

Barbarian Girl
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Chapters 1 and 2

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Chapter 1

It was a nice spring Monday afternoon, but that didn't stop fifteen year old Liza Emory from being in a foul mood. Walking through the quiet suburban streets of Rockland, Maryland, a suburb of New Washington, the five foot four freshman at Rockland High with short curly brown hair and a slightly chubby figure was focused on that bitch Macie and her bitch friends Brooke, Jade and Taylor.

Her bullies were the type to pick on girls like Liza for no other reason than because they could. The previous Friday, Macie started a rumor that Travis, a boy Liza had a major crush on, liked her. When Liza asked him to the spring dance that Monday, he blew her off. Everyone had a good time at her expense, everyone except her best and only friend Brianna.

But that was the one event in a long line of bullying stretching back to the beginning of the year, which went far beyond calling her a cunt or a dyke. At their worst, they invited her to a birthday party for Taylor, only for her parents to drive her to the address and find that it was nothing but an empty lot. Her parents told her stay away, but it was impossible when Liza shared most of her classes with them and the school administration did nothing.

Arriving at her front door, she unlocked it, threw her book bag down, kicked off her shoes and ran upstairs to the safety and comfort of her room. She opened the bedroom door and was instantly taken aback by the sight of a glowing battle axe that was lying on her bed. It was three feet in length, with dual edges with a spike between them. Both the handles and the blades were covered with mysterious runes and symbols.

Confusion and shock set in, but they were replaced by an intense level of excitement. All that she could think about was payback; payback for every single taunt, insult and dirty trick that those four bitches ever played on her! She could see it all now – she would become the most popular girl in school and all of the cute guys would fall over themselves to be with her. Since her power will have come from an object and not an inherited power or mutation she wouldn't have to go to the dreaded Rockland Academy for Powered Teenagers, and would have free reign over her current school.

She glanced over at her alarm clock to find that she had plenty of time to get acquainted with the axe: mom wouldn't be home until 5:30, dad an hour after that and her older brother was away at college. Homework could wait.

Liza's gaze landed on the full length mirror over to the side and she took note of her appearance, comparing it to the posters of celebrities and heroines that adorned the walls. Her eyes landed upon the poster of her idol, Sarah Sapphire, as she modeled a bikini. Sarah, who happened to live next door, was a heroine who had retired a little over a decade ago, but in her prime had been one of the prettiest and most powerful heroines the world had ever known. Liza could only wish for the flawless figure, long silky blond hair and the pearly smile that stared back at her from the poster. Maybe she would never look like Sarah but she was determined to be respected and have the man and child of her dreams.

She stepped over to the window and closed the blinds. Sitting down on the bed she ran her hand gingerly over the axe. The metal was smooth and warm, containing an energy that flowed through it and into her, causing everything else in the world to fade away like a hologram until all that remained were her and it. Her hand continued to travel across the weapon until it got to the hilt. Upon contact with it the sword became attached to her arm where it then disappeared, leaving only a stylized version of the axe as a tattoo on the inside of her right wrist.

She was immediately hit by a series of violent convulsions which caused her eyes to roll back in her head and sweat to fly from her face. Her clothes strained, ripped and then disintegrated completely as she underwent changes: her body became taller and thicker, fat turned into ripped and defined muscle over her milky skin which became tanner by the second, and her curls turned into shoulder length straight hair. The convulsions eventually stopped and Liza lay in the splintered remains of her bed, struggling to catch her breath as perspiration continued to roll down her body. She felt healthier, stronger and more energized.

She glanced over at the mirror to look at herself.

The house rattled with a deep booming scream.

Her face was no longer that of a teenager; it has been replaced by someone who looked to be in her mid-twenties if not older. Her hands drifted down to her privacy and she was definitely still a woman down there despite lacking any breasts up top and every inch of her body being replaced with angular muscles.

