



FOUR POETS

**THE TALE OF FOUR  
TALENTS**

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Part Two  
Prose

# Spis treści

**Wstęp**

**Liwia Mazurczak:**

„War and love- a Tale of Sorcery and Passion”,

„The Battle of Sorcerers. The Beginning of a New Era”,

„The Tale of Time. The War of the Children of Time”.

**Recenzje**





# Wstęp

Wszystkie opowiadania Liwii są jej oryginalną i własną twórczością.

Zostały opublikowane w wersji oryginalnej. Nie powstały jako zadanie domowe, prace zlecone, czy na szkolny konkurs. Powstały z potrzeby duszy i pasji.

Liwia jest członkiem szkolnego programu dla młodzieży uzdolnionej – „Liga Mistrzów”.





“

**The Tale of Time**  
The War of the Children of Time

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*By Liwia Mazurczak*

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## From the beginning

*Ab initio*



Since the beginning of time, magic existed in everything that had been created by time itself. There was no being or deity that had created Temporaesia, she had just come to exist. The beings of this world were called Temporals- they were the Children of time. They had emerged from within time eternities ago and settled upon the land. They lived in peace for only time knows how long, united as one, until they discovered they had gifts. Over centuries, the Temporals began to understand their powers more and more, finally separating themselves into kingdoms. Each kingdom lived in harmony with the others, sharing knowledge and celebrating the harvest and seasons of the year. After some time, the Sortigers- or Augurs, as some called them- started hearing the stars and time whispering into their minds. Time was calling for a ruler and the stars were blessing a Temporal with the power. The Sortigers called the kingdoms for an oracular gathering, where they told the Temporals of time's will. The beings of Temporaesia rejoiced at the news of time contacting them and embraced their King with such hope and joy that the stars even shone brighter from their happiness. The King's descendants were blessed with prophecies of their own, and some of the other common Temporals of the kingdoms too. Each kingdom had a fair ruler, whom was chosen by Sortigers, Spiritari and Tesaegorans.

These three types of Temporal beings were the "Fair Three" of Temporaesia. The Sortigers or Augurs were the seers of the realm, they could speak to time and the stars, see the past, present and future and could read them from objects, nature, beings and spirits, they also had a mystical connection to the Aether and its inhabitants. They belonged to the kingdom of Auguresia. The Spiritari were the Spirit Tongues of the kingdom, for they were halfway in Temporaesia and halfway in the Aether- the place where the spirits went and Temporals passed to after they died. The Spiritari could touch and speak to spirits, they would guide them to the Aether, where the spirits would exist in utopia. The Spiritari were Secret Keepers chosen by the spirits at the age of five and then taught all the secrets of time and eternities, some of them were chosen to be taught celestial secrets too. When the Spiritari were ready, they were blessed and given a power no-one else had. They belonged to the kingdom of Susurroustenia. The Tesaegorans, however, were blessed with time's knowledge gathered over the eternities. They could think up various technologies, philosophies and other complicated things that the other beings couldn't. They were the diplomats and rational thinkers of Temporaesia. Their jobs were usually of architects, philosophers, diplomats,



blacksmiths and engineers. They could read minds, intentions and access memories from objects they touched. They belonged to the kingdom of Tesaegora. The “*Fair Three*” would work together to test a possible future ruler. The Sortigers would see the future of the kingdom and candidate by touching their hand. The Spiritaeri would speak to the spirits and hear secrets about the being they touched. They used their special power to see if the candidate was worthy of the throne. The Tesaegorans read the mind, intentions and memories of the to-be ruler of Temporaesia. When the successor to the throne passed the Oracular Trial they were the rightful King or Queen of Temporaesia. This practice went on for eternities, without any mistakes, rebellions or wars. The “*Fair Three*” were never mistaken. However, slowly, dark times were rising on the horizon of Temporaesia, times, which would be spoken of for infinities to come.

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The chant of an old, folk song filled the smoke-filled air surrounding the Temporals that had gathered around the immense fire. It was tradition for the Temporals of each kingdom to sing, eat and tell stories of how time had created the world surrounding them. The wisest and most powerful Temporal in each of the kingdoms would tell the children and elders stories and tales of all sorts. In the kingdom of Cehylia the yearly Enlightenment was taking place. It was a night where all the Cehylials would meet in the Astra Quadratus- the Star Square. The Enlightenment was the night that all Cehylials who had been destined a prophecy would finally learn what their fate was. The children ran around the Astra Quadratus, chasing each other and stealing cakes.

