

the  
*Blue Phoenix*  
and the  
*Silver Fox*



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*Fable and the Silver Foxx*

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Edited by Chris and Andrea Elston. Book layout and design by Chris Elston.

ISBN: 978-1-953-158-01-7

Library of Congress Control Number: 2020944200



Printed in the U.S.A.  
U.S.A. \$16.99

This book is lovingly dedicated to Darran, my soulmate, and Connor & Lily, my miracles from Heaven. I pray every word ignites a fire in your souls that fuels all your hopes, dreams, and faith in the Gospel.

Love,  
Elaine/Momma  
(the luckiest wife & mother this side of Heaven)

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to God in Heaven, who bestowed upon me the talent to write.

Writing a book is rewarding, but also brutal. I could not have accomplished such a feat without the support and love from my husband, Darran, and my children, Connor and Lily. Connor (11-year-old boy) said, "I cannot believe my nerd mom wrote this. It's so good." Lily (7) wants to co-write a children's book with her mother now that she has 'street cred.' Thank you, my little family, for all you have done for me.

To my parents, siblings, and family. You have no idea how much your faith in my writing means to me. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for believing in me, and being proud of my accomplishment.

To Shine-A-Light Press. A big heartfelt thank you for giving me a chance. Thank you for believing in my story's potential. I'm sorry I am a colloquial farm girl who doesn't have the time to capitalize the letter 'i' and I know you worked harder than you ever have before in order to get my book publish-ready. Thank you, a million times over.

To Amy Warren, my supportive best friend. Thank you for your encouragement to write a book. Thank you for reading it all the way through and loving it. You gave me the courage to submit it.

To my co-workers at the Wound Care Center/Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy. You all are like family to me. Your inquiries about what chapter I was on or my current word count really supported me in my adventure. I am grateful to all of you.

Last but not least, thank you, to my tribe on Twitter, #Starwars peeps, #Reylos, and the awesome all-inclusive #WritingCommunity. You gave me the courage to write because you recognized a talent that I did not see. Thank you all very much.

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✦ Journals of the New World ✦

the  
*Blue Phoenix*  
and the  
*Silver Fox*

*Elaine Beth Doebereiner*





There are many things unknown to mankind. It's not found in books nor passed down through oral history. The mysteries regarding the apocalypse and survival of man still linger, several years after the End of Days. Our world has been remade into its original state, wild with forests and animals. Life is hard but also peaceful. It is a continual fight to follow the gospel and protect the earth from evil. We felt it imperative to piece our journals together so that mankind will know the truth. This generation can pass down the knowledge of events because of these collective journals. Therefore, we hope the knowledge prevents past mistakes, and life as we know it continues on peacefully.

STAY SAFE AND NEVER FORGET,

☞ *Fable*

An Old Soul

⚙️ *Ruebee* ⚙️

The Elder

GABRIEL WESSON ✂️

The Straight Arrow

🌻 *Iris*

Earthly Angel

⌘ *Solara wesson*

The Wild Card

*Israel* †

Earthly Angel

❖ *Maevyn Wesson*

The Survivor

*Michael* ⚔️

Warrior Angel

:: *Levi Wesson* ::

The Preacher Man

∇ *Sariel* ∇

Angel of Death

*Cayne* \*\*\*

The Redeemable

ψ *Gaia*

Protector of Children

*Foxx* ∴

Romanian Mystery

*Ignatius* ☸

The Great Defender



# 1

Year 25: New World  
Year 2216: Old World

## “Baiting Salem” Fable, #1

The sky transitioned from blue to pinkish gold and into the peaceful black sky speckled with brilliant twinkling stars. Stars flickered like candlelight. The orange moon, so beautiful, glided into view. It's quite a miracle to be alive and humbling to sit here admiring the scenery. The land is now called *New Eden Island* by Earth's too few inhabitants. It's been so long since the End of the world occurred, no one remembers the number of years that have passed. According to my math, I'm 16 years old so that makes it about 25-26 years ago. No one really knows if our island is the only land that remains. It is possibly year 2216 of the old world. People here call it 025 NW for new world.

Global warming had reached the highest climates that Earth could withstand. People, animals, and plant life rapidly began to die off. The polar bear was first, then several

others followed in its footsteps right into extinction. The glaciers and tundra habitats melted causing mass flooding and ecosystem imbalance. Water is a powerful element, leaving death and destruction in its wake. Terrible hurricanes, tornadoes, and lightning storms set the world ablaze. Land masses were sunk deep into the ocean. What the flooding and storms could not accomplish, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions accomplished for them.

Some say that the earthquakes moved all the remaining land masses together, creating one big island, although my parents said there was no evidence of this. We hope there are other lands out there with more people, but we have not discovered a way to know whether or not that hope is futile. This island is now known as New Eden. It is the name given to her as a reminder of our new beginning.

There's no electricity here. There are no cars, no skyscrapers and no roads. Pollution and powerplants all but forgotten. Forests and mother nature are all I have known. Mother Nature has regrown and flourished. Her streams and creeks run with clean fresh crystal-clear waters, safe to

drink. Food is hunted in the woods, fished from the waters, and foraged from the forest and trees. It is a hard way to live but it is simple and clean.

I scanned the terrain and breathed deeply, letting the cool fresh air fill my lungs. My heart smiled listening to the crickets chirping and tree frogs peeping. When I'm by myself in nature, I feel a sense of belonging. But amongst humans, I feel quite the opposite, awkward; unaccepted; and out of place. Maybe I feel that way because of the nature of my birth.

4 years before the end began with inclement weather and natural disasters, infertility struck worldwide. So, to my calculations, 4 years of infertility, 3 years of bad weather, 2 years of trying to rebuild, and then all of a sudden, I was born. No one had laid eyes on a baby for 10 years or more, and I'm sure that was a scary ordeal for them. There, I was born to the village shamans, Nyo and yara. My aunt yona helped birth me and we have been close ever since.

The villagers said that my birth brought the demons to Earth, and were concerned that, perhaps, I was one myself. If not a demon, then they felt I was a bad omen at the very least. My parents had prayed for a baby for so long and were already in their 40s. They saw me as nothing but a miracle, but the villagers shunned us and sent us away. My parents gladly left the village and became travelers, nomads like our ancestors. My family is of Egyptian, Irish, and Romanian heritage.

My parents gave me not only one name but three. My first name was my family's name for me. They called me their "Little Phoenix" because I was the first baby in several years. My mother and auntie usually said "Fee" for short, but my father liked to call me "Nikie," which was like calling me junior. The second name was the name I told people outside of the family, Fable. And the third name was never to be spoken out loud. It was whispered to me and it is my true name.

A whistle in the distance brought my attention back to the present. Gabe and Solara told me that when the world was

at its weakest, fighting to rebuild, the gates of hell opened up and unleashed chaos. Chaos has a name, Rune. He brought with him Casne, Dante, and Salem. Salem is the Demon we were hunting on this night. I was on the tallest hill, being used as bait. I don't like being bait but I was being punished for thinking on my own and making my own decisions. One decision in particular that had sent Dante to the Chamber of Hell where he belonged. No one in their sound mind would be standing out in the great wide open, where a demon (let alone a human-eating demon like Salem) had been spotted. If victory were to grace us on this night and we sent Salem to the chamber of hell, that would be two demons down and only two left to go.

