

Season 1 Episode 4

Trevon stood stunned, unable to comprehend what he was seeing. *How is it I never heard of this place? And these people—I've never seen their like before!*

A large cobblestone road cut straight through the center of the underground city. Each of the buildings were made of gems, and each emitted a soft glow to their surroundings. Two and three stories the buildings were, with hungry eyes staring out of them as the newcomer—Trevon—made his first step into the city. A larger crowd began to gather a spear's throw away. All of them were dressed in bright, shiny armor that reflected the diffusion of colors from the gems.

Darkness of the Night and Leaves in the Wind approached from behind and stood on either side of him. They looked at the crowds, silent and thoughtful. Then, Darkness said, "Our needs are best met with the Seer," turning to him, her emerald irises radiating with a green fire, she said, "You will be tested before you meet our Elders."

"And make sure you keep your mouth shut until we arrive at the Seer," advised Leaves in a whisper. "Our people can be easily stirred."

Darkness led the group through the center of town. There was a certain edge to her that worried Trevon. Regardless, the crowds parted to allow the company passage; all except for one individual. This man stood with bleached white armor, watching the group as they approached from afar. Slung across his back was a bow, white like his armor, with a quiver full of arrows. At his hip was a sword, at its pommel a clear gem.

Trevon watched as the crowd started to take a few steps back. A disturbance hung in the air, causing Darkness

to slow her steps. Leaves stayed uncomfortably close to Trevon as they closed distance on the white-armored elf. Within seconds, the area around the group filled with a thick white smoke, obscuring sight of the crowd around them. In their place, lingering like shadows, were white armored elves similar to the one in front of them, who had swiftly unshouldered his bow and knocked an arrow, aiming it straight at Trevon's head. The rest of the white warriors had arrows knocked and aimed at the group.

Standing closer to the white warrior, Trevon noticed that his eyes were pure white, no pupil and iris to be seen. In a ghostly voice, the elf asked, "Why do you bring the Lekolai here?"

Darkness scowled threateningly. Taking a step forward, an aurora of dark energy forming around her body like black fire, she said in a voice that was grim and menacing, "Guardian of Illumination, stand down—the Elders have requested that we bring them the servant to the Salavene Priest."

"So you say," the white warrior responded. The others surrounding the group didn't move, didn't breathe; they only held their position.

"So we say!" roared a male voice from a distance. Immediately, the white warriors, except for the one in front of the group, lowered their bows to a guarded stance. Two dark shadows emerged from the white abyss behind the Guardian. The male placed a hand on the Guardian's shoulder, whispered something in his ear, and then let go. The Guardian held his position for a second longer; then, with the smoke dissipating along with the rest of his warriors, the Guardian dissipated slowly into the ethers.

The two figures emerged from the smoke; a gasp came from both Darkness and Leaves when they recognized who the two shadows were. They both dropped to one knee,

forcing Trevon with them, and inclined their heads. Trevon could not help but continue looking at the figures as their features were revealed: the two elves had glittering sapphire skin beneath a cloak of blue; at their waist was the pommel of a sword. *These High Elf Priests*, thought Trevon, mesmerized. *I thought they were myth!* The one in the center locked eyes with Trevon for a second, then averted his gaze to Darkness.

“High Elf Priests,” started Darkness, the aurora of dark energy now dissipating from her body, “you honor us with your presence.”

“Welcome, Trevon,” the male said as he approached. He leaned forward, his blue eyes soft and forgiving as he scrutinized Trevon’s face. Reaching out, he grabbed Trevon’s hand and knelt before him. Closing his eyes, he remained silent and thoughtful. Darkness and Leaves did not look or otherwise flinch at the presence of the elf. A soft humming came from the priest. Then, he said in a whisper, “You’ll do, son of Tresk.” Rising to his feet, he looked at the female priestess, then back to the group and said, “Rise, children.”

Darkness and Leaves immediately stood straight, but Trevon took a second to reflect on what just happened. *What did he just do?* As he stood, the priest said, directing his attention to Trevon, “The Elders have long awaited your arrival and that of your master, Trelok, the Salavene Priest.”