They would run up to the nearby pond and douse each other with water from it.

The Elders laughed at their antics. In Temporaesia, Elders were the grown-ups who had fully tamed their powers. The general age of fully controlling powers was twenty. Some Temporals- such as Ignistaeans or Infernos as some called them, would harness their powers later on. This happened because of the sheer force and difficulty in gaining full control over their powers- they were not only dangerous, but incredibly wild too.



# **The Battle of Sorcerers**

## **The Beginning of a New Era**

*By Liwia Mazurczak*



"And now, women and Sorcerers, the great, the wonderful, the *invincible* Sorcerer of Traegoris!" the voice of the Eldest Sorcerer echoed throughout the dark woods. A cacophony of cries enveloped the dark clearing.

It was rather fortunate that the nearest humans- or Mortals, as they were called by the Sorcerers- lived on the next island. There was a slim-to-none chance one would stumble upon them and create chaos among the Mortals and Sorcerers alike. The night was still rather young and the Sorcerers and their magic women were still decently sober after all the celebrating.

It was New Year's Eve- or, as the Sorcerers called it, the Astral Renewal- which meant the beginning of a new year and, perhaps, a new era. The magic people were sorted into two categories- the women, who had powers but were never allowed to hone them to their full extent, unless in the field of home skills, such as cleaning, cooking and healing. They were frightened into obedience by the males of their kind and over the years, centuries, brainwashed into being some sort of slaves to them.

And then there were the males- the Sorcerers, the *mighty and powerful*, the *rulers of the world*. The *only* ones who mattered in their eyes. The women were *lucky* to be able to serve them food, to clean, to be in their presence. It was an *honour* for them. They were also the only ones allowed to take part in any magical tournament, to hunt, to learn, to cast spells, enchantments, read books of higher knowledge than how to correctly and efficiently clean the stains out of clothes and how to make the burns on pots disappear.

They were superior to the weaker gender.

And that was what would be their downfall- their **ignorance**.

Their *complete* and *utter* **ignorance**.

Because they were in for a surprise this Astral Renewal- and it wasn't a pleasant one.

They could be sure of that.

\*◦☾◦\*

The forest was silent.

*Too* silent.

And that was never a good sign.

The wind wasn't howling, the trees weren't swaying, the birds weren't even moving. Something was wrong. *Very, very* wrong. It could've been the forest watching, waiting for something to happen. It could've been that it was just a calm night, unlike the numerous before it. It may of been the world, forest, time holding their breaths in anticipation for what would happen shortly.







The figure was walking stealthily through the pitch-black forest, their bottle-green cloak gliding over the mossy, damp forest floor. The mist was beginning to embrace them like an old bestfriend, effectively hiding them from prying eyes and dangers that lurked in the depths of the woodland.

These were perilous times to wander about in the vast forest. All sorts of creatures slunk through these ancient woods, seeking out their next prey. Mother forbid someone was found outside of the village- they were accused of conspiring with Mortals or the Darklings. Darklings were dark Sorcerers, who dabbled in the dark magic. They were Sorcerers made of pure Evil, sacrificing Mortals, Sorcerers and animals alike. They spared no-one.

It was an extreme risk for the figure to be walking through these woods by themselves, unarmed except for the bow and arrow strapped to their back and small dagger stashed somewhere in their cloak. The chant of an ancient song drifted through the surrounding trees, echoing off grand oaks and deflecting off the waters of a nearby lake.

The sound was a pleasant distraction from the deadly silence of the misty forest. The figure kept creeping towards the direction of the chanting. Breaths calm, controlled. Eyes set, focused. Body aware, prepared to fight if need be. Ears and senses alert to every sound, every movement.

The calm, cold breath of the figure blended into the surrounding mist. A strand of chestnut hair fell down in front of one of their bright-green eyes. The cloaked person didn't even move, didn't even bat an eyelash. One, single miscalculated move and they could be seen, unmasked- *dead*.

That couldn't happen- would *not* happen. They wouldn't allow it. The cloaked shadow waited, watched, listened. Still, unmoving. Wary, alert.

Now all they had to do was wait.

\*◦☾◦\*

"And now, women and Sorcerers, the great, the wonderful, the *invincible* Sorcerer of Traegoris!" The cheers of delight flooded the woods surrounding the clearing. The fire situated in the middle illuminated the many faces of the magic people, their wide smiles a telltale sign of the marvelous battle that would begin.

