Praise for *Tourmaline and the Island of Elsewhere*

"This unforgettable adventure will bring you to places beyond your wildest imagination... All aboard!"
Sinéad O'Hart, author of *The Time Tider*



"This is such an exciting, magical adventure, written with wit and warmth and a wonderfully bold and bolshy heroine. It feels like an instant classic."
Sophie Cameron, author of *Away with Words*



"Sharply drawn, beautifully observed and with plenty of action and humour to make the reader gasp and shriek in equal measure."
Lou Abercrombie, author of *Coming Up For Air*



"A brilliantly written and spirited adventure filled with magic, mystery, peril, humour and some stunning twists and turns that completely captivated me. LOVED it."
Kevin Cobane, educator



"There is something unexpected around every corner keeping them, and us, the reader, on our toes in this thrilling adventure story."
Armadillo Magazine



"Fresh, funny and gripping, this will wrap you in its enchantment and sweep you away, unable to stop until you reach the final page, but then, having savoured every word, you really don't want it to end."
Jill Bennett, educator



"An explosion of imagination – characters, world-building and story are all on point… A hugely fun magic treasure-hunting adventure and a fantastically welcome start of a new series filled with strong female characters."
Irish Examiner



"A fabulous fantasy of magical proportions. Your reader will fly through the pages, being carried along with the feisty Tourmaline and her friends, in a hugely rich and imaginative world."
Mini Travellers blog



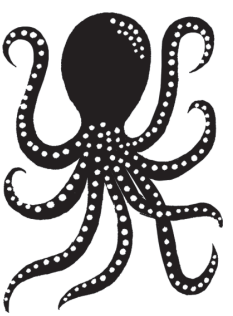
"With strong and relatable female characters, a compelling plot, and immersive fantasy settings, this imaginative middle-grade novel, is unputdownable"
School Reading List



"A thrilling tale of magic and treasure hunting, friends and family, full of wonderful female characters, moral dilemmas, puzzles and humour"
Liam James, blogger

TOURMALINE

AND THE MUSEUM OF MARVELS



This one's for Dan, my firstborn, with all my love x
RL



LITTLE TIGER
An imprint of Little Tiger Press Limited
1 Coda Studios, 189 Munster Road, London SW6 6AW

Imported into the EEA by Penguin Random House Ireland,
Morrison Chambers, 32 Nassau Street, Dublin D02 YH68

www.littletiger.co.uk

First published in Great Britain in 2024

Text copyright © Ruth Lauren, 2024
Illustrations copyright © Sharon King-Chai, 2024

ISBN: 978-1-78895-592-8

The right of Ruth Lauren and Sharon King-Chai to be identified
as the author and illustrator of this work has been asserted by them
in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988.

All rights reserved.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise,
be lent, resold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in
any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar
condition including this condition being imposed upon the subsequent purchaser.

Printed and bound in the UK.

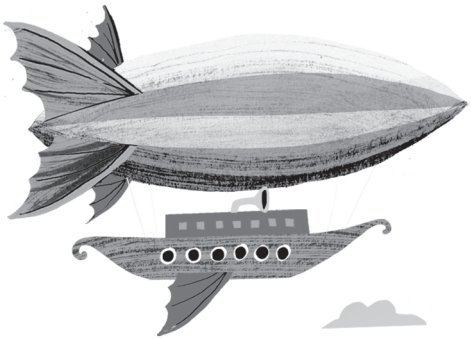


The Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) is a global, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the
promotion of responsible forest management worldwide. FSC defines standards based on agreed principles
for responsible forest stewardship that are supported by environmental, social, and economic stakeholders.
To learn more, visit www.fsc.org

