

WARRIOR CHILDREN



THE IMMORTALS SERIES

LEGENDARY THREE

VAUGHN EDWARD

PROLOGUE A

HE LANDED IN THE CANYON. The ground shattered and cracked in five places, four hundred feet below from where he was standing at the top of the cliff. He stood up, shook his head and yelled out to nobody in particular. "Seriously?! What. In. The. HELL?!" *How do they keep following me? From where?*

A minute later, two portals opened up in front and behind him. Ten large and grotesque, hulking figures, five from each portal, shuffled through. He eyed them curiously and saw each had an upside-down half-moon on their forehead. *Just don't give up, do they? Sharp fangs and demonic in nature. Well this should be fun, at the very least.*

They slowly circled him, enclosing him in the center.

The leader of the group scoffed and spoke out. "Ten of us! Sent to dispose of one small boy? A waste of our time!" The others agreed, and murmurs and jeers simmered around the circle.

Small, sleek and slender, the boy appeared to be in his mid-teens. He sighed and ran his left hand through his dark, wavy hair, while his right hand rested easily on a long, golden and metallic staff, which stood as tall as him. Acting as if he was ignoring the predators before him, he casually touched and inspected the leaf-shaped tip at the end of the staff, rubbing his hand slowly on one of the flat sides.

A voice rang out from the circle. "Leader, after coming this far, you should allow each of us to tear him apart slowly, one at a time. It would be more satisfying than just gutting him with a spear."

The boy slowly lifted his head and sneered. The right corner of his mouth curled up into a thin smile. All that could be heard was, "Heh heh". *Maybe I can find out more about this portal, if I can draw a few more out of it.*

In his most cocky voice, the boy retorted, "One at a time? Each get a bloody turn, while nine of you watch on the side? Technically, that's still ten against one. The way I see it, ain't much of a fair fight." He paused. "I'm thinking, maybe you should call a few more of your pretty friends to come join you. You know, to even the odds a little bit?"

The leader yelled. "Enough!" He pointed to one of his followers down the line. "Get it over with! Kill him, now!"

Immediately, the boy shifted his stance and sprang up into the air in a back flip. A beam of light shot out from his staff and exploded one foot in front of the leader, causing him to tumble backward, while the boy landed outside the circle.

He stared at the group in front of him and taunted them. "I'm much faster than all of you. I can run, and I can hide. I can do this ALL day. I would even venture to say, I am physically stronger than your strongest. If you care to test me? Ah, but I already told you. Let's even the odds. Bring a few more here, and then I'll fight."

After pursuing him for nearly two hours through the mountains, leaping from rock to rock and running through the woods, they came into a clearing. Again, the boy repeated, "It's really very simple. My directions aren't hard to follow. Bring a few more here, and I'll fight."

Clearly frustrated, the leader threw his arms up in the air in rage and screamed at the top of his lungs. Instantly, a portal opened up.

The boy watched intently. He saw five more emerging from the portal. He set his gaze to the very back of the portal, as far back as he could see inside of it. A familiar feeling set upon him.

Well ain't that interesting. They're from home. I knew there was something familiar about these yayhoos. A moment of annoyance, and he creased his brow. But where would they be hiding on Mars?

"Father? You gonna answer that one?" the boy asked, loud enough for his ears only. He waited a moment. No answer. *Right then.* "I forgot. You only answer when YOU see fit," he muttered.

Whatever. "Do I really ask for much? No. Do I talk to myself? Absolutely. Why? Cause I've no one else to talk to, except for huge, ugly demons twice my size. Mission. Find rocks. Throw rocks around. Holy bitch. I've definitely hit a new low."

He let out a long sigh, then screamed out. "Eight months, Father! You said he would be here! But still no sign of Edward!" No reply. "Whatever. Let's just finish this."

He kicked a rock and prepared himself for battle with the fifteen demons before him. Just then, the air crackled and popped behind and above him. *What the hell? Only a small handful in the universe could possibly know this technique of communication.*

Without turning around, the boy said sarcastically, "Whomsoever you are, you have picked a most inopportune time. As you can see, I am in no position to talk. Even though I'm, talking to you right now? I can, however, tell that your intention is not to harm me. Because of that, I'll not waste your time in finding me by cutting the communication. If you wish, you can watch. Before I begin, state your names. Quickly."

PROLOGUE B

“THOSE STARS! MAN, IT’S A perfect night!” Starko was resting on his back, staring up at the sky and pointing his finger. “You know what, Thomas? With all those planets, I sometimes wonder if there are any others out there.”

“By that, you mean?”

“Well, like me and you. And if there are, you think we’ll ever meet them?”

“You know, I wonder myself,” Thomas replied lazily. “But it’s all speculation. Maybe they’re out there. Maybe they’re not.”

Starko was silent and thoughtful. Then, in a slow and drawled-out manner, he stated, “So. The sons of Surya exist.”

Reflecting on his entire past, Thomas finally answered, “We sure do.”

“But what do you really think? After all these years, surely you’ve gotta have some kind of an opinion?”

Starko, for a god, you sure do sound like a babbling, ignorant child. I mean, you sound like I used to, before you turned me into this Greek god. Look at me! I’m thick and muscular, over six feet tall, and this fiery, red hair of mine...”

“Doesn’t make you look like a Greed god,” Starko interrupted with a cheerful grin.

They were both humorous, remembering the antics of their days together. Starko leisurely sat up and looked at Thomas. “Seriously, though. Give me your most intelligent answer. You think the children of all those other stars exist somewhere in form? Look at all the planets up there, and think

about all the ones we can't even see. You'd THINK the gods of those other universes have spawned children also. It only makes sense, doesn't it?"

Thomas was quiet for a moment before he answered. "I really don't know. Actually, I don't know if it's even worth caring or thinking about. I mean, maybe the gods are making babies. I don't know. I suppose if the Otherworlds wants us to know, it'll make us know. Wouldn't that be slightly arrogant and moronic of us to think we're the only ones?"

"Maybe we ARE the only ones." Starko shrugged his shoulders casually. "Okay, fine. I can remain content with that answer. For now, at least."

Suddenly, a blazing stream of fire and light shot across the sky. "A shooting star?" Starko's eyes bulged in wonder. "How much more perfect can this get?!"

A straight line soaring to their right, it changed colors, from green to gold to white to blue, and back to green. It slowed down, until it hung suspended in mid-air for nearly half a minute.

"What in the blazing hell?" Startled, Thomas slowly stood up.

The colorful star discharged with a blast from its suspended state and traveled toward the left, before it zigzagged, racing closer and closer to the ground. There was a big explosion in a field in the distance. Lights from every color of the rainbow lit up the night sky.

"Come on!" Starko ran toward the field, with Thomas at his heels.

Three hundred feet away, they both stopped. A powerful force reverberated in the air, which caused their bodies to tingle wildly. Both Thomas and Starko were rendered speechless, and all thoughts dwindled to nothing. There was but a single hum, vibrating from the field. In both their minds, they heard, "Sons of Surya, an honor it is for me."

Striding from out of the field came the outline of a small boy with an aura of pure white, reaching thirty feet in length in every direction. In his right

hand, he carried a three-pronged weapon, five feet in length, which shined with its own aura of pure silver.

When he finally stood fifteen feet away from Thomas and Starko, he laid the weapon down and simply fell to his knees in full prostration, with his forehead to the ground and his arms outstretched. A wave of blinding energy pierced through them both. Slowly, the boy rose from his position and stood staring at the two sons of Surya.

He was a teenage boy, slim in figure and cut facial features. A broad smile passed over his face right before he laughed heartily. "Hahahahahahaha!"

He laughed for quite some time, with his hand pressed to his belly, until tears were running down his face. It was so infectious and intoxicating, to the point where Thomas and Starko were laughing without reason.

After some time, he quieted. Dictating with immense pleasure, he voice out, "Starko, Thomas, as you can already feel from the very depths of your bones, we know each other as the rains know the sky, as the leaves know the trees. It was, after all, my father who urged your father to turn the tides of transformation for you both, from mortal thinking to enlightened intelligence, nearly one hundred and fifty years gone by."

"Who... who ARE you?" asked Starko in awe.

"I am as you are. I am that which has always been. I am my father, and my father is me. I am the son of Siva." He breathed in the nighttime air with great elation and slowly looked around, taking in his surroundings.

He turned back to the two sons of Surya. "On this planet, I believe I will choose..." He closed his eyes and seemed to be concentrating, listening for something. Opening them back up, he looked eagerly at the two sons of Surya. "I have chosen the name Andrei. A strong and beautiful name, I heard it

whispered to me, as I scanned the length and breadth of this planet. What do you think?"

"Andrei. Siva. It works," Starko said. "Siva," he repeated. "As I know it, he's the greatest god in existence." He turned to Thomas and slapped him on the shoulder. "Like I said, a perfect night!"

Thomas gave a slight bow of his head. "Seems like a perfect night, indeed. But something tells me you've come with a bit of urgency, and that there's more to this story than the merry meeting of three gods."

"Truly, Thomas. I HAVE come with urgency. Your roles in the coming days are about to change."

Starko politely interrupted. "I knew this day was coming." Andrei merely nodded in agreement. "Father warned me about a time when we would have to join forces with the three gods from eons ago. It seems that time is upon us now, is it not? Is my story on par with yours?"

"It is." Andrei's gaze was intense and piercing. "Exactly one month from now, the skies in three different directions will light up in grandiosity, and the deities of grace will fall from the heavens to lead the peoples of Earth from the Age of Darkness into a Golden Age of knowledge, wisdom and heartfelt silence.

"The suchness of this moment to come has been declared by my father. Through the combined forces of the authorities of the son of Kala, the son of Gaia, and the son of Arul, the tyrannical occupancy of he who leads in the guise of fear, doubt, worry, jealousy, greed and dread, can be disposed of. It is such that this deity of terror has arisen in full form through the ignorant minds of humanity.

"He is but a blood god, one who has taken the lives of hundreds of thousands of innocents, and he has dripped the life force of hundreds of thousands more to nearly nothing."

“You paint a pretty bleak picture for us.” Thomas stuck his hands in his pockets and tilted his head.

“Perhaps, but true,” Andrei responded. “Yet, the three to come, so long as they remain intact and alive, will train, inspire, and rouse the forces in order to annihilate.”

He continued. “Once upon a time, a wizard of very high status, and a god from the loftiest realms, banished the brother of this blood god to an unknown space between the spaces. The demonic energy, which was sealed away, has since been dissolved into pure light. Yet, a part of that banished demon lives on through the reign of he who has claimed supremacy in the unnatural foulness of human nature.

“Humanity is now at a crux, in which the scale can be tipped in either direction. This blood god, Moloch, has rooted his energy into all the sleeping minds of unawareness. He has made them all forget who they are and has twisted their minds to the darkest corners of abomination.”

“Moloch?” Thomas was full of questions. “Sounds like a good name to fit an evil bastard. Just who or what is he?”

“That is a very good question, Thomas. On my honor, it is also a question I cannot answer, for I simply do not know the exact origin of this monster. It has been speculated by various gods and goddesses in the Otherworlds, but none have bluntly come forth and affirmed in a knowing manner. If my father knows, which surely he does, he has not spoken.”

“Ah,” said Starko. “But you said, the brother of Moloch was once banished and that his energy dissolved. So, if that’s the case, then what was his brother?”

Andrei tilted his head a bit. “I also said, a part of that demon lives on in what is now known as Moloch. And if I know not what Moloch is, then I know not what his brother was. As far as I know, which is not much, since I was not

there, and I only received the story second-hand from my father... Moloch's brother was the antithesis of purity.

"And if conscious, streaming awareness is your definition of purity, then the brother of Moloch was the complete contradiction to consciousness itself. If that is the case, so too is Moloch the antithesis of consciousness, or that which streams through everyone and everything."

Thomas and Starko looked confused.

"As I stated, in exactly one month, the three gods from the Otherworlds will take their thrones upon the world to battle once again. They have been chosen for the second time to courageously defend this planet. Upon their arrival, they will inhabit their spaces for one month, as their bodies will form into substance from the particles of light from the Otherworlds.

Thomas creased his brows. "So, let me get this straight. Three gods are coming to Earth to do battle against some apocalyptic demon who wants to plague the planet with violence and destruction. And these three gods aren't like those legendary half-breed, demigods, born from a god and a human, are they?"

Andrei shook his head slowly. "No. They will not be born from a mortal. The three to come, will be born from pure light, pure energy."

"Ah," said Thomas. "So, one hundred percent god. When will this happen?"

"On the eve of luminosity, as the lustrous Chandra shines her light of intelligence, the bodies of each of the three gods will have reached their peak densities."

"Chandra?" Starko asked.

Andrei nodded. "She is the goddess of the Moon. There is no other like her, and she will hinder or grace as she sees fit."

“I see. You said, on the eve of luminosity. You mean the Full Moon, right?” asked Thomas.

“Indeed, I do mean that.” Andrei continued. “However, although their bodies will have formed into dense matter, they will still be very weak. Only when the Blue Light from the Otherworlds comes pouring in, will they be capable of gaining bodies of immortal strength. It is imperative that the three gods stay alive until then.”

Thomas inquired again. “The Blue Light? You mean the Blue Full Moon, right? There are two Full Moons in December, and one of them is the Blue Moon.”

Andrei stared at Thomas for a moment. “HmMMMMM.”

Well that was a non-answer. Clever bastard. Thomas turned to his right and spit on the ground. He looked at Starko without saying another word.

“And you? Can you not stay and fight with us?” Starko asked. “It seems the powers you wield could easily wipe out a lot of the bad stuff going on.”

“It is not for me to interfere, at least on that level,” Andrei said. “What would the people learn if all I did was wave my hand and pull the demons from this world? Only through a combination of the magicks of the Otherworlds and the life experiences of each individual, as they overcome the demonic forces, can the people AND this world truly move forward in strength and intelligence.”

“I see.” Thomas shook his head, and the corners of his lips creased upward. “I have to admit, that makes too much sense.”

Andrei nodded. “Thomas. Starko. As the sons of Surya, the great god of the Sun, you have been called by the gods of the Foremost, to serve humanity by serving the sons of Kala, Gaia and Arul. Although their bodies will have formed into bones, blood and organs, they will be very weak for some time.

“As gods who walk as matter amongst the mortals made of matter, you are urged, and expected, with the help of the three gods from the Otherworlds, to wrestle the human and animal races from the grips of darkness, and bring them all to the brink of the Otherworld’s boundless boundary.

“Starko, son of Surya, do you accept?”

“I do.”

“Thomas, son of Surya, do you accept?”

“Sounds like no other choice, huh?”

Andrei tilted his head a slight bit and raised one eyebrow.

“In that case, I suppose I do.” Thomas stretched his arms out and yawned.

“Very well, then.” Again, the son of Siva bowed heartily to them both. “My time has now drawn to a close. I must bid farewell. One day, I shall return.”

His body exploded into millions of light particles. Both Starko and Thomas had to shield their eyes. When they uncovered them, the son of Siva was gone, but there remained an incandescent glowing throughout. Surrounding them in all directions were the most colorful roses and flowers from every species.

“Wow!” Starko was in complete amazement, staring at the glowing orbs in the air and all the flowers strewn about the ground.

“Wow is right,” said Thomas. “But wow, did he have a way with words. I felt like I was in an airy, fairy tale from centuries ago.”