"Which of you will dare challenge the invincible Sorcerer? The eldest Sorcerer bellowed at the spectators. Murmurs of excitement circulated round the clearing, making the air around them spark with electricity.

"I will!"

"I will!"

"No, I shall!"

"Don't be daft, you can't even conjure a stick!"

"Yeah I can!"

"I will!"

"Let me!"



"It'll be an honour!"

"Let me!"

"Alright, alright, calm down please! Calm down!" The Elder called, silencing the excited young Sorcerers as well as some of the more respected and experienced of them.

"The Sorcerer of Traegoris shall duell with each and every one of you. Rest assured!" A murmur of agreement sounded from the Sorcerers' throats.

"Now, let the tournament begin!"

Many tried to win with the Invincible Sorcerer. None, however, accomplished what they had set their minds on. The Elder laughed a jolly, deep laugh, amused at the fools who had tried to achieve the impossible.

"As you can see, the Sorcerer is rightly called invincible. Is there anyone else brave and foolish enough to compete with him? Is there?" A moment of silence passed and no-one volunteered.

"Well then, he is the-"

"I am."

Two words, one second, not a single sound.

The Sorcerer smirked at the cloaked figure. Their face was clouded in shadow from the hood, posture confident, voice unwavering. It was hard to tell who this figure could be, no doubt a charm or spell to fool the others, but that didn't stop the Sorcerer from accepting the challenge.

"And why would I duell you? You'll probably- no, wait, let me rephrase that- you'll definitely end up like the rest." The male jested the enigma in front of him.

"First to draw blood wins." The figure stated, taking off their bow and arrow and throwing it across the clearing. They threw the dagger at the Sorcerer, making him widen his eyes in surprise. It sunk into the bark of the oak just near his throat.

"Or are you afraid?"

The Sorcerer snapped.

"Bring it on."

The Elder created a circle of fire around the two duellers. The figure closed their eyes and took a deep breath. The beating of their heart thudded in their ears, the rush of energy, electricity, pure, powerful, deadly magic coursed through their veins, rushed through their body. The soft chant of nature passed through them.

Their eyes snapped open.

Bright-green, deadly eyes glared at the figure before them, with such fury, that even the Darklings would have been terrified. It was the sort of fury that would make a king doubt duelling with this figure. Yet, the Sorcerer standing before them was oblivious. His *ignorance* would be the end of him- it would be the end of them all.

The Sorcerer smirked, egoism oozing off of him in waves. *Well, this will be fun.* The cloaked person thought.



The Sorcerer attacked first, sending daggers at his opponent. The cloaked figure only raised a hand and clasped it into a fist, causing the daggers to stop and turn into dust. They turned their hand- two fingers pointing upwards- and caused a whirlwind to encase their opponent. The male began fighting against the force, sending spells and enchantments, until they were thrown across the ring of fire.

The rage written across his face was evident.

"I will kill you for that." His voice was low, deadly.

"I'd like to see you try." Was the reply.

The Sorcerer conjured snakes, giant, venomous snakes that could kill a whole army. His smile was triumphant when they began to sliver up the figures arms. The figure, however, knelt down and whispered something to the snakes. They hissed and turned towards him. He began backing away, began panicking. He began to burn them.

Amber flames sprouted out of his hands, turning the snakes to ashes. He laughed manically whilst doing so. The figure stood unimpressed. Raising their arms they conjured an enormous amber, crimson, hellfire snake. It lunged at him, burning his clothes, hair, skin. He desperately tried shielding himself with a water spell, cries of pain escaped his mouth, beads of sweat began trickling down his face. His shirt was soaked with his sweat and tears.

Suddenly it stopped.

He fell to the ground, gasping for air, trying- and failing miserably- to get up, fight back.

"You filth- filthy, wor- worthless piece of s.....t." He rasped out.

The figure walked towards him. Looked down. Scoffed.

**Pathetic.** They thought.

"This isn't the en-" He began choking on his own blood. Gasps rang out from the magic people. Terror filled their eyes. The Sorcerers were speechless.

The defeated Sorcerer began coughing up his very own blood violently, painfully. The hand of the cloaked figure's hand didn't falter. Their fist kept closing ever tighter, drawing more blood with each second.

They stopped.

The man lay upon the ground convulsing, gasping for air.