2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

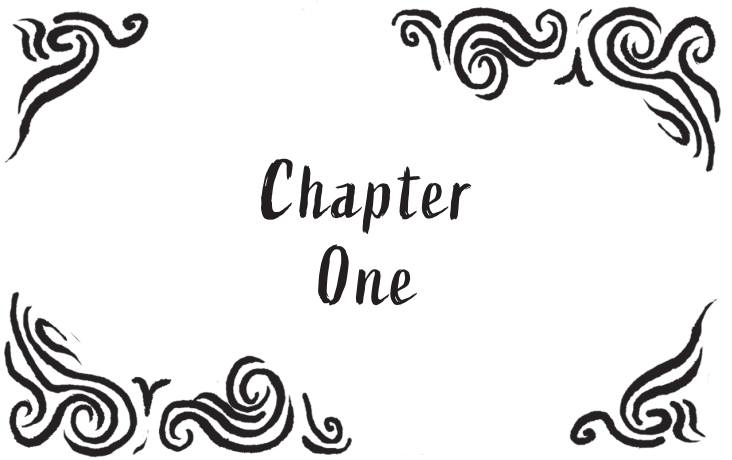
TOURMALINE

AND THE MUSEUM OF MARVELS



RUTH LAUREN

LITTLE TIGER
LONDON



Chapter One

Tourmaline picked up a vial of green liquid and glanced at the professor dozing at the front of the science lab. Professor Nyqvist (the latest in a long line of junior professors at Pellavere University bribed or ordered to wrangle an education into Tourmaline's head) had clearly found her day quite trying. Her efforts to stay awake weren't going well and her head was now sagging gently on to the robes folded across her chest.

Tourmaline looked at the Bunsen burner and the round-bottomed glass flask in front of her. The professor's current state was probably for the best. In the weeks since Tourmaline had fallen into the Source of magic on the island of Elsewhere, during a mission to rescue her mother, there had been several unfortunate incidents,

over which she'd had no control. If anything untoward was about to happen, it would be helpful if the professor slept through it. She tried to think positively, though. With any luck, she could complete the chemistry test then meet George and Mai in the orchard as planned.

"No magic," she whispered to herself. "Not now." She turned the flame on the burner up, took one more look at the professor (still asleep), and poured the green liquid into the flask of red powder.

Nothing happened.

Which was better than something terrible happening, but not likely to bring about an end to the science test. Tourmaline needed to get on with more important things – like a very different, secret set of experiments that George had been conducting.

She tapped the glass impatiently, then gave the flask a shake for good measure and turned the flame up even higher.

The mixture in the flask, now a muddy sort of colour, began to bubble. This was promising and Tourmaline took heart. "Professor Nyqvist," she said, "I think it's work—"

The liquid bubbled higher, reaching the top of the flask. Tourmaline hastily turned the flame down, but more and more bubbles appeared, multiplying at an alarming rate. The flask was beginning to look ominously volcanic.

Tourmaline didn't have time to do anything about it. The contents of the flask exploded in such a spectacular fashion that they hit the ceiling. Tourmaline shot upright, eyes wide, heart frog-jumping. "I said *no* magic!"

The professor snorted awake, at first dazed and then horrified, as a cascade of noxious-smelling liquid, bubbles and – somehow – gas rained down on the lab. Tourmaline threw a frantic glance round the room for something – anything – that could stop the chaos.

She grabbed a fire blanket and flung it over the flask, but the blanket began to flicker with green flames. Unreasonable and impossible green flames.

Water. She needed water. She rushed to the sink, filled a large flask and threw it desperately in the direction of the green-flaming blanket.

The water never reached the fire. Instead, as it got close, the droplets turned into snowflakes that floated

gently down, merging with the sludgy mess that was still shooting from the original flask. Tourmaline threw her hands up in despair. "Stop!"

But the experiment seemed determined to finish what it had started. Tourmaline ducked under the table until the furious noises from the flask subsided, and then stayed there for several seconds longer just in case.

"I have absolutely no idea how you even managed that," said Professor Nyqvist in the stony silence that followed. "Miss Grey, I feel compelled to tell you that I have no choice but to report this to your mother."

Tourmaline scrambled out from under the table and pushed her curls out of her face, which was hot and probably quite red. "She's not here right now."

