

Chapter 1 Mortimer Finds Midnight

Mortimer was a very curious boy. His mother worked in the kitchen of the castle. He didn't know who his father was. Stranger than this, no one else seemed to know either. Gossip spread quickly among the servants. Maya, Mortimer's mother, was one of the most liked servants. Everyone talked to her, and she always had something to say, except about Mortimer's father. On this subject, she was very silent. When anyone brought the subject up, she would either change the subject or stay silent all together.

While Maya was busy in the kitchen, Mortimer spent his days sneaking around the castle. He always found interesting things in the hallways, closets, and sometimes even the rooms. Among the things he found were colored feathers, gold coins, clothes, and odd assortment of chess pieces, various buttons and ribbons, and some string. There was also an assortment of odd items that Mortimer didn't know what the items were or what they were used for. He didn't care. He liked the hunt. He kept all his treasures in a box hidden under his bed covered with straw and dirt.

Soon, however, Mortimer tired of seeking his treasure in the castle. He could find nothing that he didn't already have in his hidden box. His curiosity overtook him and he started looking for treasure outside.

He hunted and searched everywhere little boys could go without getting caught. Of course, he couldn't go too far. It was said it wasn't safe outside of the castle perimeters. Evil creatures, wild animals, and bandits and thieves stalked the perimeter of the castle grounds waiting for easy prey.

Mortimer's spirits grew low. He had found no new treasures for a while. He decided to go further in his search. After all, there had been no signs of wild animals, evil creatures, or any other person or animal meaning him harm since he had started his search outside of the castle walls. Surely, it was safe to go a little further. He walked his way to the border of the castle lands and the Land Beyond. There was a little stream there that marked the boundary.

The stream looked so cool and fresh. Mortimer was hot. He decided to go for a little swim in the stream.

As he was splashing and enjoying the cool water of the stream, he saw something sparkling in the water. It took him a couple of dives to find the object that glistened at the bottom of the stream. His curiosity and patience paid off. He put his hands around the object. He looked at it carefully. It was a smooth, black stone. It was so black; Mortimer wondered why he had seen it sparkle in the water.

As he looked at the black stone, Mortimer was reminded of the legend of the wizards. It was law in the kingdom that anyone who found a black or white stone they were to bring it to the temple of the Goddess of the Sun. Mortimer didn't believe in these stories. It was his stone. He found it. It was his. He was going to keep it.

Chapter 2 The Legend of the Wizards

From an early age, Mortimer had heard of the legend of the wizards of Mystica. Every storyteller, bard, and musician seemed to tell the tale. Strangely enough, they all told it the same way.

Once there were six wizards who lived upon Mystica. Three of these wizards wore white robes and worshipped the Goddess of the Sun. Three of these wizards wore black robes and worshipped the God of the Night.

For years, the wizards lived in peace. The land of Mystica prospered. Crops grew, cattle were fattened. Food and water was plenty. People, wizards, and animals lived in peace and harmony. A castle was built. The very castle that Mortimer's mother was working in. A king was named. People traveled and traded freely throughout the kingdom of Mystica.

Power was equal among the wizards. If they fought (which they often did) no side ever came out ahead. One of the wizards of

the black robes grew weary of this. His name was Midnight. His skin was as black as his robes. His hair and beard were black too. His eyes were an icy gray, like a cloud of dirty smoke. Some say he was the son of the God of the Night himself.

Midnight wanted more power. He wanted to defeat the wizards of the white robes for once and all, and claim Mystica for himself. He was deterred from outright killing the other wizards for if the wizards died, so did the land of Mystica. Mystic and the magic of the wizards were connected in an odd way Mortimer could not figure out. It was no use ruling a dying land. He had to find another way to defeat the other meddling wizards.

Midnight searched and searched the entire land of Mystica for a way to defeat the other wizards. He searched far and wide. At last, he search paid off. In an abandoned city, in an abandoned temple he found what he was looking for. Ironically, the temple once worshipped the Goddess of the Sun. Hidden in the darkest corner of this temple, he found a faded spell book.

The spell book was worn and tore out at places. It was musty and full of mildew. Yet, Midnight could make out one spell. This spell was all he needed.

The spell trapped people's souls in stones. Midnight quickly went to work. He gathered all the ingredients. He studied the spell over and over again. Finally, he was ready. Mystica would be his!

Midnight traveled to the top of the highest mountain in Mystica to recite the spell. As he recited his carefully studied spell, something went wrong. Some say he angered the Goddess of the Sun by using a spell book from her temple. Some say, he had read the faded spell book wrong. Whatever the cause, the spell went array.

The whole sky went dark. All of Mystica shook. Tremors could be felt throughout the land. When the sky cleared, and the tremors stopped, six stones lay atop of a pile were Mortimer had been standing. Instead of trapping the other wizard's souls, the spell trapped them all, including Midnight, into stones.

Three dark, black stones for the dark wizards and three clear, white polished stones for the white wizards lay on top of the mountain, but not for long. Some were carried away by wind, water, and other natural elements. Some were carried away by animals, and used for nesting or by dragons for their treasure.

From that day forward, Mystica was no longer a peaceful place. Evil creatures came out of the darkness. Crops did not seem to grow. Tempers flared among the different types of people. The humans, elves, dwarves, and dragons once at peace warred with each other.

The king of Mystica was a wise king and he tried to make peace with all his subjects. He made it a law that anyone who found a stone colored solid black or white to surrender it to the temple of the Goddess of the Sun. He figured if anyone knew how to undo the spell, it would be one of the chosen priestess.