"Look at me." The figure demanded. He did as he was told.

"All of you look at me." Hundreds of eyes looked at the figure. They slowly took the cloak's hood off.

The shocked yelps and deep inhales of breath could be heard, the Sorcerers were furious, the women were confused, children gaped in wonder, terror. A commotion started.

And then there was silence.

Caused by the sharp wave of a hand of the figure standing in the middle of the ring of fire.



It was a woman. A very young woman at that. Chestnut, wavy hair pulled back in a loose braid, emerald eyes framed with thick, long lashes, lips red like blood. Her skin was a light golden, her posture proud. She wasn't tall, but she demanded attention, power cascaded off her, choked anyone that stood too close.

She looked down at the pathetic man lying at her feet, bloodied, sweaty, covered in grime.

"First to draw blood wins." She smirked at him and stepped over him out of the circle.

"What do you want?!" A Sorcerer yelled at her.

"Who are you?" Another asked.

"You can take our women, just leave us alone, take the children too!" Another bellowed. He dropped to the floor convulsing, writhing in pain, feeling the burn of imaginary flames.

"I am here to free every woman and child from your grasp. I am here, to take them somewhere safe, teach them, look after them. I am here-" She paused. Looked around, scanned the surrounding her people. She smiled. An evil, malicious smile.

"- to kill all of you."

And that is when all hell broke loose.

\* ◦ ☾ ◦ \*

She stepped over the lifeless bodies of the Sorcerers. Face impassive, eyes void of any emotion. She looked at the children and women she had saved from their grasp. None of them had been hurt or died. Apart from one.

She knelt down before the lifeless woman's body and gently stroked her face. She had been a mother. Had left her child behind because of a cruel man, who had used her as leverage- he had promised to let her go had she stopped the attack. So she did.

He killed her anyway.

"I'm sorry. I am so, so sorry." She whispered to the woman. She heard footsteps behind her.

"Her name was-" The girl began, she couldn't of been older than fourteen.

"Go on." She smiled at the girl, a genuine, encouraging smile.

"Her name was Meleeya."

The Sorceress looked down at the woman in her arms, smiled gently at her and whispered, "Goodbye, Meleeya, sister. I may not have known you but you didn't deserve what you got. I'll take care of your child. Don't worry."

With that she lay the woman down, closed her eyes, healed the wounds on her body and began chanting. A song so low and melancholy a tear fell from her eye. The other women joined in, held hands and chanted. Flowers began blooming around them, slowly covering Meleeya and glowing a bright, blinging light meaning that Mother of nature had embraced her.

The Sorceress stood up. Looked at the women surrounding her, the terrified children.



"You will be safe with me, no-one shall ever beat you, hurt you, kill you or treat you like you were treated before. You are free, you may leave, go wherever you want by yourselves, or join me and never get hurt again."

The women looked at her with wonder. Admiration. A little girl walked towards her shyly and asked, "So, am I no longer going to be hit for trying to learn magic or read those pretty books my brother can read?"

The Sorceress smiled at her sadly, eyes filled with tears.

"No, you won't. You are going to be allowed to learn any magic you want and read all the books you could possibly ever want to."

The girl smiled and handed her a flower.

"For you, my saviour. I had dreamt of you coming."

The woman accepted the flower from her, a white rose, and spoke to everyone standing.

"From now on, we begin a new Era." The women nodded to each other, murmuring agreements and thanks to the Mother.

"We will be the Sorceresses, the Daughters of Mother and the most fearless, powerful Magics of all time. Men will fear us, respect us."

"We will fight."