“I’m sure he rarely makes it to Earth, so it probably doesn’t matter what time-period he’s in. Besides, he’s the son of Siva. He’s probably earned the right to talk however he wants to talk.”

Thomas shrugged his shoulders and stuck his hands in his pockets. “I can live with that answer.”

CHAPTER 1

Part I: Edward's Dwelling

MARVELING AT THE INTRICACIES of his new dwelling, he smelled the damp stench of soil poking through the rocky floor, as it filled his senses. The light flickered once. It flickered again. Faintly, he saw the outline of rocks and insects crawling upon them. *I don't think I'll ever get used to this. How am I even seeing this?*

He passed what seemed to be a faint outline of his right hand through his stomach area, and he gasped. It slipped through, without touching anything solid. He looked down to where his body was supposed to be. All he could see was the pulsing violet light in the center of his chest.

As the hours passed, the light spread, following small pathways which looked to be veins running in every direction. *If I am seeing this, surely, then my eyes have formed. I smell the Earth, but my body doesn't feel solid yet.*

Twelve hours passed. Aware of every detail as it was happening, he heard slight echoes of dripping water and the bugs which were swarming in every which way. *I can now see, smell and hear. What a grace.* He turned his head in the direction of something scurrying nearby, and he saw a faint outline of a small animal with a long tail. *Goodness. What in the world is that? I've been gone so long. So much evolution has occurred.*

After seven more hours, he felt a small tingle in the middle of his forehead. This lasted for nearly thirty minutes before it spread throughout his body. First his toes, then his groin and the bottom of his tailbone, before it traveled up his spine.

Startled at these sensations, he was forced to emote. *Four of my five senses. I won't need the fifth for at least a month.*

Breathing in and out slowly, a tear rolled down his cheek, and he whispered to nobody in particular, "I'm back. It's been so long. So many incredible moments. So many horrific events. And... and I... and we can experience it all again. I can't believe I'm actually back."

He continued to whisper, sending hissing echoes bouncing from wall to wall within the confines of his cavern. "I... I wonder what it's like out there now. After all these years, the evolution of... of everything! Certainly, every detail, every crack and crevice, and even the animals and the people. Surely, every single atom and cell on this planet has evolved!"

His whispering quieted, and he was content to sit in silence, without a care of the world or his own experience. A full twenty-four hours passed. He remained sitting on the slab of stone, watching the light emanating from his body, reflecting around the rock walls.

His eyebrows raised, and curiosity hit home. *Indeed. I wonder what the world is like.* With effort and concentration, he focused his mind as far out as he could imagine, stretching his energy and attention for miles and miles beyond the walls.

Murmurs of voices, children laughing and people screaming. Strange sounds he had never before heard, and wondrous melodies, somebody singing, and a pounding rhythm. The clanking of metal grinding, barking and conversations. It was electrifying!

Even the wind he could hear brushing against the leaves of various trees, and the waves of the water crashing into the rocks. He listened and listened in ecstasy for several hours, soaking in the sounds and the energies of a world so foreign to him.

He smiled. A small giggle. After listening some more, he laughed uncontrollably for several minutes. He was joy incarnate.

Slowly, he tried to stand, but wobbled a bit and fell down. Pushing his arms against the ground, he rose up onto his knees and breathed a few moments before crawling toward the wall. Leaning against the wall, he stood up and walked slowly forward, then backward.

He walked the entire span of the room which he occupied in the large underground cavern, following the lining of the wall. He made a full circle and reached the spot he had first started walking.

Eyeing the stone he was previously sitting on, he took one step. *I can do this. I don't need that god-damn wall to hold me up.* Another step, and another. Slowly but surely, he reached his destination. When he fell forward upon the rock, he laughed wildly again.

Halfway through the second day, he was still sitting in the same spot, unmoved. Breathing, seeing, smelling, feeling, listening. The smile upon his face never left. Then, from out of nowhere, he heard a voice as if the person was standing directly in front of him. Only, the voice came from the very center of his brain.

Low and entrancing, the voice streamed into his awareness. "You are now acclimated to the vibration of the Earth realm."

He was instantly placed in a trance, but still aware of everything happening. "Father! The Earth has accepted me well. I breathe. I see. I feel. And this dirt! The dirt is very pungent. And the sounds of this planet! Everything has changed. It has all evolved. I can't believe the world I live in!"

"Son of Time, much has happened since you last dwelt amidst the shadows of this planet. As time passes, it is a law willed by the Otherworlds, that all matter must change. As thoughts change, the atomic nature of all things change, causing bodies to change. When those thoughts change and the old concepts collapse, structures change. Buildings, trees, and all races, from the tiniest insects to the largest animals and humans, change."

“Yes. I knew this was the case. Yet, I am still very astounded to find how immense and intense the change has been from our last footings three millenniums ago. By the way, Father, you have come with a purpose?”

“As all things change, so too must your name. The evolution of all things continues, even the particles encased within the sounds of names. You will need a suitable calling to fit this new age you are tasked upon, for the title you were given thousands of years past has not the power to guide you in the modern world.”

“I see. What do you wish for me to be addressed as?”

“My son.” There was a grand pause. “Your name, which I wish to bestow upon you, hails from the resonance of two lines of adornment. It vibrates with wisdom energy from a line of saints, and it carries the energy of courage and leadership from a lineage of kings. With this name, I will give thee the power to walk as those who walked as wise men in a world of chaos, and the magnetism to draw upon the nobilities of those who were born into status and grandeur.

“Your very being, as it mortalized into the body which forms, will be granted passage by my will and presence beyond time and space. That which you will be called, draws from the power of saints and kings past, and thrives as a living force in the modern day. From this moment on, you will now be addressed as Edward!”

When spoken, a shaft of brilliant white beamed through the ceiling of his dwelling and poured into the top of his crown, enveloping his entire body. Strength flooded his muscles and bones, and his senses were heightened.

His father added, “Now that you have been aligned with your new name, you will need an official last name to be placed on documents as you walk the planet. You shall take one of my names. You will be known amongst the mortals, as Edward Kronos.

After nearly an hour, all was quiet, and Edward sat motionless but relaxed. *Thank you, Father.*

A few hours passed, and his silent reverie was broken by yet another voice, which pierced into his thoughts.

“Can you hear me?”

Edward was instantly filled with amusement. “I can.”

“So, you’re aware!”

“Yes, very. Father granted me my new name, Edward Kronos. And you?”

“Yes. Father too came and went. For this day and age, he willed the son of Arul to be known as Gene. Gene Arul.”

Edward’s lips creased upward. He felt the resonation of Gene’s new name. It was powerful and fit for the contemporary setting. “It’s very strong, very pronounced. Your father makes no mistakes in the choosing of all things. What of Gaia’s born? Have you heard?”

“I have,” said Gene. “He’s resting now. He was in very deep communication with the Earth goddess, and when he came to, he needed rest. He would have contacted you, but while we were communicating, he got weak and his voice faded out.”

“His chosen name?”

Like electricity through wires, Gene sent the thought to Edward. “The goddess herself chose it for him, imparting him with a sense of adventure and all the gifts that a goddess would give. Christopher.”

“Christopher? Let me guess. Christopher Gaia?”

“Exactly!” Gene was clearly excited.

“Nice. I like it. It suits him.” Edward paused, letting the new name roll in and out of his consciousness. “After all this time. We’re back.”

“Yes. We are,” Gene answered. “As I understand, nearly two thousand miles separate our bodies. I’m immobilized in the central portion of this land. I ended up in a cavern in some place that the mortals call Missouri. Christopher is somewhere in the east in a place called the Shawangunk Mountains in New York. He told me he heard people on the outside of the caverns whispering the name of the mountains. Where are you?”

“Near the water, underground. I feel the presence of mountains everywhere, and an immense body of water is very near. I listened and found that I am somewhere in the west of this country. In some place called California.”

There was a long gap of silence. Finally, Edward spoke. “It’s time, you know. Now that we have full awareness, and the powers of communication have opened to us, we haven’t a minute to lose.”

“Yes. I know. Our Guardian Watchers. It’s time.”

Part II: Mery's Dreams
A small town in the Midwest
1st Day of December

"Nooooo!" Thrashing wildly, Mery's scream pierced into every room in the house. "No," she whispered while panting.

Dashing to her room, Douglas almost hit his head on the top frame of the door, as it hung a few inches below six feet. He crouched a bit, so that his seventy-one inches could fit through. He found his daughter uncomfortably sprawled out on her bed, sweat and tears pouring down her face. Her hair was in a matted mess.

Dammit! Everyday this happens. Her dreams are my worst nightmare!
He stood frozen, tranced out in fear for a few seconds, before snapping out of it. "Mery! I'm here! Oh gods! It's okay, calm down. Just catch your breath. He-here. Just wait a sec. I'll get you some water."

"I'll... I'll be alright, really. I don't need you fussing over me all the time." She was choking on her words as her father left the room, and she knew she wasn't very convincing.

He sat next to her on the bed and watched her gulp down the water. Her long, dark hair was frizzed out, partially covering her face. Her chest and body were still heaving heavily, and she was slurring her words. "Oh, my head."

She put her right hand to her forehead, before sliding it down to wipe the drool onto her sleeve. She took another sip of water, and with a trembling hand, she slowly placed the glass onto the mantle beside the bed. "So, you know the past month I've been having these dreams. They're freaky intense! And dad, they seem so real. I feel like I'm right there living the moment when they happen."

She was quivering, with a despairing look on her face. "Dad? Wh-what's happening? You're always wanting me to tell you about all these dreams, like they matter. You sit there and act like it's all real. I'm either crazy, or you are. Or, maybe we both are!"

"Sweetie." Douglas took a deep breath. He did not know what to say. He opened his mouth, but the words would not come out. He tensed a moment, before letting out a long sigh. He knew the time had come. She deserved an explanation.

She was clutching onto her wrist, which was wrapped up in her blanket. "These dreams! They entice you and make you wanna stay in it for a real long time. It's all good, and you're put into this fantasy dream land at first. Then, all of a sudden, you're thrown for a loop, cause everything changes, and blood and guts are splattered everywhere! I mean, what the hell?!"

Mery had a crazed look. Her normally pretty face was scrunched up, and her forehead was wrinkled. "And those stupid boys! Those three, god-damn boys! See?! I'm already talking to you like it's all real! But they're always in my dreams! I'm starting to feel like I'm possessed by them. And they aren't even the scary ones! They're real tame compared to everything else. They shine in all their glory. It's like they WERE the light.

"But then, it goes from them to all this gore and war, and blood and death. I can't even tell you how many times I've seen people killed in my dreams! It all seems so real! I'm losing it dad! I'm really losing it!" Her sobs had turned into a full-out cry.

Looking like a crazed lunatic, she uncovered her wrist from under the blanket and pointed at it. Speechless, Douglas dropped his jaw. "In the dream, they pointed to my glowing wrist. They called it a Trident. They told me I have to follow my calling. When I woke up, I find that my dream ain't really a dream! Look at my wrist! It's glowing! It's all real!"

Eyes wide and terrified, Mery was shaking uncontrollably. Choking on her own spit, she could barely talk. "I'm going bloody crazy, dad. My head feels like it's about to pop. If anyone sees this, they'll wheel me away with no questions asked. I've become a god-damn case-study for the government!"

Oh no. No no no no no! How can this be? Why her?! Why now?! "I'm sorry," he whimpered. "There's a lot to tell you. I can explain. You're not crazy. I'm sorry all this is happening to you. None of this was supposed to happen."

Douglas was pale. His forehead creased, and he fidgeted. He ran his left hand through his short, white hair. "Mery, I need for you to tell me something. Why were you screaming 'no' when you woke up?"

She shuddered when he said the word. The very mention of it sunk her back into the experience of her dream. "Dad, these boys, they aren't the only ones I saw in my dream. I saw others. But these other people, they weren't human, or they didn't look it. They were big. I don't know what they were. In the backdrop of everything, there was something really gory. I could taste it. Feel it! It was pure evil." She closed her eyes, and tears raced down her cheeks.

He placed his hand on her shoulder. "Take your time, sweetie. Just take your time. Nothing'll happen to you. I promise. Everything'll be alright."

She calmed down a slight bit. "What I saw was the most horrific thing. It was worse than anything you'd see in the worst movies. And I was there. I could feel it all happening. People were enslaved. They were shackled and tortured and gutted. I never saw the thing behind it all, but it or he obviously controlled all those pawns of his that I saw.

"And those people. When they resisted, they were... they were slaughtered." This time, she whispered it, "Slaughtered. I could see it all, feel it all. I swear I was there and that it was happening. Then I woke up, obviously screaming."

She was staring at the glowing insignia on her wrist, while they both sat in silence. Douglas stammered, "Mery. I..." Stumbling on his words, he dropped his head and sighed. "Listen, it's been really tough ever since your mother and Lynne left. And I've a lot of explaining to do, starting with that mark on your wrist."

"What?! You know about this?! Wha-?"

"Li- Listen. It's like I told you. None of this was supposed to happen! None of this!" He shook his head from side to side frantically. "Your mom and I, we kept all this a secret from you, for your own good. I didn't know you'd open up to all of it, at least not in this way. You weren't supposed to. I'm sorry. I can say that a million times, that I'm sorry. But I didn't know any of this would be happening."

"Dad, what are you talking about? Any of what? What the hell IS this thing on my wrist?!"

"Mery, there's a lot to tell you. Your mother and I, we kept these things from you for your own good. That mark on your wrist. It was always there. It was just... it was just concealed. We hid it from you, using magick." His voice was shaking, and he was searching for the right words.

"What? What the hell are you talking about?" Her face wrinkled up, and she squinted her eyes into a glare, before giving her father a dumbfound look.

"Look." He took his left wrist and placed it on his lap, face up. "See this line?" There was a small line two inches long that looked like a tattoo.

"Yeah."

He took his right index finger and placed it on the line. Nothing happened. "Gimme a second. I can't do this unless I relax, and I'm far from relaxed right now."

With his eyes closed, he took a few deep breaths. For several minutes he sat there, while Mery audibly sighed and thumped the wall with her right foot. Finally, he opened his eyes. His demeanor had changed. The look on his face was extremely focused. He incanted aloud. "Vasi!"

In doing so, he was thrown back against the wall with a powerful force. The two-inch line on his wrist ignited into a bright light. Three lines then grew out of the base of the first line, forming a Trident, with the two-inch line as its base and staff.

The room instantly grew brighter, and Mery had to shield her eyes for a second. He placed his wrist next to hers. She saw with startled eyes, both insignias were identical.

"Wh- what in the hell?!" When Mery touched his wrist, she received a small electrical shock.

He rubbed his temples and shook his head. "I haven't called on that power in years. I forgot how strong it is."

"Dad, what's going on?"

He took a moment to compose himself. "You were born into a family filled with generations of magick. We both were. Your mother was. Your sister. It's something that can't be helped or swayed. It is what it is. You are magickal, and you've been entrusted with knowledge beyond your comprehension and mine. When I was a kid, it was normal for me, cause my parents lived in a place that this kind of stuff was acceptable."

"You just said I'm magickal! I'm supposed to accept that? But why? Why didn't you tell me? Does Lynne know? How could you keep this from me?" She felt betrayed, scared, angry.

"Because, Mery. I wanted a normal life for you. I wanted for you, what I never had, something I've been trying to have! That's why we hid these marks on your wrist from you and Lynne. And Lynne does know. Now. That's why

your mother took off with her. She wanted to finally train her in the magicks of our ancestors.

