

# Legend of the Dragon Soul

## Book 2 of the Shadow Dragon Saga

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*Complete summary including spoilers.*



Kess despises the claustrophobic caves of the Undercity, where she and her wolf companion, Griskin, struggle to navigate the city and search for Dracuni, the young dragon she desperately wants to steal.

Kess dreams of becoming a dragon rider and is determined to find Riony and her dragon hatchling. She and Griskin stealthily move through alleys and rooftops, avoiding the city's busy areas.

Griskin would normally be able to follow the scent of their prey, but spores from the mushroom farms have his sense of smell acting up. While Kess works on tools and sedatives to capture Dracuni, she overhears a child talking about Riony, a new delver, leading her closer to her goal.

Riony's first official day as a delver starts chaotically when one of Lyrrin's crystal rune experiments explodes. Dracuni, growing quickly and now the size of a medium dog, is spooked, and Riony scrambles to extinguish the flames before rushing to work.

Lyrrin wants to show her an experiment that does work but Riony is late. Despite her worries about leaving Dracuni and Lyrrin alone, Riony is eager to start earning for a better life and perhaps a safer home for them all. She hopes her role as a delver will provide that stability.

On her way to join the delvers, Riony is reminded of the suffering in the city and wonders if her unique bond with Dracuni could eventually help heal others.

The Hjelzahn siblings (Aishena, Yoskar, and Benjin) are with the delver group, and the delver leader Brishan pulls them aside for a private discussion and it is clear he knows they are secretly dragon king heirs. Riony talks to her new delver friend Niskina, Brishan's daughter.

Once assigned to explore a tunnel with Aishena, Riony's inexperience and recklessness causes trouble when she attempts to open a jammed door and accidentally triggers a trap and a cave-in.

Though she narrowly escapes harm, her actions leave the team with a tough clean-up and a stern warning from Brishan. This setback hits hard, and her place in the delvers' ranks is at risk.

Riony heads home, feeling ashamed and dejected. But on her way, she senses Dracuni's distress—a faint mental link that feels like fear. Lyrrin then finds Riony, told Riony had been injured while delving. Riony realizes it was a trick to get Dracuni alone who is now in danger.

They race home and see Kess fleeing through the caverns with Dracuni, sedated and bound.

Lyrrin throws a flash bomb she's created as an experiment that disorients Kess and forces her deeper into the tunnels, away from the exit, but also hurts Riony's eyes as well. Riony sends Lyrrin to find help while she steels herself to face Kess alone.

Lyrrin approaches the Delvers, including siblings Aishena, Yoskar, and Benjin, asking for help to track down Kess, who has stolen something valuable from them and fled into the depths. Aishena and Yoskar, who owe Riony a favor, agree to assist, and a group of delvers join them despite Lyrrin's reluctance to involve more people.

The siblings, protective of Benjin after a previous kidnapping, bring him along for safety. Brishan insists Niskina, his daughter, join them to learn responsibility, despite her reluctance to be a delver.

The team follows Lyrrin to where Kess was last seen, an unstable area full of booby traps. They catch up with Riony and Kess who are facing off against each other in a dead end, but still both struggling to see.

Griskin begins scratching at a cracked wall, which Aishena warns could trigger a collapse. In the confusion, Riony tackles Kess off her wolf, sending them both crashing through the unstable wall and into an underground river, where they're swept away.

Lyrrin panics over Riony's fate, but the delvers restrain her from rushing after. Lyrrin manages to send her cave otter, Butterfur, into the river after Riony.

Then the floor begins to give way, pulling Lyrrin, the delvers, and Griskin, down multiple levels into a previously unexplored section of the ruins filled with Alderkin artefacts, including a large slice of geode.

One delver dies in the fall. With them trapped below, the delvers regroup, binding Griskin and assessing injuries. Benjin's neck is badly hurt.

Riony and Kess wash up in a pool illuminated by bioluminescent water. Dracuni is still with Kess, who refuses to let Riony get close. Carnivorous olm circle in the water, adding to the threat.

Kess threatens Dracuni's life if Riony tries to fight her. Riony attempts to negotiate, warning Kess of the dangers lurking in the caves, but before they can strike a truce, a revenant—a terrifying undead creature—falls from a crack in the ceiling, and they must work together to fend it off.

Meanwhile, the delvers, including Lyrrin and the injured Benjin, recover in the newly discovered ruins below. As they explore, they find Alderkin relics and murals hinting at the ancient civilization's connection to dragons and unicorns.

A massive mural shows an image of the first dragon taming, with the shadow dragon ominously present. This raises questions about the origin of the curse plaguing the land, as the Alderkin once fought to protect unicorns from harm.

Lyrrin also notices similarities in depictions of the Alderkin and herself.

Lyrrin, feeling guilty over their predicament, searches for ways to help Benjin and find an escape. The delvers search for a relic with a float rune, if they can find one they could safely transport Benjin to the surface.

Back in the caves, Riony and Kess fend off the revenant, working together surprisingly well. Kess throws knives to slow the revenant's movements while Riony's swordsmanship keeps it at bay. They finally push it into the water, where the carnivorous olm attacks it.

