

The Iceberg's Crown

Kate Kim

Far beyond the edge of the world, there was a magical place called “The Iceberg.” Here, rising metallic skyscrapers were punctured by numerous windows that climbed up to the towers’ soaring tops that overlooked the arctic city. Brilliant, azure skies lapped by plump white clouds nearly swallowed the ultra-modern airships soaring through the wide expanse of The Iceberg’s sky.

The Iceberg had the most advanced engineers and inventors, who provided the city with the most modern technology, including flying ships, brilliantly designed buildings, and computers for almost anything.

However, the most extraordinary feature of The Iceberg was its small, fist-sized orb. It was a pearly, luminescent globe that cascaded shimmering light onto the city, blanketing the small iceberg. This magical protective orb, resting on the tip of their tallest tower, was so precious to the citizens that they had nicknamed it the ‘Iceberg’s Crown’. Great measures were set by their leaders to protect the orb.

The orb was granted by a wizard by the name of Lumex to a fisherman called Marcus Lu, who founded his own iceberg-based city with it. Their economy burst into expansion, growing and climbing the ladders of success until the Iceberg was at the peak of the world, ever so powerful, and yet secluded. For Lu knew, from the very start, that the Iceberg would be powerful. It would be successful, and thrive in every way. But the Iceberg would never be safe. The power it would hold would be so valuable, enemies would not hesitate to attack it, stealing all of their knowledge and intellectual resources. If the orb were to ever be taken, the Iceberg would perish.

The Iceberg continued to grow and expand, learning, trading, and strengthening themselves for many years. They stayed isolated from the rest of the world, minimalizing contact with the rest of the world.

Until one courageous, eleven-year old girl changed Iceberg history.

In this place called the Iceberg, there lived a young girl named Sam, who dreamed of being a pilot like her father. Her mother, Mingrone, was a Defender—charged with protecting their orb from the hundreds who attempted to steal it.

Sam was busy helping her father with tower patrol while a rogue general named Astern plotted to attack The Iceberg with his army of soldiers and his platoon of airships. However, this was unbeknownst to Sam, who steadfastly scanned the miles of empty sky around her with the airship’s special cameras while her father piloted the ship.

Earlier in the month, General Astern had discovered the tale of the orb from a wicked sorceress. As a greedy, piggy man, Astern had resolved to steal and use its magnificent protective powers to protect his own army in battle. Now he was fulfilling his resolution and planned to pillage the Iceberg.

Astern fixed his eyes on the intricate city below his ships. He bellowed for his attentive soldiers to attack the city, his quickening heart thudding from excitement. Instantly, the battle-ready airships dove down, tearing violently through the stunned city, even daring to swoop in mocking loops around the defended tower, engines trailing fluffy streams of gray smoke.

Sam rotated the northeast second camera thirty-one degrees, and caught a glimpse of something silver. She rotated it again to thirty-nine degrees to get a better view. It was an airship. She alerted her dad.

“Probably Pilot Schertz, forgetting his position again,” Mitch shrugged. Sam nodded doubtfully, but subtly spun all the north and east cameras that way regardless. Her face paled when she saw the rest of the ships clearly, contrasted against the bright sky.

“Dad. Dad! That isn’t Schertz’s ship. They’re not even The Iceberg’s ships. They’re”—Sam furrowed her brow—“they’re battle ships.”

“What?” Mitch checked the cameras himself. His face set in grim realization as he held up his radio. “Alert,” he said somberly.

“Intruders.”

In The Iceberg’s flight control room, a Defender named Mingrone was barking orders to her soldiers. Camera screens plating the walls showed a single scene from hundreds of angles. It was the shiny tower that’d housed the orb, strikingly impressive except for one thing.

The tip of the tower, where a pointed roof should have rested, was missing. In its place was blank, empty space. For the first time ever, the Iceberg’s Crown had been stolen.

Mingrone’s soldiers finally assembled themselves. Mingrone, rubbing her face, held up her radio and sent out a message to all the airships.

“The orb has been stolen.”

Sam wore a pair of sleek metal wristbands bordering her slender wrists, about two to three inches wide each. They stretched from her wrist to the middle of her forearm, each with a purple-jeweled amethyst clamp that could be activated to access the conjuring powers that the wristbands contained. Sam had organized a large inventory at home, tucked in her basement, full of things she might need. By pressing the amethyst clamps, whatever item Sam needed, as long as it was in her inventory, would be conjured to wherever Sam was at the moment. Included in this inventory was a small, carefully stitched piece of special fabric unique only to The Iceberg.

Sam’s silver shining wristbands shot out long wings made of this paper-thin substance as she soared to the foreign aircrafts, allowing the magnetic metal of her bracelets to then snap to the smooth underside of the ship. She quickly activated her wristbands’ advanced technology to camouflage herself and sneak stealthily onto it.

Sam tiptoed through the ship. She had no idea where the stolen orb could be, and realized, with her heart sinking, that this probably wasn’t the right ship. The rest of the fleet were trailing after this one, and she didn’t know which one it was in.