I was lost in contemplation (again) when a slight breeze danced around me, warning me that Salem was lurking in the dark nearby. She was very close as it did not take a deep breath to detect her stench of bile and necrotic flesh. The 'dead animal scent' choked me up. As the aroma grew stronger and the rustling grass grew louder, every muscle in my body tightened uncomfortably. Trusting the others to follow the plan, precisely, I continued to hold my

ground. I could feel her hot breath upon my neck. Finally, arrows sped right by my head followed by a loud series of shrieks. I spun around quickly to find Salem crawling around like a rabid animal and leaking green frothy bile from the corners of her mouth. I'm not going to lie, she was lanky-scraggly-sunken eyed-rotted teeth-TERRIFYING!

Just when I thought she could not be any scarier, she crawled into a wild sugar cane field. I have bad memories of previous wild sugar cane fields.

One memory involved a scary crocodile. The other one is stupid and not one I like to mention. Long story short, my mother used to tell me a story called, "Princess and the Frog." I found what I thought was a frog in a sugar cane field one day and kissed it. It was brown with dark brown/black spots. Turns out it was a highly poisonous tropical cane toad and I started to hallucinate. The sugar cane shoots began speaking and moving, then woke up with ugly faces and chased me out of the field into the woods. There, I met a covert leprechaun with a fireball in his backpack. The fireball was really a shooting star that he



had wished upon. He wished he could have it for more wishes. It was amazingly beautiful, bright orange, and warm. He caught me when I stumbled, unable to take my eyes off the ball of fire. He had a collar on with a metal clasp that read "Wart." When my parents found me in the woods I was puking. They saw and heard nothing else. I had never ventured into a sugar cane field since, until this night.

After 10 suspenseful minutes of tracking Salem, we cornered her. She fought back vigorously. She was struck in the face and to our disgust, a necrotic cheek fell to the ground, revealing a maggot filled sinus cavity. Salem leapt upon me, pinning me to the ground. Green bile leaked out of her mouth all over me while maggots fell out of her face onto mine. Holding her back, I held my breath, pursed my lips tightly, and kept her rotten teeth from biting my face off. Gabe had been knocked down not far from where I laid. He refocused, jumped to his feet, and sliced her head off. Her lifeless body trapped mine beneath her as more of her bodily fluids oozed all over me. That's one more

bad memory of a sugar cane field that shall never be forgotten.

≡ Fable

“But ask the beasts, and they will teach you;  
the birds of the heavens, and they will tell you;  
or the bushes of the earth, and they will teach you;  
and the fish of the sea will declare to you.  
Who among all these does not know  
that the hand of the Lord has done this?  
In his hand is the life of every living thing  
and the breath of all mankind.”

~ Job 12:7-10

## 2

Year 25: New World  
Year 2216: Old World

### “The Witnesses” Gabriel, #1

THE THREE OF US WERE IN OUR POSITIONS. FROM MY VANTAGE POINT, IN THE TREE ORCHARD, I CLEARLY SAW THE OPEN FIELD. I COULD SEE FABLE IN THAT FIELD, AND MY SISTER SOLARA IN THE NEIGHBORING TREES. I HID AMONG THE TREES FOR COVER, READY WITH MY BOW AND ARROW TO DELIVER THE KILL SHOT. SOMETHING PUZZLES ME ABOUT THIS DEMON. IN THE BEGINNING, SHE COULD BREATHE FIRE AND SHE WREAKED HAVOC ON VILLAGES. SOMETHING HAPPENED TO HER, MAYBE SHE GOT SICK, I CANNOT BE CERTAIN. BUT WHATEVER IT WAS THAT HAPPENED, IT TOOK THAT FIRE BREATHING ABILITY FROM HER AND CREATED A RABID SICKLY BEAST. NOW SHE HUNTS AND EATS HUMANS.

EVEN THOUGH FABLE WAS VISIBLE OUT IN THE OPEN FIELD, SALEM ATTACKED ME FIRST. I WAS FORCED TO CLIMB HIGH UP INTO THE TREETOPS AND INCONSEQUENTIALLY DROPPED MY BOW INTO THE UNKNOWN BELOW. I WAS LOOKING INTO THE SUNKEN BLACK EYES OF DEATH AS SHE CLUTCHED MY THROAT WITH HER CLAWS. GROWLING AND DROOLING READY TO SLICE ME OPEN, SALEM STOPPED ABRUPTLY. SHE LOOKED UPWARDS AND SNIFFED THE AIR. THE WIND BEGAN TO BLOW LIGHTLY FROM FABLE'S DIRECTION TO MY POSITION. MY ONLY HYPOTHESIS IS THAT WIND CARRIED FABLE'S SCENT AND SALEM KNEW THAT SCENT SOMEHOW. SALEM SNIFFED SOME MORE AND THEN A WILD HATEFUL GROWL CAME FROM HER FOAMING LIPS. AFTER SHE VERIFIED THE SCENT, SHE JERKED AROUND QUICKLY, SQUATTING ON THE TREE LIMB UNTIL

SHE VISUALIZED FABLE. IT WAS AS IF I DID NOT EXIST ANYMORE, NOR DID SOLARA.

SALEM MOVED SWIFTLY AND QUIETLY. FEARING FOR FABLE, I SCALED DOWN THE TREE TO RETRIEVE MY BOW. THE ONE-TIME FABLE SHOULD NOT LISTEN TO ME, SHE DOES. WHAT IS IT WITH THIS CHILD? SHE HAD NOT MOVED AN INCH OUT OF PLACE EVEN THOUGH SALEM WAS BREATHING DOWN HER NECK, READY TO STRIKE. I WAS EQUALLY TERRIFIED AS I WAS IMPRESSED AND PROUD THAT SHE FINALLY FOLLOWED ORDERS. IT MUST HAVE TAKEN A GREAT DEAL OF DETERMINATION (TO PROVE ME WRONG, I IMAGINE) AND STRENGTH TO HOLD SO STILL WITH THAT BEAST READY TO BITE HER THROAT OUT. MY ASSAULT OF ARROWS FLEW RIGHT BY FABLE'S FACE. SHE SIMPLY CLOSED HER EYES, HELD HER BREATH, AND STOOD HER GROUND. A FEW ARROWS PIERCED SALEM IN THE SHOULDER, CHEST, AND LEG. SHE FLAILED AND SCREECHED UPON THE GROUND. SHE RIPPED THE ARROWS OUT AND BEGAN TO STRANGELY CRAWL ABOUT IN A CREEPY FASHION, MOVING HER NECK BACK AND FORTH. THEN SHE CRAWLED QUICKLY INTO THE SUGAR CANE FIELD.