“I didn’t want that for you. You weren’t ready or old enough. B- but look. You’re seventeen, and well, I just never thought. I just never fathomed.” His voice trailed off into a whisper. “I just never thought your Trident would be activated by them.”

“What? So, you DO know who those three idiots are! You kept all this hidden from me, AND you knew about them! Who in blazes are they anyway dad? I’ve a right to know everything! They come to me every single day! And LYNNE!”

No longer able to contain herself, she bolted up and shouted, “Forget it! I need to get the hell out of here! And if I come back, and if I’m in the mood when I get back, you can tell me who the bloody hell these fools are in my dreams!” She stormed out of the room. Douglas heard the front door of the house slam.

Oh gods. What just happened? My love, I wish you were here. She’s got your passion. And she talks just like you when you were mad. He looked up toward the sky. “Now what am I supposed to do?” He sighed audibly. “The once fearless, Douglas Damaru, has become a useless tool in the shed. And I have no idea what to do.”

He stared at the dazzling insignia on his wrist. Touching it with his index finger, he slowly traced the outline of the Trident. A wave of peace came over him. Somewhere deep inside, he knew everything would escalate. Yet, he was assured everything would be okay.

Part III: The Prophecy and the Clan

*The hours gone by.
The rustling leaves in the wind.
The setting sun.
The quiet surge of a warrior,
emerging from the silent depths
of Destiny's gaze.*

Alright, time to talk. She stretched her neck from side to side, up and down. A long sigh escaped her. *I'm starvin'.*

Startled by the creaking front door, Douglas quickly sat up on the couch, still dreary from sleep. He rubbed his eyes and groggily looked up. "Mery?"

"Yeah, dad. It's me. I don't smell any food."

"Well, you couldn't possibly think cooking was on my mind. Besides, I kind of thought you'd be staying the night with a friend, judging how you stormed off."

"Nope. I'll just warm some leftovers. Then, you can tell me everything. I'm ready now, and I wanna hear. I mean everything. Lynne. Mom. The three boys. These marks on our wrists. That word you said earlier that made your mark appear. Vasi. Or whatever."

Muttering to himself, "Yes, Vasi." *I'm a magick man turned dad. I'm not cut out for parenting.*

Twenty minutes passed. Mery came back with a plate full of potatoes, buttered beans and an old, hardened piece of bread. She took a seat next to her father. "We need more food, and this bread is stale." Her voice was muffled, and food was nearly spilling out of her mouth.

"So, why are you eating it?"

"Still tastes good, and if you slop it with enough butter, it really don't matter. So, start with that word. What is that?"

“Right. That word. It’s been around longer than our entire line of ancestors. Our entire heritage has used that word in similar ways that I used it, and it never grows old. Vasi is a trigger. It’s a very powerful trigger, handed down from every generation.

“Supposedly, it originally came from those three boys who are haunting you in your dreams every night. At least, that’s what the stories say. I tend to think it was around before they even set foot on the Earth. The word represents the entire power of everything that exists. It’s just... it’s just pure energy.”

“One little word?” Mery poked at her food, then looked up and blinked several times. Her mind wanted to protest, but the power from her wrist said otherwise, so she remained quiet.

“Yes. One little word. But not everyone can use it, unless you’re empowered by one of the three boys who gave it to us. Or, born into an ancestry line that was empowered by them a long time ago. Or, I’ve heard that somebody with a very pure heart can tap into it and use the power if their intentions are good.

“Also, those three boys? They’re not just boys. The stories I was told say they are gods. For whatever reason, they choose to come before us in the mold of youth. But before I say anymore, I need for you to first tell me what they told you in your dream.”

Straining to remember, Mery took a seat by the fireplace. Staring at the glowing embers and the fire, she closed her eyes and took a long, deep breath. “Well, when they spoke, their voices were all in unison, and it sounded like a mini choir in acapella. It was actually kinda cool.”

She drifted off, trying to remember their words. “You see, that’s how they always start out. They draw you in with all that beauty and pretty stuff and

their soothing voices, before they show somebody's guts all over the place." Her voice switched to a bitter coldness.

She shuddered. "Anyway, they told me it was time, that all I've known isn't what it seems, and everything will change. They also gave me this cryptic message. I wrote it down when I was sitting in the woods this morning."

The brilliance of the first light, a pure white, will circle over the horizon during the battle cries of Earth's mourn. Winter will come to pass. The second, a wondrous blue light, will usher in the dawning of a new age as the three who walk amongst the flesh, will gather as one.

At the very moment she spoke the message, Douglas tensed, and his eyes widened. Before she could finish, he cut in while his gaze was set upon the floor. "Heed the cries of souls be gone. Earth, wind, fire, water and space, will bow before one, and all that is lost will be found."

"Yeah, that's it exactly! But how'd you know?" Mery couldn't believe what she was hearing.

He looked up and quietly said, "It's the old prophecy of our clan."

"Seriously, dad? Clan? You mean like some secret society that you read about online or hear about every so often on the news?"

He relaxed a bit. "Honey, you have a shining light poking out from your wrist, and you're asking if I'm serious?"

"Oh, right."

"And no, not like those secret societies. We're secret alright, but you never hear about us on the news, and we're not even talked about online. The magick covers our trails and protects us from just about everything. There were parchments written in Japan dating back over a thousand years. The

transcriptions translate our clan name into The Warriors of Light, or the Light Warriors. Either or, but you get the picture.

“We’ve been around for ages. Actually, I take that back. There are some famous texts written about us, mystical happenings that our clan was responsible for, but those texts don’t have a name for us, and we’ve long been forgotten about. It’s just references.

“As for the prophecy, I never really thought much about it. Had no reason to believe it’d come to pass in my lifetime. That prophecy’s been around for over three thousand years, so why would I give it much thought? But now, it seems the prophecy is suddenly coming to a head. Not to mention, it was passed on to you first-hand from the three gods.”

His voice trembled. “We tried to escape the life of magick and prophecies. It’s just too much, and it’s always been a dangerous path. If you hadn’t recited part of it, and if your wrist wasn’t glowing, I’d think you were just crazy, dreaming dreams that any teenager would. But then I’d be a naive fool.”

Glancing at the glowing Trident on her wrist, he knew she was one of them.

“Dad. Who are they? I mean, honestly, in my dreams they look younger than me.” She added, “Yeah, they’re fine, but damn they’re annoying.”

“Yes well, don’t let their outer appearance fool you. As I said, they choose to come in that form. Word has it, they’ve been around for over 3000 years, which explains the history dating the prophecy. Stories say, they’re as ruthless and deadly as the most gruesome destroyers in all of history.”

Shaking his head that he was actually relaying all this to her, he continued. “The stories surrounding them, some of which were passed through the ages by word of mouth, speak of three boys, no more than the age of sixteen. It was said, when they last made their presence known in 1300 BC,

they scoured the lands eradicating the vile malevolence caused by the demon lord, Mephistopheles. It was...”

“Wait! Did you just say Mephistopheles?” She cackled, writhing on the floor, lightening the air. “Seriously, dad. That’s a name kids learn about in school, you know, like in those stupid plays.”

“You’d be surprised, Mery. A lot of plays are written from the truths of those who lived them. They write about things in a creative way, so they don’t sound so loony. In the case of Mephistopheles, his name lived on years after he was slain, and he was forever made famous by a wordsmith.

“Anyway, the three boys. There’s a stone tablet that tells about the making of their swords. It says, the three swords they used were forged by an ally, another great and powerful god. The tablet also says, when this god prepared for battle, wings would sprout from his back, and light would pour from the sky and illuminate his sword and entire body. Even the most powerful of gods and goddesses would come to bask in his presence and bow to him.”

Still wanting to protest, Mery stopped herself and looked down at her hands and wrist. Instead, she just let her father continue.

“According to our records, it’s written, this same god who made the swords, came from the highest order, a clan known as the El Dynasty. But they’re a mystical clan in the spirit world. The story says he summoned three warriors to Earth. The three warriors had never before stepped foot on this planet. But because it was this particular god of El who made the summoning, the fathers of these three warriors each gave their permission for them to take leave and be amongst the people here.”

Mery’s eyes were closed, and she was lightly bouncing the back of her head against the wall she was leaning on. “So, a god from some group, called the El Dynasty, made a petition to the fathers of these three boys and

told them they needed to come to our planet. Really nice. This story is just too much, dad. But honestly? It's one hell of a story so far."

"Yes, it is," Douglas said. "As far as I know, it's all true. But anyway, as a gift to them for leaving their home and coming to a new land, the El god used a powerful magick and willed his own sword to partially melt. The drippings from his sword were combined with and covered the most precious base metals of platinum, gold, silver and copper found from deep inside of the Earth. He basically merged the power of his own sword with metals from here, to create invincible and deadly weapons for the three gods.

"After everything was said and done, and Mephistopheles was defeated, they buried their swords somewhere in Middle-Earth, where the Heart of Gaia resides, making it impossible for anyone to find them."

Mery's eyes were wide, and her mouth was gaping. She didn't know if she should be afraid, or if she should laugh again. He continued. "To the few who became their sworn followers, they etched into their wrists the mark of the Trident of Siva, the greatest god of all, whom even the El god bows to. Their followers were told that this insignia would serve as a gateway, a connection to them. The followers were also told of a time in the future when the three gods would return to battle once again.

"As for the trigger I used to invoke the power that caused this Trident to form on my own wrist? It's the name of Siva. Only, the syllables are turned. Either way you say it, Siva or Vasi will ignite the power and bring the magick of the gods to you to use as your very own."

Mery was shaking and almost in tears. She still couldn't believe what she was hearing. If the Trident on her wrist hadn't been glowing, she wouldn't have believed a word her father was saying. Everything just seemed so sudden, so outlandish. It caused her emotions to scatter in all directions. "So, these three gods. They have names?"

“They did. I don’t know their human names from long ago, but I know their origins. It’s said, they are the extensions of their fathers, and mother, powerful and infinite streams of energy within the spirit world. There was the son of Gaia, the goddess of Earth. Son of Kala Bhairava, the god of Time. And the son of Arul, the god of Ascension.”

She thought about it for a moment. “And the El god? He has a name? I mean, he sounds a bit too important to have a boring name like the El god.”

Douglas found that humorous. “He does. In our clan, we know him as Mikhae, the great god and slayer from the El Dynasty. But in mainstream religions, he’s referred to as an angel, or a protector. He was one who saw no need to cover his tracks like the three gods. He came out to the public more often than not, banishing evils and creating miraculous things for people.”

“This can’t be true,” she whispered. “But my dreams. Oh god, my wrist.” She stood up. “Dad, just... just give me a sec, k?”

“I know. It’s a lot to process. Take your time. There’s more. Actually, a lot more. Why don’t you go to bed? We can talk about this in the morning or whenever you want.”

“Yeah. Yeah, maybe I should.” Her voice barely audible when she walked away.

Part IV: Storytelling on the Gods

Arising at the crack of dawn, Mery opened her eyes to the sun peeping through her window. The sweet smell of waffles hinted into her room, and she heard her father rustling around in the kitchen. *Holy freaking crows. I actually had a decent night of sleep for once.* She rolled out of bed, put on her robe and walked toward the bathroom.

Hearing the cranking of the pipes in the bathroom, Douglas yelled, “When you’re finished with your shower, come get your breakfast.”

“K, dad.”

A half-hour later, Mery walked into the kitchen and sat down at the table.

“Did you dream?”

“Yeah, but only a little. It was different this time, and I woke up feeling good. But this time, only one boy made a grand appearance. It was a short dream too. Also, you were right, at least about one of the gods. He called himself the son of Ascension. He told me he chose the name Gene and would rather have me call him that. I feel stupid saying all this, but whatever. It could be true.”

“Gene, huh?” *My worst fear. She really is a chosen one. Gene. Perhaps for him.*

“So, their parents. I mean, who are they? You said these boys or gods, or whatever they are, were like extensions of their parents. So then, who are they? Listen to me. I’m starting to act like this is all normal.”

Unsure of the exact answer, he gave only what he knew and what he could surmise. “You’re asking the wrong person. I mean, I can only tell you what was handed down to me, and honestly, I don’t know if everything that was

word-of-mouth is completely reliable. Your grandfather and grandmother knew more than I ever did. I can tell you a little bit about the three gods themselves, but not so much about their parents.

“There’s a lot of stories about them. Some are myth, some are truth. What we believe to be true is that, when they were last here, they were born into the physical world as powerful streams of light, which somehow formed into bodies.”

“Soooo, assuming any of this is true, and I’m not saying you’re lying to me, cause I’m not stupid or blind to this thing on my wrist, but I’m just sayin’. Why do you think they’ve come back? I mean, after all this time, why come back now?”

Douglas stared at the ceiling, then the floor. “I don’t know. I can’t answer that.” He seemed to be lost in thought. “But to come back after all this time only means that we as a whole on this planet are on the brink of some kind of disaster. The best way to explain it is to tell you in a chronological story. It’ll give you a much broader spectrum to understand it, I think.”

Holy hell. Always the intellectual. Should’ve been a professor. “Suits me, but hold on.” She grabbed a plate and tossed three waffles on it, then dumped a third of a jar of jam on it, followed by a thick layer of syrup. “Alright. Now I’m ready.”

He stood up and paced around with his arms behind his back. “Twenty-five hundred years ago...”

“Oh lord,” Mery mumbled to herself.

“...a boy was born to a very prominent family in a region of Nepal. When he grew up, he went from prince to beggar, before acquiring the status of a great god. And even though he set his heights to the status of the gods and achieved it, he was quiet about it and didn’t portray himself as such. His contribution is that he paved the way and led ignorant people from the evils

and toxicity of word, thought and deed. Because of him, life was good for a short time.

“But after five hundred years had passed, the world was falling to shambles again. So, like clockwork, the world was given another god. When this one appeared, he ushered in a new way of living. He came to lead the battles caused by the sins of man and the demons that controlled them. He was known to be a very miraculous god who could make the blind see, and he could raise the dead. Unlike the first one, though, he was outspoken, which led him to his demise by the people of that kingdom.”

“Dad, you should’ve been a storyteller. It’d be a lot more interesting than the insurance office you’re at.”

“Yes, I agree. It’s pretty bland down there.” He paused for a moment. “Where was I? Oh yes. Since the passing of those two great souls, humanity’s nearly lost all conviction. Throughout the generations of our clan, stories were passed down of how people in this world were becoming bitter, jealous and argumentative. It’s no secret. I mean, look around. Seriously, just watch the news for one night.”

Mery looked confused. “What do you mean?”

“Exactly what I said. The news is all about portraying the bad stuff and showing people in the worst of ways. Not to mention, nowadays it’s all about waking up and fixing meals, driving to work and listening to gossip while at work. Then, coming home and gossiping about what happened at work. People act like robots, fixed in their own little world. But the three gods? Stories say, THEY say we’re all gods and goddesses.”

Mery looked even more confused. “What do you mean they say we’re gods?”

“Exactly that,” Douglas answered. “Deep down, we’re all intrinsically a god or goddess, but we just don’t remember that we are, and we don’t remember how to do anything godlike or miraculous.”

“What about you? Do you remember? You know, the god stuff?” Realizing what she just said, she put her head in her hands. “Aaarrgh!! I can’t believe I’m having this conversation with you. That sounded like a dumber than stupid question that I just asked.”

