

SYNOPSIS. Life is extremely mundane and boring for sixteen year old Azra and she hates it. Until she meets this strange guy Dimitri. He is a member of the Stream Jumpers, a rogue squad of crime fighters that travel through these different dimensions called Streams, trying their best to stop the army of cyborgs from taking over.

Dimitri tries to warn her before it's too late, but Azra comes home to discover her mom is missing. He explains that Azra's mother is lost in another Stream. She disappeared during a shift in the balance. The shifts are due to the absence of the Elemental Gems. Sapphire for water, Emerald for earth, Garnet for fire, and Diamond for air. A shift has happened once every five years for the past century, each shift stronger than the last. The gems keep the balance of nature throughout the universe, but they must be together to work. They were stolen by the first leader of the cyborgs and were scattered into the void. Without them, everything slowly descends into chaos, one shift at a time.

Azra needs Dimitri's help to find her mother, and in return she helps him with finding the gems, and figuring out a way to stop the leader of the cyborgs before the universe completely falls apart.

The two of them travel through the different Streams in search of the gems. They meet a few companions along the way that help them in their journey.

In each Stream they travel to, it may seem normal at first, but there is always a twist. Azra and Dimitri must figure out what each twist is before it catches them off guard. As they have all of these life threatening adventures, Azra questions her sanity. She had never thought any of this was real or even possible. And although Dimitri gets on her nerves, they build quite a strong bond of friendship, withstanding any threat. Well, almost any threat...

Ears ringing and head spinning, Azra slowly rose to her feet just to be pummeled in the stomach, knocking her back to the ground. The wind scampering away, further and further with every attempted breath she took as she swallowed every ounce of air she could manage.

The crowd cheering around them in the stands, drowning out her own thoughts. All the heavy plated armor was weighing down on her, the chainmail was starting to burn in the sweltering sun and made it hard to move. She rolled out of the way as quickly as she could before her opponent slammed his sword right into the spot she had occupied only seconds ago.

He was breaking the rules. This wasn't supposed to be to the death.

Azra had heard one of the servants say her opponent's name was Aldric. He was double her size and his muscular build was apparent despite all the armor. Yet another unfair advantage.

Aldric was towering over her almost entirely blocking the sun. Azra felt the shame of early defeat creeping its way into her consciousness. Wishing for all the world that she could find a way out of this.

Only moments from completely giving up, Azra felt something hard poking her in the back from underneath her. The sword. It flew out of her hand the moment the match started, leaving her weaponless and vulnerable. After taking a deep breath, she slowly gripped the hilt and summoned the strength from her core. Swiftly rolling out of the way again, she used the distance to quickly scramble to her feet. She was back in the game.

Azra braced herself, drenched in sweat and dizzy, she stood steadily. Holding her sword with both hands. Legs slightly bent at the knees for more balance and stability, something she

desperately needed at the moment. The two opponents were facing each other as if the match had just begun. Aldric rushed forward, sword raised. As he brought it down, his sword was met with Azra's. Metal clashing in the air. She held her ground but Aldric was using such force that she could barely keep her sword up. The force was too great that she took a step back, trying not to fall over again. She had to think quickly because Aldric wouldn't let up. Wasting no time, he struck out again. Azra blocked the attack by lifting her blade to his. The clanking of steel ringing through her ears. Aldric raised his sword again and Azra ducked, just as his sword whistled through the air right above her head. Hastily standing, she panicked. She blindly lashed her sword out in front of her, not thinking. Instead of her sword meeting air or metal, it hit skin. The open spot in Aldric's armor just below the bend at his elbow met Azra's blade which sliced clean through. Aldric's arm fell to the floor.

Aldric stopped and looked down at the forearm lying in the dirt. Not a drop of blood in sight. There were only wires.

Wires?

Head spinning faster and faster on a merry go round out of control, Azra blinked several times trying to take in the scene in front of her. Small sparks were flying from the open wound in his arm. Aldric was still as he looked back up at Azra and proceeded to do what he was doing, unfazed. As if he hadn't just lost a limb. Azra couldn't wrap her head around anything. Trying to bring her focus back to the match because Aldric was still rushing at her, wielding his sword in the one hand. She lifted her arms and their weapons clashed once again. Steel on steel. Aldric was so methodical and precise with every slight movement. Unhuman. Meanwhile she was spazzy and all over the place.

It's not like she had much practice in the art of sword fighting. Besides her two fencing classes in eighth grade with Mrs. Johnson, the horrid instructor who was teaching the classes. Azra had quit by the second class, partly from disinterest but mostly because of how discriminating and non inclusive her teacher was.

Aldric may have been exceedingly strong, but Azra had the advantage of speed. She sidestepped just as he jabbed his sword at her. But not before he managed to slice her arm. She hissed through her teeth. Before she could even assess the slit in her arm, Azra had to jump back again and block his attack. Everything was happening in a quick blur, yet time seemed to slow. Something caught her eye behind Aldric. It was Dimitri. He was watching intently from the weapons stand. His Emerald green eyes sparkling in the sunlight. The momentary distraction almost cost Azra her life. She had to think outside of the box. Sword fighting wasn't going to be enough. If he was going to play dirty, then so was she.