WE HUNTED HER DOWN AND THINGS GOT GROSS AND MESSY. BY THINGS, I MEAN FABLE. THAT POOR GIRL GOT MAGGOTS AND BODILY FLUID ALL OVER HER. I DON'T KNOW HOW SHE DIDN'T GET SICK. AFTER FINALLY DEFEATING SALEM, SOLARA AND I BURNED THE CORPSE WHILE FABLE WASHED UP IN THE STREAM. BY BURNING THE CORPSE OF A DEMON, WE SEND IT BACK TO HELL. THE ONES THAT DEFY LUCIFER'S ORDERS ARE THROWN INTO HIS CHAMBER OF HELL FOR PUNISHMENT.

SOLARA AND I ARE THE LAST OF OUR BLOODLINE. OUR GRANDFATHER, LUKE, A MAN OF THE CLOTH, FOUNDED A SECRET ORGANIZATION, AN IMPORTANT ONE AT THAT, CALLED “THE WITNESSES”. IT IS AN ORGANIZATION THAT PROTECTS EARTH FROM EVIL. GRANDFATHER RECRUITED OTHER CLERGYMEN THAT HE

WORKED WITH OR KNEW. THEY, IN TURN, RAISED THEIR CHILDREN UP INTO IT. NO OUTSIDERS WERE ALLOWED IN. OVER THE YEARS, AS OUR NUMBERS DWINDLED, HOWEVER, EXCEPTIONS WERE MADE.

MY GRANDFATHER SAID THAT MOST OF THE SURVIVING HUMAN POPULATION BELIEVED GLOBAL WARMING ENDED THE WORLD. IT WAS INDEED A FACTUAL PROBLEM AND THE EARTH WAS IN TROUBLE. RUNE SEIZED AN OPPORTUNITY TO INHERIT THE EARTH BY OFFERING TO HELP GLOBAL WARMING DESTROY EARTH FASTER. THEN HE NEVER RETURNED HOME, THUS BETRAYING LUCIFER. WHEN GRANDFATHER WAS QUESTIONED HOW HE KNEW THIS SENSITIVE INFORMATION, HE PROCLAIMED AN ANGEL TOLD HIM SO. WHETHER IT IS TRUE OR NOT, MY GRANDFATHER BELIEVED IT AS DID THE OTHERS WHO FOLLOWED HIM. SOLARA AND I WERE HOMESCHOOLED ACADEMICALLY, WE TRAINED SEVERAL HOURS A DAY LEARNING HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT, AND SEVERAL MORE HOURS OF WEAPONRY MAKING AND TRAINING.

I CAN NEVER ADMIT THIS TO SOLARA, BUT I FEEL LOST SINCE OUR PARENTS WENT MISSING. SOLARA IS ANGRY AND BELIEVES IN HER HEART THAT OUR PARENTS ARE DEAD. MY PEOPLE, MY FAMILY, HAVE SUFFERED AND SACRIFICED. HERE I AM, UNSURE OF WHAT TO DO. WHAT I DO KNOW, IS THAT IT FALLS ON SOLARA AND I TO FINISH WHAT OUR GRANDFATHER SET OUT TO ACCOMPLISH.

GABE ✂

“So do not fear, for I am with you;  
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you and help you;  
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”  
~ Isaiah 41:10



# 3

Year 25: New World  
Year 2216: Old World

## “Dante’s Demise” Solara, #1

Fable following orders puzzled me greatly. She is stubborn, reckless, and impulsive. I did not ever foresee her capable of blossoming into a team player. Perhaps Gabriel's methods have remedied the situation. What puzzles me even further is how Fable was on Salem's hit list. Never has she mentioned EVER seeing Salem before. But Salem had her scent in memory and left my brother and me alive just to get to Fable faster.

Actually, come to think of it, Fable has never mentioned much of anything. We know nothing about her or what happened to her the day her family's camp was destroyed. She has been with us for about a year now.

Despite her flaws and mysteries, however, Fable has grown on me. I hate to admit it, but I look at her as a little sister. Gabriel, on the other hand, accepted her as

a sister since the day we met her. That is a day I will never forget.

Gabe and I were hunting in the woods. We saw rays of sunshine on the horizon, slanting down toward the ground. Knowing that meant water was up ahead and the clouds were drinking it up. We headed that direction to investigate if the water, was in fact, drinkable. Studying our surroundings, we saw this was a small camp near a beautiful lake. There were mountains and woods.

Had we not spotted the rare black and gray fox, we would have never found Fable. The creature was digging and yipping at a pile of fresh dirt. He reminded me more of a large alpha wolf than a fox. The sounds it made were eerie and mimicked a child screaming. As we observed the fox, Gabe closed his eyes and listened. He looked at me and was white as a sheet as he spoke. "There's a girl buried alive there and she is screaming for help."

We dug as fast as our hands could move. The fox must have been her well-fed pet as he stayed and helped dig. At the bottom of that grave, we found a girl, 15 years of age, half dressed, badly beaten, with burns



scattered across her body. She was soaking wet as if she had been submerged in the lake. I will never know how a young girl like that survived such a brutal beating. Her pale, bruised, burnt body laid quietly and barely breathing. Gabriel wrapped her up in his cloak. Fable and her pet silver fox, Remi, have been with us ever since.

Because of her, we have sent two demons of four to the Chamber of Hell. The first one was Dante. He burrowed into the ground, grabbed his victims by the ankles, and pulled them under to suffocate them. He was a coward of sorts and never stepped foot on the ground. Gabe's plan to go through the cave, find his way underground and flush Dante out of his tunnels to the surface was taking a long time. Fable grew weary and too impatient to follow the plan.

I sat in disbelief as Fable tied a scarf around her nose and mouth. She slowly laid prone on her belly and ear to the ground. She listened to the earth and what was happening below her in it. She began to mimic walking vibrations by slapping the ground, alternating hands. Dante took the bait within seconds. I could barely keep my eyes open as his brown creepy fingers slithered out of the dirt and wrapped around

Fable's wrists. He pulled her into her second potential grave. At first, I only saw her feet and I feared that she would suffocate. She dug quickly with her hands and soon disappeared from view, leaving a tunnel behind her.

I heard a thud that echoed loudly. Gabriel must have heard it, too, from wherever he was in the tunnels by then. I heard a struggle and Fable sounded like she was in over her head. Against my brother's wishes, I slid down the tunnel, landing onto the hearth of Dante's roomy evil lair. Before my eyes, I saw a gargoyle creature with big freakish black eyes, brown hide, and long fingers with black daggers for fingernails. He had what I best describe as a scrunched-in face with four visible fangs. Two short fangs up top and two long curving fangs at the bottom, very much resembling elephant tusks. Atop his head protruded two tiny horns and two pointy ears at the sides.

Dante had Fable upset and he had cut her a couple of times on the arm and the hip. He kept sniffing the air toward her just like Salem.

Then he spoke to Fable. His voice was gruff. "You should be dead in the grave we put you in, girl."

He then picked up one of the daggers he had thrown at her before I entered the scene. He licked the blood off of it. His already big black eyes got even bigger. His lips quivered in fear.