“You’re fine. It’s a lot to take in at once. But in answer to your question, yes, at times. When I’m drenched in magick from the Trident on my wrist, yes, I remember. But it isn’t completely sustained in me. I’m told, the more you fumble around with that power, the more you become it.

“As for your question about why they’re here now? I really don’t know. But who can really say what’s lurking out there now? Those three warrior gods didn’t come back to this planet for so long, cause they were never needed. But the very reason they’ve made their presence known, and with the passing on of the prophecy to you, shows a time of need for them on this planet. Whatever’s going on, it’s enough to summon them back into existence.”

She swallowed her food and took a sip of juice. “Well, yeah. They’ve been bothering me and causing me all sorts of racket in my dreams. Something’s obviously going on. Now that I’m somehow a part of it all, I need to know. Everything. Simple as that.”

He cleared his throat from the lump that was forming and resumed the story. “It was written in history, when the three male warriors return, they... they’ll choose three females to protect them until they’re ready to fight. These females will know magick, and they’ll know how to fight. Nobody knows who it’ll be.

“But I mean, of course it’s not you or anyone you know.” A fake smile formed on his lips. “You don’t really know anything. We didn’t train you, and you’ve never fought.”

A spine-chilling feeling crept through her. “Yeah, I don’t know nothing,” Mery said, staring at the floor, still feeling slightly betrayed by her parents. “But why come to me? Every day for a month, they’ve been coming to me in my dreams. Doesn’t that mean something?”

“I can’t answer that.”

“What about the prophecy? What do you think that means?”

“Look outside Mery. What do you see?”

She moaned at the prospect of having to move her legs, but did it anyway. Staring out the window, she replied, “The woods, the sky, that squirrel over there. What am I supposed to look at?”

In the distance of the morning glow was a very faint outline of the Full Moon. “The moon’s almost full.” Mery was silent for nearly a minute.

“Wait!” She gasped as she repeated the first line of the prophecy. “The brilliance of the first light, a pure white, will circle over the horizon during the battle cries of Earth’s mourn. And,” she paused lost in thought, “winter’s coming on the 21st!”

“Yes!” There was excitement in his voice. “At the end of the month there’s also another Full Moon. That will be a Blue Moon. There are two Full Moons in the month of December. It doesn’t happen often. And the rest of the prophecy?”

She struggled to remember it. “The second, a wondrous blue light, will usher in the dawning of a new age as the three who walk amongst the flesh, will... will do something or another, before hunting for bacon and eating their breakfast in the woods. I don’t know. Wait. Where’s that piece of paper?”

The brilliance of the first light, a pure white, will circle over the horizon during the battle cries of Earth's mourn. Winter will come to pass. The second, a wondrous blue light, will usher in the dawning of a new age as the three who walk amongst the flesh, will gather as one. Heed the cries of souls be gone. Earth, wind, fire, water and space, will bow before one, and all that is lost will be found.

“All the signs are aligning with the prophecy,” Douglas said. “Also, since you’ve dreamt about the three gods and even opened the gateway to them through the insignia on your wrist, my fear is that there’s going to be some bloodshed in the near future. Maybe that’s what they were showing you. Maybe all that war and gore you were talking about could very well be a predicted future. Everything might change soon.”

He seemed distracted. *Everything. But why her? Why now?*

Mery considered all of what her father said. “I’m curious about you and mom. You basically said that you settled down to hide and get away from the magick. Why? I mean, what were you two REALLY doing before you had us?”

“Well, we were both born into the clan. Your mother and I met when we were sent on a special mission. She left home in Wales and traveled to New York, and I left home on the West Coast to travel there. There was an alarming rate of paranormal activity going on, and the police couldn’t pin it down. Even the psychics the police were using had no idea.

“However, the people in our clan kept a watchful eye from a distance. When nobody could solve it, we quietly stepped in and took over without anyone knowing. It was demonic activity. That’s why nobody knew what was happening. How could they?”

“Your mother was the first to arrive, and I stepped onto the scene about four hours after her. There was a rupture in veils between our world and another dimension. It was in a certain spot near these railroad tracks deep in the city. There were entities of all sorts coming and going and creating havoc. The psychics couldn’t sense it, because psychic viewing happens from a lower-based world. The power to view and sense from that standpoint is limited. The demons know this, and they are able to cover their tracks.

“That’s why we stepped in. Where demons are concerned, the power of the gods is needed. I call them demons, since we have no other word for them. They’re not ghosts. We just don’t really know what they are. When we don’t know, it’s best to just allow the power from the three base gods of Arul, Bhairava and Gaia to flow, and everything just seems to take care of itself.

“So, your mother. When I arrived, she was already in battle.” He smiled at the thought of her. “These blue eyes of mine have seen a whole lot in my day, but nothing as spectacular as your mother. She was so beautiful and courageous. That is when I fell in love with her. She almost had the rupture sealed, but a demon had slipped from her view and was still in the Earth realm. It let loose on her, and this brutal force of energy shot out of its hands. Luckily, I was half a second faster, and the energy that came from me, absorbed what it had sent out, and the demon was dissolved into nothing. Your mother just smirked at me, acting like nothing happened, and then finished sealing the rupture.

“That’s really how we met. But you know, stuff like that got to us. There was danger and excitement. But it was too much, so we hid and left that world. We silently played with the magick in our own fashion, away from all that stealth. We were able to cultivate the power of the gods without having to fight all the time. The fighting was just too much.

“There’s something else.” He started to weep. “Mery, the reason your mother left us ten years ago? She wanted to train Lynne. I didn’t want this for either of you. I only wanted you to grow up and live a normal life. I wanted you two to go to school, play music, dance and hang out with your friends, or whatever. Then go to college and get married. My life? I had a family, but with the magick, it was everything but normal.

“Before either of you were born, your mother and I already had our share of battles. We were tired. That’s why we stationed ourselves in a small town. We were hiding. When Lynne was born, our lives changed. Four years passed, and you were born. Everything was perfect, or so I thought.

“By the time Lynne turned eleven, your mother suddenly wanted back into the game. We discussed the matters at length, and I finally gave in. We decided she could leave with Lynne in order to train her in the ways of the old. For ten years, your sister has been training in magick with your mother, while you lived a quiet life with me.”

She was fuming. “Where are they now?! And the truth!”

“They moved back home where your mom grew up. In Wales.”

“You told me she ran off! Overseas though? You obviously left that part out!” Mery stopped herself and breathed. “I... I don’t know what to say. I mean, I guess I could be mad and jealous and all. Lynne’s probably got all these cool powers now. Anyway, it sounds like mom’s the big culprit here, running off with Lynne. But, it don’t matter dad. You obviously only did what you thought was best for me, right?”

“So I thought.” A sigh escaped his lips. “So I thought. Also, I’ve kept something else from you. I haven’t heard from her or Lynne in five years. We always kept in touch, and Lynne was doing well in her studies. But five years ago, everything stopped. I did everything to find them. It was as if she just disappeared into a void, and I’m at a loss.”

Mery said nothing to this. She only stared at the ground, pondering. “Dad, there’s something I didn’t tell you either. The three boys, they said they’d come back to me soon. They told me to prepare myself mentally and emotionally, and when it’s time, I’d have to go.”

Douglas said nothing. He merely stared at the ground. *Damn. I knew this was going to happen.*

CHAPTER 2

Part I: From Nothing to Something

“WAKE UP. IT IS TIME.”

“What? Dad?”

“No, Mery. Not even close. Now, get out of bed.”

“Who? Who the bloody hell are you?” Mery spoke out groggily, still tied to the dream-state.

“Who am I? I’ve come to you every day for one month, and you forget so soon. My feelings are hurt. My father has spoken, and it is time. Now, roll out of bed.”

“Oh, you again. What was it? Gene? Genie Weenie. You always speak in riddles? Time for what?”

“Listen. It is very crucial that you find me. I am not far from you. You, Mery. You have been chosen. I need you now.”

“What?! But why me? I don’t know anything! And chosen for what?”

“Exactly. You don’t know anything, which makes you perfect for the role you’ve been given. You were chosen for your purity of heart. You know nothing. You were never trained, and you have never fought. The greatest magick is born from something which extends past all thought and habit. Currently, you have no habitual magick to fall back on. You will rely on instinct alone. This will be your greatest weapon, and you will be one of our greatest assets.”

“I see. So, I’m your asset, which you’ll be using as your weapon, even though I don’t know anything. And somehow, I got dragged into this, how? I’m guessing I don’t have a say in this one way or another. After all, it seems you can hunt me down and find me anytime I fall asleep.”

“It is not as you say or believe,” Gene said, clearly annoyed. “We do not seek to use you. It was scribed, millenniums past. You will rise and take your seat upon the mantle of this world during times of darkness, chaos and bewilderment. As a matter of fact, we the gods who walk in physical bodies are just as much a pawn in this game as you are.

“We are all at the hands of mercy, grace and the constant flow of what needs to be done in the moment. I am merely accepting my part in this and acting upon it. In today’s terms, we can say, you the warrior, are on the rise to dismantle the evils which rebel against the goodness of mankind.”

“Really? You call that today’s terms?”

“Mery. Up until now, I have been kind and gentle with you. However, you are needed. I will do what I have been called to do in order to bring you to your destiny. Do not piss me off.”

She shuddered, somewhat irritated and partly out of fear. “Okay! Fine! I’ll hear you out, and I’ll go do what I need to do!”

“Even before I stepped foot on the Earth 3300 years ago, millions and millions of years before that, at the beginningless of time, you were chosen amongst the trillions and trillions of souls in existence. Three souls were chosen out of all those in this galaxy and out of those in galaxies undiscovered by your people. Out of those three, your card was pulled. You are to be my protector in this day and age. As for the how and why, it is far too mysterious to delve into and understand.”

“Why do you need me to protect you?!”

“The power of the Full Moon opened a portal for me and my two brother consorts to enter into the Earth realm. But our bodies are weak, and we have been separated throughout the Americas. You are my Guardian Watcher who will unite me with Edward, son of the god of Time, Kala Bhairava, and

Christopher, son of the goddess of Earth, Gaia. We can fight, but our bodies are not strong yet, which is why you have been hired for the job."

"Why are you here? And how'd you get here?" Her mind was filled with so many questions.

"The pure energy of a very powerful god, the Great Wizard, left this Earth eons ago. It lingered for years, raising the vibration of humanity. However, since his physical presence has been gone for so long, people have lost faith in the goodness within everything. When faith was lost, the vibration the Great Wizard left behind dwindled away, and the magick that once was, has become mere words with no meaning or power. Now, wars have sprung up everywhere, and hurricanes and other calamities have taken the world with a fury. They are not mere natural disasters."

Gene paused to let everything sink in for a moment. "Because of the faith which humanity lost in goodness, a demonic terror has awakened on this planet. This said entity has been gathering armies. Wars and disasters are only the beginning."

Although she was in a dream, she felt the numbness around her body. Her emotions were withdrawn, and she was at a loss of words. He continued, "We arrived here as light, last Full Moon. After sitting for one month, our bodies have finally solidified. Now, we need you, our Guardian Watchers.

"Your job is to find me and keep me alive. My body is still very weak. If I and my brother consorts can stay alive until the Blue Moon coming up, then immortality in the body will happen. Clearly, this would be a nice thing, when fighting the darkness. But as weak as the body is, I am not left powerless, nor am I bound by space or time. I personally activated the Trident on your wrist. It will guide you. Every moment which passes, the magick within you will bloom, and I can work through you. You will know where to find me, simply from our bond.

“One more thing. You do not serve me, but instead my father, Arul. Even more, you serve all of humanity. Now go!” With a jolt, she awoke. Sweat was pouring down her face, and her body felt limp as she stared at the ceiling.

What have I gotten myself into?

The glowing Trident on her wrist was buzzing, and her entire body was tingling with a sensation she had never before felt.

Awe hell! I gotta get outta here. There's no way I'm telling dad either. He'd never let me out of his sight. Not for this.

Part II: Time is a Funny Thing
Southern California
Full Moon, 2nd Day of December

Son of Time
*Dance with spirit,
and spirit will dance with you.*

“Man! What am I even doing?! I have got way too much stuff to do to be trampling out in the woods.” Heather shook her head, parked her car and took a look around. *Nice. This is pretty.* Her sandy-brown hair fluttered in the wind, until it settled softly past her shoulders. She rubbed her eyes, then pulled out a compact mirror from her purse. She stared into the mirror at her blue eyes. “Oh, I totally thought my eyes would be bloodshot.”

She drew a long breath and started talking to herself again. “Good lord, what am I doing? Work is gonna have my hide if I don't go in.”

“Heather, come.”

What the-? She quickly scanned the entire area, expecting to see somebody, but all she saw was the forest and the mountains. She was breathing quickly, anxiously. *Maybe I really should be here and not work. I've been going crazy this entire freaking month. That damn voice. I could definitely use this day off.*

“At least I can be crazy where nobody can see me!” she yelled.

In a very pronounced manner, the same voice spoke out to her again, slowly, but with an edge. “Please stop wasting time. I can see you, and you are NOT going crazy. Follow the trail to your right until it ends. At that point, you will know which way to go. And do us both a favor. Hurry. I'd really like to get out of here.”

An odd sensation passed through her, causing her body to tingle. She was frozen in her tracks, unsure of what to do. The voice which spoke seemed

to be standing close by. Yet, she was all alone, amidst the backdrop of a great forest. The tall trees and scattered rocks, and the buzzing of insects provided some comfort in her uncertainty.

She heard it again. "When I said 'hurry' I meant now!" The voice was so loud, it sounded like the person was standing right next to her. She shuddered, then turned to her right and saw a trail leading into the forest, exactly as the voice had told her. *What in the name of?!*

Instinctively, she grabbed her left wrist. It started to pulse. Her head throbbed, and her sight was hazy for a few seconds. She stared at her wrist, puzzled. Shrugging her shoulders, she walked toward the trail.

The moment she stepped into the forest, it was as if she had entered into another land. The birds were chirping louder than normal and seemed to pierce through her entire body, and the trees looked unusually alive.

Standing tall, poised, she eyed the trail and watched it turn around a clump of trees. With a feeling of urgency, she took a step. Paused. Then she took off in a brisk walk in a downward slope, twisting and turning every which way.

Well, guess I'm not going into work. It'll have to be all good. After following the trail for fifteen minutes, Heather halted. The trail abruptly ended at the base of two very large boulders.

Great, now what? She stared at the boulders in front of her and took a few deep breaths. With cat-like reflexes, she hopped onto one of the rocks and made her way upward, jumping from rock to rock.

At the top of the formation, she came to a flat surface of dirt and stones and was startled to see she had climbed so high. Turning back around to face front, she eyed a thick forest of trees, which she entered. There were dead branches and leaves scattered everywhere, and she was aware of the movement of small animals all around her.

Why am I even doing this?! At least I didn't tell anyone. Nobody can accuse me of being an idiot. She laughed to herself and veered left, following a path with no trail.

Another twelve minutes went by. She was standing before a very small opening to a cave, hidden by the branches of a tree looming over it. Heather turned and looked in every direction. Closing her eyes, she breathed in and out, doing her best to shake away the anxious feelings inside.

"Alright, Voice, now what?" Her eyes still closed, she listened intently. No answer.