She had to use her own defensive skills. Trying to remember all the moves she had acquired from her fights at school, in which she would always win. Azra gripped the pummel of the sword as tightly as she could and ducked low to the ground, just as her opponent swung his sword again. Weapon at her side and out of the way, She tucked and rolled, landing in a crouch. This move distracted Aldric, just long enough for her to strike out with all her strength in her sword and swipe his legs, tripping him. He lost his balance and fell backwards. Azra wasted no time taking his sword from the ground beside him. A weapon now in each hand. She stood over her opponent, crossing her blades at the end just below his neck. Aldric was making incoherent grumbles from deep in his throat, accepting defeat as she backed off of him and shoved both weapons into the dirt. The match had ended.

The crowd was applauding all around them.

The two opponents stood before the king. Aldric kneeling in honorable defeat.

The king arose from his seat. He looked around at his subjects and raised a hand, indicating silence. “Looks as though we have ourselves a victor.” His voice was deep emotionless “Step forward, girl.” He said the last word bitterly. Azra did so. The king was about ten feet above her in the stands.. “You must claim your prize.” She took a deep breath to steady her mind as her adrenaline subsided before speaking. She still couldn’t believe she had won.

“That necklace,” she said, pointing to the piece of jewelry that was hanging loosely around the queen’s neck. Azra’s voice was dry as a bone as she was still out of breath and in desperate need of water. The king raised an eyebrow. “You have managed to defeat my champion and in return you ask for this measly necklace?” The judgement in his voice was not attempted to be masked. “Yes, your majesty” Azra felt awkward saying those words, she had never called anybody ‘your majesty’ before. It didn’t roll off the tongue. “Why?” he mused. Azra had been avoiding eye contact until that moment as she raised her eyes to his, with immediate regret. His eyes were a soulless ebony abyss. As if they could devour her with a single stare. She looked away before answering, “I-I think it’s pretty...?” She silently cursed herself. “We have an overabundant amount of ‘pretty’ jewelry, why this one in particular?” He wasn’t buying it. Azra had to think quickly.“Well, your majesty, my mother had a necklace similar to the one your queen is wearing.” She was lying through her teeth, “She had lost it before she...uh... passed away. When I saw it, I was reminded of her and I would like it as my prize for sentimental reasons. Your majesty.” She could only hope it was convincing enough for the king to not suspect her.

The king's face was blank and as he turned his back and walked to the queen. They were discussing under their breaths. Azra focused her stare at the ground, raising her head just in time to see the queen removing her necklace. She handed it to her lady's maid who made her way through the crowd to Azra. It was the queen who spoke first. "My dear, I am so sorry about the loss of your mother. I lost mine a long time ago." At that, a pang of guilt hit Azra but she ignored it. It had to be done, she reminded herself.

Aldric had been kneeling before the king a few feet behind her. "Azra!" She jumped at the sudden shout and turned to see Dimitri, sword in hand. "The gem!" He shouted. At first she didn't understand. A blue light shone out of the corner of her eye and she shifted her focus to Aldric, who had lifted his head, still kneeling. Helmet now off, she could see his whole face. He wasn't human at all.

The left half of his face was steel. A red orb where his eye should've been. The right half was gold plated. It was his right eye that made Azra's breath catch. It was a big glowing sapphire. The gem. Dimitri had suspected the gem was in the necklace but this sapphire was glistening in the sunlight like nothing she had ever seen before. The cerulean glow emitted a feeling of deep, ancient power. The melody of a stream flowing through Azra's consciousness, more peaceful and calming with every second that she peered into the stone. She was transfixed with the serenity taking over her mind. Stuck in place. Her thoughts were filled with ocean waves and sea breeze.

The sound of a metal echoed through her mind. Snapping Azra back to reality, just in time to see Dimitri running toward them, sword in hand. Before Aldric could even turn, Dimitri

raised his blade and brought it down on Aldric's head. He lopped it clean off. Azra gasped as Aldric's severed head rolled to her feet and his body fell to the ground.

Sparks were flying and wires of all different colors were flailing about. Along with the wires was an iridescent liquid with a sharp smell of battery acid oozing out of the head and onto Azra's boots. Shouts and screams erupted from the crowd. The king's guards were already in pursuit of their arrest.

They had to get out of there.

Azra reached down and picked up Aldric's head. Grimacing as she did. The head was heavy and even more acidic liquid poured out as she turned the face towards her. Trying not to stare into the stone again, she plucked the sapphire out of its socket. Ignoring the power coursing through her veins as she touched it. Dimitri was already fighting off guards. "Stop her! She has the sapphire!" The king shouted from the stands. Azra let go of Aldric's head and let it fall to the floor.

Dimitri tossed his sword to her and she caught it with her free hand. She wasted no time fighting off the guards and protecting Dimitri so he could program the device on his wrist. Kicking out at one of the men, Azra could only hold them off for so long. The king and his guards were closing in on the two of them. "Hurry," she said to Dimitri, panic creeping up her throat. "Almost there." Panic in his voice as well. None of this was part of the plan. "You ready?" he asked. She nodded vigorously. The king reached out and grabbed hold of Azra's wrist just as Dimitri had pressed the button. She tried to get her wrist back but he had a death grip on her. "Give me the gem, girl." fury in his voice " Let go of me!"

“You don’t know what you’ve just done.” Before she could respond, a blinding light erupted from Dimitri’s wrist and the two were yanked out of the Stream and into the void.