His gruff voice now sounded full of despair as he whispered, "Curious. . .The blood of an ancient, in a child...The prophecy."

Before he could elaborate, Gabriel busted in and daggers were flying every which way. One dagger pierced Fable's shoulder and pinned her to the wall. Gabe and I were also pinned, but to the floor, and could not stop Dante as he advanced toward Fable. She found the strength to rip that dagger through her flesh and threw it perfectly. It tore his throat out. We burned his body while Gabe scolded Fable for deviating from the plan.

Later, Gabriel and I had a private discussion. We agreed that Fable needs to tell us about that day. Dante mentioned the grave and Salem tried to bite her face off. What if the others are hunting Fable right at this very moment? Not only for therapeutic purposes but for safety and survival, we need to know who she

is and what happened to her and her family. We just don't know how to get her to talk to us.

⌘ Solara

“The Lord will keep you from all harm—  
he will watch over your life;  
the Lord will watch over your coming and going  
both now and forevermore.”

~ Psalm 121:7-8

**“Orphaned”**  
**Fable, #2**

The sky lightened and seemed stuck between day and night. The fire was burning down. I finished bathing in the stream and my clothes were dry by the fire, ready to be worn again. I wondered if Salem had indeed made it to the Chamber of Hell. As I observed Solara and Gabe by the fire, something caught my eye above the wild sugar cane field. I quietly tiptoed toward them studying the anomaly in the sky. I identified it as a peculiar gray-blue dust but it was not moving, just hovering. In a living nightmare, I had witnessed that very dust cloud, the day my world ended. The day I became an orphan.

My family decided to become nomads after I was born. I've been all over this Island from the forests to the mountains and as far as the beaches. Humans are far and few between. Before we set up our very last camp by

the lake, I was 15. It was such a beautiful place. I remember longing to stay there forever. And, I nearly got that wish.

Aunt Yona died first. She was my mother Yara's twin sister. Yona had a purple shawl that her mother, Talia, (my grandmother that I never met) had made for her. My mother had one just like it but in yellow. That purple shawl was Yona's prized possession and all she had left of her mother. We had taken a quiet walk in the woods and were nearing the lake. I noticed that gray-blue cloud and thought nothing of it as a gust of wind carried it away. But that very same gust of wind stole Aunt Yona's shawl and gave it to the lake. The shawl laid just within reach.

Aunt Yona hurriedly got to her hands and knees. As she stretched her arm to seize the lifeless shawl, it twisted and twirled away from her grasp as if it were attached to a dancing fish. It was now further and deeper in the water but still clearly visible. She leaned in closer and had the shawl in her fingertips when it darted away again. The shawl was still visible, but it was out of reach from the

lake's edge. Aunt Yona, determined, began to enter the water. I witnessed as she knelt toward the shawl and grasped it in her hand with an accomplished smile on her face. That smile vanished when she realized she was unable to pull the shawl from the water. Then, she started to panic because she could not let go of it either.

I began yelling for help. It was as if invisible twine tied her to the shawl. My family was on their way to help but not in time. Just like that Yona was pulled quickly and violently into the depths. She disappeared with the shawl and the lake was smooth as glass and looked like nothing happened. My mother screamed in grief and anger. My father had to hold her back away from the water while my uncle Leo dove right in the water despite my pleas against it. The lake claimed him as well. My parents went to grieve, discuss the events and to decide what to do. I ran deep in the woods to find materials that I did not already possess.

I fashioned a big hook, the size of my hand, from bone and used strands of animal hide to secure it to a staff's

end. I then made a necklace for myself. It had a hook sculpted from the same bone with some pretty shells for extra detail. I took the same path from the woods toward the lake. I felt like we were being watched and by more than one person. Like our camp was surrounded. I told myself that it was my nerves and to shake it off. I was determined to catch the "fisherman of humans."

I saw that gray-blue cloud again hovering over the lake and then off it went in the breeze. The wind took my necklace and gave it to the lake. Sure enough, he took the bait. I clutched the sister hook closely as I neared the water. My necklace sparkled in the sunlight. I played his game, trying to grab the necklace and it danced away from my fingertips. He was begging me to get into the water to reclaim my treasure. But instead, positioned on the land, I linked the sister hooks together, used all my strength to swing my hooked staff up and away from the water.

I not only reclaimed my necklace but, with it, tumbled out cayne, completely bewildered. His breath was knocked



out of him upon his impact with the bank. I hooked him in one of his big, black almond-shaped eyes. He howled in agony as blood streamed down his face. But his pain could not be as sharp as mine, losing Aunt Yona and Uncle Leo.

This was my first encounter with a demon. I had imagined if I ever happened upon one, that I would be frozen in fear. Fearful, I was not. I would have filleted his throat open if the gray-blue dust cloud had not attacked me. It swirled around me like a snake and squeezed the breath out of me. I saw Cayne stand up, and 2 others came into view, one from the ground and one from fire. My parents were ambushed as they came to my rescue. Before I passed out, the cloud manifested into Rune. His arms squeezed around my chest tightly. That's all I can remember about that day.

By the stream that meandered at the wild sugar cane field's edge, where Salem's body was now ash, that gray-blue dust approached closer and closer.

Pointing to the sky, "We must go NOW! He is here. . ." I yelled, grabbing Gabe and Solara's hands and pulling them toward the stream.

Before I could jump in, Rune grabbed me and tossed me away from the water. A hand much larger than my face grasped my throat. I felt my feet leave the ground. He brought me up to his level and his eyes burned into mine. Rune stood 7 feet tall, with a dark gray body, the same almond-shaped eyes as Cayne but Rune's were amber-colored, a long tail, and 2 thick black horns upon his head that curled back like a mountain ram. Rune smelled my hair and smiled. My heart rhythm scurried rampant like the heart of a rabbit caught by a wolf. I began to feel dizzy, fighting for air. When I thought it was the end of me, Remi, my pet fox, sprang from the field. His sharp teeth clamped down upon Rune's arm.

Rune let out a loud growl, dropping me. Remi nudged me into the water, then followed me like the loyal pet that he is. We were rapidly swept downstream.

The last image imprinted in my mind, as I was fighting the rapids, was Rune. He stood tall, staring at me, his body heaving in angry frustration. The violent waters beat us around, trying to pull us under. To our disbelief, we survived the perilous waters and washed up into a calm pool. We swam to shore, not sure if we were dead or alive. What stood before us was a miracle from heaven in the form of expansive caves. A nice dry sanctuary to rest our battered and weary bodies.

≡ Fable

“But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one.”

