

THE MAGICIAN'S SON

THE STORY OF THROCKTON

CHAPTER 7

Throckton and Lundra jumped up and continued to dig.

Many times Throckton tried to use his magic, but nothing worked. Finally, he just gave up.

This went on day after day. Throckton was working so hard he did not notice the time. Just like Lundra had said, his hands were getting used to the work. Large callouses were forming on his hands, and his hair began to get longer. His clothes had rips and tears, as well as stains on them. He looked terrible, but there was no one there to impress.

Because of his curiosity, he kept asking why they were digging. What were they digging for?

No one had an answer for him.

For a long time Throckton looked for a way to escape. He tried to explore the different tunnels, but they always led back to the same place. It was a maze of passageways with no way out.

He finally came to the real conclusion that he had been a terrible person and that he was doomed to work in the mines forever.

The more Throckton worked, the more he realized why he was in the mines. He began to regret the way he had treated everyone, and he began to think about his family. The time in the mines was softening him. He became nicer to the people who were with him. He obeyed the things he was told to do. He did not concentrate on escaping. He took pride in his work. He dug faster and farther than any other worker. There was nothing else to do. He thought if he dug far enough he would eventually dig his way out.

When he slept, he lay on the hard ground and dreamed of his bed back in his room. When he ate his meals, he thought of the dining hall in the school and all of the choices he had to eat.

During the day, he reviewed in his mind the lessons he had learned. He knew his magic would not work, but the time spent going over the lessons made his time in the mines go by more easily.

He worked side-by-side with the other diggers. Every one of them had a story.

Lundra told him her story.

“When I was sent to the Magician’s Academy it was my third school in the same year. I managed to get kicked out of the other schools, but at this school, it was impossible. The reason I am here is that I was put on trial for starting a fire in my room. I thought when the fire trucks came I would be able to escape.

“What I did not expect, was that Malinda knew what I was doing and put out the fire before it did any damage,” Lundra told her story.

Another worker named Jennison, told his story.

“I’m not a lot different from the rest of you. It was my intent to be as difficult as possible in the school. I didn’t want to do anything. The less I did, the better I liked it,” Jennison shared his story.

Jennison was a big kid. He was very strong, but even in the mines he was lazy. He had many marks on his back where Dron had hit him with the whip. His hair was black and very curly. His skin was dark and it was also covered in dirt, just like everyone there.

Throckton told his story. When he told them about how he made a mistake on a spell and created a lion instead of a mouse, they all laughed.

Telling stories was the only form of entertainment the workers had. They told their stories over and over. They never got old.

Bront, another worker, even suggested that if they ever got out of the mines, they should write a book about all of the things they had done. He was sure it would be made into a movie. Everyone laughed at that.

The work never ended.

One day Dron called over to Throckton to talk to him.

“Throckton, come here. I need to talk to you,” Dron yelled over to him.

Throckton put down his shovel and went to where Dron was standing.

“Son, you’re doing good work. I would like to promote you. I would like you to be my assistant overseer. You can start right now,” Dron offered.

Throckton looked over at the other workers.

Then he answered Dron, “No thank you. I’ll continue to work with the others. I don’t want to be a boss. I don’t want to hurt anyone. Just let me continue to work as before.”

“You really surprise me. You’re the first worker who has refused to take a promotion. Something has changed in you. Go back to your work. I’ll speak with you later,” Dron said with a smile on his face.

Throckton went back to digging. Then he had a thought come to his mind.

“I’ve never done that before. Why didn’t I take the job?” he wondered, but he did not change his mind.

When the other workers heard that Throckton had not accepted the position of assistant overseer, they teased him.

Bront said, “I think you feel that you are better than us.”

Throckton responded, “Actually it’s the opposite. I’m just as bad, or even worse than all of you. I have no desire to tell you what to do. I just want to do my work. I just want to be left alone.”

Throckton and the others continued to dig and dig.

Sometimes Dron would give them some time off to rest. They would get extra food and water during these rest periods, but they usually did not last very long and they did not happen very often. The entire crew had to do a good job or else they would cancel the rest period. Throckton was the cause of a couple of rest periods being lost because he got distracted, but soon he realized he would not have any friends if he kept it up.

It was a long time before Dron came to Throckton again.

“Throckton, I have a question for you. If you could make a spell right now, what would you do?” Dron asked him.

“That’s a strange question,” Throckton answered. “Magic doesn’t work here.”

Dron responded, “I’m just asking, if you could make a spell, what would it be?”

Throckton thought for a moment, and then replied, “I would release all of these workers and allow them to become good magicians.”