“Is he here?” asked Trevon. Darkness shot him a cruel look, as though he shouldn’t have spoken out of turn. If it was considered disrespectful, the priest did not show concern as he replied, “No. King Isildur has him kept as a prisoner of war. We are not sure of his condition, but we are certain that he will not survive the coming end of this season.”

“We have to rescue him,” proposed Trevon.

The priest raised a hand slightly. “All will come in time, Master Trevon. For now, your needs are best met with the Elders of our people. There is much to be discussed in the little amount of time that we have. War is coming—a war of the stars—that must be prepared for.”

“A war of the stars?” asked Trevon, confused.

Turning, the priest said calmly, “Walk with us, friends. And take comfort, for all will be told in time.”

Trevon followed close behind with Darkness and Leaves on either side of him. The crowds receded behind and within buildings as the larger group continued on the cobblestone path. The priests did not seem to acknowledge their presence nor their willingness to disappear.

“There is a man who lives in the deepest of green forests: he is just as important as you and your master. He founded the elven rebellion but has forsaken us for reasons he deemed unfit to discuss,” explained the priest.

“Who is he?” asked Trevon.

“He is the one who created this entire civilization from rock and stone—he, I might add, has shared no name,” explained the priestess. “Only know that he is the most powerful of us all, even if he is a bit strange in the head.”

“Strange?”

Darkness of the Night appeared to have wanted to speak, but it was the priestess who answered promptly. “He sings to the stars, like the rest of his brethren, but when he does the stars react pleasantly to his melody. When the melody turns dark, however, it is best to be far away.”

“Look,” interceded the Priest. “There it is.”

Up ahead, a tall palace of five stories grazed the ceiling of the crystalline cavern. Trevon began to wonder how long

it took the elves to fashion the city out of hard stone. The precision of every cut on the buildings seemed too precise for a society as old as, well—he had no idea *how* old the elves were.

“What do you need me to do?” asked Trevon finally.

The priest did not answer right away. In fact, the palace towered high above and the stairs were only a few feet in front of them before the priest decided to respond. “You will meet with our Seer, our Elders, and then you will rescue your master. Only with his help—and his long-awaited historical dialogue—can we hope to save *our* master and that of your planet.”

“*Your* planet?” repeated Trevon, confused.

The priest stood before the large doors of the palace when he turned to inspect Trevon closely, wondering where the confusion came from. “You didn’t think we elves came from Ishtar, did you?”

Trevon did not know how to answer the question. He simply looked away at the crystal doors in front of him.

Turning away, the priest opened the doors to the inner palace beyond. “We come from a planet of green, inhabited by creatures much like our own, except with rounded faces and ears that are very much as alien to us as the dragons and the Genosurai.”

The Genosurai? The men with rounded faces and ears? questioned Trevon in his mind. He had never heard of these two groups before. Were they evil? What did they have to do with the elves on Ishtar? How did the elves get here in the first place? Those questions and more dominated Trevon’s mind. So much so, in fact, that it took him a while to acknowledge his grand and unique surroundings as it appeared before him.

The crystalline exterior surfaces of the palace were no match for the grandeur of the interior. Looking at the

outside, one might suspect that the inside would mimic the hard stone and featureless design of the palace. Except they would be wrong: the palace walls on the inside were made of a polished yellow wood. The floor was red, glossy, and likewise wood. The stairs were made of gemstones, like the exterior, but resembled an infusion of red and yellow colors that accented the theme of the interior. Historical illustrations lined the walls, and stone workings of similar purposes stood on pedestals at certain areas of the ground level.

“Go,” said Darkness in a hushed voice, nudging Trevon with her elbow. Trevon jolted when he noticed that the priests were already half-way up the stairs and were waiting for him.

He rushed up the stairs two-at-a-time until he met up with them again. Whereupon, the Priestess asked, “Pleased with what you see?”

“Quite,” Trevon replied honestly. “I did not expect to see such splendor in a palace of stone.”

At the top of the stairs, the Priestess turned and gave Trevon a hand the rest of the way as she replied, “That is only possible through magic, friend. Without it, we would be living in stone huts.”

I doubt it, thought Trevon as he followed the priests across the second story inner balcony to a side door. Stopping at it, the priests turned again. The Priestess placed a hand on Trevon’s shoulder, and looked into his eyes strongly. “Once we pass through these doors, Trevon, son of Tresk, everything you used to know about your civilization will be irrelevant, meaningless knowledge. Are you prepared for this?”

