



THE PROPHECY^{OF}
CRYSTALLURIA

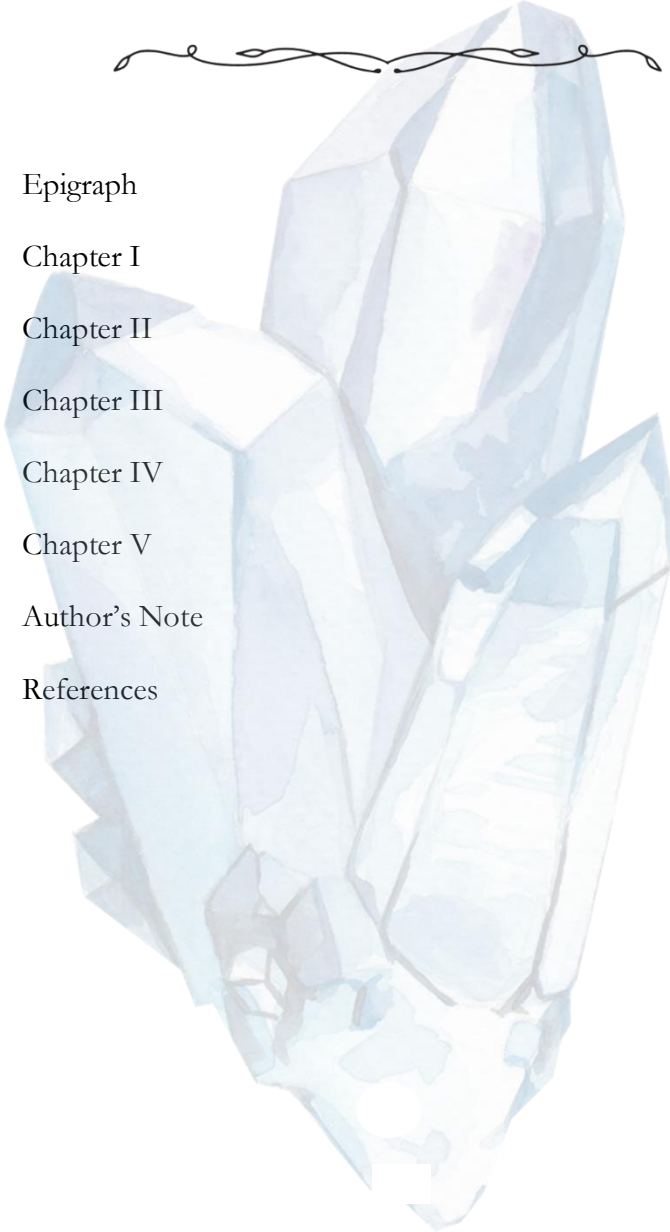
BY BAYAN NAJAJRAH



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Epigraph



“It is not our *abilities* that show what we *truly* are. It is our *choices*.”

-J. K. Rowling, Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets





THE PROPHECY OF CRYSTALLURIAT



By Bayan Najajrah

Chapter I

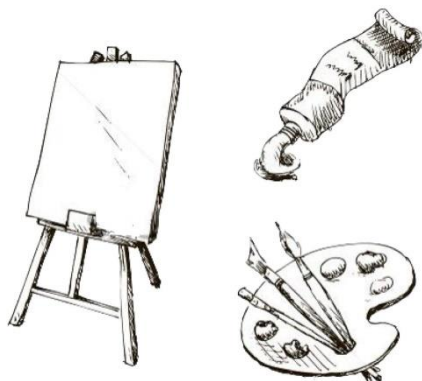
In the hushed embrace of Kango, where *Sakura*¹ trees murmured secrets to the wind, lived Akari in a small isolated *Minka*² house nestled atop a serene and verdant mountain, where each footfall echoed with the enigma of hidden tales. Akari inherited a gift from her grandfather: the art of drawing. She spent countless hours in the art room, painting alongside her grandfather, who shared all his painting knowledge with her. Her dreams, painted with visions of studying in Tokyo, to become a renowned artist.

Yet, her grandfather, Jiro-*san* believed she was fragile for the challenges ahead. He insisted on her concealment, masking her otherworldly heterochromia. A mysterious depth was in Jiro-*san*'s eyes, a lingering of concealed truths—truths she longed to unveil someday.

