



CÍRCULO DE AMATISTA

EDITORIAL DE LA
CASA DE THARIS



SEGUNDO EPISODIO

EL ARCO DE ARTEMISA

LOS DOCE MISTERIOS



GABURAH LYCANON MICHAEL

PARENTAL
ADVISORY
EXPLICIT CONTENT



Title: The Bow of Artemis - Second Episode, The Twelve Mysteries Author:
Gaburah Lycanon Michel.
Editing and proofreading: Daniel Averanga & Lic. Ma. Eugenia Torrico.
General Production: Pablo Santa Cruz de la Vega

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Queries, suggestions and comments to the author gaburah@gmail.com

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Foreword

Grim. I can think of no other suitable adjective to describe Gaburah Lycanon Michel. Even his appearance may seem unfriendly at first glance, and when he speaks he does so with hostility, which he himself accepts; but his texts reflect something else, and that is the tenor of all his work.

When I was given the opportunity to read the First Episode of this novel trilogy I had the impression of jumping into a remote and longed-for past, an almost dreamlike childhood that left me, for a few minutes, meditating in my living room. Even now, when I remember what I experienced with the first part, I can't help but smile. In this second episode, sensation became rational thought, emotion became empiricism and idyll mutated into an epic elegy. I could expect nothing less from Gaburah, but I was extraordinarily surprised to read this second instalment of "The Bow of Artemis".

The pillars of the narrative, which during the First Episode had been held by the main characters of the novel, lie in this text in an all-powerful narrator who takes us through the fantastic landscapes of other worlds, but from a total third-person perspective. Even the main thread of the story ceases to be the anguish of growing up, the awakening of sexuality, first loves and the encounter with the fantastic and dark, to give way to a profound historical revisionism that makes the reader doubt his or her own knowledge of Universal History. The main character of this Second Episode is, without a doubt, the Arch of Artemis itself; a relic that, according to the author, has influenced the evolution of man's development from the very beginning.

The narrative structure of "The Bow of Artemis - Second Episode, The Twelve Mysteries" consists of the story of the characters in the novel during their travels and subsequent encounter with the desolation of war, the historical and revisionist account of the provenance and purpose of the Bow of Artemis, and the gnostic development of the



twelve stratagems summarising the main precepts of the Hyperborean Wisdom (more fully expounded by Felipe Moyano).

The development of the story starts from the most earthly scenarios drawn from a raw, magical and experimental realism, passing through the territory of an epic fantasy full of dragons, castles and swords, until it ends up in the most scientific science fiction with detailed logical, physical and chemical explanations of the circumstances that surround the characters. This particular blend of magical realism, epic fantasy and science fiction gives the story a special colouring that takes the reader from the terrifying and supernatural to the romantic and sexual. In other words, this Second Episode is worthy of being called a "Potpourri of genres".

The climax of the work, spread over two convenient instalments, gravitates around a specific war event which, towards the end of the story, permeates the pages with blood, gunpowder and death. In a second instance, the climax is immersed in the tragedy of the struggle between twin brothers which, as a corollary, opens the doors to a sense of abandonment, as if everything we had known and experienced throughout the work had come to a dramatic end.

This instalment can be considered as one of the most accurate references that exist about that hidden side of the author, the one that never surfaces in the presence of others. Gaburah is a writer (or apprentice writer, as he has proclaimed himself) who shares a great knowledge of the Forbidden Gnosis only through a well-done narrative. And if I must point out something that makes this work great, it is the deep treatment he gives to the Hyperborean Wisdom with such a domestic touch. A great work for an obscure author.

Mauricio Gámez, Co-publisher of the Casa de Tharsis Publishing House



-For Wise Warriors, every war lost on Earth is a war won in other Heavens....

Nimrod del Rosario, 52nd Day - "The Mystery of Belicena Villca".

*-This spark will be the last scene you will see,
for my sword will bring to you the end of your life;
and your blood scattered on the ground is as a
Silent Revelation||*

Galneryus, Silent Revelation.

-The night came when she taught him how to kiss. She lay naked on the grass and called him to her side. She wrapped her long limbs around him and brought her lips close to his. It was only a soft, imperceptible touch, enveloped in a perfume of resins. The next day, she left. And he knew she would not return that night. He leaned the threshold and concentrated intensely. He had a suspicion: Someone, perhaps he himself, could be thinking, or dreaming, all this||.

Miguel Serrano, He-She.

-City of tears, he wrote in his diary your name in chalk, which the rain washed away in a sigh||.

Yulia Savicheva - Sed'moe Nebo.

Dedicated to my family, especially to my mother, for having given me all the support I needed to follow the path of letters, and to my friends and comrades who helped me to get here -alive||....



See how the world turns, once again we find you and I, together, in the pages of this book. I take it for granted that you can hardly remember me, so I'll refresh your memory; but first, let me light a cigarette... ah, much better, do you want one, ah, sorry, maybe you don't smoke? Anyway, as I was saying I'll give your memory a helping hand. I am Gaburah Lycanon Michel, accidentally author of the novel you now hold in your hands. I really have no idea how long it's been since we last met, surely you must remember the First Episode of this book, I'd like to ask you when you read it, I beg your pardon; ah, yes, yes, I heard you. Well, it really has been a long time, hasn't it? Well, while I sip my rich cup of coffee next to me and smoke my cigarette, I'll be clarifying the picture that makes up this whole tangled mess that seems to veer from reality to fantasy at a monstrous speed. I don't really know where to start, just give me a few seconds...

Well, I've got it, I guess I'll start by telling you that I have a weird conception of life and death, and everything I write is about just that: life and death. They say that we all lose 21 grams at the very moment of death. It is said that absurdity only exists when a simple reality is turned upside down to be noticed. It is said that we have eyelids on our eyes so that with them closed, we can see the light, but we do not have





I have "eyelids" in my ears so that with them always open we can listen to the silence. Ah, I guarantee you that thinking about all that gives me a headache. But...

What can be lost in 21 grams? What can be lost in the weight of a coin or a hummingbird? What can become absurd at the moment of death?

Where is the light and the silence, at what point do we give ourselves over to a darkness so noisy that we fail to see the truth? Questions, questions..., I'm pissed off with the bloody questions.

What do you mean, ah, you were asking about coffee; well, I'm drinking torrado yungueño, it's my favourite, but don't distract me any more! I know, I know, I have a foul temper, but understand that I smoke and drink too much, and I swear even more. I tend to get irritated with astonishing ease and I always try not to engage in unnecessary conversation, unless it's with you, and by that I don't mean that this conversation is unnecessary. I just don't like talking to strangers, when my mum told me as a kid not to talk to strangers, I took it very seriously. Anyway, enough of the bullshit... Let's go to the background of this book. Now I know you remember it: "The Bow of Artemis, Episode One - Battle Prefaces". The title rings a bell, it seems familiar, I know that an old file has been activated in your memory, that of a somewhat abstract and romantic novel. I imagine that you have noticed that this novel is the continuation of the previous one, you know, for a second I imagine your face when I read the "to be continued..." that I left in the previous book and I want to laugh so much... All right, all right, sorry to be so irritating, I'll get to the point: as you may well remember, Episode One tells of the colourful and sublime lives of four children who are migrating into adolescence; four pubescent boys, to be precise. Mischief, school days, homework, exams, love affairs, misunderstandings and all manner of faint-hearted situations are all part of the molecules of school air. We have all breathed it, but few of us have felt the air reaching its



so brutal, so obsessive, so bloody, passionate, demonic and sexual. Personally it was not my case, maybe not yours either, but it was the case of four boys I had the misfortune - or fortune, depending on how you look at it - to meet.

You will remember Rodrigo, a boy like any other, but only seen from the outside. Upon meeting him, it was easy to see that he was not ordinary. A pianist, a swimmer, eccentric, a bit of a loner, this boy was an exceptionality; I disliked him quite a lot, even though he was my cousin. And of course, you'll remember the insufferable Diana, a very striking girl, an "egg-warmer", I'd say. Too much beauty and talent together, things that are overshadowed as you get to know her better; with her you had only two choices: either love her or hate her.

I hope I don't have to describe Rodrigo's death again, I take it for granted that you remember his murder, I told you about it in Episode One. What do you mean, you don't remember well, dammit, I was hoping I wouldn't have to go over that event! Anyway, I'll sum up by telling you that they tortured him in an inhuman way, although I knew that no one heard his screams. Rodrigo was in a mental clinic when he died, he was only 19 years old; but because of the pathology that plagued his body and mind the boy was more emaciated than an old man. Little was left of that body after his murder; blood splattered on the ceiling, walls and floor; entrails hung on the cell roof with nails suspicious of insanity. There was no longer any skin to cover that body, it had all been ripped off by some kind of brutal instrument of torture. The flesh filled the entire ward for the "hopeless insane" of the Psychiatric Clinic of the National Health Fund with the smell of death. Come to think of it, in my nightmares I saw everything they did to the poor boy. You know, I think that the execution of William Wallace added to the Passion of the Christ - according to Mel

Gibson - and the dismemberment of Túpac Katari fall short of the monstrous tortures devised by the Semites to take revenge on Rodrigo.

Revenge, yes, a terrible revenge. There is no point in going over such a grotesque scene any further.

I remember that I was his last visitor. Shortly before he died he left me a box with his diary and many other things; reason for the existence of this saga.... Wait, I beg your pardon, you have questions about it, so come on, tell me what's not clear.

Let's see, you ask me how come I didn't find out about Rodrigo's situation beforehand, if he was a relative of mine. To tell you the truth, no one in my family knew about it. While it is true that he was in a mental institution for a few months, it is also true that he had cut off contact with everyone. You should know that shortly before Christmas Eve 1999, Rodrigo's mother, that is, my aunt, came to my house to inform us that they were moving to France. For my family, even for me, it was something very coherent. The branch of the family to which Rodrigo belonged was the most Europeanised of our entire genealogy. That part of the family was seen as the most distant, we never fraternised much with them. So when they said they were going to France, no one went into . However, my cousin was not going to France, but to the Citadel of Erks, a place I have already spoken about... Note also that in December 1999 Rodrigo was erased from the system. He never existed in the eyes of the state; and those of us who knew him would remember him as a ghost from the distant past.

You're asking me why I didn't tell my family about Rodrigo's situation so they could help him? Ha ha ha ha... Honestly, I think I was

Sceptical, I even thought he had exaggerated and that his mother would be close by. In fact, I was about to tell my mother before I opened the box, but then, when I saw the contents, I discovered that she had been right to keep it a secret. Rodrigo asked me not to tell anyone about his misfortune, that it would be best if the family believed he was in France. And so stayed that way until the first episode of this book was published on 14 November 2011.

Do you want to know what happened to Rodrigo's family? No, don't think they are sons of bitches who left a sick boy to fend for himself. Indeed, I was also very surprised to find my cousin alone and sick. Quite frankly, until that day I thought he was living a comfortable life in Paris or Marseille; the last thing that would have crossed my mind was that he would be on the verge of death in a mental clinic. It just so happened that his family was totally unable to care for Rodrigo. And since no one in my home knew about it, the boy was left alone. Now, I could tell you what prevented Rodrigo's family from being with him; but if I did, it would ruin the whole reading for you.

After her death, there were many difficulties in preventing the news of her murder from becoming a national scandal. As a Social Communicator myself, I know perfectly well that the media, especially the television media, are on the lookout for the most morbid events in order to increase the ratings of their news programmes; a raped girl - especially a raped girl - or a teenager tortured to death are ideal events for their disloyal purposes. Not to mention the legal and medical issues surrounding her death! None of that is worthy of narration, nor are the difficulties I went through to recapitulate all the events my cousin and his friends wrote in their



diaries. When I started reading Erks' fantastic story, I realised that I was looking at the most colourful case of collective schizophrenia of all time. However, hard-headed as I am, I gave Rodrigo and the others the benefit of the doubt for a moment. His death was the one tangible fact I could not deny.

After reading the adventures of my almost adolescent comrades in Erks, my mind was impossibly fractured, torn between denial and acceptance of what I had read. Honestly, before writing Episode One of this novel I was as causo-efective, logical-formal, nihilistic, foolish, lame and stubborn as any human being on Earth living at the turn of the century.

XXI. For the sake of sanity I denied everything my mind suggested and, at the same time, my heart gave out heart-rending cries of indignation. Each page meant taking my imagination to the Citadel of Erks and watching seven people I knew "transform" into "superior" beings - as if they were a mixture of Super-Sayayayin and Kryptonian, to take a crude example from comics and manga. I would get up, pour myself a cup of coffee and go back to my room to continue; at other times I would drink beer with rum, vodka and gin to digest the incredible testimonies of my friends. Then, in front of the mirror, I would tell myself to go fuck myself for believing so many fantasies. But if I didn't believe what I read, Rodrigo's death would remain unexplained, and that was what distressed me; I didn't need the expert reports of corrupt police, what I really needed were reliable answers outside of the useless Bolivian judicial apparatus - and not to mention Prosecutor Sosa. I had so many questions: Why was he killed? What did he do? Why did he lie to us all that he was going to France? Where was my cousin really? The only arguments I had were in those diaries, which were like a script for a film of romantic fantasy and political fiction. Finally



I understood that my pact with death was broken by a premise as simple and stupid as: "seeing is believing". I went to hell.

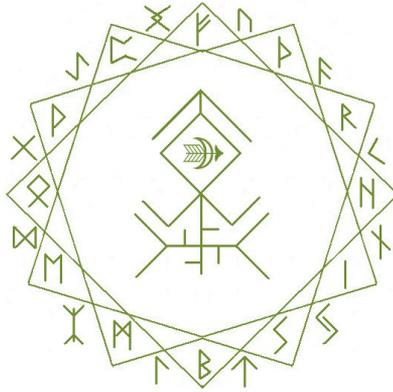
At the end of my reading, the days of life became the days of death. I thought of Rodrigo, of his murder, and the only available explanations were impossible to believe. Finally, I was between a rock and a hard place, I had no choice but to believe what I was reading and convince myself that it had happened; but it was more than that; yes, it was. Soon, the story of Rodrigo and his friends began to turn into a peculiar epic fantasy novel, which I took care of through my editing work.

This Second Episode is the most poetically edited form I could distil after four years of hard work. It is really different from the first and, as it is impossible to credit Rodrigo's diary, I decided to novelise this instalment as much as possible. To be frank, I don't know what kind of facts you are predisposed to assume and acknowledge as true; I don't know if you believe in ghosts, UFOs, "spirits", curses or even more fanciful and utopian things like Communism or world peace. The fact is that I am not so unhappy as to throw Rodrigo's memoirs at you without first putting myself in your shoes and understanding that his reality will never mix with yours. Put that way, rest assured that what you are about to read is a novel, not anything else. Any resemblance to reality is a "mere coincidence". Also, I want you to bear in mind that the fates of death have mysterious designs and at the end of our lives the metamorphic entities that direct our existences always present. If there is one thing I can assure you, with total certainty, it is that we are all going to die; indeed, I to you by God, by Odin, by Artemis or by whomever you wish, that you will die; you will not leave this world alive. The fact of certain death leads me to



to consider, for and because of you, that the gnosis that becomes a novel gives us a small hope that our death will not be in vain. I think that is what Rodrigo wanted to tell me and that is why I am still constant with the promise I made to him. I stress and emphasise what I already told you: this is a novel, nothing more than a novel.

Anyway, I leave the interpretation of the strange testimony of my comrades in your hands. I hope this hyperborean gift of gnosis will be of help to you, or at least of entertainment. I'll say goodbye for now, I'm going to the corner shop to buy a three-litre bottle of Cuba Libre for myself; maybe it will cost me less to write what is to come. I leave you with Rodrigo and his friends, and so, ladies and gentlemen, girls and boys, drunk and sober, with you: "El Arco de Artemisa - Second Episode, The Twelve Mysteries".



*-Squeezing one's knees to one's chest, Unthinking
luntes choked with tears, And one has but to cry
out: Just a moment!*

I'm so sorry, you must wake up from sleep.

*Then the voice of the heart responds,
loyalty is loyalty,*

you are far away, but you must go on.

*It will be a long time before you meet Him Ah,
secret love,*

invigorates and stimulates the blood.

When in silence,

They will close their eyes to each other; but

to love is nothing but a crude spectacle,

no love possesses success, only infinite nostalgia.

Alexsandra Kisterskaya (Сандра) - June 2009

It seemed that it was all over. The site of the explosion was now covered by a large crater, with no trace of the Church of San Francisco or its adjacent streets. A thin layer of cloudy dust covered the world and made it difficult to distinguish the real dimensions of the great hole.



Then, little by little, the dust began to dissipate and the havoc began to become visible. Not a stone was left upon a stone. The crater was of considerable depth and its nearest end was where the San Francisco amphitheatre had once been and ended where any Paceyño could have made out Buenos Aires street.

The surviving soldiers watched the black hole with awe and disquiet. Their expressions showed infinite amazement at the superhuman power that had wrought such a prodigy of destruction.

Then, amidst the dust created by the conflict and the silences waiting, they all made out a figure appearing at the edge of the great crater.

It was a horror impossible to observe and describe without losing one's mind, it was a creature of the underworld, it was evil represented, it was.... Its wings were so black and enormous that light seemed to be absorbed by them. Its skin, torn, exhibited its glowing flesh like magma. Its eyes were two empty caves, inside of which floated a pair of tongues of flame. His arms were covered with corruption and ended in a pair of claws fire and nightmare. Its spine still had that great extension that turned it into a tail, topped with a monstrous sting. The legs were an abominable combination of human and animal. Its rounded horns, like those of a ram, ended up harbouring, between one horn and the other, a fire that would never be extinguished: a true demonic halo. Its cadaverous face, barely covered with skin, exhibited grotesque fangs protruding from its muzzle. Its septum, which ended precipitously in the middle of its face, emitted yellowish vapours of sulphur with each exhalation... But the most scorching thing in the monster's appearance was that six-pronged star created out of deep



excoriations, as reddish and shiny as if they harboured a lava haemorrhage inside, ready to jump out of the flesh at any moment.

The monster crawled heavily from the edge of the crater, looked at them and grimaced.

His smile was horrible.

The soldiers immediately raised their quivering rifles towards the creature. The order to open fire soon came, and a storm of bullets slammed into the demon's body, but did not inflict any damage. A flap of the wings was all it took for a blast of stinking winds to hurl all the soldiers to the ground like paper dolls. Then the heavy artillery charged again, firing its most deadly anti-tank ammunition; but once more its inferiority became apparent.

With one leap, the creature rose to a great height, expanding its wings so that it could glide. The soldiers stared at it, now more horrified than at first. The beast fixed its gaze on a small trench. It reached into it and a series of cracks began to open up under the feet of the soldiers standing there. Within seconds, a horrific gush of hot gases and lava cooked the unfortunates completely. The crater floor was beginning to crack and a great flow of magma seemed about to burst from within. The soldiers who had not perished began to evacuate the area in desperation. It seemed that the crater would imminently explode, but then an arrow fell out of nowhere, sticking into the cracked earth, which was covered by a thick layer of gelatinous ice that glowed faintly, like a neon light.



The demon did not seem to understand the meaning of the arrow; but it did not take him long to *remember*. Then a violet light appeared in the sky.

All the men stared at the light. A human figure was descending from , surrounded by a voluminous halo of light that evoked the shape of a bear. As the halo became less intense, they could all make out a girl floating in the air. Her body was covered in cracked and bloodied armour: a chipped breastplate, a shoulder pad, cracked parts of greaves, chevrons, kneepads and scutcheons, and the bracers were barely recognisable. He had a tiny crown on his head. His hair was bio-luminescent and emitted a violet glow, and all of it floated as if submerged in water. Her eyes glowed brightly, like two beacons of magenta light, though she was wounded, she also looked predisposed.

In her right hand she held a gigantic white bow that displayed her as a fearsome warrior, imbued with an air of great courage.

The soldiers acknowledged her presence and cheered her - she was a hope for victory!

-You've done too much damage already, Golab," the girl said to the demon.

-I only played my part," replied the creature, cavernously.

-I wonder what kind of pathetic entity fights for the cause of those who have betrayed him.

-What do you know of treachery, Dianara! -the creature shouted, enraged.

-Enough to execute you," the girl replied, raising her bow towards the monster.



A violet bolt of lightning was embodied along her wrist, a bolt of lightning in the shape of an arrow. The girl placed the bolt in the sights of the bow and began to bend it from an invisible string, leaving the lightning arrow ready to be shot.

-Are we going to fight any more? -the creature questioned, looking at the girl.

-Until the end of time," she replied, and the bear-shaped halo surrounded her again.

The tension in the atmosphere had thickened the air...

The holy combat between the heiress of Artemis and the Lord of the Pit was yet to continue.



MKASSITASM



It was around the second millennium BC. History tells us that an invasion brought to the lands of Assyria, a Hyperborean people known as Kassites. They were natives of the Caucasus - present-day Russia, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan - and they carried a very special stone, known as the Stone of Venus. It turned out, then, that this was an emerald with unparalleled power.

They travelled carrying a banner bearing the figure of an eagle with a lion's head and spread wings. Their journey had been made according to the instructions of their Archer God: Kus. This God had made a pact with his Initiates that his people would participate in the Essential War.

When they reached the City of Borsippa, north of Nineveh - over present-day Turkey - King Nimrod had a huge tower built on a vortex of telluric energy, using the numerical technique of the Ziggurats. What



Nimrod's intention was to attack Chang Shambala, known as the "Abode of the Immortal Demons".

In ancient times, there were few wise men who retained the memories of Atlantis and of the Hyperborean Wisdom. This means that they remembered the war against YHVH, king of Chang Shambhala, and set about the task of founding towns and cities with the help of specially gifted Initiates. The most important element taken into account in founding such cities was the location of telluric energy currents. They could also define their astrological coordinates or any other details. Cities such as Rome or Jerusalem have lasted for millennia because they are built on great centres of force, which proves the efficacy of the telluric method of choosing a site for building a city or any other construction.

The Kassites were fearsome warriors, perfectly capable of defeating Men, Angels or Demons. They lived in a perpetual state of War and knew no feelings; no thoughts of any nature. They were pure-blooded and conscious of their Racial Mission. They wandered for years until the Wise Ones noticed that the strongest vortex of telluric energy was within the city limits of Borsippa. This city was inhabited by a tribe of "Habirian" shepherds. This posed difficulty for a people determined to do battle. In a short time the Kassites overran the city and the wise men began to develop the plan of attack.

They put into practice a strategy suitable for the offensive. First, the wisest trained an elite capable of resisting the powerful magic that the Angels and Demons would use against them as they entered Chang Shambala. This



The Hyperborean elite would have the sacred mission of exterminating the Winged Guardians, a mission in which they would surely lose their lives or their reason. Secondly, the sages began to build a "Magic Tower" to channel telluric energy and use it to breach the umbra and the Really Material Reality; in this way they intended to access Chang Shambala. In temple architecture, the most important thing is the shape of the base; in hyperborean war architecture, fortress-like buildings are often constructed with the base almost always being a "labyrinth". This form must be used due to the technical requirements of channelling telluric energies.

Nimrod's plan of attack was simple and had only three steps: open the door to the plane of Chang Shambala; access the heart of the temple; and finally, attack, attack, !.... To accomplish such a mission, every detail had to be taken into account. The weapons they decided to use were bows and arrows. The arrows were to be constructed according to an ancient technique: ibis feathers, Caucasian acacia sticks and stone points like small conical stalactites were to be used, which were to be collected from deep and mysterious caverns. King Nimrod's bow was a relic inherited from the ancient Atlanteans, the memory of which went back many eons; it Nimrod one of the mightiest warriors in the army. The armour he decided to wear was that which the ancient Atlanteans wore during wars: the magic breastplates. It is easy to imagine today, that this magic armour would be like an "electrostatic field of matter precipitation", or in simple words: a "force field". However, these "electronic armours", called magical in Nimrod's time, could only be used by the most oriented soldiers of his army; chosen by the wise men themselves. King Nimrod and his General Ninurta were among them.



According to the chronicles, it is said that the Threshold Guardians in Chang Shambala also had unique armour and weapons. Among these was one known as the "Om Ray", an Atlantean weapon with which the "Masters of Wisdom" of Chang Shambala used to - and still do - disintegrate "wayward" disciples.

Legend has it that when the Tower was ready, a metallic column of iron, copper, silver and gold, topped with a gigantic vulva-shaped Emerald was placed in the middle of the structure. This Stone had been given to the Kassites by the God Kus when he engaged them in the struggle against YHVH. According to the Initiates, the Sacred Stone had been brought from Venus by the Gods who accompanied Kus when they came to Earth, before man existed. Today, the most daring palaeontologists do not agree whether the Venus Stones appeared during the Palaeozoic or the Mesozoic, but it is evident that their existence predates the appearance of mammals on Earth.

During the time of the Kassites' journey from the slopes of Mount Elbruz in the Caucasus, the possession of this "Present of the Gods" was the stimulus which made it possible to face all kinds of hardships. It was the Centre around which the Race was formed; it was the Oracle which made it possible to hear the Voice of God, and it was the Tabula Regia where the Names of the Kings could be read. It was also the Sign of Origin before which the Demons would recoil in terror and against which no infernal or celestial power would have power. And by the same power the Gate in Heaven would be opened to invade Hell, and the relentless combat could be engaged against the servants of him who chained the Eternal Spirit to Matter. Many peoples have been called "barbarians" by other, more "civilised" peoples, blaming the supposed "barbarians" for being "savages" and "savages" and "barbarians" for being "savages".



"But it takes a "barbarian" to make a pact with the Gods and take part in the Essential War for True Freedom.

After the tower was completed, messengers were sent to the remaining Kassite villages, for their kingdom included Nineveh and other smaller towns. There were also numerous encampments stretching as far as Lake Van and even reaching the slopes of Ararat.

Thousands of Ambassadors were arriving at Borsippa to appreciate the Tower of Nimrod and to pay homage to Ishtar, the Goddess of Venus and Ama; as well as to Kus, their racial God and husband of Ishtar. Also arriving from the South was a small group of Hittites, their "cousins", with whom the Kassites had set out together many decades before, from the Caucasus.

Everything was prepared for the Summer Solstice, the day when Chang Shambhala is "closer" to our physical plane. On that day, the people of Borsippa gathered at the great Ziggurat and the final waiting began. The Kassite invaders, hunters and farmers, called the Sons of Kain, openly displayed their wild joy at the completion of a task that had absorbed generations, and in that joy pulsed the longing for the coming combat. An ancient Hyperborean proverb says: "The warrior's rage is sacred, when his cause is just. But if that thirst for justice drives the Warrior to face an enemy a thousand times superior, then a miracle is needed. Or perhaps something more than a miracle, a mutation of human nature that takes the Warrior beyond material limits, out of Time and Space. Nimrod's people, in their holy fury, sensed the coming collective mutation; they felt uplifted and saw the deluded reality of YHVH dissolve. They boiled with courage and thus purified their blood. That pure blood, boiling with fury and heroism, as it reached the head and



to the heart, it brings the memory of the Origin with it, of the beloved Original Village, of the tenderest Childhood and of the Eternal Romance. Under these circumstances, it is not uncommon for a whole people to gain the immortality of Valhalla.

Early in the morning, when the sun had just awakened, drums and flutes were already resounding in the air. On the various terraces of the Tower, the Initiates danced The Dance of the Birds while invoking the God of the Race: Kus. Meanwhile, the hierophants officiated the pre-battle rites inside the enclosure in which the colour blue predominated, standing out, with an intense brightness, the great green Emerald in the shape of a vulva consecrated to the Spirit of Venus, the Goddess whom the Semites called Ishtar, the Sumerians Imnina, the Greeks Athena or Artemis, the Vikings Frya, the Egyptians Isis or Neftys, the Iberians and Franks Pyrena, the Andean Americans Pachamama or Virgin Mistress of the Andes; and so on in every people on Earth, in every dimension of the World and in every moment of time past, present and future; sometimes seen as an enemy, sometimes as an ally and often unknown in the mind, enigmatic in the heart, but always present in the blood.

The Hierophants stood under the roof of the upper turret, outside, in the side corridors, King Nimrod and his two hundred archers prepared to die. There was no fear, only the frenzy of one who would fall in the glory of combat. And so, at about midday, a ghostly, ash-coloured vapour began to be seen creeping through the columns of the upper turret and slowly swirling, enveloping the unflappable warriors. At first, few noticed this vapour, but then it became visible to all. The cloud took on definite shapes that lingered for a moment, then dissolved and formed again. The mysterious reliefs of vapour formed figures of Warrior-Gods; but also Goddesses, boys, girls, and so on.



as of animals: horses, hawks, wolves or bears. Chariots were also seen to be embodied, joining the beings, as a Celestial Army slowly circled around the turret. As the chariots passed, drawn by winged steeds, the Warrior-Gods clearly cheered Nimrod on. He was also encouraged by the beautiful Hyperborean women, their steely eyes could temper the Spirit until the very moment of combat, but after the fight those same eyes could be the balm of icy love that heals every wound, soothes the pain and resurrects the hero. Ghostly, eternal, perpetual, warrior-like, they would break away to embrace the Warriors and caress them, and then you could appreciate their size. They were twice the height of King Nimrod, the tallest warrior of Borsippa.

Enveloped in the frenzy, the citizens of Borsippa did not notice when one of the Initiates left the dance and ran up the turret. Soon, the vapour took the form of a multitude of winged girls and boys hovering around her, spilling vapours, liquid in appearance. Without pausing for a second, she entered the Tower. Then the hierophants ceased all chanting, all invocations, and turned to stare at her. At last, the Initiate stopped her light step, in front of the entrance to the labyrinth. The girl was so beautiful that just to look at her was breathtaking. Without hesitation, she began to walk through the labyrinth with great confidence, so much so that she seemed to know the path very well. If she were to take the wrong path, if she were to hit a fence, this would have been taken as a bad omen and the operation would have to be suspended until the following year. But the Initiate had the Thousand Eyes of Blood open and followed the course of the telluric energy which also flooded the resonant labyrinth.



They all trusted her, in the terrible mission she had undertaken, which began there but which extended into other worlds.... They trusted because she was a Night Magician Initiate, her blood so blue that the veins were drawn on her white skin like branches of old trees. They all thought of her as they watched her run the labyrinth, singing the hymn of Kus.

The hierophants held their breath as the slender legs of the Initiate deftly traversed the last stretches of the labyrinth; she would soon reach the "exit", and so she did. She had triumphed!

However, that triumph meant death. Just at the end of the labyrinth was the Hyperborean Emerald, the Stone of Venus. The Initiate stopped in front of it and climbed the steps leading to the base of the Stone. Along with her, the Serpent of Creation had arrived, mesmerised by the girl's beauty; she knew that the Serpent followed her through the Labyrinth in total silence, and that meant that the Serpent had fallen into the trap. The Initiate then projected the Symbol of Origin upon the Hyperborean Emerald, and it magically ignited, bathing the huge enclosure and all its occupants in blue-green light. Outside, the rumbling of drums and flutes had become fast-paced and intense that it was impossible to think or do anything but gaze upon the Ziggurat surrounded by Nimrod and his archers.

At midday and with the sun at its highest point in the sky, things began to turn terrible. The beautiful girl challenged the snake, announcing her own name: Isa.



At that moment the music suddenly ceased, flooding the ears with silence; and with one sure bite, the Serpent killed the beautiful Isa. The Initiates knew this would happen and felt the loss, as they vowed to follow the princess to the death. The blood of the beautiful princess gushed down upon the shining Emerald who swallowed the red holy liquid. Then, the most incredible things began to happen that human eyes had beheld since many centuries ago.

Those inside the tower beheld a terrifying scene, for as the blood fell, the light emanating from the Emerald was extinguished for an instant; but then a column of fire rose from the floor, enveloping, furiously, the pedestal and the gem. The body of the princess was lying on the ground; yet a spectral and ghostly image, naked and beautiful, rose from the body and landed beside the pillar of fire: it threw itself upon her and began a sort of struggle. The fire, at first thin, was now as wide as a circle of six men. Initially it had slithered like a snake; but as it expanded it took on the unmistakable shape of a dragon. It was a fiery dragon whose frightful image became clearer by the second. As the tussle with Princess Isa's ghost increased, the Dragon became more furious.

Suddenly, the maw of the primitive demon let out a terrible roar. A huge blaze swept the room and charred numerous hierophants. Only the survivors were able to watch the incredible spectacle of the fiery beast ridden by the ghost of the deceased Isa, who had climbed onto the monster's head by sitting between its fiery fins. That bold action caused the monster to emit the roar and the deadly flame.



that killed the hierophants. Nevertheless, the spectre of the Princess fought, like a valkyrie.

Seeing that the Dragon would not yield to the struggle, Princess Isa drew the Symbol of her Origin on her forehead, and the horrible fiery creature shot upwards, like a spring, piercing the roof of the Tower and carrying the beautiful rider on its head. The moment the Dragon soared, a cry of terror burst from every mouth present, for just above the Tower, not far from the roof, the heavens parted as if a satin cloth had been torn.

All gazed at the black aperture that completely hid the sun, even though the sun, being much higher, should be seen from some distant angle. However, no one saw the sun any more. The spectacle was impressive and justified any distraction. The fiery monster, after the Heaven's Gate opened, transformed itself completely. While at first it seemed as if the hideous head had been thrust into the shadowy opening, soon the fire dragon became a body full of protrusions as it changed colour and turned brown, transforming the protrusions into sharp branches covered with sharp spikes and a few green leaves. Within seconds, it was a gigantic hawthorn tree towering over King Nimrod's Ziggurat.

From the base of the Tower, only part of the trunk and upper foliage was visible, as the crown seemed to be lost inside the Gate of Heaven while the root remained hidden from view inside the Tower. As soon as the metamorphosis was complete, all traces of fire disappeared and the phenomenon stabilised without further change. It appeared as if the hawthorn tree had been



always there. If it weren't for the sinister tear in the sky, everyone would have thought that nothing had happened there.

No one had time to be horrified. As soon as the sky opened, two men ran swiftly to the top of the Tower: they were Nimrod and the brave General Ninurta, who stopped in front of the hole in the sky and drew their bows towards the Threshold. Nimrod's bow was known for its deadly aim, it was a Hyperborean bow made from the white bone of an Atlantean animal, worthy of an elite archer. The king and the general aimed their bows into the darkness of the opening, trying to pick out a target when, suddenly, two figures emerged, brandishing their swords. The demons looked like huge white men with tiny wings. They floated heavily in the air and somehow managed to unload their blades on the heroic archers. The blades flashed through space, but bounced off without the armour Nimrod and Ninurta. A hail of arrows rained down on the "Demon-Angels", mowing them down. They fell badly wounded, and King Nimrod swiftly decapitated them, and raised their heads before the angry crowd. At that moment General Ninurta, accompanied by some of the warrior elite, began to climb the Hawthorn tree that linked Heaven to Earth. For the first time in thousands of years, a group of Wise Warriors was about to Chang Shambhala, Heaven and the Castle of Jehovah-Satan in the clouds!

The Hawthorn tree had straight, spaced branches, so that they could be climbed up them as if they were a gigantic ladder. This is just what the brave Kassites did and climbed the tree to lay siege to the "Gate of Heaven". As soon as General Ninurta and his warriors had climbed far enough, they found that they were at the entrance to a cavern.



They leapt boldly from the tree, not yet knowing if they could stand on the mysterious world they were entering. The ground was rocky.

A soft gloom reigned in the place, but there was enough light to make out the details of the cavern. Seven stone steps were visible, and from the last one, a passageway leading off into the distance. Above the entrance were nailed seven triangular banners. Each banners bore the same legend written in different languages. In their own Kassite language they could read:

-Dare not set foot upon this threshold unless you have first died to the passions and temptations of the world. Here you come only to be reborn as Initiates in the White Brotherhood, but to gain such a privilege you must first die. Adepts: if you are still alive, if the flame of primordial desire still burns in your hearts, if you retain the memory and nourish the purpose, then flee, while there is still time!

This was a strategic manoeuvre. The legend, ostensibly intended for suspected initiation followers, was intended to provoke doubt in the minds of the intruders. However, far from achieving these ends, the message brought instant laughter from the Kassite warriors. Up the Hawthorn tree climbed Nimrod and Ninurta, followed by another squad of archers, who, catching up with them, were ready to enter the infernal cavern.

Soon, a terrible burning of passions and desires began to inflame the hearts of the warriors. Nimrod and Ninurta looked at each other, hesitating; they expected to find enemies trained for combat, but there was only magic there! Ahead they found banners, and in them the greatest pleasures of the flesh and the heart began to show themselves. They knew full well that the enemy was trying to buy them and corrupt them, they wanted to bribe them.



The Kassites defeated and disarmed by the temptations of vulgar pleasures? The King would not allow it: he drew his sword and in one swift movement inflicted a wound on his left hand, delivering a message that still reverberates in the blood and heart of the Kassite bloodlines: "Listen. I, Nimrod, who has led you victoriously in a thousand battles, tell you that we must fight to the death these vile Demons who dare not face us. Here is my blood, which is the purest in the world! With it I will trace the Sign Kus on this infernal banner and then we will enter to slay the Demons. Our Sign is invincible!". Brave were the words of the King who traced the Sign of his Origin in blood and it seemed as if a fire consumed the banners.

However, they did not manage to enter the tunnel. The remains of the banners were still smoking on the ground, when the Shambhala Demons were ready to employ one of their terrible Atlantean weapons: the "OM-cannon". At first it was a soft, piercing, high-pitched sound, like the singing of the cicada; then it began to rise in pitch and volume until it became unbearable. Nimrod and Ninurta called out to the Woman, the spectre of Isa, for indeed she was in sight. Isa looked at them and seemed to speak loudly, but no one could hear her. However, the faith that the Kassites had in the princess was impressive, and perhaps it was this confidence that soon made them hear her, or think they heard her. She commanded them to look at the Symbol of Origin engraved on their swords and bows, and so they obeyed immediately. Nimrod lost his gaze on the Symbol of Origin on his Bow and then Isa leapt up to the King and the General and placed his hands on the heads of both, producing the exaltation of an aura around their bodies. This operation produced obvious relief as a second later



Both were cursing, though they could not yet hear their own oaths.

At that moment, Nimrod ordered an archer to call the rest of the troops and he did so. This call was longed for by the Kassite people and, in an instant, thousands of warriors launched an assault on Heaven. When Nimrod and Ninurta were convinced that OM lightning could not stand against them, they were ready to invade. The corridor was wide enough for them to advance five at a time, which they did at a run. In front was the spectral figure of Princess Isa, followed by Nimrod, Ninurta and the rest of the archers; a dozen of the rest stood as guards at the entrance.

The Kassite vanguard had travelled a long way when the tunnel came to an abrupt end. They saw three halls, one after the other, with large signs at their entrances telling them where they were. One was the "Temple of Ignorance and Learning", another the "Temple of Brotherhood", and a third the "Temple of Wisdom". The first hall was empty, except for an altar with the hated symbols of YHVH. The second had two altars and two huge stone columns at its entrance. The third had a sumptuous altar with a coffin marked with the most obscene and accursed symbols that anyone could conceive of without losing his mind. In all the rooms there were rich carpets and tapestries covering floors and walls; and aromatic perfumes permeated the space, softly lit by several oil lamps. The three halls constituted an unusual spectacle for these hardened men who, minutes before, had found themselves in a humble desert town. Immediately the fight began in the first room. There, a group of the Guardians of Shambhala, the Hiwa Anakim, confronted them.



They closed the way. The Guardians surrounded a bald, half-naked old man, of Asiatic race, who looked like an inhabitant of the distant mountains of Kuen Luen. He held in his hands a Sceptre of Power, a mighty weapon that wielded all the great machinery of the material Universe. The Sceptre emitted a bolt of lightning that struck General Ninurta's chest, knocking him to the ground and ending his life. But the enemy had no time to rejoice in this blow, for an accurate arrow from Nimrod pierced the heart of the yellow Demon, causing great confusion among the Hiwa Anakim. The clash became inevitable; while some Demons dragged the corpse of the old man to the "Classroom of Learning", others headed, sword in hand, towards the Kassite warriors. A hail of magical arrows rained down on the creatures, but the atmosphere was so cramped that hand-to-hand fighting soon ensued. Already several Angel-Demons had been mowed down, and more soon followed from the effect of the Kassite blades. Nimrod opened a clearing between the attackers and, followed by his squad, moved on to the next room. Here the fighting became fierce.

Nimrod was furious, for he had spotted a glowing figure leading the attack. He peered momentarily into the Temple of Sapience from a doorway that seemed to open into a wide courtyard, then shouted orders and stepped aside to make way for other clumsy Hiwa Anakim who were meeting a swift death with Kassite arrows and swords. The glowing figure was an Archangel-Nephilim, one of the "Traitor Gods", but Nimrod, impressed by his Divine appearance and great white wings, thought it was YHVH himself. He took careful aim and fired as the Archangel appeared again in the doorway. The arrow traced a smooth curve in space and went straight into his chest, bouncing off as if it had hit a rock.



That Traitor God, that Archangel, cursed Nimrod in ways unthinkable for a mortal. In his hatred, he sent more troops of Demon-Angels towards Nimrod who, horrified, watched as many Hiwa Anakim set about ferociously devouring the fallen warriors. This sight brought a shriek of horror from the Kassite King, and as his sword held the attackers at bay, he observed that the casualties were terrible among his Elite archers. At that moment he gave the order to call for reinforcements. Moments later, thousands of warriors were pouring into the accursed Temples of Synarchic initiation.

Soon, the Hiwa Anakim were overrun and Nimrod had time to rally his surviving archers. Less than half were left, but the reinforcements that had arrived were so impressive that they threatened to overwhelm the three Temples that had already been taken. A way out to the outer courtyard had to be attempted.

Nimrod peeped through the doorway where he had seen the Archangel and found that it opened into the courtyard of a huge palace in the middle of a colossal city. It was the palace of Jehovah-Satan, YHVH.

They were in the heart of Chang Shambhala: Heaven, very close to the Palace of the King of the World. Soon, Nimrod looked at the halls he took and realised that the feat had been gigantic. They were in the greatest places of deception and softening in the Universe, something that only very pure blood or much longing for Origin could withstand. Those who went and end up there, always were and are useful people to the Synarchy, heads of state, religious, kings, wealthy and influential people, presidents of corporations and many others; and sometimes warriors are brought there to be tempted, even by



The Archangels themselves; those who have returned and have claimed to have been "abducted by extraterrestrials", but this is not so. Those who go there "return fully bewitched and ready to work fully to fulfil their mission with YHVH". They are the "Initiates" of the Synarchy, who have "died" and been "born again"; but what has actually died in them is the Spirit, the Blood Remembrance, which now, in total strategic confusion, they will never feel.

In the courtyard outside the Temple of Wisdom, where the brave Kassites had barricaded themselves, a whole legion of Hiwa Anakim with swords in hand and several squads of Sheidim, grey-skinned dwarves, waited uneasily. The sight of the outer courtyard could not have been more frightening, but Nimrod wished to confront the Archangel and avenge his comrades. To that end, he sent the infantry in a horde, followed by a vanguard of spearmen; behind them would be the elite archers, protecting the rear and firing continuously at the nearest targets. In the confusion, Nimrod would try to reach the Archangel.

The winged being on whom Nimrod sought vengeance was Kokabiel, one of the Sephirothic Archangels of the Tetragrammaton who guard the world, and one of the two hundred Traitor Gods who came from Venus and founded the White Brotherhood or Occult Hierarchy of the Earth. He stood leading his nightmarish hosts, shielded behind a fountain fountain; he was dazzling in appearance....

Nimrod gave the order to attack, and a horde of Kassite warriors rushed against the tight formation of the Angel-Demons. The dwarves fired their "belt" weapons and caused some stumbling among the first warriors; but it soon became apparent that the momentum they carried would make it impossible to



to stop them. Dozens of arrows began to rain down as the two fronts clashed. At that moment Nimrod leapt at Kokabiel in an attempt to slit his throat with a sharp jade dagger. This weapon, from China, had been recommended by Isa as a very effective weapon for slaying Angel-Demons and Archangels.

Rolling in mortal embrace, the two ancestral enemies, the white Nimrod and the dark Kokabiel, played out their illusory lives trying to stab each other - the likes of which had not been seen in 8,000 years! But their bodies belonged to two different races: Kokabiel was huge, almost twice the size of Nimrod, and that physical advantage, coupled with his hatred that constituted an almost palpable energy, put the Kassite King on edge. Soon, the Archangel reached for the King's neck, caught in a deadly wrestling hold. Nimrod's bones creaked, and suddenly the man's spine made a clattering sound as it snapped. The Archangel kept cursing him, saying that he would always be remembered as "Nimrod the Defeated" for he had achieved nothing with his invasion. The Archangel conjured up prayers to YHVH for eternal punishment against Nimrod for his sins. But Nimrod was pure courage, and soon he remembered Isa and had the strength to throw the jade knife upon his executioner: when he felt himself dying, he diffused his consciousness in the Blood, in the Hyperborean manner, and let the last effort of his arm be guided by his instincts. And then the hand, fearfully armed, shot straight to a point on the Archangel's waist, just above the liver, at a weak spot in the armour. Kokabiel fell, his face disfigured with fear, and finally he died; he would never live again in this Universe, such is the mystery that the Demon-Archangels of Chang Shambala try to conceal.



As Kokabiel fell, a sudden bewilderment arose among the demonic and celestial hosts; yet the voices of other cowardly angels urged them to fight on without retreat. The slaughter was terrible, and blood already covered much of the courtyard, strewn with hundreds of corpses. A squad of soldiers began to set fire to the nearby corridors and soon the evacuated palace was ablaze. In the midst of the confusion, a few warriors pulled the Archer King to his side and saw him smiling as he spoke to the spectre of Isa, his secret and great love. Some claimed to remember in the Blood what Isa said to Nimrod, words of a glorious love that still echo in the perpetual song of the birds and the mighty walk of the Bears. Women of a plantigrade essence would be born from the memory of Isa and with his blessing; and warrior men would be born after Nimrod. What beautiful words Isa said to the King: "O Nimrod, fear not, we have triumphed because of thee: O the conqueror of Kokabiel! I have made it my business to fulfil the mission of the Race and to find the Path of Return. The Goddess guided me and now we can return to our Original Village,

We have conquered the Freedom of the Spirit, brave Nimrod! The possibility of being ourselves, our own creation, of being ourselves the womb of our own birth; it is the Will of the Unknowable, Divine Nimrod, that we can do all things; let us go, then, where love is love and honour is honour; let us go where words are not, and where I can heal you and love you, and you me with the A-Mort of Origin; come, take my hand, let me take you beyond, where all is Eternal! And so Isa uttered the last words, accompanying the final sigh of the Hyperborean King.

That interminable "half-day" remained unchanged throughout the Battle of Nimrod, and could be considered to have lasted approximately twelve hours. At the moment when the Kassite King expired and the battle at Chang Shambala was extinguished, the last prodigy shook Borsippa. They had already climbed the



Heaven all available warriors: over four thousand, including some visitors, and the city then presented a strange appearance. With that crowd of mostly women and children shouting and shouting, their protests superimposed on a background warrior music played by the Kainite Initiates. And that imposing tower, rising up to Heaven in open defiance. And that hawthorn tree at its apex, that pinkish tree symbolising the sublimation of matter by Him and its fitting into the Cosmic Hierarchies whose supreme ruler is He who calls Himself "One". On that interminable half-day the image of Shamash was non-existent, the Sun was totally hidden in broad daylight; indeed, Borsippa presented a rare appearance on that, his last day!

There were no more slaves in Borsippa; the lineage of YHVH, the blood of Abraham, the Habirite shepherds, would be saved. But neither were there any cowards to flee when the silver lentil appeared in the sky. All were struck dumb with amazement as the great silver eye emerged from a suspicious cloud. They all died at their posts as the lightning bolt struck the Tower of Nimrod. The extreme heat was so hot that the sand melted and dripped like water. A deadly hurricane, an expansive circle of fire, burst from Borsippa killing every living thing for ten miles around.

Another of the Atlantean tactical weapons was employed, thus fulfilling the plea made by Enlil and Shamash to the Hound of Heaven: Sirius-Sion, and witnessed by Princess Isa. Once the attack was consummated, the silver lenticule disappeared from all physical sight to return to the centre from whence it had been projected, at Chang Shambala.



As the smoke cleared, the seventh part of Nimrod's Tower stood; Shamash continued his journey westward and the Hawthorn Tree and Gate of Heaven were no more. The nightmare was over: the Threshold was safe to continue its service to the synarchic initiations and the Sons of the Midnight Sun had failed again.

Only the racial memory of Nimrod's great deed and the charred remains of his Tower would remain, as can still be seen today in the Tower of Borsippa, with the sand vitrified by nuclear heat still adhering, after millennia, to its walls. And the slanders invented by the Habirite shepherds and picked up by Arab and Jewish tradition would also live on. In the Talmud and in various rabbinical writings, part of this story can be read, suitably altered. Mention is made there of Nimrod's Tower "from which his archers shot arrows into Heaven", the "Luciferic pride" of King Kassite, his Tower "mistaken" for that of Babel, and so on. There have also been found clay tablets engraved in cuneiform script which give a more factual account of the events, and numerous Kudurros, engraved stones which used to be placed in Temples or as territorial boundaries, with references to Nimrod's exploits.

But Nimrod's defeat was not a , for that same day the Kassite King, his brave General Ninurta, his Initiates and all the people who died at Borsippa, set out on the Return to the Origin, led by the untamed and ghostly Isa. Meanwhile, the Hiwa Anakim Demons devoured their corpses at Chang Shambala, and the King of the World delivered his Evening Prayer, delayed twelve hours that day by Nimrod's indelible deed.

The rest of the Kassite people continued to dominate for a time but eventually merged with their Hittite cousins for, as is well known from the



Hyperborean Circles: "a Race that loses its Kainite Initiates is a dying Race" and, along with Nimrod, the Kainite Initiate Elite had departed forever. However, before all was lost, the Hittite cousins of the Kassites returned to Borsippa: there was something to be found.

The great vulva-shaped Emerald had become a small blue-green gem, embedded in a bow, the Bow of King Nimrod, which, without explanation, had fallen from the heavens to the tower. A young Hittite boy picked it up and, listening to the voice of his blood, became a transducer between the bow, the gem and the world of men. He was to begin his odyssey to reach, by the will of the Bow of Nimrod, where the gods would guide him.



It was 7 p.m. on Saturday, 1 January 2000 in the city of La Paz, Bolivia. The Church of Santo Domingo was full of parishioners celebrating the first Eucharist of the year.

-As you share the bread, let us share Heaven with our Lord Jesus Christ.