Nervous, Trevon swallowed and nodded slowly. He was unsure. In part because the Priestess suggested that all the history locked away within Ishtar regarding the Lekolai

were false; that all the teachings of schools and historians were elaborately twisted. Perhaps, even, to suit a political purpose, whatever it may be.

The doors to the Seer's quarters opened. The inside was very much like the rest of the palace. Golden chairs with red cushions resided beneath a large, stained glass window that overlooked the city. From his position, Trevon noticed that he could see clearly through the glass, but from the outside he could not. On either side of the room stood a large collection of viles and glass jars of varying size and proportion, all of them containing some mixture of liquid or solid for whatever purpose that the Seer deemed fit. And standing in front of the window, looking out at the streets below, was the Seer.

"Greetings, young one," the Seer said in a strangely musical tone. "Welcome to Evalinen, the historical library of what once was, what currently is, and what may be."

Looking around, Trevon noticed that his company was non-existent. His heart began to pound in his chest; his anxiety increasing. Slowly, he took a step into the room. The doors banged shut, causing him to jolt forward in surprise.

"No need for the hysterics, young Trevon," the Seer said. In the dim of light, Trevon could barely make out what she was wearing—if anything. The light from the outside was too bright for the dark room. Turning around, revealing that her entire body was covered in scales, she said, "Come forward—I have not met one of your like for some time." Trevon, with evident surprise, found that her eyes resembled that of a dragons. Her facial features were inclined with high cheeks and a slightly narrow mouth and nose, like the snout of a dragon.

“Come now, little one, surely you have met one of my kind before?” Trevon did not respond. With a sigh, she said, “Well? Come forward—I won’t bite . . . much.”

Trevon took one step forward. As his foot touched the ground, his whole world turned black. Lights flashed everywhere, greens of the forest, yellow and orange from the sun, and blue from the glittering sea dominated the environment as an entirely different world started to form. The Seer was no longer in sight.

Dizziness took Trevon as he took a step back, hoping to leave the strange world around him. Instead, a heavy gust blew in from behind, forcing him further into what would have been the Seer’s room.

“What’s going on?!” yelled Trevon as he quickly turned around. Nobody was behind him.

Are you scared, young Trevon? asked the Seer.

His head twisting from side to side, he asked, “Should I be?”

The Seer’s response was not forthcoming.

All around, the sounds of the forest dominated Trevon’s hearing. The crashing waves of the sea, the bending trunks of the trees that swayed with the wind, and the underbrush that rubbed against each other created a chorus that deafened his ability to predict where the Seer would strike.

Another gust of wind blew in from above, slamming the top of his skull and forcing him to the ground. Minor scratches and a slight bruise on his elbow forced him to stiffen, wary of his surroundings. Looking around as he got up, he yelled, “Where are you?!”

The wind continued to blow through the trees. It came from everywhere, as if its direction were not constant in one direction, but in many.

I am everywhere!

The sound of the wind crashing through the trees and the underbrush became so loud and so constant, Trevon noticed that it was indeed *everywhere*.

The wind . . . how is this possible? thought Trevon.

It is possible because I make it so, said the Seer. *Now attack me!*

Trevon stood stunned, unable to understand exactly *how* he was supposed to attack her. Then the wind came in from all directions, gusting like a gale. The trees all bent inward like a circle, aiming at a central point: Trevon. In only a second, the wind gathered and thrust Trevon into the sky, through the branches and leaves of the trees above him.

He couldn't help but scream in fright, unable to gain control of his situation. Soon, he was above the clouds and continued to ascend higher and higher until, at last he could see for miles around, the wind dissipated. His heart dropped as he plummeted to the neck-breaking ground below.

"Help me!"

Help yourself, the Seer replied cruelly. *Believe in yourself, and perhaps you will be worthy to live this life.*

In no time at all, the branches of the trees acted as a barbed netting to bring a painful resistance to Trevon's fall. He flipped and cartwheeled through the air as he slammed against thicker branches. The pain was intense, almost incapacitating. He knew he would die if he continued his fall.