# ·characters·



**Catharaes Estrendaea Draegonae**

**(Ka-ta-rays · Es-trend-ay-uh · D-ray-gon-ay)**

**Non ducor, duco.**

*I am not led, I lead.*



**Theon Bellastar Endraytum**

**(Th-ee-on · Bel-la-star · En-dray-tum)**

**Non timebo mala.**

*I will fear no evil.*

**Daemonis Infernae Caedes**

**(Day-mon-is · In-fer-nay · Kay-duh-s)**

**Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta  
movebo.**

*If I cannot move Heaven, I will raise Hell.*



**Karyhlis Aesmerta Tumalah**

**(Kar-ill-is · Es-mer-tah · Too-mah-lah)**

**Astra inclinant, sed non obligant.**

*The stars incline us, they do not bind us*

**Conroyel Iskael Sophosatum**

**(Con-roy-el · Is-kay-el · So-fo-say-tum)**

**Cogito ergo sum.**

*I think, therefore I am.*



**Sorcerer of Darkness**

**(Sor-s-ur-er · o-f · Dark-ness)**

**Oderint dum metuant.**

*Let them hate, so long as they fear.*

**Sic semper tyrannis.**  
*Thus always to tyrants.*



Screams and shrieks echoed down the dark, deserted corridor. The intricately carved columns of white marble climbing ever higher towards the ceiling, creating archways and lapping onto each other. The walls were smashed, covered in blood, dirt and dust. The once breathtaking castle was now anything but. The stench of death had seeped into it, stuck to the walls, the hallways, drowning the castle's inhabitants in its overwhelming presence, sucking the life, the light from their eyes. The cries that danced down the bloodied corridors stuck daggers in the inhabitants- or what was left of them. The screams enough to suffocate them. The shrieks so horribly loud that nothing would be able to drown them out. They would then linger in their minds, creep up on them at night and try to suffocate them while they slept. The insufferable cries stopped suddenly. And all of a sudden, they'd have preferred they hadn't. For it was the knowledge of the fact that the person, who had been denying what had happened, had inevitably come to realise what took place. And it was the knowledge, that that very person was grieving the death of their father.

And mother.

And her two brothers.

And her newborn sister.

It was the pain etched into her face, the excruciating, burning pain that she wore upon it, that made the maids and soldiers grieve with her. Cry with her. Scream with her.

Mourn with her.

It was that pain which made them feel what she did. However, that pain was nothing like the agony they saw in her eyes.

Her eyes- her eyes were the real reason you would die inside. They were the eyes that showed you all the terrors and fears of the world. They were the reason poets wrote about pain, about death, about the torment they felt inside. It was the fear, the sheer and utter fear children wore upon their innocent faces when they ran shrieking to their mothers about the monster under their bed. It was the fear of the girls that would run through the woods or streets as fast as they could, so as to not become victims of men that had lust in their eyes and evil in their hearts.

It was the fear mothers had when they saw their child in danger. It was the terror of a husband when he was sent out to fight in a war, knowing he may never see his wife or children again. It was the pain and fear when a woman or man of colour felt, when they were about to be beaten senseless by a tyrant, who thought they were lesser than him, which was a false and disgusting lie shared by brainless drunks.

It was such a deep and terrifying suffering that the castle help feared for her sanity. They had seen more than once a person go mad from the grief and anguish they felt. They couldn't bare to see her end up in such a way.

The girl, no older than eighteen, lay upon the lifeless body of her mother, sobbing into her bloodied chest, not caring whether the blood stained her clothes, her skin.

She wept into her mother's ripped clothes, shaking erratically through her cries, gasping at the air around her.

A soldier tried to take the lifeless body of her father away, to save her the view of his slit throat and burnt eyes. She lunged at him, ripping him to the ground with her, screaming curses and attempting



to strangle him. The guards and maids began prying her away from him, the guard terrified of what she had just done, catching his breath. She flailed and screamed and smashed objects, her eyes mad, wide. She ran over to her brothers, cradling their bodies. Their frail, pale bodies lay limply in her arms, their five and seven year old faces scratched and bruised. She searched the room madly, until her sight landed on her newborn sister, practically crushed by the stampede of men that had rushed into the room during the fight. She crawled towards her, picking her up gently and rocking her back and forth, singing a lullaby gently. In her state of madness she saw her baby sister laughing up at her, blinking those beautiful, sky-blue eyes at her. It was a memory though and her shocked, grief-stricken mind fooled itself to think it was reality. She lay her sister down and whispered sweet nothings to her, getting up and looking around.

Where was her mother? She was lying right ther-

A shriek escaped her lungs as she lunged at the maids who had tried to take her mother away in order to prepare her body to rest in one of the orchards. She ripped at their clothes, hair, scratched their faces, clutched their necks tightly. The soldiers and guards began prying her off, others checking on the maids. This went on for a rather long time, the screams and struggle getting more ferocious and powerful with each passing second.

"SILENCE!" A voice boomed out from the open doorway, the old man's eyes staring at the guards. The girl began trying rip out of their grasp so as to attack him.

"Let her go."

"But, Sir, she will attac-"

"I said, let her go." The man repeated calmly. And so they did.

