

## Heba: The Elemental

Hello, my name is Heba. People have always told me that I'm different and I guess they're right but I never knew why I was different until now. My name means gift of God and my parents named me that because for a very long time they were thought to be infertile. When my parents delivered the news that they were finally pregnant to my grandmother, she began to cry. She told my parents they were tears of joy but they told me they could feel something was wrong. She said there was a time and a place for life to end and that hers would be ending soon. My parents, of course, comforted her and told her there was nothing to worry about but as my development progressed, so did my grandmother's sickness. My parents tell me the story of my grandmother often and they want me to know as much as I can about her. On the day I was born, we got a call with her time of death. My time of birth was 12:10 pm and my grandmothers' death was just moments before. We believe it was coincidence but I know now that her death and my birth were no coincidence.

I was at school one day and I was doing a math problem on the board when I heard snickering and whispers from a corner of the classroom. I turned around to see who it was but it stopped so I continued writing. I finished quickly and sat back down. I am the highest in my class in math and most of the boys make fun of me and tell me I'm not in my place. I mostly ignored them until that day. I hurried out of the class after the teacher dismissed us and got confronted by three of the tallest and bulkiest boys in my class and one smaller boy. I tried pushing past them but they moved the same with every step I took. They said to me that I was no longer welcome in being in the highest math class in the school and that they would teach me a lesson on how to stay on my place. I tried calling for a teacher but one of the boys covered my mouth. One of them said, "Hold her down and then each of us can show how humiliated we've been. Then she will be the one never wanting to come back to class." I could barely breathe and as one of the boys wound his foot back to kick me I closed my eyes and braced

myself. I imagined myself in an empty field and my thoughts of the boys melted away. After what felt like an eternity, I opened my eyes again. I had never felt the blow of a kick or a punch and I was surprised to see three of them laying on the ground unconscious. I quickly freed myself from the hand of the shortest of the boys and ran out of the corner they had trapped me in. One boy was left there still standing confused. I went and got the closest teacher and told him what had happened. He seemed surprised but called for help from another teacher and went to check on the boys. I ran quietly out of the school. The day was not over yet but as soon as I returned home I explained what had happened to my parents and they fully understood my reason for departing. I stayed in my room and wondered what could possibly be the reason those boys fainted. I lay down on my bed to think more but then the ceiling spun as I slowly drifted off to sleep. I heard a voice yell my name. I could not see it was too dark. suddenly a girl around my age stood in front of me. a light green glow emitted off of all her exposed flesh and she whispered, "You're one of us, Heba."

I was confused and I tried to ask what she meant but she simply said, "Karmen and Robert will come. Make sure you are ready to fight." I could not speak and wondered what she meant. I saw a boy in the background dressed all in black come behind the girl slip a ring on her finger and then take off the same ring. She collapsed and the light from her skin slowly faded away. I heard a voice say, "You're next," and the boy grinned. I awoke with a start and was terribly confused by what my dream meant if it meant anything at all.

I trudged to school the next day expecting the worst. I couldn't believe what had happened and was too afraid to make eye contact with any of the boys in my class. They didn't even seem to notice me that day. Whenever I saw them in the halls they just looked right through me like I wasn't even there. I felt very intimidated when one of the boys looked straight at me. His eyes locked on mine and he grabbed my arm and pulled me into a less busy hallway. He said in a quiet voice, "I'm really sorry for what I did yesterday. I wanted to make it up to you."

This boy looked very familiar and I asked him, "Is your name Tarak? I think we played when we were younger."

"Yes", he said. "I remember you well. You played with us boys and you always kept up." He reached into his pocket and pulled out a small chain. Attached to it was a small figure of the symbol pi. It was masterfully crafted and very smooth. I took it into my hand and studied it for a moment until I noticed I hadn't thanked him. I quickly stuttered out, "Th-thank you, Tarak. It's beautiful." He replied "I worked on it all night. Can I help you put it on?" I nodded and put it around my neck. I pulled up my hair and he clasped it in the back. I thanked him again and asked why he had done this for me. He replied shyly "I was only being mean to you because that's the only way those other boys would be nice to me."

I understood although it would have been nice to be able to tell him that being mean is not the way to make friends with others. I was just glad I had found someone who would be nice to me after all this time of being different. He walked with me through the halls to my next class and when we saw the other boys, they made fun of him for walking with me. One boy said, "So you'd rather be a nerd and be with a girl than be in our group?" Another boy chimed in, "We always knew you were a punk. We just had to see how far you would go before cracking."

A hot rush of blood flooded my face. If they would have said anything like that about me I would simply turn and run but I felt a newfound confidence. I walked right up to the group. There was a new boy with them probably taking the place of Tarak and I went up to him first. I said in a calm yet firm voice, "If someone said those things to you what would you do?" The other boys waited impatiently for his response. Knowing his answer could be the difference between him being the predator or the prey of the school, he replied, "Well I'd punch them and kick them until they either took it back or were out cold."