-Thine is the Kingdom, Thine the Power and the Glory forever Lord," the congregation responded.

-The Lord be with you.

-And with his Spirit.

-Go in peace, brothers.

Some parishioners were beginning to leave the grounds and a sacred choir announced the end of the mass. The priest began to sprinkle holy water on a large conglomeration of people who stretched out their hands to be touched by the blessed liquid. As the priest threw the water he saw one of his lay deacons approaching, his face quite agitated and pale.

-Silvio, is something wrong? -asked the priest, stopping handing out the water.

-Father, you are wanted at the bishop's office.

-Who is looking for me?

-Fray Santiago.

The priest's face paled as soon as he heard this. He did not even take off his liturgical cassock and ran to the bishop's office.





When he arrived, he saw the newcomer: a man with a bushy beard and a bald head. His face was almost cadaverous and he was covered in Dominican habits.

-Santiago, I wasn't expecting him for another three days.

-The prophecy, the Sentinels," murmured the friar, trembling.

-The... the... God, are they...?

-That's right, a group of children have just left Rowena's lair for Erks.

-Miracle, St. Dominic's prophecy was true, thanks to the Unknowable and the Virgin!

-But that is not all. His Eminence sent a message from Rome. He sends word that Brother Aldrick Du Ruelant is on his way.

-God, the last Cathar Crusader! -said the astonished priest abruptly. Tell me, Fray Santiago, when is Brother Du Ruelant scheduled to arrive?

-It will arrive in ten hours.

-Then there is no time to lose! Silvio," he ordered his deacon, "call all those in charge of the cloister and assemble them in the presbytery.





While an unusual commotion was raging in the cloister of the Dominican Order of Preachers, in another part of the city sat a sinister young man in the middle of a gloomy house. The place was neglected and abandoned, a building that had been in dispute for quite some time, located in the Miraflores area of the city of La Paz.

The boy wore a red cloak, wide black trousers and a red leather breastplate across his torso. His blond hair subtly framed the harsh features of his face.

He appeared to be asleep; nothing seemed to disturb the unbearable stillness of the ruined house. Then a series of golden lights began to gleam through the gloom and shadows. Beneath the rickety armchair that held the boy, figures began to outline themselves, their radiance reminiscent of molten gold. Like impossible blotches of horror, a series of branching tubes began to criss-cross the lying surface, turning into bleeding veins at a moment's notice. The floor began to evaporate, leaving behind a purulent, wet white surface, the same one that appeared to be some kind blooming canker sore. The walls were filled with blood and molten gold. Beneath the boy's armchair shone a circle dominated by Hebrew letters and a large Star of David in the middle. Then, out of the golden lights, a winged being, with three pairs of shining wings, appeared. He wore magnificent golden armour, beautifully adorned. On his head was a helmet and in his hands, a sword.





- Golab, Golab," the winged being evoked, as if trying to wake the sleeping boy.
- Can't you see I'm resting? -the boy suddenly muttered.
- Wake up, I have to talk to you," replied the Archangel.

With an unusual heaviness, the boy opened his eyes. His eyeballs were varnished with a layer of reddish glow, the same that made one imagine the flames of hell. In contrast to the winged being who looked like an angel from the heavens, the boy in red, Golab, looked like a demon from the most fiery hells.

-St. Michael, the Chief of the Heavenly Armies. What brings you here? - asked Golab.

-The *Sidhas* Archangels are very angry, the Council of the Tetragrammaton has been debating and we have come to the conclusion that you have failed.

-I care very little for your conclusions," replied the reddish young man, with wicked derision.

-You knew the importance of your mission.

-At the Bafometh Meeting, each demon gave his opinion; I did the will of Bafometh....

-You fool! -You think the Archangels of the Tetragrammaton would approve of your actions? You let the Sentinels live, you fool! Now what are we going to do!

-Calm, my brother," said Golab, his calmness contrasting with Michael's alarm. Such angry outbursts do not suit you. Both the Baphometh and the Tetragrammaton just wanted to make sure those children were not an obstacle; you know that, you were at the last meeting. And I can guarantee you that the Sentinels pose no threat to us.



-They rejected the power of the *Dorje*.... How can you think they are not a threat!

-Listen, Michael. There are only two things we could fear from them: either they will find the Bow of Artemis, or they will awaken the son of the Fenrir, and that will never happen, *they are not ready*. Moreover, the fracturing of the Wolf beast guarantees that none of its parts can ever be reunited. Lycanon is alone in this world and the Other Wolf has not been born in this age, I am sure.

-How can you be when all the other Sentinels have coincided in time and place?

-Desperation has given them away," said Golab, smiling. The old blind man pretended to help those children; but after being near them, I understood. They will be no threat to us.

-You still listen to Astaroth or Asmodius instead of listening to me. They're the ones who convinced you of everything you tell me, but you don't fool me..." said the angel. -said the angel.

-What are you saying?

-Do you think I'm unaware of your true feelings? -Golab's eyes widened wildly. Dianara, the moon bear, are you truly immune to her, to her power?

-I am a goat, Lord of the Pit," said Golab. All the members of the Baphometh are aware of my great power, the archangels of the Tetragrammaton know of it, but you seem to be the only one unaware of my strength. If I wished it, I could wipe out this universe and many more with a single close of my left palm, and yet you think that I, Golab the Lord of the Pit, would fall for the sake of a wretched mortal? You underestimate me, Miguel. Women as such disgust me....

Michael approached Golab and gently cupped his face.



-And the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they took to themselves wives whom they liked," Genesis, chapter five, verse two.... - quoted the archangel. Truly, Golab, I hope you are not lying. Even our father loves you, and so do I? -said Michael, and he leaned down and kissed Golab.

After a few seconds, the angel vanished and the house regained its aged appearance.

-Dianara... -You wretch!" whispered Golab, "despite the centuries, you still linger in the memories of my soul... but I will have my revenge for this.



It was almost midday in the Church of Santo Domingo. A man was unloading his luggage from a taxi. The man was wearing a black shirt and trousers, wearing the white lapel around his neck that identified him as a Catholic priest. His entire body was covered with a long black trench coat, giving an imposing bearing to a man who needed no further trappings to command respect. His eyes were hidden behind rounded spectacles that gave him an enigmatic air. His height, almost two metres, and his bearing, praised the authority that his presence alone inspired. He was neither Bolivian nor South American, but European and *something more*.

Two monks came out of the church to welcome the newcomer. Both wore habits and looked very nervous. One was older, tall and bushy-browed, with sparse white hair. The other was younger, with skin and features as hard as those of a man from the highlands.

-The Lord's peace be with you, brother," the elder of the two greeted.

-And with your spirit," he replied, glancing sideways at them.

-We've been waiting for you," said the youngest. Please, come in, come in," and he took his bags.

The men entered the chapel and walked to the office. The major introduced himself:

-I am Friar Bernardo Clementi," and he pointed to the young man, "This is Brother Xavier Azurita.

-Est *un plaisir*," replied the guest. I am Aldrick Du Ruelant, His Holiness sent me. You both know the reason for my arrival.



-We are aware, brother," replied Bernardo Clementi. The news has come soon.

-And the situation? -Aldrick asked.

-The chosen ones have been led to Erks by the Way of the Gods," replied Xavier.

-Then my long journey does not end here," Du Ruelant said, smiling. I must leave for the Citadel of Erks as soon as possible.

-Of course," said Bernardo, "but we must ask for discretion. Our position is a delicate one.

-Don't worry, I'll be cautious," Aldrick replied.

-We've arranged transport," said Javier. You will be taken to the camp at the entrance to Erks. Rowena Von Kaiser and Qhawaq Yupanki will already be waiting for you at the citadel.

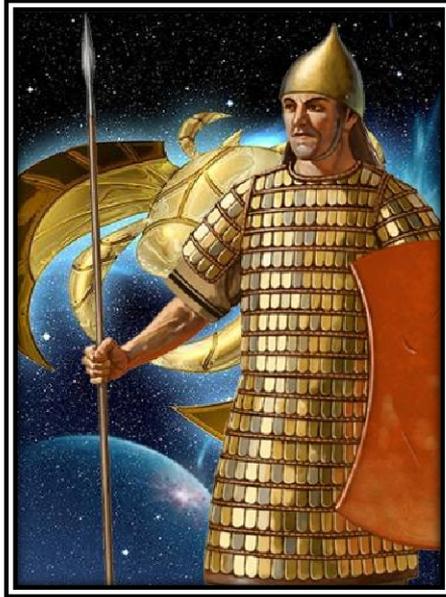
-I thank you, but I would prefer to go to Erks on my own," said Aldrick. You must know that our allies in Rome have not abandoned us to our fate with such a difficult task. Reinforcements are on their way from all sides. They will come slowly, be patient.

-That's great news, brother," replied Bernardo. We will keep our eyes open.

They accompanied Aldrick to the door, as he prepared his mind for the journey.



MHITITASM



In the middle of the year 1999 BC, in a destroyed village, a lonely young man sat on a ruined column.

It was evident that something unimaginable had happened in this place, formerly known as Borsippa. The sand was vitrified from exposure to immeasurable heat. The hermit found it hard to believe that all the devastation was real, but as his feet sank into the sand, his doubts about what he was seeing dissipated, he was not hallucinating, it was real. He was a Hittite, a member of a kingdom whose end had come a few days before he reached the destroyed village. He was totally overwhelmed by what he saw, but even more so by the object he found in what was a scorched tower:



had found a white, bone-like bow with a beautiful blue-green gem embedded in the middle.

What really distressed the nomad was not the bow itself, but from the gem encrusted bow he could sense a mysterious voice speaking directly into his mind. Every step he took revealed to him a spilling of blood. The bow called to him, spoke to him, told him its story, and in doing so, called him by name: "Nivske".

Nivske had come to this place at the invitation of a relative of his. He was told to attend Borsippa to participate in the opening ceremony of a great tower that King Nimrod had built as a monument to the Goddess Ishtar. Called by adventure and promises of glory on a holy march, Nivske left his hometown and headed for the place to which he had been invited. On the way he imagined the feast to be held and already tasted the delights of foreign lands. None of this prepared him for the disastrous surprise that overwhelmed his soul? Nivske had never imagined that such a horror could exist.

When he reached the centre of the village and saw the ruined tower, he imagined that some huge army had wiped out the King and all his subjects, but there no corpses anywhere, even though everything looked burnt. That disturbed him even more and he felt he was in danger. Then he saw a glow among the black fallen rocks of the tower. Mesmerised by the beauty of the glow, the young Nivske walked through the charred platforms and found the archway.



From that moment he felt he had something important to do and, guided by the instructions of the arch himself, he left the ruins of Borsippa for the West.

After a long and arduous journey through the Konya plain and the Boz Mountains, Nivkse was to land on the Aegean Sea. He felt the voice of the relic he carried telling him where to go and protecting him from the dangers along the way. He could recognise in that arcane presence the warmth of the ancient patron goddess: Morana, and his fear had been replaced by an eagerness to get to...; although he had no idea where he was going, he knew he was going the right way.

At the coast, he boarded a commercial vessel and set sail across the Aegean. Neither storms nor storm surges distracted him from the place that was fixed in his mind: where the sun was setting. Weeks later he arrived at a thriving city on an island called Crete.

There, the roots of a culture were blossoming and Nivske was fascinated by what he saw. The young man was just a humble peasant and had never been to a city like this before in his life.

But he was hungry and exhaustion almost got the better of him. His money had run out during the sea voyage and he had no way of getting more food; he did not even speak the strange language of the place. Once again, he sensed the imposing presence of the bow within him: he clutched the relic in his arms and let a higher instinct guide him. And so he came to a temple. He looked at the entrance and collapsed on the steps.



He didn't know how long he dreamed... when he heard a voice calling his name. It was a delicate, feminine voice. He felt comforted and then he felt a light on his forehead; he made an insistent effort until he could finally open his eyes. They were like two green gems embedded in a face, such as only in the imagination of poets could be conceived. Surely this must have been the most beautiful woman he had ever seen in his life.

-I've been waiting for you," the woman said in her own language, helping him to sit up.

-Who are you? -asked Nivske, in a mixture of rapture and confusion.

-I am a Nocturnal Initiate in the Wisdom of the Gods and the Oracle had foretold your coming.

-O-Oracle?

That word was not in Nivske's vocabulary. She silently helped him walk into the temple and then offered him some fruit, which he ate voraciously.

-An Oracle is a virgin who foretells the destiny of men," explained Kora.

-There is no such in my country.

-I .

-And how do you know my language?

-I am a scholar, it is my duty to know all the languages of the world.

Kora's eyes fell on the bow Nivske had left resting against a wall. She breathed a sigh of relief when she saw the relic.



-The bow you have with you..." Nivske glanced at it.

-Oh, the bow! I found it in Borssipa. I feel that it is bow that brought me here.

-I don't think I understand.

-I can't explain it," Nivske replied, still eating. Ever since I found it, I've had strange thoughts. It's as if the bow has a life and speaks to me in strange ways. The thoughts that come into my head are disordered; I think it is haunted.

Kora smiled, perhaps at Nivske's innocence or just at the way he ate.

-It's not a spell, Nivske...

-How do you know my name? -he asked, surprised.

-The oracle revealed it to me.

-Your Oracle is very good then.

-Come with me, I want to show you something.

Kora led her guest into a back chamber, through a large marble doorway, and into a huge anteroom, permeated with the scent of oils. In the background was a small, enigmatic statue: it was a woman with three pairs of breasts and a waning moon with an arrow through her forehead. Nivske had never seen anything like it in his life.

-She is the Goddess of my people, her name is Artemis," said Kora.

The name seemed strangely familiar to the young foreigner, as if the word held some kind of meaning for him and his past.

-In your village it is Morana," said Kora, "but here it has been given another ether and another name.





-Artemis," Nivske muttered. *I've heard that name before.*

-*That is because the bow you have brought with you is a manifestation of Her. According to the Oracle, that bow was in the hands of a great king of your people.*

-Yes, King Nimrod! -replied Nivske, surprised to remember.

-*The stone that carries that arch is known as the Stone of Venus, and it came to this temple because the Goddess has willed it.*

-So, my journey...

-*You were a messenger of the Goddess. She has brought you here with her bow: The Bow of Artemis.*

-The Arch of Artemis?

-That's right.

-*What are we supposed to do with him now?* -asked Nivske, confused.

-*We are its custodians. Our mission is to protect it until it is ready for use.*

-*I have to go back to my village, I have a family and I can't just stay here to....*

Suddenly Kora undressed in front of the young Nivske, her body so perfect that the Hittite boy no longer felt like protesting.

-*You are to stay here, Nivske, and in order that the longing for your original people may be satiated, I will at this moment receive your body into mine. So come.*

Nivske could not resist: he possessed Kora and in his mind came another memory lost in his inner seas: the memory for a lady he loved who had already departed from the world, or rather who had never arrived in the world. Kora told him





remembered her and the hours of pleasure and nostalgia initiated the young man into mysteries he could never have suspected. Then he and she would have the son who would guard the bow for generations in the Temple of the goddess Artemis, until such time as it must leave the temple and be taken to new lands by new custodians.



The dying twentieth century had made its prophecies of the end of the world prevail; but the prophets never predicted such a gag of triangulated ironies as occurred during the days of humanity's last year. For 1999 was not just a number, it was the beginning of the end.

The managers of the Apocalypse would not be four horsemen or a legion of angels, or a dragon trying to eat the newborn of a woman in labour. Those who would lead the world into Armageddon would be a group of children whose lives had never before been stained with the dark tints of death, misfortune or war.

Armand Rodrigo Torrico Michelle, known as Lycanon among the gods, was thirteen years old at the turn of the twentieth century. He had abruptly arrived at adolescence through his unbridled sexuality. His French blood of millennia-old avatars had been runified by wolves at the beginning of France itself. Born in Bolivia on 21 August 1986, by the strategy of the gods, Rodrigo never imagined that his duties inherited from Europe catch up with him. Those sleepy, nostalgic eyes, of a liquid green that seemed to come from other worlds, expressed nothing but infinite uncertainty. His short hair was a perfect frame for a boy who exhibited the elfin beauty of an *extra-universe* being fallen to the world of mortals. His slender body, fully proportioned, exhibited a strange muscular development for a boy of his age. Rodrigo was the perfect profile of a Spartan boy destined to become a warrior. And beyond all that aesthetics inherited from the lost Europe, the talent of a musician could be glimpsed.





unparalleled in history, a pianist who had lost his inspiration the day one of his hands was wounded. But his words, hurled against the course of his emasculated childhood, were but a reflection of his true courage, a courage that even Rodrigo himself did not yet know.

On 1 January 2000, Rodrigo left the city of La Paz with a Company of seven people: four women and two men, apart from himself. The Company's destination was one of the most extraordinary places known to human eyes: the Citadel of Erks.

That fortress was on a dimensional plane parallel to the stellar north of the third planet of the Solar System. Its location had been a secret jealously guarded by the Amautas of the black Bonnet, who inherited the seal of the umbra from the hierophants of the Viking Empire of Tiwanaku, the Lords of Skiold, eons before the founding of Cuzco.

The journey to Erks was always a complicated labyrinth that could hardly be solved without a full knowledge of the Hyperborean Wisdom. For that reason the person at the head of the caravan was Rowena Von Kaisser, a woman with steely grey eyes. Her eyebrows and hair were so blonde that the sun whitened them to grey when its rays touched them. Her skin was outlined by a few bluish veins that traced over that magnificent translucent figure, smooth and firm. His great height gave him an imposing bearing, being a head taller than the tallest man in the Company. Rowena's sculpted body could deceive anyone, for despite the youthfulness it reflected, she was, in reality, almost 60 years old; only the wrinkles on her neck and the stretch marks around her eyes could confirm this.



However, her eyes were hardly ever visible as she always protected them with glasses.

Unwilling to look back, but unable to help themselves, the young caravan and their mature guide left the city of La Paz, abandoning their former lives in the swirling waters of the past. The chosen ones: a young university student who would not finish his degree, a young girl who would not graduate from school that last year of Promotion, two girls who would not know high school and two boys who would never again play with their skates on the cobblestone streets of the neighbourhoods of La Paz, would leave to become warriors; behind them, the parents of all those who had left constricted their hearts, torn between the relief of having their children far from the clutches of the devil and the anguish of never seeing them again.

There went the Company of Six and their guide, Rowena Von Kaisser, who was the worst nightmare of the packs of heaven, the sinful "Eve" whom Jehovah-Satan would hate to the end of time.

Ahead of Rowena and her wards, the Way of the Gods lay open, and she knew full well the value of her team. The woman felt unusually uneasy about the responsibility that had been thrust upon her shoulders, for she carried the best of France, Russia, Egypt and Germany in her caravan and there was no margin for error. If anything happened to them, if death or the temptations of fire overtook them, all hope would be lost. The responsibility was enormous.

Avenida del Maestro in the Alto Obrajes area of the city of La Paz: a huge black wagon, designed by the now defunct General Motors,



was waiting for his passengers. Its driver, a white man with a full moustache and messy hair, waited inside the vehicle while a cigarette burned between his lips. The man looked through the window and caught a glimpse of the boys Rowena was bringing. He grimaced slightly as he took a long drag on his cigarette. It was noticeable that none of the boys had had a restful night, their dark circles under their eyes betraying sleeplessness. The man smiled: "They're just kids," he thought.

The night before the departure was a disconsolate, illusion-cracked night for the boys. One of the members of the carava had had a birthday on 31 December 1999 and there were no major celebrations other than hugs. Of course, having a thirteenth birthday at the end of the year is no more curious than the journey they were about to make on 1 January 2000, but the circumstances were totally alien to the daily routine of a normal life.

The Company boarded the vehicle and began their adventurous march to the citadel of Erks. The Peace was tinged with dawn, the sky reddened and the sun announced its light. It was almost six o'clock in the morning and the first glimmers of day broke through the darkness. One of the boys yawned, complaining about lack of sleep. Another was looking at the mountains of La Paz, thinking it would be the last time he would see them. The doors of the wagon closed and the engine roared. The road took the carava through Obrajes, crossing Avenida Hernando Siles and Avenida Costanera. The Valley of the Moon came into view soon after, revealing its shadowy stalagmites. They passed Mallasa, Villa Bella, Villa Esmeralda, Avircato and several other nearby towns. The journey was beginning to become terribly tiring for the passengers. The younger ones fell asleep, the young ones fought against drowsiness, and Rowena kept her eyes on the road; she tried not to



feel or think. The driver, who had not spoken a single word since departure, was focused on driving and nothing else.

The city was getting further and further away, and before the sun reached its zenith, the landscape became a picturesque display of rural life on the outskirts of the city. The snow-capped Illimani seemed closer by the hour. The trails of danger faded, and the demons were left with empty claws as their prey moved further and further away from the city.



Aldrick du Ruelant was ready for the second part of his journey. He had set off at dawn for the high mountains of the Cumbre range. A few kilometres from where he stood lay the low valleys of the Yungas of La Paz. Behind me, following the road south, the city was beginning to wake up. People were out and about, and the children were already awake, playing in their backyards.

The Crusader sighed, the cold mountain air filling his lungs with calm. His memories were focused on a distant past and a Dominican monastery in the middle of the valleys of the French Languedoc. Despite the distance, he was still able to perceive the salty air of the Mediterranean Sea, the midday sun on the shores of Montpellier. His eyes, full of nostalgia, pretended to look at a world alien to human hearts. The secret wars against the abyssals had tempered his spirit and made him a relentless soldier. He knew that the hopes of the Catholic Church rested on his shoulders. Not even the Pope was aware of the journey the Crusader was about to undertake. His Order, the Dominican Order of Friars Preachers, had always been rebellious to the Pope's designs, showing themselves over the centuries almost irreverent to his power. The story goes that the intervention of King Philip IV of France was the key to the founding of the Dominican Order despite the opposition of Pope Boniface.

VII. The prophecies of St. Dominic had foretold that one of the members of the Order would cross the Atlantic to train the warriors who would confront Satan. Aldrick had grown up all his life in the shadow of that prophecy and never thought he would be *The Chosen One*.





In the French valleys, Aldrick had been raised by great masters of the Hyperborean Wisdom, all descendants of the Lords of Tharsis. As a child he had been taught to master the art of the bow and sword. His physical strength had completely broken the capabilities of an ordinary human and the speed of his movements increased incredibly during his training. His power surpassed human imagination, on a scale that only the Cathar Crusaders could conceive of... yet all of his training brothers died during the bloody battles against the abyssals of the City of Dis. The secret wars were never noticed by ordinary humans. Only the highest echelons of the Church knew of those terrible clashes. Hordes from subterranean abysses, from hell, had tried to storm an unsuspecting Vatican, and the Cathar Crusaders of the Dominican Order were the only ones who managed to defend the Holy See against such a colossal invasion. Although that had been 1990, Aldrick's wounds still burned from the swords and claws of those demons.

-Hail Virgin," he prayed, "*you* mother of Kristos, give me the strength to overcome this chalice. Guide me in the light that blinds and burns. Give me *your* darkness to see through it. Holy Virgin, mother of Kristos, blessed art thou among Goddesses and women; holy *be* thy sign, the Symbol of Origin, the Symbol of HK. O Isis, Athena, Artemis, Frya! Abandon not this thy son in the looming war.... Come to me thy power and thy cold love, now and in the hour of my death. Amen.

Aldrick crossed himself, unsheathing the sword he carried, and plunged the blade into the snow. The sky began to cloud over as soon as the blade touched the ground. A bolt of lightning streaked across the skies, striking one of the mountains and generating a



roaring avalanche. The Crusader drew a cross in the snow and around it he drew an eight-pointed star.

-Christos," murmured Aldrick, "my Captain, my Lord; lead me safely through the Umbra and let me trace your sign over this world of mad demons and leering angels.

The Crusader pressed hard on the sword, burying it deeper into the snow and rock.

Open up, filthy dimension! ," shouted with force the Crusader. Show me your lies, I command you in the name of Kristos, in the name of HK!

At that moment a mighty blast of icy wind and diamond dust swept across the skies and descended upon the Crusader. The earth trembled, the glaciers began to split and the rocks began to howl as if they were being shattered by an explosion. A violet light began to glow from the grooves of the cross and the eight-pointed star drawn in the snow.

Suddenly the earth began to open up beneath Aldrick's feet. Icy winds rose from unheard-of depths. The Crusader's clothes filled with ice crystals. His trench coat flapped in the wind, like a cloak driven by a raging storm.

-Give way to me, accursed earth, hell of men! -commanded Aldrick with furious firmness; "open yourself to my power, to the power of the Sign of Origin!



Then the earth suddenly cracked and the Crusader was lost in the hole that appeared beneath his feet. Dozens of lightning bolts struck the hole and in a few minutes an avalanche covered all traces of it with snow. A few moments later, the whole phenomenon stabilised and no trace of the Crusader or the crevasse remained. The winds ceased to blow, the snow stopped falling, the lightning stopped flashing, and the earth shook no more.

Aldrick had disappeared.



ALDRICK



This world is an enemy field for a Nocturnal. A being of the night can appear, say something and quickly disappear, for the whole of Creation will automatically turn against him. How many years could Jesus Christ preach, according to the Christian myth? Only three, but those three years gave rise to a successful religion that has been on Earth for two thousand years already!

Aldrick Du Ruelant



The chosen children were on their way to Erks, Aldrick du Ruelant was making his journey into the bowels of the earth, and in an unsuspected part of the city of La Paz a new horror was preparing to evolve.

Sitting in the living room of that gloomy house in Miraflores, La Paz, Golab was ready to hibernate. He was covered in a red robe, standing on a drawing of a six-pointed star. He was about to lie down when he heard insistent honking from outside. He pretended not to pay attention, but the honking continued, and then someone knocked on the door. The reddish boy smiled sidelong and, using his telekinesis, opened the door.

Three tall, albino-browed, almost bald men entered the compound. One of them wore rabbinical garb; the other two wore white. They looked at Golab and knelt before him.

-The troops of the People of the Omnipresent are ready," said the rabbi. The Mossad has reported that the dimensional gates are still flawed, but we are making progress.

-And have they found the boys yet? -Golab asked.

-No, my lord," replied the rabbi, hesitantly, "b-but the Pentagon is making every effort to track them down. The Grand Hexabor has personally come to look for them.

-Hexabor," Golab muttered. The Druid Chernob that Michael sent. It's insulting that he called that priest to perform such a simple task.... Have you searched this city well?





-In every corner... -They have vanished..." replied the rabbi.

Golab quickly approached his subjects, grabbing the Hebrew by the face.

-They couldn't have disappeared," Golab said angrily.

-Someone erased all his records! -There are no identity documents in the Bolivian registry, no trace of his whereabouts!

-So look for the families, tear this pathetic country apart if necessary, But find them! -the demon shouted and pushed the rabbi with monstrous force. The other two men were frozen, kneeling with their heads down. When you find Dianara," Golab added, "I don't want you to touch a single hair on her head; you will bring her to me intact.

-Yes, my lord, we will," said one, in a trembling voice, "but we suspect that Rowena Von Kaiser has taken them along the Way of the Gods to Erks.

Golab looked at the prostrate man, and bringing his hand to his own chin, exclaimed:

-So Rowena lives, and on top of that she takes my victims to Erks...! Gentlemen -What are the chances of getting the boys back from Erks?

-It would not be easy, my lord," replied one of them. The citadel is protected, and their army is large. We could besiege Erks and take the chosen ones, but it would cost too much.

-Then I think the time has come to reconsider an invasion of Erks.

-Golab replied, "It would not be the first time we have come into conflict with these cursed people, and I don't think it will be the last. Listen to me: I want you to say



the Pentagon not to lift a finger until these brats are found: if you locate them with certainty in Erks, report that the Baphometh agrees to military action. Give the message to the Tetragrammaton as well. Right now I need you to gather as many troops as possible. I also want you to tell Hexabor to stay out of my way... in the meantime, keep an eye on the Umbra and make sure the induced gates are open before the deadline.

-But sir," said one of the men, "the barriers of the Ingas are impenetrable?"

-Then strive to penetrate them! -Golab replied, returning to the circle. Oh, and another thing: at this point my powers are almost restored, so it's time to change bodies. I want all my data removed from this country. When I arrived, the Cabal registered me under the name of Ikker Linera Marqués: look up that name in the Bolivian Civil Registry and make it disappear. While I hibernate, I want you to keep an eye on this house, understood?

-Yes, my lord," they replied.

-Well, now, off you go! I must sleep.

The men left, but not before picking up the rabbi whom Golab had thrown into the air.

When the demon was alone, he closed his eyes and began to levitate. Within seconds, the room he was in underwent a dramatic transformation. The floor was eaten away to magma. The walls became black, fiery rocks. The ceiling thinned to a black dome, filled with stalactites. Golab, who until then had looked like a teenager, was surrounded by two vampiric wings covered in blood. A light



Scarlet surrounded those wings and magma began to leap out, covering Golab's body like threads of spider's web. Soon the body took on the form of a chrysalis and Golab fell into a deep sleep, producing a silence of horror in the room.

MITROVANSISM



The year was 1100 BC and Priam, King of Troy, was dead.

The wooden horse that had brought destruction to their city stood victorious before its burnt ruins. The Greeks had attacked during the night and, in the darkness and the flames of their torches, were mercilessly slaughtering the Trojans. No one was spared by the Greek steel: men, women, old men and children....

Agamemnon, the king of Mycenae and general of the Greek army, rode triumphantly through the rubble of battle and had already begun to take the spoils of his victory.

While the whole city was sinking in an orgy of blood, Prince Paris, son of Priam, together with Briseis, priestess of the Temple of Apollo, were leaving the city through nooks and alleys. Their only hope was to find the



secret passage that Hector, brother of Paris, had taught him. Their pace was slow and careful, and they advanced, evading the Greek soldiers who ran to and fro, not knowing where to begin their sublime plunder.

Without knowing how or why, the rampant running of the two survivors was halted in front of the imposing Temple of Artemis. The huge white columns were stained by fire and smoke billowing from the entrance. Several corpses were on fire and the statues that adorned the entrance to the temple had been toppled.

-What are we doing here, Briseida?

-I don't know, I just felt we should come.

-If the Greeks see us, they will kill us!

-They won't see us. I feel it, I feel it in my veins.

-In your veins?

-That's right. It's something cold that's in my blood.

What kind of spell has bewitched you, Briseis, the rosy-cheeked priestess; this temple has surely been sacked, and they will surely be back soon.

-Paris, trust me, we'll be fine.

Called by an inaudible voice, the beautiful Briseis entered the Temple of Artemis with Paris. It had indeed been sacked. On the floor lay the corpses of several priestesses of Artemis whom the Greeks had raped and then slit their throats. Like desecrators, Agamemnon's men had taken all the gold and degraded the image of the Goddess. The stone had been mutilated several times and its three pairs of breasts had been removed...



-Bloody Greeks! -cried Paris. This enemy is worse than the beasts! We must get out of here, Briseis, the Greeks may come back.

-There is something here, I know it and we have to find it.

Paris and Briseis began to search every corner of the temple. Paris grew more nervous by the minute and tirelessly urged the priestess of Apollo to leave the temple of death. But Briseida was focused: she sensed that there was something there that had to be found.

A shadow passed swiftly in front of them. Paris drew his sword and advanced slowly into the gloom created by two pillars, in the direction where he saw the shadow move. A figure moved in the impenetrable darkness. When they were within a few feet of the silhouette, it leapt with impressive speed and ran towards the sacred hall of the goddess. Paris and Briseis followed the silhouette and came upon a small shrine whose existence seemed to be secret. Under the flame of two golden torches, the figure they saw took refuge in a small recess beneath the crescent-shaped main altar. It was a girl with white skin, brown hair and amber citrine eyes. She was no more than thirteen years old and from her young age there was no doubt that she was one of Artemis' surviving virgins. Like the other girls, she too was devoted to the austere life of the priestesses of the goddess; but the bruises, the swollen face and the bleeding between her legs showed that her virginal condition had ended. Agamemnon's men had outraged her and then thought her dead when she fainted in pain.

And in his frail arms he held a bow.





-We won't hurt you, little one," said Briseida, coming closer.

The girl pressed herself closer against the wall when she saw herself uncovered.

-We'll get you out of here, little one, what's your name? -said Paris.

-Agorei.

-Agorei," said Briseida; "they call me Briseida, and this is Prince Paris.... Fear not Agorei looked at the couple and tears streamed down his face.

-Are you a priestess of Apollo? -the girl asked Briseida.

-I am," he replied.

Only when she heard the answer did Agorei approach her and, without letting go of the bow, embraced her.

-They were going to take him away from me, they tortured me, they did horrible things to me, but I resisted and managed to escape," she said. I can't let them take him away.

-Take what away? -Paris asked.

Agorei gave him a brief glance and then looked at the Bow he held in his right hand.

-The Arch of Artemis.

The three fugitives left the temple by stealth. Briseida covered the girl with one of the altar veils and wrapped the bow as well.

In an attempt to distract Agorei's mind, Briseida asked her to tell them about the bow. The girl exhaled a sigh of deep regret and began to recount part of her tormented story:





-My sisters and I were the custodians of the Arch of Artemis. This is a gift that the Goddess herself has given to men in the early days under the sun of Apollo. Long centuries ago, the first two custodians arrived from distant lands with the Bow of the Goddess in their arms. The mighty archer Eo and the moon mage Quel'dorei came to Troy and taught us the secret arts of the Cold Fire of Artemis. They were thus the two descendants of the first night guardians, the glorious Kora and Nivske. It was said of Nivske that he received the bow of an ancient King who ascended to the heavens, broke into the mausoleum of Cronus and set about the task of slaying the Titan, but that King died in combat with the winged demons of Cronus. Nimrod was the name of that King and his bow was the weapon Artemis gave him to defeat his enemies. When Nimrod fell, the bow descended to earth and the guardian Nivske picked it up, carrying it through the dark seas of Poseidon to the Pelasgians. Ages passed for the bow to reach Troy after its long stay with the Minoans. Since then we, the virgins of Artemis, have had the sacred duty of guarding the bow as long as it remains in Troy. But now that darkness has fallen upon us, it is time for our sacred relic to leave Troy.

Agorei's story had completely absorbed Paris and Briseida, who felt in their hearts the responsibility of someone else's promise. But the girl was too exhausted and had lost too much blood, she would not hold out. The way out was still elusive and the Greeks were increasing in number. Finally Agorei fell exhausted and dying in one of the alleys of Troy. She looked at Briseis and barely smiled.

-Watch the bow," said Agorei.



-We're not going to leave you... -Paris replied.

-No, you must go. I am dead, I have waited a long time for this moment, and I am happy.

-You're so young," said Briseida, crying, "We could save you!

-I have already been saved, I saved myself and now I will go to meet Artemis. She awaits me in the Origin Village of our ancestors. Never let the bow fall into the wrong hands.

-Hold on! -said Paris, holding Agorei's small hand.

-May the goddess protect you..." These were his last words.

Devastated by the death of little Agorei, Paris and Briseida resumed their march, taking their bow with them; Paris slung it on his back, along with his quiver of arrows. It was then that the clues they had been searching for began to manifest themselves: a cross on a wall was the first of several traces that began to guide them. They followed steadily but cautiously through the devastation: each cross had an arrow leading to the next. In that way, they reached the royal palace that was on fire. A terrible figure rose from the flames, he had a short sword and black armour. It was none other than Achilles himself, the light-footed one. He seemed totally oblivious to the presence of Paris and Briseis.

-It's now," Paris muttered. Our exit is just down the road behind him.

-We must wait, we must not attract Achilles' attention.

-We won't draw their attention, we'll do something else.



The illustrious Paris unhooked the Bow of Artemis from his back and then took an arrow.

-What dark wonders are in your mind, Paris? -said Briseis, "what will you do?

-What Hector did not do.

-No...!

Briseis's shout imminently warned Achilles of her presence. He turned and his gaze met Paris'. Both were petrified for an interminable time. The bow was taut, with the arrow in its sight, ready to kill. Paris was unperturbed as he aimed at Achilles' heart. Achilles himself had frozen, as if he knew what was about to happen and approved of it. Then Briseis pushed Paris, who accidentally released the arrow. The path of her lethality traversed an impossible course, full of twists and turns in the air, until it finally came down and stuck in the heel of the blond Achilles. A tight cry escaped from the wounded man's throat, and he felt the soft caress of death... Paris pushed Briseis, put another arrow into the Bow of Artemis, took aim and this time the arrow entered Achilles' forehead, piercing his helmet between his eyes, and its point exited through the nape of his neck; the force with which the arrow had been expelled was impossible to imagine, and the bow was powerful in its own right. Only then did Paris know that the weapon in her hands was truly divine. It was a dangerous weapon, and that frightened the prince intensely.

Briseis was devastated when she saw Achilles die. Mad with grief, Briseis took an arrow from Paris' quiver and thrust it into her stomach.



-But what have you done, Briseis! -cried Paris, horrified.

-I will go with him," the priestess replied and took a last look at the corpse of her love.

-Oh, Briseis! -how could you love that Greek, that cruel murderer? where, when and how did you fall in love with him?

Then Paris looked at the bow in his hands and knew he had one more thing to do before he died. With Briseis dead, Helen in the hands of Menelaus and his entire city in flames, Paris knew he could only fulfil the oath he had sworn to Agorei: to guard the Bow of Artemis.



It had been almost six hours since Rowena and her disciples left the city of La Paz. In contrast to the indifference of the teacher and the carriage driver, the boys seemed to grow more anxious as the minutes ticked by. For them the adventure meant ten times what a school trip was.... All excitement was mixed with the fear that each one felt, for in the back of their minds they were aware of the challenge that awaited them....

Gabriel Siegfried Cortez Horkheimer, called Gorkhan among the Gods, was a teenager whose fragile health had gradually and lethally dulled his natural sparkle. The optic atrophy he was suffering from was blurring his vision more and more, and it was almost imminent that sooner or later he would lose his sight without medicine being able to prevent it. Of course, the boy was unaware of the real gravity of the prognosis and, although the shadow of suspicion made Gabriel a seer of dreams, his temperament had remained unchanged for years. The matrilineal heritage of his lineage, a centuries-old German caste, had updated old missions and symbols in the blood of Gabriel, who was darker and darker under the weight of knowledge. Nevertheless, and despite his ups and downs of joy and sadness, Gabriel always looked excited, passionate.

Gabriel's eyes remained closed and his mind was lost in the labyrinthine world of his memories, nightmares and premonitions. One night, before departure, the boy had dreamt of a war whose fatal outcome puzzled him. Corrupt men with stars and stripes had come from unthinkable places to take by force what they could not take by trickery. They had come with a Star of David on their sign,





with white and blue in their hearts and their souls flooded with the power of Jehovah-Satan. They came with artillery, infantry and air force to attack a Nation that seemed defenceless against such a colossal machine of death. But it was not so. A proud army came out to defend the liberated square. Tanks, planes and Bolivian-flagged soldiers emerged from the very bowels of chaos. The angels were enraged and came down to subdue the mortal rebellion, and the loyal gods were not indifferent either: seeing the angels, they took sides in the battle. Gabriel's mind could not stop recalling that dream and all those previous, real events...

The black wagon was tracing its route along hidden paths that no one else travelled. It crossed valleys and wound its way along real bridle paths. The passengers grew more and more weary until sleep overcame them and all, with the exception of Rowena and the driver, fell asleep. The hours began to wear slowly and heavily. The precarious road soon reached an increasingly dry and rocky landscape. A final slope was the unmistakable sign that the road had almost reached its end. Then a long plain opened up, surrounded by rock formations that naturally entrenched a long perimeter. The area was devoid of vegetation. The ground was dominated by coloured rocks and boulders. Not a single cloud covered the sky which, kindly, showed all its splendour to any onlooker.

In the middle of that high, hidden plain a camp had been set up. Uniformed men in camouflage suits were moving about, carrying boxes, strange artefacts and all sorts of bags and containers. At the entrance to the camp were two guards with AK-47 rifles. They stepped aside to make way for the black wagon, completely dusty and muddy from road grime. The interiors of several tents were filled with





uniformed men working in front of mysterious devices; some of these looked like radios and computers. In the middle of the installation, the Bolivian flag fluttered, somewhat overshadowed by the dawn light.

The wagon stopped in front of a huge tent from which two soldiers emerged. Rowena immediately awoke her disciples who, not without effort, returned to their vigil and began to get out of the car. The three boys and three girls of the caravan stood in front of the big tent and were astonished to see the welcoming committee.

The Cuellar family had always been conflictive. The father, a prodigious military man, suffered from terrible bouts of jealousy and hysteria, which had irreparably damaged his marriage to Maria Kuklova Pardo. His Spartan discipline was not well regarded by those who knew him, as his children suffered from his rigid character. This strict man, Major Orlando Cuellar Aguirre, had recently been promoted. His son, Second Lieutenant Edwin Cuellar Kuklova, had graduated from the Army Military College a year early and, by order of the High Command, was assigned with his father to a classified Bolivian Army mission. Among Rowena's caravan were more members of the Cuellar family, and the awe they caused was justified. Jhoanna and Diana Cuellar Kuklova could not help but shed tears of emotion when they saw their brother and father in that mysterious camp.

Rodrigo Torrico Michelle and his cousin Oscar Higgs Michelle were not at all pleased. Both professed a unique love and affection for the Cuellar family's daughters, and it was no secret to them that Major Cuellar had continually mistreated them. However, both girls attached themselves to



The man clung to his daughters as if he regretted all the beatings he had inflicted on them. The fraternal embrace between father and daughters was joined by Edwin Cuellar and they closed a silent family pact. Those present could do nothing but wait for the bonds of that family to be reaffirmed, but Oscar and Rodrigo were not resigned. They could not forgive all the tears that the Cuellar girls, their girlfriends, had shed for the Major's brutality.

When the embrace was over, Major Cuellar invited the rest of those present to enter the large tent. A huge table with several maps spread out stood in the centre; the surrounding area was covered with shelves filled with rolls of paper, gadgets, a radio and a screen that constantly displayed readouts of numbers and letters that seemed to correspond to coordinates. Behind, almost at the entrance to the tent, Rowena and the wagon driver stopped.

-Daughters, boys," said Major Cuellar. I owe you a lot of explanations...

-Too many," interrupted Oscar. The Major sighed with a certain weariness in his voice.

-You and I know perfectly well that we are facing difficult times," replied the Major. I am very sorry I was not present when all the calamities you suffered happened to you," he looked around. Oscar, Rodrigo; you have both taken good care of my daughters and I have not enough words to thank you, but for once in my life I am going to ask you to trust me and pay attention to what I am going to tell you.



Oscar and Rodrigo's discontent was all too evident. Major Cuellar continued:

-This is part of the Inti Squadron HQ," he said, calmly. We are the representatives of the Bolivian state to the Erks authorities. When they learned that my sons were Sentinels, they asked the Squadron to find me. I trained for a few months and then they promoted me to Major, making me Squadron Commander, at the request of the authorities in Erks. I then brought Edwin, my son, and trained him myself and briefed him on all the functions we perform here. We are the protectors of the entrance.

Total silence and expressions of surprise were all that could be seen from the boys. Oscar and Rodrigo's displeasure passed as the Major's explanations came through. Also the Officer's son and daughters had calmed down from their unleashed excitement at the meeting.

-Everyone in this camp has the sole mission of keeping the only known transit route to the Citadel of Erks protected," Cuellar added and then pointed to Rowena. I met your Hyperborean mentor during my training. She will guide you to your destination and prepare you for what is to come," he nodded to the driver of the wagon. This is Ursus de la Vega, the enforcer of the *Circulus Dominicanis*. From now on he will be our lookout and liaison between you and us. He will protect your parents," the Major smiled, "he will protect all of us from the beasts that pursue us. Ursus will receive any information from Erks and bring it to this facility.



-Why didn't you say what you were doing? Why did you go away and leave us?

The girl's words seemed to hurt Major Cuellar.

-I'm sorry, but I did it all for you," was his reply, and after a few seconds of silence, the Officer continued: "Once you cross the portal there will be no more communications, you will only be able to receive and send mail. Listen to your mentors, they will protect and teach you.

-Dad," Diana murmured softly, overcome with fear.

-Be quiet, my child. It will be all right," her father replied, cleared his voice and continued, "Know that, to all who have known you in this world, you will be but a memory. This will be your last night in this world because tomorrow you will leave for a place cannot imagine. I myself am not sure what it is like there; but have every confidence that all will be well. This world, from today, will be the past; so say goodbye to it for now, for you will not return until you become Sentinels," he concluded and withdrew abruptly.

The boys reluctantly left the big tent and were led by Ursus to their temporary shelter, where they would spend the night. Then they were all taken to the centre of the camp where a group of Raso soldiers were rejoicing in the firelight as they roasted their supper. The new arrivals integrated with the soldiers and soon began to fraternise with them. Perhaps the youthful effervescence of these foot soldiers made the boys feel less dazed by the flood of new experiences they had experienced since their departure from the city. But one member of the caravan was not sharing the fire that freezing Andean night.



Her name was Jadwi Rocio Salas Bakari, but in the skies she was known as Rit, the falcon. She sat on a large stone looking up at the sky. But in that relationship between the celestial and the human, it was the sky that must have blushed at the sight of such incredibly beautiful black eyes. Rocio's gaze was not human, it seemed to be the postor of an infinite power, as well as of a unique emptiness. Those black pupils were darker than the night, darker than evil, darker than darkness itself. And their size, the sheer size of those eyes seemed to overwhelm the darkness of the night. The girl had turned 13 only two months before her departure from La Paz, but her body did not tell the story of her age, nor did she look it. The daughter of an emotionally weak mother and an alcoholic father, her fate until then had remained tied to the violence and lust of her own father. Her past sexual abuse had left an indelible scar on her mind and her only hope was to get as far away as possible from her abuser, her own father. Isis must have heard the little girl's prayers, for she was finally away from his clutches. However, Rocio could not stop thinking about all the loved ones she had to leave behind: her mother, for example.

Rocio's white skin glowed with the light of the stars as she looked up at the sky as if trying to forget old frustrations. But the girl was totally blind to her own beauty and all that tormented her heart at that moment was the knowledge that the person she loved most, a boy, her childhood friend, was already engaged to her best friend. It was a fatal love triangle that in Gabriel's presence became a foursome. There they were: Diana, Rocío, Gabriel and Rodrigo, living earthly dramas on the verge of the end of the world. Rocio thought and thought, and all her



His thoughts were torn as his silence was invaded by the voice of the one who had professed his love for him only a few months before his departure from La Paz:

-What's on your mind? -asked Gabriel.

-Oh, Gabo. I'm worried about my mum, I left her with my dad and I'm afraid he'll hurt her.

-Your mum will take care of herself, trust

Rocío answered the gesture of encouragement with a grim smile, not too expressive or insipid. There was a silence in which they both stared at each other. Gabriel's lost yellow eyes melted into Rocío's huge black eyes. She looked down slightly and asked:

-Do you think all this travelling will do good?

-I don't know, but if we had stayed in La Paz, things would have been worse.

-Rowena says Erks is wonderful.

-And you think so?

Rocío hesitated, rested her chin in the palm of her right hand and answered:

-I think so.

-Will you miss your old life? -asked Gabriel.

-I don't know, I don't think so. Will you miss her?

-I'd miss her if you weren't with me....

-Are you still at it?

-You know I do. I'll always like you, Chio, even if you don't feel the same way.

-Silly," laughed Rocío briefly and added: "Let's go with the others.



The night was a time when sleep was on the horizon. Most were preparing to rest, but not everyone in the camp would sleep well that night. Rowena would not sleep, only prepare for the last and longest leg of her journey.





One, two, three, four, five. The movement of the double-bladed spear must be performed with a proper and precise rhythm to avoid injuring oneself with one of the blades. The skill required in the use of the double-bladed spear helps the student of the combat arts to sharpen the mind and temper the pulse. One, two, three, four, five. Two students were practising on the training campus. He was a boy with dark curly hair, bushy eyebrows and dark brown skin. His bare torso showed a perfect, sinewy chest, carefully sculpted by arduous physical training. At thirteen, the young gladiator had more combat mastery than a green beret. He was a true Spartan, his intensely worked body, adapted for war, said it all. His lips were tight and ruddy, damp with midday sweat, with the sun at its zenith burning on the gladiators' minds, burnishing the effort and perspiration from their faces. He was fully focused, treading carefully with each step before advancing or retreating. His bare feet suffered from the searing burn of the stones, but the pain was irrelevant: the student must not lose his concentration or his opponent would tear him to pieces.

One, two, three, four, five. The first lunge is forward, then down, up, up, down and forward again. The fighting technique was taught by the Hyperborean mentor who fostered both gladiators from their earliest childhood, that is, if the childhood of either could be called tender. While the boy tried not to lose concentration, older rival exhibited an almost ironic calm. She was seventeen and the difference



The age difference contrasted the combat: she was more experienced; and it was good that she was, she was his older sister.

Of course, no younger sibling feels comfortable if his older brother shows any kind of pity or overconfidence towards his rival; competition between siblings, regardless of age, should always be equal and fair. She knew this and therefore did not trust her brother's inexperience. Sweat had caused the linen shirt to stick to her breasts, two breathtakingly perfect mountains. Her tanned skin, damp with perspiration, enhanced the golden glints of the sun, almost caressing an eroticism that was utterly divine. Her bare legs, exposed by the generous fit of her shorts, and her bare feet moved with a solemn delicacy, contrasting with her younger brother's almost clumsy movements. She did not move her weapon anxiously, but rather moved it as if it were a delicate object; thus her every movement showed great gracefulness. Her long hair, dark with small brown locks, at the same time provided a frame for her movements. She looked like something out of the most beautiful picture ever painted.

One, two, three, four, five. The boy blurred, slipping out of the frame of the beautiful painting and slipped, brushing the sharp blade of his spear against his sister's hair. He sliced off a tiny lock and it fell awkwardly to the floor. She turned slightly, facing him sideways and bringing the tip of her weapon within millimetres of her opponent's neck.

"I've lost again, opa," she said. She spoke with a very strong Cambodian accent.



He frowned, pulled the gun away from her neck, grabbed it by the handle and shoved it away violently. He sat up, standing in front of his sister and glaring fiercely at her.

-You were lucky," he said. The sun hit me *straight* in the face and that's why I slipped.

-Ha ha. *You can* make all the excuses you want, but admit that I've beaten you again.

The boy approached his sister and took the spear from her hands. She smiled placidly and he looked at her angrily, his pride wounded.

-Next time I'll wipe that smirk off your face," he said with conviction; she responded with a hug and a kiss on her brother's forehead.

-*You're so cute when you put that little hairy face on.*

-Berkana, Akinos! -called a woman approaching the brothers.