The girl ran towards him in her mad state, her clothes soaked in blood, her bright-green eyes burning with an anger and hatred only rabid animals could muster. Her hair soaked in blood and sticking in an unruly manner. She leapt towards him.

The man raised the palm of his hand towards his lips and blew the powder sitting upon it towards her. The girl dropped to the floor. Her body unmoving.

The silence that enveloped the people was suffocating.

"Is- is she- is she- d-dead?" A terrified maid asked.

"No, Amber, she is very much alive. I just made her sleep. She will hopefully have calmed down and started rationally thinking again by the time she wakes up." The man told her, his old, slightly wheezy voice soothing their nerves.

"Now, since we have gotten rid of the slight obstacle," he gestured to the unconscious girl, "we can take the deceased and get them ready for the funeral. We shall let her say goodbye to them when she is sane and ready, until that time, please do clean a little and perhaps get yourself food and rest. Thank you all, and I'm glad you are alive."

With that he asked the guards to take the girl's body to her chambers and to guard her. One inside, one outside and to let him know when anything happens. They bowed in respect, which the old man

chuckled at and told them to not be so official and that he should be bowing to them, since they had very valiantly fought in the battle. With that, he sauntered off down the hallway.



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**Dolor.**

*Grief, sorrow, heartache.*

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Her eyes fluttered open. The dimly lit room seemed vaguely familiar, confusion evident on her face, her mind blank, she scanned it with her eyes. Something was off. She could almost smell it. The energy surrounding her was grim, dark, almost like it was sucking all of her will to live out of her.

The door opened.

Her eyes flitted towards the figure standing in the doorway, a wave of recognition swept over her. Her eyes teared up, a small, sad smile played onto her face. He walked towards her, his wise eyes twinkling, sadness evident in them, a small smile crinkling his eyes and mouth at the edges.

"How are you, Princess Catharaes?" He asked gently, sitting on the chair near her bed, his aged, withered hand rested upon the intricately carved armrest. His unruly, ginger beard streaked with white here and there added to his age. He must've been at least one hundred years old based on his knowledge and appearance.

"Please, Advisor Conroyel, do call me Catharaes, there is no need to be so official."

The old Advisor smiled. He was the Royal Advisor, once to the King, now to her- the future Queen. He was wise, yes, but he knew she wasn't ready for the news that she was now to be Queen. She was barely eighteen- still a *child*. She should of had more time to prepare, to laugh and enjoy her youth, to be free a while longer.

And now here she lay, so serious and suddenly aged by ten years - not by appearance, but by her demeanor. Her eyes were confused, scared, she looked like a lost girl in the body of a woman. He had to tell her of her parents, brothers and sister.

"Do you-" he paused uncertainly, calmly looking at her. She looked at him curious, so he continued. "Do you remember what happened?" He asked tentatively.

Her large, emerald eyes stared at him, she shook her head slightly, her incredibly long, dark-hazel hair lightly reflecting the amber flames of the floating balls of light that surrounded the room. They seemed golden in the lighting.

"You were coming back from the ride you went on, when I sent a soldier to warn you and take you away from everything. To keep you safe." She nodded at him, she remembered that part. "Then, the rival army came in." He gulped and his eyes glazed over, this was hard for him- oh the *things* he saw.

"They stormed in, killing women, men, *children*. I saw them doing unspeakable things, they burnt the grounds, they set the castle on fire, slaughtered anyone in sight, drowning, suffocating." His voice wavered at the end, he lowered it to barely a whisper.

"They used dark magic, Catharaes, they raped the women- even children some of them, then killed them. They used dark magic to poison the air, to burn the blood in their veins. They stormed in looking for you, your mother, father, brothers and sister. I didn't let them. I didn't let them. I fought in every possible way I could. They wanted you though- they wanted *you* the most."

Tears streamed down the girl's face. She knew where this was going, but she had to hear it, know it, feel it.

"I believe you, Conroyel, you are a good man, *I believe you*." She whispered. The old man gave her a pained smile.

"They threw me aside, slammed the door open and went in. Then they-" his words caught in his throat. He gulped, a tear falling down his aged face.

"Then they took the Queen- your mother- and her children. They captured your father- the King- after. The rivals-" he spat on the floor, as if the words were acid burning his throat, "those disgusting, evil, spawns of the devil rounded them up in the ballroom, they tortured them for information about where you were. They wanted to-"

Silence, his strangled breaths in the air, the old man's pain emanating onto her. She sat up, her feet dangling off the edge of the bed, her mid-thigh length hair fanned out on the covers. She looked at the man before her- the once cheerful and cheeky Advisor was now a shell of the person before. It was obvious to her that he couldn't get over the death of all those people.