Tears ran down Liza's face. She was ugly; a big hulking... freak. She would never be popular now; no boy would ever go out with her. Her family would disown her for sure. Once again, she would be the laughing stock of the entire world.

The sound of helicopters and sirens could be heard approaching in the distance. Panic set in and she stood up, finding herself to be nearly seven feet tall now. With a clothing emergency on her hands she tore the purple sheet from her bed and just wrapped the entire thing around her torso as well as she could.

The helicopters and their sirens were now directly above her house. "Wielder of the Axe of Borin," a voice called out from the loudspeaker, "you are being taken into custody by the National Hero Corps Registration and Containment Division. If you willingly surrender we will not resort to deadly force. This is your first and only warning!"

If they had their way she would have to go the Academy, but she wasn't about to let that happen. Her body tensed up and the Axe appeared in her hand.

Time to test out her new powers.

Chapter 2

Sarah Sapphire, forty-six years old, stood in the backyard studio of what used to be a shed, working on a sculpture. She gently hearted the solid block of steel with her hands which were engulfed in a blue energy aura the color of her name. She didn't have a plan for what she was making; the sculpture would be finished when it felt right.

Her energy, generated by sheer force of will, had an amazing versatility. She could fire several different kinds of energy beams and, at her most devastating, she could ignite a full-body aura creating a massive and deadly explosion. On the other end she could use it to cauterize wounds, fly through the air and, like now, create works of art that she could sell for upwards of a few hundred thousand dollars.

She had spent her prime years as a heroine or, to be more precise, a paid soldier and assassin for the United States government via the National Hero Corps, a quasi-military organization. Heroes and heroines fought wars, conducted espionage and killed various supernatural creatures, but their main purpose was to hunt down and murder villains, those being people with powers who didn't become a hero for whatever reason.

Being someone with a power used to be something to be envied, but all that changed with the start of the Cold War. Once the War started every powered person not loyal to the government was considered a communist spy and, as a counter, the hero program was initiated to track them down and kill them. Now, those not loyal were considered terrorists, but the point was the same: if a powered person's ability was not being used by the US government then they were considered evil and had to be eliminated, hence the terms hero and villain. There were a few lucky ones who escaped to other countries that didn't have similar programs in place but they were generally third world shitholes where only the most desperate wanted to live. In essence,

During Sarah's seventeen year career, she had killed thousands of people with little remorse. Then, eleven years before, she had a nervous breakdown after her dual identities as a nurturing mother and a brutal killer could no longer coexist. Sarah was left a bitter and jaded shut-in whose only contact was now limited to her husband and partner Patrick, and her then five year old son Michael. Discovering art helped her to be able to express her inner torment and bring some normality back to her life.

Patrick, a hero who had superhuman hand-to-hand combat skills, continued to work for several more years until he hit the mandatory retirement age of forty at which time he got a very nice pension from the NHC. No longer a hero, he now worked as a trainer at the Rockland Academy, helping to train Michael, now sixteen, use his energy fists and feet – an inherited combination of his parent's powers – effectively.

The thought of Michael being a hero was horrifying to Sarah. All she could do was cherish every day of the two years they had left until his eighteenth birthday and become a hero, because his chances of living past that was slim.

The life expectancy of a person with powers was low. Sarah and Patrick had both managed to live past the age of forty which was something that only half of all powered individuals ever did; one third of them never made it past thirty. Forcing powered people to endlessly fight each other was the government's way of controlling them – letting them kill themselves while still gaining something out of it. It was sick and twisted but it was written into the Constitution as an amendment and having that amendment repealed would never happen.

She tried to push past her fears for Michael and concentrate back on the sculpture. It was working until she heard the helicopter's loud speaker from the Emory house.

At a little past 3:00 there was only one person home during that time and Sarah ran out to the front lawn to see a gargantuan Liza burst out of her front door, leap over the lawn and land on a NHC armored vehicle, leaving two massive dents where her feet made contact with it. The agents that had surrounded the house aimed their plasma rifles at her as she stood on the car. The helicopters, three of them now, continued to circle overhead.