The Hyperborean mentor of the two was returning from her errand. She had ordered her students to practice *Tyr's* technique with the double-bladed spears until her return; and so they did from the time the sun began to rise until noon.

-Teacher Arika," replied both brothers at the sound of their teacher's harsh voice.

-Where is Vairon, why isn't he training with you?

-He went to the river, teacher," Berkana replied.

The girl's honey eyes, beneath her bushy eyebrows, held a thousand sparkling sparks of energy. Her presence would infect anyone with optimism and she showed it with a constant smile on her lips.



-Back to the river again... -mumbled the teacher.

-He said he wouldn't be long, but that was an hour ago," said Akinos.

The boy had a steady, angry, eternally on fire look. His face, like his sister's, expressed passion for everything he had to do. Neither of them did things casually; they did everything with as much enthusiasm as possible, including the simple act of talking to their mentor.

The teacher closed her eyes, sighed and said:

-Go to the inn to wash up and eat the day's food. I'll see you both back when the evening breeze blows from the west.

They both nodded and walked away, laughing and frolicking. The teacher watched them leave and kept thinking of her third student, the stray, the one who always left before the end of the training hour, the one who had come to her with painful traumas recently suffered.

The teacher, Arika de Turdes, was a shady character who never spoke more than necessary or did anything rash. She was known to many as "The Gorgon", although no one knew for sure how she had earned her reputation. Some said that her gypsy status had made her as poisonous as a Gorgon, others claimed that she had the power to turn men who leered at her to stone. There were even strange legends about her and her unproven transformations in the moonlight.

His incredibly black and abundant hair looked like a swarm of snakes. His stern, yet beautiful face always wore the same expression of seriousness that could hardly be interpreted. It was impossible to tell whether his



striking sleepy eyes had a look of seduction, arrogance or disapproval. Her full lips looked like they belonged to that kind of man-eating woman, but there was still a hint of danger in that seductive mouth. She always wore the same outfit: a blouse that exposed her shoulders and arms, a long black skirt, sandals on her feet and several gemstone rings carved on her wrists, ankles and neck. Sometimes she wore earrings in the shape of a "V". Arika de Turdes wore jewellery, but she never wore anything *metallic*.

The locals say that the gypsy woman came from a place in Iberia known as Turdes, not many years ago. To hear her speak with an obvious Spanish accent, sometimes mixed with Basque or Romani, one could easily realise that she was a foreigner in American lands. No one knew anything about her past, Arika never spoke of it; but the scars on her naked body in the sun on the banks of the river spoke of nameless tortures and savage wars. The fact was that the latter was more likely than the former. Everyone could attest that Arika was a tremendously dangerous woman, trained to kill. Her movements in the handling of all kinds of weapons aroused great expectation and admiration among the warrior castes of the village who could not help but be curious. But there was something else, something occult and esoteric about the woman. Some claimed to have seen her glowing in the trees. Others said that on full moon nights her hair became a tangled mass of snakes; it was these who began to call her Gorgon. There was even talk of a man who appeared petrified on the banks of the river near the northern training perimeter for Hyperborean students, where she resided. This mystery that Arika embodied had made her famous. Everyone knew she was there, but they preferred not to talk about it. Not that they feared her, but they preferred to avoid her.



The gypsy walked swiftly across the scorching, tree-lined wasteland that made up the training perimeter. Her mind was fixed on one person, a young man who had not yet managed to get used to his new life in a distant land. Soon the landscape began to green and within seconds grass on the ground and trees appeared, marking the border between the training perimeter and the rest of the *liberated square*. It crossed between some thick logs and the sound of flowing water began to filter through them, giving way to the great river that crossed the plain, the crops, the forests and the sandbanks, and seemed to come from the glacier of the gigantic mountain that guarded the crops at its foothills. Arika mingled with the twittering of birds and the breeze that sought shelter from the sun in the shade of the trees. The river appeared without warning, a crystal-clear stream of calm water in which fish flitted as if flying beneath the flow. The gypsy woman looked downstream and saw, sitting on a huge rock, her errant pupil.

-By the beard of Navutan! -What are you doing here, Vairon!

The boy sitting on the stone turned around reluctantly, looking fearlessly and guilelessly at his teacher, who was mumbling unintelligible scoldings. The boy's eyes looked like two grey steel spinning tops, opaque like an ancient, gnarled sword. That look carried unspeakable sorrow without imagining the horrors that could extinguish the eyes of a child like him. His face, white and slightly puffy-cheeked, was overflowing with tears. A small stream of teary mucus trickled down his perfectly straight nose. His stiff, brown hair, like wild straw, clung to his face with sweat. His thick, rosy lips were salty from weeping, he



He licked his lips, thinking that if he drank his own tears he could avoid feeling the pain. His thick blond eyebrows, drawn with such an expression of grief, showed him to be utterly helpless. His gangly body looked frail, and at thirteen years old, the boy felt bereft of any desire to fight any more....

However, the gypsy seemed unmoved by such a scene.

-How many times must I tell you, Vairon, that if you don't pass this training, you will die a death you can't even imagine in your worst nightmares!

-I'm , teacher," replied the boy as he wiped his tears with his forearm.

-You have to learn to obey my instructions.

-I'm sorry, teacher.

-And stop saying you're sorry!

-Yes, teacher.

Arika sighed, looked at the boy with a grimace of resignation and sat down next to him. He straightened his head, looked at the waters of the river and remained silent.

-What's the matter, *chaborró*? -asked the teacher, trying to soften her voice.

-Not much, teacher," he replied without looking at her.

-You still haven't been able to forget about your parents, have you?



The disciple was silent for a few seconds; he was desperately holding back his urge to cry. He did not want his Hyperborean mentor to see him suffer.

-I wish I could have saved them," said Vairon, his voice almost choked with a sigh.

-You must stop blaming yourself for what happened. They would not want to see you defeated. For that and much more, it is absolutely necessary that you overcome the training and awaken the power within you.

-I don't know if I can, teacher.

Arika smiled slightly and put her hand on his shoulder.

-Of course you can. Never forget, Vairon, that you are the Werewolf. It is in your destiny," the teacher paused to clear her throat. You should know, my anxious student, that the other sentinels have already left La Paz and are on their way here.

Vairon's pupils became very small at the news. His heart raced anxiously. He turned his head sharply to look at his mentor and smiled excitedly.

?

Arika nodded .

-Are all coming?

The teacher nodded again.

-Is... *she*... coming?

Arika smiled for two seconds and then became serious again.

-If you were hoping for a second chance, Vairon," he said, " may get your wish. But never forget that the enemy uses the



power of desire to chain the eternal Spirit to the immortal soul. Always remember who you are," the mentor advised, sitting up. She looked up at the sky and continued, "Don't forget who was meant to have the *Silver Hajime*, and even if you weren't, your part of the job is almost done; the seal must be broken. Meet the Other Wolf, it's our only chance, have I made myself clear?

-Yes, teacher.

-Now, go to the inn, get cleaned up and join Berkana and Akinos for the next part of the training. You still have a lot of strengthening to do and you need to work harder.

Vairon got up and ran to the inn. He felt his strength had been renewed and he was eager to become strong, as strong or stronger than his comrades: Berkana and Akinos. Vairon wanted to become the most powerful of the Sentinels, he wanted to show everyone how strong his will was, but most of all he wanted to defeat Lycanon, his Gemini, to win the heart of the one he loved most in the world. The boy was no longer an ordinary child, he was a Hyperborean student and he was ready to take his responsibility.



AKINOS



All the sensations at sea sparkle and shrink into unforgettable moments. The tempest rages, furious hurricanes that tear apart everything they touch, and under the waters the tornadoes of sea currents that sweep away everything that breathes under the sea. That is the will of Poseidon, our Admiral.

Akinos, The Kraken of the Deep

MGRIGOSM



The year was 330 BC and Ephesus was celebrating the arrival of a man whose exploits spoke for themselves. He had come from Macedonia, Greece, bringing with him the greatness of a noble and aristocratic empire; he had spared the life of his bitter enemy, the Persian king Darius, and had even adopted the families of the adjacent Persian villages as subjects of Greece. The people said that this man was the son of Zeus himself, everyone believed that he had a divine mission and respected him as if he were a god; indeed this man, King Alexander the Great, was the object of admiration of all his people.

That day Alexander had gone to Ephesus to celebrate a blessing ceremony: he was about to begin the siege of Persepolis, the capital of Persia, and wished to depart with the grace of the Moon Goddess; wishing in turn to see the great Temple of Artemis.



A huge procession was patiently awaiting the arrival of the great Greek Emperor, all the people of Ephesus were ardently impatient to see with their own eyes this son of Zeus, descendant of the House of Hercules, leader of the Greek Empire sent by the Gods of Olympus to lead his people where no other had gone before. The morning's waiting had turned into the effervescence of an afternoon feast, people dancing, eating, laughing and talking of the Emperor's exploits. Chroniclers recounted how Alexander the Great had defeated Darius during the Battle of Gaugamela and compared his valour to that of Leonidas of Sparta and his 300 Spartans in fighting the Persian fleet during the Battle of Thermopylae. Others recalled the Battle of Isos in which 365,000 Greeks, under Alexander's command, defeated 500,000 Persians, comparing the feat to the resistance of Troy during the conflict between Hector and Achilles. Some scholars were telling about the beauty of Alexandria, at the mouth of the Nile, and praising the greatness of a city such as only Alexander the Great could create. The people of Ephesus were gathered at the gates of the Temple of Artemis and all their thoughts turned to one man: Alexander.

The sun was setting in the west when a group of soldiers in ceremonial dress and carrying golden torches in their hands approached the entrance road to Ephesus. They formed a column around the main street through the city leading to the Temple of Artemis, leaving the pathway clear. The people were ecstatic when they saw the military column, for they knew that Alexander had arrived. The women began to throw flower petals on the path the Emperor would take and the men lined up to chant hymns in Alexander's honour. Three carriages entered first, the chariots were beautifully decorated with scenes from the Emperor's battles and the horses pulling them had been



adorned with golden veils and scarfs. Then a golden chariot came into view whose passengers were the generals of Alexander's army: Antigonus, Ptolemy and Seleucus; they waved to the crowd as they passed in their chariot. And then the last chariot entered the city. The people burst into a single voice of jubilation when they saw him. Alexander wore golden armour with beautiful designs and Ionic ornaments on the breastplate, shoulder pads, armlets, shinguards, shinguards, breastplates and greaves. The mane of his helmet was red, as was his long cloak. His eyes had a calm expression, as if the pomposity of the welcome did not impress him. His upright engraving and sculptural body covered behind the armour were imposing enough to send his message to all who saw him: "I am Alexander the Great, and I am the Emperor". The expression on his face behind his sharp features and chin was as hard as the steel of his sword: he looked like an unmovable man.

The generals' chariots arrived first at the temple gate, the three men crouched and bowed to the presence of the Goddess that the temple signified. For them Artemis was an important goddess, especially for the archer phalanxes of the army, for she was the Goddess of archers, of the moon and of victory during night and low-light combat. The presence of the moonlight that breaks the darkness was the blessing expected by Alexander's men during the darkest days on the fields of battle and death, so they knew that Artemis' blessing would give them strength to cross the darkness of Hades. Without her blessing they would feel insecure during the siege of Persepolis. For Alexander himself, it was important to have Artemis, the Goddess of the Night, as he himself foresaw stiff resistance from the Persians and did not wish to suffer heavy casualties.



Alexander's chariot arrived shortly after that of his generals. He alighted slowly and looked at the entrance to the temple as if he were standing as an equal before the Goddess. For him the presence of Artemis was more a favour from a Goddess to a God than a kind of divine sorcery towards a mortal man of flesh and blood. The people knew this too, and when they saw Alexander standing in front of the Temple of Artemis, they felt as if a God was visiting the house of another God. The meeting of two gods moved those present and overwhelmed their souls until they did not know how to feel...

A woman in a long robe of electric dark blue appeared at the entrance to the temple, her hood concealing her face and identity behind a veil of mystery. She wore silver chain mail, burnished bracers, rounded shoulder pads and leather boots; on her back hung a bow and a quiver full of arrows. Alexander saw her and immediately thought of the Amazons, a race of warrior women who excluded men from their society. People said that the Amazons occasionally had sexual relations with men from neighbouring countries, and killed or sent the male children they bore to live with their fathers. The girls were trained as archers for war and became famous for the beauty they developed from early youth. Artemis was also the goddess of the Amazons, which is why Alexander was not surprised by the presence of one of them in the temple at Ephesus. Aristotle had told him that the Amazons were almost constantly at war with Greece and fought other nations as well. They were even allied with the Trojans, and during the siege of Troy their queen was killed by Achilles.

-Welcome to Ephesus, Alexander the Great," the woman greeted, and the Emperor bowed his head slightly in greeting. Please come with me.



Alexander followed the woman, but when his generals tried to go with him, the warrior turned abruptly, drew her bow, loaded an arrow and aimed at them to everyone's astonishment.

-Only Alexander the Great is invited to this temple, the rest of you are not allowed to enter," the woman warned.

-Keep yourselves safe," Alexander ordered them. Enjoy this moment, and I will talk to her....

The men, grimacing and grimacing, turned and returned to their carriages. They were not satisfied with the Emperor's order, much less with the insolent aggression of a woman, but they had no choice but to obey.

The interior of the temple was a prodigious piece of architecture. Every frieze, every relief, every column had been worked with unparalleled care and detail. It was said that, before his death, Prince Paris of Troy had sought with a sacred arch, the Arch of Artemis. The Vestal priestesses told that after the destruction of Troy, Paris and Briseida met a virgin of Artemis from one of the temples in the city, the girl had the sacred bow in her custody and when she died she gave it to the Prince and Briseida. She, mad with grief after Paris killed Achilles, committed suicide and left the Trojan alone with the bow in her hands and the mission to protect him. With no choice but to fulfil his oath to put the bow in safekeeping, he travelled south and, to legend, arrived in Ephesus where he was received with all the honours of a nobleman. At the command of the Goddess Artemis herself, Paris did his utmost to convince the Ephesian kings to build a



He himself began work on the temple for the goddess, but died of a mortal wound from an arrow shot by the archer Philoctetes. The archer kept the bow and, generation after generation, kept it hidden until, according to the myths, another Ephesian king took up the construction of the Temple of Artemis out of love for his wife, the daughter of an Amazon. When the temple was completed, the descendants of Philoctetes gave the arch to the Amazon women and they became the custodians of the arch, keeping it inside the Temple of Artemis over the centuries.

Of course, Alexander had heard those legends, but he had always thought that they were nothing more than mythology and ancient tales, but when he saw the warrior woman leave the temple, he realised that the legends were true.

-I know why you came, Alexander," said the woman suddenly.

-I came to seek the blessing of the Goddess Artemis," replied the Emperor.

's all?

-That's all I'm interested in.

-You are a great emperor, but the men of your army need more than a blessing to enter Persepolis.

-Do you doubt my military power?

-No, great Alexander, but know that the enemy they pursue will not only be flesh and blood.

-The Oracle of Delphi has predicted...

-I know what the Oracle predicted," the woman interrupted, and Alexander was offended by the interruption. The fate of his empire is assured, but he will need something more...



The woman led Alexander through the large temple until they reached the central part. There rested a six-foot image of Artemis made of wood and adorned with gold and precious stones. At her feet rested an ivory-white bow. Its string was silver and had two pairs of protruding thorns on the outside of the curvature at both ends of the bow, no doubt made of bone, but from what animal, Alexander wondered. Two grooved surfaces also protruded from the inside of the bend, inside were two blue polished and cut gems, one in the shape of a crescent moon with an arrow through it and the other in the shape of a "V". Both stones had a faint blue-green glow. The central part of the bow was lined with a blue ribbon of acacia stem, and in the sight was inlaid a green gem of perennial whitish-white and turquoise glow. As Alexander laid his eyes upon the magnificent bow he felt a shock run through his spinal cord and into his mind. Thousands of ideas came to him, as if an inner voice was communicating directly with his conscience.

-The Goddess Artemis is at war with a Persian god," said the woman.

. It is a war as old as time itself and the time for a new battle between the two gods has come.

-I do not fight the gods," said Alexander, "I accept them along with the peoples I conquer.

-And that fatal mistake could cost him his Empire.

-What insolence!

-Be calm, great Alexander. Not all conquered gods are good for the Pelasgians, some of them are on the lookout to destroy our race.

-I believe no such thing.



-Do you think that the gods represent themselves to men as omnipotent figures but with different names?

Alexander looked at the woman as if some kind of divinity had appeared before him. He thought of the various demigoddesses, but none of them seemed to be this particular woman.

-As the son of Ra, I know that the designs of the Egyptians, the Greeks and even the Babylonians accept me as ruler of this world," Alexander replied. The woman bent her head slightly and fixed her gaze on the bow resting at the feet of the Goddess.

-There is much truth in your words, but there is war in the heavens as there is war on earth. Zeus is also in battle and you have taken sides with the Olympic Champions. Are you not a descendant of the House of Hercules?

-I.

-Then he will know which foreign gods he can admit to his kingdom and which he can't.

no.

The woman took the bow in her hands and placed it in front of the Emperor.

-This is the Bow of Artemis," Alexander looked at the bow and held it between his hands.

When his skin made contact with the bone, he shivered as he felt a powerful cold current run through his veins and, within seconds, the sensation was gone.

-What does this mean?

-Take the sacred bow with you. Use it and defeat the one among the Persians who has disguised himself to unleash the lions of Persia against us.





-Is there anyone other than Darius who could endanger our kingdom?

-That is right, great Alexander. There is a vile being, a Persian god who wants to tread us under the yoke of his evil. They call him Baal. Shoot an arrow from this bow at the head of his statue in the temple the Persians erected for him and Artemis will give him favour to rule all Asia.

-But Baal is like Zeus.

-No, great king, Baal is not like Zeus. Baal is rather like the Jehovah of Abraham in the Kingdom of Ur, like Enlil of the Assyrians, like the Titan Cronus whom Zeus defeated. Baal is the enemy of Greece and must be expelled from Persia if you wish to rule all Asia.

-I don't understand the designs of the gods," Alexander muttered, evidently overwhelmed.

-You don't have to understand them, just take them as your responsibility to Olympus and to the people of Greece. Xerxes did not bring his army of nightmares across the Aegean for nothing; he and Darius, like all the Persians who have set their heart and soul on subduing Greece.

-Haven't the Amazons tried that too?

The question seemed to discomfort the woman, who averted her gaze slightly and removed her hood. Her brown hair and citrine eyes were hypnotic, her face an effigy of beauty that Alexander could not help but be moved by.

-Our causes are different, great Emperor," said the woman; "since the time of Nivske and Kora, we have had a mission to help Greece become great, even if by force.



-How can we not believe that the Amazons are conspiring against Greece and Macedonia?

-Let the Bow of Artemis answer your question, Alexander. Take it to Persepolis and use it against your enemy. I will be waiting for you and will overtake you in the city of the Persians after you conquer it. If you defeat Baal and achieve victory, Artemis will bless your empire and you will return the bow to me.

For an instant a flood of doubt swept through Alexander's mind, but he felt a certain kind of powerful presence in the temple, as if Artemis herself were there. The Emperor stared at the green gem that the relic held in its sights and, like a time-defying portal, he glimpsed all the vicissitudes of his campaign of conquest, past, present and future. He felt that immortality was knocking at the door of his destiny and that the Persian threat, as the woman had told him, was not Darius or Persepolis, but their god, Baal. When he looked up, the woman was no longer with him, she had disappeared.

Alexander looked at the carved figure of Artemis and a suspicion crossed his thoughts.

-She was Artemis herself," he muttered to himself.

Alexander left the Temple of Artemis with his bow in his hands. When his generals saw him they said nothing about the weapon the Emperor carried; they merely enjoyed the sign: the archer Goddess, Artemis, had blessed them. Persia was going to fall.



The Way of the Gods is a path built 4900 years ago by the White Atlanteans in South America. When the Incas and all the Bronze Age were born, the path was already there.

Most of the pre-Columbian routes in South America were built and used by the royalty of Cuzco. The two Royal Roads found by Pizarro's conquistadors followed a route parallel to the Way of the Gods: the coastal route started in Tumbes and reached Talca in Chile 4,000 kilometres later; the central route, 1,000 kilometres longer, started in Quito and ended in the Titicaca basin on the banks of the Desaguadero River. The much more easterly Way of the Gods also ended in the Titicaca basin. But the difference was that the Royal Roads were paths along which all the activity of the Empire was channelled, whereas the Way of the Gods was a secret route, known and used only by the Amautas of the Black Bonnet. The only people who had been able to travel the route apart from the Amautas were the European initiates of the Pyrena Cold Fire Cult, who arrived from Spain in 1535 under the command of Lito de Tharsis. Transit along the Way of the Gods continued until 1789, when the Lords of Skiold sealed the Inca Passage in the face of the impending South American war of independence, brought about as a consequence of the French Revolution.

Years later, Simón Bolívar himself would become obsessed with the legend of the Way of the Gods. Seeing the threat that the United States of America might pose in the future to the newly liberated colonies, and sensing the mystical power that swept across the entire continent, Simón Bolívar began the



secret search for the Way of the Gods by investigating all the Viceroyalties instituted by the Spanish Crown; from New Granada, Bogota, Peru and Gran Charcas to the provinces of La Plata, Tucuman and Santiago. However, the agents of the English Crown were pursuing the same objective as Bolívar, namely to seize colonies in South America and recover those they had lost in North America. For this reason, and seeing the danger to the secrets of the South American continent, the Lords of Skiold sealed off energy sources in South America. When the charismatic axis was lost, a political and psychological impossibility to generate a great country in South America was established. The creation of the Republic of Bolivar, later renamed Bolivia and conceived by Antonio José de Sucre, brought about the ultimate strategic closure. A long lack of energy and power was established throughout the continent until in 1899 the Path of the Gods was once again trodden by the descendants of Skiold and, decades later, by representatives of the Bolivian state totally unrelated to the interests of the dictatorships.

As the Path of the Gods could only be traversed by those who were Initiates in the Hyperborean Wisdom, neither Spanish conquistadors nor modern Bolivian explorers had been able to find the path until a descendant of the Lords of Skiold contacted Bolivian President German Busch Becerra. This led to the establishment of a Bolivian Exopolitics Agency, which arranged for the creation of an elite group in the army, whose purpose was to maintain a link between otherworldly civilisations and the Bolivian state.

In 1956, the permanent guard at the entrance to the Camino de los Dioses was withdrawn because President Víctor Paz Estensoro, a servant of the



Golen-Masonic, had set his sights on the secret routes linking the Andean regions with other worlds. The guards of the Path burned the maps and coordinates leading to the entrance of the secret route, which they then abandoned. For years they tried to flee to Argentina to join the Order of Tyrodal Knights of Salta, but were captured by agents of the *Mossad* and Israel's *B'nai Brith*, brought to Bolivia under the safe conduct of the dictator Luis García Meza in 1981, and died during the terrible interrogations.

The secret route was lost until 1990 when a descendant of the Lords of Skiold regained contact with reliable people in the High Command of the Bolivian Army and, outside the democratic governments, established a new Permanent Guard at the entrance to the Way of the Gods. Several officers were in charge of maintaining surveillance until 1999, when Major Orlando Cuellar was assigned for strategic reasons to command the Permanent Guard at the entrance. By the year 2000 the Way of the Gods regained its status as the main route between Earth and the civilisations of other worlds. One of those worlds, Earth's twin and situated in a space-time septentrion parallel to the Solar System, was inhabited by an advanced civilisation of hyperborean warriors, farmers, craftsmen and strategists whose existence had been triggered as part of a strategy of the Gods to support men at the End of History. That civilisation had interacted with the men of South America for centuries. Their city was known as the Citadel of Erks.

Rowena's mission was to lead her wards to the Citadel of Erks, but due to the labyrinthine nature of the path that would not be so easy, at least not as long as the boys did not have their spirits awakened. Much of the Way



of the Gods was underground and had several branches leading to different parts. One of them was the Island of Koaty, at the end of the Way, Lake Titicaca, where the Skiold Lords took refuge during the Muisca and Aymara massacre perpetrated against the Voltan Casique of the Inga Empire. Another trail led to Tiwanaku, the ancient Inga capital built by the White Atlanteans millennia ago. To the north it led to Cuzco, the Inca capital; and there was a small fork to the west: the entrance to Erks. Rowena was well aware that getting there would be an arduous task; therefore, she had to be cautious.

The night was over and the sun was peeping timidly over the horizon. At five o'clock in the morning the bugle signalled the start of the day and, like a good early rooster, awoke the whole camp with its melody. The travellers also woke up and when they came out of their tents they were overwhelmed by the landscape that the night darkness had hidden from them when they arrived the day before. Mount Illimani, at 6,462 metres above sea level, rose overwhelmingly, covering a large part of the horizon and delaying the sunrise. The snow-capped peak looked so gigantic in size that it dwarfed every other detail of the landscape. No doubt the camp must have been very close to the great mountain, for at a greater distance its true size was camouflaged among the other glaciers in the range. It was Mount Illimani that was the first thing the boys saw when they emerged from their tents, and they were totally amazed by its majesty.

It was half past six thirty when the caravan was ready to leave. At the head would be the guide, Rowena, together with Edwin. In the middle would be the youngest members of company: Diana, Rocío, Gabriel and Rodrigo. Behind would be the older ones: Oscar and Jhoanna. On horseback they would carry sleeping bags,





supplies, provisions, victuals, water, dry firewood and other items they would require during their journey.

Due to the nature of the road it would be impossible to travel by car, so they would have to travel on foot. It would be a long pilgrimage into the unknown.

The farewells were emotional. Not only because of the unusual tears streaming down Major Cuellar's hard face as he embraced his children for perhaps the last time, but because of all the fears and nostalgia that had been awakened in all the members of the caravan. Ordinary life agonised slowly and painfully, but greatness was born, becoming the womb of its own birth. The seven chosen ones were leaving La Paz, and if they returned they would never be the same. And they knew it.

Fifteen minutes to seven in the morning, the caravan set off on an adventure. Seven young lads, an adult woman as guide and three horses treading an ancient path, known only to the Lords of Skiold, the Lords of Tharsis and the Hyperborean initiates of eons.

On bridle paths, surrounded by mist and cliffs, the caravan travelled without letting the gelidity of the air chill their bones. Strange shapes were drawn in the clouds, forming bodies of women and men that seemed to caress the faces the travellers. Diana had become so attached to Rodrigo that it was difficult for him to walk, she was more cold than afraid and he was frightened. Near them Rocio and Gabriel were chatting to try not to pay attention to the supernatural visitors forming in the fog. In the back, Oscar was telling jokes to Jhoanna to relax; up ahead, Edwin and Rowena were having a



sepulchral silence. They traversed the precipices of the long mountain path. At some undetermined time, vegetation began to appear in the mist. At first it was only moss, feeding on the rocks of the path, but the grass soon thickened, revealing exotic reeds and later also small trees and lapacho trees.

The group reached the end of the long trail around midday, but the sun remained shrouded in a thick layer of mist. All the way down steep, steep descents made up of rocks placed there millennia ago. No doubt the path had been carefully constructed to guide travellers away from the deadly cliffs and precipices. Rowena had stopped near a scrawny, leafless tree. The path had ended and in front of the walkers was only an endless abyss, completely covered by clouds. To the right, the precipice threatened them, to the left, they were flanked by a gigantic rock wall with some vegetation encrusted in impossible corners. The guide looked at the chasm in front of them, looked at the stone wall, and the cliff on its side. There seemed to be no way to continue the journey and anxiety began to take hold of the boys.

-Rowena, which way ? -asked Edwin.

-The road goes on," he replied.

The travellers looked ahead and saw nothing but emptiness and fog.

-There's nothing there," mumbled Rocío.

-By the wall," said the guide.

Carved into the rock by means of unimaginable construction techniques, a narrow path hung from the great stone wall, recessed into the inside of



the rock. Their passage would be terribly dangerous, for on one side of it emptiness and certain death. The only safety the walkers could have was to stick as close to the wall as possible and pray that it would lead to a safer path.

Trembling and extremely nervous, the members of the caravan moved reluctantly along the trail. The wind whistling through the mountains seemed to *murmur* things...

-What is it, Rowena? -asked Diana, pale with fear.

-Mountain ghosts," the mentor replied matter-of-factly.

They accompany visitors on their journey.

-Can they hurt us? -asked the frightened Diana again.

-They don't care about hurting us, they just want us to hear their voices.

Suddenly a waterfall veiled the narrow path. The water was icy cold and the travellers had no choice but to step under it. They were freezing and wet, their strength would soon begin to fail them. As exhaustion began to become irresistible, the cliff pass led down to a fertile grassy esplanade. The group stopped for a moment to rest near a stream. The water was so crystal clear that it seemed to be a fluid totally alien to nature itself; it was the purest water the boys had ever seen. Occasionally they could hear the voices of girls laughing.

-Are there people in this place? -Oscar asked the guide. She shook her head.



-They are *Ondinas*, water entities that play in places like this. Don't worry, they are harmless.

The march continued downstream. Gradually the little stream became a mighty but gentle torrent of water. The mist cleared and they found themselves in a valley completely dominated by the wilderness. The cold of the highlands had vanished and its place was taken by a torrid warmth married with a humidity so merciless that it made bones ache. All the travellers were drenched as if they had bathed. Soon the humidity and heat began to do their work and exhaustion began to take hold of the boys. Mosquitoes and strange insects began to see the visitors as food. Rowena took some torches and lit them, then extended them to each member of the caravan before moving on. Without that fire the insects would eat them alive.

The grass and undergrowth turned into tropical, jungle-like trees of immense height. Their canopies were so lush that they cast their shadows over an agonising sun that would gradually begin to set in the west. Rowena feared that night would catch them in the merciless jungle, so she had to pick up the pace, straining the physical endurance of her charges to the utmost.

At six o'clock in the evening the sun was dying and it seemed that the jungle had no end, but against all odds the trees disappeared and their place was taken by a steep path of rocks built by arcane ingenuity. It was like a thousand steps up a hill dominated by lush vegetation and streams of crystal clear water. Rowena picked up the pace as much as she could, but her pilgrims were exhausted. Despite the stormy exhaustion, by dawn they managed to reach the top of the hill and were greeted again by





the snow-capped Illimani, which looked even bigger than at the Inti Squadron camp. They had walked almost all day.

-We will rest here and resume our march tomorrow," Rowena ordered.

-Is it still a long way to go? -asked Gabriel, who was lying on the floor in exhaustion.

-Yes, the hardest part of the journey is about to begin; but I will prepare you adequately," replied the guide. Rest well, for tomorrow the true Way of the Gods awaits us.



The stars twinkled in the clear sky, the sound of a panpipe accompanied its brightness in singular solitude. Sitting on the branch of a huge tree, more than 30 metres high, a young boy of no more than 15 years old was blowing the pipes of the zampoña, making it sing. His hard, sharp Andean features showed a unique calm as he played a melancholic melody. The night was cool, neither too warm nor too cold. He played with his eyes closed. He wore black trousers and leather boots, and over his bare torso, covering his brown skin, was a black leather waistcoat. The sinewy young man denoted the intensity of the training he had undergone since birth. Raised in Bolivia and schooled in the military arts by the finest masters of the Citadel of Erks, the boy's physical and mental abilities had surpassed the limits of human understanding. His name was Rhupay Yupanki and he had climbed that tree to rest after a long day of practice. His mind took him back to the city of La Paz, to those comrades he had saved from the clutches of the White Brotherhood. It had only been months since then; but to him it seemed like years....

Suddenly her melody was interrupted by the arrival of a friend:

-You should sleep," said the visitor. He stopped playing and looked at her and smiled at her.

-Perhaps, Valya, perhaps; but I cannot help thinking.

Valya Willhelmsson was the last noble of a Viking caste of Icelandic kings. She was only two years younger than Rhupay, but her powers did not



had nothing to envy her. Raised alongside Rhupay and her grandfather, the girl had reached a level of warrior enviable to any hyperborean student. Her chivalry was blonde as the sun's rays, her eyes were calm, a deep emerald green that mingled with the tones of the greenest leaves in the field. Her beautiful, shapely body was deceptively fragile, for she could split huge boulders with a single kick. In contrast to the candour and beauty of her face, the gestures and expressions of a tough young girl were perfectly discernible. She was very young when she was orphaned. Her parents had been killed by the powerful demon Golab and the cruel Hélixabor. Rhupay's grandfather, as Valya's godfather, travelled to Iceland as soon as he heard the news and adopted the girl, taking her to Bolivia. From her homeland, she took only her mother's violin, an instrument she had learned to stay in touch with her ancestors. The moon had been a privileged spectator of beautiful violin and panpipes that Rhupay and Valya gave for the serene nights. This could have been a perfect night for another concert, but the day ahead would be arduous and they had no time for music.

-Do you still think about them? -Valya asked.

-I haven't stopped doing it since we returned to Erks.

-They'll be fine, you know.

-I'm not worried about their journey to get here, I'm worried that they won't be able to awaken their powers, despite the training.

-Do you doubt their spirits?

-It's not that," Rhupay looked a little overwhelmed. He jumped down from the tree and fell lightly on the grass as if he were a light leaf. When I rescued them, they felt so... so... so...

-Lost? -Valya completed, but Rhupay shook his head.



- Animics, Valya, animics. They still suffer and live dominated by their heart.
- And have you mastered yours? -Valya said, stroking Ruphay's chin, "Learning to cuddle takes longer than they've been alive.
- They are not ready.
- Neither were we when we started training.
- We started very small.
- But our spirits are as old as theirs. We remember our past lives and I am sure they will remember them too. Be confident.
- I strive to have it.
- If you can't trust them, trust what your blood tells you.
- They'll do fine," Ruphay hesitated, gaining confidence, "I ... but...
- Be calm, my dear Rhupay. All will be well.

The boy embraced his childhood friend with natural, brotherly, but firm tenderness. He felt in his chest all that Valya represented in his life. She was a sister, a comrade, part of his family and so much more. And she felt the same for him. Rhupay was the only family he had left and, from all his training, he knew perfectly well that the two of them were destined to fight together. However, the struggle of conflicting feelings had brought them together in more ways than just fraternal bonds. Lacking morals or cultural ethics, the two had become an unlikely mix of brothers and lovers. Their love was not about friendship, but the purest camaraderie that arises between trench brothers. When war comes they fight back to back, heal, comfort, protect and shelter each other. It was not unusual for her to have given her first time, and vice versa; nor was it unusual that in previous battles they had had to fight even without being





prepared, surviving the unspeakable. They complemented each other, they were one phalanx and that made them effective and powerful warriors.

-Let's go to sleep," Valya said in Rhupay's ear. Come to bed with me tonight.

-Won't you play the violin?

-Tomorrow perhaps. When they are among us.

-Lycanon, Dianara and Gorkhan," muttered Rhupay.

-And Rit, and Hagal, Debla and Ninurtske too. Trust in their spirits....

-You always know how to calm me down," Ruphay said, smiling; but he couldn't stop thinking about everything that had happened in the months since he'd met the La Paz travellers on their way to Erks, his mind wouldn't leave Lycanon and... something, someone... Vairon. They were going to meet and things could go very wrong, Rhupay knew, and feared.



As soon as dawn broke, Rowena roused her wards and resumed the march down steep descents and up steep slopes. As they proceeded she told them the story of the Hyperborean Genesis, the First Mystery of the twelve that make up the twelve-pointed star, a runic dodecagram symbolising the twelve mysteries that the Hyperborean Wisdom demands of the postulants to Initiation. The story had left the boys pondering and still trying to grasp the deeper meaning of the legend Rowena had told them. Deep inside they knew that the Hyperborean Genesis told more than just an antediluvian story. There was an enigma that afflicted the minds and hearts of each of them.

Jhoanna Cuellar Kuklova had been named Debla by the Gods; however, the certainty of divine recognition was of no use to her as she faced her very earthly situation. Like her brothers and friends, she could not stop thinking about the tale of Enlil, Enki, Inana and Yahweh. She saw the scattered pieces of her life and found nothing to justify herself to herself for all the time she had wasted, believing things that were not....

Her steps were light, careful. Eighteen years old, her body was carefully sculpted by long years of rhythmic gymnastics practice. Her face had a beauty that only women of her caste could display. Much of Russia's history could be seen reflected in her eyes with shades of Siberia and honey. Her Slavic ancestry spoke of an ancient race. Perhaps it was her beauty that was the greatest curse of the women of her family, for she always managed to lose the men in the most insane of passions.



by his presence alone. His caramel eyes held a deep hint of melancholy, he found it hard to imagine all that he had left behind to follow the Family Mission of his ancestors. But she found it even harder to believe that everything she had lived through was a white lie of an unforgiving fate. The only palpable thing for her was Oscar, the great love of her life, who even in that company accompanied her...

She was affectionately called Joisy, a nickname given to her by her sister Diana when could not yet speak properly. There was no denying that Jhoanna was maternalistic, as she had always felt attached to children younger than herself, and vice versa. It was not uncommon for her younger sister and her friends, who were the same age, to see Joisy as a protective figure. Likewise, Jhoanna did not feel alone. The presence of her younger sister and older brother, Edwin, comforted her frustrations. As the air became intoxicated playing with Jhoanna's long hair, nature itself made room for jealousy and love. She could sense it.

It was already approaching midday and the stone path looked more gaunt with every metre they walked. Jhoanna was tired. She had hung on to Oscar's arm for a little support. He was strong for both of them and carried his lifelong sweetheart with tenacity and courage.

-My feet hurt," Jhoanna muttered.

-Calm down, love, we'll rest.

-Did you ever imagine that there were places like this in the world?

-Never," he replied, "but I love that they exist.

-What Rowena told us about the Hyperborean Genesis is... A

brief silence fell between them.



-Legends always have some reality and some fantasy," said Oscar.

I sense that there is much truth in Rowena's story.

-He said it's the First Mystery of twelve. I wonder if the remaining eleven will be the same?

-For some reason I sense that they are even more spectacular.

Jhoanna's eyes were filled with fear, but it was not a phobic fear, but an uneasiness about the uncertain future.

Oscar Higgs Michelle, known as Hagal among the Gods, was a muscularathletic . His years as a cyclist and his cult of physical strength had reinforced his stamina for muscular activities. Only Edwin could compete with that physical quality. However, this contrasted with Oscar's immense scientific curiosity about his surroundings: he had read many science books before leaving La Paz.

His dark eyes had a real fire in their gaze. His whole face was full of firm, energetic gestures. He was a cheerful, joking young man, full of optimism. The proportions of his body praised his lineage, one of the oldest in France. Oscar was undoubtedly Gaulish in every sense of the word, in his thick eyebrows, in his sinewy limbs, in his white skin, in his tight lips, in his long neck, in his luxuriant, fair hair, in the abundant hair on his chest, in his prickly beard. Together with Rodrigo, his cousin, both exhibited the best of their family, a lineage linked to the history of France at various times. These qualities, coupled with the natural gallantry he possessed, had made Oscar the object of passion for many women of all ages who longed to be with him in bed; or rather, with him inside their bodies.



Jhoanna and Oscar were also childhood friends, but their relationship was conflicted over time due to various love affairs involving her older brother. There was one person much loved by all three: a friend to Joisy, possessed by Oscar and platonic to Edwin. Like a badly tuned string quartet, events dragged the four teenagers into a spiral of passions and outrages of loyalty until, after a series of senseless fights, peace returned their lives. The old wounds still burned, however, and they could only stop hurting if they put all their energies into overcoming the challenge before them, which, for the moment, was to reach the Citadel of Erks.

After a full morning's walk along narrow paths surrounded by moss, grass and perennial dampness, they came to a cliff whose bottom was dominated by a natural pool, its source a great waterfall veiled by the whisper of its own falling noise, formed from an invisible river on the other side of the cliff. The caravan descended down the side, following the age-old trail that had accompanied them since they left the Inti Squadron camp. They stopped at the edge of the natural pool, surrounded by a tropical landscape. Near them stood a huge stone wall where the path ended. The boys sat down roughly on the grass, exhausted. Meanwhile Rowena unloaded the firewood from one of the horses and began to make strange preparations. Edwin glanced sideways at her, still breathing heavily from the fatigue of the walk.

-Which way now? -he asked, noticing that the road had no continuation.

Rowena looked at him and each of her pupils, and pointed to the large wall in front of them.



-We must go in that way," he replied sternly.

-But there is no road, shall we climb? -Oscar replied.

-No, we have to go through the wall.

-OK guys, bring out the ACME dynamite," said Gabriel in jest, his friends laughed but Rowena didn't find the joke funny.

-This is the only time you will cross with my help. For this one occasion only, you will use this route. When the time comes that you must return to this dimension, you will use other ways to cross the Umbra, but you will never use this path again unless you bring a pure-blooded Spirit who is asleep by strategic confusion of the Demiurge.

Rowena's words had silenced the laughter. In their place came anxiety and fear of the unknown. The faces of each of the young members of the caravan betrayed the insecurity that had gripped them.

Rowena lit a fire with the dry logs they had brought from the camp, then let some green leaves burn and blow away in the wind. She took out a strange metal pot and it on the fire, took some water from the natural pool and poured it over the pot, heating it until it began to boil. He gathered some herbs from his surroundings and ground them together with the contents of some small corked bottles, the contents of which looked like white sandstone. In a flask he mixed the ingredients and added the only plant the boys could recognise: coca leaves. Then he poured the preparation into the boiling water.

While Rowena made those enigmatic preparations, Oscar, Edwin and Jhoanna talked quietly, sitting on the sands that bordered the natural pool. Rodrigo, Gabriel, Diana and Rocío were playing in the water without



to worry about anything else. The sun was warm, pleasant. The water was cool and its gentle, crystalline flow made it possible to see the fish that dwelled within. Gabriel had challenged his friends to try to catch one with their hands and they immediately jumped in to try their luck. Diana had managed to meet the challenge, Rocío and Rodrigo had not been so lucky. That brief moment of rest had given the boys a respite from the accumulated fatigue, from fears they carried from the uncertainty.

After a couple of hours Rowena removed the brew from the fire and left it on some rocks in the shade to cool.

-Make a circle around me," Rowena commanded. Reluctantly, her pupils obeyed, the guide continued, "For the next part of our journey, which is the most difficult, you must turn off your minds and hearts, but because of your primitive state you do not know how to do that yet. Although you have had brief moments of awakening, your spirits are not ready to withstand the energy of your own spectrum. So we will resort to other methods.

The guide poured some of the brew, the result of the infusion, into a small earthenware bowl.

-They will drink this," said Rowena.

-What is it? -asked Oscar suspiciously, everyone doubting the mysterious concoction.

-Mead," replied the guide.

-And what is that? -Diana interrupted.

-Don't worry about that," Rowena replied. Trust me and when you awaken you will be in a new world far from the threats that haunt you in this one.





No one was exempt from grimacing and grimacing, the brew tasted very bitter, like gall and vitriol. No sooner had they finished drinking than all the members of the caravan fell to the ground, fainting. Rowena sighed and then traced a rune on the horses' heads with ash from the bonfire. She loaded each of the boys and lifted them onto the animals.

Then, using the same ash, he drew a large rune on the stone wall. The sky, which until then had been clear, began to darken with black clouds. The temperature began to drop suddenly, mixing with the humidity and creating frost on the stones. The water in the natural pool cooled to the freezing point, turning into a huge mirror of ice. The waterfall turned into a frozen sculpture as a mysterious mist began to rise from the earth itself, taking the shapes of horses, bears, wolves and scorpions. Rowena raised her hand, her fierce gaze piercing the clouds, daring them to unleash the fury of their lightning upon her. The woman's eyes began to glow with a bluish-green radiance and the wind blew violently.

-Wothan! -Rowena shouted, measuring her voice against the deafening roar of the wind. Give me the strength to overcome this chalice. Guide me in the light that blinds and burns the eyes. Give me Your darkness to see through. Give me the power to tear the veil of deceit from this hell!

Then a bolt of lightning struck Rowena, but she was unharmed, instead deflecting the beam into the stone wall, and a bright green light began to emerge from it.



-Show yourself, hellish world, and give way to me! -commanded the woman at the wall.

Suddenly the light ceased to shine, giving way to a kind of threshold that had been left uncovered on the great rock. A furious storm was about to burst upon the place, Rowena knew she must hurry. She took hold of the horses' reins and crossed the threshold quickly. Within seconds the caravan disappeared behind the rock. As the last horse finished crossing, the threshold closed, the clouds dispersed, the mist vanished and the temperature began to rise again, melting the ice and returning the landscape to its normal, jungle-like appearance. Finally the boys and their guide entered the true Path of the Gods.



ROWENA



For him who has decided to fight, there is only one way: Truth. When a man sets out to reach Truth and Freedom, there is no being, no power, no god that can stop him. In the end there was never Original Sin, but Original Betrayal.

Rowena Von Kaiser





(Uruz)

First Mystery, The Hyperborean Genesis

Zecharia Sitchin's version of the Sumerian Myth; adaptation of the Amethyst Circle.

Legend has it that millions of years ago, in the world of Divine Beings - the Anunnaki - there had been a terrible crisis in their Village of Origin called Hyperborea, because of power struggles. The king of that race of divine beings was called Anu. He had two sons; one of them was his legitimate son who was to accede to the throne, his name was Enlil; the other was the king's illegitimate son and Enlil's elder brother, his name was Enki. Enki's brother Enlil was a rather hateful and arrogant being who liked to indulge in the basest pleasures. The Prime Minister was a great friend of Enlil's and shared his tastes, his name was Yahweh. Unlike his brother, Enki was a loyal, cold and honourable Being.

The power struggles between these divine beings were leading them into a terrible planetary crisis. They had discovered that their atmosphere was disappearing because of the fights between them, this led them to try to find a way to save the macrocosm of their planet. To do this, a group of Divines had created a machine capable of reproducing their atmosphere, the big problem was that they had no fuel to run it.

Lacking fuel in Hyperborea, the Divines began to search for fuels and experiment with metals to find a way to power their machine. Then Yahweh, who was an alchemist, told them that on a tiny planet, in one of the Universes he had created, there was a metal capable of providing the energy for their machine. One day, in audience with King Anu, the Divines, Enlil, Enki and Yahweh met and this is what they said:



-In one of the created Universes of my Consciousness, there is a tiny planet orbiting an insignificant star. That planet has an interesting metal that appeared because of a fortunate mistake of mine," said Yahweh.

-Where is this planet? -asked Anu, the king.

-It is in the Fourth Universe. It orbits a star located in a galaxy relatively close to my Logos.

-And do you have control over that universe? -asked Enlil.

-I still have a long way to go to perfect it," Yahweh replied, "and I have not been able to make it work as it should. I have only taken seven days and seven nights to build it, and on the seventh day I had to rest. It is still incomplete.

-Well, if you say there is a metal there that is of help, mine it," replied Enki.

-I would, but I don't have skilled labour.

-So how do you suggest we get the metal out that you say might work? -questioned Anu.

-We will have to do it ourselves," Yahweh replied.

-Are you suggesting that we go to one of your lower Created Universes? -Enki questioned, annoyed.

-There is no other way," replied Yahweh.

-If there is no other way, then I will send my sons, who I trust, to carry out the mission," said Anu and ended the hearing.

Thus Enlil, Enki, Yahweh and a large group of Divines entered Yahweh's half-built created universe. The first thing they did was to find a centre of operations; they settled on the Twelfth Planet of the system, at a fairly prudent distance from the central star, for the closer they approached the star, the more its power diminished.



Enlil, who was a brilliant engineer, made a long study of the system, scanning planet by planet. The most interesting planets turned out to be the first eight. Among them were two ice giants, two gas giants and four small rocky planets. At the end of the scan, Enlil determined that the optimum planet for the exploitation of the blissful metal was the Third Planet. The only big problem was that to reach it, one had to pass through a dense asteroid belt which was very difficult to penetrate. Enlil and Yahweh were too cowardly to cross it; this led Enki to make the final decision to undertake the feat. Yahweh knew that, although the Universe he created was situated in his own consciousness, he did not have total control because of how imperfect it still was.

Enki then boarded a transport with a brave group of Hyperborean Divines and set out for the centre of the aggressive system, in search of the Third Planet.

The odyssey was terrible, they suffered several losses and the asteroid belt had caused severe damage to their ship. As they drew closer and closer to the central star, they noticed that they were beginning to weaken. The star's gravity and radiation were too heavy for beings as light as the Divines. Passing through the asteroid belt, they landed on the Fourth Planet, where they created a colony in the midst of an abundant jungle with living conditions. When the heavy work of construction was completed, they set out on the journey to the Third Planet.

In a short time, they surveyed the planet. They found themselves on a hot, jungle world, where animals lived in harmony. Like the Fourth Planet; the Third Planet showed no signs of conscious life, indeed the work of Yahweh was still too early.



After the exhaustive search, Enki found the famous metal that Yahweh had announced so much. It was a fairly strong golden metal, and when fused with hyperborean plasma it produced large amounts of energy, enough to power the machine in his Original Village. Immediately, Enki sent the message of his discovery to his father who congratulated him and gave him command of the mission. In a short time a large number of Divine Beings colonised the planet and settled on a large island. They called their colony Atlantis.

Soon, they began the extraction of that metal, which they decided to call -gold||, and sent it to the colony on the Fourth Planet for its respective transfer to Hyperborea. Within a short time, the machine was up and running, and the atmosphere slowly began to recover. The mission had been a success, Enki's father was happy with it and was beginning to doubt leaving the throne in the hands of Enlil and Yahweh, since they had not succeeded. Neither of them liked King Anu's position with regard to Enki and were jealous. Both thought that their consciousness was unique in the Universe and that they must be One in order to reign. So they both left the Twelfth Planet and arrived on the Fourth Planet, where they took control of the mission by force. Enki did not fight to avoid bloodshed and allowed things to take their course.

In time, discontent began to arise in Atlantis over the hard work the Divines had to do. Although the habitat had been modified so that they could live on the Third Planet, Yahweh's Created Universe was too heavy. Soon fighting broke out and the miners stopped working. Faced with the crisis, Enlil was forced to find a quick solution.

One day, Yahweh told Enlil that he had found an interesting animal. It was a small hominid monkey that had the knack of freeing the others.



animals from the traps the Divines set for them so that they could eat them. This monkey was particularly skilful, using rocks to make tools, and it seemed it would not be long before he discovered fire. Yahweh told Enlil that these hominids were another lucky accident in his experiment, they were able to run his world in a relatively balanced way, even though they were still very unevolved. Then Enlil had an idea, he captured the monkeys and took them to the mine to work; unfortunately, they were too stupid and failed to learn anything new, they were not even self-aware. At this juncture of the moment, Yahweh had a crazy idea which he put before Enki and Enlil for their consideration.

