

FOXCRIFT

↳ BOOK THREE ↳
THE MAGE

Foxo

» BOOK THREE «
THE MAGE

CRAFT

BY
INBALI ISERLES



SCHOLASTIC PRESS / NEW YORK

Text and illustrations copyright © 2017 by Inbali Iserles

Map art by Jared Blando

All rights reserved. Published by Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic Inc., *Publishers since 1920*. SCHOLASTIC, SCHOLASTIC PRESS, and associated logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Scholastic Inc.

The publisher does not have any control over and does not assume any responsibility for author or third-party websites or their content.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without written permission of the publisher. For information regarding permission, write to Scholastic Inc., Attention: Permissions Department, 557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data available

ISBN 978-0-545-69087-4

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

17 18 19 20 21

Printed in the U.S.A. 23

First edition, October 2017

Book design by Nina Goffi

THE SNOWLANDS

THE WHITE MOUNTAINS

TAKU
GROUNDS

BUBBLING
GEYSERS

ICE
RAZORS

THE RAGING RIVER

(THE UPPER
WILDLANDS)

THE DARKLANDS

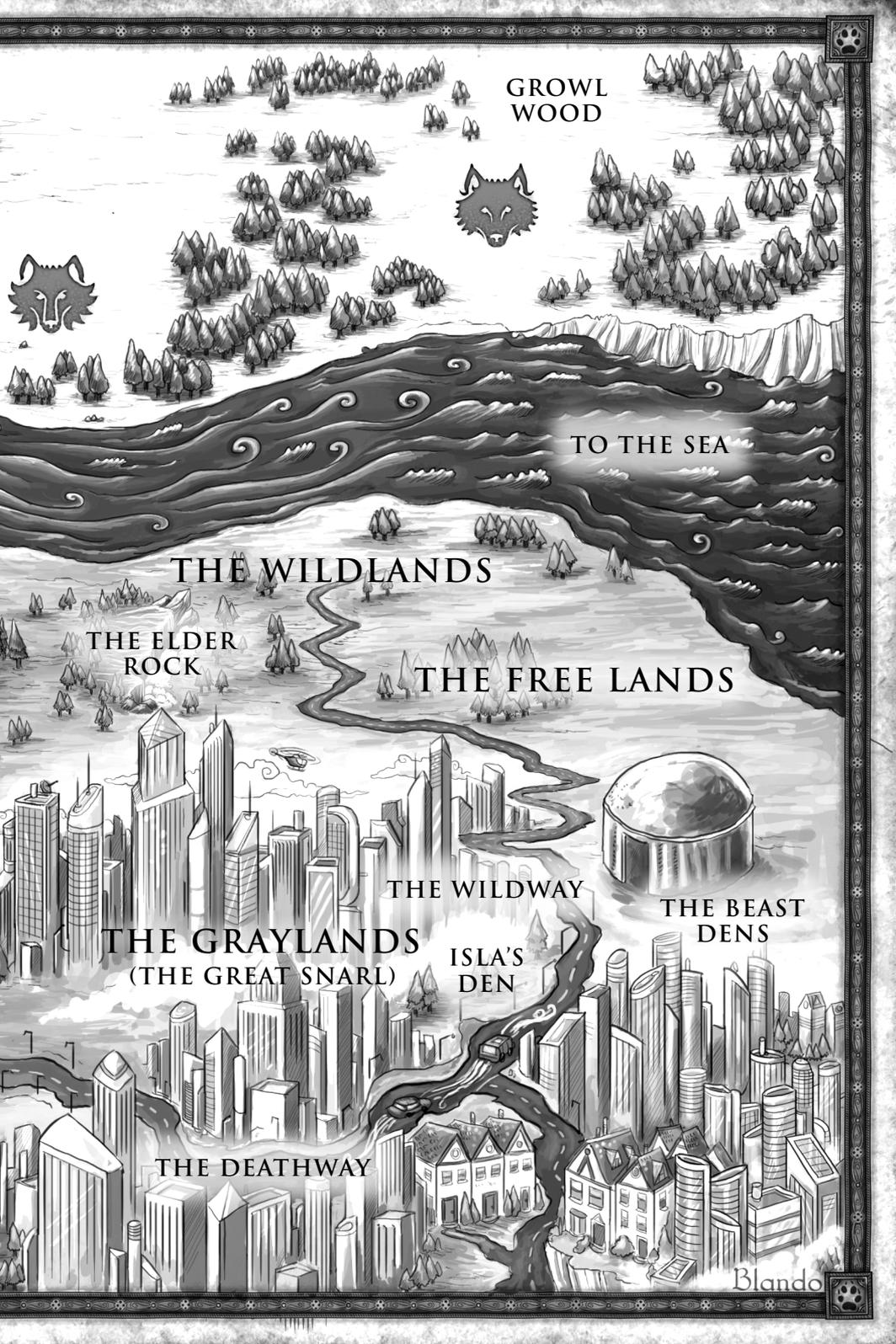
THE GHOST
VALLEY

THE DEEP
FOREST

THE MARSHES

THE LANDS OF
FOXCRAFT

(THE LOWER WILDLANDS)
THE WILDLANDS



GROWL
WOOD



TO THE SEA

THE WILDLANDS

THE ELDER
ROCK

THE FREE LANDS

THE WILDWAY

THE GRAYLANDS
(THE GREAT SNARL)

ISLA'S
DEN

THE BEAST
DENS

THE DEATHWAY

Blando

1



Mad fox, bad fox, just another dead fox.

I couldn't shake the words from my mind. I used to chant them with Pirie when we lived in the Great Snarl. It felt like a long time ago, another age. Before the Taken arrived and my brother disappeared. When life was simpler, when days were short and twilight was filled with adventure.

When Ma, Fa, and Greatma were still alive.

Before everything changed.

My paws sank into deep snow. A gale was shrieking over the tundra. Gray clouds webbed across the stars, flooding the night with an ominous glow. Wisps tumbled from the sky, ducking and darting like panicked mice. A blizzard was rising over the Snowlands.

The clamor of the Raging River dissolved beneath the howling wind. My paw prints followed me like a shadow. I squinted into the gloomy sky. I could make out a forest of spruce trees. Tall trunks shot up against ice-capped mountains. Beneath the branches, I'd find shelter from the storm.

A shriek and my head whipped around, heart lurching against my ribs. Was it only the wind, or something else?

Someone else?

The Snowlands expanded before me in all directions, a hostile world of churning flakes and freezing air.

The realm of the snow wolves.

The screeching gales disguised their calls. The tumbling snow concealed the land in its shimmering pelt. Were wolves active by day, like dogs? Or, like foxes, could they hunt at night? I knew so little about our savage, distant cousins.

I blinked hard. If wolves were prowling, I couldn't see them.

I couldn't see much through the blizzard. I could hardly make out the spruce anymore, just a faraway jumble of thick brown trunks.

I strained to catch Pirie's scent. The icy air betrayed no clues. I was alone in this wilderness. I cocked my head, my ears turning forward. Birds . . . Rabbits . . . Bugs. They had to be close. Even in the Snarl, there were always pigeons and mice, beetles and flies. There were so many different noises. The clacking of the furless, the roars of the deathway.