Persephone Grey, renowned artefact hunter, had gone to a museum to give her professional opinion on one of their artefacts and wouldn't be back until the following day.

"Then I will leave her a note," said the professor. Her jaw was clenched a little too tightly.

"Perhaps I could..." Tourmaline looked round the room. Something thick and lumpy dripped from

the ceiling on to the professor's desk.

"Please do leave, Miss Grey," said the professor in a long-suffering tone. The flask gave a sudden warning belch, and Tourmaline fled.

Several minutes later, she was balanced in a makeshift hammock strung between two apple trees.

"And now she's going to tell my mother," said Tourmaline, having finished recounting the incident to her two friends. "I can't go on like this."

"It's better than the thing in the bathroom," said Mai. "That was much worse."

Tourmaline had gone into a student bathroom and, while she was washing her hands at the long line of sinks, water had suddenly started gushing first out of one set of taps and then all of them. The result had been a hasty exit, a fairly large flood, and extensive water damage to a priceless oil painting in the apartments below. This had caused some difficulties for George since the apartments (and the priceless oil painting) belonged to his mother, the dean of the university.

"Just tell Persephone it wasn't your fault," said Mai. "Everyone knows strange things have been happening at

Pellavere lately, and not *all* of them are caused by you."

"They might be," said Tourmaline morosely. "Who knows?"

"Focus on the current experiment, please," said George, who always became quite focused during the serious business of trying to figure out Tourmaline's magic.

Tourmaline sighed and closed her eyes, then opened them, then put her hands behind her head. It was the exact same pose she had been in on *The Hunter* when her hands had glowed, and she'd realized that the Source had done something to her.

"Anything?" asked George.

Tourmaline looked at him. His brown hair was sticking up on the left side as it sometimes did. His pale face was serious and his pencil was poised eagerly over his notebook. He'd been carrying it round, taking careful notes on the experiments – each of which had been conducted in the hope of finding out when Tourmaline's magic would appear, *why* it appeared and what it could do. And none of which, so far, had given Tourmaline any answers at all. Her magic was wild

and erratic, and seemingly unpredictable. The only thing it seemed consistently determined to do was ruin Tourmaline's life.

It had been spring when she'd left Captain Violet's wonderful ship, waved off the wild crew of *The Hunter* at the port and returned to the university where she lived with her mother (freshly rescued from the island of Elsewhere) and her friends George and Mai. Since then, her magic had made a habit of showing up only at the very worst moments – like when Persephone had asked her opinion on a new, possibly magical, artefact she'd found. Tourmaline, having reached out to touch the artefact, had seen on her hands the oil-on-water pattern that had been happening ever since she'd fallen into the Source. She'd had to run from Persephone's lab calling out excuses to prevent her mother from seeing the strange light.

Persephone was already keeping the secret that Tourmaline had fallen headfirst into the Source. And she'd been so very worried that Tourmaline now couldn't bring herself to tell her mother that it had *done something* to her. At least not until she and her friends

could figure out what it was that it had done.

They'd tried so many things – most recently holding her hands in ice water (she wasn't keen to repeat that) and jumping out of one of the trees in the orchard (always fun, but it hadn't made the magic appear). George had even snuck into her room in the dead of night and crashed a cymbal next to her head. All that had done was make *her* leap out of bed shrieking and *him* run from the room calling "Sorry, sorry, sorry!"

The magic stubbornly continued to withhold its secrets.

Now George's pencil hovered over his notebook.

Tourmaline looked carefully at her hands. "Nothing," she said. "But you know they don't always glow. They didn't just now in the lab."

It was as though the magic *liked* catching her off guard. Or showing up as a glow and then doing nothing. It was as mysterious and obstinate as the island it had come from.

George, who had really hoped that a hammock (as the place Tourmaline had been when the magic first appeared) would do the trick, took a deep, steadying

breath and told himself that all great scientific discoveries were preceded by multiple failed attempts. But he was running out of ideas.