"I'm so over this! Just ridiculous!" She turned to her left and looked up, squinting at the sun. Relaxing a bit, she chuckled at her own craziness and stared at the ground for a few moments. "Damn, I need a drink. Actually, two."

Mentally prepared to turn back and walk to her car, she raised her head and gasped. Standing twenty feet in front of her was a teenage boy. An intense aura of white surrounded his body, and in his right hand was a long three-pronged staff that gleamed with rays of silver.

He slowly lifted his left hand and pointed to the entrance of the cave. Heather turned for a second and looked to where he was pointing. When she turned back around, the boy was gone. In the spot where he was standing were glowing orbs, and roses and flowers of every color were strewn about the ground.

She trembled and rubbed her face. Voicing aloud, she stated matter-of-factly, "Alright, fine. Whatever the hell you are, you're in there. And THAT is where I'm going!"

She crawled through the opening. Once in, she was able to stand at full height. "Well it'd be nice to see where the hell I'm going." She reached into her pocket and pulled out her cell phone, and a light flashed a few feet ahead

of her. There were two directions to walk, and Heather was at a standstill trying to decide which path to take.

“Whatever.” She turned to her left and took a few steps. When she did, her left wrist throbbed in a dull pain.

“Ow! What the hell is going on?!” Heather clutched her wrist, and the pain instantly stopped. Taking a long, deep breath, she slowly turned to her right and took a few steps in the other direction. In doing so, a giddy sensation rushed through her, and she felt a tingling buzz gliding over her skin.

Well ain't that something. I guess I'm a walking GPS. Walking in near darkness, she continued on the path to the right, heading in a downward slope.

After forty minutes, she came to level ground. Twisting around a corner, she entered into a small cavern. At the other end of the room was a soft, glowing violet color, emitting from the next room over. She realized she had no need for the light from her phone, so she tucked it back into her pocket.

“What is THAT?!” I swear to God, if I find an alien.

Heather chuckled at her own joke and walked slowly toward the glow, stopping before turning the corner. *There's something, there.* Her breathing was agitated, and her body felt as if it was on fire from the inside out.

“Screw it. Came this far already.” She turned the corner and promptly came face to face with a naked, blonde-headed boy, who looked to be in his late teens, sitting cross-legged on a rock. He had piercing, dark-brown eyes and an angular jawline, and his hair was a matted mess, flopping in all directions. Taken aback, Heather’s jaw dropped. When she tried to speak, her thoughts suddenly came to a halt. “Ah! I... huh?”

“Heather. You have answered my calling.” The boy rose from his position and motioned for her to come forward.

Heather stared at him for a moment. He had a very toned, slim and muscular body and looked to stand around 5'8". "Who... who are you?" Heather asked in embarrassment, slightly turning her head.

"Edward. I have a task for you. I need not speak. I'd rather show you. Come. Take a seat." He pointed to the spot where he had been sitting.

"Ummm, I normally don't take direction well, especially from naked, teen-aged boys. And you kind of smell."

He gazed at her in amusement. "But considering the situation, and knowing that I've been inside of your head for an entire month, and the very fact that you came here and found me?"

"Yeah, fine. Point well-taken." Not knowing what else to do, she took a seat on the rock.

Edward crouched down to her level. "Let me show you why you're here, and why I called you."

"Okay, yeah. But I can't tell you how awkward this is."

"You pretty much just did. By the way, you'll understand better if you're silent. I will only talk when necessary." He placed his right hand on top of her head.

In a blinding flash, she saw what seemed to be three shooting stars flying through the night sky. Each found its way to a different part of the country, piercing far below the ground.

Deep in the recesses of her mind, she heard the same voice that had been speaking to her for a month in her dreams. "Now you know how we arrived on this planet and how our bodies came to be. What you have seen is what took place one month previous from this date of now."

The scene shifted. She was now in the midst of a war, somewhere in the far and distant past. People were rushing by in every direction, but nobody seemed to notice her. She watched as dark shadows shifted in and out of the

battle, burrowing into the nostrils, ears or mouths of some of the soldiers. After violent shakes, the men would fall and the shadows would let loose, only to make path to the next and closest living body.

From behind, a thundering streak of violet lightning shot past her and disintegrated three of the shadows. The streak of violet halted and condensed into physical matter, until it slowly turned into the boy whom she had just met in the cave. In the vision, he walked slowly toward her.

The boy stopped in his tracks. "I am beyond time. I am the epitome of time. I am time-transcended. I am the son of Kala, the fierce, deadly, loving and compassionate energy beyond all illusion, and I am Kala Bhairava himself. During this historical battle, as I walked this battlefield thousands of years in the past, I stopped and spoke to you as I am speaking to you at this very moment which you are looking upon now.

"Shortly after I spoke to you 3300 years ago in this exact moment, you witnessed the slaying of an evil anarchist by me and my two brother consorts. The form you embody now as you watch this moment is a light body from another dimension. This is a scene which you have watched more than once. Time. It all happens at the same moment, in different directions and dimensions. But still, all at the same moment of now. Watch. You will gain in power as the story unfolds." He then resumed battle.

Heather watched on and saw power radiating from the hands of the small boy. After all the dark shadows had been dissolved, the boy pulled a glowing sword from behind his back. He waved it in a circular motion above his head a few times while incanting strange words. The next moment, he was gone.

All was silent.

Still in her trance, Heather heard the rippling voice of Edward and felt it penetrating every cell of her body. "You are my chosen subject, my Guardian

Watcher! You will inherit the powerful and magickal traits of Bhairava himself! In the coming days, you will experience yourself shifting in and out of time, for you are beyond all restraints and restrictions. I give you now, the ferocious, the peaceful, the instinctive, the active, and the enduring power of my father! Allow yourself to become what you already are!"

Edward flooded all her cells, her DNA, and every fabric of her existence, with the eight magickal names of his father. At the top of his lungs, he shouted, "Asidanga Bhairava! Guru Bhairava! Chanda Bhairava! Kroda Bhairava! Unmatta Bhairava! Kapala Bhairava! Bhishana Bhairava! Samhara Bhairava!"

As each name was spoken, Heather's power increased, and all the karmic ties and worries of her past dwindled to nothing. She played witness to each of the eight faces of a timeless deity and was shown the fierce and compassionate side to each of them.

Her body rumbled, almost to the point of a seizure. She heard herself screaming. The pains of the thousands of past lives she had lived throughout history were ripped from her essence. The pain, grief and sadness was drained from her body and emotions. She would no longer feel the traumas of her past.

Another voice filled her senses. Deep and mesmerizing, every sound from this new voice reverberated through her, giving her a sense of balance and peace, smoothing out the pain she had just experienced.

"Child." The voice of Edward's father felt as if it was inside and outside of her. "All aspects of my powers have been invoked. I grant you passage into territories untrekked by billions upon billions of entities throughout the myriad galaxies. As you bow to the gods, so too will they bow to you, and the powers which flow from unending streams of joy will be yours to explore. Child, dance with spirit, and spirit will dance with you."

A blazing surge of pure white flashed into her forehead and into the center of her brain. Swirling around for a few seconds, it expanded brightly and exploded in every direction. Heather fell over and was panting heavily. For three hours she lay unmoved, yet aware of everything.

Edward stood up and watched over her. For a moment, he closed his eyes. "Father, to awaken her fully would have been tragic. Her body would not have been able to handle that much power. But we haven't much time, and we need her to be stronger. When can the final summonings be done?"

"Soon, Edward. When the moment presents itself, then and only then will you be giving. Then and only then will she be receiving. Nothing else will matter, and nothing else can happen but that which is ordained in that moment. That is the moment in which the final summonings will be unleashed."

"I expected you to say this. Nevertheless, I understand."

Slowly, Heather stirred and did her best to sit up. Turning to face Edward, she gave him a hard look. And with an edge in her voice, she screamed, "What the HELL did you just do to me?!"

Everything went black, and she fell backward in silence. Edward simply laughed and allowed her to sleep for the next ten hours.

Part III: Mery's Awakening
Southern Missouri
Full Moon, 2nd Day of December

Son of Ascension

That very day, I saw the sun rise, and the sun set, and everything dissolved into nothingness. All that remained was that which was unspeakable and unfathomable. It was me. It was you. It was everything.

It only took a few hours to drive. Although she had no map or an address, she knew exactly the direction to go and which highways to take. Something deep within her was guiding her every move. Standing at the entrance of the cavern, she knew she had reached her destination. The glowing mark on her wrist was entrancing, and her thoughts were almost nil.

Mery looked toward the sky and breathed in and out heavily. Turning, she looked behind at the rolling hills and the thick forest. The rustle of wild animals and the moan of the wind filled her ears. If she had not been fixated in wonder, the cold would have been too much to bear.

Damn. It's pretty out here. No wonder he picked this place to dwell.

She peered into the darkness, knowing this was where she had to go. *Well, I've come this far. Can't stand out here forever.*

The moment she entered the pitch-black cave, the insignia lit up even brighter. Surprised by the display of this new and unknown power, she trekked on amidst the damp and slimy pathways. Further and further into the cave she walked, guided only by a sharp instinct which told her every step to take and which direction to follow.

Large, jutting rocks pointed in every direction, and the splashing of running water echoed throughout. The path was narrow, and she had to bend

at times and turn sideways to continue roaming. She saw the glow from the minerals growing on the walls, as the light from her wrist bounced off them.

Gotta keep going. Man, I know I'm not far.

She rounded a winding path and froze. An entrance to an immense opening into a larger cavern had revealed itself. A feeling of electricity shot through her entire body. Pouring out from the cavern in front of her was an intense, white light which seemed to engulf her every breath, her every thought. It was blinding to look at, and it seemed to call to her.

“Come, Mery.” The voice was loud and mesmerizing, although it rang only inside of her mind.

When her eyes had finally adjusted to the brightness, she continued into the opening. Entering, she gasped in astonishment. The new cavern was massive, reaching three hundred feet in height. Hundreds of stalactites hung from the ceiling in various sizes. Every color of the rainbow shot through the open space, emanating from every single mineral upon the walls.

In one corner was a beautiful emerald green, glowing from the rocks, which had been forming for hundreds of years. The earth beneath her feet was slightly damp, and somewhere in the distance she could still hear the sound of running water. In the very heart of the open cavern, she saw the source of the brilliant light.

A pathway of stepping stones led to the center, where enormous rocks were piled fifteen feet tall. Sitting cross-legged on a large, flat rock, at the top of the rock formation, was the glowing figure of a teenage boy. For the first time, she heard his real voice.

Soft. Pure. “Come. I even made a path and steps for you. I want you to join me here.”

Every step she took toward him caused her aura to blaze brighter and brighter, and a new strength formed in her. She looked up at the boy and

climbed the staircase to where he was seated. One step. Two steps. Three steps. The tapping of her feet on the rocks echoed throughout. Finally, she stood facing him. *If he says his name is Gene, then I know I'm not completely crazy.*

The boy rolled his eyes. "You're not crazy, because yes, my name is definitely Gene. Besides, the fact that you found me, simply by hearing a voice in your head and seeing me in your dreams, should give you some kind of satisfaction. Your powers have grown." There was a gleam upon his face. The sound of his voice was charming. "And yet, you have not even received."

"Received?"

"Kneel."

She kneeled onto one knee, and Gene rose. He was very tall, she noticed. Maybe a few inches over six feet. She squinted her eyes. He had what seemed to be Slavic features, with contoured cheekbones and light-brown hair. His walk toward her was more of a glide. Standing in front of her, he gazed deeply into her eyes. When he did, his eyes flickered from brown to yellow and back to brown. "The very fact that you are here is your acceptance of this mission and this great lineage, the lineage of my father, Arul."

"Well, yeah." She shrugged. "I mean, if I wouldn't have come, it would've pissed you off, and you'd probably haunt me in my dreams for eternity. Coming here sounds like a better plan than that."

He was amused. "Fair enough. But let's cut to the chase. Breathe in deeply once."

"Okay, ummm, but this is all really very hard to do when you're standing naked in front of me in all your full glory."

"Mmm hmmm." He clearly did not care. "Well, I'm not bothered if you're not. Now close your eyes and breathe in deeply. Hold it until you can no longer hold it. Push yourself. If you think can't hold it anymore, hold it longer."

“Fine.” She shut her eyes and took a deep breath, while Gene rested his hands on her head, waiting for her.

Nearly forty seconds passed. She finally released it. Her body slumped as she panted, void of all thoughts. At that moment, Gene pushed his right thumb into her forehead very hard. Light shot into her at the point of contact on her forehead, and from his left hand atop her head, brilliant streams poured into her brain and body.

As the light poured forth, his voice rang out in a mesmerizing melody of his father’s name. “Aruuuuuul... Aruuuuuuul... Aruuuuuuul...!”

Over and over he sang the name of his father, his voice a high-pitched song that bounced off the walls. Instantly, the cavern grew twice as bright, with pure white radiating from them both. Mery’s body shook tremendously, and she screamed loudly, not from any pain entering, but from the pains of the past leaving her.

She lost all thought and was looking at herself as if she was outside of her body, and she was able to see in every direction. Everything she peered at seemed to lose form and identity. It was as if she had somehow merged with it all, including Gene.

The images of three teenage boys filled her mind. Intense bliss permeated her every pore, every cell.

The images of the three boys dissolved. Her consciousness was now placed upon a battlefield, where she sensed a dreadful entity unlike anything she had ever encountered. The horror and shrill from him filled her ears. And then she knew.

She had traveled back in time thousands of years and was standing in the very center of the empire of the great Mephistopheles. Although the beast was near and she felt the horrifying energy from him, she was not afraid.

In a flash, three gods were traveling at warp speed, swords in their hands. They were converging at one point, the center of which a great and evil beast of a man stood.

For one moment, she was shown the face of this monstrosity. His eyes were black. His left cheek was an iridescent red, and his right cheek, a soft white. A long black mane flowed beautifully from the crown of his head to the bottom of his back. Besides the varying colors in his face and eyes, the rest of him looked human.

He stood about eight feet in height, shirtless, with chiseled muscles resembling a Greek or Roman god. His skin was completely smooth, with the exception of a few black scars etched into his body. He wore long, black pants which fluttered in the wind.

The next moment, three swords entered into his body. A golden light rumbled from the sword at the bottom of his spine in his back. A white light shot through his heart where a second sword pierced him in the front. And in the center of his forehead, an illuminating violet light tore into the center of his skull where a third sword punctured his forehead.

An appalling cry spewed from his mouth, and his body shook violently. Mephistopheles lost his ground and fell onto his knees, leaving his body to wither away to dust. The last of him dissolved into nothing, and three beams shot out from each of the swords to form the image of an immaculate Trident where he once stood.

Mery's eyes opened with a start. They were glowing. The image of the Trident was still visible. This time, however, it was dancing above them where Gene was standing. Still singing, his voice faded and hushed, leaving only the echoes and the running water inside of the cavern.

He crouched down and looked into her eyes. "You have traveled back in time. You have traveled beyond time. And you have entered into the present

moment where everything mundane ceases to exist, and the extraordinary is only self-evident. A great gift has been bestowed upon you, from my father, through me, to you.

“You have received a transference, a great electrical charge, which will consume everything tedious and cause you to be aware of your true power from inside. You are ready for battle, and you now possess the raging powers to destruct and destroy. And still, you are the epitome of peace and silence in its entire absoluteness. The powers you will display are limitless. You will discover them in varying moments throughout your experiences.”