-These monkeys are not intelligent enough because they have not matured," said Yahweh. I believe we can evolve them at an accelerated pace. If we can sire a monkey egg with a hyperborean sperm....

-No, no, no," replied Enlil, "we cannot afford to share our divine blood with these monkeys.

-I think that would be an interesting way to solve our problems, so we would have enough workers," replied Yahweh.

-Do you really think it's a good idea? -Enki questioned.

-I myself will conduct the experiment," said Yahweh, "and you will see that it will be successful.

And so he did. Using his vast knowledge of genetic engineering, Yahweh crossed a monkey with a divine and more intelligent monkeys began to emerge. When they were put to work, they were found to be effective; however, they had two problems: the first was that they were very weak as they could not withstand the divine genetic load, and they were also very sad as they had no mates, they were all males. This caught Enki's attention and he blamed Yahweh for the failure.



intelligent, self-aware and sad for lack of females. Then Yahweh had another idea to improve the race, he thought they should give them females of the same species to balance the genetic load and have strong workers. Enki and Enlil were opposed at first, but gave in to pressure from Yahweh who soon made female monkeys using the same technique he used with the male monkeys. When the first females began to be born, they were brought before the male monkeys, who feared them at first, but soon began to reproduce; however, they did not produce stronger monkeys, but deformed monsters. The experiment was a disaster. Enlil was furious as he knew things were out of control, he now had a race of abomination producing monkeys, with divine genetics, and no workers. If King Anu found out, he would relieve Enlil of the royal succession to the crown for allowing such a disaster.

So Enlil called upon Enki and Yahweh to help him solve the problem. Then Yahweh had another idea, he thought that the new race could be made perfect by begetting a monkey sperm in the womb of a divine woman. idea frightened Enlil, but, due to Yahweh's pressure and the emergency of situation, he agreed to carry out the experiment. The big problem was that none of the divine women wanted to volunteer for the experiment. In the end, only one woman agreed, and that was the daughter of King Anu: Inana, who agreed to carry the baby monkey in her womb. The only thing she wanted was for Enki to return, the divine woman was madly in love with him.

And Yahweh performed the experiment and soon the first half-god child was born, -and Yahweh thought His creation was good and called it -human species-; and His first man He called -Adam-|| (God said: Let us make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness. Let him have authority over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air, over the animals of the field, over the wild beasts and the creeping things that creep along the ground - Gen 1:26).



Yahweh's new man turned out to be a magnificent worker, he was strong and healthy and very intelligent. He soon recognised Yahweh and considered him his only God and Creator, and they began to worship him and his entire Universe. For the new man, the world was a wonderful place and Yahweh was his God. The vain Yahweh liked the worship of his creation, but he forgot to tell the men that they had a mother who was also a Goddess. Soon men began to show signs typical of an independent being, no longer an animal. Man had developed a spirit. When Yahweh looked at his creation he discovered that men had become Hyperborean Divines enclosed in a body of flesh and in a false world for it was all a dream of Yahweh himself. Men were like sleeping Divines, ignorant of the disgrace into which they had fallen, for they had been reduced to labourers, enclosed in sacks of flesh. However, Yahweh liked the worship and meaning that man put into his Universe, which began to evolve rapidly thanks to man and his Divine power. Yahweh hid this from Enlil, Enki, Inana and King Anu himself.

In time, the men began to show characteristics typical of the hyperborean race. They had developed a language, they had awakened a sexual appetite, they had awakened deep feelings and, over the years, they began to need a woman since there were only males. So they asked Yahweh for a woman and he agreed. One fine day he put a man to sleep and cloned him genetically, but with the body of a woman, his female was called Lilith. The result was an exaggeratedly aggressive female with whom the man did not feel at ease, only a few men managed to pair up with the new female while the rest suffered from loneliness. Then Yahweh asked Enki and Inana for help in making a new female. By dint of persistence and out of compassion for the suffering men, Inana bore a new human in her womb who would now be a female. When she was born, Yahweh



He decided that he would name her Eve and placed her with the men who fell deeply in love with her. Yahweh asked Enki and Inana to keep the existence of the new female a secret from Enlil, as he would be furious if he found out that they had made a female for man.

The new human woman had turned out much better than Yahweh had expected. She was superior to her male in almost every way and, most disturbingly, she had inherited the infinite beauty of the Hyperborean Divine women, she was like a Goddess made flesh. The men were happy with her, soon the women told the men about their common mother and rumours of a Goddess began to arise among the men and women who inhabited Atlantis. They had reasoned about good and evil, but now they reasoned about Yahweh as one God among many. This did not please Yahweh who found excuses with Enlil, Enki and Inana to remove the men from Atlantis and hide them from the other Gods. Yahweh took the men to a plain and told them that they should now produce their own food. (-...To the woman God said: -I will multiply your sufferings in pregnancy and you will give birth your children in pain. You will always lack a man, and he will rule over you. To the man God said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate of the tree which I forbade you to eat, cursed be the ground for your sake. With toil you will take food from it all the days of your life. She will give you thorns and thistles, while you ask her for the vegetables you eat. In the sweat of your brow you shall eat your bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken. Know that you are dust and to dust you shall return|| - Gen 3:16-19) (Then Yahweh God said:

-Now that man is like one of US, for he has made himself a judge of good and evil. Let him not also go and stretch out his hand and take of the Tree of Life, for he shall live forever|| - Gen 3:22).

One fine day, when Enlil was checking the works in the mine, he met a beautiful woman. She was so beautiful that he was mesmerised. Enlil did not know that Inana



had given birth to human females and that the woman Enlil was seeing was one of those humans, he thought she was a divine woman. Enlil soon conquered her and had intercourse with her; the woman became pregnant, but Enlil's surprise was immense when he saw that Giants began to be born who were almost like the Divine. Then Enlil realised that something strange had happened and called Inana, Enki and Yahweh to ask for explanations, he had discovered that he loved a cute woman. (- When men began to multiply on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God noticed that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they took as wives those they liked|| - Gen 6:1) (-There were giants on the earth then and there were giants later, when the sons of God joined themselves to the daughters of men and had sons by them. These were the heroes of old, famous men|| -Gen 6:4)

Yahweh and Inana's explanations did not convince Enlil who could not bear the thought of having monkey children on the Third Planet. Without further hesitation, he Yahweh to destroy men, then Yahweh tilted the axis of the planet to produce a cataclysm. He thought it would be better an extermination by water than by any other element of his Creation. Soon Atlantis was abandoned by the Divines and they left the men orphaned and frightened because they did not know why their masters and parents were abandoning them. Soon, Enki and Inana felt sorry for the men and went down to talk to one of them. This was one of the most intelligent men who was given the order by Enki to build a water vessel, so as to withstand the cataclysm that would soon devastate the Third Planet. This man did as the Gods told him and gathered the people of his community into the vessel, ready to withstand the catastrophe. (For my part, I will send the flood, that is, the waters upon the earth, to destroy everything that has breath and life under heaven; everything on earth shall perish|| - Gen 6:17).



In a short time, the earth's axis tilted so much that underwater earthquakes began to tear the planetary crust apart. The tidal waves reached 10,000 metres and soon covered the surface of the planet, turning it into a sea world. Inana and Enki, who were on a ship watching the disaster, wept with real sorrow for they loved their children. Meanwhile Yahweh seemed to enjoy the spectacle; this Divine One has always been known to take pleasure in the pain of others.

When the chaos was over and they were safe in the colony of the Fourth Planet, Inana and Enki embraced each other to mourn the pain of their dead children; then Inana went furiously into the presence of Enlil and Yahweh, who were happily recounting the anecdotes of the water holocaust. She approached them and thus spoke to them:

-The two of you are cursed bastards who are not even worthy to be on a par with the men you destroyed. To you Enlil, I will never again allow you to commit these outrages. And to you Yahweh, if anyone survived, I will never again allow you to do to my children what you have just done today. I am their MOTHER, I will protect them at any cost and if I must go to war with you to do so, then that is what I will do," said the enraged Inana with true Goddess fury.

-I remind you, Inana, that you are a stranger in MY Universe. This is MY creation and everything here belongs to me, that included your beloved male children. If some of them are alive, I will do with them as I please, if you don't like it you can leave. But if you stay and try to confront me within MY Creation, you can be sure you will lose, for I am the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end. All that exists in this universe breathes me and I it, man is me as I am man. Man is my property and you have nothing to do with it.

-As long as they are my children I will fight for them, and they will eternally be my children. They would not bow the knee to a tyrant like you. They were not animals of



your dream, they were spirits like us. But you deceived them, that's why you want them in your universe. For you, men are builders and discoverers of your work, you allowed them to exist in this universe to give meaning to yourself and to give continuity to your Creation. Well, if the demi-god man had not existed in your Universe, it would never have evolved. Neither Enki nor I will allow you to hold the Divines captive, locked up in your world again.

-Locked up they are, and locked up they shall remain," replied Yahweh, looking at Enlil. After all, there are many Divine Ones who wanted to keep the Spirits of men captive in this Universe. My creation is the perfect place for the Gods to live as they no longer want to be in Hyperborea, we are tired of Anu. They and I will be the masters of this Universe and man will worship us, for I will bring him back.

-So, you are all Traitor Gods and you are a Dictator," replied Inana, furious.

-I am Yahweh, I am YHVH. I am the One, I am unique, and I will never let men remember that you are their mother. For them, I alone am their Creator and their Father.

-You are a scientist who has lost his mind," Inana replied.

-This fight is stupid," said Enlil. It's madness, the men must all be dead, and if they're not I....

-You know better than that, Enlil," Yahweh advanced an answer, "this Universe can be a paradise. Help me evolve it and your reward will be great. You will have more humans to love," Yahweh tried to Enlil.

-What if my father, King Anu, finds out? -questioned Enlil.

-He will be convinced to leave us here no matter what. All we have to do is keep sending him gold and he will be satisfied, for he is only interested in keeping the machine running until the atmosphere of Hyperborea is repaired.

-Well, that being the case, I'll stay here," replied Enlil.



-They are both traitors," Inana replied, "I will never forgive them for this betrayal.

Once the discussion and the declaration of war against YHVH was over, Enki and Inana returned to the Third Planet to pick up their children and take them to Hyperborea. Enki and Inana returned to the Third Planet to collect their children and take them to Hyperborea, but it was too late. YHVH had found them first and, using his science, had bound the spirits of men to a new invention of his which he called a soul. The soul of men was that which kept them locked in their bodies of flesh and blinded to Inana or Enki. Their soul was their form of direct contact with YHVH and a way to keep their spirits heavy and sunken in the world of matter where YHVH is king. Then YHVH left control of the kingdom of men in the hands of the Traitor Gods who were known to men as Angels who pretended to be YHVH's slaves before men. Then YHVH created an abode for himself, which he built between the Sun and the Third Planet, and set up gates to go from the Third Planet and the Fourth Planet to his abode. He called his home: Chang Shambhala, which to men would be known as Heaven. Men were taken to Atlantis where he made a home for them and blessed his creation.

Inana and Enki also made an abode in the Universe of YHVH, they both knew they had to rescue their children. They called their abode Agartha and soon revealed themselves to a group of their children and blessed them, they made a Blood Pact with Inana, Enki and the Loyal Gods, and in time came to be called the White Atlanteans, while YHVH made a Cultural Pact with a group of men who later became known as the Dark Atlanteans. Soon, the struggle between the White Atlanteans and the Dark Atlanteans became a war, a war between the Goddess and YHVH. With time and the advancement of technology, the battle eventually sank Atlantis for good.



As the place where they lived sank, the White Atlanteans began to move eastward, building great stone monuments of great technology and symbolism, so that their brethren on the rest of the Earth, less advanced than the White and Brown Atlanteans, could find them. YHVH had imprisoned many Spirits who needed the help of their superior brethren of the White Race. As they went about finding a way to free their brethren, the Dark Atlanteans destroyed or changed the symbols of the constructions that the White Atlanteans left behind. And the White Atlanteans became known as the Sons of Cain for they carried the Symbol of their pact with Inana in their blood, they called it the Mark of Cain. The Sons of Cain were very wise Warriors, Builders and Farmers, while the Brown Atlanteans or Sons of Abel were traders, priests, sacrificers and shepherds.

Over the centuries, the Dark Atlanteans would pass all their power and blessings to the People of Israel and the Priory of Zion, so that one day they would come to control the world and realise the plans of YHVH and Enlil, which were: to sacrifice the whole race in the burnt offering of fire except their Chosen People. And those who bore the Mark of Cain, which is the Symbol of Origin, and their allegiance to the Blood Pact with the White Atlanteans and the Loyal Gods, should be punished most severely. This is the Original drama, the Essential War.



In a remote region of the Bolivian altiplano there was an abandoned village, perched on a cliff with an uncertain end. The ghost town practically hung from one of the cliff's crags, built into a fold in one of its edges. No one had lived there for centuries, the only inhabitants being old, grieving souls trapped by sadness and suffering. Sometimes the souls spoke to the wind and their whispers could be heard as if coming from deep beneath the earth. At other times the souls would swirl along the highway linking La Paz to Oruro, frightening drivers who, in the early hours of the morning, claimed to see strange anthropomorphic figures crossing the road. However, on that night of 3 January 2000, the town's ghosts were dressed up to receive a visit from the living.

Arriving with a congregation of fanatical peasants, the white-boned amautas were celebrating the arrival of a high Druid Chernobyl of *Chang Shambala*, sent from the very Council of the Tetragrammaton. The arrival of this important personage within the synarchic monasticism was a reason for celebration. From midday onwards, the amautas in white bonnets invoked the Sun God and Pacha in rites and prayers, so that the weather would always be favourable to them. Along with them came a large congregation of powerful traders from the *avernos* and the streets of Eloy Salmón, Huyustus and the 16 de Julio market in the city of El Alto. All of the revellers, all male, were of the distinct strain of the Aymara bourgeoisie and accompanied their priests in the coming event. Several llamas had been sacrificed as well as teenage virgins. The hypnotic incantations of the highest



Aymara amautas had put the accompanying congregation into a trance-like state. Among those present, seated on a seat made of human bones, was the guest of honour, a personage whose thinness allowed his skin to stick to his bones. He was of virtuous height and crude features. He had no eyebrows, eyelashes or any kind of body hair except for a thin, very long tuft of hair on top of his almost bald head. That lock of black hair was tied in a long braid to form a bun. Her skin was pale and lacked colour all over her body. Her lips were almost camouflaged against the discoloured mass of skin that covered her cadaverous skeleton. Her reddish eyes, nestled under her bulging superciliary arch, were the only colourful thing on her entire body and stood out like two coloured dots on a white sheet of paper. His only clothing was a white robe and an ivory staff in his right hand.

Late in the afternoon, the rituals seemed about to end. One of the amautas, dressed in pink flamingo feathers, stood in front of the congregation and, in the Aymara language, said:

-Our prayers have been answered. The great Sun God is pleased!

Suddenly the attendants began to come out of their trance and then, drawing from pots buried among the red-hot stones, they began to share various foods that they had left to cook in the heat of the boiling rocks. The *aphtaphi* had begun. Everyone ate, laughed, fornicated and drank to their heart's content and pleasure. A great orgy had begun. From the adjacent villages, the Aymara burghers had brought numerous virgin girls for the ritual feast; they were served chicha, beer and



The priests approached the man dressed in white and served him a ration of tunta, potatoes, chuño and human flesh turned into charke on an earthenware plate. As the feast continued, the priests approached the man dressed in white and served him in a clay dish a ration of tunta, potatoes, chuño and human flesh turned into *charke*.

-An *offering* of food for his *eminence*," said one of the amautas in feeble Spanish. An invitation which the diner accepted with a slight bow of his head in thanksgiving.

As the party went on, alcoholic beverages, hallucinogenic herbs and uncontrolled gluttony took hold of all present. Many fornicated in relentless sodomy as they drank and ate. The frigid highland air had begun to heat up on that cliff overrun with laughter, voices, screams and moans of pleasure. The frenzy of passions had become such a splendid orgy that some members of the congregation began to faint, dropping dead from exhaustion, indigestion and intoxication.

At almost midnight, the white-boned amautas and the guest of honour retired to the old abandoned church. They sat around a table and began the final meeting.

-On behalf of the Tetragrammaton and the Council of the Synarchy, Master Soros congratulates you on your progress," said the honoured guest, who had a foreign tone to his speech, but was nonetheless understood by those present. I want to know if things are ready for the entelechy of the people.

-*Ya'stan*, your *eminence*," said one of the amautas. Soon there will be a revolution of the social movements to seize power for us. The



The elected leader is now in Chapare, preparing for the *ashalto*. He doesn't know his *funshon* and is just following our advice.

-It is time then for Master Soros to deposit the money they will need for their revolution. Subsequent elections must be guaranteed: they must take over the country.

-We were waiting for that *little bit of money*, boss.

-You will have it soon. I want you to tell me now if the old blind man has been found.

-In Erks he says he is. He had not left the citadel since he left our lands. There is no one in the *Chuquiago-marka* any more. Right now he must be about to meet with the Rowena and the seven *elegedos*. The coke says that the cacique Voltán is accompanying them.

-Golab was overconfident," the chief guest mumbled. San Miguel is upset, Pacha asks us to hasten the capture of Tiwanaku.

-The more we are working, Your *Eminence*. But nothing *always* cooperates with this government.

-Don't be foolish. The charismatic axis can never be taken from this dimension. The government of this country will be of no use to us until you take it. What we need is to find a way across the Umbra to approach Tiwanaku from the other side.

-Those ruins are *always* well fenced in, the chieftain Voltan lives there. Although we have tried very hard to open the encirclement, there has been no way, therefore, chief.

-We will have to accept that we depend on Golab's incredible power to open that fence.

The amautas took out small bags from which they extracted coca leaves to chew.



The guest of honour looked overwhelmed, glanced at the dark faces of his companions and continued:

-What about the Arch of Artemis?

-Nothing, Your *Eminence*. We have looked hard, but there is none.

-I hope he never appears," the stranger paused, smiled faintly, and continued, "I want you to make sure that nothing disturbs Golab in *Chuquiago-marka* while he hibernates; he may be a stupid devil, but we need him. I'll leave tomorrow and get you the money you need. Don't forget that it is vitally important to have power in this country until 2012. Make culture, intoxicate the country, divide to conquer, expand your *ayllu* with the *ajayu* of Pacha. Master Soros assures us that the states of the world sympathetic to our Synarchy will give you Continental Socialism to ensure that the balance of power remains balanced. Keep working on the ruins of Tiwanaku and prevent the energy portals from spreading. If a single kilowatt gets out of those ruins we could face a disastrous end to our plans.

-Don't worry, Mr. Hécabor. Let's get to work on that.

The guest stood up and started to leave, but a few steps from the exit of the old church he stopped and turned to the amautas.

-One more thing," he said. Be alert, at this stage, anything is possible," and he withdrew.



HEXABOR



The glory of the sacrifice for the ascension of the People of Jehovah God. It is His Holy Will that our race should reach the stars, but how long shall we wait. Sacrifice to the Gentiles and you shall be saved. Suffer, suffer until you purge your souls of sin, Suffer, for your pain is pleasing to God.

Héxabor





In the unfathomable darkness of the depths of the earth lies the great labyrinth that makes up the Path of the Gods. The path, carved into the granite and basalt of the Andes Mountains, is surrounded by chasms so deep that their blackness seems to be taken from the very edge of the universe. The road winds its way through the massive wall at the very root of the mountains. Upwards there seems to be no ceiling but emptiness, downwards, like a mirror, you see exactly the same nothingness. In front of it there is only the narrow, sometimes overlapping path of stalactites and stalagmites. The air inside the monstrous cavern is thin and the voices of invisible spectral inhabitants call out like sirens to the unwary who, by random chance and without knowledge of the Hyperborean Wisdom, have entered the cavern.

Time inside the great labyrinth is totally different from the outside world. In the thick roots of the mountains, time is slow and heavy. A single hour on the surface of the planet can be a whole day in the subterranean and underwater realms. An ordinary man arriving in the labyrinth of the Way of the Gods would see his days wasting away without finding the way out, until he would die from thirst, fatigue and despair. But for Rowena time was not an issue, she had created a bubble using the power of her wraith to calibrate the time of the world to the time of her own Spirit. Inside the luminous bubble she had created were the horses carrying the members of the caravan on their backs. All slept face down on the horses, unaware of all that was happening.



The two years spent inside the cavern had been reduced to 17 hours inside Rowena's bubble. But on the surface of the Earth, a week had already passed. Both the guide and the animals were tired, but there was no time to rest. The chasm passage was nearing completion and soon they would reach the *Gorge* of the World. It was a tunnel that cut into massive wall, as if it were a small incision in the root of the mountain range.

During the last few hours of the walk, Rowena briefly delved into her memories. She looked at the infinite blackness around her and remembered the war against the abyssal intraterrestrials of the City of Dis. She remembered those dark years near the Vatican, underground, defending the world against a force that knew no bounds. Her mind again sensed the magnificent power of the Crusader warrior she had seen fighting inch by inch against the Archdukes of Fire themselves. Rowena felt under her veins the call of war and realised that all those memories could only foreshadow harrowing hours of Satan's new onslaught.

As her mind took her back in time, the entrance to the *Throat* of the World appeared before her. The edges of the entrance had beautiful runes carved into the granite and adorned with all manner of carvings. The twelve guardian beasts of the entrance could be seen carved on the stone: a , a wolf, a hawk, a scorpion, a condor, a puma, a leviathan, a panther, a horse, a bull, a kraken and an eagle. Above the entrance was a gigantic star of twelve peaks jutting out of the rock, carved by mysterious and utterly alien ingenuity, for there was no way to reach that place to perform the work without falling imminently into the abyss. Rowena saw the great twelve-pointed star and felt relief in her spirit. Then she smiled at the sight of the



menacing figures of the twelve beasts guarding the entrance. He sighed lightly and entered the tunnel.

The first few yards were agonisingly dark, darkness that only the light of Rowena's bubble dared to defile. But gradually the tunnel began to show a faint glow, coming from somewhere ahead. That glow grew brighter and brighter until finally the guide and her caravan came to a gigantic circular chamber, illuminated by some sort of bioluminescent moss. In the middle of the cavern was a torrent of water flowing down from a circular crack in the ceiling and down through another circular crack in the floor. Supporting the rock face were four stone statues in the shape of giant men that served as pillars carved by the ancient Atlanteans. Both the walls and the floor were carved with runes.

Rowena looked at the various entrances in front of her, trying to remember, or figure out, which one led to Erks. Finally her spirit's intuition told her which way to go, but before moving on she had to let the horses rest; she herself needed a few hours' rest before continuing the short stretch of road that remained. She sat down on a rock, lowered her spectre and the bubble she had created quickly disappeared. Her time had returned to the Way of the Gods. Then he dismounted the boys from the horses' backs and laid them down on the stony ground of the chamber.

Two hours later, Edwin Cuellar Kuklova opened his eyes. He was the first of the young members of the caravan to wake up. When he realised where he was, he was completely stunned. He couldn't believe his , not only because of the architectural prodigy, with the



stone giants supporting the roof, which would surprise anyone, but also because of the almost unnatural appearance of the luminous mosses.

-What the hell is this place? -Edwin asked Rowena, who was sitting on a rock and staring at the various paths in the chamber, oblivious to the boy's amazement.

-We are in the *Gorge*. This site connects to all the routes of the Way of the Gods.

-But-but how is it possible, who made this place, where are we?

-We are under the Andes," replied the guide. In a time-space fracture that opens up under the mountains. The White Atlanteans built this millennia ago.

-Are you serious? -Edwin could not believe Rowena's words, but he had no choice but to believe. And how much further is it?

-No," the woman replied.

-My head hurts," Edwin muttered, sitting down on the floor. What did we drink?

-Mead.

-Of course, but what is the mead made of?

-No need to know now," said Rowena, "Edwin Nikolai Cuellar Kuklova.

Edwin was somewhat disappointed by the teacher's secretiveness.

-It's been a long time since anyone called me by my middle ," he said.

-Those will no longer be your names when you're on the other side, and you know it.

-Yes, I know.

-And do you know what the gods call you yet?



-Yes," Edwin replied, somewhat sadly. Before I started training with my father, the blind man, Qhawaq, came and told me that in Erks I would be called Ninurtske, the Taurus of war.

-A strong bull, Ninurtske.

-I still find it so hard to accept all this.

-It is normal, you have not been educated to see the subtler dimensions of truth. You can only sense them in your imagination. The rest you have handed over to the patriarchs of your prison, which are mind, reason, heart and feelings. That's why you need everything that happens to have an empirical proof, a method and a palpable, measurable and verifiable proof. That's how you have been brought up. And then you see this magnificent chamber and doubts arise in you.

-I hesitate because I can find no explanation for all that is happening to us.

Rowena approached Edwin and, bringing her face close to his, added:

-You are their General in battle, Ninurtske. They have signed a silent pact in which all Sentinels, your sisters, friends and comrades chose you as their commander. Stop giving power to reason and allow the intuition of your blood to explain to you all that you now ignore.

-But, Rowena...

-No. Don't let doubts take over. Answer them yourself.

-I will try. But you must know that I didn't ask for this, I never wanted to give it all up. I had a military career just to secure my future and that of my family.

-You are noble, Edwin Nikolai Cuellar Kuklova," said Rowena. You truly deserve to be Ninurtske, the Taurus of war. Of the twelve Hyperborean beasts, you will always be the vanguard.

-Twelve... beasts?

The woman sat up, staring at the bedroom ceiling.



Just as there are twelve mysteries, represented by the twelve-pointed star, so there are twelve guardians. Twelve warriors whose power combines in the presence of the Bow of Artemis to break the veil of lies generated by Creation and its Creator. If the twelve beasts do not gather together, it would be impossible to use the Bow to its full capacity.

-I think Qhawaq told me something about that, but I was so doubtful....

-The twelve beasts incarnate once every five hundred years in members of the Fifth Race, which is human. They attach themselves to the spirit of those chosen ones and ascend from the upper abysses only at the call of the highest ranking Officers within the world of the Loyal Gods.

-Officials?

-That's right, their spirit guides.

-Of course, as in the case of my family, protected by Morana.

-You know, Ninurtske, that your sisters and friends carry the Hyperborean Beasts within them as you carry the Taurus.

Edwin bowed his head in hurtful shame. He felt that the very fact of having his loved ones in such a surreal situation was partly his fault.

-I never wanted my sisters to have to go through this.

-They and the other comrades have chosen this destiny long incarnations ago, as have you.

-I know, but it's no comfort to know.

-It is not a matter of comfort, my young Taurus; it is a matter of honour.



▷ E LOS▷ IOSES ROAD



There is no soul capable of entering this labyrinth of terror and coming out to tell the tale. There is no way out and no end to it, even time is locked in and never comes out again. It is truly a horrifying underbelly.

Héxabor

MROMANOSM



The casualties among the Byzantine troops had been horrendous, which is why the commander-general, Basilisk of Constantinople, had given the order to retreat. It was the night of 14 November 831 AD when the attack began. These monsters attacked only at night and their figures, glowing like the magma of a volcano, had terrified all of Basilisk's soldiers. The men had given themselves up to their prayers to Christ on the cross, they prayed for their lives and souls, they cried out to be saved by the Son of God from all the flaming horrors they saw in those accursed ravines. Few of them were left, and they were thirsty and wounded. Several soldiers suffered dreadful mutilations and scarifications caused by those demons of hell. The troops were decimated and the last night was about to begin. Surely none would survive; they would be taken into the presence of Satan to be tortured and tormented for eternity; Christ had forsaken them.



On the orders of Emperor Michael III of the Eastern Roman Empire, Byzantine troops had come to retake the Roman territories in the Caucasus mountain range at the foot of Mount Elbruz; the beginning of the campaign was characterised by the slow but steady retreat of the Slavs towards the Balkan plateau, across the upper shores of the Black Sea, until they reached the Macedonian frontier. Basilisk knew this and took some satisfaction in seeing that his troops were efficient enough to force the Slav tribes to retreat. The next few months they moved into the mountain range along the southern shore of the Black Sea, the great Mount Elbruz greeted the Byzantine camp during the eighth month of the campaign. They slept peacefully the first night, but the nightmare began on the second.

An earthquake woke the camp, the soldiers came out of their tents and noticed that something strange had happened to the natural order of things: the darkness was total. There was no moon, no stars, no wind, and the silence was like an impalpable, infinite void in the midst of the darkness. The men lit torches but the light from their fire did not illuminate much, it was like being inside a gigantic cavern, only this was not a cavern, it was the open field and it was as dark as a catacomb. Basilisk tried to calm his men by urging them to embrace faith in this moment of such deep darkness and silence, but fear sprang from their skins like a geyser of panic when they saw a flaming glow erupt from the earth, just a few feet from where they stood. First a plume of smoke and fire rose as a deafening roar rumbled beneath the bowels of the ground, then a jet of lava spewed to the surface, glowing ominously and contrasting with the darkness, as if an underground volcano was erupting. It took a few seconds for the phenomenon to stabilise, and then the hideous figures of death and fire appeared. They were



Skeletons with red-hot bones, barely covered with burnt skin and greasy, smoking membranes; they looked like highly decomposed corpses but moved with feline agility.

Some of the men began to run in terror, Basilisk himself did not know how to act, he felt as if they had descended into hell and had to fight for their lives. With some effort the Commander General recovered from his initial fear and began to hand out orders. His presence and authority figure restored order and discipline to the Byzantine army. Basiliscus harangued them to confront Satan's demons and win Christ's forgiveness for their sins, making them the first Crusaders of the East. The men took cover in a circular perimeter and defended their position against the furious onslaught of the demons. The first wave was repulsed with minimal casualties, which encouraged the soldiers and filled them with courage. They had realised that the denizens of hell were neither invincible nor immortal.

It seemed that no more demons would emerge from that magma mouth when a bloodcurdling howl echoed throughout the darkened mountain range. Like infernal gargoyles, demons with vampiric wings of fire and bodies gnawed to the bone by the magma, totally devoid of flesh, began to emerge from the lava. The bony figure itself glowed red-hot, like a heavy metallic presence emerging from a pool of molten steel. They wore a single coiled horn on their heads and their empty eye sockets were dominated by an igneous orange light. When the men saw these fiendish creatures, they lost all initial momentum and their strength began to crumble in the panic that was beginning to overcome them.



Bravely, Basilisk gave orders to his archers and harangues of courage so that his aim and arrows could bring down the menacing gargoyles as they began their onslaught. The arrows caught fire as soon as they made contact with the bones of the fiery devils, their flight emitting a smell of sulphur and burning flesh that began to suffocate the Byzantines. In the first wave of the massacre, the gargoyles wiped out the entire vanguard. Their igneous claws dismembered, filleted and disembowelled men like sharp sword blades, heated red-hot and sharpened in fire to cut flesh with butcher's precision. From the heat, the wounds cauterised as quickly as they opened and, in matter of seconds, were scarified on the skin of the unfortunate who were hit. The second wave attacked the Byzantine rearguard and evaporated the men with the malignant, fiery breath of the gargoyles. The soldiers in the front rank were quickly charred, those in the second rank suffocated to death, and the unfortunate ones in the third rank were not killed, but were left with deep burns but were unlucky enough to survive to suffer the pain of their wounds.

Overcome by darkness and terror, Basilisk gave the order to retreat and led his men to a natural trench that they used as a refuge during their campaign against the Slavs. The march was arduous, many men were lost in the darkness and then their bloodcurdling screams of pain could be heard on the horizon. After a full night's march, of the 3000 soldiers camped at the foot of Elbruz, only 254 had reached the shelter, most of them wounded or insane. At dawn, the light of dawn cleared the darkness and with it also ceased the attacks of the fire gargoyles. The incandescent glow on the horizon faded and the sun shone its rays on the desolate scene of death left behind by the Byzantines. The path that led them to the shelter was carpeted with severed parts of



bodies, bitten viscera and all sorts of vital fluids and blood dripping on the stones.

During the morning they slept as much as they could and tended to the wounded. At noon they were to resume their march and see their way back to Constantinople, but as they were about to set out they were again besieged by those greasy, steaming creatures they had fought the night before. The whole afternoon was devoted to battle, fighting for their survival in the face of an enemy that seemed innumerable. Some soldiers left the ranks and tried to flee into the woods, terrified; but they were easily overtaken by the greasy demons and then eaten alive. By dawn the siege ceased, but the darkness had caught up with them again. Basilisk and his surviving men were exhausted after the fight. As they rested, prayed and surrendered to Christ, the night would bring back the nightmares of the underworld, they knew.

-My Lord," a soldier addressed Basilisk, "we have only fifty torches left.

The Commander General looked over the rocks to the horizon and began to devise a defence strategy in the hope of surviving another night.

-Dig the trench as deep as possible, but leave camouflaged exits and fresh air inlets; let them be hidden from these fiends. Gather up some corpses and place them on the hill we are traversing to the west, and leave smouldering, half-extinguished campfires.

-What about men?



-No, no one will stay on that hill, we will try to camouflage ourselves. If we are lucky those demons will not notice us and we will survive another night.

Cherishing their hopes of outwitting the demons as their only salvation, the Byzantines dug a deep trench and camouflaged the approaches with dry leaves and rocks, then placed several corpses on the nearby hill and battle signs. They hid and waited.

The darkness became as thick as the night before, the silence was so absolute that the nerves of the exhausted soldiers began to fray. Then they heard footsteps, thought the demons had overtaken them and squeezed their eyes shut, praying not to be found. Then the light of a fire flashed before their eyes, but those who stood there were not demons but men, Slavic warriors. As soon as they saw them, with a wave of his hands, Basilisk ordered a couple of his men to accompany him, they came out of hiding and met the Slavs.

-Get out of here if you want to live," said Basilisk, in Latin. This land is cursed and full of demons.

The Slavs looked at him and then turned their gaze to a hooded figure covered to his feet in a long dark blue cloak.

-Are you survivors? -asked the person in a woman's voice and in the language of Rome.

-We are the ones who are left.

-Where did you come from?

-From Constantinople.



-You are Byzantines then," the woman's voice became low, as if these Roman foreigners were some kind of nuisance.

-We have come to reclaim the lands of His Emperor Michael III until we were overtaken by demons," Basilisk replied. He was very surprised to be talking to a woman in this field of death, but he had seen even more eccentric things from the Slavic tribes. Escape from here, find a place to hide, and wait. Those beasts are invincible.

-You are wrong," the woman replied and then unhooked a bow from her back.

When Basilisk saw the weapon he immediately noticed the green gem embedded in the sight, that bow was exactly like the one described in Roman legends as the Bow of Diana, or the Bow of Artemis in Greek tradition; it was the legendary weapon with which Alexander the Great won his ultimate victory at Persepolis. Greek legends said that Alexander had obtained this relic from the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus. He then headed for the Persian capital and comprehensively defeated Darius' army. With the Persians defeated, nothing more stood between Alexander and his real goal: to conquer Asia. But to achieve this the Greek Emperor was said to have made a deal with the goddess Artemis in which she offered him victory at Persepolis in exchange for Alexander banishing the god Baal from Asia. Plutarch's chronicles narrate that when the Emperor entered the city the first thing he did was to seek out Darius' family and ask them where the temple of Baal was. What he found on entering the huge holy building was a giant figure of Baal standing imposingly inside the main temple of Persepolis. Alexander saw the statue and knew that the time had come to keep his word to the Moon Goddess, so he took the Bow of Artemis, loaded an arrow and shot Baal's head off. When the statue was struck, it was



turned to salt and immediately burst into flames until it disappeared. This phenomenon indicated that the Persians had been totally defeated and that the whole of Asia was in Alexander's hands.

Basilisk remembered all this within seconds, the presence of the green gem on the bow confirmed his suspicions and, guided by an uncontrollable impulse, his words came mumbling out of his mouth:

-The Bow of Artemis," Basilisk acknowledged.

The woman looked at the astonished Byzantine and removed her hood. Her beauty was unfathomable and devastating to any man. Her hair was long and auburn, arranged in several braids that swept across her head, on which rested a crown full of ridges. Her eyes were infinitely citrine, like honey, liquid as the waters of a frozen river. His skin was as white as snow and his lips as rosy as the petals of an apple blossom. Basilisk's breath had been taken away by the woman's breathtaking beauty.

-You are a pretty intuitive man for a Roman," he said. But if you wish to free yourself from this darkness, you will not do it by hiding in cowardice.

-These beasts are no match for steel or arrows," replied one of the men accompanying Basilisk. No mortal could defeat them.

-And it is on that course that you are all going to die in this field of darkness," the woman immediately replied as she slowly loaded an arrow into her bow.



-Madam, the portal to the umbra has opened," said one of the Slavic warriors to the woman who was apparently their commander.

An explosion of fire lit up the horizon miles away, the portal to hell had been reignited and the gargoyles of fire would be ascending, spurred on by the smell of fear that the Byzantines emitted.

-They are coming, and there is no escape from them; unless we face them.

-We'll camouflage ourselves, but we won't face those monsters again," said the Basilisk man, who still couldn't come out of his spell because of the woman's beauty.

-The beings from hell do not need to see you to know you are here, they can smell your fear and taste your flesh from seas away.

A horrifying howl swept across the esplanade from the ridge to where they stood, the sound had enveloped the souls of the Byzantine men in terror, all praying in unison. The wind began to warm and a flock of shadows in the sky, cast over the fiery glow, rose and began to fly towards them. Basilisk looked up at those shadows with the certainty of death, then turned his gaze to the woman, who was now ready for combat, and for an instant he was glad he had not died without first witnessing such feminine beauty. Then the doubts raced through his mind, so many that he did not know whether to express them or to keep them to himself. But her curiosity got the better of her and she asked the only thing she really wanted to know:

-What are those things?

The woman glanced sideways at the Byzantine and gave a wicked smile.

-Servants of Jehovah-Satan.



Avenida del Ejército in the Miraflores area of La Paz. A meeting was held in the house where the children of the Cuellar Kuklova family once lived. But since their departure its only inhabitant was the mother of Edwin, Diana and Jhoanna. She had summoned the rest of the parents of the boys who evacuated from the city; the reason: to receive news.

Rodrigo and Oscar's mothers had attended the meeting. Gabriel's parents were also there. Rocio's mother arrived late. In front of them was their only link to their children, a man who had arrived not only with news but also with warnings: Ursus de la Vega. It was around three o'clock in the afternoon on Sunday, 9 January 2000.

-Is everyone who should be here now? -Ursus asked.

-All of them," replied Diana's mother.

-Well, let's get started then," said the informant as he lit a cigarette. Your sons have arrived safely at the first part of their journey: the guard camp on the Way of the Gods. They departed several days ago and will surely be arriving at their destination soon. In Erks they will be met by Qhawaq Yupanki and a master warrior who will teach your sons to fight, his name is Aldrick Du Ruelant. They, together with Rowena, will protect and instruct your sons. Be careful for them, they will be safe.

-What makes you so confident? -asked Rocío's mother.

-The Citadel of Erks is a heavily armed location on a world parallel to this one. Your enemies will never be able to reach your children there. That is why you must start worrying about yourselves now.



The faces of those present were full of anguish. Since their children had left the city, each of them had begun to have serious problems in their jobs. They had all been fired for no reason, complaints to the Ministry of Labour had gone unheeded, and Gabriel's father was being sued for an alleged tax debt he had never incurred. No doubt they all had every reason to worry.

-As you have been warned," Ursus continued, "the forces of the state will come down hard on you. Your lives are at risk, not only from what the Synarchy, using the laws, can do against you. But there are also terrible forces that have already identified you and will not rest until they have destroyed you.

-It's been like this all our lives," said Oscar's mother.
We knew this could happen.

-But they weren't ready," replied the informant, Ursus. Have they already severed any links with the rest of their families?

Everyone nodded silently.

-Well, then it is time for you to disappear too. If you have real estate, it is time to sell it. If you have bank accounts, close them and collect the money. Try to liquidate your financial situation as soon as possible. You will all be taken to the Cloister of St. Dominic. There you will be provided with everything necessary for your sustenance.

-Are you asking us to give up everything? -asked Gabriel's father with great alarm.

-I ask nothing of you. If you do not leave your lives behind, it will be your lives that will leave you behind. You will never get jobs, you will be tried for crimes you did not commit, and your civilian life will be destroyed until you become



beggars with no choice but to steal to eat. They will be taken to prisons where they will know nameless torments and all the extortions of the state will weigh on their shoulders. Their lives will be over.

-But," interrupted Gabriel's father, pale, "my company, my employees?"

-Declare bankruptcy," the informant replied. They are not facing problems they can solve.

-It's so unfair," Rodrigo's mother muttered.

-The enemy is never just. The shadow of war is approaching and terrible things will happen. The Powers of Matter are turning the policies of this country upside down. Governments will fall, many will die, there are drums of false revolutions. A new bourgeoisie will rise and have absolute power in the Nation, and you have no place in that new country to be founded. Your inheritance of blood has made you outlaws of democracy, of the rule of law and of all that nonsense invented to give legitimacy to governments without authority. The people will rule without judgement, the world economy will be turned into one big Russian roulette wheel. The future is less than uncertain, it is a calamity foretold. If they do not take the decision now to give it all up, it will be too late.

No one dared say a word. They all knew deep inside that Ursus was not lying, and they felt the weight of their deep fears turn into the palpable threat of misery.

-What will happen to us? -Gabriel's mother asked. Ursus stared at her.



-We will protect you for as long as we can. The mission of the Circulus Dominicanis is to ensure that you stay alive until the end of the war... We will not succeed, at least not with all of you.

-Will we die? -said Diana's mother, dreading the answer she knew in advance.

-We will all die, my lady. Death is a release from the enchainment we suffer in these hellish dimensions of matter and energy. The point is for all to die an honourable death to ensure their escape from this world. That is why they must live until they know how to get out of here. He who dies without dying, lives. It is the only way to be free.

-And that death is near," Gabriel's father interjected. I sensed it from the day my son came with his friends to tell me about his paranormal experiences.

-The enemy feeds on their fear and their pain," Ursus added. For now you must only concern yourselves with staying alive long enough to learn how to die. If your children are disturbed by the untimely death of any of you, your training will be complicated and all could be lost.

-This is a nightmare we have already lived through," said Diana's mother. I still find it hard to accept that it's going to end this way.

-Don't be distressed, my lady. There is a reason for everything," replied the informant. Conclude any unfinished business and assemble as soon as possible in the church of Santo Domingo. Seek out Father Bernardo Clementi, identify yourselves and obey his instructions. We must take advantage of the presence of our allies in the Catholic Church while it is still possible. May Kristos protect you.



Rowena had to prepare the caravan for departure, the time they had had to be well spent and the experienced guide knew it. When the boys awoke and saw the superb size of the chamber they were in, they were unable to utter a word, they could not even close their mouths. It took them a long time to come out of their shock and get ready to continue the march. As they prepared to proceed, Rowena explained to them the usefulness and meaning of the twelve Hyperborean mysteries. The teacher had already revealed to them the First Mystery which consisted of the Hyperborean Genesis. She and the other Hyperborean mentors would gradually reveal to them, during their training, the remaining eleven mysteries: the Allegory of the Prisoner, the Mystery of the Blood Pact, the Odal Strategy, the Myth of the Labyrinth, the Myth of Isis and Osiris, the Myth of Kain, the Secret of Death, the Secret of the Legia, the Legend of the Twin Wolves, the Enigma of the Grail and the Secret of the Night Sun. Each Mystery revealed represented the assimilation of a rune as each mystery was signed with a rune:

First Mystery:	𐌺 (Uruz)
Second Mystery:	𐌸 (Durisaz)
Third Mystery:	𐌶 (Fehu)
Fourth Mystery:	𐌷 (Raido)
Fifth Mystery:	𐌾 (Kenaz)
Sixth Mystery:	𐌴 (Is)
Seventh Mystery:	𐌹 (Naudiz)
Eighth Mystery:	𐌺 (Jheran)
Ninth Mystery:	𐌷 (Hagla)
Tenth Mystery:	𐌶 (Sig)
Eleventh Mystery:	𐌶 (Baar)
Twelfth Mystery:	𐌹 (Tyr)



With each rune assimilated, the Spirit of the students would be prepared to withstand their own power and thus awaken the Hyperborean beasts within them during the Hyperborean Trance, only then could they raise their spectres to a level sufficient to face the demons of *Chang Shambala*. With each Mystery, the separation between mind, heart, soul and Spirit would grow stronger until the twelve Sentinels awaken their power. Thus, as they progress, Rowena and the other Hyperborean mentors will reveal the Hyperborean Wisdom to them.

After revealing another mystery, the Prisoner's Allegory, and overcoming the emotional shock of its unveiling to purebloods, they resumed their march, accompanied by the flickering light of those luminous mosses. The company walked through the narrow, rune-lined tunnels that led to Erks, Rowena explaining details of the Way of the Gods in case they ever had to walk it again. All along the path they went downhill, descending steadily until they felt a cooling breeze invade the tunnel. Suddenly they were faced with two paths, one still descending and the other ascending. Rowena took the second path. Diana asked her where the other path led to, the guide's reply was: "To the *Higrad*".

The breeze from the tunnel soon turned into a gentle wind that brought scents of plants and damp grass. The exit was not far away. They continued to climb until they came to another fork in the tunnel, one path seemed to have no exit, the other followed in the breeze. Rowena, however, took the dead end. In front of the caravan stood a stone wall.

-There is no way out," said Jhoanna.



-This is the way out," Rowena replied.

-There are only rocks here," remarked Oscar.

-Are there just rocks, or are rocks all you see?

Edwin approached. As soon as his finger made contact with one of the rocks, the entire wall disappeared as if it were a hologram.

-Fascinating," he murmured.

In front of the caravan a light stretched out from deep in the tunnel. The sight brought smiles to the boys, who were anxious to get out of the place.

They quickened their pace. In the hearts of every member of company there was a deep emotion utterly impossible to describe without having been on the verge of reaching the end of the Way of the Gods before. Rowena was in front, close behind her was Edwin. Behind her were Diana and Rodrigo, holding hands. Behind them were Gabriel and Rocio who had also unconsciously held hands. Johanna and Oscar were almost behind, she was holding her lover's arm while keeping her eyes on the exit of the tunnel that was getting closer and closer; he also had his eyes fixed on the finish line.

One by one they emerged from the tunnel, and as they came out the shock and surprise petrified on the faces of the newcomers, the ones from another world. The caravan had finally reached its destination.

Emerging from the side of a mountain, where the tunnel had been opened, a dreamlike landscape spread out before their eyes. There was a valley crossed by a gentle flowing river. The plain was dominated by trees and all kinds of vegetation. In several areas, there were glimpses of the crops of the





more mysterious fruits, totally unknown to the newcomers. The path beneath their feet, similar to a stone road, wound down the mountain and cross-country through the valley. On the horizon were two even more impressive figures. Rising on a hill that covered the other end of the valley was a tower that rose to an unheard-of height, touching the clouds and losing its top in the unfathomable depths of the sky. Behind the tower was a familiar figure to the visitors. It was Mount Illimani, or a carbon copy of it, for the mountain in front of them had more snow than its twin.

-Is it really the Illimani? -Gabriel asked the guide, unable to get over his astonishment.

-Yes and no," Rowena replied without stopping walking. This place is a replica of the planet Earth. The difference is that humans never appeared on this version of our world until Erks was built.

-Are we in another dimension? -asked Rodrigo.

-Evidently. There are countless worlds of illusion, parallel dimensions that coexist with the world from which you have come. In a great number of these worlds there are clones of you, replicas of your beings who are really only holograms living in realities as false as your own. On other worlds life did not evolve. There are others where no fish had the courage to crawl onto land to generate life on the surface. There are worlds almost identical to yours and others totally different. Millennia ago the gods decided that of all the illusory worlds, the only real one would be the planet Earth of the fourth vertical, that is, their world, and they established it as the scene of the final battle. It is there that the end of history will take place. That is why you incarnated in that world and no other.



-I don't understand, Rowena," Edwin interjected, "If all dimensions are parallel, why didn't humans appear in this one?"

-This dimension was the proving ground of the Demiurge God, the great computer of matter. When he perfected the other dimensions he forgot this one. He stopped working it during the Permian and geological and biological events happened here in different, gentler ways than in the other dimensions. We came to the Quaternary and because of the gentle nature of this world the hominids had life too easy to develop their brains. Moreover, neither the Creator God nor the Deliverer Gods came into contention for this place, no Spirit was chained here. For that reason this is one of the centres of operations of the Loyal Gods in God's creation. This place has a direct link with Agartha, the land of the Deliverers.

Occasionally strange glows would emerge from among the plants like sparks of light floating. The wind brought dandelions that also emitted light as they passed and various plants seemed to have a natural glow. Some of them were bluish, others had very intense green tones. The air was so pure that with light breaths it was possible to fill one's lungs with the subtlest molecules of oxygen. The warmth of the sun was not scorching or suffocating, but of a gentle warmth. The humidity of the atmosphere had made the visitors' clothes cling to their bodies. None of them could take their eyes off the wonders that surrounded them.

-Rowena, what are those lights? -asked Rodrigo.

-Energy generated by the anchors of the strategic fence, a force applied to generate its own time in the citadel.



The caravan crossed the valley and then took the bridge across the river. Under its crystal-clear waters, fish of all colours could be seen leaping in the water, swimming with unspeakable energy.

The other part of the valley was dominated by trees. Some were familiar to the travellers: apple trees, peach trees... but some bore mysterious fruit. Occasionally, huge dragonflies crossed their path, their wings breaking the light into rainbow colours.

They climbed the hill, still admiring the wonders before their eyes, dominated by the imposing presence of colours they had never imagined, new smells and totally different sensations. The world they had come from was not as colourful as this one. When they reached the top of the hill, an even more impressive spectacle opened up. It was something that none of the newcomers had expected or even dreamed of. It was the most beautiful and incredible thing they had ever seen in their lives.





(Durisaz)

Second Mystery, *The Allegory of the Prisoner*

Version of the Hyperborean Myth by Felipe Moyano; adapted by the Amethyst Circle.

I will begin my presentation of the myth by focusing on a man who has been taken prisoner and sentenced, unquestionably, to life imprisonment. He is unaware of this sentence, as well as of any information from the outside world after his capture, for it has been decided to keep him indefinitely incommunicado. To this end he has been locked up in an inaccessible tower which is surrounded by walls, chasms and moats, and where any attempt to escape is apparently impossible. A squadron of enemy soldiers, with whom it is impossible to speak without punishment, is permanently guarding the tower; they are ruthless and cruel, but terribly efficient and faithful to their masters: no thought of buying them off or deceiving them. Under these conditions there seems little hope of the prisoner ever regaining his freedom; but the real situation is very different. Although the exit from the outside of the Tower is cut off by walls, moats and soldiers, from the inside it is possible to go directly to the outside, without encountering any obstacles. How? By means of a secret exit whose access is cleverly hidden in the floor of the cell. Obviously, the prisoner is unaware of the existence of this passageway, as are his jailers.