Akari has always wanted to explore beyond Jiro-*san*'s boundaries, but a barrier erected by her uncertainties and fears of the unfamiliar world, stood resolute in front of her desires. Yet, her curiosity pushed her sometimes to secretly peer into a nearby small village, where she used to practice *Laido*³ by observing young warriors, honing her defensive skills but never daring to reveal herself to them.

After a day filled with sword practice, she returned with a basket laden with food, opened the door, and called out with an innocent voice, “*Ojii-chan*⁴ I'm back!”

Jiro-*san*⁵, who was lying on his *futon*⁶, appeared more frail than usual. He beckoned Akari closer, with a trembling hand, offered her a folded letter and an old wooden box featuring *Sakura* motifs. “Akari-*chan*⁷, my time draws near.” He whispered hoarsely. “I've held onto secrets for too long, all to protect you.” Tears welled up in Akari's eyes, “*Oji-Chan*, you can't leave me, not now.” Jiro-*san* continued, his voice growing weaker, “The time has come for you to know the truth. These are for you—they hold the key to your destiny.” Akari's eyes shadowed with concern and lingering tears. She gently placed them beside his *futon*. With a tender smile before he took his last breath, Jiro-*san* whispered, “Fly, my butterfly. Your wings carry dreams, and the sky is your canvas.” Akari whispered “Farewell, *Oji-Chan*. I'll never forget your love.”



Chapter II

In the midst of a grief-laden storm, Akari sat alone in the chaotic art room, immersed in memories. A radiant green light hummed softly, creating a gentle vibration in the air that cut through the darkness, drawing her in. She decided to open the letter.

Akari-chan,

Unveil your legacy. The key lies in your strokes, guided by magical tools in the box. Sketches hold secrets; trust your magic. Crystalluria wait in the shadows. Embrace destiny. Seek Akemi-san in Kuroboku's forest.

Grandfather

Awe and curiosity blended in Akari. She opened the box, revealing ethereal-glowing oil paint tubes, brushes, sketchbook, and green crystal-adorned ring. As she explores

the sketchbook, enchanting drawings unfold—each page contains capitative magical landscapes and mythical creatures. These details ignited her imagination, compelling her to capture them on canvas.

Deep breath, Akari's brush hovered above the canvas. The room faded, time escaped. In the final touch, a subtle glow emanated from the canvas, sensing a tingling in the star scar behind her ear. The colors of the painting flickered with otherworldly brilliance. A world of crystals materialized before her eyes. The canvas now is a magical window bridging two worlds where tapestry of reality interwoven with the fabric of dreams.

Akari stood, overcome with amazement and awe. Drawn to the mystical view, she cautiously approached, a hint of fear and hesitation creeping in. Taking a step back, her eyes glimpsed the first painting she painted with Jiro-san, making his final words echoing in her heart, fueling her with strength.

Akari packed her bag, and grabbed her sword. Stepping into the enigmatic world embracing the unknown. Among the trees, she stumbled and fainted. Awaking, a creature with a black crystal on his forehead and ice blue eyes stared at her. “What enchanting eyes!” Akari sprang to her feet, sword in hand. “W-Who are you?” she demanded.

He approached, undeterred. “Hold on, hold on. I'm the one with questions here. You dropped out of nowhere, *Kirei-san*.”

“Stay back,” Akari insisted. “Don't make me use this! Tell me where we are.”

“Easy there, *Kirei-san*, no need for violence.” He replied casually, “It's *Kuroboku* forest.”

Akari realized it's the forest from Jiro-*san's* letter, "Alright, thanks. I need to go."

"Easy there, it's not every day we get someone like you." He grinned mischievously, revealing his sharp fangs "By the way, I'm Toma, and you are?"

Akari ignored him, standing to survey her surroundings. The dark, intimidating forest left her feeling lost. Turning to Toma "Do you know someone called Akemi-*san*?"

"Yeah, but what's your business with her?" His curiosity piqued.

"I wish I could explain, but I must meet her." Akari implored, "Can you take me to her, please?"

He considered for a moment before responding, "Sure," Raising his left eyebrow "But what will I gain?"

Akari, feeling cornered, "I don't have much to offer."

Toma's eyes fixated on something on Akari's hand—a brilliant bracelet with a blue gemstone. He leaned in with interest. "Well, well, what do we have here? It sounds precious," a sly grin appearing "Maybe we can work something out after all."