Her body was rocking gently, tears rolling down her cheeks, and her breathing steady and deep. Although she was in a trance, she was still aware of everything happening around her. “Was... was that a speech you worked on, the... the entire time you were down here?”

“You sure are a funny girl.” He placed his hand atop her head once more and gave her the final transmission.

“May the light of Ascension engulf your every breath, your every cell, your every thought, your every deed. May you become that which is indescribable, unfathomable. And may you become the warrior in wisdom, to stand by my side, guiding the thousands who will clamor for the knowledge.”

With his final words, the entire cavern was set ablaze. All images were consumed by the illuminating glow of their auras. Mery’s body was vibrating forcefully. Then she passed out.

CHAPTER 3

Part I: Racing with Time Los Angeles, 3rd Day of December

"MOVE IT!" SCREAMED HEATHER, as she raced across the streets of Los Angeles, hand-in-hand with a sickly-looking teenage boy. Glancing in every direction, she spotted an alleyway to her right. "This way, now! Can you hop the fence, or do you need me to blast it?"

"I'll climb," Edward said raggedly. "If you blast it, it'll just cause a scene we don't need."

"You first!" she shrieked.

Edward climbed the fence. Once on the other side, he turned and watched Heather standing her ground, facing the entrance to the alley. Within seconds, a flash of violet danced around her body.

Papers were flying, and the big trash bins on the side were rolling by themselves. One of them stopped in the middle of the alley, completely blocking the entrance. The other lifted off the ground and landed on top of the first bin.

Man, that was exhausting, but at least it'll slow 'em down for a few minutes. She darted toward the fence and joined Edward on the other side.

12 Hours Ago

Heather looked up groggily and saw two people standing before her. She closed her eyes. Opened them. When she was finally able to focus, the two people slowly merged into one.

"Ooooh, my head. Please remind me never to do that again with you." She eyed Edward and added, "And please put some clothes on, will you? I

have a feeling me and you are gonna be running around for a good while. And for the sake of this century, we can't have you waltzing around like that."

Sarcastically, he replied, "I suppose you have a stash of clothes my size, magickally hidden somewhere? Or maybe you had an inkling of what was going to take place today, and you came prepared?"

She forced herself to stand up and gave Edward a ridiculous look. "Yeah, I happen to keep small clothes for small boys at all times in the trunk of my car." She shook her head. "You always this way?"

"Which way is that?" he asked.

"Full of attitude. If you knew you were naked and all, why didn't you just come to me in my dreams and tell me to buy some clothes? In your size? Hell, I could've gotten it in the section for little boys, and it'd be cheap. You're real skinny."

"Are you done yet?" Edward asked. "If I would have told you I was naked while you were in the dream state, how believable would I seem to you? Everything would have just seemed even more outlandish to you. Shall we go now?"

"Whatever. I'll buy you some. Now get me out of this cave. I need some sunshine."

They exited the cave and were greeted by a sharp, cold wind. "What?! It's dark out here. What time is it? I found you in the morning. It's already night?"

"I don't know how you keep time in this age. However, I can tell you, only one half-cycle has occurred, from the sun's light transitioning to the moon's light. Point us in the direction of your car. I will be able to get us there."

"I thought you're the god of Time. You don't know how we keep time nowadays?"

“This is true. I am the god of Time. I see in all directions and spaces of Time, as well as the spaces in-between. However, it is very different from my point of view. My point of view is very illogical, but very definitive. The world's point of view of how Time works is very logical and very man-made. You will begin to see as I see, soon enough.”

“Oh. Anyway, the car's that way.” She pointed, and Edward took off walking in silence. The forest trees blocked most of the light from the moon, but somehow, he knew where to step. Every so often he would stop, look around as if sensing, then continue. Finally, they reached the place where Heather had parked her car.

She fumbled around for her keys. “We're going to my place to sleep. Also, I just remembered I have an old pair of jeans and a t-shirt of an old ex. They'll be big for you, but it's something.”

“I am not picky.”

“Yeah, but you're dirty as hell.” She put the key in the ignition and looked at the car clock. “10:03pm. I can't believe I was out for that long. And I can't believe how unbelievably exhausted I feel, even after sleeping that long. I need to sleep as soon as we get home. Then we can figure out what next in the morning.”

While driving, she yawned and stretched her arms out one at a time. “Man. My body just feels like jelly. It doesn't wanna do anything.”

“It's because your body is trying to catch up to the energy that was dumped into you. Another way to think about it is, the energy which was transferred to you is molding your body into a higher frequency. You just need to rest, so your physical world can catch up to the hidden world.”

While driving, Heather was aware of the silence between them. She was also aware of the lack of thoughts in her mind. For some unknown reason,

she was content to just drive and not care about what had happened, or what was going to happen.

They pulled up to the driveway of her apartment complex. "We're here."

Edward nodded. Before entering her home, he stood in front of her doorway, facing the street. He raised his arms and whispered something. Heather watched in curiosity. For a brief moment, a brilliant flash of all hues surrounded his body. Satisfied, he turned around and walked inside, closing the door behind him.

"What'd you just do?" she asked.

"I was safe-guarding your home. Just putting an extra layer of protection around it. There's a lot of chaos out there, and you just never know. There are a lot of people out there with minds like loose cannons. They just haven't a clue how destructive they are with their thoughts."

"Oh. I guess it was just the fact that you did it standing there, completely exposed for the entire neighborhood and night-watch to see." She shrugged her shoulders. "But, whatever."

Just another bizarre thing to add to my night. She disappeared around the corner. When she returned, she had a shirt and some pants. "Before you put these on, you should jump in the shower. I mean, you just spent an entire month in a cave."

Edward smiled coyly. He followed her to the bathroom and watched and listened to her instructions on how to turn the faucets on and off. After she left the bathroom, he fiddled with the faucets, twisting them left and right, watching the water run out. He played with the shower head and was amazed to see how the flow of water would come out either in sprinkles or in one steady stream.

He laughed hysterically. *This world is so NEW to me!*

Heather was resting on the couch in complete silence. Everything had completely changed, and her emotions were mixed and confused. She turned the television on and found she had no desire to watch. She immediately turned it off.

She faintly heard Edward laughing, humming and whistling in the shower. Directing it to nobody in particular, she shook her head and slowly voiced out, "What in the hell just happened to me?"

After his shower, Edward put on his new clothes and found Heather sitting on the couch in the living room. He stared at her for nearly a minute, before she realized he was in the room. "You are troubled."

She let out a sigh. "Well, my entire life just changed. I'm not the same person I was when I woke up this morning. And even though I know I should go into work tomorrow, I really don't want to. It all just seems stupid and pointless right now."

"This work. What are you referring to?" Edward looked perplexed.

"Well, work. I go in and do, you know, work. For other people, and they pay me. That's how I make a living, so I can have all this." She waved her arm in an arcing motion, pointing to the things in her home. "When they pay me, I go out and buy food, clothes, couches and electronic stuff, and I pay my rent for this house. If I don't work, I don't eat. But I have this sickening feeling I'm supposed to be doing something else now."

"I understand now." He looked her directly in the eye. "Do not worry. If your work doesn't satisfy you, then don't do it. And you're right. You ARE supposed to be doing something else now. If that worries you, know that every step of the way, you will be given everything you need, and more. Don't go into work tomorrow. If you do, you'll only daydream about the important things you should really be doing. Look at me. I don't work, but somehow I'm taken care of."

"That's easy for you to say. You're like some sort of god, right? So, of course you're gonna be taken care of."

"That is not why I'm taken care of," Edward interjected. "I'm taken care of and given everything I need, because I firmly believe I will be taken care of and given all I need," he explained. "The Universe actually and really does hear your thoughts. You too will be taken care of. Just believe it. Let me rephrase what I said. I don't work, at least not in the manner you have been working. Don't get me wrong. I definitely have a job, a very big job, actually. I'm working almost every minute I am breathing. And I am being paid, rewarded and supported every step of the way for my work. Now let's sleep."

She turned off the light and went to her room. Edward lay on the couch and closed his eyes. After fidgeting around for nearly ten minutes, he rolled off the couch and onto the floor. *That's much better.*

Eight hours had passed, and Edward awoke with a jolt. His eyes were wide open, and sweat was pouring down his face. He quickly jumped up and yelled, "Heather! Wake up! We have to leave, NOW!!"

The door to Heather's room opened. She walked out with a boggled look on her face. "What?"

"We have to leave right now! Something bad is coming this way. I can't tell you how I know. I just know. You have five minutes."

"What about that little protection spell you did last night? Won't that help?"

"That'll keep small, minor things out, but not whatever is coming our way. Now hurry!"

She darted to the kitchen sink and quickly flushed her face with water. After slapping her face a few times to help wake up, she ran to her room and put some fresh clothes on. She was about to strap her heavy boots on, but

Edward interrupted. "No. Put those on." He pointed at her sneakers. "Those look like it would be easier to run in. And please do hurry."

Once outside, they ran to her car, backed out of the driveway and drove toward the city. "We need to be around a crowd, so we won't be spotted." Edward glanced back to see if they were being followed.

"That's easy enough in L.A. People are swarming the city by now." She cleared her throat and asked, "Tell me again why we're on the run? What's after us?"

"I don't really know. I was sleeping. I had a vision of something chasing us. I didn't see who or what it was. It was more of a feeling."

"These feelings are usually right? I mean, when I have a dream, I just get up, get dressed and go to work."

He gave her a dumbfound look and said, "Yes. I am usually spot-on."

"Well you know, just making sure. I just met you, and I don't know how you operate." She shook her head in disbelief. "I knew I should've gone to work today."

"Wrong. You knew you shouldn't have. Right now, you're denying that fact, simply because the path you took, the right one, by the way, is different and a little harder."

"A little harder? You wake up shouting, and now we're on the run from god knows what, and you say 'a little harder'? Wow."

They entered the heart of the city. Cars were everywhere, and people filled the streets. He pushed a few buttons on the radio out of curiosity. Within a minute, he lost interest in the radio. "Find a place to park, anywhere. We can sit somewhere and talk."

Heather parked the car down the block from a coffee shop. "Let's go get some coffee."

They stood in line waiting to be served. Before their orders were taken, Edward tugged at her shirt. "They found us. God-dammit, they found us. We need to get out of here, else we place all the innocents in danger."

"You're the one who wanted to be around people. Why didn't you think of that in the first place?"

"I thought it would make it harder for them to find us. I didn't think they'd be able to track us if we were in a crowded area. Something must be homing in on us and guiding them. I don't know how they're doing it."

They walked out of the shop and were about to head to the car. They were greeted by four immense creatures, which Heather could only describe as barbarians. The creatures walked out of an alley, blocking the way to her car. "Run!" screamed Edward.

They took off running in the opposite direction, dodging people left and right. After entering a large crowd, they slowed down. Edward leaned over and said, "I'm still very weak, but the power of my father streams through you. I know you feel it. You can do wonders even now. Should we encounter those four, or anyone in the future, you only need to imagine what you wish to do, and it will be done. Imagine, wish, feel it."

Heather was staring at her hands as they walked, when all of a sudden, violet sparks shot from her palm.

He nodded in approval. "Yes. Exactly. You can lift objects, and you can destroy. However, know that you were chosen, because you do not have the destructive desire in you."

"Come again?"

"I said, you were chosen, because you are not truly a fighter at heart. You don't have the desire to destroy. Since this is so, it makes you the best person for this job. You'll always know the best path to walk, with the least

amount of force and destruction. The best fighters are those who do not wish to fight.”

Heather was about to say something when she turned to her right and saw two of the four barbarians not too far away. "They found us again! What now?"

"Obviously, we run."

"Move it!" screamed Heather, as she raced across the streets of Los Angeles, hand-in-hand with a sickly-looking teenage boy. Glancing in every direction, she spotted an alleyway to her right. "This way, now! Can you hop the fence, or do you need me to blast it?"

"I'll climb," Edward said raggedly. "If you blast it, it'll just cause a scene we don't need."

"You first!" she shrieked.

Edward climbed the fence. Once on the other side, he turned and watched Heather standing her ground, facing the entrance to the alley. Within seconds, a flash of violet danced around her body.

Papers were flying, and the big trash bins on the side were rolling by themselves. One of them stopped in the middle of the alley, completely blocking the entrance. The other lifted off the ground and landed on top of the first bin.

Man, that was exhausting, but at least it'll slow 'em down for a few minutes. She darted toward the fence and joined Edward on the other side.

"Now, what the HELL were those things chasing us? Their eyes were glowing red! You see that?"

He was breathing very hard with his eyes closed while sitting on the ground. There were smudges of dirt across his face and his shirt was tattered in two places. "Aye. Those were the..."

"Wait!" Laughing hysterically, Heather asked, "Did you just say, 'aye'?"

Very slowly, Edward turned his gaze upon her. He had a calm but very stern voice. "You insolent child. I may look like a young boy, but I am certainly much older than your mere twenty-three years, and my essence walked this Earth long before the famous King Tut was laid to rest. And you! I tell you not to blast the fence so as not to attract attention. Yet, you cause a garbage bin to fly through the air and land atop another in mid-day."

"Well, it stopped them, didn't it?"

Edward didn't acknowledge her. "Come on. Let's keep walking. Just mingle with the crowd. Now, where were we? Oh yes! Those were Moloch's slaves. In the ancient days, the peoples of the lands contrived a plan to appease their choice of god, Moloch. Their sickened minds of separation, pressured by Moloch himself, led them to sacrifice their own children to the demon.

"The more children who were forfeited, the stronger he got. He got stronger, cause the people got weaker. The spirits of those children have been housed and enslaved by Moloch, and he's held dominion over them for hundreds of years, waiting for the right time to unleash them back onto the world under his control. Seems he's given them new bodies."

"Moloch?" She was crazed with excitement and fear when she said his name. "Wait. You're saying those overgrown giants are really children?"

"Exactly. Although, they're no longer children. Their souls have been around for hundreds of years. When I pierce my thoughts into them, I can see what they were and how they became the way they did. Those giants, as you call them, are definitely the souls of the children who were sacrificed. The souls of those children are basically housed in those creatures. I can't say for sure what Moloch's grand design of a plan is, but I've a pretty good idea. After all, what do most abusers of power do when they're in a position of power?"

Heather shrugged her shoulders. "I don't know. You tell me."

Edward just stared at her in disbelief. He looked up to the sky, shook his head and sighed. Mumbling under his breath, he whispered, "Seriously, Father. Could she be any denser?"

"You know, for a god, you sure are an ass. What's up with that?"

"For your information, being godly and knowing the ins and outs of everything have absolutely nothing to do with morality and the way I act. Sure, there's an ethical way in which we should all live, but it has nothing to do with the human standard of morals. The most precious and loving god in a human body can have the foulest mouth, but his very presence will still enliven and enthrall everyone and everything in his path. Besides, I won't be this way with everyone. Just you."

"Oh, well that's just nice. And I'm not stupid," Heather said with a tone of defense. "If I really was that dense, I wouldn't be protecting some god who was sent to Earth to lead the people from some demon set loose from some unknown place."

"I didn't say you were stupid. If you truly were stupid, you wouldn't have been chosen to be my Guardian Watcher. Be that as it may, I've not the patience right now. I've traveled many more galaxies and dimensions than you could possibly understand, and my body is weak. To top it off, I'm on a time schedule. I've explained this to you. This is why, when I say, do this or do that, I really mean, do this or do that. My way."

