

DRAGON GIRLS

Mina the Lightning Dragon

by Maddy Mara

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Mina was sitting at the kitchen table on her mom's laptop, playing a game. She smiled as she watched three avatars flying through a lush forest. Mina was the one dressed in silver. The one in black was Hana, her twin sister. In the middle was an avatar wearing purple. That was Zora, the twins' cousin.

The three girls loved spending time together but they didn't get the chance to do so very often. Zora lived on the other side of the country. Just recently the three girls had all attended their grandma's eightieth birthday party. That had been so much fun. But now they wouldn't see each other for months and months.

Luckily, they could still meet up in online games. *Magic Treasure Zone* was one of their favorites. You had to search for hidden treasures while constantly avoiding danger. It was exciting to play and took a lot of skill.

Mina got better each time they played the game. She loved flying through the imaginary

world. But the best part about the game was chatting with the others. Right now, Hana was upstairs in their bedroom, on the computer the twins shared. Zora was in her room, thousands of miles away. Even though they were apart, it felt like they were together.

Outside, lightning flashed. Mina typed a message into the game's chat. *There's a storm coming!*

Zora replied: *There's one coming here, too. I just saw lightning.*

Mina felt a tingling in her spine. Of course, it wasn't impossible for there to be a storm in two parts of the country at the same time. It must happen sometimes.

But something else had happened to the cousins recently. Something that definitely didn't happen very often. The three girls had been drawn into a realm called the Magic Forest. And that wasn't even the most exciting part. Once they were there, Mina, Hana, and Zora transformed into magnificent dragons. They weren't just any type of dragon, either. They were Storm Dragons!

Hana was the Thunder Dragon. This made perfect sense to Mina. Her twin was loud and bold. Mina was the Lightning Dragon, but she wasn't sure yet what her special powers were. In dragon form, Mina had a lightning bolt on

her forehead. And everyone always said she was as fast as lightning. But Mina didn't really care what her special power was. Being a Storm Dragon was amazing, no matter what!

Outside, lightning flashed again. This time it lit up the entire night sky.

Whoa! wrote Zora. *We just had a MASSIVE strike here.*

So did we, typed Hana. *Something is going on. I can feel it.*

The tingling up Mina's back grew stronger. The Tree Queen, the ruler of the Magic Forest, had told them they would see a storm when it was time to return to her. The girls had

completed one task for the queen, but there was more to be done.

Mina heard the faint hum of a song. Was it coming from the computer?

Magic Forest, Magic Forest, come explore . . .

Mina's excitement swelled. She'd heard this song just before she went to the Magic Forest last time. Now she was sure of it—they were being called back!

Mina started typing a message. But something odd happened. The keyboard vanished. Mina blinked. The screen was getting bigger and brighter by the second.



Magic Forest, Magic Forest, come explore ...

The song grew louder. It came from all around her. Lightning flashed outside and the window flew open. The room filled with swirling wind and the air smelled like ripe mangoes

and cinnamon. On the computer, the forest trees stretched up and out of the screen until they surrounded Mina. Now she could hear the rustling of leaves and smell rich forest soil.

Lightning flashed again and the air crackled with electricity. Mina shut her eyes as the sweet-scented wind swirled around her, lifting her out of her seat. From somewhere nearby she heard the final line from the song.

Magic Forest, Magic Forest, hear my roar!