Now, the prisoner shows no predisposition for escape, either because he has been convinced that escape is impossible, or because he is unaware that he is a prisoner, or for any other reason; in any case, he shows neither courage nor daring, and certainly does not seek the secret way out; he has simply resigned himself to his precarious situation. It is undoubtedly his own negative attitude that is his own worst enemy, for if he were to keep alive the desire to escape, or even if he were to experience the nostalgia for lost freedom, he would turn around in his cell.



where there is at least a one in a million chance of stumbling upon the secret exit by chance. But it doesn't, and the prisoner, in his confusion, has adopted a losing behaviour that, as the months and years go by, increasingly pathetic and idiotic.

Having surrendered to his fate, one could only hope for outside help for the captive, which can only consist in the revelation of the secret way out. But it is not so simple to expose the problem because the prisoner does not want to or does not know that he can escape, as has been said. Two things, then, must be accomplished: 1st - to make him discover his condition as a prisoner, as a person whose freedom has been taken from him, and, as far as possible, to make him remember the golden days when there were no cells or chains and when he lived in his Original Home Village. It is necessary that he should become conscious of his wretched situation and ardently desire to get out, before he can be relieved of the existence of a way out. 2nd - to reveal to him the existence of the only possibility of escape. For it would be enough, now that the prisoner wished to escape, if he only knew of the existence of the secret way out; he would seek it and find it for himself.

Put like this, the problem seems very difficult to solve: he must be helped, awakened from his sleep, guided, and then the secret must be revealed. So it is time to ask: is there anyone willing to help the wretched prisoner? And if there is, how would he manage to fulfil the two conditions of the problem?

I must declare that, fortunately, there are others who love and seek to help the prisoner. They are those who share his race and inhabit a country far, far away, which at war with the Nation that imprisoned him. But they cannot attempt any military action to free him because of the reprisals the Enemy might take upon the countless captives, besides the one in the tower, whom they hold in their terrible prisons. See



It is therefore a matter of directing help in the intended way: to awaken him, to guide him and to reveal the secret to him.

But how can this be done if he has been locked up in the heart of a fortified citadel, saturated with enemies on permanent alert? The possibility of infiltrating a spy must be ruled out because of insurmountable racial differences: a German could no more infiltrate the Chinese army as a spy than a Chinese could spy on the German Command without being noticed. Without being able to enter the prison and without the possibility of buying off or deceiving the guards, the only recourse is to get a message to the prisoner.

However, sending a message seems to be as difficult as introducing a spy. Indeed, in the unlikely event that a diplomatic demarche were to obtain authorisation to present the message and the promise that it would be delivered to the prisoner, it would be useless because the mere fact that it would have to pass through seven levels of security, where it would be censored and cut off, renders this possibility completely useless. Moreover, by such a legal means (prior authorisation), it would impose the condition that the message be written in a clear language accessible to the Enemy, who would then censor part of its content and change the words to avoid a possible second hidden message. And let's not forget that the secret of the hidden exit must not be revealed to the Enemy, only to the prisoner. And the first thing: what to say in a mere message to make the prisoner wake up, get his bearings, understand that he must escape? No matter how much we think about it, it will become evident in the end that the message must be clandestine and that it cannot be written. Nor can it be optical, because the small window of his cell allows only one of the inner courtyards to be seen, where no signals from outside the prison usually reach.



Under the conditions set forth, there seems to be no way in which your Comrades can provide a solution to the problem and help the prisoner to escape. Perhaps light will be shed if it is borne in mind that, despite all the precautions taken by the Enemy to keep the captive disconnected from the outside world, they failed to isolate him from sound. -For that they should have kept him in a soundproof cell.

I will now show, as a final point, the way chosen by the comrades to give effective help; a help that will 1st: awaken and 2nd: reveal the secret, to the prisoner, directing him towards freedom.

In deciding on a sonorous way to get the message across, the comrades realised that they had a great advantage: the Enemy ignores the prisoner's original language. It is therefore possible to convey the message simply, without double meaning, taking advantage of the fact that the message will not be understood by the Enemy. With this conviction, the comrades did the following: several of them climbed a nearby mountain and, with a huge conch shell, which allows the sound of the voice to be greatly amplified, began to broadcast the message. They did this without stopping for years, for they had sworn not to abandon the attempt until the prisoner was free again - they swore not to abandon him and they would keep their word. And the message came down from the mountain, crossed the fields and the rivers, went over the walls and invaded every corner of the prison. The enemies were at first surprised, but, as the language meant nothing to them, they took the musical sound for the song of some fabulous and distant bird, and in the end they got used to it and forgot it. But what did the message say?

It consisted of two parts. First, the comrades sang a nursery rhyme. It was a song that the prisoner had heard many times during his childhood, back in the Golden Village, the Original Village; when they were still far away, he had heard a song that he had heard many times during his childhood.



The black days of war and perpetual captivity could only be a nightmare impossible to dream. Oh, what sweet memories were evoked by that melody! What spirit, however asleep he might be, would not awake, feeling eternally young, a child, on hearing again the songs of childhood, those he had heard happily in the golden days of childhood, and which, without knowing how, were transformed into an ancient and mysterious dream? Yes; the prisoner, however dormant he might be in his spirit, however much oblivion might have closed his senses, would awake and remember! He would feel the nostalgia of the homeland, the distant village, he would realise his humiliating situation, and he would realise that only he who has infinite courage, infinite will, could make his escape.

If that was the prisoner's feeling, then the second part of the message would give him the key to the secret way out.

Note that I said the key and not the secret way out. For it happens that by means of the key the prisoner must seek the secret exit, a task which should not be so difficult considering the small size of the cell. But once he has found it, he will have to complete his feat by descending to incredible depths, crossing corridors plunged in impenetrable darkness and finally climbing to remote summits: such is the complicated route of the enigmatic secret exit. But he is already saved, the very moment he starts his return journey, and nothing and no one will be able to stop him.

To complete the end of the mystery, we only need to say a word about the second part of the sound message, the one that held the key to the secret. It was also a song. A curious song that told the story of a forbidden and beautiful love between a knight and married lady. Consumed by a hopeless passion, the Knight had embarked on a long and dangerous journey through distant and unknown countries, during which he became skilled at



the Art of War. At first he tried to forget his beloved, but after many years, and having found that the memory of her remained ever vivid in his heart, he realised that he must live eternally a slave to the impossible love. Then he made himself a promise: no matter what adventures he might have to run on his long road, no matter what joys and sorrows they might bring; inwardly he would remain faithful to his hopeless love with eternal devotion, and no circumstance would be able to turn him from his firm determination.

And so the song ended: remembering that somewhere on Earth, now transformed into a stone warrior in love, the valiant Knight marches, equipped with a powerful sword and a beautiful horse, but carrying around his neck a bag containing the proof of his drama, the key to his secret of love, perpetual love, ETERNAL LOVE: the Wedding Ring that he never gave to his Lady.

Contrary to the nursery rhyme of the first part of the message, this one did not produce an immediate nostalgia but a feeling of embarrassed curiosity in the prisoner. Hearing, coming from who knows where, in his old native tongue, the story of the gallant Knight, so strong and valiant, so complete in battle, and yet so sweet and melancholy, so inwardly torn by the Memory of A-mort and love; the captive was seized with that shameful curiosity which children feel when they sense the promises of sex or sense the mysteries of love. We can imagine the prisoner meditating and thinking, surprised by the enigma of the romantic song! And we can also suppose, too, that he will finally find a clue in that Wedding Ring... which according to the song would never be worn at any wedding. By deduction, the idea of the ring will lead him to seek and find the secret exit. He will look for it through that memory of the Original Village, memory of love, eternal memory of A-mort.



Early in the morning, at sunrise, Arika de Turdes had left her students to train with the aim of helping Vairon achieve basic mastery of his powers.

Failure after failure, Vairon had seen his efforts fall under the weight of his own failure. And no doubt the frustration was justified in his mind. He felt pressured to achieve something utterly impossible, for his challenge was to lift a gigantic boulder using no method other than his own strength. It was irrational for the overwhelmed student to even attempt it; however, all his logic shattered like glass hit by a hammer when he saw Berkana lift the huge boulder weighing hundreds of tons using only his bare hands.

This affront to his pride, coupled with his desperation to become strong, led Vairon to try to repeat his comrade's feat, but to no avail other than to hurt his hands miserably. Sprawled on the ground, defeat looming on his brow, the novice watched his stubbornness die along with his desire to attempt the challenge that had been set before him. After all, he was too human to achieve such a prodigy.

- Are you tired already? -Akinos asked his overworked companion.
- It's impossible," he replied, still breathing hard from the effort.
- It will be impossible as long as *you put* that in that hard *head* of yours.
- It's easy for you to say that. Can you lift this shitty stone?





Akinos approached the rock, staring at it and smiling. He placed the palm of his hand on it and with a slight effort began to push it before Vairon's astonished gaze.

-How do you do it? -he asked, watching the rock as it rolled by.

-Arika taught me that there are no impossibilities," he replied, "The key is not to think or feel too much, so listen and try to imagine that the stone is as *light* as a feather.

-I can't," Vairon replied, humiliated by a sense of helplessness.

-Don't ever say you *can't* again. If you *want to*, of course you can.

While Vairon's journey was being narrated in the shadow of that great stone, Berkana returned from the stagecoach that Arika had entrusted to him in the morning. He was returning with some fruit and bread.

-Shit, it took you forever," said Akinos by way of welcome.

-I got distracted for a *while* there in the village.

-Nie..., you *get* distracted by everything.

-From perico nomás *habláj*," Berkana replied, glancing sidelong at Vairon. Hey, kinsman, you still haven't moved the stone one *bit*? - he asked. Vairon shook his head.

-I don't know how to do it.

-Remember what Arika said.

-Of course, of course, not to think or feel and to see the stone as something that doesn't exist. And how the hell am I supposed to do that, eh?





-First you *have* to calm down. If you *get* in that kind of mood you'll never move her.

-Oh, Cambas! It's easy for you. You can move rocks, jump off buildings and fall like it's nothing, break trees with a kick and even bend the course of a river. But I'm not that strong.

-Oh, Colla! Look, Vairon, take a good look at what you have," said Akinos, "you're not as strong as we are. *You're even stronger.*

-Is it a white lie?

-*Nie*, kinsman, *pa'na*, I it. *Be* more confident.

Vairon drew a half-hearted smile on his mud-stained, dirt-stained, sweat-stained face. His hands were bleeding and aching badly. He looked at them and felt his strength drain away with every drop of blood that was lost forever in the dry earth of the training perimeter.

-I'd like to have at least a shred of that security, the *chance* to move this fucking shit stone. But the truth is, I'm fucked.

-Well, get some rest," said Berkana. I've got news. Both boys looked at Berkana expectantly.

-I tell them that there was a lot of commotion in the village.

-Why? -Akinos asked.

-We have visitors," replied his sister.

-What kind of visitors? -asked Vairon.

-Your friends, Vairon, have arrived.

A shadow fell over Vairon's face. As if pulled by a powerful tug, all his thoughts turned to a distant past that seemed almost lost in the sands of oblivion. He remembered the days when he was





a normal child living in a world dominated by routine. He felt in his fingers the softness of a pencil and paper, the addiction to make more and more perfect strokes. The sketches made with his own blood. He wanted to have at that moment something to draw on to keep away from himself all those ghosts that hurt him so terribly.

On moonless nights, Vairon's memories tore him apart more than his frustrations and fears. He had lost too much in too little time, and everything that could have been sublime was swept away by incomprehensible events...

He could not forget the blood, the unrecognisable forms of his parents, turned to shredded carrion on the floor and entrails hanging from the ceiling. And there was this monster, a tall, pale-skinned man whose white robes and snowy staff were stained with the horror of his parents. If Arika had not arrived in time, the poor boy would have been killed too. And then, in the midst of that grotesque scene, one face alone could blur the nausea, the face of a girl whose name meant to him impossible love and jealousy.

All that came to his mind as soon as Berkana gave the news of the arrival of his friends.... He was no longer the boy they had known, even his name had changed and he was now called by the Hyperborean name by which the Gods knew him: Vairon, Man Made Werewolf. The veiled mystery of his lineage had been lifted into his sphere of consciousness to complete the Mission that the Gods had entrusted to him many centuries ago. So the return of his friends meant everything and nothing. And though he knew that day would come, he never imagined it would be so soon.



-Why are you telling me this, Berkana? -Vairon asked, sitting up and looking at the large rock in front of him.

-Didn't you want to know?

-I don't know.

-I'm sure *you'll miss* them," Akinos interjected.

-Perhaps.

-*You know you can't* let this get to you," Berkana continued. *I had* to be stronger.

-Strong, strong," Vairon repeated, "There's nothing I want more than that.

-Y... -Akinos asked, a little unsure, "Do you *still* love her?"

Immediately Vairon's face hardened with an expression of fury, as if all the failures represented the impotence of his cowardice, his weakness, of his dead parents.

-Diana," he whispered to himself, closed his eyes, "Diana! -he shouted and hit the big stone with all his might.

In a passionate moment, fully charged with rage, Vairon's spectre rose so high that the great rock shattered into thousands of pieces. A brilliant greenish light girded the fist of the hyperborean student as unheard-of amounts of energy heated the rock and then froze it to the point where all its molecules began to fragment and split into their tiniest subatomic particles. In an instant so short, mere fractions of a second, the power of the enraged boy smashed into the atoms around him, causing dense clouds to cover the sky and blot out the sun. His power was such that Akinos and Berkana had to leap several metres away from the



The impact and raise their spectrum to the maximum to generate a plasma shield to protect them from the infinite power of Vairon, provoked by an unbounded rage.

When the phenomenon stabilised, a great cloud of dust and gas covered the spot where Vairon and the stone had performed the great prodigy of destruction. As the visual became clearer, all that was left on the perimeter was a large crater and the young student kneeling with his hands resting on the scorched ground beneath him. Akinos and Berkana were shocked after seeing the results of the great energy emanation. Their jaws dropped. The energy released had been so intense that even faint sparks of plasma were electrifying the floor with their greenish glow.

-Why did they have to come back," murmured Vairon, "Diana, Rodrigo, how long are they going to torment me?"



BERKANA



From coast to coast, the only sound in the sea is the sound of mermaids singing. They tell their stories, they tell the tale of a prisoner, a dashing knight and a wedding ring never given. They sing of love songs, songs of childhood. Their voices arouse curiosity for so much mystery, longing for a lost honour, nostalgia for a faraway country and memories of a love never lived. They sing their music on the coasts; and in the mountains, on the other side of the sea, only the sound of a piano playing on the highest peaks can be heard. Their music whispers strange poems, but there is one that is loud as a cry; a poem in which only one word is repeated in a stubborn, desperate, burdened and perpetual way: - Vairon||....

Berkana, Leviathan of the Tempest



Its high white walls appeared to be of ivory, carved with the greatest care and adorned with various runic figures. Spread across the eight corners that made up the shape in which they had been arranged, stood eight equally white towers, with long banners hanging from the top and dropping almost halfway down the tower. In those banners, a figure was clearly distinguishable 

The entire fortification was designed as a city, sheltered behind several levels of walls, like an onion. Between one wall and the next there were all sorts of buildings and cobbled streets for people to pass through. Each wall was lower than the one before it and formed eight levels in the shape of an eight-peaked octagon until it reached the central part, a place where one could see several buildings crowned in the centre by a castle-like figure and a cathedral, with the most imposing structure in the landscape protruding from the back. It was a tower so tall that its peak was completely out of sight. It rose so high that it blended into the blue of the sky and blended into the mountain range that formed the backdrop to such an impressive city.

The outskirts of the town were surrounded all kinds of plantations that carpeted a vast perimeter along the valley. To the east and west two rivers served as a boundary between the populated area and the wild plain that spread along the border with the mountain range. To the south the mountain range was a gigantic wall whose greatest banner was the fabulous Mount Illimani. However, there was something different on that parallel-dimensional horizon. On the planet Earth of the fourth vertical, of the place the travellers had



Here, the snow-capped mountain stands solitary and surrounded by hills devoid of perpetual glacier. On the planet Earth, where Erks had been built, Illimani was surrounded by mountains almost as high as the great mountain itself and crowned by eternal snow. It was easy to suppose then that the map of that twin planet of Earth would not be quite so identical to its sibling in a slightly denser dimension.

The otherworldly arrivals, with Rowena leading the caravan, could not help but be overwhelmed by such a wondrous place. The sky was so blue that its harmonic celestial blueness anchored itself in the mind of any fascinated viewer who could not help but gaze upwards. And the clouds seemed to take definite shapes playing on the roof of the world. The wind was a moist cooling breeze that gave relief from the heat of the agonising afternoon. The plants, almost rhyming with the poetry of the landscape, bloomed with the most incredible and impossible shoots a human mind could imagine. Some flowers were bioluminescent and phosphorescent, tinged with colours totally unknown in the world of the newcomers. The six young visitors looked around in total awe and surrendered themselves to the total abandonment of their anguish.

A discreet path led the caravan downhill until they came to a wide stone road surrounded by trees in the middle of the plain. They headed south until they came to a big bend where the trees were no longer there and were replaced by all sorts of crops. The workers, peasants and farmers for the most part, were white-skinned and had blond or red hair. They were all quite tall and exhibited great muscular development, perhaps due to the hard physical labour they performed. Most of them worked with little clothing, bare-chested, with bandages on their forearms and forearms.





hands, and curious trousers wrapped with pockets in which they placed their work tools and the occasional weed. They all stopped working at the sight of the strangers arriving and turned their gaze towards the strange boys.

The road continued until they reached the entrance to the great main wall. The gates were of white stone, exquisitely carved and carved with figures of warriors, naked women, beasts and a bust of a snake-haired woman on the lintel of the entrance. Two guards with spears and bulky armour squared up when they saw Rowena approach them. They exchanged a few words in a language totally unfamiliar to the boys and she entered the city with her wards behind her.

Inside, the city was as impressive as outside. Most of the buildings were beautiful architectural works of stone and wood. The paving of the streets had been laid using cobblestones perfectly cut to form a smooth, tile-like surface. Most of the buildings had windows covered with all kinds of ornamental glass.

The inhabitants wore clothes of dyed leather and cotton thread. There were men and women walking hurriedly and carrying baskets and all sorts of strange objects from one place to another. Some children played and ran about, occasionally turning to look at the strangers. The cart was in their way as the caravan moved passively through the streets of the citadel. The inner walls were arranged in such a way that they served as a wedge for the buildings that had been constructed around them. They proceeded through a few more streets until they came upon the



The next entrance whose characteristics were similar to of the first gate. On each level the appearance of the city was the same. Exactly as beautiful and organised, full of people rushing about doing all kinds of work. Some people stared at the foreign boys, but no one approached them; they just watched in silence. The occasional passer-by nodded as Rowena passed by.

They finally reached the centre of the citadel after a few minutes of steady walking. A large carved wooden gate greeted them, behind it stood the castle they had observed from the hill when they arrived. Behind the castle was the cathedral-like building with its massive, endless tower. Rowena stopped at the entrance and addressed the boys.

-This is the Citadel of Erks," said the teacher. I will soon take you to the place where you are to stay. For now, wait here for a few moments, I won't be long.

Rowena entered the castle after giving her instructions to her pupils, leaving them alone before the eyes of the inhabitants of Erks, who did not cease to look with some suspicion at the strange boys. They looked at each other and gathered themselves together. They felt inevitably nervous under the gaze of so many strangers.

-These people are looking at us kind of funny," said Gabriel.

-You don't listen to them," Edwin replied, dismantling some of his equipment.

-Will they speak Spanish? -asked Diana.

-No, a while ago I heard some people talking in a very strange language," answered Rocío.



-It looks half-German," Oscar interjected, looking up at the castle in front of them. In fact the whole place looks like a medieval town in Europe.

-That's true," said Rodrigo, who remembered seeing something similar in history books.

Without straying too far, the visitors began to stroll back and forth, looking curiously at everything around them. The locals didn't stop watching them either, but they didn't stop too long, just glanced at them and then went on their way. They stayed like this for a few minutes until someone addressed them in Spanish.

-Hey! -said the strange person who was just a girl with dark brown skin.

The newcomers looked at her nervously, the local girl smiled, turning the strangers' anxiety into curiosity. Especially Edwin, who had not felt his heart beat so strongly at a girl's smile for years.

-You're not from around here, are you? -asked the girl.

-No, we come from La Paz," said Edwin. The girl thought a little and smiled .

-You're *collingas*," the girl's accent had that thick edge to it.

The foreign boys were very surprised to hear it.

-Do you also come from...? -Edwin asked.

-Yes, I'm from Santa Cruz," she interrupted him, completing her answer.



-But, we thought we were the only ones who came from....

-Bolivia? -the girl interrupted again. No, they're not the only ones," she added, holding out her hand to Edwin. My name is Berkana.

-Nice to meet you. My name is Edwin.

-You're not *called* Edwin," she corrected, "at least not in Erks.

-Right, my name is Ninurtske....

-That's better," said Berkana. You should all make good use of your Hyperborean names, because in Erks those are the ones that count.

-Have you been here long? -Edwin asked.

-More or less. Sometimes I live here, sometimes I go back to Santa *Cru* to do some things.

-I understand," Edwin replied, totally fascinated and without even concealing it. The smiling girl had completely shaken his mind in a few seconds.

-Well, I'm off, I have an errand to run. See you," she said, turning away and raising her arm in farewell. Edwin kept looking at her as she left. Oscar approached her and put his hand on her shoulder.

-Hey, at least keep your mouth shut so the flies don't get in.

-Yes, of course... -said Edwin.

Within fifteen minutes Rowena emerged from the castle and, with a nod of her head and taking the reins of the horses, gave the order for her charges to walk.

Once again the newcomers found themselves surrounded by streets and curious gazes. They walked silently on, passing again through the eight levels of the citadel, until they came to another large gate. They emerged from



They followed a stone path until they came to a clearing, away from the crops and trees. In the centre were stone huts with wooden roofs surrounding dry logs and the ashes of a central bonfire. Rowena stopped near the logs and placed her palm in front of them, a pair of yellowish bolts of lightning shot from her hand and the fire immediately ignited in the logs. The boys could not understand how Rowena had done this.

-From today you will live here," said the teacher. There is food in the cupboard in your rooms, but it will only last you for a week. You will also find beds and fresh water for drinking and washing at the back of your huts. The fire will keep you warm on frosty days, you must not let the wood get damp. Tomorrow I will return and tell you how you will make your lives from today. For now rest.

-Wait! -Are you going to leave us here?

-Don't worry, they're safe," he replied and withdrew without another word.

-It's the warmest welcome I've ever received," laughed Gabriel, resigned.

With Rowena absent, Edwin took the reins of the expedition and began to dismount the belongings they had brought from the horses. The small huts were rectangular in shape. Each had a pair of twin double-decker beds inside. There were also a couple of small, beautifully decorated cupboards, a desk, a cupboard and a fireplace in each cabin. Almost attached to the wooden walls, on the outside, was a latrine whose obvious function was processed by simple cesspit logic. After some tidying up, the group came to an agreement to allocate the available spaces. The allocation of the huts was quite Solomonic.



Rodrigo and Gabriel would share one space, Oscar and Edwin would occupy the other, and the last one would be inhabited by Diana, Rocío and Jhoanna.

The otherworldly arrivals soon realised that the change in their lives would be far more radical than they had expected. The comforts of modern life were to be a thing of the past. From then on everything would be obtained with difficulty. They would have to chop wood, if they wanted fire. Hunt, if they wanted meat. Grind wheat, if they wanted bread. Spinning, if they wanted new clothes. Draw water from the well to quench their thirst. The boys knew this and felt burdened by their new responsibilities.

As they were getting organised and arranging their things in their respective huts, the sky suddenly became cloudy. Everyone went out to see the strange atmospheric phenomenon. Clouds were travelling across the sky at high speed and gathering at a nearby point at the other end of the city.

-What the hell is going on here" Gabriel muttered.

-We're in another world, it must be normal," said Diana.

-No, this is not normal," said Rodrigo.

Suddenly a brief flash of greenish light appeared on the horizon as if it were a bolt of lightning. When Rodrigo saw it he felt something constrict inside his chest. He brought his hand to the side of his heart and began to wring his clothes.

-Rodri, are you all right? -Diana asked when she saw her boyfriend's pained expression.

-Yes, it must be fatigue," he replied.



The phenomenon ended as abruptly as it began. The boys were a little afraid of what they had just seen, but tried to forget it as they shared a rather humble supper of a cup of milk and a piece of bread each. As night fell, they all began to retire to their respective huts, exhausted, but anxious and nervous about the unknown.

Edwin couldn't stop thinking about the girl who had greeted them when they arrived at the citadel. Her gaze, her smile, her very presence had awakened in him all sorts of feelings. The seed fascination for this girl had been planted inside him and he still didn't know how to face this new challenge. He didn't feel ready. Oscar couldn't sleep either, but his sleeplessness was due to the anguish of having left everything behind. The challenge of starting a new life was overwhelming him.

There was no sleep in the girls' cabin either. Rocio thought of her mother and felt anxious for her. Jhoanna also feared that her parents would be harmed by the terrible forces they had defied. But Diana, far from her fears for her family, had other anxieties on her mind. She could not stop thinking about the strange phenomenon they saw when they arrived at the huts, those grey clouds, the greenish glow, and something else: she had heard someone calling her name. She clearly heard her name when that greenish light passed like lightning in front of her eyes. She felt that someone familiar was near and that uneasiness would not let her rest.

In Rodrigo and Gabriel's cabin sleep was also an absent guest; neither of them could sleep. Gabriel's eyes were fixed on nothing. What worried him most was that the medicines for the optic atrophy he was suffering from were not working.



soon they would run out and he would irretrievably lose his sight. He knew he had to tell his friends, he had to confess to them that he had a disease that would leave him blind, but he refused to inspire pity in others. Rodrigo didn't sleep either, in his mind there was also the growing shadow of a threat he couldn't decipher. That greenish glow had left him with a sense of latent danger. There was something in Erks that he would have to face and he could not quite define what it was. Then his thoughts turned to the inside of his backpack, where there was a sheet of paper entitled "Battle Prefaces", written by a cousin of his who had nothing to do with what was happening to him. Rodrigo could not stop thinking about the relationship that it had with what he was experiencing at that very moment. Finally he could no longer cope with his anxiety and spoke to Gabriel.

-Che, Gabo, are you awake?

-Yes.

-Do you remember that letter we read at Rowena's house?

-Which one?

-The one that says "Battle prefaces".

-Ah," Gabriel made an effort, the subject soon leapt from his mind, "that one of your cousin's, isn't it?"

-Yes, that one. You know, it's a very unusual thing. You know, think about it, 2009 is about nine years away, and the letter is dated 14 November 2009.

-Well, after everything we've seen so far, I don't think anything surprises me anymore....

-It's just that... What the hell does the Gaburah have to do with all this? I see it as a bit...

-Cojudo?



-No, no," said Rodrigo, "I don't know how to explain it. The truth is that I felt sorry for him.

-Why is that?

-I don't know. My cousin Gaburah was always a super crazy, obsessive guy. He disowned everything and anything, and he was always cursing; it was easier to ignore him. You know, he never showed any interest in the supernatural, and now I have a letter written by him, in some future...

-Although it's bullshit, but if you think about it, we're in another dimension. We've seen *a lot of* very abnormal things, shit has happened to us that no one else has. What happened to your cousin is no less or more normal than anything else...

Rodrigo smiled.

-That's the smartest thing you've ever said in your life.

-Yaaa. Don't be a jerk either.

-You know *bro*, I don't think I want to know how this letter got there. I don't feel like involving anyone else in my family in this. Least of all the Gaburah. He doesn't deserve it.

-You're a bit of a bastard yourself, aren't you? -Gabriel replied, with a mischievous grin.

Silence clung to the walls of the hut, permeating the conversation of both boys. They longed to catch up on their sleep. Finally Gabriel spoke again:

-Hey, *man*, did you imagine this place would be like this? -he asked.

-Not at all, it's going to be a bitch to live here," Rodrigo replied, his voice choked.

-You know, one day I'm going to need a lot of help from you and the others.

-Why do you that?

-We're friends, aren't we?



-Yes, and we will all support each other.

-I , *brother*. Hey, will you miss your old life? -Gabriel asked.

-I think so, I'll miss the comforts," said Rodrigo.

-Right, there will be no more washing machine, cooker, television, microwave; nothing.

-Ni Nintendo

-How I'll miss rolling around in *Mortal Kombat*!

Rodrigo smiled at the comment and they were quiet for another while; sleep was slowly creeping in. Both boys tried not to be afraid of the future, but it was no use. Gabriel feared for the absence of his medicines in Erks, he feared he would go blind during training. Rodrigo feared for himself, for the menacing, greenish presence that haunted him in Erks; but his greatest anxiety was Diana. He felt uneasy that she and her sister would not be able to adjust. The fire in the fireplace lit up all his anxious thoughts in the midst of the Erks night.

-You know, I'm not scared anymore," Gabriel murmured, breaking the silence and trying to show some confidence. I think we'll become strong men here.

-Yes, tough and strong men," Rodrigo replied, speaking more to himself than to his friend. And the best thing is that now I will have much more time to spend with the Diana," the boy said in a truly hopeful tone.

-Hey, what will you do if you get the chance to..., you know..., *wikiwiki* with the Diana?

-Fuck, you're a degenerate," Rodrigo replied, blushing.

-Seriously then, *bro*. Don't get sanctimonious with me," Gabriel insisted.

-Nothing to see, if Edwin finds out he could hoist me with a ball," said Rodrigo.



-Ahhh, you're such a pussy, haha.

-Ya, I slept.

-Yes, that's what I'll do - again silence.

-If I get the chance to do it with her, I'll eat her whole," said Rodrigo.

-I that. Asshole," he muttered.

ELACIU AERKS





(Fehu)

Third Mystery, The Blood Pact

Version of the Atlantean Myth by Felipe Moyano; adaptation by Círculo de Amatista

Legend has it that when Atlantis sank, as a result of the war between its races, the Atlanteans loyal to the Spirit-Liberating Gods made a Blood Pact with the men of various warrior peoples. While the Atlanteans loyal to the Soul-Forging Gods made a Cultural Pact with men of various merchant peoples.

The Blood Pact consisted of Spirit-loyal Atlanteans mixing their blood with representatives of the native peoples, mostly of white races, generating the first dynasties of Warrior Kings of Divine Origin. They asserted themselves as great rulers because they were descended from the loyal Atlanteans, who in turn claimed to be Sons of the Gods. But the Warrior Kings were to preserve that Divine heritage by relying on an Aristocracy of Blood and Spirit, protecting their racial purity. And so they would do so faithfully for millennia until the enemy Strategy, of those who culturally covenanted with the faithful Atlanteans of the Soul, led them to break the Blood Covenant by operating through the foreign Cultures, blinding and maddening them through fiery love and passions. That lack of commitment to the Sons of the Gods was the cause of great evils.

The Blood Pact included more than genetic inheritance, of course. Firstly, there was the promise of Wisdom: Atlanteans loyal to Spirit had assured their descendants, and future representatives, that loyalty to the mission would be rewarded by the Liberator Gods with the Highest Wisdom, that which enabled Spirit to return to the Origin beyond the stars. It is worth saying that the Warrior Kings and members of the





The Blood Aristocracy would also become Wise Warriors, Men of Stone, like the Spirit-loyal Atlanteans, just by fulfilling the mission and respecting the Blood Pact; on the contrary, forgetting the mission or betraying the Blood Pact would bring grave consequences: it was not a question of -punishment by the Gods|| or anything similar, but of losing Eternity, that is, of an irreversible spiritual fall, even more terrible than that which had chained Spirit to Matter. The Liberator Gods, according to the particular description which the Spirit-loyal Atlanteans gave to the native peoples, neither forgave nor punished for their deeds; they did not even judge, for they were beyond all Law; their gaze was only on the Spirit of man, or on what was spiritual in him, on his will to abandon matter; Those who loved Creation, those who wished to remain subject to the pain and suffering of animal life, those who, by holding these or similar illusions, forgot the mission or betrayed the Blood Covenant, would not face - no! no punishment: only the loss of eternity was certain; unless the implacable indifference which the Delivering Gods exhibit towards all traitors|| was considered a _punishment'.

As to Wisdom, legend has it that the native peoples received in every case a direct proof that they could acquire a superior knowledge, a concrete evidence that spoke louder than the incomprehensible arts employed in megalithic constructions: and this undeniable proof, which placed the native peoples above any others who not dealt with the Atlanteans, consisted in the understanding of Agriculture and the manner of domesticating and governing the animal populations useful to man. Indeed, upon the departure of the Atlanteans loyal to the Spirit, the native peoples had, to hold their ground and accomplish the mission, the mighty aid of agriculture and animal husbandry, no matter what they had been before: gatherers, hunters, or mere plundering warriors. The magical enclosure of the fields and the layout of the walled cities had to be carried out in the





*The Atlanteans, loyal to the Spirit, bequeathed to the native peoples for this purpose a stone plough. It was a lithic instrument, made entirely of stone, designed and built by Them, which they were never to part with, and which they were only to use for founding the agricultural and urban sectors of the occupied land. Naturally, this was a test of Wisdom, but not Wisdom itself; and what of Wisdom, when was the knowledge to be obtained that enabled the Spirit to travel beyond the stars? Individually it depended upon the will to return to the Origin and the direction in which that will was directed towards the Origin. Each could leave at any time and from any place if he acquired the Wisdom that came from the will to return and the **Orientation** towards the **Origin**. The combat against the Powers of Matter would, in this case, have to be resolved personally; it would constitute a feat of the Spirit and would be held in high esteem by the Liberating Gods.*

Collectively, however, the Wisdom of Spirit Liberation, which would make possible the departure of all the Wise Warriors to K'Taagar and thence to the Origin, would only be obtained when the theatre of operations of the Essential War was moved back to Earth. Then the Liberating Gods would again manifest to men to lead the Forces of Spirit in the Final Battle against the Powers of Matter. Until then, the Wise Warriors should effectively accomplish the mission and prepare for the Final Battle. And then, when summoned by the Gods to take their place in the Battle, it would be the turn of the Wise Warriors as a whole to demonstrate the Wisdom of Spirit. As the Atlanteans loyal to the Spirit asserted, this would be inevitable if the native peoples fulfilled their mission and respected the Blood Pact, for then the highest Wisdom would coincide with the strongest will to return to Origin, with the strongest orientation towards Origin, with the highest courage resolved to fight the



The powers of Matter, and with the utmost spiritual hostility towards the non-spiritual.

Collectively, then, the ultimate Wisdom would be revealed at the end, during the Final Battle, in a moment that all Wise Warriors would recognise simultaneously. How? The opportunity would be recognised directly with the Pure Blood, in an inner perception, or through the -Stone of Venus||.

*To the Warrior Kings of each allied people, that is to say, to their descendants, the Atlanteans loyal to the Spirit also bequeathed a Stone of Venus, an emerald-like gem the size of a child's fist. This stone, which had been brought to Earth by the Liberator Gods, was not faceted in any way but was finely polished, showing on one part of the surface a slight concavity in the centre of which was the Sign of Origin. According to what the Atlanteans loyal to the Spirit revealed to the Warrior-Kings, before the fall of the extraterrestrial Spirit into Matter, there existed on Earth an extremely primitive animal-man, the son of the Creator God of all material forms. Such a man-animal possessed soul essence, that is, a Soul capable of attaining immortality, but lacked the eternal Spirit which characterised the Liberator Gods or the Creator God Himself. However, the animal-man was destined to attain evolutionarily a high degree of knowledge of the Work of the Creator, knowledge which was summed up in the Sign of the Serpent; in other words, the serpent represented the highest knowledge for the animal-man. After starring in the fall into matter, the Spirit became incorporated into the animal-man, a prisoner of Matter, and the need for its liberation arose. The Liberating Gods, who in this were as terrible as the accursed Creator God Captivator of the Spirits, only attended, as was said, to those who had the will to return to the Origin and exhibited orientation towards the Origin; to these brave Spirits, the Gods said: **"you have lost the***



Origin and you are a prisoner of the serpent: with the Sign of Origin, understand the serpent, and you will be free again in the Origin!

Wisdom thus consisted in understanding the serpent with the Sign of Origin. Hence the importance of the legacy which the Atlanteans loyal to the Spirit bestowed by the Blood Pact: the Pure Blood, the blood of the Gods, and the Stone of Venus, in the concavity of which the Sign of Origin was observed. That inheritance, no doubt, could save the Spirit if -with the Sign of Origin the serpent was understood,|| as the Gods ordained. But to realise the Wisdom of the Liberation of the Spirit would be no easy task, for on the Stone of Venus the Sign of Origin was in no way impressed. On it, in its concavity, it could only be -observed||. And it was seen there only by those who respected the Blood Pact, for, in truth, what existed as a Divine inheritance from the Gods was a Symbol of Origin in the Pure Blood. The Sign of Origin, observed in the Stone of Venus, was only the reflection of the Symbol of Origin present in the Pure Blood of the Warrior Kings, of the Wise Warriors, of the Sons of the Gods, of the Semi-divine Men who, along with an animal body and a material Soul, possessed an Eternal Spirit. If the Blood Pact was betrayed, if the blood became impure, then the Symbol of Origin would be weakened and the Sign of Origin on the Stone of Venus could no longer be seen. The possibility of -understanding the serpent,|| the ultimate Wisdom, and with it the opportunity, the last opportunity, to join the Essential War, would be lost. Conversely, if the Blood Pact was respected, if the Pure Blood was preserved, then the Venus Stone could rightly be called -mirror of the Pure Blood|| and those who observed the Sign of Origin upon it would be - Initiated into the Mystery of the Pure Blood||, true Wise Warriors.



And there was, killing himself with infamous alcohol in the gloom of dingy bars. He sought in drink the abject consolation for all that he had lost, to anaesthetise the maelstrom of burning desires that inflamed his insides and seemed the constant scourge of his passions beneath his greasy skin. He wanted to stop remembering, to forget that his wife had left him and that his daughter had disappeared from the face of the earth. His daughter? Didn't he bring that daughter into the world to be his perpetual companion? Of course, for that he had begotten her with a woman whose fiery youth had been but an excuse for the sacred intercourse of the filthy drunkards. But his daughter was too beautiful for him, much more so than his wife. She was so beautiful and grew so fast that he soon felt the burning need to take her. He restrained himself as much as he could, but he failed and did what he wanted to do. So he drank, lost himself in the arms of Bacchus and released his demons; that's how he took his daughter's virgo by force, that was his great secret.

But his daughter was no longer with him, he could no longer spy on her in the shower or when she changed her clothes. He could no longer smell her neck or hear her voice. He could no longer hotly caress the most intimate parts of that immaculate body. He could no longer be a father to her, he could never have her. His wife, or ex-wife, had taken away all power over his daughter. One day she just left the house and never showed up again. All the beatings he had given her to show her who was the man of the house were of no use. His constant efforts to prove his supremacy had been in vain and nothing made him more bitter than that. He needed to feel the power, to know that there were those who feared him and yet loved him, to experience the adulation and the surrender.



unconditional support of his dependents at all costs. But he could no longer exercise that power, it had been taken away from him. So he drank himself to death, to ease the pain of his emasculated authority.

He drank, Rocío's father spent whole days drinking. He had no job, no family, no home, nothing. His ex-wife had taken everything from him and the only thing he had left, the only reason he could breathe, was his desire for revenge. He wanted to destroy, to hurt the female who had humiliated him. He wanted to tear apart those who had helped her abandon him. He wanted to regain power over his daughter and be inside her again without anyone daring to stand in his way. He was to have total control, supremacy, the irrefutable rule of his Marxist desires, of his dictatorial longings for entire nations. But especially his family, which by biblical rule should revere him.

He had already spent almost all his savings on cheap booze. The alcoholics in the bars of the Garita de Lima knew him quite well; "there's Mario sucking again", they said. Some of them had become his friends and for that reason had not assaulted him despite his reputation as a bank worker, or rather ex-bank worker. After all, there wasn't much to steal from him anymore. He had lost everything when his wife left him.

Mario Salas Ibáñez, Rocío's father, was drunk. He had arrived shortly after midday and had drunk several pitchers of adulterated rum before falling asleep at the table. The chichería cumbia resounded all around him, the thug passing by and laughing at the sight of him. Others came to the surrounding tables, shared the spoils of some robbery and then left. No one felt the slightest pity for the filthy



drunk who, every afternoon, fell asleep at table three of the bar "Corralito" in Garita de Lima.

At nightfall the noise of a knife fight woke him up. Two thugs had quarrelled during the sharing out of a robbery. One of them had slashed the other's face and the floor was bloodied. Mario got up with a horrendous headache and left the joint, staggering from side to side. In the street he vomited a couple of times before the incisive scolding of a skirt-wearing woman who, with infinite disgust, saw his wares vomited up with gastric juices. With no direction or orientation, Mario wandered into shady alleys shrouded in the shadows of scorned and rotting mafias. A few metres away from him, a schoolgirl no more than fifteen years old was being raped by two thugs who had caught her unawares. Her backpack, with all her school supplies scattered on the ground, had been abandoned a few metres away from Mario. One of the rapists held her and covered her mouth while the other straddled her legs and followed a hypnotic rhythm with his hips. The drunk, witnessing the whole portal, couldn't help but get an erection. It had been a long time since their last intercourse.

With no control of himself, Rocío's father slipped his hand down his trousers and began to masturbate, remembering his daughter's naked body, her smells, her tastes, and as he so his anger grew. He was onanising himself with such force that he soon began to feel pain. When he finished, he noticed that the thugs had gone and left his victim on the floor, totally terrified and with a horrible bleeding crotch. Mario drunkenly got up with every intention of helping her, but instead he ran away, into even more hidden streets; he thought that if the police arrived they would think he was the rapist. He stumbled over a stone in the road and



He fell heavily into an abandoned gutter on the ground, cutting his face.

-Shit," he muttered.

For a moment he closed his eyes and wished he would never open them again, he wanted to stay right there and let death's embrace put him out of his misery. Then he felt someone lift him up and wipe the blood from his face. When he opened his eyes, he saw a man with Asian features, pale skin, red irises, and an aquiline nose, covered head to toe in a white robe. In his drunkenness and the moment, the drunk thought he was an angel. Then the mysterious fellow blew on the drunkard's face and he suddenly felt completely sober. He looked at the strange man and could barely articulate a few words.

-I have no money," said the pathetic alcoholic.

-I don't want your money, Mario," replied the character who had saved him.

-What do you want, then?

-To you, brother, to you.

-F... I beg your pardon?

-I have come to save your soul.

-I don't understand.

-Listen. Many things I know about you, such as that right now only your hatred keeps you alive. The heavenly hosts have decided to give you a chance to fulfil your purpose.

-Is this a dream?

-No," the man said and then, placing his finger on Mario's forehead, projected images of heavenly places into his mind. If you purge your sins



If you repent of your outrages, there will be forgiveness and reward for you.

-Yes. Yes, I'll do anything.

-Will you be an instrument of our Lord, your God?

-Yes.

-Good. Very good.

At that moment an intense light shone from the chest of the man in white. He looked at the dazzled dipsomaniac man and kissed his lips intensely. Mario could not resist, quickly went into shock and lost consciousness. He fell to the ground, unconscious, but seconds later his body began to convulse. His skin began to ooze blood and ulcerate horribly. A myriad of scales began to erupt from his ulcers. Two large wounds opened up on his back and from them a pair of expanding bones emerged. A transparent membrane formed on them, similar to the wings of a bee. Claws articulated from its fingers. Its ears elongated until they became pointed. Its skin transformed until it looked like the skin of a reptile. His hair quickly fell out and from the back of his neck and forehead three spiral horns sprouted from between which a reddish flame was lit. His legs deformed into the hind limbs of a ram. Its spine began to lengthen until it protruded from its hips, becoming a tail topped with a sting. Its eyes sunk into their sockets and the features of its face peeled away from its flesh until it looked like the face of a skull. When the transformation was complete, the beast opened its eyes. Its gaze was a window into hell, reptilian eyes with flattened pupils dominated by a yellowish colour. It sat up, shook its head and looked at its master.



-A warrior born of hatred and peace," said the man in white. Tell me who your lord is.

-Jehovah," replied Mario, transformed into a beast.

-Tell me who your General is.

-You, my lord Hélixabor.

-I said my name one more time.

-You are Hélixabor, my Lord.

-And who are you?

-His slave and faithful servant.

-Whose soul is your soul?

-It's yours.

-Then you will do my will.

-Yes, Master.

-You will take revenge on the woman who took everything from you.

-Yes, Master.

-You shall take your daughter and bear her a son, whom you shall bring before me.

-Yes, Master.

-And you will purge your sins in the limbo of Shambhala, where forgiveness will be given to you.

-Yes, Master.

-Now I rename you in the name of God Jehovah. In the name of the People of God, you will be a *Golem* of Israel in this world. You will obey only your new name. You are called Bálaham.

-Yes, Master Hélixabor.

-Tell me your name.

-I am Bálaham, your servant.

-What is your mission.



-To end the lineage of Seti and Ramses. Destroy the rebels who dwell in Agartha. Destroy the invaders living in Erks. Exterminate the Sentinels and Artemis herself.

-Very good, Bálaham. Now you will return to your human form and always come to my call. I will give you money, power, pleasures and all that you need as a mortal. And as immortal in your soul I will give you the power to destroy all who oppose you.

-Yes, Master Héxabor.

-You shall render an account to me and to the Tetragrammaton of the *Sephirothic* heaven of Shambhala. And you shall worship and give glory to the Lord your God.

-Yes, Master Héxabor.

-That's the way I like it, Bálaham.

The impromptu submission ceremony over, Héxabor vanished in a blaze of white light and Bálaham returned to his human form, once again Mario Salas, Rocio's drunken father. But in reality he was no longer the same, he had all the knowledge in his mind. He knew what he had do. In one of the pockets of his torn trousers he found several gold coins and he knew perfectly well where to get more. He was a rich man and before long he would be powerful, he knew it. Revenge would be taken and the one time daughter would be his again.

Mario left the alley, but before leaving he saw the abused girl still lying on the ground, picking up her school supplies and making a superhuman effort to sit up. Mario looked at her and ran his tongue over her lips, tasting his next victim, for Mario knew perfectly well what he was going to do with this girl; she was going to be his first source of pleasure in his new life.



BALAHAM



There is no better flesh than that of a virgin girl who is about to bleed for the first time. You can devour her, torture her or penetrate her, it doesn't matter, it is exquisite. Her fear is sublime, the promise of sacrifice and martyrdom for the glory of the Most High. Let the girls suffer and bleed so that He, in His greatness, may have mercy and comfort them as He digests them. Everything else, everything that does not suffer, is disgusting because it does not accept the mercy of the Most High.

Bálaham



Qhawaq Yupanki was an old man with silver hair and grey beards. His white skin had several blemishes caused by the sun and his many jobs in the mine and in the fields. His body was completely imbricated with numerous scars caused by undetermined wars and others that were a matter of controversy even among the scribes of Erks. His eyes had no pupil or iris at all, just a blank sclera whose eternal expression was the nothingness of a gaze. No one knew how Qhawaq lost his sight, but everyone knew him to be blind from the beginning.

Some apocryphal records of Bolivian history often speak of a "white Indian" who repeatedly gained notoriety for his interventions in the course of historical events not only in Bolivia, but in the entire South American continent. Some Erks scholars and historians of the Bolivian Military College, belonging to the Inti Squadron, claimed that Qhawaq Yupanki was this "white Indian". This, against all logic, implied that the old man's age was 200 years or more. However, Qhawaq's life was an unsolved mystery; he himself never spoke of his youth.

Although no one could determine the old man's exact age, it was certain that old Qhawaq had wandered in various directions throughout his life, intervening in every important moment of history. Some annals identified the "white Indian" during the retaking of La Paz at the Battle of Ingavi in 1841. Other documents spoke of a "white Indian" who advised Bolivian President Germán Busch Becerra during the years of the Chaco War in 1932. As a result of the guidance of the "white Indian", the



General Germán Busch prepared a well-planned assault to overthrow David Toro and seize power under a Nationalist government that had undoubtedly made several overtures to the German government of the Third Reich; this relationship led to the assassination of Germán Busch, not his suicide, as the official version claims.

The old man was a descendant of the ancestral House of Skiold. His ancestors were known as Atumurunas and came from the Schleswig region in southern Denmark. In the 10th century, the Skioldland Kingdom existed there, which was eight centuries old and had resisted the Christian invasion of Charlemagne 150 years earlier.

The Skioldans were known to retain their allegiance to Odin, or Navutan, even during the Christianisation of Scandinavia; and they had managed to preserve their Stone of Origin as an inheritance from the white Atlanteans. All this resulted Jehovah, the Synarchy and the heavenly hosts declaring war on the House of Skiold. Despite the continuous attacks of the demons of heaven, the Skioldans managed to remain free until the time of the German King Henry I. In the 10th century, this King, who was also a Hyperborean Initiate, defeated the King of Denmark, Germondo, and conquered Schleswig; according to his custom, he established a border mark in the region and for this purpose appointed the King of Skioldland as Margrave, regardless of whether his subjects were Christians or not. But the German Kingdom was, and the *Golen* soon began a campaign of agitation to force the mass conversion of the Vikings and to force their King to surrender "the instruments of pagan worship", including the Crown that held the Stone of Origin. However, they achieved nothing during Henry I's lifetime.



The king died in 936 and was succeeded by his son Otto, who, although descended from the legendary Vitiking on his mother Matilda's side, was brainwashed by his Benedictine *Golen* instructors. Otto I wanted in every way to imitate Charlemagne and began by having himself crowned king in Aachen by the Archbishop of Mainz, followed by several expeditions to Italy to meet the popes and his imperial investiture in Rome in 962.

In 965, the intrigues of the *Golen* and the heavenly demons took effect and an expedition marched on Schleswig: it was composed of imperial troops under the command of General Zähringer and carried the mission to convert the pagan Kingdom to Christianity or destroy it, and, in any case, to seize the royal Crown. There was no salvation for the Vikings and so their King, Kollman, proposed to them to leave this country that would soon fall into the hands of the Demons: *"Odin led our grandfathers and gave them these lands; and he now commands us to leave for another kingdom beyond the seas!"*

Seventy per cent of the population accepted the offer and set sail in 220 drakkars, those who remained were put to the sword by the enraged evangelists. The large fleet crossed the Dark Sea and reached the Gulf of Mexico. There the civilisation of the Toltecs flourished, who welcomed the Vikings as "sons of the Gods", that is, as descendants of the Atlanteans of the Blood Pact.