"Okay fine. I get it. But I'm still the chosen one." Heather cracked up at her own joke.

He rolled his eyes and shook his head. "Anyway. Moloch is in a position of power. Certainly, what he is after is more power. Perhaps even world domination. One other thing. Moloch is..." He paused, peering into nothingness to find the right words. "Moloch, as I've come to understand, hails from the family lineage linked to a treacherous demon from ages ago."

Heather squinted her eyes and lost her smile. "You're not joking, are you?"

"No, I am not joking. This demon was powerful, but subtle. It took two of the most prestigious warriors from the Otherworlds to banish him. He was the demon of demons, at least to the peoples of this world."

She was taken aback, and her eyes glazed over. She wondered if this was all a dream and if she would soon wake up. Her head was spinning a little. She was having a hard time processing everything. "What do you mean by 'subtle'?"

"He didn't capture people and create wars the way his brother, Moloch, does. Instead, he did all his work by charming people, taking over their minds and creating delusion, thereby raising mass havoc which spread from land to land."

Heather's curiosity was ticking. "What about those two warriors who banished him? Who were they?"

"You mean, who ARE they? One of those warriors is the maker of our three swords. His name is Mikhae, of the Dynasty of the El Warriors. He's a giant sort of a creature with large wings that span at least ten feet in length, and he stands at least ten feet high. The light that comes from him will blind you, and his wordless presence demands complete loyalty. The other is known as the Great Wizard. In form, he looks just like any other mortal man. When he was here, he looked like a hippy with long hair, sandals and very intense eyes. But don't mistake him. I mean, he isn't called the Great Wizard for nothing.

"Now, those two from the Otherworlds, they exiled this demon into an abyss which no human could possibly ever stumble across. But just before his sentencing, while standing at the edge of the void, that demon bellowed a horrific cry to his brother.

“At that moment, the Great Wizard held out his right palm, and the warrior Mikhae unsheathed his sword. The winds from all corners shot out from the hand of the Great Wizard, taking hold of he who rose against humanity. And the fires from all worlds blasted out from the sword of Mikhae.

“That stupid demon was then sucked down into the chasm between the worlds. Yet, even though the two warriors had succeeded during that time, they knew they were a few seconds too late. The ripple of that demon's cry had already been heard by his idiot brother, Moloch.”

“You don't care much for either of them, do you?” Heather brushed the hair away from her face and rubbed her eyes, trying to process everything. “And this Moloch? Sounds like he's on a rampage to save his brother then, right?”

“Gods, no! Only a compassionate being could do something that honorable. The one who was banished, cried out to his brother at the very last moment. He was panic-stricken and desperate. He knew he wouldn't see the light of day for eons and eons, so he transferred a great deal of his power to his brother. It was a last-minute attempt, completely done out of fear. Besides, since his banishment, he has completely been obliterated, dissolved into nothing. There is no saving him.”

Her forehead furrowed, and she puckered her lips while forming her thoughts. “So, Moloch then, is some kind of demon. Which is?”

Edward was thoughtful for a moment. “Mephistopheles was a mortal man who was given powers by twisted and demented spirits. He had a soul, buried, but still a soul that could be felt. Moloch, on the other hand? When I search or sense for a presence here on the planet, I only feel complete and loathing darkness. It is horrific, and the repugnant nature of the traces of energy, which this Moloch has left behind in various places, causes people to

deter and doubt. Whatever he is, he is truly an abomination. He has no presence, nothing to call soul.”

He quickly changed the subject. “I’m famished.”

“You eat?”

Eyeing her with an incredulous expression, Edward asked, “Are you serious? Please tell me you’re joking.”

“Well, I mean, you’re supposed to be like a god or something, right?” Heather was perplexed.

“Wow. Yes, we all three eat. All gods and goddesses, when they inhabit a body, eat and go to the bathroom. They talk, run and play. Some of them even work, and you might not even know that you’re working right next to one of them.”

He started to walk off, but turned around. “So best not to piss random people off. You might just be pissing off a god.”

“Oh.”

He smiled a big grin and said, “Now, anymore stupid questions before we take leave?”

“No, that’s all for now.” Even as she said this, her mind was racing with a thousand questions.

“Let’s go.” He waved his arms impatiently. “I really don’t like to waste time. Also, there is no possible way we’ll be able to get your car back after that chase. We’ll have to either walk or find another ride.”

“Oh, just great! Being with you for one full day, I’ve lost my job, my car and my sanity! But it’s cool. I still have a little money to pay for a taxi. How very awesome for you.” She shook her head and followed his lead.

Part II: Time Crawls Like a Snail

“Seriously? An avocado and some spinach?” Heather had a dumbfound look on her face. “People don’t go to diners and order that kind of stuff. This is just the most ridiculous thing I’ve ever witnessed in my life. Look at all the different kinds of burgers and chicken sandwiches they got.” She shook her head and feigned an attitude of disgust.

Edward was silent, peering outside the window from where they were seated. His face showed no expression. Heather stared at him for a moment and tilted her head in curiosity. He looked to be in another world, yet so powerfully grounded in his seat. Very slowly but fluidly, he moved his hand, picked up his glass of water and took a sip. The water slid down his throat, and he closed his eyes as if in ecstasy.

Very gently, he set the glass of water back on the table. Picking up his fork, he poked at the spinach. Again, he closed his eyes when he brought it toward his mouth. Ever so slowly he chewed, savoring every last bite, while lost in thrill of the moment.

“Uh, did you even hear a word I just said, Yoda?”

Swallowing his food, he took a few deep breaths and opened his eyes. “How could I not hear you? Loud and annoying.” He took a few more bites of his food, this time a bit faster than before.

Heather was about to say something, but he cut her off. “It’s a fact most people disrespect their food. It sits in front of them, brimming with vitality from Gaia, ready to nurture. Yet, people, meaning you, don’t pay any attention to it. It’s these same people who read newspapers or talk while they eat. It ranks up there with running on a treadmill and watching TV at the same time, like I saw at that fitness center we passed.

“They’re really doing neither very well. It’s a waste of time. They’re not really paying full attention to their body or the TV. They could easily cut their workout to a third of the amount of time and exertion and still get the same results. All one has to do is be completely present and engrossed inside of their body. The same goes with talking on the phone and trying to have another conversation with somebody in front of you.”

He crammed a few more spinach leaves in his mouth and continued talking. “I could go on and on with the stupid analogies, but I rather think you get my point, eh? Your food’ll do wonders for your body if you pay attention to it. And who or what is Yoda?”

“Forget it,” she uttered while shaking her head.

“Fine by me. If you must know about my diet, my body isn’t big, so I don’t need to eat much to survive. Not to mention, I haven’t eaten anything in thousands of years. So even a grain of rice would suffice right now. Also, I don’t eat anything that mooed, meowed, barked, cooed, or could have. It’s actually kind of gross to me.”

“Why is that?” she asked.

“I really wanted you to learn this on your own, rather than me telling you. With the final summonings, you’ll have so much energy flowing through you. Your body won’t be able to handle the heavy stuff of meat. But it really doesn’t do much for me to tell you outright, cause it’s just words. All you’ll hear is blah, blah, blah. It’s in one ear and out the other, and then, another bite of your burger. So why bother, hmmm?”

“Well,” Heather said. “Try me.”

“Fine. The energies of anger, sadness and grief, which the animal experiences before and at the time of its slaughter, become lodged within the flesh. The spirit of the animal leaves, but the disgusting energies stay behind. When you eat that disgusting stuff, it bogs you down and makes you lethargic

and fat, like the rest of the people in this country. Also, in previous lives, we were all animals. You were probably a monkey or a cow. Satisfied?"

"You're right. I'm still partial to this thing that used to moo." She took another bite of her burger. Pointing at his left wrist, she asked, "What's that pitchfork mean?"

"Ah! I was wondering when you'd ask!" Edward instantly brightened and exuberantly explained. "It is a Trident, the mark of the great god, Siva. You know, you have the same mark on your wrist also. It's very clear to me. I'm sure it was your mother who hid it from you, but I can see it."

"What are you talking about? I do?" A puzzled look crossed her face.

He looked around to see if anyone was watching. Nobody seemed to be paying any attention, so he leaned over the table and touched her left wrist with his right index finger.

Miraculously, the mark of the Trident formed on her wrist and spewed light. Heather's body jerked into a straight posture, and her eyes bulged widely. She felt like a lightning bolt had entered into her. All the images around her became hazy.

"You've always had this mark, and you've always been marked as the one."

"Okay." Her hands were shaking, and she was breathing hard. "Next time, just warn me when you do things like that. I feel like you just jump-started me. I think I could puke in about five seconds."

"Well, don't. Hold it in." He smirked at his last remark. "Oddly enough, that's exactly what I did. I jump-started you. You see, the way you were before I did that, you were at about sixty-five percent. Now you're at about seventy-five percent. Soon enough, you'll open up to the full potential, once I do the final thing."

Deep within the inner folds of his mind, he heard the voice of his father, "Thus, the moment has presented itself to you. You have reacted exactly as was pre-ordained. The finality of the summonings will happen, once again, at the exact moment of when it shall occur."

I understand, Father. Edward was staring at her.

She was at a loss of words. The mention of her mother carried her back to her days in Texas, where she had spent the majority of her life. She was a bit remorseful, since they were not very close when her mother was alive. She closed her eyes and shuddered.

Sensing what she was thinking, Edward chimed in, "She loved you. She cared enough to hide this Trident from you, so you wouldn't attract undo attention to yourself, or lose control of the power at a young age. Your mother was a natural. Was she not?"

Heather slowly shook her head. "Yeah. Come to think of it, she was. When she'd get really pissed, she'd just look at a car and the tire would pop. I kinda felt sorry for anyone who crossed her. They really didn't stand a chance."

She asked, "How do you know so much about my mom anyway?"

"It's my job to know these things." He picked up a piece of his avocado and stuffed it into his mouth. "I'd be a horrible teacher if I didn't do my work."

"Oh. Well, I guess I did pick up some of her characteristics, huh? The good ones anyway."

"Yup. You got her raw power. The difference is, she wasn't trained, and she didn't know how to control it. But you! The power and the training!"

"But why me?" It was a question she had been wanting to ask. "Out of the millions in this world. You could have easily chosen some apprentice girl in..."

Edward cut her off. "You were chosen thousands of years ago. No, wait. You were chosen at the beginning of Time itself. It was destiny. Father has a way of making things happen. He foresaw many possibilities, all the possibilities. This outcome was the one most likely to happen, and it did. You are a direct descendant of the original clan of warriors whom Gene, Christopher and I trained in the very beginning."

She rubbed her temples for a second. "You're saying the Winters family has always been a family of magickal warriors?"

"That is exactly what I am saying." Edward picked up another piece of spinach and stuck it in his mouth. "Your destiny, Heather Winters, has always been marked for the role as Guardian Watcher."

Heather looked down and stared at her plate of food. *Un-freaking-believable.*

Suddenly, the air around them changed, and Edward was alert. It was as if a thick cloud had condensed and descended upon their table. Without moving his head, his eyes scanned the entire restaurant. He slowly cocked his head so he could see outside the window. "Prepare yourself. I think we've been found. I sense three, maybe four of 'em. Can you feel it?"

"I feel something, I think."

"I need for you to concentrate on one simple word, and set your intention while you do it. We need for everything to come to a near standstill so we can do our thing."

Heather's nerves were twitching. At the same time, her adrenaline was pumping from the excitement of the danger which lay ahead. "Alright, what is it?"

"Bhairava. Simple as that. Just say it aloud with me very, very slowly. Bhai... Raaa... Vaaa... it's my father's name, or part of it. It'll bring us power."

Over and over they repeated the name of Edward's father. Sparkles of violet danced around them, followed by nearly all the colors of the rainbow. A minute later, their auras had filled the entire room where they were sitting. Heather looked around, wondering if the people would run off screaming. What she saw, however, was quite the opposite.

A waitress, ten feet away, was walking at the speed of a snail. The four businessmen at the next table were deep in conversation, but their words were long and drawn-out to one syllable per five seconds.

"Time. It's a funny thing, huh? For us, we can maneuver and accomplish all we need within a split second. For them, it takes weeks, months. At the rate we're moving, we'll be a blur to them, which is what I wanted. No need for them to see any of this. Let's go." Edward quickly stood up and walked toward the front door, with Heather at his footsteps.

"What about them outside? Did we slow them down also?"

"No. It takes far greater energy to do that. They're still human at the very core, but they were twisted by a soulless monster and are many centuries old. They are not so easily bent. If Gene and Christopher were with me casting the enchantment, we could've slowed them down with no problem. Not a big deal though. We can overtake them without a strain. I only wanted to put everyone else on pause, so they don't see what we're doing."

"What's wrong with that? So, what if they see? I mean, really, magick is real, and don't people have a right to know about it?"

"Yes, magick is very real. And yes, people do have a right to know about it. But right now isn't the time. Right now isn't their time." He was annoyed at all her last-minute questions. "I'd rather not have them succumbed to the violence. Can you imagine? After seeing us battling with these idiots outside how they'd be looking under their beds at night and triple-checking their doors and windows? Let's just do it my way. Call it damage control."

“Oh.”

Edward’s left hand was resting on the door knob of the entrance. The tone changed in his words, and he gave her a look of reassurance and asked, “You ready?”

The moment Heather nodded, he jerked the door opened, and they both ran out.

Part III: The Goddess in New York

New York City
3rd Day of December

Son of Gaia

*The world which we see before us,
Is exactly how we dreamt and wished it to be.*

Surrounded by flashing lights and the sounds of honking cars, Christopher and Gwen walked slowly down the street. They came to a stop and looked around. The sun glistened on the top of their heads, making the blonde hair on both their heads seem lighter. Standing completely erect at nearly 5'10" and a half, Gwen seemed to tower over Christopher, although by only four inches.

Eyeing the bottles, papers, scraps of food and cigarette butts scattering the streets, Christopher said sullenly, "So this is what's become of the world?"

Gwen stared sullenly at him for a moment at his green eyes. "Yup."

"Really?! Last time I was running around here, Earth was covered with lush green and colorful flowers sprouting everywhere. Trees taller than those buildings guarded the lands, and wild animals roamed freely in peace. No matter where you went, the beautiful aromas of Gaia filled every sense, bringing you to a blissful state. Now look. Dumb, dumb, dumb." He shook his head in pity and revulsion.

"It was really like that back then?" Gwen was in awe.

"Three thousand years ago? It sure was. I'm all for change and everything. I mean, change can't be stopped no matter how much people resist anyway. The buildings and cars and all this cement is fine and dandy to me. It's

just that people don't have to be so stupid. Just look at everything. This city has a chance to be really pretty."

"And your mother? Does she ever get angry at the people for trashing up her grounds?"

"No. She just watches. Watches and waits. She has all the time in the Universe. She has more patience than you could possibly imagine. She watches, waits and dreams of a time when everything will be in better order. Only when things get too out of hand, will she intervene. Sometimes, she'll make parts of the planet tear into pieces, or just do random things, so people get a message."

"That's pretty deep." Gwen rubbed her hands together to warm up from the cold.

"She is a goddess." Christopher shrugged.

"Oh, right. I guess she can do whatever she wants then, right?"