Tourmaline, meanwhile, was beginning to wonder if she was just going to have to make a run for it every time there was an incident, which was getting awkward. She wasn't sure how many more times she could claim a bathroom emergency without having to visit the nurse.

Mai glanced over at the high window of the lab, where a light had just gone on. "Maybe you're a ... a light source? You know, with the glowing."

"I'm not a *lamp*," said Tourmaline, really hoping she wasn't.

"Of course you're not a lamp," said George.

"We know that the Source just makes things more *them*," he said helpfully. "Like the rope and its rope-ness, and the pocket watch that could freeze people. The Source didn't give these objects new abilities, it just enhanced the ones they already had."

"What about the cat?" asked Mai. "And your jacket."

"Fitzsimmons teleporting is the very essence of cat-ness," said George. He frowned. "But I'm really not

sure about the jacket."

"What's Tourmaline-ness, then?" asked Tourmaline, who was still struggling to balance in the hammock.

Mai and George both thought.

"You're loyal," said Mai.

George started printing carefully in his notebook.

"And I heard someone say headstrong and impulsive the other day," Mai added, seeing that George was taking notes.

"Who said that?" asked Tourmaline indignantly.

Mai's eyes widened and she waved her hand vaguely.

Tourmaline's eyes narrowed. "It was Josie."

Mai shrugged admission. "It was Josie."

Josie knew Tourmaline better than almost anyone else, having looked after her and George since they were both tiny babies.

"What else are you writing?" said Tourmaline, suddenly sitting up and peering at the notebook. George tried to hide the page, but quickly gave in.

Tourmaline sighed. George had written 'thief' and 'liar' in very small letters with a question mark after each.

"I wrote them small because I know it's not very—"

"It's OK, George," said Tourmaline. "Saying things is sometimes lying and taking things is sometimes stealing. It really depends on why, and who you ask."

"Anyway, you barely even steal things any more," said Mai. "Although you do lie."

"Well, I can't be expected to give up *everything*," said Tourmaline.

George nodded his agreement. It would be too much in one go.

They all thought about this for several seconds, then George wrote, in much larger letters, the word 'indomitable' on the list. He glanced up at his friend. "Because you really are impossible to subdue or defeat," he said.

"Mm," agreed Mai.

Tourmaline looked at the list and found she was pleased with it, although she wasn't sure it was really helping with the question of what the Source had done to her.

At that moment, there was a loud tearing sound and the bedsheets that had been used to make the hammock split down the middle. Tourmaline fell straight through

on to the grassy ground of the orchard.

George let out a little noise – partly in sympathy for Tourmaline, and partly in mild distress over what Josie would say when she discovered the ruined sheets.

Mai held out her hand and pulled up her friend. Tourmaline straightened her shirt, untied the remains of the sheets from the trees and bundled them under her arm.

"It was worth a try," she said. "One of your better ideas, really."

The experiments, if nothing else, had been very good for keeping her busy. That meant she couldn't spend too much time thinking about Evelyn Coltsbody, her recently discovered, possibly villainous father. He was currently detained in custody by the Agency for the Investigation and Classification of Magical Artefacts (or AICMA) for trying to take over the magical island of Elsewhere.

George nodded sadly. "I'm sorry, Tourmaline."

"It's not your fault, George. But I *have* to stop this happening. If Mai's mother finds out..."

They'd also recently learned that Mai's mother, Emiko

Cravenswood, worked for the AICMA. The Agency were responsible for removing every bit of stray magic from the world. And if they felt that strongly about whisking magical artefacts away never to be seen again, what would they do to a girl who had been submerged in the very thing that had made those magical artefacts in the first place?

"We won't let her find out. We can't." George shook his head, unable to continue with that line of thought.

Tourmaline waved her arms around as best she could with the sheets in the way. "I *know*. Believe me, George. The Agency wanted to destroy a whole entire island. And I'm a whole entire person. I'm never going near Emiko Cravenswood again." She took a deep but not very satisfying breath, looking down at the torn sheets. "I've got to stop the magic, George. Your experiments just aren't working, and if I don't find out how to get rid of it soon, I'm going to get caught."