"Conroyel." She called softly- nothing. "Conroyel." Nothing. "Conroyel Iskael Sophosatum, I demand you look at me now." The man looked up, as if woken from his reverie.

"You are the wisest, kindest and most honourable man I have ever met- you are like a dear, old friend of mine, just like you were to my father." She looked at him with sincere honesty, not an ounce of blame in her eyes or face.

"You are- forgive me- an old man. You do not have such powers and abilities as some of the people in this castle. You are a healer and Advisor- you do not fight, for you have never been trained. You heal, you advise, you teach. You do not fight." She took his hand in hers. "I do not blame you for the death of my family." Her forest-green eyes holding golden specks from the light, "I thank you though for being loyal to the end, for trying to save them."

She paused.

"For bringing me out of my madness."

"It was nothing, your Highness." He bowed his head.

"Oh please do stop, call me Catharaes or Thara- although I would prefer dear friend." She smiled at him sincerely, trying to lift his mood. The old man chuckled. She was so kind and strong, good material for a Queen, he thought.

"Now, could you please call the maids and everyone who was present during my loss of sanity? I would like to apologise to them all."

"Of course, dearest friend." He smiled her way as he stood up and began leaving the room.

"Oh and Conroyel," The Advisor turned around, "please prepare the funeral."

The man nodded, sorrow taking over his face. "Of course." And with that he was gone.

The funeral was sombre. It was neither grand nor extravagant, it wasn't official or private- it was open to everyone, just like Catharaes asked for it to be. She wanted this to be simple, so that everyone willing to pay the respects would be able to- rich or poor, man or woman, no matter where they were from or how they looked.

The whole kingdom came. Even the elders who had trouble travelling wanted to send off their good and fair King and Queen, as well as their barbarically killed children. The whole kingdom was grieving. This was a tragedy that touched all. The Royal family had always been open to their people. They would travel through the kingdom every few weeks, listening directly to problems and helping where they could. They were always kind and caring, never thought of themselves as superior, but as equals to them. They had been trusted with the safety and respect of their subjects and they were honoured to fulfill the duty as their King and Queen.

"Excuse me, your Royal Highness, I would just like to-"

"Catharaes."

"P -pardon me?" A confused woman, who looked like a mother, asked the Princess.

"I am sorry for confusing you, please call me by my name, I am Catharaes and you are?"

"Oh, I am Saleema, your R-" she coughed a little, in an attempt to cover up what she was about to say, "Catharaes." She smiled at the Royal before her. "I am very sorry for your loss, I cannot even imagine what you are going through now, please, accept this gift." She took out a necklace.

It was made out of leather string and the pendant was a steel circle, half of the circle was a crescent moon made of white opal, which had tiny rainbow sparks when the light hit off it. Next to the crescent moon was a star. It was a sapphire that had been shaped into one. The necklace was beautiful.

"Oh, I cannot take this, this is too much, dear Saleema."

"Of course you can, it is a good luck charm. I found the sapphire in an old, abandoned mine. I wanted to give it to her Majesty the Queen when she would visit my village, but..."

"But she died." Catharaes finished for her, the woman teared up. "Thank you, the necklace is very beautiful and it must of taken you a very long time to make this." Saleema smiled at her, face brightening up.

The funeral was depressing, the skies rained down upon them, the weeps and cries of the mourning people adding to the somber atmosphere. Catharaes stayed strong throughout it though- she had to. She had to for her people.

When everyone deserted, she stayed in front of the graves, looking, thinking, grieving. She choked on her tears, eventually they fell down her face mixing with the rain. Her body was becoming numb, her mind faraway. She wished she could swap places with them.

"I'm sorry." She whispered to the flower encased graves. "I'm so, so sorry mum."



"I'm sorry dad. And Sebastian and Lucaen. I'm sorry Delmira." She choked out.

Her knees gave way and she began sobbing on the muddy ground, her black dress stained with the dirt, soaked. Her hair turned black due to the rain and suddenly she started to scream. She screamed with such anger and pain and so many emotions that the birds flew out of the trees, cawing. Her scream was so powerful that the magic within her exploded like a cannonball, making the fruit trees around her to lose their fruit and some of their leaves. She wept and screamed and pounded the ground with her fists until she could no more and her body gave way to the exhaustion.