"Yes, something like that."

"Can I record this?" Gwen asked. She was digging into her purse, looking for her digital camera.

"Sure." Suddenly, Christopher froze. Gwen stared at him with bewilderment and fascination. He paused, closed his eyes and tilted his head toward the stars. "Edward's in trouble." He audibly sighed. Speaking to seemingly nobody in particular, he asked, "What am I gonna do with him? How does he always find trouble?"

"How do you know? Will he be alright?"

"Huh?"

"I said, how do you know he's in trouble? Will he be alright?" Gwen was fascinated by his connection to Edward and Gene.

"Oh. Well, time and space don't really separate us. We have this bond inside, where we can feel things from the other. So, I know, cause he's tense.

His adrenaline has kicked in. But yeah. He'll be perfectly fine. He IS Edward, after all.

Without any warning, Christopher's arms shot out to both sides, stretching out completely into a T-position. He let out a loud roar, unlike anything Gwen had ever heard. It was not the voice of a teenager. It was a very low rumble with bass, depth and power. Instantly, golden light seeped out of every pore, through his eyes, hands and mouth, and his body vibrated in an ecstatic frenzy.

With the voice of complete and utter authority, he spoke slowly, "When the three become one, the power inside and beyond all images and thoughts will destroy the blatant ignorance of humanity's self-inflicted pain!"

Gwen's jaw dropped. She fell over backward in near shock. Her camera was still recording. She looked around to see if anyone was watching. Everywhere she turned, she saw people covering their eyes from the blinding light emanating from Christopher. She guessed they were not even sure where the source of this light was coming from. It came from his body, and yet, it seemed to also come from outside of his body. It was everywhere.

Christopher's body lifted one foot off the ground. He was floating. His body completely dissolved and disappeared. All that remained was the most entrancing and illuminating golden hue. Gwen gasped. Frozen in fear, she just remained in place, waiting. A few minutes passed by. And another few.

Slowly, the light dimmed, and Christopher's physical body took form again. He was floating before her once more, with his arms still stretched out into a T. Slowly coming to, with his head bobbling from side to side, his arms dropped to his waist and he fell to the ground. The people closest were pointing and whispering.

"By the gods!" Gwen yelled. "Christopher!" *What the hell!* She ran to the crumpled boy on the sidewalk. People were terror-stricken. They watched

the scene between Gwen and the boy, unsure if they should call the police, an ambulance, the news or do nothing. She saw his chest moving up and down.

He's alive. She looked at everyone around her and said with unbearable annoyance, "We're fine!" Nobody moved. They continued to watch, still unsure of what was happening. Gwen then stood up and shouted, "I said we're fine!" When she did, sparks flew around her, and loud, popping noises filled the air. Everyone in the vicinity backed away and moved on.

Dragging him to the side of a building, she propped him up into a sitting position and patted his cheeks, while saying his name over and over. His eyes flickered, and she heard him mumble. She barely made out the names, "Edward, Gene."

With a sudden start, his eyes opened wide, and his body shook. He looked at Gwen, who was staring at him with alarm. His lips formed into a small smile. Then a grin. Finally, he was laughing wildly. "That was outrageous!" he yelled.

"Outrageous?! Are you for real?! You just disappeared, then reappeared in front of everybody, causing a huge scene. Now you're laughing about it? What happened?" Gwen demanded the full story.

He tried to stand up, but fell over and yelled, "Ow!" when he hit the ground. "That hurt. It was Edward," he mumbled. "Remember, I said he was in trouble? Wait. I did say that, right?" He rubbed his head.

"Yeah. You said that."

"Oh, okay. I thought so. Well, he called to us, to me and to Gene. But he did so in a way he'd never done before. Actually, none of us have ever done that before. All three of us kind of formed into one entity or being. Outrageous, I tell you! Truthfully, I've never experienced anything like it before. It was just pure exhilaration! But don't ask me to do that again anytime soon. That took the wind out of me."

"I can see that," Gwen said. "For a small boy, you sure can take a lot."

"I'm not small," Christopher said defensively.

Gwen stared at him. And kept staring at him. She put her right thumb and index finger together and squinted her left eye. Christopher rolled his eyes and said, "Okay! Maybe I'm a little small. Satisfied?"

"There's nothing wrong with that," Gwen replied. "It's fine."

He sighed. "My mother decided I should incarnate into a small-framed body, so I would be better suited to relate with people. She told me, if I was to appear as a huge warrior, people would automatically set themselves apart from me. I wanted to be seven feet in height and 250 pounds of pure muscle. Instead, I incarnated as only five feet and seven inches. I prolly only weigh about 120 lbs."

Gwen snickered. "Well, I mean, there's nothing wrong with that. You might be small, but you're still more powerful than anyone else on the planet."

He thought about it for a moment. "This is true. Anyway, about Edward, he reached out to us. We became one. Then, we battled some really big and ugly people and some birds, and I woke up to you slapping me in the face."

"Birds? What?"

"Big birds." Christopher spread his arms out and tried to mimic the birds. "It's not working. You had to be there."

"You said something when you were all freaked out. Your voice was pretty scary. Oh wait! I recorded it!" Excited, Gwen hit the play feature on her camera. They both watched in amazement. "Okay, here's the part!"

When the three become one, the power inside and beyond all images and thoughts will destroy the blatant ignorance of humanity's self-inflicted pain!

He was clearly excited. "O boy! I said that? You're right. My voice is pretty scary, isn't it?"

"Really?" Gwen looked baffled. "You don't remember saying that? What'd you mean by it?"

"How should I know? I wasn't there. Well, I was, but I wasn't. Never mind."

Thinking to himself for a few seconds, he finally said, "Okay, I'll try and explain. There are times when we can lose complete control of ourselves, and an unseen force takes over. It's those times which are the most precious and exciting. It's total ecstasy! It's like your entire identity is erased, and all that's left is pure energy. What was said wasn't voiced by me, or what you know me to be. It was voiced by the stuff inside and outside of everything. Sounds like a prophecy."

"A prophecy?"

Christopher nodded. "Yeah, an offshoot of the original prophecy, but a prophecy nonetheless. But we really shouldn't dawdle on it. It'll work itself out in its own time and in its own way. For now, let's just get on with the work we came to do."

Reluctantly, Gwen stood up and extended her hand to Christopher. He took it in his hand, hoisted himself up and took a few deep breaths.

"You okay?" Gwen asked.

"Sure am. Actually, now that the woozy feeling's gone, I feel even better. Shall we?"

They walked back into the crowds of people swarming the city. The sun was bright, the air cool. The sounds were loud and chaotic.

"Over there." Christopher pointed to a side street covered in litter. He stood silently, while Gwen poised herself with hands at chest level. She bowed

to the Earth. A dazzling, golden light surrounded her body. Focusing her energy inside of the ground, she felt the very pulse and rhythm of the Earth.

Tree roots shot up from below the ground, sweeping the area, and the ground caved in various places, swallowing every piece of trash.

“Roses,” Christopher directed.

“Okay.” She concentrated again. The flow of energy erupted, and where the trash previously lay, bushes filled with yellow, orange, white and red roses bloomed.

“Yeah!” Christopher yelled out. “Flowers are from other dimensions and carry the essence of the gods and goddesses. These particular roses will slowly melt away the stupidity from everyone on this street and the entire city. Not even winter will be able to kill them. Gaia will make sure they survive.”

“Don’t you think people or even the city officials might start to get a little suspicious if those flowers never die?”

Christopher giggled, watching his breath in the cold air. “Bah! What do we care? People everywhere are suspicious of one thing or another. Aliens, or strange, big and scary animals walking on two legs. If not this, they’d find something else to be suspicious about. I think it’s okay for everyone to see flowers that never die. Why not, right? At least it’ll make them feel good and make them think about something other than their hair or their bad skin. It’s a good thing!”

“Okay. Just wondering. Why don’t we head that way, right to the heart of everything,” suggested Gwen. She pointed to all the lit-up signs and thousands of people walking the streets. “It’s all just a jumbled mess of stuff, and it looks like we could do a little fixing up there.”

“Yes, fine. Good idea. We can completely alter the place, right in front of their very eyes!” Christopher was even more excited.

“In front of all those people? You don't think we'll scare them, even just a little?” Gwen was both hesitant and excited to display her newfound powers.

“Oh well. If somebody sees, they see. Mother Gaia allows us to show off a bit in front of people, so long as we aren't going crazy. It's mainly just the violent stuff in battles she'd rather us hide. When that kind of thing happens, we do everything necessary to hide our tracks. Now, let's go have some fun. People might see something happening, but we can do this inconspicuously, so they don't know who or what is actually doing it.”

They took a seat next to each other on a bench. With a yawn, Christopher stretched out and lay down next to her.

He commanded, “Green.” Gwen's head lowered into a bow to the Earth. Instantly, she felt a rush of energy sizzle up through her spine. Her body was about to light up in gold, but Christopher snapped his fingers and hid it from the human eye, so nobody could see what was happening. Ivy sprang up from the ground, wrapping itself delicately and beautifully around the buildings.

The people walking by were instantly startled, causing them to scream. After the initial shock, they stood in place, mesmerized by the beauty of what had just happened. Crowds were beginning to form. Most had their cameras or phones out, snapping pictures or taking live videos of the scene before them.

“Give the people something different,” he instructed. “Bonsai.” Gwen nodded and let the power surge. Various sorts of bonsai from around the world emerged from out of the ground, lining the perimeters of churches and beat-up apartment buildings.

Christopher added, “Put a few next to that building with the new ivy. Don't hit the people. Just line the perimeter and shock 'em a bit. That'll be interesting!”

“Okay, you’re the boss.” She did as she was told. As soon as the bonsai sprang from the ground, those closest jumped back, landing against the people behind them. Dirt shot in the air from beneath their feet, and the crowd was in a commotion. Just as fast as it happened, the soil smoothed out. The entire perimeter of the building was a magnificent sight of beautiful bonsai trees from roots Gwen had pulled from the other side of the world.

They both laughed, just watching the crowd which had gathered. Christopher was glowing happily. “I’d venture to say, nearly all those people have never seen anything magickal in their lives up until now. At least not on this level. They’re prolly so used to waking up, going to the bathroom, leaving home, coming home and watching TV, while eating... wait, what was that food you were telling me about earlier?”

“Nachos,” Gwen answered.

“Yeah, that. So, most people are prolly so used to coming home, watching TV and eating nachos on the couch. Then pooping and going to bed. How boring.”

“Well, with what we just did, I’m sure a few of them wet their pants just now.” Gwen was clearly satisfied.

“Hahahahaha! Yeah, maybe. It’s all good though,” he replied.

“Yeah! I thought freaking them out would be a bad thing. But it’s actually kinda good for them.” Gwen was amazed at everything happening, and the fact that she was causing it.

Christopher looked lost in thought for a few seconds. He then turned to Gwen. “Mmmmm, nachos. I can’t wait to try it. It’s been so long since I’ve had food.”

Gwen concealed her laughter.

“There’s a wild, white and lavender orchid growing in the Amazon of Brazil.” He sent the image telepathically to Gwen. “Call to it and bring her here.”

Gwen focused her energy, connecting with the orchid. It was intense inside of her. She wasn’t sure if she could do this, and she was having trouble focusing with all the doubt in her mind. Seeing the strain in her, Christopher popped up and tapped her lightly on the forehead.

Her aura ignited with more power. She felt the roots of those orchids traveling at speeds of hundreds of miles beneath the Earth. Shooting up from the trampled dirt, beautiful orchids filled the barren streets of New York, startling all passers-by. It was a sight to behold!

“Ah! Hahahahaha! Yeah!!” Christopher yelled out. “Like I said, sometimes it’s good to shock people! You see, in the split-second, when people are in shock, they lose all their thoughts and are instantly brought into the present. That’s a good thing! Most of the time, people are just rambling about nonsense and worrying about random stuff.”

“Oh, I understand now.” She had a thought from a few years back. “You know, that happened to me once with the stove. I remember just being so full in my head. I could barely even cook, cause I had all these problems happening at the same time. I accidentally burned myself for like a second. But as soon as it happened, I swear, all my thoughts just stopped. I see what you’re getting at.”

“Exactly!” His face was beaming with a mischievous grin. “It’s like I said. You startle them for just a second, and they forget about what they were worrying about. When that happens, a small space opens up in their minds, and the Otherworlds is able to penetrate into the little gap that was created. I can explain it in depth later if you want.”

Christopher was beside himself in joy. “Anyway, give them all hope! It’s Christmas time!” He thought for a few seconds. “I got it! Cinnamon, orange and pine!”

Concentrating once more, Gwen felt the connection with these simple and common plants of the Earth. Within a few seconds thick scents of cinnamon, orange and pine filled every street within a three-mile radius of where they were sitting. People stopped in their tracks, smelling the air, smiles hinting on their lips.

“Oh boy! Check that out!” He sat up to get a better look. Gwen saw the glimmer of his youth expressed in his adoration for the Earth. He explained to her, “Those scents are extraordinary and will linger in the air for weeks to come. They’re rising from beneath the ground, and they’ll lift the spirits of everyone. They’re not just regular scents, you know. Because we used magick, all the people are now saturated in magick. Everyone who smells it will be transformed in some way.”

Although she was pleased at the glorious nature which had taken the city by surprise, Gwen was still a bit uneasy and confused. “I don’t get it. I mean, it all looks beautiful, striking really. But earlier you spoke of a presence on the planet that is so wicked and foul. How is it that a few plants and flowers and aromas are gonna help?”

Christopher sat peacefully, Zen-like, and he was beaming from ear to ear. “The entity upon the Earth feeds off the dissatisfaction of humanity. He, or it, gains strength when people lose sight. However, when Mother Nature touches a soul for even a split-second, they stop and forget about all the chaos happening in their lives to explore the beauty in front of them. All worry drops away, and for a few moments, life is worth living.

“If we can get a mass number of people to experience the same feeling of this present moment, a very intense magnetic field is created. It’s

powerful beyond belief. It'll shake that abominable, evil energy to the core. No matter how demonic and destructive evil is, if enough people connect with the Otherworlds and forget about the horrific and depressing times in their lives, the demonic energy loses its connection to the people. Make sense?"

"Yes, I think so."

He continued, "When a person smiles or laughs, their life changes right then and there. Everything we did today will make people do just that! The goddess Gaia has given New York hope today! My mother is happy. She has shown her presence. It can be felt, seen and smelled. Today is a very good day!" Christopher remarked with contentment.

"Okay. Just wondering. But yeah, that does makes sense, in a weird kind of way. Now we can head to the airport, right?" she asked.

"No, not just yet. Your powers have definitely matured, but I haven't given you the entire initiation. The glowing Trident on your wrist clearly shows how you have gained in power. Later, when I open up the energetic pathways inside your brain and spine, you'll see and feel as you've never before seen and felt. For this to happen, we need to be away from people in a quiet place."

"Okay," she agreed. "What about the other Guardian Watchers? They're being initiated, or whatever, also?"

"Yup. They sure are. Edward and Gene will take care of them and open them both up in the best way possible. We'll get to meet them soon enough. K?" He answered his own question. "K. Then let's get moving."

As they walked toward the train station, they saw people everywhere had come to a halt to view the lush life which had instantly sprung up. Pictures were taken. A reporter and his newscast were on the scene, and there were children giggling and shouting to their parents about gold lights streaking through the wind.



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