All time froze: he rebelled against the idea of accepting his fate, cruel as it was. His urge to survive and carry on became dominant, awakening a power that had yet to emerge in his subconscious in the past. What was now dark became bright as the noonday sun in his mind. He reached for it, hoping that it would save him. As soon as his mental

touch encountered the light, an icy fire flooded his mind and body.

A large branch slammed against the side of his chest, breaking two of his ribs. His eyes went red with anger, pain, and desperation. With a yell, he called upon all the reserves of strength he had in him. His body lit up like a flame, burning the leaves and twigs that remained on the way down.

“Stop!” he yelled finally, and he did just that. He levitated with his bloody and bruised body on its side just a foot from the ground.

The sound of wings came from afar, below the trees but above the underbrush. Then he saw her—the Seer. Her wings were at least twice the height of her body, but she was nevertheless able to maneuver between the trees with ease as she approached viciously. Trevon tried to move on time, but it was too late. With a heavy *slam!* she collided with his body, thrusting him into the air with her claws around his neck.

“Oh my,” she said in a slightly deeper, more horrifying voice. “You really must be prepared to die!”

They ascended to the tops of the trees again, and she let him go with a shove. Instead of falling to his death, Trevon concentrated his power on levitation and immediately approached a tree—there was no way he could keep himself aloft for long.

“Hey!” yelled the Seer from afar. “That tree won’t help you! Fight me!”

“I can’t!” Trevon yelled back. He finally made it to the thin trunk of a tree and held on, attempting to regain his strength. “I am kinda new to this sort of thing, remember?”

“New?” scoffed the Seer. “Are you *new* to this?” As she finished her inquiry, she ascended slightly higher above the tree line and extended her wings far on either side of her.

The bones in her body began to force themselves into different positions, extending in length and growing her size to at least triple. Her snout became longer and narrower, her wings longer and more aerodynamic, her legs bowed back like a hounds, and her claws and fangs even longer and sharper than before, like razor blades.

Trevon's heart stopped for a moment, his vision hazed with disbelief. With effort, he forced himself to breathe, but only after his first intake, the mighty dragon roared savagely and lunged for him. She breathed a long tail of fire, but not so close that it would kill Trevon—only heat the air around him.

As the Seer neared, she back-flapped and whipped her tail around. It struck against the tree below Trevon and snapped it as easily as Trevon could snap a toothpick with his fingers.

Using his reserves of strength, Trevon levitated where the branch used to be. The Seer continued behind him and doubled back for another strike. Before he could turn to face her—perhaps even use magic to stop her—a stinging pain lashed at his back, followed by a stab of something large and thick, but pointed and sharp. A spurt of blood launched itself from Trevon's abdomen as an ivory spike of the dragon's tail revealed itself as it stuck out of his gut.

Something approached Trevon's mind—it was the Seer's subconscious, attempting to make contact. He couldn't respond, however, as the pain in his body was too much. He couldn't concentrate. Finally, the Seer forced herself in, allowing a fresh wave of pain to settle over Trevon's mind, and she said, *You're useless to us!*

The spike left Trevon's abdomen, and he slowly started to descend towards the ground.

Trelak could have picked a better assistant, she said with finality. While in the air, she twisted her body around to smack Trevon with a death blow.

Trevon's mind blew by like a gust of wind. All time accelerating a thousand times over. He could not die—he was able to stop himself in mid-air . . . he will have no trouble stopping—

The tail just arrived in front of his line of sight, and it was then that all time slowed—whether by his magic of by his adrenaline rush, he did not know. Raising both of his hands, he felt the scaly underside of the Seer's tail as it stopped in front of him. A blue aurora shone around his hands, and he stared at the still tail before him . . . no longer a threat.

Growling, the Seer swung with her paw to finish the job.

Smack!

Trevon's body flew faster than he could react. Before he could realize that his arm was broken in five different places, his body hit the ground. Dirt and dust flew into the air. Beneath him was a small crater. He did not think. He did not breathe. He did not feel any pain. He simply lay there, utterly spent as his world became consumed in darkness.

When Trevon awoke, it was on a silky smooth bed in a room of vines and flowers. Small the room was but filled with all the luxuries of nature. A pleasant aroma pervaded the room thickly, allowing a cool sensation to wash over his tortured frame.

He looked at the door beside him, listening as some people spoke on the other side.