~ 2 Thessalonians 3:3



“Questions, No Answers”  
Gabriel, #2

THE SOUND OF THE WHIPPOORWILL ECHOED THROUGH THE NIGHT AS WE TRIED TO SLEEP INSIDE THE CAVES. AN OLD FOLKTALE STATES THAT THE ONOMATOPOEIA SOUNDS THE BIRD MAKES FOREWARNS OF IMMINENT DEATH. THIS IRONICALLY ATE AT ME, PICKING MEAT PIECE BY PIECE TILL NOTHING WAS LEFT BUT BONE, THE SAME WAY A VULTURE DOES TO CARRION. I HAVE HEARD THE WHIPPOORWILL CALL MANY A NIGHT AND NEVER ONCE THOUGHT OF IT AS A DEATH OMEN BUT TONIGHT I COULD NOT SHAKE THE RAW FEELING THAT SOMETHING WAS ABOUT TO GO AWRY. I FORCED MYSELF TO GO INVESTIGATE THE SURROUNDINGS AND ELIMINATE THE POSSIBLE EXISTENTIAL THREAT BEING BROUGHT TO LIFE IN MY WILD IMAGINATION.

MY FUTURE HAD A BLEAK OUTLOOK AS I CAME FACE TO FACE WITH A RATHER LARGE BOBCAT. ITS YELLOW-GREEN INTENSE EYES UNBLINKINGLY FIXED UPON MINE, READY TO GOBBLE ME UP. WITHOUT WARNING, IT LEAPT INTO THE AIR TO CLAIM ME AS ITS PREY. ALL I COULD SEE WAS A TAN BLUR WITH BITS OF BLACK. MY LIFE FLASHED BEFORE ME. INSTEAD OF CLAWS, TEETH, AND FUR CRUSHING MY BONES, SOMETHING COLD, SLIMY, AND WET KNOCKED ME TO THE GROUND. FABLE HAD THROWN A 30-INCH LONG, 15-POUND ATLANTIC SALMON AT MY FACE. NOW PEERING ME IN THE EYE WAS A CONFUSED BOBCAT WHO WAS ALSO

HUNGRY. SO, HE TOOK THE FISH AND RAN INTO THE COVER OF NIGHT. IT'S A SHAME SHE HAD TO SACRIFICE A MEAL LIKE THAT TO SAVE MY HIDE.

“LUCKY FOR ME, YOU NEVER SLEEP, FABLE,” I CHUCKLED NERVOUSLY.

“I WON'T TELL SOLARA THAT YOU YELLED OUT FOR YOUR PARENTS,” FABLE GIGGLED AS SHE DISAPPEARED INTO THE DARK CAVE TO CAJOLE HER RESTLESS MIND AND BODY TO SLEEP.

IT WAS FUNNY BUT, THE TRUTH BEHIND THE HUMOR ALSO HURT A LITTLE. I DO MISS MY PARENTS, MAEVYN AND LEVI. I BELIEVE THEM TO BE MISSING BUT I KNOW SOLARA HAS LOST ALL HOPE THAT THEY ARE ALIVE.

I REMEMBER THE NIGHT WE SPLIT UP. SOLARA AND I WERE ORDERED TO HELP THE VILLAGERS THAT WERE ATTACKED BY SALEM IN THE NIGHT. MY PARENTS WANTED TO WARN THE NEXT VILLAGE TO EVACUATE. WE DID OUR DUTY AND HELPED RECOVER PEOPLE FROM THE WRECKAGE AND GAVE THEM MEDICAL TREATMENT. WE JOURNEYED TO THE NEXT VILLAGE THAT OUR PARENTS DESIGNATED AS OUR RENDEZVOUS POINT. BUT WHEN WE ARRIVED, THE VILLAGE HAD BEEN BURNT TO ASH. WE NEVER FOUND THEIR BODIES. THIS HAPPENED A FEW MONTHS BEFORE WE FOUND FABLE. SO, IT'S BEEN NEARLY TWO YEARS NOW SINCE SOLARA AND I HAVE SEEN OUR PARENTS.

THEIR WHEREABOUTS ARE JUST ONE OF MANY CONCERNS. FABLE IS A BIG CONCERN OF MINE RIGHT NOW. WE FOUND HER AT AGE 15 AND HER BIRTHDAY NEARS. SHE WILL BE 17 GOING ON 35. I SHALL NEVER FORGET

THE DAY SOLARA AND I UNBURIED FABLE FROM THAT GRAVE. WITH RECENT EVENTS AND DEMON ENCOUNTERS, WE FEEL THERE IS ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM THAT ALL FOUR DEMONS WERE PRESENT THAT DAY. HOW DID A 15-YEAR-OLD GO UP AGAINST ALL 4 AND LIVE, WELL BARELY LIVE, ANYWAY? I CANNOT FATHOM SUCH A THING AS BEING BURIED ALIVE. THAT IS THE VERY REASON HER 'DANTE STUNT' ANGERED AND SHOCKED ME. IF SOLARA EVER HAD TO DIG ME OUT OF A GRAVE, I WOULD CERTAINLY NEVER WANT TO BE IN THE GROUND EVER AGAIN.

DESPERATELY, I NEED TO KNOW WHAT SHE WAS THINKING OR IF SHE WAS EVEN THINKING AT ALL. ANOTHER MYSTERY LOOMING OVER MY HEAD IS THE FACT THAT SALEM AND DANTE ACTED LIKE THEY KNEW FABLE. HOW WOULD THEY KNOW HER UNLESS THEY REMEMBER HER FROM THE DAY THEY ATTACKED HER CAMP? IT'S JUST ODD AND THE WHOLE SITUATION LEAVES A WHOLE LOT OF QUESTIONS AND ZERO ANSWERS.

MY OTHER CURIOSITIES LIE WITH FABLE'S PARENTS AND THEIR ACTIVITIES. BEFORE EVERYONE IN OUR ORGANIZATION DIED OR CAME UP MISSING, 'THE WITNESSES' WERE CONNECTING NYX AND YARA TO THE DEMONS AND MISSING PEOPLE. SOME THEORIZED THAT NYX AND YARA WERE IN LEAGUE WITH RUNE. IT DID SEEM THAT IN EVERY VILLAGE THAT THE TRAVELING SHAMANS HAPPENED UPON, PEOPLE WENT MISSING OR THE VILLAGE WAS ATTACKED SHORTLY THEREAFTER. BUT NOW I FALTER WITH THAT HYPOTHESIS.

I SAW NYX AND YARA'S DEAD BODIES AT THE CAMPSITE AND KNOW THEY WERE TORTURED FOR A REASON. THEY WERE PROTECTING SOMETHING OR SOMEONE. WHEN I EXAMINED THEIR LIFELESS BODIES, I

DISCOVERED THAT THEY BORE THE SAME SYMBOL ON THEIR SHOULDER AS MY MOTHER BORE UPON HERS. IT WAS A SPIRAL SHAPE. A SYMBOL OF PROTECTION. A SYMBOL THAT MEANT THEY WERE MEMBERS OF ‘THE GUARDIANS,’ WHICH MEANT NYX AND YARA MAY HAVE KNOWN WHERE THE LEGENDARY UNDERGROUND SANCTUARY IS.

IF THEY KNEW, DID FABLE? MY MOTHER, MAEVYN, WAS A GUARDIAN BUT SHE DID NOT KNOW THE EXACT LOCATION OF THE SANCTUARY BECAUSE SHE WAS SEPARATED FROM HER GRANDMOTHER RUEBEE WHEN RUNE KIDNAPPED HER. IN MAEVYN’S ABSENCE, RUEBEE MOVED THE SANCTUARY, PERHAPS BECAUSE THE LOCATION HAD BEEN COMPROMISED.