Suddenly Sam spotted a control room. A grin flicked onto her pixie-like face, and she quietly snuck in and set to ripping every wire could see with the serrated knife she conjured up.

Sam stopped dead. Footsteps began to pound towards her. Sam banged frantically on her bracelet for her camouflage just as a bewildered soldier flung it open and took in the mess. Seeing Sam, he lifted his radio. “Control room to cabin one; intruder!”

The soldier must have alerted every person on the ship, because *swarms* of cornflower blue-clad soldiers spilled out of every room in the ship, like angry blue hornets (or so Sam retold later). Sam sprinted out of the ship, straight out the open cargo door. She made a magnificent leap out of the ship and plummeted towards the growing land, when her father, horrified, saw his

daughter in the air. He dove towards her, jerking the ship's joystick so hard it snapped, and snatched her up out of the sky. Sam climbed into her seat and breathed a long sigh.

She had accomplished something, even if not what she had originally intended.

Sam's stomach plunged when they had landed and she had taken a good look around. Everything was a mess! Several piloted ships had been brutally demolished, crumbling and still smoking from the attack. A few Defenders had become severely injured with broken limbs and bleeding gashes, and although none had died, the city had become wild with panicked fright and crowded disarray.

Hordes of terrified citizens poured out of the town circle, bumping into one another, calling out the names of separated friends and family member's, while passing around rumors that did nothing to ease the madness, including a story about a twelve-year old girl who jumped out of a plane and tried to find the orb herself. At this, Sam buried her face in her hands and tried to decide whether to giggle or moan.

Sam looked around sadly. *This is how far the bad guys are willing to go*, she thought. They had attacked a whole city, full of innocent people, not caring in the slightest about the chaos they would wreck. What was next? She didn't know, and she was afraid of what it might be.

But worst of all, Sam realized as she turned around, was that the city's sheltered, protected orb—the crown of their iceberg—had disappeared, the entire tip of the tower ripped from its gleaming body. The tower stood tall and jagged, mournfully lonely without its glowing companion.

Though exhausted from her ordeal, Sam stayed up late that night. She stared at her city, dull, dim, and sad without its protector. The tower that had once brought such feelings of contentment and security was now a reminder of their vulnerability. Sam glared at the offending tower and made a decision.

She was going after the ships.

The next morning Sam woke up early and snuck out to the airfield. She jumped into a junky old travel ship and tinkered with the engine until it worked again. The ancient aircraft groaned to life clumsily with a roar, its grumpy engine gushing smoky gray fumes as if the metal aircraft were stretching after a nice, long nap. The plane began to roll along the field, slowly picking up speed.

The airship was going extremely fast now. Sam tilted back in her seat as the front wheels lifted off the ground. She was about to take off when there was a sudden, loud CLUNK. The front wheels dropped so jerkily Sam almost flew out of her seat. The airship sputtered a little, coughed once, then went silent. It was dead.

"No, no, no . . ." Sam moaned. But there was no bringing it back to life. Sam hopped out of the plane and trudged home, defeated.

Sam was still sulking on her bed that night, when it hit her like an avalanche of gigantic rocks. She still had to follow the ships that had torn her precise little city apart, no matter what. Even if her plans *had* been ruined twice before. *After all, the third time's the charm*, Sam thought.

Sam gathered her bag again and snuck out of the house. When she reached the airfield, there was a light-haired someone leaning against a gorgeous, brand-new plane! The someone was *glowing* with yellow light. It was a wizard.

“Hello, Samantha. I am Lumex.”

Sam gasped. Lumex was the wizard who had created their orb! Sam peppered Lumex with relentless questions as they boarded the ship and took flight into the air. From the patient answers Lumex gave her, Sam gathered that Lumex had found out that the orb had been stolen and wanted to help get it back. She couldn't directly interfere with Sam's adventure according to wizard laws, but small things on the side were possible. Lumex also told Sam of the evil wizard, Damaz, who was helping Astern. Sam told Lumex about *their* side of things, about Sam's wristbands that could conjure things from her home inventory, and how the attack had been so unexpected and awful. They talked for so long that Sam nearly didn't notice the gleaming fleet of ships just ahead of theirs.

They had arrived.

“Okay,” said Sam, “are you coming inside with me?”

Lumex looked regretful. “I can't. Wizard interference. . .”

Sam took a deep breath and activated the camouflage on her bands. She jumped on the ship and crept through it, navigating her way throughout it with uncertainty until she found the twinkling sphere, resting in a sparse, unused room tucked in the corner of an empty corridor.

Sighing in relief, Sam made her way back to her own ship to Lumex.

She held up the orb triumphantly. “Got it,” she declared.

When Sam returned to the Iceberg in her ship, she was met with loud peals of thunderous applause and cheers. Sam was presented with the opportunity of being a Defender—the highest position in the Iceberg—even though she was six years too young. However, Sam turned it down and requested to be a pilot and get her own license instead. Her request was granted.

No one ever managed to successfully steal the Iceberg's Crown after that, though there were numerous attempts. Still today, pilot Samantha Elliott Crinkle is considered one of the Iceberg's most famous, bravest heroes—and definitely its best pilot.