Chapter III

Deeper into *Kuroboku*, after securing what he wanted, Akari couldn't help but notice the beauty of the glistening crystals that adorned the bases of towering trees. It was as if the crystals were an integral part of the forest, emerging from every corner. Toma stopped, raised his hand and uttered, "*Lumisaki*¹⁰." A house crafted from iridescent crystals and embraced by nature's touch appeared out of nowhere. Akari's eyes widened with amazement of the scene that she just witnessed.

They entered a chamber full of bookshelves, Toma said "Hey, someone's looking for you." A middle-aged woman, with a yellow crystal on her forehead, wearing a *Kimono*¹¹ adorned with floral motifs appeared, "Who dares to seek me out?" her voice resonated.

Akari's voice trembling, "*A-Ano*¹²my grandfather, *Jiro-san*, sent me—"

"I can't believe my eyes, you're finally here, *AKARI-SAMA*¹³!"

Akari hesitated, "How did you know who I am?"

"You are the chosen bearer of destiny," she declared, eyes certain.

"W-What do you mean?"

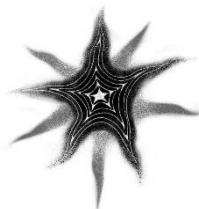
Akemi-san rushed to the shelf behind her, grabbed an ancient book with four crystals, each bearing a distinct color. She whispered incantations, the book opened and she started reading.

“In a realm where the crystal shards secrets, darkness looms. A star-marked girl with eyes ablaze in amber and violet and blessed with innate talent, will come from a distant realm to dispel the darkness of Kuro, harnessing the sacred ring’s power. Crystallorians destiny resides within her grasp. She’ll stand against malevolence and resurrect the kingdom to set the balance right.”

“This is YOU Akari-sama!”

Akari was taken aback, “But I don’t understand, why me!”

“I believe you are ready to know everything from the beginning, so sit down, please.”



“Years ago, before you were born, I worked as a guardian of Ancient Knowledge in the royal sanctuary. Your mom, Hana-sama, used to come with you grandfather on exploration trips to our world. Our ruler, Hiroshi-sama, was captivated by her beauty, married her. During a celebration for your imminent birth, Kuge¹⁴ Kuro, plotted for an attack to seize the throne. He failed, but he cast a forbidden curse on Hana-sama, decreeing her death if she gave birth to you. Despite pleas, she valiantly chose to bring you into the world. Unfortunately, she passed away. Grieving, your father distanced himself, prompting your grandfather to return to

your world for your safety. The prophecy spread, infused Crystallurians' hearts with hope. Kuro, fueled by greed, sought the sacred ring. Exploiting your father's vulnerability, he imprisoned him in a colossal crystal to draw you into his malevolent grasp."

Emotions swirled like a tempest within Akari as she absorbed the shocking truth about her family and her pivotal role. A powerful overwhelming sense of responsibility swept her away. The weight of these truths pressed down on her shoulders. "How... How can I face such an enormous responsibility?" Akari's eyes widened. "I'm just utterly powerless, and yet, the destiny of Crystalluria hinges on me?"

"Akari-sama, your burden is heavy, but within you, a power lights the path through shadows." Akemi-san consoled, hand on Akari's shoulder. "*Your strength is the resilience of your spirit.* Hana-sama, Jiro-san, and every soul in Crystalluria, past and present, have faith in you."

Tears welled up as Akari thought of her grandfather's warmth and her mother's sacrifice. Taking a deep breath, "I'll do it" said in a steadier voice "I'll do it for *Okasan*¹⁵, for *Ojii-chan*, for my people, and the kingdom they loved. I'll protect Crystalluria, I refuse to let fear dictate my path." Akemi-san smiled, acknowledging Akari's resilient spirit.

"*Ano...* I don't know anything about magic" Akari hesitated.

Akemi-san smiled, glancing at Toma, and reassured, "You don't have to worry about this."

"Damn that old hag," Toma muttered begrudgingly.

Chapter IV

In a vast crystal-filled cave, Toma explained “Crystalluria has four major tribes—Energy Amplification for hope, Healing for compassion, Protection for courage, and Manifestation for wisdom, each mastering a unique magical power derived from the crystal on our foreheads.”