I KNOW DEEP DOWN NYX AND YARA WERE MORE THAN TRAVELING SHAMANS AND SOMEHOW, SOMEWAY, THEY WERE SAVING HUMANS. PERHAPS THAT IS WHAT GOT THEM KILLED. THEY WERE EITHER NOT FORTHCOMING WITH THE LOCATION OF THE HUMANS OR MAYBE THEY MISDIRECTED RUNE ON PURPOSE, AND HE FOUND THEM OUT.

FABLE HAS NOT EVER UTTERED A WORD OF THE EVENTS THAT TRANSPIRED THAT HORRIFIC DAY SHE LOST HER PARENTS, NOR HAS SHE MENTIONED SAVING HUMANS AND DEFINITELY NEVER UTTERED THE WORDS UNDERGROUND SANCTUARY OR THE GUARDIANS. SOLARA AND I DO NOT KNOW HOW TO GET HER TO OPEN UP TO US.

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE SIT AND HAVE A DISCUSSION. WHETHER OR NOT FABLE WILL TALK, WE MUST JOURNEY BACK TO THE LAKE. PERHAPS IT WILL SPARK HER MEMORY, OR WE CAN FIND CLUES THERE. I KNOW SHE



WILL NOT LIKE THAT IDEA. SHE DOES NOT SLEEP WELL AND HAS NIGHTMARES. SHE IS RESTLESS AT NIGHT AND THERE ARE MEMORIES THAT SHE DOES NOT WANT TO FACE. BUT I MUST CONVINCHE HER TO. WE NEED TO PIECE THIS PUZZLE TOGETHER. MAKE A PLAN GEARED FOR VICTORY. THE SURVIVAL OF MANKIND DEPENDS UPON IT.

GABE ✈

“Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, ‘I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!’”

~ Mark 9:24



## 6

Summer, Year 26: New World  
Year 2217: Old World

### “Birthday Surprise” Solara, #2

Fable is turning 17 in a few days. Gabe handcrafted the most precious bo-staff for her. She is going to love it for many reasons. The bo-staff is her favorite weapon to wield. It is lightweight but sturdy. It was painstakingly crafted from wood, bone, and gemstones. At the top, it loops into itself to create an open space where it houses a gorgeous sparkly aqua blue gem. At the point of intersection of the loop and staff sits a carved animal. Fable loves all animals but the animal she most yearns to see, and touch, is the sea turtle. Gabriel found it fitting to bring one to life out of bone, knife, and tedious craftsmanship. The gem inside the loop glittered in the light. It reminded me of a star, leading the creature in the right direction.

I made her a two-piece deer hide suit for swimming. The top has hide straps and resembles a tank top while the bottoms look like a frilly skirt. I talked Gabe into taking Fable to the beach for her birthday. Maybe

if she felt like we were a family, she would open up to us. It will be like a 'pre-sorry' since he is going to take her back to that camp where we found her 2 years ago. I disagree with his antics and I fear it will do more harm than good.

with the rising sun, we began our journey to the beach. Gabe led us and I was the caboose. The sun silhouetted around Fable mimicking a bright colorful aura around her. I admire Fable. She seems unconcerned with what happens in the 'time after we save Earth'. It's as if she was born with the sole mission of saving mankind. She is the only person I know who is so connected to nature and animals. When she hunts for food it physically hurts her to kill the animal. She thanks it for its sacrifice and prays for it. Then there is her pet fox, Remi. I've never seen a wild animal-human duo. At first, I thought it very peculiar and dangerous but now I see her as just different (in a good way) and there is not a dangerous bone in her body. Unless, of course, you're a demon.

Fable told me once that the ocean's saltwater has healing properties, not just for physical ailments but also unseen wounds of the heart. I don't believe there

is any healing for my pain of living in this world nor of losing my mother, Maevyn, and father, Levi.

I was born into an organization that does more suffering and dying, than it does saving the world. Why does my bloodline bond me to such a fate? I just want this all to be over so we can begin living. We deserve to be happy and safe with all that we have endured.

Soon, the sanctuary caves were far behind us and the great unknown stretched ahead. I could hardly contain my excitement while watching Fable receive her gifts and have a fun day at the ocean. The scent of saltwater slowly filled the air. In the distance waves collided with the rocks and the sound echoed through the trees.

Fable stopped to listen and took in a deep breath. She giggled and said happily, "The beach!" I could tell that Gabe was just as happy as I was with her reaction. She is our family now. Our little sister. We want her to have a happy birthday.

Fable cried when presented with her new bo-staff. She had lost hers in the stream rapids before we got

to the sanctuary caves. She loved the water suit I made her.

we had a lovely time on the beach.

Camp for the night was made in the tree line for cover. A thunderstorm rolled in and lulled us to sleep. And, when the light shone through to tell us sunrise was here, Fable was already up.

I tiptoed toward her, trying to figure out what she was doing. She was throwing washed-up starfish back into the sea before they dried up and died on the hot sand. Gabe and I joined her. The water was clear, and the sea life was visible at my feet. I was mesmerized by the colorful fish, starfish, crabs, and all the marine life I could see and touch. A big sea turtle came and was curious about us. He swam in circles, studying us. Fable got to pet him and swim with him.

I could see and feel how Fable did in that moment. She was right. The saltwater can heal all wounds. We are all connected to the earth and the animals. This feeling is why she saves animals instead of just killing and eating them. She is right, there are plenty of food sources here on our island besides just the animals.

It was an amazing day and I wished it would never end.

⌘ Solara

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

~ Colossians 3:15-17





**“Dreams”**  
**Fable, #3**

Dreams. Some say they are thoughts and feelings manifested in your sleep. My dreams are a curse. I dream of a past I've never lived, places I've never seen, and of people I have never met.

I dream of a city, a city made of sparkling white stone. The city sits safely upon a very tall stone wall and foundation. Atop the foundation, at its four corners, are massive waterfalls flowing from water fountains, that emptied several feet below into the clear waters. A road pieced together with glittering stone hugs the perimeter of the foundation. There are several sidewalks to walk down, all leading to different destinations. These sidewalks connect at 90-degree angles in a crisscrossing pattern. Filling the spaces between the sidewalks are rectangular pools of clean

water. But when I peer into the pools of water, no reflection stares back at me. Others can see their reflection as they stop to look. People walk by me as if I am a ghost they cannot see.

In another dream, I'm falling. Falling from cliffs or mountains. It feels as if I fall forever. Before I plummet into the water below, I wake from the dream with a forceful sensation that I am falling back into my body.

The nature of other dreams is prophetic. I dream about certain things and then those things actually happen. A nightmare of Rune killing us at the water's edge haunted me in my sleep in the time that we were tracking Salem. That event happened, except for Rune killing us.