Dron was again very surprised.

“What about you?” Dron asked.

“I deserve to be here. I’ve made many mistakes in my life. I just want the others to go home. I can do this alone,” Throckton answered.

Dron looked down at Throckton.

“Do you know why you were sent here?” Dron asked.

Throckton again thought for a moment before replying, “Yes, I broke the rules. Even though I didn’t know the rules and the consequences in the contract, I did know what I was doing was wrong. I was just looking for attention, I guess. I wanted to go home and I was trying to do whatever I could to accomplish that.”

“Do you know why you were sent to the Magician’s Academy in the first place?” Dron continued to ask questions of Throckton.

“I was disrespectful to my parents, teachers, and anyone else who told me what to do. I know if I had not been like that, I would not be here right now,” Throckton responded.

“You have answered well my friend,” Dron spoke.

Suddenly Throckton was in front of the students in the dining hall. He was in the same spot as during his trial. He looked around, and all of the students were still there. Standing in front of him was Malinda.

Throckton looked down at himself. He was clean and he was the same as before.

“What happened?!” Throckton said in amazement.

Everyone began to clap. Throckton was stunned.

Malinda spoke.

“Throckton, you continue to amaze us. You found the reason why you were sent to this school. You now know what it means to be humble. You found out that you are not alone in this world, and that with the help of others, life can be so much easier.

“We are reinstating you to our school. You will study with the fourth year students and if you pass your exams, you will graduate from the Magician’s Academy at the end of this term. We hope you’ve learned your lesson well,” Malinda smiled, as she gave the news to Throckton.

“You mean I’m not going to work in the mines for the rest of my life?” Throckton asked very surprised.

“That’s correct,” Malinda answered.

“What about Lundra, Bront, Jennison, and all of the other workers? What has happened to them?” he questioned.

“They were images we created through magic to make the mines real for you. Without them, you would not have believed you were actually there,” Malinda responded.

The door to the right of the dining hall flew open and in walked Dron. He looked very handsome in his new clothes. Throckton concluded that Dron was the only thing that was real in the mines.

Dron stood by the door with a smile on his face. He was proud of Throckton.

Throckton did not know what to say or do.

“Was all of this a dream?” he asked Malinda.

“Not really. It was very real for you. Look at your hands,” Malinda directed him.

He looked down at the callouses on his hands. They were thick and hard.

“The callouses on your hands are a reminder of the hard work you did in the mines. I hope you never forget your experience and the friendships you made.” Malinda explained to him.

Throckton was completely shocked.

“Now what?” Throckton asked. He did not know what to do or say.

The rest of the students ran to greet Throckton. He had no idea how to answer their questions.

Varanda, the girl who defended him, was one of the first to run to him.

Throckton just stood in surprise. He did not know what to say or do. The students were jumping up and down yelling, “Throckton, Throckton, Throckton!”

Finally, breakfast was served and Throckton ate more than he had ever eaten before. He was so thankful to be back at the school. This was a feeling he had never expected to feel. He still wanted to go home, but being in the school was better than the mines.

After breakfast, Malinda asked him to come to her table.

“Throckton, now that you are a fourth year student, you will no longer need us to get to your room. In fact, you can go anywhere you want in the school with a simple wish. I hope the remainder of your time here goes by fast,” Malinda explained.

Before he left the table, Malinda continued, “I have one more piece of business with you.”

“What’s that?” Throckton asked.

“I need for you to sign this contract with the school. Please read it before you sign it, that way you can’t say you don’t know what it says,” Malinda said as she turned the paper in front of her around so Throckton could read it.

He looked quickly at the contract.

“I know what the consequences will be if I don’t follow it. I can do this. I have no problem with what you ask,” he said, and then he signed the paper in front of her.

He handed her the pen and smiled.

“Aren’t you going to read it?” Malinda asked.

“I get what it says. I won’t cause you anymore problems. I promise,” Throckton responded to her question.

Throckton closed his eyes and when he opened them, he was in his room.

“Now that’s better!” he said to himself.

He lay on his bed and closed his eyes. He thought about the experience he had had. Even though it was now over, the memories were vivid in his mind.

Now he had to survive the next three and half years and then he would be able to go home. This would be easier than the time he spent in the mines. Still he was lonely for his family.

He fell asleep. The next day was Saturday so he could sleep for the whole day. He was so tired.

After relaxing over the weekend, and getting to know his classmates, he attended his first class with the fourth year students. It was called ‘Advanced Magic Spells’.