Just as Riony moves to take advantage of Kess's distraction, Kess disarms her, sending Riony's precious dragonlord sword into the river. Riony agrees to carry Kess out of the caves as long as she doesn't hurt Dracuni.

Riony knows that if Kess even cuts Dracuni she will discover her blood and realize she is even more precious than she thinks. The cave otter, Butterfur, arrives, and Riony hopes he can help lead them the right way out.

Riony carries Kess through the caves while Dracuni remains in Kess's control. The journey brings up old memories and tensions between Riony and Kess, with Kess teasing Riony as she had in their childhood, calling her "Riony Pony."

Though the nickname irritates Riony, it triggers a deeper, personal reflection on their past as Riony was Kess's slave and carer, and the only person who was ever kind to her.

During their journey, they find signs of more revenants having fallen into the depths, leading to the discovery of cave spiders feeding on their remains.

Riony and Kess discuss their survival, and Riony jokes about eating the spiders if they get desperate. They worry that they may not be able to find their way out if the revenants are also stuck in the depths.

Lyrrin and the Delvers continue exploring the ruins. They find a damaged float rune, which Lyrrin tries to repair. While doing so, her secret of her clawed fingers is revealed by Benjin. With her talent for working with runes discovered, they also attempt to activate the round geode slice in the room, similar to the ones found in shrines.

Lyrrin activates the geode slice, revealing it to be a magical gateway to another location. However, they don't know where the portal leads, so it will not immediately help Benjin, whose health continues to deteriorate.

As Riony, Kess, and Dracuni continue their journey, frustration builds due to their slow progress, especially as Butterfur (Lyrrin's cave otter) leads them in circles.

In an ancient chamber, Riony finds a large sword, and other Alderkin artifacts, and takes them despite Kess's mocking. When Riony pulls the sword from its mount, a landslide of bones triggers a swarm of cave spiders.

Back with the Delvers, Lyrrin is desperate to reunite with her sister and help Benjin. She reveals to Aishena that Riony has silvernix (magical healing unicorn blood) that could save Benjin. They just have to find her.

Lyrrin pleads for Aishena to take action, even though Yoskar refuses to believe in the possibility. Aishena, caught between her loyalty to Yoskar and her own doubts, begins to open up about her past.

Aishena shares the tragic story of her family: her mother's mysterious change after being attacked by the shadow dragon, and the murder of her father and sister, blamed on their mother by Yoskar. Yoskar took Aishena and Benjin and fled with them from their home and murderous mother.

Aishena blames herself for her family's deaths because she didn't listen to Yoskar's warnings sooner.

Riony flees from the cave spiders, carrying Kess and Dracuni. While they fend off the creatures, Riony stubbornly keeps holding onto her massive sword, though the spiders are too fast. Kess runs out of throwing daggers as the spiders swarm around them.

In their frantic escape, Butterfur runs off, and they lose their way, sliding down a slope into a large cavern. They fall off a ledge and Riony manages to hang on. The spiders don't follow them into the cavern, and Kess tells Riony to pull them up. Riony says she can't, she's been bitten by the spiders.

Aishena shows Lyrrin on a map she found where she thinks Riony might have gone, but she insists they need to stay together for Benjin's sake. While feeling down, Lyrrin befriends Kess's wolf, noticing its sniffles from the mushroom farms. She comforts the wolf, offering it her own sinus-clearing herbs. Suddenly, Lady Hjelzahn, Aishena's mother, appears.

She claims she's there to help but is confronted by Yoskar, who distrusts her and believes she killed their family. Tensions rise as Lady Hjelzahn accuses Yoskar of going mad and being the real murderer.

Aishena is torn between loyalty to her mother and brother. During her indecisions, Lady Hjelzahn attacks, killing Yoskar when he steps in to defend Aishena.

Riony, weakened by her spider bites, struggles to hold onto the cliff edge while carrying Kess and Dracuni. She begs Kess to save Dracuni and herself and go on without her. Kess manages to get Dracuni onto the ledge above them, at which point Riony reveals she was fine all along and drops Kess onto a lower ledge while she climbs to safety.

Riony feels bad about the betrayal but takes Dracuni and leaves Kess to her fate.

Brishan steps in to restrain Lady Hjelzahn, but Aishena, now certain Yoskar was right, is left unsure how to proceed. She confesses her belief that no help is coming and asks Lyrrin to find assistance from Riony quickly. Lyrrin frees Griskin in hopes that the wolf will help her locate Kess and Riony.

On her way out of the cave, Riony struggles with her decision to abandon Kess. She feels guilty and conflicted, but when she hears a disturbance from back at Kess's location, she turns back.

Kess is being attacked by a massive, monstrous creature, a conglomeration of revenants—rotting, skeletal beasts with multiple heads, limbs, and mouths.

In the attack, Kess's legs are trapped under a fallen rock. Riony rushes to help, giving Kess her cutting athame to cut the stone trapping her while she faces the creature to keep it distracted.

As Riony battles the revenant conglomeration, Kess struggles to free her legs from the stone. The pain of her injuries is almost unbearable, but she works to cut through the rock, determined to escape. Meanwhile, Riony fights the creature, using her massive sword to keep it at bay, but the heavy sword is slow and unwieldy, exhausting her quickly.