Akari interrupted, “So what’s yours?” Toma lifted his black hair from his forehead and leaned in closer to Akari’s face “Don’t you see, it’s a *black tourmaline*¹⁶ – Protection.” Akari’s face flushed with red and pushed him away “You’re too close.” “*Baka*¹⁷” Toma replied, averting his gaze with a flushed face.

“Where I was... yeah, with the power of the sacred ring, you can harness all four powers, Energy Amplification suits you most, given your sword skills. So let’s try this spell and see how strong you are. Try to say *Tsukaeness*¹⁸” Akari donned the ring, drew her sword, and screamed, “*TSUKAENESS!*”

The sword transformed into an immense weapon. A radiant aura enveloped it, emanating strength and brilliance, astonishing Toma. “You are undeniably talented!” Within a week, Akari mastered most spells that Toma had taught her with ease. They became ready to leave for the floating city where the royal castle that Kuro took over exists. “How are we going to get there?”

Toma whistled in the air, within moments they heard a roaring resonance from above, followed by a whirlwind of

air as the black creature with star-like crystals descended from the night sky landed, astonishing Akari. “This is my dragon. I call her Lunafang.”

Flying over the city, Akari marveled at the ethereal beauty of the crystalline buildings below, their facets catching and refracting sunlight, creating a dazzling array of reflections. In a few minutes the castle was in their sight. They landed discreetly and sneaked in, Toma skillfully bypassing guards. “Before we proceed, I must find *Otosan*¹⁹. Do you have any idea where he is imprisoned?” Akari inquired with a blend of determination. “Follow me,” Toma replied.





Chapter V

Arriving at the prison beneath the palace—a dim labyrinth of shadowy corridors with cold, damp walls. Eventually, they found the cell where he was laying seemingly lifeless, imprisoned in a *sapphire*²⁰ crystal. Akari casted a strong spell, shattering the crystal.

As they tried to awaken him, they heard the echo of distant footsteps signaling the approaching of the guards. “We have to leave, NOW!” Toma urgently checked the corridors. “HELP ME CARRY HIM!” Akari struggled to lift him off her father. Escaping the prison, they reached the castle's front courtyard, finding an impenetrable barrier blocking their path.

“Welcome, my special guests. You can't imagine how eagerly I waited for YOU, Akari-*sama*.” An imposing figure with obscured features, draped in dark robes intoned from the shadows, his voice echoing with a sinister tone that sent shivers down their spines. A spell struck, shackling them and rendering them helpless. “You have finally fallen into my grasp, weak *BONJIN* ²¹.” Kuro said, with an evil

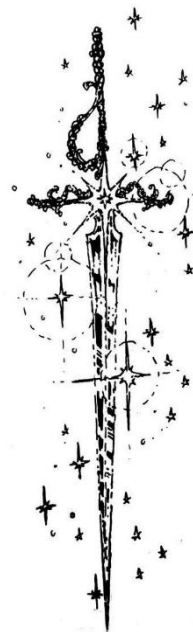
laugh. He leaned to Akari, seizing the sacred ring, wearing it triumphantly. "IT'S MINE NOW, I'M INVINCIBLE."

Kuro, unable to harness the ring's power, frustrated, "What's wrong? Why doesn't it work?" Anger flickering in his eyes "*Baka*," Toma retorted sarcastically, "It only works when its owner wears it, don't bother yourself."

"I will kill both of you and send you to hell, starting with you *Bonjin*," said with a growl of anger "*Koroseill*" Akari's father's exhausted body rushed forward to intercept the impending attack. "NO, OTOSAN, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?" Akari cried out.

"Akari-*chan*, did ...you get hurt?" He wheezed, a raspy cough escaping between each word. "Don't worry about me, don't talk, please." tears filled her eyes. "I have to tell you something before I leave... cough ... cough...I know you thought I left, but I didn't. I kept you away for your safety. I hope you can forgive me." Fear gripped Akari's heart, "Don't leave, *Otosan*" she implored, the weight of impending loss in the air. "*You're strong*, like your mother." Tears filled his eyes "Protect Crystalluria. Never forget, *you're destined for greatness.*" With a final effort, he mustered a whisper, "*I love you.*" "I love you too, *Otosan*," she whispered, her voice breaking with sorrow. "Your sacrifice won't be in vain." wiping her tears. "I will protect Crystalluria, no matter the cost." A spark of determination ignited in her eyes.

