Dear Reader

My love of writing stemmed from my love of reading, and the joys and escapism that books brought me. Reading has helped me through some very difficult times in my life, and for a short while, allowed me to escape from my troubles, and step into new worlds. My mum nurtured my love of reading from a young age, and she also penned a few poems that she read to me, and my younger sister that inspired me to write my own stories. I was always an imaginative child with a flair for creative writing, and from a very young age of 5, encouraged to pursue a career as an author. But sadly, not all our hopes and dreams as children are met in adulthood, and it therefore has taken me a long time to be able to give the time and attention to my writing. Life and the need for a steady income, had sent me down another path and sadly meant putting the pursuit of my dream on hold.

And then a significant traumatic event occurred, and it forced me to evaluate my whole life. A long-term disability developed as a result from the trauma and left me in limbo. I’d lost my identity and I was confused as to what I did next. Whilst in this period of self-reflection, I had a chance to consider what truly made me happy. The answer was staring me in the face – always it was my love of books and reading, coupled with quality time spent with my family. Whilst the disability did not make it by any means easy, as I had to learn how to manage my pain and fatigue levels, the shift and focus now on my own mental health and wellbeing was exactly the kick start that I needed.

And with the help of an amazing circle of writing friends, I wrote and published my first book, The Veils of Valoria. Such an incredible feeling that reduced me to happy tears.

When I first started writing the Veils of Valoria, the inspiration for the story came from a dream, and as I began to write it the ideas were pouring onto the pages. The book was becoming the equivalent size of ‘The Lord of the Rings.’ My editor at the time told me to cut the story in two halves, a risk that I took and have since learnt from. The first half is the Book you are about to read now. The second half is due to be released sometime in 2023. Please do forgive me for any questions that are not completely answered for you in this first book. Bessie, in particular, can be a frustrating character for this, but I assure you she is an amazing person and will not keep Finn and Rowan dangling too long! The second book, ‘The Guardians of Valoria’ will not disappoint and will pick up any loose threads!

I wanted to share this very brief account of my journey as a writer, with you as the reader, as I feel I have an important message to share. Some events and situations are completely outside of our control, but before we get lost in all that negativity, as I almost did, we must remember that we do have control over how we respond to them, and in my case, I chose to use this as a positive experience and allow it to refocus me on what was important.

My final message to share with you is, that if you have a dream or ambition to do something, that makes your heart sing and your soul radiate, then you can achieve it. My disability whilst difficult to manage, does not define who I am, only that I need to adapt and work a little differently to accomplish it.

Thank you so much for choosing this title and I hope that you enjoy reading my book as much as I enjoyed writing it. Please keep a lookout on The Book Dragon’s Facebook Social Media page at [www.facebook.com/thebookdragonteam](http://www.facebook.com/thebookdragonteam) for notifications of a future release date for Book Two ‘The Guardians of Valoria.’

I won’t make you wait too long; I promise!

**Best Wishes**

**Kirsty**