With a smile on his face, he looked to the other boys to see their approving nods and smiles. I wanted to protect my friend so with a snap of my fingers, the other boys became dizzy and started falling over. All I had to do was put myself in the state of mind that I was in when

they held me. I was afraid yet at peace. When the small boy tried to talk only a high pitched voice came out. he said "Wha-what did you do? What's happening to my voice?" I simply grabbed him by the shirt, brought my mouth very close to his ear and whispered, "That's what happens when you become a bully. The voice in your head, although tiny and often unimportant, comes out and shows who you are trying to be. All the idiotic and mean things you say to or about people just sound ridiculous but you keep saying them anyways to make you feel better about yourself. Go back to the group you belong to. Go back to your real friends before you end up like them." I turn his head to the sprawled out boys on the ground and let go of his shirt. Tarak stood in awe and I simply gripped his hand and pulled him down the hall.

When we arrived his face of surprise had not changed. He asked in a shaky voice, "How did you do that?" I replied, "Well remember yesterday when they were going to hurt me? I just put myself in the same state of mind and the power came easily." His face contorted in confusion and I could almost see the gears grinding in his head trying to piece together what to say next. I didn't know what to say so I stayed silent. When I thought he was going to walk away he turned to me and said, "You're amazing." He placed a small kiss on my cheek and I blushed. I had always thought of Tarak as a strange boy but I knew then he's nothing less than amazing. He walked me home after school and we grew closer with time. I fell to my bed and almost instantly fell asleep that night.

I kept having strange dreams and with every dream came the same names, Karmen and Robert. I didn't know anyone that went by either of those names. I kept sketching their faces on my notebook pages so I wouldn't forget them. Suddenly the teacher called my name. I was afraid she had noticed me while my head was in the clouds. That wasn't the case. She told me someone was here to see me. I gathered my things and headed down the hallway, my mind spinning. Am I in trouble because of those boys? I asked myself. As soon as I got to the small office at the front of the school, I almost fainted. There, in the flesh, stood Karmen and Robert. I couldn't believe my eyes. I rubbed them just to make sure I hadn't dozed off during class. They

were real and not just some figment of my imagination. I walked up to them slowly and carefully. The woman behind the desk asked me if I needed to sit down. I told her I was fine but I knew I was very flush. I looked them both up and down. Karmen, with her boy-short, light brown hair, button nose, beautiful green eyes, and short yet slim stature, and Robert, with his dark brown hair, tan skin, bright blue eyes, and tall stature. Just the way they had appeared in my dreams. The only thing different was that Karmen had different colors of eyes every single time I had a dream about her. Sometimes dark blue, other times brown, or even bright red. I walked up to them and introduced myself even though I was sure they already knew who I was.

Karmen spoke in a soft voice, "It's nice to finally meet you Heba. We have come a very long way to talk with you. I think we have a lot of explaining to do so why don't you come with us?" I looked at them curiously. I had to figure out why they were here and how they knew me so I told the woman at the main desk that I would be back later and followed them out of the doors. We walked to a small coffee shop just down the street and found a table. They both began pouring everything out. Robert sat back most of the time to let Karmen do the talking.

"It all begins with you Heba. You're the first person we need. Have you ever felt like you had some kind of power? Have you ever gotten scared or been in a dangerous situation? Has some kind of power taken over your body?" I thought about the boys at the school and said solemnly, "Yes". She continued, "You're what we call an elemental. Certain families on the earth have a certain element associated with them and your family has the element of helium. The traits are passed down every other generation so your grandmother would have been the last elemental." I thought of my grandmother and how she must've known about the elementals. Karmen continued, "Most elementals don't know they're special until someone or something sets them off." She pulled a piece of paper from her pocket and began reading, "The elemental of helium has the power to, cause dizziness, cause voice change, and become invisible when frightened." Karmen said in a stern voice, "You must use your powers wisely and for good. You can start right now. There is an evil boy named Marcus and he is trying to take over all of the

elementals' powers and use them for evil. He almost took my powers. I'm the elemental of iron. Robert helped me escape and has been protecting me ever since." She shot a happy glance at Robert and he smiled at her. "Robert and I need to travel all over the world to convince different elementals to come with us and you are our first." She stopped and I spoke before she explained any more. "I need to say goodbye to my family and friends if that's ok." Karmen's face softened. She said, "This is going to be a dangerous task. Marcus is a very powerful wizard and you may not come back. We are going to train you so your powers enhance but Marcus could always be stronger than us." I said with my brow set, "I've known enough terrible people in my life to know what it takes to stop one. We'll stop him, Karmen. We have to. Whatever it takes, I'm going to fight. I've been fighting all my life. Because of my gender, because of my intelligence, because of my family, because of my school, What's one more fight in my endless fight of life?" Karmen smiled at me and looked to Robert. They spoke in a language I could not understand but finally, they both said, "Welcome to the fight, Heba the elemental."

2487 Words This short story is part of the novel I'm writing. The title is in progress.