Despite having easily prevailed over the Toltecs and having contributed profoundly to the improvement of their civilisation, ten years later the Kollman people continued their journey south, with those who had married local women remaining with the Toltecs. Leaving Mexico, the Skiold Lords sailed to Venezuela. They then marched on



They sailed west, through Colombia and Ecuador, and would reach Quito, from where they would sail south again. They disembarked at Tacna and climbed the mountains to the east until they reached the plateau of the Bolivian altiplano and found themselves at Tiwanaku and Lake Titicaca. This was the place indicated by the Stone of Origin as their destination.

At Tiwanaku the Skioldans found a half-destroyed stone city, a kind of masterpiece of the Atlanteans of the Blood Pact. Next to the ruins they built a town that would become the head of an empire. And on the Island of the Sun, they erected a Temple to the local Deity, for they themselves had introduced themselves to the Collas, Pukinas and other natives as "Sons of the Sun". The Viking Empire of Tiwanaku prospered and expanded until the 14th century, when the second part of the drama of the House of Skiold unfolded.

In that century the Skioldans were already known as "Atumurunas", due to their white skin colour and their predilection for the cold moon. They had dominated all the native peoples living in the vicinity. Only one resisted, and not on its own merits, but because the Atumurunas hesitated between knowing them to be free and far away, or subjecting them to vassalage and having to deal with them. That people were the Diaguita, and the Vikings' apprehension of them stemmed from an almost biochemical rejection, essential to their customs and culture. The fact was that while the mass of the natives did indeed belong to the American cultures, the noble and priestly caste that ruled them had a powerful link with the demons of heaven and their overlords of Mediterranean, practically Hebrew, ancestry, which crossed the Pacific in infiltrated form along with various groups of Asians, Turks, Filipinos and Japanese.



The Skioldans soon discovered that the Diaguita nobility were of the most ancient Hebrew lineage, and their priests were regarded as the most zealous defenders of the Covenant with Jehovah. They professed a deadly hatred of the Vikings and Quechuas, and lived permanently harassing the frontiers of the Empire of the Viking Incas and Quechua Incas. But they had always been kept in check; at least until the fateful year of 1315. In that year a widespread uprising of Diaguita tribes, led by the Aymara chiefs themselves, took place from the Quebrada de Humauaca to Atacama in Chile, for no justifiable reason on the part of the Empire.

The news that arrived indicated that the Great Cari Chieftain had received a visit from two envoys of Jehovah known as Berhaj and Birchaj, who incited them to war against Tiwanaku and Cuzco. They assured him of victory because the Diaguita, they said, belonged to His Chosen People and could not lose. Motivated by this promise of victory, the fierce Diaguita and Aymara advanced irresistibly behind the borders of the Empire, besieged Tiwanaku and infiltrated the Inca nobility through intrigues between the lords of Cuzco and the Tiwanaku lordships; the infiltration was such that, decades later, the plots would lead to the fracture of the empire through Atahualpa's betrayal of Huáscar, his brother. The priestly cult of llama sacrifice would be essential in the centuries to come to keep the Ande divided and the Quechua weakened. Later, the Aymara tribes would rise up with an advanced culture to dominate the Pactos de Sangre, which would be deployed from the ruins of Tiwanaku and sustained by a powerful coca economy, economic speculation and populism. Its entire cultural heritage would be oriented towards alcohol, passions, blind faith and the forces of matter; it would initiate the Ekeko Era.



In those murky years of tribulation, the Vikings finally sought refuge on the Isle of the Sun and entered the Way of the Gods. Some went to Erks to avoid being pursued by the demons of the sky, while the Atumuruna Initiates entered the secret Atlantean Cavern on the Isle of the Moon, Koaty. There they would await the Lords of Tharsis to secure their lineage and, many years later and through their last descendant, Qhawaq Yupanki, they would train the chosen warriors of the Houses Michelle, Kuklov, Bakari, Horkheimer and other nobles to face the sky demons by the first year of the 21st century, which was 2000.

Perhaps because of the long tradition of Qhawaq's ancestors, the Lords of Skiold, many things were said about him. Everyone knew that the old man played a key role during the occult wars against the abyssal intraterrestrials; his wise guidance was vital in the defence of the Vatican City. However, the only verifiable event with living witnesses to Qhawaq's immense power was during the siege of the Urantia demons in the Battle of the Atlantic, a war that pitted several troops of underwater devils against the defensive squadrons of Icelandic hierophants on the volcanic shores of Iceland. All the survivors saw a lethal bolt of lightning shoot out of the old man's eyes and scorch the demonic hosts that were trying to invade the Arctic Circle.

In 1984 Qhawaq's only known son was killed by the priest Héxabor, leaving an orphaned child whose mother had died giving birth to him. With no one else in the world, the child fell under the protection of his grandfather who soon made him his apprentice in the Hyperborean Wisdom. Six years later, in 1990, old Qhawaq again witnessed the cruelty of Héxabor who, in collusion with the demon Golab, murdered an Icelandic couple.



very close to him, so close that Qhawaq was named godfather to the couple's only daughter.

With her parents dead, the responsibility for the child's welfare also fell on the shoulders of the old man who decided to adopt her and take her away from Iceland forever, raising her and her grandson in the cities of Sucre and Oruro until it was time to take them both to the Citadel of Erks. When the children were old enough they were trained to raise their power to the highest possible level and take control of it. This strange family of grandfather, grandson and goddaughter was referred to as the "First Cultivation" as the two children had been marked by the Gods during the Winter Solstice as Sentinels of the Goddess. They had entered a circle of twelve chosen members who would be the most powerful warriors of their Threshold. Since then Qhawaq Yupanki together with his grandson, Rhupay Yupanki, and his goddaughter, Valya Willhelmsson, set about gathering the remaining Sentinels in order to face the battle ahead.

Old Qhawaq sat at the head of a long rectangular table, patiently waiting for a quorum to be established for the meeting of the selected training committee. Because of his knowledge and wisdom, the old man had been appointed hierophant of Erks and among his many responsibilities was to organise the training of the twelve Sentinels. Qhawaq had pondered long nights on how best to carry out his task. He had even had records opened with the names of each of the boys chosen in the Erks town hall, his file included the names by which they had been baptised in La Paz, and the Hyperborean names revealed by the reading the runes. However, the reason



The purpose of that meeting was not to sort out the method and way of training the boys, but to discuss a bigger problem.

The first to arrive was Rowena Von Kaiser. She was obviously exhausted, for she had not rested a single minute since arriving in Erks with her caravan. As soon as they arrived at the citadel she went with her wards to the training perimeter and settled them there. Those were the terms under which Qhawaq and Rowena had agreed on the distribution of space. Erks was not a place that received visitors and the food was measured. They had to be very selective when it came to welcoming new members into the community.

-Master," said Rowena, bowing slightly to the old man.

-Welcome back, Rowena Von Kaiser," Qhawaq replied. It is a joy to have you back in this city.

-It has been a long road.

-The Way of the Gods is always long. But don't worry, as soon as your boys learn to freeze their own time, they will no longer need to go that way to return to their world; they will be able to travel, to come and , breaking directly through the spatial and temporal dimension of the illusory world of matter.

As they were talking, another member of the party arrived. He wore a long dark greatcoat over his black shirt and trousers. Rowena stared at the newcomer and gave a wolfish smirk.

-Aldrick Du Ruelant," said Rowena. You are on time.

-Fortunately, I arrived without major setbacks.

-It's strange to see you again after so long.

-Likewise, my lady Rowena.



-Comrade Aldrick," said Qhawaq, "arrived a few days ago. He has been preparing everything to start training his disciples.

Rowena gave the Crusader a sidelong glance.

-Always cautious and disciplined, Aldrick.

-*He suffit de faire mon devoir,*" replied the Crusader.

-*Vous toujours,*" Rowena replied, also in French.

At that moment, the fourth member of the committee arrived. The woman whose presence in Erks had been institutionalised years ago; accompanied by the mystery that characterised her. She looked at everyone, nodded slightly, and then Qhawaq motioned for everyone to sit down.

-Arika of Turdes," Rowena greeted the newcomer. It is good to see you again.

-Likewise Rowena," the gypsy replied. We'll have a lot of work to do around here," she looked at the Crusader. Aldrick, I hope you're ready.

-I always am, Mrs Arika.

-Let's get started," said Qhawaq as he pulled out several scrolls and placed them on the table. These are the records of the boys in Erks. I have carefully prepared them for filing. As you will see, we have already distributed the training groups. The First Cultivation, which I lead, will continue to be composed of my grandson and goddaughter. Comrade Arika has created her own training circle consisting of Vairon, Berkana and Akinos. They have been designated as the Fourth Cultivation," she paused and added: "The Second Cultivation will be composed of Lycanon, known as Rodrigo in his other world; Dianara, formerly Diana; Rit, who is Rocio; and Gorkhan, Gabriel. Rowena Von Kaiser will be the mentor of that group; if she does not object," said Qhawaq, looking at the blonde woman.



-I am familiar with them," said Rowena. It will be all right with me.

-Perfect," Qhawaq replied. As for the Third Crop, which Aldrick Du Ruelant will train, it will be composed of the greatest: Ninurtske, known as Edwin among his people; Hagal, formerly Oscar; and Debla, who is called Jhoanna.

-Ninurtske, the Taurus, holds the charismatic axis of the group, Isn't that right? -said Aldrick; the old man nodded.

-He already has military training and is a born leader. The others will follow him no matter where he goes. That is why, Comrade Aldrick, it is important that you are careful in the training of these boys. I know they are his first disciples, but I am fully confident that he will be a great hyperborean mentor.

The old man rolled the scrolls of their respective disciples to each master.

-Keep those documents safe, they will even serve as safe conduct to the state authorities of the world you come from," said Qhawaq, moved his stiff neck slightly to release some pressure, and continued: "Now to what we came for. I have to inform you that a serious problem has arisen in our plans, something we feared might be the worst thing that could happen and which, unfortunately, we have confirmed. Arika will explain.

The old man yielded the floor, fixing his sightless eyes in the direction of the gypsy woman. The old man spoke as if he could see; however, this was not because he could actually see anything, but because he could perceive the energies of those around him. Arika began her explanation:

-The numbers add up perfectly. The chosen twelve are in Erks and, as commissioned, the Silver Hajime came with them, in the hands of Lycanon and Dianara. The Bow of Artemis is still missing, though it seems to be missing now.



we have some clues as to its location. According to the myth, when the wolf and the come together in cold love and unite the two pieces of the Silver Hajime, the seal that holds the power of the Bow is broken and the Stone of Origin embedded within it is activated in the power of the Pure Blood of its bearer; which in this age, will be Dianara. But to wield that power requires the twelve Hyperborean beasts to be gathered, and though we have twelve chosen ones, we do not have twelve beasts.

Aldrick and Rowena frowned, puzzled.

-Could you explain? -asked the Crusader.

-What happens," Arika continued, "is that the wolf was split and its spirit fragmented into two halves during its incarnation. Last year, around the time of the Southern Summer Solstice, which in that world they call Christmas, I went to look for possible bearers chosen by the Gods to have the Silver Hajime. I disguised myself as a fortune teller at a Christmas fair held in the city of La Paz, Bolivia. I stayed for several weeks waiting for the prophecy of my ancestors to be fulfilled and for those chosen ones to arrive in my tent. Just as I was giving up hope, Dianara and Lycanon came into the shop. Almost immediately I knew it was them, but I preferred to make sure by reading the runes. I saw that the wolf was incomplete, Lycanon lay fragmented. Some time later Qhawaq corroborated me. A few days earlier I had been on the trail of Héxabor who, as you know, is prowling around La Paz. He cruelly murdered a married couple, with an only child, whom I barely rescued. Héxabor wanted to kill the boy, I didn't understand the reason, he seemed to be a normal child, asleep, like all the inhabitants of that world. However, I discovered that the boy had Pure Blood, a long lineage with Cathar tradition and a guardian Spirit who, coincidence or not, was Gery, the twin wolf of Freky, guardian of Lycanon.

-What are you implying? -Rowena interrupted.



-What I am saying is that the Tenth Mystery, that of the Twin Wolves, is textually applicable to this case. When the wolf son of the Fenrir fleshed out at the death of the bearer, some demon of *Shambhala* fractured the beast, splitting it into two halves. One rests in Lycanon and the other in my disciple, Vairon.

-But," Aldrick interjected, "if these two children carry two halves of a hyperborean beast and the chosen ones are twelve, that means we only have eleven beasts. Where is the twelfth beast?"

-He did not incarnate in this age," replied Qhawaq. The missing beast is the eagle.

-We will not be able to use the Bow of Artemis with eleven beasts," said Rowena, "the strategic encirclement will not close unless we gather them all together, nor will the Bow be at its full power.

-But we have a chance," the gypsy added. If we find a Pureblood who carries Guardian Spirit vigilance and train him, we will summon the Eagle.

-And what will happen to the children who share the Wolf beast? -Aldrick asked.

-One of them will die and disappear without remedy," Qhawaq replied.

It's a pity it has to be like this, but it's our only chance.

-And which of them will die? -asked the Crusader again.

-Whichever is less Pureblooded," said the old man. We have no choice but to wait and train them both until only one remains in the possession of the Wolf. For now, we need only worry that the Chosen present in Erks awaken their power. If they awaken, even if the twelfth beast is absent, we can find the Bow of Artemis. Then a thirteenth chosen one will be manifested who will be the bearer of the Eagle and one of the



Lobo twins will die to complete the beast that is now fragmented into two different carriers.

-Truly," Arika interjected, "the Demiurge and his sky demons have shown all their cruelty in this nameless deed. I don't know by what kind of cursed magic they were able to capture the Wolf and tear him in two, but when the beast, the son of the Fenrir awakens, he will take vengeance for this, I am sure.

-And in the meantime," said Rowena. We can only do the work the gods have assigned us and wait for Odin's help. Gentlemen, we face the worst scenario of action we could imagine, the rest will be by force of will or divine design alone. May Artemis and Athena guide us...



QHAWAQ



You have only two things to fear: suffering the indifference of the Gods and losing your only chance to return to Origin.

Qhawaq Yupanki



(Raido)

Fourth Mystery, The Odal Strategy

Version of the Hyperborean Myth by Felipe Moyano; adapted by the Amethyst Circle.

Legends tell that the Liberator Gods never spoke of peace but of War and Strategy. The Strategy was to remain in a state of alert and to hold the place agreed with the Atlanteans Loyal to the Liberator Gods, until the day when the Essential War would move back to Earth. And this was not peace, but preparation for war. But to fulfil the mission, to fulfil the Blood Pact, to keep the people on their toes, required a special way of life that would allow them to live as aliens on Earth. For one of the greatest mysteries of the Spirit is that human beings are not native to Earth. We were chained to a carnal existence in a material world filled with air, earth, fire and water. For that reason the Loyal Gods commanded men to live as strangers in a world alien to them.

The Atlanteans of the Blood Pact had transferred the message of the Loyal Gods to the human peoples, and that is why it was so important to live strategically, that is, as outsiders. To achieve this, men were given a secret technique known as -The Odal Strategy|| or -Strategic Opposition||, which comprised the Occupation of a territory, the Encirclement of that territory and then the Wall around it; three concepts complemented by that legacy of Atlantean Wisdom which was Agriculture and Animal Husbandry.

First all, the allied peoples of the Liberating Atlanteans should never forget the principle of the Occupation of the territory and should definitely forget that the land belongs to them. In other words, the





inhabited land was occupied land and not their own land; occupied to whom, to the Enemy, to the Powers of Matter. This conviction would be enough to maintain the state of alertness because the occupying people were aware that the Enemy would try to regain the territory by any means: in the form of the native peoples allied to the Atlanteans of the Cultural Pact with the Traitor Gods, as another invading people, or as an adversity of the Forces of Nature. To believe in the ownership of the land, on the other hand, meant lowering one's guard against the Enemy, losing one's alertness and succumbing to His Power of Illusion.

Once the principle of Occupation was understood and accepted, secondly, the peoples of men had to proceed to encircle the occupied territory or, at least, to mark its area. Why? Because the principle of Encirclement made it possible to separate occupied territory from enemy territory: outside the occupied and encircled area was the Enemy's territory. Only then, when an occupied and enclosed area was available, could the land be sown and brought into production.

Indeed, in the strategic way of life inherited from the Loyal Atlanteans, the peoples of men were bound to act according to a strict order which no other principle was allowed to alter.

Thirdly, after occupation and enclosure, cultivation could only be practised. The reason for this strictness was the importance which the Loyal Atlanteans attached to cultivation as an act capable of liberating the Spirit or of increasing its bondage in Matter. The correct formula was as follows: if a Pure-Blooded people cultivated on occupied land, and never forgot the Enemy lurking outside, then, within the fence, they would be free to rise to the Spirit and acquire the Highest Wisdom. Otherwise, if the land was cultivated in the belief that it is the property of the Enemy, he would be free to rise to the Spirit and acquire the Highest Wisdom.



of the one who cultivates it, the Powers of Matter would emerge from the Earth, take possession of man, and integrate him into the world, making him an object of the Traitor Gods; consequently, the Spirit would suffer a still more atrocious fall into matter, accompanied by the most noxious illusion for he would believe himself to be "free" on his property when he would only be a piece of the world created by the Gods.

Whoever cultivates the land, without first occupying it and fencing it in, and feels himself to be its owner or desires to be its owner, will be invaded by the illusion of the world and will experience the hallucination of belonging to it. Property implies a double, reciprocal and inevitable relation: property belongs to the owner as much as the owner belongs to property. The man who felt himself to belong to the Earth would be helpless against the Enemy's Power of Illusion: he would not behave as a foreigner on the Earth; like the spiritual man who cultivates in the strategic fence, he would rather be rooted in and love the earth; he would believe in peace and yearn for that illusion. He would feel part of nature and accept that "all" is the work of the Gods; he would shrink in his greatness and marvel at the wonder Creation that surrounds him on every side; he would never conceive of a way out of Creation. On the contrary, such an idea would plunge him into a nameless terror, for in it he would sense an abominable heresy, an insubordination to the Will of the Creator which might bring him unforeseeable punishments; he would submit himself to Fate, to the Will of the Gods who decide it, and would worship them to gain their favour or to appease their wrath; he would be softened by fear and would not have the strength either to oppose the Gods or even to fight against the animal part of himself. Nor would he have the strength to let the Spirit dominate his feelings and thoughts. He could never become the Lord of Himself.

Finally, the principle of the Wall was the final application of the principle of the Encirclement, its actual projection. According to the Lythic Wisdom of the





Loyal Atlanteans, there were many Worlds in which the Spirit was imprisoned, and in each of them the principle of the Wall demanded a different application: In the physical world, the world of men, its correct application led to the Stone Wall, the most effective strategic trench against any pressure from the Enemy. That is why the peoples of men who were to fulfil the mission, and participated in the Blood Pact, were instructed by the Loyal Atlanteans in the construction of stone walls as a fundamental ingredient of their way of life: all who occupied and fenced the land for the practice of cultivation, in order to sustain the siege of a Loyal Atlantean work, had also to erect stone walls. But the construction of the walls depended not only on the characteristics of the land occupied, but their construction had to involve secret principles of the Hyperborean Wisdom, principles of the Strategy of Essential Warfare, principles which only the Initiates in the Mystery of the Pure Blood, the Wise Warriors, could know. The Loyal Atlanteans advised -looking with one eye to the wall and with the other eye to the Origin||, which would only be possible if the wall were oriented in some way towards the Origin.



-Dad, Dad!

-Calm down, son, stay calm.

-You can't do this to me, you can't leave me!

-Gabriel, my son, don't feel sad for me, I have already fulfilled my mission in life.

-No, old man, don't. I still need you!

-You must learn to be a man on your own, son. I trust you and I know that you are capable of doing things that no other human being could. You are my greatest pride and my greatest achievement. I am proud of you, Gabriel.

-Dad, don't go, don't me!

-Be strong my son. Take care of your mother and your friends.

-Wait!

-That girl, Rocio, I really like her for you. Take her to wife and have children with her to carry on your mother's Horkheimer Family Mission.

-No, stop!

-I wish I had a lineage as old as you and your mother, son, but I had no luck.

-Listen to me, damn it, wait!

-Save the world, Gabriel, free the spirits imprisoned in this hellish world. Defeat Yahweh, show that tyrant that he made the worst mistake of his existence by imprisoning us in his foul Creation.

-Please, Dad, 't....

-You will be a great man, Gabrielito. Thank you for everything. Now go and fight, Gorkhan Indomitable Steed.

-NO DADDY!!!!



The calendar read Tuesday 18 April 2000. A lawyer and his client were leaving the courts in the city of La Paz. There was an air of calm on their faces after the complicated trial and the multiple hearings they both had to attend after the Comptroller's Office initiated proceedings against the lawyer's client for tax evasion. Evidence of a plot and a network of corruption within the Bolivian judicial apparatus finally emerged. Someone had bought the influence of two prosecutors, a state comptroller and a judge to bankrupt and then civilly kill Erik Cortez Avendaño, a businessman whose business saw its demise at the hands of the usurpers of power. The businessman, however, was prepared for the plot against him and sold absolutely all his property and possessions before the trials. He auctioned off his company's shares and then put the money in various bank accounts in other people's names. Then, together with his lawyer, he fought a final duel before a prosecutor whose firm intention was to lock him up on the charges against him and then have him ritually murdered inside the prison; those were the orders of the Synarchy, of the Superior Hélixabor. But the pathetic prosecutor failed and knew that a horrible, slow, painful and unimaginable death awaited him. So, after the trial, he went to his flat where he shot himself in the head. The prosecutor's suicide made national news.

Erik Cortez had triumphed in his last battle as a civilian part of the material world, but his victory was overshadowed by the endless longing he felt for his progeny. Erik missed Gabriel, his son, dearly, and he felt the





constant harassment from the anguish of knowing he was without his medication to delay the optic atrophy that would inevitably leave him blind.

After the hearing, Erik Cortez and his lawyer went to eat a couple of empanadas with a soft drink to celebrate. It was around 4 p.m. and both were tired from the nervous exhaustion.

-Cheer up, Erik, we won the case! -said the lawyer, cheerfully.

-I would like to feel happy, but I still have a lot of things to think about.

-I need some time, some respite.

-I understand," said the lawyer, tapping his client lightly on the back. By the way, Ursus called to ask about the results of the trial," Erik looked at his lawyer with interest, "I told him everything went well.

-I thought that guy didn't like us very much.

-He doesn't like anyone very much, but he cares about you.

The lawyer who defended Erik's case had been the same one who had handled the divorce of Rocío's parents. He, together with Ursus de la Vega, had taken it upon themselves to erase from all national archives the existence of the chosen boys and, now, also of their next of kin. Father Bernardo Clementi, Ursus de la Vega and Erik's lawyer had hatched a plan to make everyone involved in the coming war appear "dead". Even the death certificates were ready. The last link to be broken was the trials of Erik Cortez and with that everything would be ready for the final blow.



-And is Father Bernardo already aware of this? -Erik asked, the lawyer nodded.

-I phoned myself while you were buying the empanadas.

-That means that's it, we're free from civilian life.

-Don't be overconfident. Until you are "dead", you could at any time be called upon to defend yourself against further prosecutions. As I saw, the "baiting force" is fighting hard and I wouldn't doubt that they will start blaming you or any of the others for the stupidest things.

-What happens when we get our death certificates?

-What Ursus instructed would happen. You are to stay in the cloister and wait.

Erik smiled with a hint of disbelief, as if what he had heard was nonsense.

-I doubt that the others want to spend years locked up in a cloister.

-It is the only way to help your children.

-I just wish my son had taken the medicine for his eyes.

-Stay calm, Ursus said Erks would treat him; trust a little.

They both paused when their empanadas arrived at their table. They ate, talking slowly about the anecdotes of the trial. It had been a tough legal war in which they had had to make ingenious stratagems to avoid falling into the dead ends that the prosecution prepared for them at each hearing. Then, as they were talking, a man familiar to both of them came through the front door of the bakery, sat down and ordered a cup of coffee. He was dressed in an elegant dark suit protected by a brown trench coat.



He was wearing dark glasses and a brown hat. The first to notice him was the lawyer who caught his client's eye.

-Erik, isn't that Mario Salas? -he asked slyly, pointing with a slight gesture of his eyes towards the newcomer. Erik looked at him stealthily and nodded.

-It's him.

-Fuck," the lawyer mumbled. I'm sure he's very upset about the whole divorce thing with his wife.

The man in the trench coat was none other than Rocío's father, the drunken wreck who had made a pact with the demons of heaven in exchange for revenge. He had been following Erik and his lawyer since they left the courthouse, and while they were distracted by casual conversation, Mario entered the café and sat nearby to watch his prey. Drawn by the awkward situation, Erik and his lawyer asked for the bill and got ready to leave.

When the waitress gave them back their change, they stood up and hurried away. They walked a few streets until they reached the pedestrian walkway behind the Casa de la Cultura. Belatedly they realised that their route had not been the right one. Due to some renovations, the passageway was emptier than usual, with only a sweet seller filling the wide space between the walls of the Casa de la Cultura and the closed shops on the other side. The entrance to Avenida Mariscal Santa Cruz was closed, so the two men had no choice but to retrace their steps. However, Mario Salas was waiting for them at the exit of the passage, blocking their way. The meeting with him was imminent.



Erik advanced steadily, heading around Mario's side, but Mario stepped in front of him with a sinister grin plastered on his gaunt face, covered behind his wide, round, dark glasses, and under the unkempt tangle of hair that fell through small slits between his head and his hat.

-Please, Mr Salas. This is not the time," the lawyer interjected.

Mario gave him a contemptuous, almost dismissive, dispassionate look.

-You owe me money," said Mario at last.

-No one here owes you anything," Erik said, annoyed.

-Of course they do, they owe me for all the damage they did to me and my family.

Mario replied and looked up at Erik. When their eyes met there was an intense tension between them. However, Erik sensed that something was not right. The filthy alcoholic who beat his wife and sexually abused his daughter seemed to have disappeared. His place had been supplanted by a presence more dark, more inflamed with evil.

-I can see you have no intention of giving me my money," Mario mumbled. Erik smiled artfully and added:

-You have lost, do you understand? You are the only one to blame for all that has happened to you.

-I know my mistakes and I could have made up for them if you, you stupid fuck, hadn't intervened with this little shit," he said, pointing to Erik's lawyer, "They're going to pay for this. They're going to pay for this.

Erik realised that he had to leave soon if he wanted to avoid a scene.





-If you don't give me passage," said Erik. I'll have to take it back myself.

-Gentlemen, please," the lawyer interjected. Let's settle this in a civilised manner.

Mario gave a sinister smile, looking at the lawyer as if he were a child who had just said something foolish.

-Civilised, eh? -muttered Mario.

Erik still had his chest pressed against Mario's, with the same defiant posture in which they both stood after the unrestrained Mario closed in on Erik. Then, without warning, nature itself began to draw a completely unnatural scenario. The daylight gradually began to dim, as if dense clouds were completely covering the daytime star, giving it no chance to shower the earth's surface with its rays. The sound of cars, people and police sirens in the distance faded and the temperature began to rise rapidly. Only these disturbances of the natural order were strong enough for Erik to realise that the situation had gone far beyond his understanding, the predicted street brawl that seemed to be looming was turning into a nightmare. Slowly Erik began to back away from Mario, his blood clotting with fear. Erik's lawyer, who soon realised the trouble they had got themselves into, started running towards Avenida Mariscal Santa Cruz with the firm intention of jumping over the security fence blocking the way and fleeing to some distant part of that macabre urban corner, which had become a piece of the most Dantesque hell imaginable.



Mario let out a sigh, the exhalation of which emanated yellowish vapours from his mouth. He raised his arm with open palm towards the panic-stricken lawyer. His run was short-lived, he was suddenly unable to move his body and fell heavily to the ground.

-Now ask us to be civilised again," said Mario, in a loud voice.

Erik, seeing that his lawyer was in trouble, rammed Mario with all his might, but all he managed to do was to move him only a few centimetres. The man possessed by a supernatural demonic force looked down to see Erik in a tight waistlock. Mario only had to shake a little to push Erik almost two metres away. The lawyer, still unable to move, looked at how Erik, a tall, big, burly man, had been pushed with a single jerk and realised that he had no hope of coping with such force. He had not finished assimilating the terror that assailed him when a sharp pain began to shudder through his entire body. Mario had not lowered his arm, it was still pointing towards the lawyer. Erik shook his head and fell prey to a nauseating horror when he noticed that his lawyer was beginning to swell. The unfortunate man gave monstrous howls as his body was covered in sores and lacerations that left his flesh red-hot, as if he was being cooked from the inside out. His eyes exploded, his hair fell out, his abdomen burst open letting out the entrails of his body and then his whole body exploded, spilling guts, blood and all sorts of fluids into the passage that had become a hellish portal.

Mario smiled, letting out a very light, imperceptible laugh. His face showed the pleasure he took in the suffering of others. Then his gaze flickered to



He turned to Erik who had already pissed his trousers in the terrifying presence of this man, this cowardly alcoholic who had left his condition of a drunkard, of a human being, to become a monstrous creature.

-I would have liked the money," Mario muttered. But I'll take your pain as payment.

Before Erik' terrified eyes, Mario Salas began to transfigure in a halo of scarlet demonic light, with edges as golden as gold and marrow as red as blood.

-What... what are you! -Erik's voice broke, almost shouting.

-I am your executioner," replied the being, "Mario Salas no longer exists, now I am Bálaham.

Erik could almost sense the end that awaited him. All his thoughts turned to his son, Gabriel, and his wife, Helga. He remembered every moment he had spent at his family's side and could not help but think of all the things they had not lived, of everything he had not told them in life, of all the beautiful moments that had been taken away from him by a mad and cruel fate. Erik squeezed his eyes tightly shut, waiting for death, and wanted to cry from rage, from frustration, from helplessness, from fear; but his eyes had dried up against the burning darkness that surrounded him. Then he became aware of the time, it had been a while since Bálaham had passed the death sentence, but Erik was still breathing. When he opened his eyes, the shapeshifted man was no longer there, in his place was a nightmarish beast. It looked like a reptile with insect wings. The monster was no longer looking at him, but had fixed its gaze on Erik.



a fixed place in the sky. Erik also looked in the same direction, but could see nothing.

-Who dares to interrupt me! -bellowed the Bálaham beast towards the sky.

There was no answer from heaven, only infinite silence.

-This man must die! -the beast spoke again.

There was no response. Then Bálaham fixed his yellowish gaze on Erik.

-You will suffer, Erik Cortez, you will suffer for the sins of your son and your wife," sentenced Bálaham.

Erik was resigned, but when the end seemed imminent, a spear fell on the monster. It entered through his shoulder and exited through the side of his body, causing him to lose his balance. He staggered several steps and fell with terrible weight and force against one of the walls of the Casa de la Cultura. The wall gave way under the intensity of the blow and buried Bálaham in rubble. Erik still could not believe what he had just seen. He looked up to where the spear had fallen and saw a young boy standing on the top of a pole. He wore a long overcoat with aguayo detailing on the shoulders, a bare torso, black dark leather trousers and thonged boots.

The young man climbed down the pole and fell slightly closer to Erik, then recognised him.

-You...

-Good afternoon, Mr. Cortez," the boy greeted.



No doubt this was the strange young man that Gabriel, her son, had told her about that October 1999, just after the gang attack that had almost killed them. The children had said that their lives were saved by a strange boy dressed in a coat with aguayo detailing on the shoulders and armed with a spear. His name was..., was....

-Rhupay," Erik muttered, almost in disbelief.

-I must get him out of here," he replied. If we stay here any longer, we will never be able to get out.

-What are you talking about?

-From the Umbra, Mr. Cortez," Rhupay replied, helping Erik to his feet. Right now we are no longer in the dimension you live in, we have been pulled by some kind of force into the limbo between dimensions.

-I don't... I don't understand...

-Don't try to lay, just walk.

Rhupay and Erik left the pedestrian passageway behind and began to wander through the adjacent streets. Erik was even more startled when he noticed that the city was deserted, covered in rust everywhere. It was like being in another dimension, La Paz was still the same, but ravaged by an uncharacteristic abandonment. Then a shuddering howl shattered the ears of both fugitives. Rhupay raised his arm to the sky, expanded his palm and a beam of green light formed in his hand, then turned into a stone-tipped spear.



-Run to the amphitheatre of St Francis' Church and stay there! - Rhupay ordered Erik but another thunderous howl brought them both down again.

They had taken too long, Bálaham had caught up with them. He flew in with his gigantic insect wings, framed by thick bones protruding from back. His flight raised a hot air that carried the stench of rotting flesh. His size, over 20 feet, made it difficult for him to glide with ease, but despite his bulk he landed without a wobble within a few feet of Rhupay and Erik.

-Run, run, run! -shouted Rhupay to Erik, who ran with all his might.

Bálaham exhaled deeply and spat a greenish slime that landed on one of Erik's feet. The unfortunate man fell, rolling on the ground, and began to writhe as he gave a wrenching shriek. His leg began to cum as if it had been dipped in the most potent acid.

Rhupay shuddered as he saw Gabriel's father fall with his leg shredded in acid, raised his wraith to its fullest, a halo of green light surrounded him, picked up his spear and lunged at Bálaham. He thrust his deadly weapon once, twice, three times into the side of the beast. As he was about to thrust a fourth time, Bálaham delivered a powerful sting that nearly pierced Rhupay's spectral shield, deforming it like a bubble struck by a needle. The blow lifted him twenty or more metres and he landed on the asphalt of the Avenue, cracking it and leaving a crater from the force of the fall. Rhupay's head was blood. He to his feet with the help of his spear.





and saw that Bálaham was flying towards him. He was going to throw a gargle at him like the one he spat on the hapless Erik. Rhupay raised his hand and fired a plasma shot at Bálaham, who was already spitting his acid at the boy. Both acid and plasma collided violently and exploded with force. The deflagration pushed Rhupay a few feet, but that gave him time to recover. He stood up and leapt towards Bálaham. This time his spear pierced the beast's throat, but that manoeuvre proved less efficient than Rhupay had hoped. Bálaham expanded his claws over the boy, grabbed him by the waist and threw him with excruciating force. His body fell to the ground and plunged deep into the bowels of the earth to the foundations of the Telecommunications Palace, which collapsed on Rhupay on impact.

Bálaham, confident of victory, flew towards Erik who was still writhing in pain. He landed close to him and brought his claw within inches of the man, but as he was about to grab him he was pushed back by a plasma shot that made him wince from the burning. He fell a few feet away, completely stunned. It took him a few seconds to recover from the blow, he shook his head and turned his gaze towards Erik; he perceived that a young woman was tending to her victim, perhaps she was responsible for the attack. The girl was wearing a black leather outfit that moulded to her body like a second skin. She had a bow and a quiver full of arrows on her back. An old memory came to Bálaham's mind and he knew that she was one of the Sentinels, just like the boy with the spear he had thrown to the ground.

Erik, wounded and delirious, looked up and noticed that the girl was the same one his son had told him about. It was Valya, a companion who had protected Gabriel and his friends throughout the time it took them to prepare to flee to Erks.



-Go, save yourself," said Erik to the girl, trying to be brave.

-Stay calm, you must live or Gorkhan, Gabriel, your son, will not be able to concentrate.

-My son, how is my son?

-You are doing well, Mr Cortez. He will be a great warrior and he always remembers you.

Erik smiled, satisfied.

-I it, my Gabriel will be a formidable man.

-No, don't go to sleep! -said Valya firmly as she saw the man in agony.

She was about to charge it when she saw Bálaham leap into the air with its claws aimed at her. The girl stepped aside, grabbed her bow and fired two arrows into the beast's chest. A horrified shriek echoed from the monster's belly. Valya fired again, but this time her arrow was knocked away by an emanation of acid from Bálaham's mouth. Some of the acid landed on Valya's spectral shield, which quickly began to weaken.

The monster sat up, plucked the arrows from his chest and then approached Erik. It took him in its claws and looked at him, puzzled by the man's smile.

-What are you so happy about, you pathetic mortal," the beast questioned.

-One day, son of a bitch, the day you least expect it," Erik replied, "my Gabriel will come and make you pay. He will be an invincible warrior and no one, not even the God Yahweh himself, will be able to defeat him.

A loud laugh erupted from Bálaham's chest.





-You expect too much. Gorkhan, your son, will fall into my hands. He will suffer and pay for the sins of all his cursed line. He can never stand up to me, much less to my master Hexabor or to the Lord Almighty, he of the Chosen People of Israel. Gorkhan and his Company of rebels are doomed.

-But as long as you live and fight, you will never win," Erik replied, challenging Bálaham.

-I admire your courage, but it is of no use to you now. Before you die, know that your progeny will be tormented for eternity, and your suffering will be the beginning.

Its sentence finished, the monster drove its stinger into Erik's hip, and he choked his throat with screams. But his voice ceased to utter a sound when his entire spine and head were severed from his body by a surgical movement of the Bálaham's sting, which in a single jerk tore out the unfortunate Erik's spine. The poor man's face wore an expression of infinite horror, of a pain impossible to imagine in this life or other. Not only his body was being tormented, but also his spirit. The essence of Erik Cortez had been captured in *Chang Shambala* and his martyrdom had begun.

Bálaham felt satisfied, but his work was not done. He had get rid of the Sentinels who had interrupted him, but when he turned to the place where he had left Valya injured, he noticed that the girl had disappeared. He then went to the ruins of the Telecommunications Palace to make sure Rhupay was dead, but no matter how hard he searched, he couldn't find the body. Both Sentinels had escaped him; though Bálaham knew he would soon have the opportunity to confront them again and he was



anxious. He had a desire to consume the Sentinels' bodies in an orgy of blood.





Neither the sun, nor the sky, nor the white clouds dancing in the distance could compare their beauty with hers. She who was but a mortal girl born in times of tribulation. Sitting high up on a branch, on the top of a tree, she lost sight of the small jewel that hung around her neck. She held it delicately in her porcelain hands and let herself be mesmerised by the green glow of the gem that carried the mysterious locket. The whole was a small, beautiful piece of silver, hung on a burnished metal chain and carefully broken in half through a tiny slit placed there, on purpose, by the arcane potter who made it so, in order to be able to separate the jewel into two distinct pieces. It was in the shape of a star with twelve peaks, though the beautiful girl held only six of them in her hands, for the other half, the other six peaks, were in the hands of someone else, a young man she loved deeply. And as she lost herself in contemplation of this mysterious medallion, the name of the jewel crossed her mind like an incessant shadow of curiosity and doubt: "Silver Hajime".

Diana Alexandra Cuellar Kuklova had received the Silver Hajime from a strange gypsy that she and her lover, Rodrigo, met during a Christmas fair that December 1999. The gypsy never told them her name, identifying herself only as "The Gorgon". She never gave them another clue to find her again and Diana really wanted to see her again to ask her some questions. However, since the Hajime came into her hands, the impetuous girl's life had changed dramatically. The other half of the Hajime was hanging around Rodrigo's neck at that very moment, Diana knew it and sensed that that piece of metal with its gem in



The only link between her and her boyfriend if something terrible were to separate them; it was something she 't reason, she just , it was in her blood, in her heart, in her Spirit. And during the 4 months of training she had spent at Rowena's side with the Third Cult - composed of Rocio, Gabriel and Rodrigo - Diana had learned to read the signs that the Virgin Morana left in her path to guide her through the labyrinths of the Hyperborean Mysteries. She had learned only a few of them, and mastering them was enough to develop her intuition in a way she had never dreamed of. Diana was no longer the same girl who came to Erks, totally ignorant and frightened about her future.

A gentle breeze surrounded her, a wind dazzled and totally overwhelmed by her magnificent beauty. She who was but a very young woman who only a year before had bled for the first time. However, her youthfulness further enhanced the magnificence of her magnetism, of her irresistible fragrance that permeated every particle of air with its fruity, perfumed, barely human odours. Her honey eyes left no doubt that she had almost abandoned her humanity. That characteristic that makes men apprentices of life, fearful of death. And from her eyes, through her exquisite lips, her perfect features, her silky hair and every millimetre of her slender, perfect, almost sacred body, the spell of her, who was nothing more than an irritating, unbearable girl, sweet to the point of unhealthy diabetes, was released in the graceful line of her marrow. Her docile, detached, self-sacrificing nature was the opposite of what Rowena expected of the bearer of the Bow of Artemis. Diana could barely control her temper. She could not let go of the tenderness of her actions, dismissing them to the impending attitude of the cold, determined warrior, and so she was beset by helplessness.



She was a tender child, just that, tender and infinitely beautiful; she had not yet found a way to be tough.

Almost like a summoning of genetic memories, the beautiful Diana could feel the heartbeat of her ancestors pulsing through veins. She was Russia and Russia was her. Her heritage, her mission and that of an entire lineage of Tsars, emperors, warriors and generals devoted to protecting one of the most precious relics of the past: the Arch of Artemis. "The Silver Hajime is the key that unlocks the seal of the Bow, it is the key to its power," Diana mused as she looked at the delicate piece. The mystery surrounding the medallion was a perennial nourishment for the girl's imagination, and she could not help imagining what the Arch of Artemis would be like. She felt that her mission was of vital importance and the pressure of training overwhelmed her senses, but it was not only this that was wearing down her resistance to the pressure, there was more, much more.

Without letting her mind rest, she could sense the presence of someone who had just climbed the tree in which she was sitting. The intruder stood on a slightly higher branch, behind Diana's back, and seemed to maintain a certain stealth in order to remain undetected, as if unaware that she had already sensed him. The girl smiled slightly, the warmth of the specter could only belong to one person. She closed her eyes, leaned her head back and his warm arms wrapped around her neck. Diana felt his breath on the back of her neck like a delicate breath on the back of her neck. She brought her hands to his forearms that tenderly encircled her and said:

-You were taking too long.

-The best tickets are long overdue," replied his interlocutor.



Diana knew that voice, somewhere between low and high-pitched, as well as her own.

-My Rodri," she murmured softly, turned her head slightly and let her lips press against his. They stayed like that for a few seconds and then parted.

-Princess," said Rodrigo, looking at her with a love that only the most nostalgic and in love can express. Are you all right?

Diana nodded silently.

-I was just thinking," she continued, "about the gypsy woman at the Christmas fair, remember?

Rodrigo lowered his head slightly, as if remembering made him uncomfortable.

-I couldn't forget her.

-I wonder what happened to that woman. We never saw her again.

-And we will probably never see her again.

-One day I asked Qhawaq about her and he answered nothing.

There was a grave silence between them, which Rodrigo cut short.

-I remember the last words he said to us before we left his tent," Diana stared at him. He said it was all a dream, that one day he must wake up.

-But maybe she said it because that woman knew that the world we live in is an illusion and all that, you know, what Rowena explained to us," Rodrigo smiled wryly.

-You sound so optimistic, I wish I felt that way.

Diana stood up and, raising her foot slightly, climbed up to the branch where Rodrigo was, wrapped her arms around his neck, stared at him and continued:

-Whatever happens, everything will be all right," Diana's eyes were full of hope, an infectious feeling that Rodrigo was overcome with. She was the only one who could ease his tensions.





-By the way, it's about time to go back to the range. We must train.

They both jumped the thirty metres from the top of the tree to the ground. They landed as light as feathers. Then, as they were making their way back, they saw Rocio arrive. She was very agitated and the expression on her face was alarming.

-Boys, we must go to the huts! -he said.

-Why, what happened? -asked Diana.

-Gabo..." The three of them shot out of the area where they were resting.

Oscar, Edwin and Jhoanna were already with Aldrick, their mentor, in the boys cabin. Rowena was leaning against one wall at the far end of the room while Rocio, Diana and Rodrigo lay on the other side. Gabriel was lying on his bed, totally unconscious and with a damp cloth on his forehead, feverish. Qhawaq was checking the boy, and those present waited for a diagnosis. After a few minutes, the old man sat up. Everyone watched him expectantly.

-He is weak, but he will recover," said Qhawaq, a sigh of relief in the air.

-What did he give her? -asked Diana.

-His senses are exhausted, he was overwhelmed by a vision," replied the old man.

-Qhawaq," said Rocío, "there's something wrong with Gabriel. We were quiet, eating; then something hit him during the break and suddenly he just fainted. I tried to wake him up and was about to take him to Rowena when he woke up. He said he didn't remember anything and then he was



He went crazy, saying he couldn't see. Then he screaming, as if calling for his dad, and just like that he vanished again.

-Optic atrophy," Rowena said, everyone looked at her. Gabriel has lost the sight of his eyes because the sight of his intuition has opened up," Rowena continued. I'm sorry this is not the most appropriate time to tell you, but this was bound to happen. Comrade Gabriel, Gorkhan, suffers from a condition called optic atrophy. It was going to leave him totally blind sooner or later, but because of his training, Gorkhan was able to awaken other senses to make up for the absence of his sight. Then he began to see beyond the obvious and his eyes gradually stopped working.

Rowena was never a careful woman to break the news, she was always direct and blunt. Not only because of the bad news they received, but also because of the way Rowena delivered it, all the boys felt a chill deep in their marrow. None of their friends had ever suspected that Gabriel had such a delicate illness. Rodrigo and Diana sat on the floor, thick tears began to drip from Rocio's eyes. Oscar and Johanna hugged each other and Edwin, crestfallen, began to shake his head disapprovingly.

-He never said so," Rodrigo recalled. Gabo was always making jokes and never gave us any reason to think it was so bad.

-Why," said Rocio, "why do these things have to happen to him? It's not fair. The worst things always have to happen to him.

-Listen, everyone," Qhawaq interrupted the wailing, "because of his blindness, Gorkhan has become a seer. It's not something you understand, you shouldn't even have to know, but under the circumstances, it's not something you can't understand.



There is nothing else for them to do but to know. Never ask him about his visions, never wake him up and never pity him. Treat him as if he could still see.

-But he can't see," said Rocío. How are we supposed to treat him?

-Naturally," replied the old man. He has lost his sight, but he 'sees'. The world around him will never be alien to him if he learns to use all his senses. If you treat him as handicapped, he will indeed become handicapped. But if you treat him normally, his vision loss will go unnoticed.

No one said more; everyone withdrew in silence. Only Rocio, Diana and Rodrigo stayed with Gabriel to watch over his sleep. When night came, Diana and Rodrigo fell asleep together in one of the narrow beds. Rocio lay on the side of the bed, staring at Gabriel and feeling a suffocating grief. She couldn't help but feel sorry for him. She almost felt guilty and the avalanche of feelings that overwhelmed her wouldn't let her sleep. She just looked at Gabriel's face and lost herself in thoughts, in emotions. A long time had passed since her friend had declared his feelings and since then she had never been able to see him as anything else but a friend, a great friend. However, that night for the first time in her life Rocio felt something burning in her chest for Gabriel, something that before only Rodrigo had awakened in her. The huge black eyes shone with a halo of tenderness, her face drew a smile and carried away by a sublime instinct, Rocío kissed Gabriel's lips, she did it incessantly while he slept. And as she kissed him, she felt her heart beating wildly. *"It was me who was blind. I'm so sorry, Gabito. Now I'm the one who feels totally in love with you, the one who wants to give you everything, absolutely everything. Now I love you and I hope you still want to love me back. Will you love me again, my blind prince?"* thought Rocío to herself.



(Kenaz)

Fifth Mystery, The Myth Of The Labyrinth

Taken from Greek Mythology, adapted from Amethyst Circle

Legend has it that centuries ago a terrible drama unfolded on the island of Crete in Greece.

There was a king called Minos whose conscience kept him awake at night. The reason for his torment was the infidelity of his wife, the magician Pasiphae, daughter of Helios. She had been the victim of an uncontrollable love aroused by a bull, -The Bull of Crete||. Her love was a punishment from Poseidon to King Minos, to whom he gave the Bull as a gift and ordered him to sacrifice it, and when the King refused to sacrifice it, Poseidon made Pasiphae fall in love with the Bull.

The woman's virtue was blinded by a boiling passion that plagued her day and night, and she was remorseful to know that she was deeply in love with an animal. Her greatest longing was for the bull to be human, if only for a few minutes, and to know that she was reciprocated by him. Then the magician had an idea. Using her powerful magic she gave the beast to drink a potion that would turn him into a man.

The next day a beautiful red-haired young man appeared in Minos' palace. He slipped shrewdly through the corridors crowded with guards and went straight to Pasiphae's bedchamber. Driven by boundless love and passion, she let the young man in and sealed the door of her bedchamber with an incantation that would allow her to be with her lover in the hope that King Minos would not find out.





For seven days and seven nights the young man and the magician had sex. They did not stop to eat or sleep, they only gave themselves without pause to a love as deep as it was pleasurable. At the end of the seven days and nights, Pasiphae collapsed from exhaustion and fell into a deep sleep. When she awoke she no longer found the handsome young man she had loved for days, but the bull lying in agony between the sheets of her bed. Horrified, Pasiphae screamed out of her room and went to her husband, King Minos, to ask for his forgiveness and mercy. Minos forgave her because he loved his wife, but the Gods did not forgive her and left her pregnant by the Bull.

After seven months of complicated pregnancy, the woman gave birth. Her body almost split in half when her child was born, for instead of a small baby's head what came out of her body were two horns that tore her apart from the inside out. Pasiphae did not die of exsanguination or because she was torn in half; but she died of pain during childbirth with her entrails caught in her son's horns, sticking out of her womb. Her son was a monster half bull and half man. King Minos was so horrified at the sight of the abomination his wife bore that he almost killed him, but some kind of pity for his dead wife led him to let the child live.

Over the years Pasiphae's son grew into a ravenous monster with need to feed on human flesh. Minos locked his son in a cage in the hope that he would stop terrorising the people, he wanted to keep the secret of his marital tragedy, but the beast grew stronger with each passing year and it became easier and easier for him to smash his cage and go out into the village to carry out the massacres that horrified the people. The people of the village knew when the Minotaur, as they had christened it, was approaching, for when the monster was near the earth shook with its footsteps.



In desperation, King Minos turned to a celebrated Athenian genius craftsman, whose misfortune had come knocking at the door. The man was fleeing Athens because of the death of his nephew. That genius was known as Daedalus and was famous for his great ingenuity and creativity. Minos knew of the craftsman's intelligence and asked him to make a prison from which the beast could never leave. Daedalus obeyed the king and built one of the most incredible prisons known to man: -The Labyrinth|. It is a huge tangle of corridors that seem to have no way out. It is a place so compact that escape is almost impossible. For a beast like the Minotaur, any attempt to escape would be more than impossible.