George tried not to be offended, as this was true.

"Maybe if we knew more about *all* magic," said Mai.

"How?" asked George.

Tourmaline let out a heavy breath. "The Agency are

the ones who know about that. But it's not like I can march into their headquarters and ask."

"Definitely not," said George, relieved that Tourmaline didn't, in fact, want to march straight into their headquarters. He wouldn't have put it past her.

They entered the university building, heading for the sitting room that Tourmaline, George, and, more recently Mai, shared. Tourmaline stuffed the torn sheets into a very old and ornate brass plant stand, which was currently plantless, and then stomped them down with one boot for good measure. George cast an anxious glance around and tugged on Tourmaline's arm urgently as he saw a professor coming down the hallway.

Tourmaline immediately assumed a breezy expression and put her hands behind her back (she'd taken to doing this to keep them hidden in case they decided to glow again) as she strolled down the corridor. "Good evening, Professor Sharma."

Professor Sharma, who had recently been promoted, and whose posture had greatly improved as a result, folded into himself slightly. "Tourmaline. Mai." The professor's gaze dropped to George then bounced quickly away.

George, whose own gaze had been riveted to the floor, sped up until the whole uncomfortable encounter was a few dozen paces behind and he could breathe again.

"I'm not sure he's quite over everything," said Tourmaline.

George had been forced to assert himself with the professor to get the information they had needed to rescue Persephone. He was absolutely certain that there would be no getting over that for quite some time, if at all.

As they reached the sitting room, he considered that maybe Tourmaline's magical abilities had been affected by the chocolate cake that Quintalle Nix had made aboard *The Hunter*. Tourmaline had eaten a large quantity of it just before her hands had started glowing... He was wondering whether they should try chocolate cake when he realized that he was just hungry.

Still, it was worth a try, for science. "Tourmaline, I—"

But Tourmaline had just remembered that Professor Nyqvist was leaving a note for her mother and that it would be best for everyone concerned if she intercepted it. It was not the first time she had done this.

The last time, she had been looking for a report

about Tourmaline's recent efforts in History, sent to her mother by Professor Sharma. He'd taken over the class after replacing Professor Aladeus (who had left the university under a cloud of suspicion after his dealings with Evelyn Coltsbody had been uncovered).

The report hadn't been very flattering, which Tourmaline had expected, what with Professor Sharma's promotion having gone to his head. She'd decided it would be best to handle the situation by feeding the report to the groundskeeper's goat. Tourmaline had thought it might make a nice snack for the goat, and the goat, not being a picky eater, had agreed.

"I have to go," she said quickly. "If my mother hears what happened in the lab she might get suspicious."

"Maybe you should just tell her?" said George, though he looked doubtful. "I thought you were going to talk more now."

"I *will* tell her," said Tourmaline. "Just as soon as I know exactly what it is that I should be telling her." And with that she hurried off.



Tourmaline lingered innocently at the staff pigeonholes until the coast was clear, then rifled through the papers in her mother's cubby.

The note from Professor Nyqvist wasn't there, which hopefully meant she had forgotten all about it. But Tourmaline had already been completely distracted by something else anyway. In among the bundle of post addressed to Persephone Grey was a postcard. It was addressed to *Tourmaline* Grey, which was unusual in itself. Beyond the birthday card from Great-Aunt Heliotrope which would sometimes arrive in spring and sometimes in autumn, but never in winter when it actually was Tourmaline's birthday, this was the first post she'd ever received.

It was a good thing she had got to the cubby before her mother had.

Tourmaline glanced around again, not sure why she was suddenly balanced on her toes, with an alert, ready sort of feeling inside her. The postcard wasn't signed. On it was written a quite simple and worrying and impossible message:

Meet me at the market,
I'll talk to only you,
Find me when it's darkest,
If you want to learn the truth.

I know your secret, Tourmaline.