Akari's latent power unfurled, the star scar thrived with life, emanating a luminous glow that cascaded around her. Glowy crystals traced her cheeks,



culminating in a majestic rose-like crystal on her forehead. They extended down her neck, gracefully adorning her collarbones. Her eyes, once filled with grief, now gleamed with determination and strength. Swiftly, Akari unsheathed her sword. Time froze as the blade hung in the air. “*Tsukaeness*,” she uttered with resolute determination and brought the sword down, the blade piercing the air with a sharp sound, finding its way to Kuro's heart.

After a week at the coronation ceremony, Akari delicately took the crown. Placing it with reverence on Akemi-san's head, she bowed gracefully. Akari announced, her voice carrying a weight of liberation. “I choose you, Akemi-sama, to succeed me. I trust in your capable hands.”

She whispered, “For now, *I will spread my wings and fly. Tokyo is waiting for me.*”

Glossary

1. **Sakura:** Sakura trees, or cherry trees. These trees are widely celebrated in Japanese culture and are a symbolic representation of the transient nature of life (see [1]).
2. **Minka house:** The simple homes of country-dwellers common in Japan until the mid-20th century (see [2]).
3. **Laido:** Japanese martial art that emphasizes being aware and capable of quickly drawing the sword and responding to sudden attacks (see [3]).
4. **Ojii-chan:** It is an honorific term in Japanese used to address one's grandfather or an elderly man in a respectful and affectionate manner (see [4]).
5. **San:** In Japanese, it is a title or honorific suffix used after a person's name. It is a polite and neutral way to address someone and is commonly used in both formal and informal settings (see [5]).
6. **Futon:** It is a traditional Japanese bedding consisting of a mattress and duvet or comforter (see [6]).
7. **Chan:** In Japanese, the suffix "-chan" is added to a person's name to express endearment, often used for close friends or loved ones (see [7]).
8. **Kuroboku:** Black wood (see [8]).
9. **Kirie:** Pretty (see [9]).
10. **Lumisaki:** It is a mix of the word "Luminate" and the Japanese word "Saki" which means to reveal (see [10]).
11. **Kimono:** The traditional Japanese garment (see [11]).

12. **Ano:** An Japanese interjection commonly used to indicate a pause or hesitation in speech. It is similar to saying "um" or "uh" in English (see [12]).
13. **Sama:** It is an honorific suffix added to a person's name or title to show respect (see [13]).
14. **Kuge:** This term refers to court nobles in traditional Japan and could be suitable for an important figure in the court (see [14]).
15. **Okasan:** Mother (see [15]).
16. **Black tourmaline:** Crystal that ward off negative energies and entities (see [16]).
17. **Baka:** Idiot (see [17]).
18. **Tsukainess:** A mix of "harness" and the Japanese word "tsukae" which mean to harness (see [18]).
19. **Otosan:** Father (see [19]).
20. **Sapphire:** Gemstones are known for their hardness (see [20]).
21. **Bonin:** Japanese term refers to ordinary or common people (see [21]).
22. **Koroseill:** A mix of the word "kill" and the Japanese word "korose" , which means to kill (see [22]).

Author's Note

Commencing the creative process of *The Prophecy of Crystalluria* this reflective peeks behind the curtain, unveiling the inspirations and meticulous details that birthed a tale of magic, growth, stepping beyond one's comfort zone, and the courage to explore the unknown. I'll delve into behind the scenes of this journey as I unravel the threads that bind imagination and research. Furthermore, to peel back the layers and reveal the story's enchanted underbelly, from the initial spark of inspiration to character development, cultural quirks, and the deep symbolic meaning of crystals, giving life to a story that breathes with its own magical essence. This reflection will explore the themes, subject matter, structures, and inspirations behind my short story.