Kess, now free, watches as Riony's strength wanes, and the monster continues to close in. Dracuni, upset by Kess's injury, tries to comfort her.

Kess is now free but looks very weak. Riony doubts Kess can get herself and Dracuni out of there. Despite exhaustion, Riony keeps fighting, cutting through the combined beast, but it's overwhelming her.

Just then, Lyrrin arrives on Griskin. They leap past the monster to join Riony. Riony tells Lyrrin to get the others on Griskin and escape while she holds off the beast.

Kess, too weak to ride, is protected by Griskin. Lyrrin sees the float rune on Riony's sword and helps activate it, turning the sword weightless, making it easier for Riony to fight, but the conglomeration is still too big.

Riony gets Lyrrin to carve the same runes that had caused the explosion back at home onto a crystal and then forces it into the middle of the revenants, blowing it up enough to knock it back into the deep hole it crawled out of.

They quickly prepare to leave, but Kess continues to hold Dracuni ransom despite being visibly near death.

Back with the delvers, Lady Hjelzahn breaks free from Brishan's hold and acknowledges she may need to kill everyone if she wants to escape. The last remaining delver attacks her, unaware of her power, and is struck down easily.

Niskina wants to fight, but Brishan tells her to stay back. He's the one who should handle Lady Hjelzahn as he was once a grayglim (highly trained royal bodyguard) like her.

Aishena, worried about Benjin, realizes her duty is to protect him above all. She didn't beat her mother in her own grayglim training, but she's determined to try now with the athames she's gathered.

Riony tells Kess she's in no state to fight, but Kess refuses to give up Dracuni. Kess, desperate to be a dragonrider, admits she would rather die than give it up. Riony disarms her easily and takes back the athame, now out of charge again.

Dracuni uses her silvernix blood to heal Kess, and Riony gets Dracuni back. But now Kess knows Dracuni's secret.

They reach an uneasy truce. Lyrrin insists they need to leave fast to help the others.

Riony, Kess, and Lyrrin return on Griskin with Dracuni to find Aishena standing, beaten but still holding her ground, her athames scattered. The reunion temporarily halts the fighting as they warn Lady Hjelzahn to back down.

But Kess switches sides, offering to even the odds if she can keep Dracuni. Riony, furious at Kess's betrayal, confronts her, but Kess is determined to seize this opportunity. Lady Hjelzahn welcomes Kess's help and breaks into attack again.

Riony and Kess engage in a full-on fight, injuring each other a number of times. Aishena and Brishan fight Lady Hjelzahn, but Lyrrin cannot reach Benjin through the chaos.

Niskina wants to join the fight, but Brishan and Aishena urge her to stay back. Niskina, however, defies them and gets involved. Lady Hjelzahn seizes the opportunity and kills Brishan, causing Niskina immense grief.

Riony, distracted by Brishan's death, is bitten by Griskin. Aishena continues to fight, her last athame knocked away.

Riony is downed by Griskin's bite, but Yoskar's staff is nearby. Lyrrin calls for Riony to throw it to her. Expecting Lyrrin to do something clever with it, Riony is surprised when Lyrrin uses it to knock Kess out with a strike to the head. Griskin backs off.

Lyrrin helps Riony up and admits she's trying to be like her big sister.

Aishena, still battling her mother, stabs Lady Hjelzahn with a hidden athame she kept secret, as Riony had once suggested. Lady Hjelzahn is hurt but doesn't bleed, and they realize they need to escape.

Aishena tells Lyrrin to open the magical gateway again, which she does. Riony, Lyrrin, Dracuni, Aishena, Niskina, and Benjin flee through the gateway. Kess tries to follow but the gateway closes just in time.

Lady Hjelzahn, furious at the escape, turns on Kess, trying to attack her. Kess fights back but realizes the grayglim is not a normal human and injuries don't slow her down.

Kess escapes on Griskin, pushing through the main streets of the city now with no regard for the stares. Her obsession with Dracuni is now even stronger, knowing that if she can capture a dragon with silvernix blood, she'll be unstoppable.

Kess reflects on her time with Riony but concludes that the dragon matters more than anything else.

The gateway takes Riony, Lyrrin, Dracuni, Aishena, Benjin, and Niskina to the ruins Riony had visited while rescuing Lyrrin from the slavers. They're all upset but must focus on healing Benjin, who is barely breathing.

Riony asks Dracuni not to heal Benjin if she doesn't want to, but Dracuni does it anyway, healing both Benjin and Riony's injuries. Aishena and Niskina, overwhelmed by grief and loss, process the events. Riony hopes she can trust them with Dracuni's secret.

The team is reunited, but Dracuni's existence is now revealed. Riony comforts Lyrrin about the cave otter who was left behind, and thanks her for helping Riony find her way out.

They know the danger isn't over, as Kess and Lady Hjelzahn will continue to hunt them. They cannot return to the undercity and must find a new home. Despite the challenges ahead, they are together and ready to face the world above ground.



## The Shadow Dragon Saga

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