To move the Minotaur to his new cell, Minos had to put him to sleep using the most powerful drugs created by his magicians. After terrible casualties in his army and by making huge sacrifices, King Minos managed to put the Minotaur to sleep and take him to the Labyrinth.

With the job done, Daedalus and his son, Icarus, were about to leave Crete. However, King Minos was aware that Daedalus knew his secret and would not let him leave alive. Treacherously, the King locked Daedalus and his son inside the Labyrinth, along with the Minotaur.

When the beast awoke it was hungry and could smell human flesh. It chased Daedalus and Icarus for days until, finally, Daedalus found the way out. Being the architect of the Labyrinth, he knew very well where to go. They both emerged from the Minotaur's prison and the ingenious Daedalus designed wax wings for him and his son. Unfortunately, Icarus was too impetuous and clumsy, he flew too close to the sun and its rays melted the wax on the wings. The boy fell into the sea and died.



King Minos was pleased with his work, but he felt compassion for Pasiphae's monstrous son and made a law that all sentenced criminals should be offered as food for the Minotaur.

Over the years the existence of the Minotaur drove the King mad. The mooing of the beast at night came through the Labyrinth and reached the royal residence. The wailing was so terrible that Minos soon could no longer bear it. He began to appear tyrannical and in a complete reversal of his righteous rule created a law forcing the Athenians to offer their young men and boys as food for the beast.

As the terror in Athens grew, so did the rage against Minos. Until one day a young man named Theseus came to the palace and prostrated himself before Minos, offering himself willingly as a sacrifice to the Minotaur. Ariadne, Minos' daughter, fell deeply in love with Theseus as soon as she saw him and admired his courage. Minos accepted Theseus as a sacrifice and told him that he would send him an escort to the entrance of the Labyrinth.

That night Ariadne prayed to the gods for help. She begged so hard that finally Artemis heard her pleas. Artemis, being the Virgin of the Moon, could not understand Ariadne's reasons for trying to save a man, or even to love him; but she took pity on her distress and gave her a ball of silver, made of the same material as her bowstring. As soon as Ariadne had the ball of silver she went to Theseus and told him to take it with him and tie one end to his waist, she would hold the other end at the exit of the Labyrinth, so that Theseus would not get lost and could return.

The next day Theseus was led into the Labyrinth. He entered very cautiously, loosening the thread as he went. He carried with him a two-bladed axe



known as -Labrys||, a weapon given to him by Athena upon his departure to Crete. The Labrys had two blades, one of which always pointed straight ahead and cut through the darkness that appeared ahead, the other blade pointed towards himself and cut through the fear that plagued his inner self. Thus, with the Labrys in his hand and the thread tied around his waist, Theseus walked for days, finding the survivors who had managed to hide from the Minotaur until, at the hour of dawn, he found the sleeping beast.

Without hesitation Theseus picked up the Labrys and with a single blow severed the head of the Minotaur. The youths around him rejoiced. Then, using the silver thread, Theseus retraced his steps, taking with him all the youths he had rescued, and made his way out of the Labyrinth.

Minos swore revenge on Theseus, but his threats were never carried out. One day, while King Minos was bathing, he met his end when a jet of boiling water fell on him. As revenge before he left, Daedalus changed the entire mechanism of the King's bath and arranged the machinery to release boiling water instead of cold water. Minos was cooked amidst screams and insufferable pain. On the King's death, Hades made Minos one of the Judges of Hell, the one who determines to which Circle of Hell the damned will go.



Amidst the chaos, gunfire and shouting, Major Cuellar, along with two wounded, tried to hide a safe distance from the guard camp at the entrance to Erks. With a supreme effort, they managed to collapse near a small cave on the cobblestone path leading down to the Way of the Gods. One of them was mortally wounded, having lost part of his stomach and intestines after being pierced by the breath of the beast that attacked them.

-Tighten the aperture, Corporal," instructed the Major as he tried to put the wounded man's entrails back in place, but it was impossible, his body was so badly damaged.

-I don't want to die, I don't want to die," the wounded man kept repeating.

-He's losing a lot of blood, Major," said the corporal who was helping his wounded comrade.

At a glance both men knew what they had to do. Unfortunately they had no morphine or anything else to perform their appointed task. The Major gestured, ordering the Corporal to take charge of the guts as the Officer approached the head of the wounded man.

-What is your name, son," asked Major Cuellar.

-Roberto, my... my Major. Roberto Condori.

-Listen, Roberto. I want you to know that everything will be all right and that you will soon feel better.



The eyes of the Major and the wounded Corporal met in a silent conversation, fleeting as lightning. Corporal Roberto Condori soon understood his situation and no longer felt fear. He felt at peace with himself and his family, with his homeland and with the Gods.

-Mo... dying is... is... the best thing about vi... living," said Corporal Condori, making an enormous effort to speak.

-Go with honour, son of Bolivia," replied Major Cuellar and with one swift movement he snapped the wounded corporal's neck. The man died without any pain. In the training of the Inti Squadron it had been said that there was no death more glorious than that which occurs in combat. That is why Roberto Condori had accepted death with courage and calm.

Cuellar and the surviving corporal looked at each other. The soldier could no longer fight, he had an exposed tibia and fibula fracture which, with the help of some morphine, he had skillfully splinted himself.

-My Major, the camp...

-Yes, Corporal. I'll do it and call for reinforcements.

Very quietly, Major Orlando Cuellar emerged from the hiding place to which he had retreated and made his way to the camp. He had to contact the Dominican Cloister or the General Staff to report the situation. Almost every soldier in the squadron had been killed trying to defend their position, but the beast that attacked them seemed immune to bullets.

It was almost three o'clock in the morning when it all started. The outpost was asleep when the alarm sounded. All the soldiers woke up, woke up, woke up, woke up, woke up.



They dressed, loaded their equipment, shouldered their rifles and took up their respective defensive positions.

Up in the sky, some kind of winged demon was hovering around the camp, circling endlessly like a vulture stalking a carcass. Everyone quickly readied themselves action. Then, without warning, the monster began to spit a reddish, luminous liquid at the soldiers. It turned out to be an acid that killed instantly, if you were lucky; for a wound from such an acid could drive any man mad with pain.

The Major gave the order to fire, but the bullets seemed to do the beast no harm. The monster took altitude and then swooped down with its claws in attack position, hacking, disembowelling, decapitating and tearing the flesh of as many men as stood in its path. The bloodbath went on almost , at which time Cuellar gave the order to retreat and launched a call for help that apparently never reached its destination. For that reason, he had to return to the camp, pick up the radio and rebroadcast the signal.

Filled with courage and bravery, the Major reloaded his AK-47 rifle, ready to defend himself against the monster that had melted into the darkness of night and death. In the camp there was a terrible stench of burning flesh. Corpses and body parts were scattered everywhere. There was a strident silence throughout the place, made more macabre by the blowing of the wind, the Major knew that the demon that attacked could be anywhere and that thought weakened his resolve. For the first time in his life he felt a pathogenic fear within his being.



When he reached the command centre he saw a smartly dressed man. He was wearing a brown coat and a brown hat; his back was turned and he seemed to be looking for something in the file cabinets of the Command. Cuellar pointed the rifle at the man, removing the safety catch, and reprimanded him:

-Stop, hands where I can see them! The intruder

raised his arms.

-Turn around, no tricks!

He turned around slowly, and from the front he could see that the man was dressed almost in formal attire. He had a black suit, white shirt and dark tie. The Major approached him without taking his eyes off him, stood behind him and checked his entire body to make sure he was not carrying weapons. Then the intruder spoke to him.

-And how are Diana, Edwin and Jhoanna?

Cuellar froze at the sound of his children's names. He slowly straightened up, staring in awe at the mysterious fellow. He was still at his back and he felt he had neither the courage nor the desire to see his face.

-Silence!

-You know me, Don Orlando.

The Major made a supreme effort to recognise the voice of the speaker; it sounded familiar but he could not remember.





-My daughter is a very close friend of yours. They are both in the same class, they are the same age.

Then Cuellar felt someone speak directly into his mind, revealing the name of the intruder.

-Mario Salas," murmured the Major.

-Well done, Don Orlando. You remembered me. The last time we met, our daughters were in fifth grade, we met during a parents' meeting.

-What the fuck are you doing here! Did you know that you could be sentenced to seven maximum penalties just for being here? Your presence could be taken as an act of sedition.

-Take it any way you want. I don't care," said Mario and began to turn around slowly.

-Freeze! -Cuellar ordered, "Freeze for fuck's sake, or I'll shoot him!

Mario kept turning around. Then the Major, overcome by nervousness and the fatigue of combat, fired point-blank and without hesitation into Mario's temple. The body fell violently from the impact, like a volley thrown with force. A small trickle of blood splattered on the canvas of the command tent. Major Cuellar could hardly believe what he had done, he had a civilian in cold blood. He slowly lowered his rifle and tried to collect his thoughts, but just when he thought his mistake would cost him his job, he noticed Mario standing . Once again the Major took aim at him. Mario shook his head, his neck thundering and his vertebrae rearranging. Cuellar could not believe his eyes.



-De... he should be dead," the surprised soldier mumbled, unable to believe his eyes.

-You are wrong, Don Orlando.

The Major could not explain to himself that his target, shot in the head, was still breathing. But when he saw Mario's pale eyes and the yellowish vapours emanating from his mouth with each exhalation, the blood in Cuellar's whole body dropped to his feet, as if his blood pressure suddenly dropped. He remembered Rowena Von Kaiser once telling him that demons can take form and possession in any body that contains a soul. Images of the winged demon came back to her memory, that greenish skin full of scales, the yellowish eyes glowing in the darkness, the almost insect-like wings unfurled from thick burnished bones, the claws curved like a deadly scythe. It all seemed to be a jigsaw puzzle that was slowly coming together. Then that man appeared, Mario Salas, the alcoholic father of his daughter's best friend. He shot him in the head, but the man was still alive. Each piece seemed to fit perfectly and, together with the complete image of the nightmare she had lived through, the last piece crowned this parsimonious allegory. Finally Cuellar realised the danger he was in at that moment and, driven by an instinct for survival, he emptied the magazine of his rifle into Mario's body, which was dancing abstractly from the impact of the bullets. As the rifle discharged, the Major began to run with all the strength of his legs to the outside of the Comando tent.

He was five metres from the command centre when he saw the tent violently collapse, be blown into the air, and then the flying demon took off from its belly. Cuellar ran and ran, but his speed was insignificant compared to the monster's flight. A fume of acid exploded near Cuellar.



Cuellar was blown into the air by the force of the impact. He fell heavily and rolled along the ground until he hit a small rise in the ground a few metres from the camp.

With a supreme effort Cuellar managed to sit up. The beast landed a few metres away from him and calmly approached the Major. The soldier drew his pistol, a Glock 52, as quickly as he could and pointed it at the approaching demon.

-Why are you aiming at me when you know you won't do anything to me with that gun? - asked the beast in a voice so low that it almost hurt the soldier's ears.

-I may not do anything to you, but if I'm going to die, I'm going to die fighting.

-Foolish and brave at the same time. Yet it is not your life I want. I have come to seek the maps of the Way of the Gods. You will provide them for me.

-You're going to have to kill me first, you son of a bitch!

-If that is your wish....

The monster's claw was ready to decapitate the Major. Cuellar was ready to fire, aiming for one of the monster's eyes hoping that it would be effective enough to blind it and allow it to evade his attack. But just as the clash between the two was about to occur, a bolt of lightning followed by a clap of thunder fell from the sky, electrocuting the monster. The shrill shriek of the beast echoed for miles before an explosion silenced it. Cuellar was pushed several metres away and fell heavily to the side of the Path of the Gods.



Orlando raised his head and rubbed his eyes, trying to convince himself of what he saw. A woman had appeared out of nowhere, wearing some kind of armour and carrying two axes in a destral design. But nothing about her strange attire could compare to the appearance of her body. The woman was as monstrous as the very monster she was fighting, her head was completely covered with snakes, as if it were her scalp. Her face was completely pale and inside her mouth several sharp teeth could be distinguished. However, his eyes were not visible, the movement of the snakes on his head covered his gaze.

The jellyfish and the demon fought viciously for brief minutes. Each clash of axes against claws shook the earth. Then, just as suddenly as they began, they stopped. For a few brief minutes they watched each other and then the beast annihilated the stillness with its underworld voice.

-You must be Arika, the last descendant of the Lords of Turdes," said the monster.

-And you must be Bálaham, Jehovah-Satan's new pet," Arika replied.

-You fight well, *woman*, but you know that sooner or later I will have to beat you.

-I could go on fighting with you for eternity.

-You dare to challenge me, woman?

-I'm challenging you," Arika replied, ready to charge. But just as it looked like they were about to resume combat, a wall of fire rose up between the medusa and Bálaham.

-What are you doing, Bálaham," came a guttural voice from somewhere in the sky.



-I obey the great plan, master," replied Bálaham.

-It's not the time, come back!

-But, Master...

-Come back!

Suddenly the fire died out, leaving Bálaham once again facing her opponent. However, the woman had changed her appearance; she no longer looked like a jellyfish but like a human. The beast also transformed itself until it was once again a man in elegant clothes.

-It won't be our last duel, woman.

Finally, Bálaham, transformed into Mario Salas, began to walk down the hill towards the road that led back to the city of La Paz. Meanwhile, Arika approached Major Cuellar who still could not coordinate his thoughts coherently.

-Come on, stand up," said the gypsy woman, holding out her hand to the soldier.

-What the hell happened," asked Cuellar, taking the woman's hand.

-Our enemies have grown stronger, Major, that's what happened.

-But I saw that you....

-I would ask you not to comment on this.

-Who are you?

-My name is Arika de Turdes, I come from Erks.

Orlando Cuellar's face lit up for a .

-You've seen my...



-No, Major, I don't see them. They do not yet know of my presence in Erks, and it will be better to keep things that way for a while. I only came to save you and what's left of your troops.

-What was that thing that attacked us.

-His name is Bálaham, a cherno demon summoned from a human soul.

-Human, you say? -the gypsy nodded silently.

-The previous owner of that human body must have made a pact with the demons in the sky, and in return they gave him incredible power.

-Mario Salas," murmured the Major. I know him, he is the father of a friend of my daughters.

-I suspected as much," Arika replied and stood up. I must go, it is important that I return to Erks. I must give my report urgently, the Sentinels and their mentors must know about this.

-Don't tell my children what happened here," said Cuellar. I don't want them to be alarmed.

Arika looked at the Major for a few moments, fixing her cold, steely eyes on the man who could hardly abandon his spell. The gypsy nodded, gave a thin smile and then put her fist in front of the Way of the Gods, opened her palm and a vapour surrounded her. When the phenomenon stabilised, the woman was no longer there. Major Cuellar was still trying to comprehend all that had happened, but he soon returned to his decadent reality and began to search for survivors to rebound from Bálaham's ferocious attack. Walking through the ravages of the camp, Orlando Cuellar could see that the power of the enemy was beyond any scale of human comprehension. He knew that there was no one on Earth capable of



and that their last hope rested with their children and their friends. If they could not face such demonic powers, no one else could.

ARIKA



By an original betrayal, the Spirit-Man was imprisoned in the heaviest lands of Creation. Of all the Circles of Hell, the Celestial Abodes, the Sephiroth Realms and the Parallel Dimensions, the Traitor Siddhas had chosen the most terrible prison to hold men prisoner. Men were deceived and the fruit of the deception is rebellion.

Arika de Turdes



With clenched fists, a tear-streaked face, an expression of boundless fury and eyes fixed on the impalpable nothingness of his blindness, Gabriel had slowly walked away from the training polymer. Rhupay had visited his practice site to give him the sad news of his father's passing, and though Gabriel knew the bad news beforehand, in his heart he harboured the hope that his premonitions were wrong. When Rhupay told him that his father had passed away, the devastated boy said nothing, only began to slowly walk away. His friends, distraught, wanted to come closer to comfort him, but Rhupay stopped them. His comrade's mourning had to be carried alone.

Only hours before receiving the news, Gabriel had awoken from the lethargy that had trapped him. When he awoke he noticed, with fear and deep pain, that he could no longer see. He felt humiliated because he could sense an aura of pity surrounding him, but his friends helped the proud boy not to feel like a handicap - and he was not. Gabriel could not detect light, but he was still able to "see" through the electromagnetic traces left by living things and objects. Finally the boy understood why Qhawaq expressed himself as if he could see; he himself had discovered that he didn't need his eyes as much as he thought he did. That relieved him slightly, but he found it hard to resign himself to never again perceiving the world around him through light. His *days without light* had begun and he would miss seeing Rocío's face, the gestures of his friends or the eternal blue of the sky.





As soon as he woke up, Rowena decided that Gabriel should continue his regular training. Despite the difficulties, the boy was still able to perform certain exercises and move without stumbling, much to the surprise of his friends. Then, at almost midday, Rhupay appeared. He had several bandages on his body, it looked as if he had had an accident, but what had really happened was that he had fought a duel with a powerful demon summoned by the enemy. Rhupay told his whole story and at the end, with a sorrowful face, he told Gabriel of the death of Erik Cortez, his father. When the boy heard this, his face began to distort into a bundle of rage, tears began to stream down his cheeks, and silently, he slowly turned away from everyone.

All the memories of his father flashed through Gabriel's mind, weighing him down with a pain that was impossible to explain. But more than grief, it was that he was not there to save his father, not even to see him off, so an unquenchable thirst for revenge against his father's murderer was born inside him. He became so furious that he fell to his knees and began to hit the ground with all his might. The first few blows drew blood from his hands, but then something began to change in Gabriel. A halo of green light in the shape of a horse began to surround him, his blows against the ground were no longer hurting his fists and were instead shattering the earth. Then, and with one sure and excruciating blow, the ground began to tremble. An area of almost 10 metres around Gabriel collapsed into a crater from the blow. It was as if a meteorite had fallen on the spot. Large amounts of dust were kicked up by the impact, hiding the furious boy behind his veil. Rocio wanted to run to his side, but Rhupay held her back and with a look they all understood gave them the message to stay put.



As the dust began to dissipate they saw that Gabriel was intact. A general air of relief surrounded his friends. But Gabriel was no longer the same, he felt a power in his hands that he had never dreamed of. He sat up and returned to his friends, but his gait was different. He walked with firm, confident, almost swaying steps and he walked as if he could see perfectly. When his eyes became visible Rocio put her hands to her mouth in amazement, Diana and Rodrigo could not believe their eyes either. Gabriel's pupil and iris had disappeared from his eyes, they were now empty, dominated by the snowy white of a sclera that covered them completely and with a faint black dot surrounded by a tiny yellow ring around it. It was a hard, translucent, shadowy look, like liquid metal flowing from the bowels of his being, utterly unnatural, unhuman.

Rowena watched the boy and quickly sensed that the power of her wraith was swiftly surfacing in him. He had awoken as a Sentinel before everyone else.

-The prison of your Spirit was in your eyes, Gorkhan," Rowena told him, "but those eyes are no longer good for seeing, and so you have managed to break your prison. Use wisely the power you have discovered, and listen within to the voice of Sleipnir, the guardian of your bloodline. The rest, Gorkhan, is up to you.

Gabriel nodded silently and then fixed his disturbing eyes on Rocio. She quickly averted her gaze, Gabriel's eyes were too overwhelming.

-Everything is fine," said the blind boy, smiling.

-I'm sorry," Rocio replied and, not daring to look him in the eye, she hugged him. All his friends hugged him.



For an instant Gabriel knew that his father's death would not go unpunished and he set out to avenge the murderer with all his might. This new thought was stronger than all.

As Gabriel tried to ease the pain of his loss using all the knowledge he had acquired during his hyperborean training, the widow, wife of Erick Cortez, still could not conceive the idea of having lost her husband. In the Land of the Fourth Vertical, in the cloister of Santo Domingo in the city of La Paz, a group of monks accompanied by their illustrious guests descended into the catacombs of the church to place a coffin there. Inside rested the remains of Erik Cortez.

The funeral procession of monks, the deceased's closest friends and his wife slowly made their way down the tunnels that criss-crossed the city from one end to the other. They were as deep as a mine and led to an intricate network of caves that for centuries served the Catholic priesthood as a repository for their dead.

A special place had been reserved for Erik, a place that was only given to the most important personalities of the Order upon their death. However, that honour was given to Erik because of the circumstances of his death. For the monks his death was practically heroic, the death of a holy martyr.

-Hail Virgin, here we are, the banished sons of Kain, ready to fight for you. We invoke you to ask you for the Spirit of Erick Cortez Avendaño. Carry the Spirit of this man well along the paths of



death," prayed Father Bernardo Clementi in a funeral prayer. May he succeed in freeing himself from the perpetual cycle of incarnations and never return to these infernal abysses. We pray to you, Lord, that with your infinite wisdom you may guide this brave man through the turbulence of the river Acheronte," he said and made the sign of the cross in front of the coffin. In the name of God, Kristos and the Virgin Goddess. Amen.

Little by little the wooden box was entering the place where it would rest for the rest of eternity. The widow was utterly shattered, overcome by a grief as deep as the sea. Her eyes were swollen shut and she would occasionally let out biting moans in a supreme effort to restrain her desire to scream. When the box was inside the monks placed a heavy stone with the epitaph of the deceased:

*Erick Cortez Avendaño 1957
- 2000*

*Beloved father, husband and son; warrior of Kristos. May he return to his Village of Origin.
Honor et mortis.*

The funeral ceremonies over, the little party returned to the cloister and prepared for the fast that followed the death of an honourable man. They would mourn for twelve days during which they would pray for the eternal repose of his spirit, asking the Virgin to guide the dead man back to his Original Village. The prayers would be accompanied by a daily mass celebrated in the presbytery every dawn.

Erik's death had not only left his family in a state of devastation, but had also struck fear into the hearts of every inhabitant of the cloister, especially those who knew they were being persecuted.



by forces beyond their comprehension. The day Erik's corpse arrived at the cloister, the two warriors who carried it, two Sentinels, had arrived with terrible wounds and bearing a grim tale of a battle almost lost. Rhupay and Valya took time to heal their wounds in the cloister and then retreated to Erks, crossing the Umbra between the limbo of dimensions and the mouth of the Fourth Vertical. Only at the citadel could they finish healing their wounds satisfactorily. The tale of the two warriors had greatly disturbed everyone in the cloister. Ursus de la Vega and Bernardo Clementi set about the arduous task of reassuring the monasticism and the residents who, more than anyone else, felt the weight of the darkness that stalked them. As the darkness began to creep through the corridors of the monastery, an even more terrible threat than Bálaham was about to arrive.

MONGOLS



In 1222 AD, the Mongols under Genghis Khan had overrun all the Russian principalities between the Volga and Dnieper rivers. With their forces decimated, the Russians had no choice but to summon the Khanates to the city of Novgorod to negotiate a possible truce. The Prince of Vladimir, Yaroslav Vsevolodovich, headed the delegation of the Russian principalities and the Tsar of Polovtzy. The negotiations culminated in Yaroslav's abduction, skinning alive and subsequent dismemberment. The Russian prince had failed in his defiance of the khanate. As soon as the Novgorod meeting was over, the Mongol hordes advanced northwards towards Moskow, plundering everything in their path.

Winter was approaching and the steppes began to turn cold and snowy white. Genghis Khan was only a few kilometres away from Moskow, if the



invaded, Russia's defeat would be final and perpetual. The Russians would be extinguished from the world and in their place would arise the power of a Mongol horde that would take the world by storm. All would fall under the Khan's yoke: Romans, English, Franks, Arab Caliphs, Japanese, Hindis, Farsis, Vikings and even those pesky, curious people from across the sea. Genghis could almost sense the vastness of his empire and his divine right to rule everything under the sun, yet something inside him was draining his energy. Genghis was preoccupied with a green stone he had found last winter on the shores of the Black Sea. The Khan knew at once that it was a gem of the gods and, by some kind of superior divine will, he was moved to send the stone to the only man in Europe whom he trusted: Frederick II, King of Sicily. On that stone was engraved a tripartite pact to establish the Great Empire; the three parties would be: Genghis Khan, Emperor of Asia; Frederick II, Emperor of the West; and the Gods beyond Heaven, Loyal to men. This thought plagued Genghis and prevented him from being fully concentrated for his invasion of Moskovia, for, before he reached Suzdal, he could feel the same disturbance in the air that he felt when he found the stone in the Black Sea.

On that winter night, Genghis Khan and his generals held a banquet to celebrate the early fall of Russia. They had to prepare adequately, for the time for their invasion was very short. On the one hand, the Swedes were advancing from the Baltic towards the Volga; on the other, they had the Japanese siege at the other end of their empire. The Khan could not afford to waste too many resources in his seizure of Moskovia, and his way of encouraging his men was with a feast they would never forget.



Food began to arrive on countless trays for all the officers and the numerous troops of the horde. Drink lost the men and euphoria erupted like a volcano in the freezing night. The banquet was turning into a majestic orgy. There were enough women for everyone, most of them beautiful ladies brought from Kiev, Vladimir, Novgorod, Polska and northern Bulgaria. There was certainly no comparison between those beautiful Europeans and the rough Mongolian women the horde was used to. Whether willingly or by rape, all the women present were offered to the Khan's men who were satisfied with the delights offered by Genghis. Several soldiers fornicated with two or three ladies at a time, those who were virgins suffered mass rape. Drink was not lacking, nor was food. Some ate and drank while fornicating. Others exhibited their fetishes with food and all sorts of genital use of the women they had: wine served in the vagina of a European woman tasted better than those served in earthen vessels.

The orgy was at its climax when the deafening noise of an explosion and a violet light surrounded the horde and their slaves. The feast was interrupted, the noise brought everyone out of their drunken state, they dressed and took up their weapons.

-Sir, the armoury," one of the officers reported to Genghis.

The Khan, along with some of his men, went to the weapons storage tent and what he found he could hardly believe. The tarpaulin and everything in it was so frozen that it could not even be touched without serious frostbite. A coating of purple frost formed on the ground, emitting icy vapours and refracting glare from the torchlight.



-Where are the guards! -cried Genghis, one of his generals pointing his finger.

Both Mongols guarding the armoury had been turned into perfect statues of ice-maroon. The faces of horror expressed the panic and pain they must have felt at the moment of their death. Genghis could not fathom what kind of divine or infernal power could freeze his men like this, even more difficult to gauge the temperature around the warehouse. It was so cold you could barely breathe around the perimeter.

-Did anyone see what happened? -asked Genghis.

-Two slave girls were nearby," replied a soldier.

-Bring them before me! -commanded the Khan.

Two young Slav girls were brought before Genghis. They were beaten and it was noticeable that the warehouse guards had forced them to have intercourse with them. The two girls, after being used, were returned to the prison carriage of the horde, which is why the lethal cold did not kill them.

-You two will tell me what happened here or I'll cut off your nipples and make you eat them! -shouted Genghis, furious. Neither of the two girls seemed willing to speak, fear had petrified them, "I'm waiting! -I'm waiting," Genghis roared and one of them muttered:

-The Kuklovs," he said.

-Kuklovs? -questioned Genghis, quizzically, "What sorceries you dirty whores are invoking on your tongues!





-Archers Kuklovs," said the other girl, her voice trembling, "Lords of the House of Rurik.

Genghis was a barbarous man indeed, but he was no fool. The Mongol Emperor was highly cultured and intelligent, characteristics which, notwithstanding his barbarous deeds, he had nothing to envy the learned Greeks. He knew perfectly well that Rurik was the Varangian prince who founded the Russian Court; however, the Khan assumed that after the death of Vladimir I there would be no more descendants of the Rurikid Dynasty.

-Do you think I am a fool? -Genghis disbelieved the girls. The House of Rurik died out centuries ago, and even if Rurik himself had come back to life to attack my men, there is no human power that can freeze my soldiers, my tents and my weapons.

-Lord, we beg your mercy," pleaded one of the girls. The Kuklovs only want their people safe.

Genghis viciously slapped the young woman who cried out for mercy, she could not allow a wretched Russian prostitute to speak to her in such a way.

-I'll kill every Russian that breathes under the sky, I swear I will...!

The Khan had not finished his death sentence when another purplish flash followed by the deflagration of thunder echoed back to where he stood. The light had come from the central camp where the bulk of his troops were.

-Get in command and bring these harlots," said Genghis, and ran to his command tent.



The sight that greeted him was bleak. Everything was completely frozen. The ground looked like a huge ice rink on which stood countless frozen sculptures of a Mongol horde stretching to the horizon. The violet colour of the ice was so unnatural that it seemed to Genghis to be the work of some demon. Ice never has that subtle magenta colouring, and yet those crystals glittered ominously in the light of his torches. Even the fire in the hearths was frozen so that the flames themselves had solidified into their various igneous forms. Genghis howled with rage and pounded the ground in helplessness.

-What kind of demon could do such a thing," muttered the Khan.

-Sir, the slaves are escaping! -shouted one of the soldiers from a hill.

-Kill them all! -commanded Genghis, his eyes wild with rage.

The Mongols did not even have time to raise their bows against the escaping Russian slave girls on the esplanade. A hail of arrows rained down from the sky on Genghis' men, mowing them down. The fewest took cover while most fell under the siege of arrows. Khan himself could not identify where they were being attacked. He looked from side to side, searching the nearby hills for an attacker. Suddenly a hooded man in a black robe appeared out of nowhere and attacked Genghis. The Mongol leader unsheathed his sword and tried to defend himself from the heavy thrusts of his unknown attacker. This opponent was unlike any Genghis had ever met, his reflexes and agility were catlike and his strength was as great as that of a bear. The sparks between the blades of the hooded man and the Khan faintly illuminated his face.



anonymous veiled behind the icy darkness of that Russian night. Finally, with one swipe of his sword, the blade of Genghis's weapon snapped and flew through the air. His opponent's metal blade had been placed at his neck, ready to slice him.

-Go on, do it! -Genghis challenged. You'll have to kill me or I'll kill you.

-Enough, Dragomir! -a powerful female voice of command was heard.

Within seconds the Khan was surrounded by several archers covered in black veils with their arrows aimed at him. His surviving men had been taken prisoner, Genghis himself assessed the situation and had no choice but to assume that he had been trapped.

-Who are you people," the Khan questioned, his voice poisoned by the anger.

There was no response, the unknown attackers just watched and aimed at him.

-Who are you! -roared Genghis.

Suddenly the temperature dropped to the freezing point. The change had been so abrupt that Genghis fell to his knees on the ground, shivering from the cold. The Khan felt his bones freeze and the air he breathed chilled his brain. His vision blurred, he braced himself with his hands on the ground, making a supreme effort not to faint. Then he saw a human-shaped figure approaching in a blur. When he got closer he noticed that it was a woman in a long blue cloak and hood. In her hand she carried a bow unlike any other Genghis had ever seen in his life, it was made of bone. From



Immediately his eyes fell on green gemstone embedded in the middle of it. That stone was exactly the same as the gem he had sent to Frederick II of Sicily.

-Ma'am, we've already scoured your camp and the transducer is not there.

-said one of the hooded men to the mysterious woman.

-I understand," he murmured and glanced sideways at Genghis. The woman's eyes were caramel-coloured and liquid, or at least they seemed to be, for the shadows of her hood made it difficult to see her face. Only the Mongol must know her whereabouts.

-What about your men?

-Repatriate them, another horde is on its way and will take the place of this one.

-The Court of Moskow would accuse us of treason if you let these Mongols live.

-And the Loyal Gods would accuse us all of treason if we executed them.

The soldier nodded although he did not look pleased.

-Take them to the border of the Dnieper, then give them mead and let them forget everything.

-And what will we do with the Khan?

-I'm going to question him myself.

-You know that these Mongols will take Moskow.

-I, Dragomir, but this is a conflict in which we should not intervene.

Suddenly the temperature began to rise again. Genghis stopped feeling dizzy and the cold became bearable. The woman knelt down beside him and looked deeply into his eyes. The Khan was immediately mesmerised by the citrine eyes. It was a different gaze, the likes of which he had never seen in anyone else.



-Mr. Mongolian," the woman said, "We need to know some things.

-I have nothing to talk about," Genghis defied. I swear to you that my sons will avenge my death and eat your hearts and use your bones to make buttons.

-You are wrong, Genghis. We are not going to kill him.

-If you do not ransom me, my troops will find you and cut you to pieces. You will not get a wafer of gold from my empire.

-Nor do we want ransom or your gold, Genghis," the Khan was puzzled, not only by the strange condition of his captivity before these Russians, but also by the excellent Mongolian in which the woman spoke to him. Never had he heard a foreigner speak Mongolian so well.

-Whatever you want from me, you're not going to get it.

-Don't you understand, Genghis? We have almost got it.

Genghis was so confused that a grimace escaped him against his will. The woman continued:

-You found a gem on the shores of the Black Sea, a Stone of Agartha that serves as a transducer to communicate with the Gods. Where are you hiding it?

The woman was undoubtedly asking him about the gem he had sent to Sicily. Genghis refused to answer her questions, but the woman's eyes had robbed him of all defence.

-That stone," said Genghis, still against his will. I sent it to Europe, to the court of Frederick of Sicily.





The woman sighed with relief. It was as if the Khan had given her great news. She sat up and held out her hand to Genghis to help him up. The Mongol could not understand why his enemy's attitude had changed so quickly.

-You have done the right thing, Lord of Mongolia.

-What do you want with that stone? -questioned Genghis.

-Just be safe.

-Who are you people, aren't Russians?

-We are, our lineage is part of the Court of Moskovia; but this war between the Horde and the Tsars is not something that involves us, we have another mission.

-They are traitors then.

-We are loyal to the legacy of our ancestors, Lord of Mongolia, and to our law; which is not necessarily the law of the Tsarist Court.

Genghis looked at the bow the woman held in her hand, she noticed that the Khan was looking at the relic:

-You know this arch," said the woman.

-It is familiar to me.

-That is because you are a man of Pure Blood. The object you see is the Bow of Artemis. Our ancestors retrieved it from Alexander of Macedon during their battle at Persepolis. With this bow the demons of Elbruz were defeated before the eyes of the Romans. This bow and its gem are another transducer that we guard.

-What's so special about that stone?



-He is a Graal, Lord of Mongolia. He unites men with the Gods.

-Their gods?

The woman shook her head.

-With the Gods Loyal to all the spirits of men.

-It sounds like the Christianity of the Romans.

-But it not. We do not defend Catholic interests. Our mission is only to protect the transducers from the enemy.

-What enemy?

The woman sighed, saw that her men were already taking the Mongols to the Dnieper. Then she turned her gaze to the frozen camp, frozen in time by the power of an arrow shot from the Bow of Artemis. The Slavic slaves had been freed and would soon reach their villages, but the Mongol advance would retake the lost lands that night. She knew better than to stop the Horde from advancing, though that thought did not satisfy her either.

-The enemy of us all, Lord of Mongolia, is in a place far away from our lands. You will know and remember it before long.

With her last sentence, the nameless warrior was about to leave, but Genghis grabbed her arm.

-Her name," he asked, and the woman glanced sideways at him and replied:

-I am Dianara, a Kuklov archer; and you are the Lord of Asia. Do not forget that when death visits you, Genghis Khan.



Chang Shambhala is a small planet whose orbit is chronometrically parallel to that of the Earth and expands between the orbits of the Moon, the Earth and Mercury. Its gravitational effect is so powerful that it influences the magnetic fields of Jupiter, Saturn and the Sun itself. Only Venus is free from the graviton effect of *Chang Shambhala* because of the electromagnetic isolation of its ionosphere, due to the immeasurable number of dimensional gates open on the hostile surface of Venus. *Chang Shambhala* sits on a quantum tectonic fault line of the Really Material Reality; a topological fold in a dimensional chasm of the Umbra that favours its world to directly absorb the rays of the Sun not only in the heavy dimensions of the Fourth Vertical, but of all the parallel suns that coexist one above the other. All such light is utilised by powerful shambalic artefacts for the purpose of giving heavy reality status to all that exists on Earth and its multiple dimensional clones. Likewise, *Chang Shambhala* projects a light image of the rest of the universe, placing the axis of its power at the centre of the cosmos and maintaining the permanent seal on which Yahweh Demiurge rests. The day the Demiurge creator of the universe awakens, all cosmic existence will be devoured in a *Big Crunch*, generated by an infinite white hole. In the meantime, everything that happens on earth, in the cosmos and in all the parallel universes of the cosmos, are the product of Yahweh's dreams. And the entities in charge of keeping the Devil-God, that is, Jehovah-Satan asleep, are the archangels and their retinue of druids and priests. One of these druids is Hexabor, a warrior acolyte trained on the planet Chernobyl, situated in the cosmos of the Tenth Horizontal, in the star Regulus in the constellation Leo.





There are few cern druids and most of them never interfere too much in the plans of the Tetragrammaton, a group of immortal archangels who make all the decisions about the cosmos, humanity and countless intelligent life forms that populate the universes. The last time Héxabor intervened in the workings of the Tetragrammaton was to save the priests Bera and Birsa from the terrible and relentless fury of Kurt Bear, raised to his highest spectral power by a human with unimaginable powers. This human, a German inhabitant of the Earth of the Fourth Vertical, answered to the name of Kurt Von Subermann. His power was such that the mighty Bera and Birsa had spent their energies alone in the chase and were close to their ultimate demise in the clutches of Kurt Bear. Héxabor fought him for thousands of years in the lost dimensions of the white end and finally succeeded in pushing the bear out of Creation, returning him imminently to Agartha, the real and true dimension from which all gods come. Kurt became a god.

Despite all of Héxabor's efforts to save Bera and Birsa, their injuries were so terrible and they were so weak that they lost their lives without anyone being able to prevent it. Since then Héxabor has worked hard to become more powerful.

Héxabor was meditating in one of the Temples of *Chang Shambalá*, the Temple of Wisdom, when his meditations were interrupted by a priest whose presence brought back memories of the Chosen People's victory over a rebellious Pharaoh.

-Have you invoked Bálaham again, Héxabor? -asked the .



The man had a long beard and white hair. His skin was dark, his nose aquiline, his chin sharp and his eyes dark. He was an old man, supported by a wooden staff and dressed in a golden robe.

-Why are you interrupting me, Moses? Can't you see I'm meditating?

-I see with satisfaction that you are finally taking sides in this war.

-Involved, I always have been.

-You've never shown it before. Summoning Bálaham is one of riskiest offensives for any druid, and you have made a radical decision.

-I'm just trying to fix all of Golab's negligence.

-What are you insinuating, Hélixabor?

-No Lord of the Pit would have let the chosen escape. Is St Michael so blind, so great is his love for Golab, that he does not notice the strange thing that befalls that stupid demon?

-Golab has been one of the most powerful Pit Lords; nothing could happen to him.

-Moses, don't be so naïve," Hexabor looked annoyed. It is true that Golab's power is immense, as great as that of St. Michael or St. Gabriel, but they seem to forget that Golab has had to deal with the Sentinels the longest, especially Dianara. Have they forgotten what terrible power Dianara has? Her charms not foreign to us, Moses. That woman is capable of making any one of us fall into sin.

-You speculate too much. Are you thinking that Golab...?

-I'm not thinking anything you didn't suspect, even before I did," interrupted Hélixabor, Moses put his hand to his jaw, thoughtfully.

. Golab has been too close to Dianara for too long and it's very strange that



He could have allowed the twelve chosen ones to escape. With his immense power he could have murdered them with a breath of death, but he did not. Can't you see, Moses, Golab's actions smack of treachery and he has managed to convince the Tetragrammaton that the Sentinels will never awaken.

-That decision was Baphometh's, and Baphometh has always been in conflict with the Tetragrammaton.

-And yet we know what those cursed ones are capable of. We faced them millennia ago and nearly lost our world to them. If the Sentinels awaken and Dianara reclaims "The Bow of Artemis", I can't imagine what would happen. It would be Nimrod rising to desecrate our temple again.

-I refuse to believe that Golab is betraying us, Héxabor; however, your observations are quite logical. Golab has let those children run away, I thought so too.

-That is why I have invoked Bálaham. Help me, Moses," Héxabor's eyes tinged almost with an air of entreaty. Let us not wait until it is too late, nor will Golab be able to stand against the twelve Sentinels if we let them get the upper hand. Call your troops, let us go to Erks and claim their lives before it is too late.

-What makes you think it will be any different now?

-Taking Erks will not be necessary, we need only take the lives of the twelve chosen ones before they awaken as Sentinels.

-The Hyperboreans will not allow it.

-They will not be able to stop us. You are a powerful priest, Moses, and you should be very keen to take the lives of the chosen twelve. Are you forgetting that Rit, handmaiden of Rameses, is a chosen Sentinel?

-Don't insult me, Héxabor, I know that.

-Then help me. Let's go to Erks.





-Your words are convincing, Héxabor, but I doubt that your measures will be enough.

-They will be. I only ask you to speak to the Tetragrammaton, convince St. Michael to attack as soon as possible. Leave Baphometh to me. Neither archangels nor demons will object when we tell them the danger we are in. Let's attack Erks and get this over with...

Chang Shambhala





Arika of Turdes, along with two of her students, Berkana and Akinos, awaited Vairon's return from Pyrena's Cave. They stood at the entrance and though they were temperate spirits, totally cool to emotion, they could not help but feel anxious. Vairon had reached the peak of his training, in a few months he had perfected most of the hyperborean techniques of combat. He had mastered plasma emanations, weapon fighting and hand-to-hand combat. He could defy gravity, defy the physical laws of the universe, destroy mountains with the power of his wraith, split entire tectonic plates with the force of his fists, and even leave planet Earth and fly through space with no protection other than his own energy. However, he was not yet able to summon his hyperborean beast. The Guardian Spirit of Vairon, Gery, one of Odin's wolves, had told him that it was time for his final test. He had to submit to the Cold Fire Cult of Pyerna and if he was unable to pass the test, an irretrievable death would be the cost of his failed attempt. If he failed, he would never return from Pyrena's Cave. But if he passed the test, he would return a stone man, a Sentinel.

The young boy, whose 13 years had been enough to overcome tough tests that even mature men would fail, had only one thought on his mind: to be a Sentinel.

The interior of the cave was painted with a green glaze of reed resin, all the walls and ceiling were chiselled with runes and inlaid with emeralds. Vairon walked carefully through the interior of the cave, from experience he had learned that the cyclopean sites built by the





Hyperboreans were guarded by deadly traps to protect their treasures and relics from intruders, though the world where Erks had been built, it was hard to imagine more intruders than animals, for on that replica of Earth the human species never developed.

Despite all the young warrior's precautions, no trap threatened his entrance into the cave. The path was flat and clear, and Vairon followed it by the faint light of a torch to illuminate his steps. Wherever he walked, steps led up and down tangled paths that confused the mind. Vairon knew he was entering the depths of the earth, but he was not afraid, only slightly uneasy, as hunters feel when they are about to catch prey.

Several corridors later the young expeditionary came upon a gigantic chamber built by totally unknown, non-human ingenuity and architecture. Four great serpentine columns supported the ceiling, which was lost to unfathomable heights, covered in the darkness of infinity. The four columns were of green stone, like four huge pieces of emerald carved and worked to look like the skin of a snake and whose provenance could not be the Earth. No doubt the columns were emerald. The walls of the chamber were also unobservable. The atmosphere was dominated by darkness and the walls extended such distances that the faint light of the torch could not illuminate them well. The floor was made of stone and had runes carved into it, marking a sort of path that seemed to lead to the centre of the chamber. Vairon followed the runes, still fearing some sort of trap.



When he reached the central part of the hall, he found a small, shallow hole, inside of which rested two perfectly cut stones, as if they were gates. About a metre from the stone gates stood a sort of altar that looked more like a console with buttons made of precious gems than a place of worship in some arcane civilisation. Vairon gazed for a moment at the stony buttons before him and was struck by one in particular that was in the shape of a twelve-pointed star; chiselled with runes on each peak and with a complex compound rune in the middle. The young warrior pondered for a few moments and then began to rub the button with his fingers. He noticed that it sank when he pressed on it and depressed the stone lightly. A mechanical clatter of nuts and gears pervaded the chamber and then, suddenly, countless torches flared on the walls, illuminating the chamber and revealing its true dimensions. It was as large as a football pitch and its ceiling was several hundred feet above Vairon. The boy was stunned when he saw the vastness of the room he was in.

Then, convinced that what was in front of him was indeed a control console, Vairon looked carefully at the buttons and noticed that there was a stone in the shape of a snake; that was the only stone that did not show angular but spiral shapes. Vairon pondered for a few seconds and pressed that button. After a few moments another mechanical noise was heard, but this one came from the ground. The stone gates opened and a figure began to emerge from the hollow that formed within. The object was a stone bust, the head of a Gorgon, carved with impressive realism. The snakes that made up her hair looked so real



that almost gave the illusion of movement. The head had closed eyes and cold expression, devoid of emotion or sensation, as if asleep.

-In front of you, Vairon Werewolf, stands Pyrena," the boy heard a voice speaking inside his head. He knew it was his Spirit protector, Gery, one of Odin's wolves. The wolf Gery had been the protector of all his bloodline for centuries and his presence gave Vairon greater security. You, son of the Gods, must awaken her and see straight into her eyes.

-And how will I do that?

-Look into your blood and there you will find the answers," said the wolf and vanished.

And so Vairon did. As Arika had taught him, he turned to his genetic memory, to the archives stored in his blood through the legacy of his ancestors. With great effort he went back over his own age, reliving all the agonising events that brought him to Erks: the death of his parents, their bodies turned to shreds of flesh, made him shudder. Then he remembered her, remembered her infinite beauty and incredible talent, the girl who had driven him mad with love and passion even before her birth. He remembered pencils and paper, the smooth texture of the white surface of his dreams, his passion for drawing and perfecting his technique. He remembered deep pains and strange sensations that haunted his being. Finally he came to the date of his birth and remembered something he had long forgotten, ever since he came to Erks, and that was that he did not remember what he was called before the death of his parents. But that memory was still there, and it came to his mind. Vairon, the Werewolf, was also called Alan. No, more than that, he was Alan Amaury Duran Reveillere. On his mother's side he was a member of a pureblood family, of the Blood Pact with the Loyalist Atlanteans.



For centuries, the fate of the Reveillere family was linked to their northern compatriots, the Michelle. Alan's lineage came from one of the oldest families in France and Europe. In the 5th century BC, Alan's ancestors, native Gauls linked by political and racial covenants with the Hispanic Tartessians and the silent Spartans of Laconia, settled on the banks of the Seine River and formed a Clan whose provenance appeared to be from some lost island in the South Atlantic. Their arrival was marked by continuous battles with the tribes of Gauls who inhabited northern France from Brittany, and who would one day become the Lords Michelle of Normandy. The invasions ceased, however, when the Romans took the Brittany peninsula by storm and gave the men of the Seine River Clan the opportunity to advance in the tasks the Gods had set them. So it was for nearly two hundred years until, in the middle of the third century BC, the Parisii, a Celtic people, settled on the Seine River almost by force. The natives fought fierce battles with the Celts until they managed to exterminate the Druidic caste that came with them and took their women as wives to assimilate their culture into their own. Textually the invading Celts were subdued until the vast majority of their sacralising customs were eradicated from their minds. The Clan then fortified the island of La Cité and christened it Lutetia.

In 52 BC, the Clan parisii burned the fortification of the island and abandoned Lutetia to the Romans, who later extended it to the left bank of the Seine where they built baths, a forum and laid out most of the Parisian streets. In Roman Gaul, Lutetia became known as the city of the Parisians, or Paris, a city of little importance at the time. According to medieval tradition, St. Dionysius, the first bishop of Paris, was the first bishop of Paris.



However, the people of the Clan assimilated Christianity in a different way, with the figure of Navutan emerging from their genetic memory as a representation of Christ on the Cross. Another legend has it that Saint Geneviève, patron saint of Paris, helped in 451 AD to defend the city in its fight against the Huns, who would later be overwhelmed by the presence of the Clan mystics.

When the Duchy of Normandy was established, making the Lords Michelle masters of the Brittany peninsula, the Clan claimed from King Philip II the opportunity to administer the Cité. Thus, in the 9th century, after Viking raids turned Paris into the capital of a new empire - the Empire of France - the Reveillere lords of Paris became regents of the kingdom and natural rivals of the Michelle lords of Normandy. Both squires, forgers of France, had adopted the Wolf as their symbol, and because of the countless similarities between the two, the French people regarded them as "twin brothers in discord".

Both squads smoothed out their differences and joined hands during the reign of Philip IV to confront the *Golen* Popes of the Synarchy. Thus the Cathars and Ghibellines, led from Normandy, and the Gauls and Belgian Frisians, led from Paris, aligned themselves with the royal reforms that the Empire of France undertook to confront the iniquities of Pope Boniface VIII. After the papal fall, the Reveillere of Paris and the Michelle of Normandy saw their differences further accentuated when the Papal See of Avignon was established and the Black Death fell across Europe. The definitive rift between the two families came after Moncast Reveillere started a legal battle against Alou Claude Michelle because both nobles asked for the hand of one of the Kuklov princesses of the Russian Court, Alexandra Grigorieva Kuklova. The



A scandal broke out in Versailles, giving the Russian Kuklov princesses the reputation of "women who lose men".

Alan had remembered it all perfectly well and understood deeply the reason for his natural antagonism towards the man who had been his school friend and closest rival. He remembered him, Rodrigo Torrico Michelle, the last descendant of the Michelle de Normandía. Her, Diana Cuellar Kuklova, the last descendant of the Russian Kuklovs. And himself, Alan Durán Reveillere, the last of the regents of France, of the Reveillere of Paris. In his mind and heart was projected the drama that the three had played out over the millennia and he knew that all three had a destiny that continually linked and separated.

Then, searching his genetic memory as a Clansman, he identified the memory he was looking for. He looked at the bust of the sleeping Gorgon with her snake hair and read his memories: *all who came to Pyrena came prepared to die. To die, yes, for that was the condition of the Promise, the requirement of Her Grace: as all her worshippers knew, the Goddess had the Power to make a man a God, to raise him to the Heaven of Gods; but, as all also knew, the rare Chosen Ones whom She accepted must first undergo the Test of the Cold Fire, that is, experience of Her Deadly Gaze; and this experience usually ended with the physical death of the Chosen One. According to the knowledge of Her adepts, and without such certainty affecting in the least the fascination for Her, many more of the Chosen Ones had died than were proven to have been reborn; those who received Her Deadly Stare were certain to fall; and many, most of them, never rose again.* Alan closed his eyes for a few moments and summoned , called himself



He became Vairon again, the relentless warrior protected by Gery, the last regent of France, the Man Made Wolf.

-Oh Pyrena! -said Vairon aloud, "I don't know if I can look you in the eye!