"Stand down," yelled one of the agents.

"No!" Liza leapt off the vehicle and landed on the other side of the agents. The teenager thumped down the street over parked cars, leaving footprints in the asphalt as she ran.

Sarah knew that if she didn't intervene, someone would wind up dead. She hadn't used her powers in a combat situation in years, but because her powers were mentally generated, they hadn't decreased in effectiveness, and never would as long as she kept her mind sharp. She enveloped herself in a full body aura and forced the energy backwards, propelling herself through the air. She flew past the agents and down the street after Liza who had by now built up a significant amount of momentum and was running close to forty-five miles an hour. Thankfully for Sarah she could fly faster than that.

"Liza slow down!"

"No, I won't let them take me!"

Sarah looked up to see that they were rapidly approaching a stop light which intersected with a major traffic artery. "If you run into that intersection then you'll kill someone!"

Liza pulled back and ran into a tight arc to stop.

The NHC descended upon them with their helicopters and armored vehicles which they used to circle around Liza and Sarah. Dozens of agents jumped out and aimed their rifles at them. All of the agents had helmets on but they obviously tried to avert their gaze from the monstrous girl.

Liza slowly brought her battle axe up, ready to strike.

Sarah placed her hand upon Liza's arm. "Don't do it. Relax."

Liza looked down at the smaller heroine, her idol, and nodded. She stood at ease.

A young psychokinetic heroine with an olive complexion, identified by a badge as Alivia Patrelli, walked through the cluster of agents. "Liza Emory, you are hereby ordered to stand down and be taken into custody." She glanced over at Sarah whose hand was awash in a blue glow. "Mrs. Sapphire, do you really want to betray your country?"

"I'll stand down if you tell your lackeys to back off. Liza is a frightened girl, not a fugitive."

Alivia gave a signal and the agents moved to the other side of the circle and began the process of moving the ever growing crowd of onlookers back.

Sarah and Alivia moved to the side and stood close together. Liza sat down on the pavement, curled up on the ground with her face buried in her knees to avoid being looked at.

"General Douglas wants the Borin wielder prepared and ready for deployment tomorrow. We know that the Borin wielder is implanted with the skills to make her instantly combat ready."

"But she's not mentally ready; look at her." Sarah pointed over to Liza who was now slowly rocking back and forth as she sobbed. "You might as well kill her right now because she's not going to fight for you."

"That's not an option. This is the first time that an American citizen has been selected as a Borin Wielder which means that something supernatural and evil is about to surface here; we need her to fight it."

"But not like this," replied Sarah. "I've known her since she was a baby. If there's anyone who can reach her it's me."

"We can't risk you indoctrinating her with propaganda against us," shot back Alivia.

"I have no choice but to make her fight since all of the heroes are nothing but a bunch of grunts brainwashed to fight against the system and gain real freedom. There would be far less villains running around if there was a choice."

Alivia shifted her eyes and then leaned over and whispered into Sarah's ear, whatever she told her caused Sarah's face to slack in awe. Alivia stood back and subtly shook her head as Sarah nodded in an approving manner.

"Well Mrs. Sapphire, you can accompany Liza back to the local office where her parents are being taken but only under the condition that you won't be any trouble," stated Alivia as if nothing had happened.

"I won't."

Sarah walked over to Liza who looked at her with a red, puffy face that was streaming with tears. Sarah extended her hand. "I've talked with them and they're not going to take you into custody. We're going to the office to meet your parents and get you some clothes that fit. Like it or not you're going to be trained to be a heroine, but the good thing is that I'm going to be the one to train you."

Liza was hesitant at the mention of her parents but Sarah touched her shoulder with a soothing aura that made everything okay. Her face brightened to the point of being almost giddy at the realization that she would be working alongside her idol. She slowly rose to her feet and both her and Sarah stepped into the nearest armored vehicle.