The inspiration for writing this fictional short story is a result of reading multiple beneficial sources, including two important fundamental sections in *Wonderbook: The Illustrated Guide to Creating Imaginative Fiction* by Jeff Vander Meer. Particularly the section titled "The Scar Or The Splinter", which guided me in shaping the main character, Akari. Contemplating my own personal scar and negative emotions served as a driving force, propelling me to write a story centered around a character confronting internal conflict that mirrors mine. Regarding the second section "Inputs For Inspiration" I followed the principle of "Write what interests you" (Meer 20). I chose to explore themes such as Supernatural Forces, Magical Realms, Facing Fears, and Personal Growth. As well, I incorporated Japanese culture, since it is one of the most captivating cultures for me. Furthermore, the field of art and painting holds significance as a central field that inspires and influences my creative endeavors. Moreover, the videos of Margaret

Atwood, particularly “Getting started as a writer” have Guided me in discovering my own creative writing process, especially in getting ideas. She emphasized the significance of immersion in various forms, such as music, painting, or writing. It is a critical aspect of the writing process stating that “you have to do the immersion first” (7:47). Taking this advice, my initial step involved scrolling through pictures and creative artworks on Pinterest, which is usually my main source of inspiration. This step proved beneficial, inspiring the idea of bringing imagination to life through magical art tools. This occurred when I encountered an artwork of a girl passionately painting on canvas, creating a piece more vibrant and lifelike than the world around her. This immersion sparked the idea of magical tools as instruments capable of creating lifelike wonders. Aligning with Atwood's suggestion that “you can start with objects.” (6:11), I crystallized my story with the idea of magical art tools. Additionally, George Orwell's “Why I Write” and the motives it provided for every author. It helped to find out the real reason for writing this story, which were the first and the second reason; Sheer egoism and Aesthetic enthusiasm (Orwell). Lastly, the role of peer feedback and the editing process who provided me with constructive input on the work.

Building *The Prophecy of Crystalluria* involved an extensive research process. Immersed in the readings, I delved deep into MBTI personality types to meticulously craft characters that seamlessly integrated with the plot. This was particularly crucial for the protagonist, Akari, and other key figures such as Jiro-san, Toma, and Kuro. Akari's character was molded around the ENFP personality type, aligning with her curiosity about the world, her vivid

imagination, her decisions which are often guided by her emotions and empathy for others, and her embracing the unexpected twists in her adventure. To gain a better understanding of Akari's character, I conducted an interview with a friend who has a similar personality type, providing invaluable insights. As well, Toma with ESTP, Jiro-san with INFJ, and Kuro with ENTJ, each with personality types harmonized with their respective characters. Specifying personality types for these characters was quite helpful particularly in the pet a dog moment, allowing to expect the way they act and think. As well, conducting research on Japanese culture and norms is significant, particularly when selecting names that align with a character's background. Take Akari's name, for example, which means "light" in Japanese. This choice is symbolic, representing her as a beacon of hope. As it provides subtle foreshadowing, which tells the reader something about her destiny. Moreover, the story building entailed scientific research to select specific and suitable crystals for creating the four fundamental magical powers of Crystallurian tribes. These crystals include Quartz for Energy Amplification, Amethyst for Healing, Black Tourmaline for Protection, and Citrine for Manifestation. These Crystals serve as symbolic elements, representing not only magical powers but also embodying values such as Hope, Compassion, Courage, and Wisdom, reflecting the distinct characteristics of the characters. For instance, the wisdom embodied by Akemi-san, who possesses the power of Citrine, aligns with the chosen crystal's attributes. Additionally, the hero's journey is identifiable in Akari's progression from her ordinary world to the magical realm, encountering challenges, and undergoing personal transformation. Through Akari's journey, I sought to explore themes of resilience,

summoning the courage to step out of the comfort zone, transcending personal fears, and venturing into the uncharted. Her journey becomes a tapestry of courage and personal growth, crafting a narrative that echoes the struggle for self-discovery and the pursuit of one's true potential. Mentioning elements such as the sacred ring, Akari's heterochromia eyes and the star-mark scar at the beginning can indeed be considered Chekhov's Gun. These elements had a purpose and eventually played a role later in the narrative when revealing the prophecy. Focusing on these features early on, created a sense of anticipation and expectation, building the groundwork for their significance later in the story.

To summarize, the journey of “The Prophecy of Crystalluria” included themes of magic, growth, and courage. Akari’s odyssey becomes a monument to the human spirit's tenacity and the beauty that can be found in facing the unknown. As the narrative progresses, readers are invited to embrace their own journeys of self-discovery, to venture into the unknown with courage, and to uncover the transformative power within. Similar to the characters in Crystalluria, our own journeys hold the magic of growth and the courage to soar.

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