*Damn him.* She thought.

*Damn him and his family and all his people. Suffer. Suffer a pain so insufferable you wish you could die- but you won't, because I will have no mercy on you, just like you had no mercy towards me.*

She laughed, an evil, mad laugh.

*You will beg for death, and I shall not grant it, you shall burn in the pits of Hellfire and you will suffer for all of eternity. I will make sure of it.*

She stood up, slipping on the soaked ground and began walking towards the castle.





# Reviews

dr Agnieszka Mobley

Filologia Angielska, Uniwersytet Zielonogórski

Liwia Mazurczak's short stories may be regarded as a sort of trilogy contemplating the nature of war. While the predominant theme seems to be the same, the utilized literary conventions impressively vary. "The Battle of Sorcerers: The Beginning of a New Era" oscillates around romantic, or rather dark romantic, trends, with incorporation of magical, supernatural elements and a crucial role of nature. "War and love-a Tale of Sorcery and Passion" is constructed as a cause-and-effect narrative. The two stages, though very common, are approached in a novel manner. The cause is depicted by straightforward, realistic graphic imagery, portraying brutality of war filtered through a third-person gaze. The musings of the effects of war introduce the main character by the same narrative technique, but the details are expressed through dialogues and stream of consciousness.





Simultaneously, the author has a promising potential to master ambiguity. On the one hand, in “The Battle of Sorcerers: The Beginning of a New Era”, the plot represents the shift in roles. Domineering patriarchy is challenged by extraordinary female power. The transition from oppression to liberation comes through. On the other hand, instead of the sense of pure salvific glory, “shocked yelps and deep inhales of breath could be heard, the Sorcerers were furious, the women were confused, children gaped in wonder, terror.” The reactions of women and children particularly take the reader aback. After all, the questions may arise: “Has male violence been replaced by female violence? Has oppressive patriarchy been replaced by oppressive matriarchy? Has the object of oppression become a subject of oppression? In “War and love- a Tale of Sorcery and Passion,” on the one hand, the storyline seems very obvious: the massacre of the family, agonizing response, funeral and mourning, conscious embrace of loss. On the other hand, the survivor, who is the main character, manages to perform strength when needed, repeats “I’m sorry,” which can be the expression of either sorrow or remorse, and mysteriously “laughed, an evil, mad laugh”, which can be the articulation of either madness or satisfaction of a corrupt individual.





As far as the form is concerned, the descriptive tone of “The Tale of Time: The War of the Children of Time” impressively corresponds with mythic narratives or biblical Genesis. The author skillfully reconstructs the world order, paradise-like realm that is going to be challenged and verified by an impending disaster. The title of the short story functions as foreshadowing of the demise of the current order. Combined with the predominant content of the narrative, it heralds the approaching inter-generational conflict.







# Prof. Mirosław Pawlak

## UAM w Poznaniu

### War and love- a Tale of Sorcery and Passion

A very well written and well-thought out story!!! I am truly impressed and would be happy to read more 😊

#### The Tale of Time

The War of the Children of Time

A fascinating short story. I am really impressed by the language and the ability to come up with such ideas!!! Perhaps you are considering becoming a writer in the future?;) )

#### The Battle of Sorcerers

The Beginning of a New Era

I simply love this story!!! Great ideas and great language. I do not think that many of my students would be capable of such a masterpiece 😊 Sincere congratulations 😊





## Gabriela Reigh

Curriculum Manager for English Language and Literature  
The Sixth Form College Farnborough, Wielka Brytania

### **To all the authors:**

'The students have demonstrated excellent linguistic skills as well as impressive creativity in their work on these poems. It is not easy to balance study for exams with extra-curricular activities so the effort they have put into this task speaks volumes about their hard work, motivation and enthusiasm for their studies. Moreover, they have proved that cultural and artistic exchange between different countries is still vitally important to this future generation'

I enjoyed reading their work and both their use of English and ideas are very impressive.

Pass on my congratulations to your students for their great efforts :)





# dr Beata Kouhan

Koordinator szkolnego programu dla młodzieży uzdolnionej „Liga Mistrzów”

Outstandingly outlined series of stories which pierce the heart directly.

The stories are filled with wonders!





Dziękujemy  
i  
Gratulujemy

ŻYCZYMY  
WSZELKICH  
SUKCESÓW!