Since we have been at the beach the ONLY dream that I have dreamed over and over is about the day my family died. It is vividly colored and detailed. It feels so real, as if I am reliving it in my own personal hell. One night, I woke up drenched in both sweat and sorrow. I laid out on

the beach watching the stars as I cried. Hoping the sound of crashing waves would lull me to sleep.

What if the same thing happens to Gabriel and Solara? Then I would be alone again. Rune will always hunt me. Therefore, people close to me will always be in danger. I could very easily survive on my own. I can just leave them. The thought of the act alone hurts my heart so. It's as if God has woven a biological need of love and human interaction in my blood. Even though I have no understanding of it, I cannot discredit it. God saw fit to build human physiology and to create the intricate human psychology the way He did and I, in good conscience, cannot speak against Him. For some strange reason, this deep instinct growing inside of me anchors me to Gabe and Solara.

My loud crying must have woken them. They came to the beach and laid on either side of me. I told them of my dreams and about my parents. How it was all my fault for fishing for the "fisherman of men." Frustration boils in my blood as I cannot recall what happened in the time

between Rune making me faint and me being found in the grave. The guilt, anger, and sorrow had been gnawing a hole in my soul, poisoning my body. A heavy rock had been lifted from my shoulders to speak it out loud. The poison left my body as the words left my lips. Solara held me as my mother had when I was upset, sick, or hurt. Gabe held my hand.

They told me that my parents' death was not my fault even though I believed it to be. My parents died because they were helping humans. Because they were Guardians. They mentioned that their mother and father were Guardians also and had spiral tattoos as identification. My parents did have spiral tattoos, but they did not call themselves anything.

I didn't think they helped people because they were part of a group. They did it because it was the right thing to do. Or, so I thought until that moment. Gabe and Solara asked if my parents had mentioned an underground sanctuary, but I don't know anything about that. In retrospect, I did a lot of hunting, fishing, foraging, herb

gathering, cooking, and making the clothes, etc. My parents must have kept me busy with chores while they took care of their "saving the world" business. And, they probably chose not to tell me in order to protect me.

while Gabe, Solara and I talked on the beach, distracted, two figures crept upon us. They attacked with agility and stealth. They blew a cloud of herbal dust in our faces. I believe, from the smell and reaction, it was a mixture of valerian root, chamomile, and passionflower.

Sleep crept over us but before I was out, I heard Gabe gasp, "MOM!"

≡ Fable

"Lord, by such things people live;  
and my spirit finds life in them too.  
You restored me to health  
and let me live.  
"Surely it was for my benefit  
that I suffered such anguish.  
In your love you kept me  
from the pit of destruction;  
you have put all my sins  
behind your back."

~ Isaiah 38:16-17



# 8

**Year 26: New World**  
**Year 2217: Old World**

## **“Miracles”** **Maevyn, #1**

For two long painful years, I believed my children Gabriel and Solara were dead. My husband Levi and I were captured by Dante in underground cave tunnels while searching for the entrance to the sanctuary. He told us that our children were burnt to ash and forced us, along with a few others, to help dig the hard, rocky ground. It was only a couple of years, but it felt like a lifetime.

While imprisoned there, we learned details about the four demons. Dante was digging and burrowing to find the sanctuary. Cayne was looking for an underwater opening in the mountain. Salem was torching and terrorizing humans for information, clues, and names of people with specific knowledge, and Rune was obsessed with trying to find ‘The Prophecy’ so he could kill it. One day Dante returned after being absent for a few days and looked badly beaten and bloody. He told us it was none of our business but, rest assured, the one who hurt him was in her grave.

Eventually, Dante left us to rot and die. So, we decided to try and find a way out. In our search for an escape, we found bloody daggers and several footprints in one of the biggest tunnels. Our suspicions were all but confirmed. Following that and a whole lot of climbing, we found our freedom.

Once upon the surface, we looked for our grown children, who will always be my babies no matter how old they are. All our usual hiding spots or villages were burnt, so we found ourselves at a loss as to where to search next. It didn't matter, though. We were forced to stop looking for them as we were summoned by two Guardian scouts/trackers, a man and a woman. Her name was Jetta and his was Ace. To our astonishment, they escorted us directly to the underground Sanctuary. I was in disbelief at how close Dante was to finding one of the entrances and how close we had been imprisoned to it.

Once inside, I was reunited with my grandmother, Ruebee. She is the one who started the Guardians and built the sanctuary. Before the End of Days, an angel went to Ruebee, told her of the impending doom, instructed her to start the Guardians to fight evil, save humans, and give them a safe place to live. They were to work together with the Witnesses. A long time back, the Witnesses and the Guardians had a disagreement and split factions.



You see, before the End of Days, several demons came to earth, possessing humans. The Witnesses wanted the human life spared and performed exorcisms. The problem with those is that the demon came out of one body and entered another body immediately, spreading like a plague. In the great scheme of things, that hurt way more humans in the process. The Guardians believed in the old adage, "what is one life compared to the masses." We did what we had to do, and if killing the possessed human killed the demon, then it must be so. The benefits outweighed the risks.

We are not heartless. I have seen with my very own eyes what happened to my sister Solara with whom I was very close. After the demon was exorcised from her body, she was blind and covered in painful sores because he burnt her from the inside on his way out. The demon, unscathed, went out the window and into someone else. And, my sister, never left her bed again. Sadly, she died a painful death.

I had not laid eyes on my grandmother since Rune had kidnapped me, years ago. I remember that night as if it were yesterday. My parents spoke with grandmother over dinner. The next night, we were to sneak out in the cover of darkness and go to the underground sanctuary to live as it was completed.

In the dead of night, my mother's screams woke me first. She was dead before I found her. Then I heard a

ruckus, followed by stifled cries. I ran toward the noise to find my father dead as well. That night was the first night I saw a demon that could walk the earth without a human host and shapeshift from human-demon-dust and back again in any combination. He walked toward me in human form surrounded by fire that trailed behind him, slithering up the walls, consuming my life and memories.

He stole me away and confined me in a tiny room absent of windows. It's best described as a walk-in closet. A tattered mattress lay uninviting on the floor. The walls were painted yellow, not sunshine-happy yellow but screaming-angry yellow. He took me out of the room to torture me for information about a prophecy that I had never heard of and about the location of a sanctuary that I had only heard about but never seen nor stepped foot in. He grew tired with the void of answers, beat me and threw me back into that closet with no food or water.

I soon slipped into delirium. Echoes of gunfire and yelling voices pulled me out of darkness. I remember asking myself if these sounds were real or auditory illusions. I closed my eyes to focus on the sounds. They persisted and grew louder. Like a small flame that grows into a raging fire, the hope in my heart grew. I found the courage to break out of the closet and run toward the noise. Once outside, the sunlight was blinding bright. I saw blurry distant figures running

in my direction. I ran directly at them, screaming for help.

Rune came out of nowhere and grabbed me from behind. He squeezed the breath out of me. My extremities began to burn and tingle. Before I blacked out, I heard a loud gunshot, and strangely, at the same time, I felt something hot and searing rip through my shoulder. Hitting the ground, I heard more screams. They soon faded into dreary echoes.