His teacher was nice and the other students welcomed him to the class. This was something he had not expected. Before this, his classmates had ignored him. He was no longer the loner he had been before.

Throckton thought to himself, “Maybe those other classes I attended weren’t really all that bad. Maybe it was just my attitude.”

The classroom was bright and cheerful. There were many paintings on the wall. Later he found out that the teacher had painted them. He enjoyed looking at them because they were so peaceful.

He enjoyed the advanced spells. He realized that the spells he had learned before were nothing compared to what he would be able to do after he graduated. He was surprised at the spells he could have used in his attempt to escape, but he had no idea what they were at the time.

While he was in class, one of the administration staff came to the room and asked if Throckton could go with her.

“Ms. Forestday, we need Throckton to come to the office. Is it okay for him to leave the class?” the secretary asked.

His teacher said it was all right, so Throckton left the class.

On the way to the office, the teacher told him a little of why he was going to the office. His parents had called the school asking if Throckton could come home. His sister was very ill and they were not sure if she was going to get well.

When he got to the office, they shared the letter with him. Throckton was shaken.

“Is it OK for me to go home?” he asked. “Can I go to be with my family?”

Malinda gave him permission, but he was to return as soon as his sister was okay.

He needed to get his things packed into a bag and then they would take him to the bus station in order to go to his home.

Throckton went to his room to pack. He had tears in his eyes. He did not know what to expect when he got home. This is what he had wanted, but not because his sister was so sick.

On the bus, Throckton had time to think.

He thought about all of the trouble he had caused at the school. He remembered his friends in the mines and wondered if he would still be friends with them if they had been real.

When he arrived at his hometown, his parents met him at the bus station. His parents ran to greet him and gave him a big hug. His mother wrapped her arms around his neck and cried. They could not believe how big and strong he had become. More so, they could not believe his attitude.

Throckton went to his dad and gave him a big hug as well.

“I’m sorry I’ve been such a big problem for you dad. I’ve learned a lot about myself since going to the academy. I’ll tell you all about it later,” Throckton said to his father

“I’m so glad to see you! I’ve missed you so much,” his mother said through her tears.

She took his arm in her hands and held him tight

“I’ve missed you too mom. How is Abilossa? When can I see her?” Throckton asked, eager to get an answer.

“We’re going to take you to the hospital. She’s been there for over a week. Her condition is not good, and the doctors don’t give her much hope,” his father told him.

“What’s wrong with her?” Throckton asked.

“Right now the doctors aren’t absolutely sure. They’re still running tests to find out exactly what the problem is. They think her liver may be failing,” his father answered him.

The drive to the hospital was quiet. It took about forty-five minutes to get there. As soon as they parked the car, Throckton opened the door, got out, and ran to the doorway ahead of his parents.

They told him her room was 2201. He quickly asked at the front desk how to get to the room.

The nice lady at the desk told him, “Go down this hallway and at the end turn to the right. In front of you will be the elevator, and then go to the second floor.”

He followed the directions he was given and found her room.

When he burst into the room, he saw Abilossa laying in her bed with wires and tubes attached to her.

She turned her head and when she saw Throckton beside her bed, she smiled.

Speaking in a weak voice, she said, “Hey little brother, it’s nice to see you. Did you come just to see me?”

Throckton leaned over to give her a kiss on the forehead. Her skin color looked terrible, her hair was a mess, and her eyes did not have the glimmer they used to have. She was a lot thinner than he remembered. His necklace with the star was around her neck.

“You have gotten a lot bigger. What have you been doing?” she asked.

“It’s a long story. I’ll tell you later when you are feeling better,” Throckton answered.

He was holding his sister’s hand when their parents arrived.

Throckton looked over at his father in desperation.

“What can we do? Can we use magic to make her better?” Throckton asked his father.

“I’m afraid not. Her physical condition has not responded to any magic that I have been able to find.

When we talked to the doctor on our way to the room, he said she needs a liver transplant, but they don’t have a donor available. Unless we find a donor, she may not make it,” his father gave the grim news to Throckton.

The rest of the afternoon, they sat with Abilossa waiting for the doctors to come.

When they asked when the doctor was going to come, they found out it was going to be in an hour, so Throckton’s parents left to go to the cafeteria to get something to eat. Throckton stayed behind to keep Abilossa company.

A nurse came into the room to look at Abilossa’s chart. She had blonde hair put up in a ponytail. Her scrubs were pink.

She looked at the chart and shook her head. She turned page after page looking at the information.

Throckton glanced over at her, and then again. He looked at her closely. She looked very familiar to him.

A look of surprise filled Throckton’s face.