“—he barely survived the first test!” someone screamed. A muffled voice replied.

The first test, recalled Trevon, repositioning his body to its side. *They call that a . . .* He winced as a fresh wave of pain renewed its assault on his body.

“He cannot be allowed ba—”

“Calm yourself, Darkness,” interrupted a male in the voice of authority. Trevon didn’t recognize him. The next words that followed were alien, probably their native language.

Are these people fearful? Trevon wondered at the possibility. *Fearful for me or of me?*

The strange language continued until Darkness entered the room and noticed he was awake. Silent, she walked over and opened the blinds of a window to allow fresh light to enter.

Getting up, wincing when his ribs pained him, Trevon asked, “Who were you speaking to?”

“Nobody,” replied Darkness, moving to the closet. She retrieved some clothes and threw them on the bed. “You should get ready; the elders expect your appearance in five minutes. But before that.” She approached and, standing as still as a statue, she whispered something over his body.

A feeling of intense cold ran through his body, followed by a heat as his aching muscles soothed. When it finally washed away, Trevon stretched, happy to be rid of the pain. For the first time since waking, he reached for his stomach, but found no evidence of the spike that had critically injured him during the test.

“Don’t worry,” Darkness said reassuringly, placing a hand on the end of his bed. “The test doesn’t kill you—it just hurts *a lot*. Now, get ready. They are waiting.”

With that, Darkness of the Night left.

Anxious to see what transpired while asleep, Trevon quickly disrobed of his previous attire and fitted the . . . bracers? Grieves? Helmet? Chainmail suit? Plated Armor?

What is going on? wondered Trevon as he struggled to fit all the pieces to his body. When he was finished, he bolted out of the room and straight down the stairs. Halfway down, he heard whispering at ground level. Curious, he slowed until he was just out of visibility and listened:

“—he is dead,” declared one of the voices Trevon recognized to be the High Priest. “Trevon cannot know about this.”

“Quiet,” said another. Her voice was very similar in tone and purpose to the High Priest. “He should be coming down any sec—”

She peeked up the stairs, slivers of purple gemstones flourished brilliantly down the sides of her face and neck. With a booming voice, she called, “Trevon, we know you’re up there! Come down!”

Knowing that he was caught, Trevon tried to remain composed as he descended the rest of the stairs. *How did they know I was up there?*

At the bottom, he found the High Priest and—from the look of it—the Priestess. Both were garbed in a silk cloak and hood, the Priest in white and the Priestess in purple, to match her gems.

“Have a nice rest, young one?” she asked.

“Slightly,” Trevon replied, looking around for Darkness. She wasn’t there.

The Priestess patted Trevon on the back reassuringly and said, “Worry not, Trevon; it is time to meet the elders.” She paused, surprised as she looked over Trevon’s armor and noticed something missing. “Where is your sword?”

“Well,” said the Priest, “the one best fit for a strapping young man like this one would be best forged fresh out of the fire, don’t you think?”

Reassured, the Priestess said, “Yes.” She looked Trevon over one last time. “I think it would.”

“Fine, then we better get moving.”

The trio approached a doorway similar to the yellowwood that surrounded it. When it was opened, however, the familiar crystalline surfaces invited them. A soft glow lit the way from within each of the crystals.

“Where are we going exactly?” Trevon asked.

“When we first arrived on this planet a thousand years ago, the Lekolai that were present were not very liking to our presence,” explained the Priest.

The Priestess finished his point by saying, “We had to keep ourselves hidden, only to dig our way out to the cavern that exists above us. Certain precautions needed to be taken to ensure our survival.”

“Only recently have we made our presence known in the Lekolai world,” said the Priest. From then on, very little talk was to be had between the three. All Trevon could think about was how life underground for a thousand years must have felt like.

Did they bring technology with them to help with excavating the tunnels? The idea of pickaxes and shovels through hard gemstones and rock seemed implausible. *They did mention magic, so that helps,* he concluded.

“Halt,” someone said ahead of the group. Trevon’s mind had wandered, so much so that he forgot to keep an eye on his surroundings. Up ahead, a long guard stood tall before a large crystal rock. This crystal in particular shone brighter than the rest.