I thought I was dead until I awoke to a bounding heartbeat. I opened my eyes to find myself cradled in the arms of a handsome man, my head laying on his chest. That's the short version of how I met a young rugged man named Levi Wesson. We eventually married and had beautiful twins Solara and Gabe, named after my sister and Levi's brother.

Gabe stirred, trying to wake himself, I'm sure. Since we never found the children's bodies, I had hope that we would find them alive someday. Then, as I lived and breathed, they lay before me in restful, induced sleep. A miracle, indeed.

When I discovered their travelling companion, I immediately realized that my children had found a miracle of their own. The only baby to be born after nearly a dozen years. She shines in the moonlight as if she was in the sun. Her hair, long and curly. It was

the color of a dark brown hawk. The caramel skin of an angel kissed by the sun. What a beautiful child. Being in her presence, I felt a calmness wash all over me. After seeing her and touching her, I knew she was the prophecy that Rune sought. She had to be. She was an aberration to this new world, and I knew in that instant that we had to protect her at all costs.

❖ Maevyn

“Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.”

~ Hebrews 13:2

“The Demon Design”  
Levi, #1

*All that I have endured, has put me on a path to unite the broken factions of our world. Back when I was a young boy, before the End of Days, I learned just how cruelly designed the demons were. A demon possessed my mother. It broke all her bones, contorting her body in unnatural ways just to scare us. It was as if every joint in her body was double jointed. She crawled toward us, cornering us in our bedroom. All we could see was her pale face and sunken in black eyes moving in our direction, bones cracking as the demon used her for a meat sack puppet.*

*My brother, Gabe, jumped on her to protect me. She threw him like he was a feather across the room. He hit the wall with a big thud and slid to the ground. She scurried toward me, quick like a spider running across its web to bite a tangled fly. Jumping back up, Gabe grabbed an old paint bucket and came toward us. With great force, he swung it at her head. It made contact with a smashing pumpkin sound. It made us feel sick as we cried and apologized to our beloved mother, Neva.*

*We thought we had killed her and mourned over her broken body, but to our surprise, she jumped up with a growl and into a squatting position, her head making a 180° turn before she leapt up to the ceiling, clinging there with only her hands and feet twisted backward so that she could still face us. Blood dripped from her head to the floor. She was perched above the doorway to prevent our escape. Our grandfather and father captured her and tied her to the bed. They tended to her wounds and prepared for an exorcism.*

*My grandfather, Mathias, and my father, Luke, worked tirelessly to exorcise the demon back to hell. It did eventually come out of my mother, killing her, and possessing my grandfather. My older brother, Gabriel, picked me up and sprinted from the bedroom. My father had to kill his own father to save all our lives. I know that weighed heavily on his heart until the day he died. He lost the love of his life whom he called his “Princess Snow White.” She had the most beautiful milky white complexion that contrasted against her natural coal black hair and her very intense green eyes. On that very same day, he lost his father, too. . his best friend.*

*Tragedy shattered us to pieces but it also forged us into steel. My father formed the “Witnesses.” We gathered every gun, knife, weapon and bit of ammunition we could get our hands on. We filled cars and trucks with only the essentials. Dad said we had to go off the grid, live simply, and learn to live off the land alone, because*

someday we would be forced to. If we got used to it now, when the Apocalypse came, we would not know the difference.

The mountains were the perfect place to settle. Ancient themselves, standing tall, we were protected and could see for miles. Father taught us how to make huts out of wood, mud, stone, and foliage. Also, we explored caves and brainstormed how to create viable homes within them.

Luke was one of the best men I ever knew besides my brother Gabe. He was smart and his survival instincts were sharp. Not only that, he was the best father I could have ever asked for. He broke the tradition of exorcising demons but rather hunted them down instead. By hunting them, we saved more human beings, by not letting the demons spread like wildfire.

That's how Maevyn and I crossed paths. Rune had her imprisoned in an old cabin heavily guarded by thick woods. She stepped out of the cabin and time stood still. Her black skin, long black braid that laid over her right shoulder and didn't stop until it reached her hip, and big beautiful brown eyes mesmerized me. She was like a goddess of the woodlands. Rune grabbed her up and was killing her. I did the only thing that I thought would save her. I shot the hostage in the shoulder and the bullet traveled through her into Rune's

chest. Not damaging enough to kill him, unfortunately, but effective enough for him to drop his hostage.

I scooped her up in my arms and we ran for our lives. My father and brother covered me as I did not have a free hand to fire a gun. A fierce roar echoed through the forest. Ahead of us was a crossroads of sorts. A dead end that lead to either death by Rune or a leap of faith off the cliff which also led to death. We chose the latter of course. The cliff hugged a wild waterfall that emptied into the stream below. Before I jumped with Maevyn in my arms, I turned to look around for another way to save her.

Rune stood before me, 6 or more feet tall, chest heaving and blood trickling out of him from various bullet holes. He was a peculiar color for a demon. I had imagined that they were all smoke-like and possessed humans or they were fashioned to look like Lucifer and were red in color. But this one was blue-gray and had strange markings on his body. Black mountain goat horns glistened in the sunlight atop his head.

Holding Maevyn closer to me, I stepped backwards off of the cliff. Thankfully, as we plummeted into the mysterious waters below, we discovered that the spot we landed was so deep our feet never touched the presumably rocky bottom. We swam to safety and made our way back to camp where we intended to recuperate. Sadly, Gabe must have taken on too much water, gotten



too cold, or may have had internal injuries. He took ill and died shortly thereafter. The day I buried my brother was yet another horrible event in my experiences of family tragedy.

Maevyn and I married and soon had twins. We named them Gabe and Solara. They grew up happy and healthy, and were about 10 years old, give or take, when the End of Days occurred. My father died, however, during the massive weather changes. He was older and had trouble breathing. It got hotter and hotter and he grew weaker and weaker. Soon, he went to be with the Lord.

People blame global warming and/or Rune for the Apocalypse. From experience, I know for a fact (and my father believed this, too) that Lucifer was in on it. Rune did not betray Lucifer, he was following orders, and Rune "piggybacked" onto the global warming issue, simply making a real problem happen much faster. I saw Rune with my very own eyes before the End of Days ever occurred.

What a Heaven-sent blessing that we were reunited with our long-lost children after two heart-broken years. But I never gave up hope! As excited as I was to see my own flesh and blood, I was overjoyed to see who slept next to them. There, before me, was a living, breathing miracle.

*I have not laid eyes upon a young child since my own were little. However, I was blessed to have looked upon a very similar face several times in my childhood. A hauntingly beautiful painting that my father brushed after meeting an angel in the forest. A most precious emerald. She had been born after the apocalypse and, according to him, she was a priceless gift. Balance and peace in this chaos, she will heal the world and set everything right.*

*I knew immediately that we must extract these three from the beach and stow them away somewhere safe. This Gem must be protected at any cost. Rune is planning something big and we have to figure out what it is before it's too late. I know deep down in my heart we are going to save this world and what's left of humanity.*

:: Levi ::

“The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.”

~ Psalm 34:7