the broad side of my sword.

Haha...
SHE DID WHAT?! UGH, IT SUCKED ENOUGH TO GO THROUGH ONCE, DON'T MAKE US REPEAT IT AGAIN.
NO, I UNDERSTAND, I JUST... HMM.
WELL, WE TOOK CARE OF THE MONSTERS, WHICH WAS WHAT THE QUEST WAS, RIGHT? WE TOTALLY NAILED IT.

INDEEED...
YOU HANDLED THINGS MOST PROFESSIONALLY, GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, YOU SHOULD CONSIDER YOURSELVES A CREDIT TO THE SCHOOL.
...I WOULDN'T GO THAT FAR.
I WOULD.
IT IS UNACCEPTABLE THAT THEY TREATED YOU SO BADLY AFTER REQUESTING YOU. I WILL BE WRITING TO THE HERO GUILD TO SEND OUT A REPRESENTATIVE TO “DISCUSS” APPROPRIATE TREATMENT OF HEROES-IN-TRAINING...

UH, TH-THAT’S NOT NECESSARY... YEAH IT IS.
YOU DID SOMETHING GOOD HERE. THAT IS WHAT BEING A HERO IS ABOUT.

I STILL SAY WE SHOULD HAVE BURNED DOWN THE VILLAGE.

WHAT?

NOTHING!

WE SHOULD GO THOUGH, LOTS TO DO OR WHATEVER.
SEE YA, MISS.
BEING A HERO SUCKS, RIGHT??
EXCEPT FOR HITTING PEOPLE WITH SWORDS.
MMMMMMPHHHHHH!! IT'S REALLY BORING HERE WITHOUT LOki!!

SHE WILL GROW WEARY OF THAT SCHOOL AND RETURN SOON, DO NOT FRET.

OH MY GODDESS! SLEEPING IN IS AMAZING AND I AM NEVER GOING HOME!
QUESTION: WHY DOES COLFER LOOK SO TIRED?

OH. UMMM. I GUESS BECAUSE I TRY TO STAY UP ALL NIGHT? THAT'S PRETTY TYPICAL FOR DARK POWERS THOUGH I THINK.

THEN... WHY DOESN'T MORT LOOK TIRED??

I SLEEP AS MUCH OF THE DAY AS POSSIBLE, THROUGH A SERIES OF WELL-TIMED NAPS. IDEALLY I'D SLEEP ALL DAY, BUT GOSH THEY GOT CLASSES AND THINGS DURING THE DAY? TOTALLY INCONSIDERATE OF 'EM.

...WHY IS THIS UP INSTEAD OF THE REGULAR COMIC UPDATE?

I THINK SOMEBODY ELSE NEEDS A SLEEP... WHY AM I SO TIRED AAAAA
I JUST NEED TO FIND DANNI AND LOKI...

WHICH... WAS A LOT EASIER WHEN WE HAD LESS STUDENTS.
HRM MMMM IT’S MY BIRTHDAY TODAY. CAN I GET AWAY WITH NOT DRAWING A RANDOM ENCOUNTER UPDATE TODAY??

YEAH PROBABLY

MMMM BUT MAYBE I SHOULD POST SOMETHING SLIGHTLY MORE EXCITING THAN “LOL NO UPDATE”... HMM. WHAT ABOUT FUTURE VOLUME TEASERS?

THIS JERK AGAIN

IS YOUR HEADMISTRESS A VAMPIRE??

UNCLE LEO, NO.

DELTA’S SISTER WHYNOT

MAN I SHOULD KILL A CHARACTER OR TWO...
I had some questions about tricksterism, and I was wondering if—

I already told you! I'm not a trickster!! Leave me alone!

...she's probably a trickster.