It’s the Guardian of Illumination Darkness spoke of before, Trevon realized with a hint of fear. *Surely he wouldn’t attack the priests—he didn’t seem to mind them before.*

“What is your business here?” the Guardian asked. “You were not scheduled to meet the Elders for another few hours—after the little one was trained properly.” He looked up and down Trevon’s armor. “He doesn’t look like much.”

“Well, why don’t you see for yourself?” The Priest proposed. “Surely he is no match for one so mighty.”

Trevon’s heart dropped. Whispering, he said, “Are you *mad*? He’ll kill me!”

The Priest laid a hand on Trevon’s shoulder, and then stepped away. “Let the test begin!”

“Don’t I get a weapon?!” yelled Trevon as the Priestess joined her male counterpart. They did not respond.

The Guardian approached, spawning a vicious white fog from behind its body. In a matter of seconds, Trevon couldn’t anything except the smoke and the dim glow of the crystals.

Maybe the gauntlets on my hands will help, he assumed. With effort, he swung at the smoke before him, hoping that the Guardian was foolish enough to continue approaching from the front. It was a miss.

Pressure slashed against Trevon’s back, followed by another from the right side, the left, and then the back again. Trevon was pushed all around as the Guardian’s sword appeared almost out of nowhere—no doubt it had spawned its two other pawns like before.

“Hit me!” a voice hissed maliciously from within the fog. Another stab.

Another slash.

A bump to the helmet; a light flashed across Trevon’s vision, followed by a *thud* as he collided with the wall. He sagged to the floor, his body aching from all the impacts from the Guardian’s sword. Finally, as a shadow reflected

off the gem's light, Trevon yelled defiantly, raising his hand, palm out, as he did.

"Die!"

The fog turned to a rampaging fire, consuming everything except the people in its wide girth. Screams of a ghostly horror came, but it was not the Guardians. It was Trevon.

Standing, his mouth gaping wide with utter hatred and fueled by the immense power now erupting in his mind, Trevon focused the fire around the assailant. He was intent on killing the Guardian at all costs, even his own life.

The fire now tunneled vertically around the Guardian, stopping him from moving anywhere Trevon did not want him to. Voices came from afar, begging him to stop the flow of magic—the telekinesis.

Finally, amidst the roar of the flames and the screams coming from Trevon's throat, a mighty voice came from the gem the Guardian was protecting.

"Enough!"

The fire immediately dissipated into the ethers. A force unlike any Trevon had witnessed before—stronger even than himself—pushed everyone against the wall with their arms, legs, and neck stiff and outstretched to the limit.

Trevon struggled against his invisible restraints, unable to free himself. *Is this the Guardian's doing?* Trevon wondered. His thoughts were soon corrected when he noticed the Guardian with his other two pawns attached to the wall in very much the same manner.

To the right—where the gemstone the Guardian was protecting resided—stood a very slender man with a thin sword. Its length was engulfed in a fiery emerald light, blazing rapidly at the pulsing power of the Elder's magic. The slender Elder wore gem-covered emerald armor. A staff of pure emerald stones and not else was slung across

his back. His eyes burned a fiery passion, green like the fire of the sword and the emerald of his armor, with trails of green smoke rising from the outside corner of his eyes.

This man, Trevon realized, would kill anyone who wished any harm on his kin.

From behind the emerald Elder came two others. One blue and the other red, both with the same characteristics as the emerald elder. These, however, bore sapphire and ruby staves, respectively. Except these two did not have a sword. The sapphire elder bore a long-bow, elegantly fashioned with blue runes running down its side. The ruby Elder held nothing in his hands. His weapon of choice, it seemed, came strictly from the mind.

Trevon was released from the hold. As he lightly landed on his feet, his mind opened. The feeling of seclusion no longer dominated his subconscious as someone, or something, tried to rip his mental barriers away. They succeeded. All three of the Elders immersed themselves in Trevon's thoughts and memories, all of it stretching back to when he could first acknowledge the world as a child.

A scraping pain, like a hot branding iron rubbing against his skin, overwhelmed Trevon's mind. He fell to the floor in the fetal position, grabbing at his head and screaming all the while. It seemed to never end until, finally, the pain began to recede, leaving a throbbing ache in his skull. The Elders spoke in unison:

Welcome, Trevon, to Evalancia.