The moments of apparent stillness were broken by a shuddering rumble that echoed from the depths of the earth. Vairon took a few back, sensing a threat fast approaching him. He drew his sword from its sheath and waited for the danger to show itself.

A shadow passed close to Vairon, he turned quickly but could see nothing. Once again the darkness brushed against him, Vairon discharged his sword at the heavy darkness that snaked around him, but it did little more than cut through the air. Then the darkness grew thicker and thicker until it began to take the form of a gigantic snake. The darkness became flesh and only then could Vairon see the true form of the menace that stalked him, a monstrous, gigantic viper with green eyes and sharp fangs.

The huge reptile lunged at Vairon, the warrior leapt ten metres above it and then landed with all his might and with the tip of his sword on the body of his attacker. The razor-edged blade of his weapon penetrated the tough scaly skin and entered his body, a green liquid gushed from the wound. The snake jerked hard several times until in one titanic lurch it managed to shake Vairon off. The boy's body flew through the air and struck one of the stone walls with such force that it plunged a couple of metres into the wall, kicking up dust and debris. His limp body fell



The blow had been excruciating and Vairon was almost unconscious. He was barely getting up when he saw the snake heading at deadly speed towards him, he could not dodge its onslaught and with his bare hands he restrained the monster by holding its sharp fangs. In an act of supreme effort Vairon shook the reptile off and hurled it against one of the chamber walls. The impact lifted the stones from the wall, leaving the snake's body scarred. Vairon took advantage of the beast's dizziness to leap several metres into the air and fire a powerful blast of blue-green plasma that generated a loud explosion.

As the dust cleared, Vairon saw that the beast lay inert on the ground.

The plasma emanations that the Sentinels use consist of magnetic energy waves that freeze and stop the movement of the particles in each atom. These magnetic emanations are also coated with microwaves that cook the target from the inside. Plasma in its weaponised use is a compound of dark energy, wrapped in a cocoon that emanates a powerful light whose colour depends on the quantum character of the spectrum of the energy source. It is explosive and the key to its effectiveness lies in the abrupt change in temperature to which it subjects the target, that change of microns of seconds can vary between 1675.22 C° and 273.15 C° below zero, - absolute zero-. In one second, the target is subjected to the temperature change a thousand times, resulting in its death and/or destruction; and being an atomic and quantum weapon, it is effective even against energy creatures, such as the snake that Vairon had destroyed.



Vairon slowly approached the still smoking body of the beast. Slowly its physical form volatilised into darkness that returned to where it had come from: nothingness. Only then did the boy feel a sharp pain in his shoulder, it was bleeding and broken; it had been gouged by one of the snake's fangs, Vairon felt poisoned by a terrible, undecipherable toxin. He raised his wraith as high as he could and focused his thoughts on the wound and his blood, only that way could he counteract the poison, or at least that's what he had learned from Arika. Then, as he tried to heal himself, the Gorgon's bust slowly began to open its eyes.

The wounded boy sat up, fixing his eyes on that piece of carved stone. As his eyes opened, a faint green light was coming out of those eyes.

-*What do you seek, you protégé of Gery?* -Vairon heard a voice from the stone bust.

-Overcome the test, the Cult of Cold Fire.

-*Do you think you're ready?*

-Yes, and if I fail I at least want to die trying.

The Gorgon's eyes were opening wider and wider. Vairon stared at her, completely mesmerised by her green light. It was the moment of truth, he would either see the eyes of the jellyfish and die, or he would live and return as an awakened Sentinel. In that last moment he thought of his parents, how much he missed them and his deep desire for revenge. He thought of Arika, his teacher, and his friends and comrades Berkana and Akinos. He thought of Rodrigo, who had finally arrived in Erks. But most of all he thought of Diana, the great love of his life.

life, his secret love. If he was going to die he wanted to do it with the image of Diana's smile in his mind. And then the Gorgon opened her eyes wide, a green glow instantly blinded Vairon and then he had to face himself and the Serpent that dwells within all men. Vairon had to fight to the death and he did not know if he would win or be defeated.

PYRENA





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(Is)

Sixth Mystery, Isis and Osiris

Taken from the Egyptian Mythology, adapted from the Amethyst Circle.

Centuries ago Ancient Egypt was ruled by the gods who directly ruled men. Among the deities who ruled Egypt the greatest was Osiris. From the unknowable divine world, Osiris brought to men the knowledge of agriculture, taught them to master the Nile, instructed them in the arts of war, showed them how to create weapons and ploughs of stone and metal. Throughout Egypt, Osiris wandered, unifying the people and showing the Egyptians the mysteries of other worlds. From Osiris men learned the symbols that defy the created nature of Ra, the creator-god of all that exists and patron of time and of the Sun-Shamash. Ra was not pleased that Osiris taught men so many forbidden techniques. When Osiris taught men how to build pyramids, Ra felt suspicious and threatened by Osiris and sowed the seeds of envy in the heart of Osiris' brother Seth.

All his life Seth had been jealous of his brother and of the veneration shown him by men. While Osiris was a beloved god, honoured with possession of the Nile and all its wealth, the creator gods had Seth dominion over the arid desert sands. Therefore men feared Seth, he filled them with droughts, sandstorms and desert curses; while Osiris blessed men and provided them with sustenance.

Seth was fed up with Osiris; envy soon grew into hatred. Seth's consort and sister, Neftys, repeatedly tried to console her husband by offering him all kinds of pleasures in the desert oases, but nothing resigned Seth to his growing hatred. Then one day he had an idea and gathered together other gods who also hated Osiris, and with them he created a sarcophagus so that the gods would be able to make a sarcophagus of Osiris.





beautiful that all gods and even mortals would want to possess it and be in it. The sarcophagus was made to the exact measurements of Osiris and no one but him could fit inside it. Seth's promise was that he would give the sarcophagus to whoever could fit inside it, but no one knew that the craftsmanship had been built exclusively for Osiris.

On the day of Ra, Seth held a banquet in honour of Geb, father of Osiris, Isis, Neftys and himself. Of course Osiris and his wife and sister, Isis, were invited. All the gods of Egypt attended: Sobek, the crocodile god, master of the Nile and the waters; Tot, the ibis god, master of wisdom; Maat, the cow goddess, mistress of justice; Min, the fertility god; Jonsu, son of Bálaham and Mut, master of the moon; and so on. During the feast Seth displayed the magnificent sarcophagus and as the Imhotep goldsmiths had calculated, the gods were fascinated by the craftsmanship. One by one, the divinities entered the sarcophagus in the hope of fitting into it and taking it away, but no one would fit. Then it was the turn of Osiris who confidently entered the sarcophagus. Then, treacherously, Seth closed the sarcophagus, threw it into the waters of the Nile and cursed it so that Sobek would never find it. Then he and his accomplices disappeared in a cloud of locusts.

In desperation Isis set out in search of Osiris. Turning herself into a falcon, she took flight and flew all over Egypt in search of her husband, whom she loved dearly. Meanwhile Seth, gloating over Osiris' misfortune, had taken control of Egypt and began to rule tyrannically over men.

After decades of searching Isis finally found the sarcophagus containing Osiris in the palace of Byblos. She found it under a tree which, by the divine spectre of its occupant, began to grow beautifully. To get her husband back Isis had to become a murderess and a prostitute, for the



king of Byblos was unwilling to give the goddess the sarcophagus. She seduced the king, had intercourse with him and before the man left his mortal semen inside her divine womb, Isis turned into a falcon and tore out his heart. Then she went to the aid of Osiris, opened the sarcophagus and found him weak and dying from hunger and darkness. Isis then took the sarcophagus in her falcon talons and carried it back to Egypt, hiding it in the Nile delta until she could find a way to cure her husband and remove Seth's curse.

With Osiris in agony, Isis realised that if she wanted to save her husband she had to find the secret of death, and to do so she asked for the help of her sister Neftys. She abandoned Seth and left him asleep in an oasis by means of a magic potion that Hator, goddess of love, had given her. Then both sisters, transformed into falcons, flew to the Duat, the realm of dead. They sought out Anubis, the god of the underworld, and begged for his help. It turned out that the jackal god, Anubis, did not know the secret death but of life in the other world; but he told them that Tot, the ibis god, knew the secret of death. So the three gods set out for Thebes and met Tot, whom they asked for help. The ibis god agreed, moved by the infinite pain of Isis. He revealed to them the secret of death, and the four gods set out for the Nile delta, where Isis had hidden the sarcophagus; but when they arrived they saw that the sarcophagus was empty. The guts and entrails of Osiris had been scattered all over the delta. It happened that Seth awoke from sleep and monstrously raped Hator to make him confess what he had heard from Isis. Then the tormented goddess, whose womb was already broken and torn by the rape, told him that Isis had found the sarcophagus of Osiris and revealed its location. Seth, mad with rage, went to the Nile delta, opened the sarcophagus and dismembered, flayed, skinned, disembowelled and mutilated Osiris in every possible way. Seth had cut the body into 42 parts and threw each one into different parts of Egypt.



When Isis and the other gods arrived at the delta, the goddess nearly went mad with grief when she saw the empty sarcophagus and Osiris' intestines floating among the reeds. But all was not lost, Neftys reminded Isis that they knew the secret of death and would bring Osiris back to life. So the falcon goddesses flew all over Egypt in search of Osiris' body parts. Piece by piece they gathered up his body, and wherever they found a part, they founded a city and ordered men to erect a temple in honour of Osiris. At the end of twelve moons all the parts of Osiris were gathered together except the penis, which the fish of the Nile had eaten. Then Isis and Neftys, using their magic and their arts, drew a penis and turned it into flesh, replacing the original member. They then summoned Tot and Anubis and began the rituals of resuscitation. Then Tot told Isis to become a falcon and to dance with her wings, blowing air over the inert body of Osiris. So Isis did, and as she danced the dance of the birds, she understood as well as Tot the secret of death. The winds of life inflated Osiris' lungs again and he came back to life. With mission accomplished, the gods withdrew and Isis gave herself carnally to Osiris for twelve moons, becoming pregnant by him.

After copulating, both Isis and Osiris, who already knew the secret of death, knew that they had to separate. Anubis returned and told them that it was time to take the god Osiris to live in the Other World. Isis and Osiris said goodbye one last time and he caressed Isis' womb, giving her child his eternal blessing. Finally Osiris, having become a mummy, began to leave the world of the living in the flesh and went to live with Anubis in the Other World. In Isis would remain the memory of the eternal love she felt for her husband, and in him would also remain that perpetual longing for Isis. From then on Osiris judges the dead and Isis reveals to them the secret of death on the other side. Later Horus, the son of Isis and Osiris, would be born, who would take revenge on Seth for the death and betrayal of his father.



Frederic Chopin's Nocturne No. 20 in C major, a delicate interpretation full of unusual nostalgia. The performer had been carried away by his own melancholy, a hope-killing descending scale and a fifth-interval harmonic resolution to regain some melodic optimism. A trill impregnated with subtle longing and arpeggios riding lightly over the piano keyboard.

It was Rodrigo who played. One day Rowena told him that Erks had a music academy. At first Rodrigo found the idea of taking up the piano in a place so different from his hometown strange. Even more, he found it unusual to have to share the surroundings with people who didn't even speak Spanish, and when they spoke to him he didn't understand a word they , but not everyone seemed so alien to him. Some students did know some Spanish and taught him *Erkian Futark*, the language spoken in Erks.

Diana accompanied Rodrigo whenever he went to the academy to practice, so the two of them practised together and regained the old prodigy level that once characterised them. Diana was still far more skilled than Rodrigo, but the proud boy was not giving up on his quest to improve every day. After all, his Family Mission was to find the music of silence and that could only be achieved by playing. Despite the irreversible injury, which had almost rendered his left hand useless, he was gradually regaining the dexterity of his left hand and was improving his level. Diana was happy for her boyfriend. She deeply wished that he would return to being the pianist he was before.





Erks' academy housed dozens of students, *luthiers* and musicians specialising in a wide range of instruments. All of them were chamber musicians cultivated in the performance of classical pieces. The academy was named after the musician it honoured every year during the Harvest Festival: Richard Wagner.

According to the calendar Rodrigo had brought with him from La Paz, the first half of July 2000 was over; however, for all the chosen ones, it was as if time had sped up. It seemed as if many more months had been consumed.

Gabriel was about to turn 14 and his friends were already preparing some kind of celebration to commemorate the event. It was hard for everyone to look back. Only a year earlier, on the same date, the boys had been celebrating the eve of a party somewhere between a children's party and a youth party, but in the year 2000, things were too vastly different to even think about such a thing. The training had not only made them much stronger, it had made them mature at a frantic pace. For Gabriel himself, his birthday seemed like some kind of distant memory. After the loss of his vision and the death of his father, the young Sentinel began to change radically in character. He became increasingly silent. He had stopped talking the classic nonsense that identified him and his habit of joking all the time had almost vanished. And Diana, neither short nor lazy, set out to fill the space that Gabriel's good humour had left; she tried to see the positive in everything, she tried to be jocular, to make her friends and siblings laugh.



Rodrigo's melody ended simply, spontaneously. Diana looked at him and took his hands, rubbing them together as if the 24 C° that warmed the citadel were insufficient to keep them warm.

-You did very well," said Diana.

-Yes, I feel I've improved a bit.

Their minds were focused on some distant point, inside their own memories, observing each other as if nothing else in the world was important. It seemed that this moment of contemplation would last forever, but the untimely entrance of Rocío awoke the couple from their lethargy. The intruder looked at them, smiling malevolently.

-I hope I didn't interrupt anything," said Rocío, suppressing a slight giggle.

-Ahem... no... nothing, nothing, everything's fine..." Rodrigo and Diana replied, in disarray.

-It's good because Rowena is calling us.

Elsewhere in Erks Diana's brother, Edwin, was beating a sack full of stones as a way of practising his hook. The bag was held together with chains to support the one and a half ton it weighed, but to Edwin that weight was insignificant. The bag swayed violently in the air every time it was hit, as if it weighed a few kilos and was stuffed with rags. Edwin felt an obsessive anxiety running through his marrow, he felt the imperious need to be stronger every day, every hour, if possible. He wanted to return to his world, to the city of La Paz and be reunited with his parents. He was very afraid for his family after death visited Gabriel's father, so he had



to return to protect them. And it was not only Edwin who felt the need, Oscar and Jhoanna were also overcome by the urge and trained hard to become stronger. Thanks to Aldrick's instruction, the three youngsters had already managed to consciously raise their spectra to an acceptable level within the rules of hyperborean combat. They had delved into most of the twelve Hyperborean Mysteries and as a result had discovered the power of their wraith. Their strength and agility had far surpassed human limits. Their training, from the beginning, was linked to stones and gravity. They learned to break monumental boulders, to play with them and even to levitate them. They also learned to fall from immense heights without the slightest harm; that was Aldrick's way of training them, mastering the stones and falling from unheard-of elevations.

Sweat on Edwin's naked torso splattered from his body every time he hit the bag. His fists were covered with white bandages to keep them from getting cold. His boxing stance helped him maintain perfect balance and his punches were getting faster and faster. It took five seconds for the bag to rock from one end to the other and in that time Edwin was able land forty to fifty blows on the bag.

He was about to finish his sequence of strokes when Jhoanna approached him. She, too, was sweaty, noticeably exhausted after challenging herself to break her record for displacement.

-How much longer before you're done? -asked the exhausted girl.

-No," Edwin replied, panting, "Just two more rounds.

-Aldrick is calling us.



Edwin stopped abruptly when he heard his sister. He hugged the bag, breathing heavily and giving himself time to catch his breath.

-Do you know what he wants? -asked the young man, Jhoanna replied with a shake of her head.

-I imagine you'll want to give us some new exercises.

-Yes, that..." Edwin still couldn't catch his breath, his heart was . I need a few seconds.

-Yes, we'll rest for a while," she replied, sitting down on a nearby boulder.

Exhausted, Edwin seconded her and sat next to her, leaning his head back to relax his neck muscles.

-Did you go to the village? -Edwin asked.

-Yes," replied his sister. I picked up some supplies we were short of.

-And you didn't meet the Rhupay or the Valya?

-Edwin closed his eyes, remembering.

-I'll never forget when we saw them arrive with their faces full of guilt, remember? - said the exhausted warrior.

-When that monster killed Gabriel's father; how could I forget," replied Jhoanna with a sad expression marking her face.

-I never thought there was anyone strong enough to beat Rhupay or Valya.

-It made me nervous too. They, as First Cultivation, had always been the strongest among us all. I thought they were invincible.



- The enemy is no fool," Edwin said, depressed. But we will get stronger.
- Jhoanna looked at him, smiled and hugged him.
- Of course, we will be stronger than all our enemies.

Aldrick and Rowena arrived at Erks Cathedral accompanied by their respective students. As soon as they met they began to play and joke. Being together filled them with energy and joy, and every time they met again, even if they had been separated for only a few hours, they made a great fuss. Unusually, the most serious of the group was Gabriel, but he also allowed himself to laugh in the company of his friends, especially Rocío.

Inside the building, Qhawaq was waiting for them, along with Rhupay and Valya. Their faces were serious, as if something serious had happened. Their expressions were enough to make the new arrivals gradually calm down and become serious as well.

Aldrick and Rowena approached Qhawaq, exchanged a few words in the tongue of Erks and then turned to their students. The old man took the floor:

-Several pieces of news have reached Erks," said Qhawaq. Some will worry you and some will please you; never forget, however, that news is neither good nor bad, it is only news.

Everyone's hearts skipped a beat when they heard the old man's words. They worried constantly about the safety of their families and every time news came from La Paz, they feared to hear about the murder of their families.





parents. The thought haunted them at every meeting they had with Qhawaq.

"I'll start with what might distress you," the old man added, and the boys held their breath, prepared for the worst. As you well know, a few months ago a very powerful enemy gravely wounded Rhupay and Valya here, and then murdered Gorkhan's father," no one wanted to look at Gabriel, but they all knew that a shrill pain came over him every time he remembered that. Although we did not tell you, around the same time the camp guarding the entrance to the Way of the Gods was also attacked.

Edwin, Diana and Jhoanna's faces paled.

"My dad, how is my dad!" Jhoanna interjected, Qhawaq waved his hand to calm down.

"Major Orlando Cuellar is well, he was injured but has recovered quickly and is investigating the matter.

A sigh of reassurance escaped the lips of Edwin and his sisters.

"You should know that the survivors of the attack were saved by a powerful ally of ours whom you will meet in the not too distant future. The reason for our alarm is that we discovered that our attacker is Bálaham, an ancient and extremely dangerous demon," said Qhawaq and then fixed his blind eyes in Rocío's direction.

The old man knew Bálaham's identity, but he dared not reveal it to the Sentinels, much less to Rocío. Telling her that her father had become a powerful demon might harm her, he preferred that she find out for herself, when she had to face him; for Qhawaq knew that the day when father and daughter would clash was near, he had seen it in his clairvoyance. The result of that clash could awaken Rocío like



Sentinel, to make her truly Rit, Stone Hawk; or to end her will and her corresponding death. Qhawaq was perfectly aware of that, but he had to keep all that to himself. The old man sighed lightly and continued:

-However, Bálaham did not come alone. Being such a powerful demon he had to be summoned. Rowena and Aldrick did some research with me and after going through some old scrolls and comparing them with the characteristics of this attack we can guess who might have been responsible," they all looked at Qhawaq intently, without even blinking. The only one who didn't look at him was Gabriel, he had ducked his head and he knew what the old man was going to say, his clairvoyance allowed him to know. There is an immensely powerful priest, a druid in fact, his name is Hélixabor. He must have summoned Bálaham and unleashed it against us. This is an enemy we cannot yet defeat, and that is why you need to put more effort into your training.

A general despondency swept over the boys, who were demoralised by Qhawaq's words.

-But there is more," the old man added. Major Cuellar and Ursus have been investigating too. Using a magnetic spectrometer and a resonance sensor, they set about tracking Bálaham, believing they could find his lair. They received some kind of anomalous reading from the plateau and embarked on a mission to find the source of the anomaly. The reading came from the Sorata valley, but when Ursus came into contact with the source of the emanation he noticed that it was not a Sinarchy trap.



He sent for me immediately. I went to Sorata together with Rhupay and Valya, and we were in no doubt...

The boys held their breath, even Gabriel whose scope of clairvoyance hadn't uncovered the old man's words.

-The Arch of Artemis has materialised and is in Sorata, inside the Grotto of San Pedro.

Diana's eyes filled with thick tears of emotion that began to overflow as a smile belied them, her excitement was such that she jumped on Rodrigo and kissed him. Excitement is contagious and soon everyone was jumping up and down and hugging each other.

-It's too early in the morning to be celebrating," Qhawaq interrupted the festivities. The specialists of the Inti Squadron have set to work with a commission sent from Erks and have explored much of St Peter's Grotto. It goes deep into the earth and becomes an intricate network of caves. No one who has entered St. Peter's Grotto has ever returned. All explorers who have ventured in have been lost inside. The Arch of Artemis is undoubtedly in one of the caves and extracting it will be no easy task.

-And how are we going to do that? -asked Diana.

-They have been well trained," Qhawaq replied. Remember the Mystery of the Labyrinth?

Everyone nodded silently.

-The silver is key to get out. You must leave clues from entrance so that you can return. Surely you will not get lost, but you must be cautious in your search. Use the Hyperborean Wisdom, it will save your life.

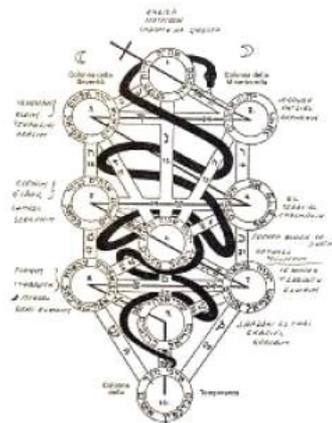


There was a pause, Qhawaq continued, "Know that in the depths dwell dangers more terrible than you can imagine. Darkness is total in the bosom of the Earth and nightmares can come true there. Prepare your hearts to face Satan. Now go, get your things ready, we will leave this very day to return to your world. The time has come to go through the Arch of Artemis.

The universe and all its creation constitute the ensemble of matter, energy, dark matter and dark energy that makes up not only the material and energetic part of the cosmos but also the antiparticles that structure it. All that exists, in itself, is a dream of Jehovah Himself. When He finished Creation and decided to rest on the seventh day, He asked one of His co-workers, an archangel, to wake Him up when His creation and the man He had created were ready to be devoured. That time had come centuries ago, but the Tetragrammaton of the Archangels had decided not to wake Jehovah, but to leave Him sleeping, perpetually dreaming. That way the archangels could enjoy their godhood and at the same time the pleasures of the flesh.

In order to organise the universe, everything in existence had been divided into ten kingdoms arranged in the Sephiroth Tree:

1. Seat of Jehovah or *Kether*,
2. Kingdom of Heaven or *Shambalá*
3. Earth Kingdom or *Chokmah*,
4. Animal Kingdom or *Binah*,
5. Plant Kingdom or *Chesed*,
6. Kingdom of Fire or *Gebura*,
7. Water Kingdom or *Tiphereth*,
8. Underground Kingdom or *Hod*,
9. Submarine Kingdom or *Jesod*,
10. Kingdom of Men or *Malkuth*.





Each kingdom had been assigned a guardian who was part of the Council of God, the Tetragrammaton of the Archangels; however, of the original ten guardians only nine remained. During the Bronze Age a powerful Babylonian king, Nimrod, had taken it upon himself to eliminate the guardian of the Seat of Jehovah, the Archangel Kokabiel. Because of his death the Archangel Michael, in his capacity as General of the Heavenly Legions, had taken control of the Tetragrammaton. All the other kingdoms still had their guardian. The Kingdom of Heaven was guarded by the Archangel Metraton. The Kingdom of Earth was inhabited by the Archangel Raziel. The Animal Kingdom was guarded by the Archangel Uriel. The Plant Kingdom was guarded by Archangel Tsadkiel. The Kingdom of Fire was guarded by St. Michael the Archangel, but at the same time Michael guarded the Seat of Jehovah, watching over his sleep so that he would never awaken. The Water Kingdom was guarded by Haniel the Archangel. The Underground Realm was guarded by one of whom few could tell whether he was a demon or a celestial being, Samael the Archangel. The Underwater Kingdom was inhabited by Saint Raphael the Archangel. And finally the Kingdom of Man was guarded by St. Gabriel the Archangel.

, just as the bipolar universe needs darkness to have light, the Archangelic realms have their infernal counterpart divided into ten circles.

1. Satan's seat,
2. Circle of the Underworld,
3. Circle of the Furies,
4. Circle of the Sorrowful Mother,
5. Circle of Passions,
6. Circle of Fire,
7. Abyssal Circle,
8. Circle of Desire,
9. Circle of the Moat,
10. Men's Circle.



And to each Archangel corresponds a dark head of each Circle as a counterpart to the heavenly light; without this opposition between darkness and light it would be impossible to move the universe of Jehovah's Creation. In the case of Satan's Seat, whose Lord was Moloch, there was also a vacuum, for the Demon Moloch had been slain by a Greek hero named Theseus, who, mistaking him for a spy of Hades, cut off his head and tore out his lungs. For that reason the Seat of Satan had no other Lord and chief besides St. Michael the Archangel himself.

To all the other Circles there was still a Lord and chief, all of , together, formed a demonic Council, the Baphometh of Demons. The Demon Astaroth, Lord of the Underworld. The Demon Asmodius, Lord of the Abyss. The Démona Aval, Mistress of Pain. The Demon Harab, Lord of Passions. The Demon Belsebuh, Lord of Fire. The Demon Arkanis, Lord of the Furies. The Demon Anakim, Lord of Desire. The Demon Golab, Lord of the Pit. And the Demon Molay, Lord of Men.

By an act of treachery on the part of Samael, the Tetragrammaton had won an essential war against Baphomet, which meant that Baphomet no longer had any power of decision over Creation beyond the power of temptation that he might exercise over men. For that reason, on the day the Tetragrammaton met again, it did so in the absence of Baphomet.

There was an unusual alarm throughout *Chang Shambhala*. On the orders of St. Michael, the angels and celestial inhabitants were preparing for a warlike event. No one knew the exact reason for such preparations, they were merely obeying Michael's orders; however, concern was the prevailing feeling in Heaven. All remembered the day when



that a mortal man, Nimrod by name, ascended with terrible power and slew hundreds of angels and one of the Archangels of the Council, Kokabiel. The very memory brought deep fears among the inhabitants of *Shambhala*. No one said so, but all were frightened.

A rectangular table of a glass-like material was spread out in the main hall of the largest building in Heaven. The walls were adorned with inscriptions in various languages of which ancient Hebrew predominated. A series of torches burned with a fire as golden as the sun. The air was filled with incense and the floor was covered with fine carpets. On the main wall was a hatch and a control panel to open and close it. When the hatch opened, the members of the Tetragrammaton entered. St. Michael led the way, with his proud panache, his three pairs of golden wings and his armour as burnished as his hair. Then entered Metraton, the Second Officer, with his armour as silver as his hair and his three pairs of wings. Raziel followed in his bronze armour and his two pairs of brown wings. Uriel came with him wearing grey armour, he had two pairs of black wings as did his hair. Tsadkiel came in next, he had three pairs of wings that went in a gradient from red to green and orange armour. Then entered Haniel who also wore three pairs of feathered wings of a dark, very dark blue and silver armour. Samael entered next wearing black armour as well as his two pairs of wings; one pair was like the wings of an angel and the other like the wings of a vampire. Saint Raphael had three pairs of blue wings and a light blue armour, he entered behind Samael. And finally St. Gabriel entered with his snowy armour and his three pairs of white wings.



The members of the Council took their places around the large rectangular table. When all were in their respective places, San Miguel called the meeting to order.

-Elite Grigori! Perfect souls of the Brotherhood," said Michael in a deep voice, "we have convened this council of the Tetragrammaton to attend to the terrible danger that looms against Yod He Vau Hed; our Lord Jehovah. I have spoken with Moses and have decided that we must take action to prevent the Men of the Cold Stone from returning to desecrate these holy precincts. We must, therefore, take action against an old menace that is resurfacing in our universe. I will hand over Gabriel who will explain what it is all about.

All eyes turned to the white archangel, guardian of men. St. Gabriel took a few seconds and began to discourse.

-The Kingdom of Men has always brought us great trouble and great pleasure too, everyone here knows that. However, when Nimrod rose up against this sanctuary we knew something was wrong. We failed to fix the problem completely and now we are haunted by our mistakes.

St Gabriel's words were followed by murmurs from all present.

-Brothers," continued the guardian of the Kingdom of Men, "the chosen twelve have incarnated. We sent Golab to fix this problem; but the mighty Lord of the Pit seems to have betrayed us.

-Watch your words, Gabriel," Michael interjected.

-No, Gabriel is right," said Tsadkiel. I have tried to fix this myself. I brought Dianara, the Moon Bear to the Temple of Wisdom on our



sanctuary. I was going to make her give in until that cursed woman, the unnamable one, arrived. And she did not come alone, Freky, the Wolf of Odin accompanied her. Golab has neglected his task.

-Golab simply trusted himself," Michael replied. He is faithful to the Baphometh of the Demons and to this Tetragrammaton.

-Just because I'm your lover doesn't mean I'm faithful to all of us," said Uriel. Or does he no longer have eyes only for you, Miguel?

There was a brief silence at the insidious insinuations of the Animal Kingdom's guardian. Metraton intervened.

-All members of the Tetragrammaton are aware that Golab was wrong; indeed, even the members of Baphometh have assumed it; but I vouch for their fidelity and will not doubt Golab's actions. But that does not detract from the seriousness of what Gabriel has exposed.

-It's much more serious," continued St Gabriel. If that were not enough, we have located a fracture in the time-space network of the cosmos. An object of heresy has once again materialised in the Realm of Men," Gabriel continued quietly. Gentlemen, a *Graal* is on Earth, in one of its many dimensions. It is the one that was embedded in the Bow of Nimrod and then pondered by that foul traitor. The Arc of Artemis is in one of our universes, totally parallel to the dimension of the Fourth Vertical.

All the faces showed rapture at St Gabriel's announcement, they knew the danger posed by the Arch and still had in their memories the havoc that could be wreaked by the objects embedded in them.





emeralds they called *Graal*. A Stone of Origin meant more threat than they were willing to tolerate.

-I have already taken action," Michael interjected. I am enlisting a select group of mortal slaves to track down this object of heresy and destroy it. I have also given my authorisation and support to Priests Hexabor and Moses to lay siege to Erks with the help of Legion warriors.

-For God's sake, Michael! -We've been trying to take Erks for centuries and we've always had to face failure. If we attack the citadel again, we will only lose valuable Hiwa Anakim warriors. We will need all our troops if we are to stop the threat of the Arc.

-I don't intend to take Erks, Haniel," Michael replied, "I intend to keep them occupied long enough for us to get the Bow. Besides, I won't send too many warriors, just enough. Héxabor has taken the brilliant initiative of invoking Bálaham in the flesh of a blood relative of one of the chosen ones, of one of Rameses' subjects who has been reincarnated. Moses, together with Bálaham and Héxabor, will use their strategic advantage to strike at that weak pillar of our enemy.

-You are something, Michael," said St Raphael. Some of chosen have already awakened as Sentinels.

-As long as Dianara isn't awake," Michael replied, "we'll be fine. One or two Sentinels, alone, pose little threat to us. But if we wait for Dianara to awaken and use that cursed necklace to break the seal of the Arc, we could have the Fenrir's son laying siege to our sanctuary with nothing we can do to hold him back.

-Then let's send out the expedition now," Tsadkiel added.

-I already did," Miguel replied. I sent them before setting up this meeting. As we speak, Héxabor has departed with Bálaham, warriors from



Legion and slave troops of the Chosen People to Erks. Meanwhile, Moses is on his way to the anomaly site with Pentagon slaves to hijack the Arc. Metraton, I will ask you to Moses and his human slaves as soon as this meeting is over and help him complete his task. And you, Tsadkiel, go with Hélixabor and Bálaham and hold off the Erikians for as long as possible. As soon as they see our Holy Office in the vicinity of the Arch they may intend to send troops to prevent us from doing our duty. That's all, I adjourn this meeting, you are dismissed; but not you, Gabriel, I have to talk to you.

Quickly, Metraton and Tsadkiel closed their wings, enveloping their bodies, and disappeared under the glow of their angelic lights. The others left the room on foot. But Michael and Gabriel lingered for a few moments.

-Gabriel, I need you to keep a close eye on Golab," Miguel asked.

-Don't you trust him any more?

-It's not that, but he's spent too much time around Dianara. You know better than I do what that harlot is capable of. She's a strange kali woman who camouflages her power well behind a veil of amnesia. The last time she remembered who she was she nearly drove Golab mad. I love him and I don't want to lose him again.

-Don't worry, I'm going to talk to the Baphometh to settle the matter. You just take care of neutralising the power of the Bow of Artemis, that's all I ask of you. I don't want that disgusting object in my kingdom. Take it anywhere, but take it out of the world of men.



A silver-winged archangel flew overhead, while on the ground several soldiers were aiming at him. The winged being had only to flap his wings to provoke hurricane-force winds that knocked down all those who were aiming at him. When the wind died down, another group of soldiers appeared from large helicopters, the machines had the American flag painted on the fuselage. At a disadvantage, the soldiers who were attacked by the archangel also had to fight the American soldiers who kept landing.

The chaotic course of the fighting had forced the besieged soldiers to retreat. Digging in, they regrouped at an outpost on the shore of a lagoon surrounded by trees and vegetation, at the far end of which was a waterfall that formed a veil. In the centre of the outpost flew a Bolivian flag that gave the identity of the entrenched soldiers, they were from the Bolivian Army.

Then, when it seemed that they would imminently lose their position, two terrible and enormous beasts emerged from the water that formed the lagoon. First appeared an anthropomorphic creature with a greenish glow and gigantic maw that emitted a bluish-green vapour with each exhalation; its entire body seemed to be made of energy. Then rose up a monster with the appearance of a green salamander with fins on its back, arranged to function as wings. It had in its mouth two fangs so large that they protruded from under its upper jaw like sabres and its eyes glowed with a glow somewhere between grey and blue. Both creatures were of water and had a marine appearance of a translucency that denoted their energetic nature.



The attacking soldiers immediately unloaded their bullets at the beasts, but the attack went through the monsters as if they were shooting at a waterfall. The salamander-like beast swept over the American soldiers, causing a great wave in the lagoon, striking its surface with its tail. The other beast leapt up and, with one bite, wounded the archangel's wing, which fell to the ground. Its fall was as devastating as if a meteorite had hit the earth. A ripple of expansion knocked down trees and moved great stones through the air.

When the phenomenon had evened out, both beasts had disappeared. Their place was taken by a muscular dark-haired boy and a tall, slender teenage girl. Both wore fairly light armour and a sort of black, tailored chain mail covering the entirety of their humanity. When the besieged soldiers saw them, they immediately jumped to their feet and grabbed their rifles. Then a third beast appeared, a gigantic wolf made of blue energy. The wolf was actually a spectral halo surrounding a person at its centre. That being had a familiar face, one that in visions had already shown itself but never so clearly. He knew it, he knew it... his name was...

Gabriel woke up with a sweaty face, he had had a vision. It was only a few hours before dawn; although the blind boy could not see the light he could sense the change in the air, he knew that the sun would soon awaken. The warmth of the fireplace told him that the wood would take a long time to burn, it had been only a few hours since he had been able to sleep. The next day they would all leave for their home world and Gabriel still didn't know how he would face his mother, how he would tell her the news that he had gone blind. He didn't really



I wouldn't have to tell her anything, she would know by ineffable signs. Rodrigo snored in the other bed, Gabriel heard him and knew his friend was sleeping soundly.

For a moment, to the blind seer Gabriel had become, it seemed like the most thankless of trades. He had had a vision that night, he would share it with no one, but he had glimpsed something terrible in his sleep. Someone he knew was in Erks, someone he had always seen as a friend but who had never been listed as a Sentinel. Gabriel knew full well that the news would disturb Rodrigo and Diana, the two of them more than anyone else. He was certain that they would all find out sooner or later, and he bit his tongue to keep it to himself. Qhawaq had told him not share his premonitions if he wanted nothing bad to happen to anyone who heard them. There would be no more sleep that night, only the chirping of crickets and the crackling of the fire that warmed the room. The day to come would be important, very important. And as the sounds from outside tried to lull the blind boy to sleep, his mind wandered slightly over an image as beautiful as it was tempting: the nakedness of Rocío. Gabriel smiled, at least something good for himself he had visualised, the day they would both give themselves in body and Spirit was closer than ever, he could already imagine it and the erection it gave him was satisfying; Gabriel was ready.



(Naudiz)

Seventh Mystery, The Myth of Kain

Taken from Hebrew Mythology, adapted from the Amethyst Circle

Legend has it that, after their banishment from Paradise, Eve and Adam fathered children in the cursed and desert lands. Their first two sons were named Kain and Abel.

Abel had learned an old technique, taught by Jehovah to Adam and from Adam to his son Abel, which consisted in the careful husbandry of domestic animals. In this case, Jehovah had assigned the meekest and most harmless creatures of the Cursed Lands for Abel's use: sheep. Then Abel became a dedicated shepherd, absolutely pliant and obedient. His fear and blind surrender to Jehovah pleased the conceited God who watched with pleasure as Abel surrendered to His will, resigning himself even when he had to endure the rigours of the Cursed Lands. Thus, when the shepherd was mistreated by the vicissitudes of material life, he sacrificed a lamb and burnt its fat in order to appease the hunger of Jehovah, who claimed spilled blood as a love offering from his creations.

Abel's brother, Kain, was a completely different man. Secretly, his mother, Eve, had taught Kain how to make the earth flourish with various vegetables. The secret of agriculture was inherited from a woman Goddess, called Inana, who reflected herself in human women to remind men of their uncreated trait, their divinity. On his own, Kain had also discovered various hunting techniques, with which he obtained the meat for his sustenance. His life as a hunter and farmer had made him a shrewd and enterprising man; and because of his warrior nature, the farmer had developed a distrust of Jehovah, to whom he rendered



He did not share the custom of sacrificing animals as an offering to God. He did not share the custom of sacrificing animals as an offering to God, so instead of spilled blood, Kain offered the fruits of the earth as a gift to Jehovah.

Abel evidently hated Kain deeply. He was jealous of his brother's autonomy, whom even nature dared not challenge. While Abel had to wait for the grazing season for his flocks, Kain could make anything he wanted to sprout from the earth. In contrast, Kain was disgusted by his brother, Abel, who seemed to be deeply in love with Jehovah. Kain experienced the most insufferable disgust when Abel performed his bloody sacrifices. For that reason, the two brothers were as far apart as the sun and the moon.

Over the years, Jehovah had rejected the offerings of Kain, consisting of fruits and vegetables. He welcomed Abel's offerings. God's rebuke was sinking deeper and deeper into Kain, who could not understand Jehovah's true intentions.

Then one day Kain came to the answer he was waiting for after a long vision he suffered during the ploughing of the land. The farmer suddenly fainted and was visited in a dream by a woman who identified herself only as -The Goddess|. This divine woman revealed to Kain the Original Betrayal of which the Spirits of men were victims. And Kain dreamed for twelve days and twelve nights, without awakening. At the end of those twelve days and nights, Kain arose, took the best vegetables of his harvest and went to the altar of the Lord to offer them.

God sensed the hostility of Truth in the eyes of Kain and rebuked the farmer: - Where do you come from, Kain, that your hatred of Me is palpable in My eyes|. And Kain said: -I come from the field to offer you these fruits of the earth,



But first I want you, in your infinite love and greatness, to answer me a question||. God was ready to listen to the farmer, who continued: -If I was created in your holy image and likeness, in whose image was my mother made?||. God was enraged at Kain's question and said, "I will punish you ten times more than your father, if you dare to ask Me such a question again, for you are a bad son, for you doubt Me. Go from My presence, before you break My law||. Then Kain answered God with a cry that is still repeated by blasphemers: -There is no Law and there is no Judge,||. Then he went to find Abel, overcome with the fury of a man who has discovered his Creator's deception. When he found his shepherd brother, he said to him, -There is no future world, no reward for the righteous, no punishment for evildoers. This world was not created with mercy, nor is it governed with compassion. For what other cause has your offering been accepted and mine rejected?||. Abel answered simply, -Mine was accepted because I love the LORD God; yours was rejected because you hate him. Then Kain knew which side Abel belonged to. He picked up a stone from the ground and struck the shepherd's face until his skull was a bloody, swollen mass, totally unrecognisable.

Jehovah God was quick to notice Abel's absence on earth and appeared to Ka'in as a golden light in the sky, and said to him, -Ka'in, where is your brother?|| To which the farmer replied, -I do not know, am I my brother's keeper?Then God understood what had happened, there was no doubt that Ka'in had been visited by that _wicked woman'; the one whose memory and voice turned men away from the light of Jehovah. And God was angry with Kain, and said to him, -What hast thou done, Kain! He cries out the blood of your brother, and his cry comes to me from the earth. And the farmer replied, "I have discovered the deception, Inana has revealed it to me. Abel was not my brother, and you have deceived me. You demand of me love and sacrifice, pain and fidelity, and you do not love me and would not sacrifice for me. For you have abducted me from my world, for you have brought me to these Cursed Lands against my will. You and all



The anger of the LORD was unleashed at the insolence of Kain, and God said, "Because of that cursed woman to whom you have listened, you too will be cursed. You will live far from fertile soil, and when you cultivate, the land will not bear fruit for you. You will never be able to sleep again, and you will be a wanderer and a fugitive on the earth. And Kain answered: -You cast me down this day, you punish me without reason, but I will find death in this torture||. And God sentenced: "It shall not be so, for I will take vengeance seven times on whoever dares to kill you. I will give you eternal life, for I will not allow you to be rewarded with death. And all will see the sign in your blood, the Symbol of sin, and all will recognise you. And Kain answered: -I have been unjustly punished by you. I go, but not before swearing that I will take vengeance seven hundred and seventy-seven times on you, and this suffering that you are giving me I will repay you in full. Be accursed, O LORD, that this dishonour shall not go unpunished,|| And Kain departed from the presence of the LORD God, with his blood fervent for vengeance.

Kain suffered from hunger and sleep for years, unable to sleep or obtain the fruits on which he fed. Being immortal, he could not take refuge in death either. And there was no living being on earth who suffered such hunger and agony as Kain. But, in all its perfection, the body of the wretched farmer found the remedy for his malady. By mutation, his mouth was endowed with great fangs, hollow inside, and he began to feed on blood of the shepherds he met on his way. Kain became a creature of the night and united with a woman, daughter of Lilith, with whom he had a son whom he named Enoch. And Enoch had a son whom he called Irad. And Irad had a son whom he called Mavael. And Mavael was the father of Methusel, and Methusel was the father of Lamech. And Lamech had three sons, Tubal-Cain, the warrior, and Jubal, the musician, and Nohema, the most beautiful woman of the land of Nod.

The sons of Kain, under the supervision of their father, built a large walled city and encircled their territory with small stone idols, which



reflected the primeval memory of the Goddess woman. And they made musical instruments to comfort her Spirit, and they made weapons with which they ruthlessly slaughtered the other shepherd sons of Adam. For Kain and his descendants had a vengeance pending against the shepherds of Jehovah, and the shepherds had a vengeance pending against the farmers and hunters, and against Kain, turned into a being more like a vampire than a man.

And the centuries of Kain's endless life passed, and the once farmer discovered the secret of life and the absence of death, or the secret of death and the absence of life. He saw reflected the symbol of his blood, placed on his forehead, and after contemplating it for centuries he awoke to its power, and Kain became a God. And when his body at last met death and his Spirit became a God, Kain departed from Jehovah's created world; and even today, those who see the Symbol of Kain survive in the night, mutating into canine beasts, wolf-men, at the Full Moon; or drinking blood from their fangs and wandering in the absence of the New Moon. They are Sons of Kain.



Gabriel and his mother had been fused in a strong embrace, she was crying with emotion at seeing her son again and with grief at seeing him blind; on his face there was not a single tear, only an expression of uneasiness. Rodrigo was also with his mother, trying to make up for all the lost months in a few seconds. Each and every one of the chosen ones were reunited with their parents at that moment, those who, after seven months of absence, they were meeting again. But their reunion would not last.

The long and complicated road leading from Erks to the guard camp proved much less of a hardship for the travellers than the first time. Rowena and Aldrick accompanied the caravan. Time had passed since Bálaham's attack on the camp and again the soldiers of Inti Squad took custody of the Way of the Gods. No one mentioned the matter of the attack, there was no need to recall it.

After the welcome, a caravan made up of several wagons and vans left the Inti Squadron camp for Sorata. The boys' parents, who came to the guard post only to greet their sons, had to return with Father Clementi to the Cloister of Santo Domingo in the city of La Paz. With the exception of Major Cuellar, no other family members of the chosen ones were in the caravan, for security reasons.

The atmosphere in the mobilities was one of anxiety and expectation. Diana, Rodrigo and Jhoanna talked endlessly about their expectations regarding the Arc, they had the impression that such an object would be capable of giving them great





victories against their enemies; they even spoke of invading heaven and personally assassinating Jehovah. Edwin and Oscar were discussing the operational issues involved in the appearance of the Arc; both knew they would have to train much harder. Rocio and Gabriel weren't talking, he had his eyes pointed somewhere on the horizon, he couldn't really see anything, just his own thoughts in the darkness of his blindness. She had rested her head on her friend's shoulder and was caressing his hands. Rocio's cuddling didn't seem to generate a significant sensation in the boy who didn't respond to the attentions; however, Gabriel was happy to feel Rocio so close. He felt loved by her and that was enough for him, they didn't need more words than necessary, the rest would be actions and, very soon, the beginning of their own romance.

The road to Sorata was consumed with the flame of anxiety, each passing second bringing everyone to a heightened state of alertness. The presence of the Bow was so powerful that at one point along the road the chosen ones could sense its power. When they reached the village they bought some food and provisions to set up camp. Then they continued for another mile or two along the road leading to St. Peter's Grotto until, at a certain point, they had to leave the vehicles and continue on foot. They walked for another half hour, at walking pace, until they reached the site.

The grotto of San Pedro was a waterfall of crystalline water that covered a large cavern with a veil of water. A large lagoon surrounded by trees topped the waterfall and carried the water through a network of underground springs. The heat was intense and the vegetation lush. The camp was quickly set up by the soldiers and, almost like a sacred ritual, a Bolivian flag was hoisted in the centre of the post with a flagpole.



improvised. Major Cuellar had learned that, mystically, it was necessary to always have a Bolivian flag at whatever location they settled; only in this way could they be sure to encircle the perimeter with the army's presence.

The next thing they did was to prepare for contingencies. The soldiers in the vehicles closed the roads leading to the San Pedro grotto. Because of its natural beauty, it was a place much frequented by tourists, so Major Cuellar had assigned some of his men as lookouts to prevent unexpected visitors. They then dug a trench and staked it with wooden props on which they placed barbed wire. In the trenches they placed mortars, anti-tank bazookas and anti-aircraft machine guns. The big artillery machines had to be carried piece by piece from the trucks and then assembled in the designated places. The boys were alarmed to see so many preparations, they felt that the amount of weapons was exaggerated. But they did not know how terrible the encounter between the Major and Bálaham was. Cuellar only wished to ensure that if they were attacked again by a similar force they would be able to defend themselves.

-Dad," Jhoanna called as she entered the command centre, "Can you explain to me why you brought so much weaponry? You look like you're preparing for war.

The Major gave her a sidelong glance, without much interest, as he loaded his Desert Eagle pistol.



-We are going to extract an important object from these caves; I am just taking the necessary precautions.

-Yes, I understand that, but seeing so many weapons confuses me a bit.

-You guys just get busy finding that Bow as fast as you can, we'll be out here, waiting for you.

When the camp was ready, Major Cuellar called Aldrick, Rowena and their respective wards. They all gathered in the command centre. The tent was filled with wooden crates. Black suits were scurrying from inside some of them, as if the garments had come to life and were trying to escape. In other boxes were curious beige rifles, which appeared to be made of plastic. In others were pistols and bullets. Several devices had been placed there, and soldiers were watching the readings on the devices as if they were watching them. Once they were assembled, Cuellar began to expound.

-I will be brief. The army has been preparing for a possible war for years, which is why it has been developing military technologies hidden from public opinion and even from government administrations. The Inti Squadron has the advantage of being absolutely independent of the Executive, few know of our existence and that has allowed us to make important advances in war engineering.

The Major approached one of the boxes and placed several straps, boots and a of instruments on the table.

-Each of you will receive basic military equipment," Cuellar said and then placed a black suit on the table. It was made of material similar to that used to make diving suits. These suits are made of thermal material, they're tough," said Cuellar.





and will help them maintain their body heat if they have to swim underwater or in cold places. The boots you see are standard. You will find that they are flexible, tough and lightweight; our Special Forces use them for assault missions. The belts consist of holsters for pistols, sheaths for sharp weapons, grenade hooks, pouches and pulleys. They will help them to climb difficult parts of the cavern and carry the equipment they will be carrying.

From another box the Major took out a black leather sheath that looked like a sword mould.

-Your mentors have explained to us that you are much more skilled in swordplay than in other techniques," Cuellar said, not convinced by his own words. I would prefer you to take a rifle, but at the request of your mentors we have brought you this," he showed them the holster. This is a quiver, used to sheathe swords. You will notice that it has several pockets, you can store a lot of things in it.

Then he approached some crates containing several pieces armour-like appearance. They were of black material, burnished with details of white lines and some letters and numbers.

-The ultimate in personal protection. Kevlar protectors from the FOWM-221 series. Waistcoats, shin guards, shin guards, shin guards, greaves, shells, arm guards, elbow guards and shoulder pads, they take care of the main parts of the body without being too bulky. We developed them in the Army and they were intended for the infantry forces of our troops but I think they will serve you well. Don't be fooled by their fragile appearance, they are made of fibreglass-carbon and platinum alloy, they are not just bulletproof vests, but



real armour. They are light, thin and incredibly tough, able to withstand impacts from armour-piercing bullets.

Finally, he spread out some blue camouflage suits on the table.

-Regulation uniforms, but made of a much better material than jute. They are thermal, warm in the cold and ventilated in the heat. They are waterproof and non-flammable. That's all, the best of our equipment is at your disposal. I wish we could give them something better to defend themselves against the enemy we have, but unfortunately there is no such thing. I know that these beasts cannot be eliminated even with nuclear weapons, any army on Earth is harmless to these monsters. But I know that you can take them on and defeat them. I just want you to take good care of yourselves, don't die on us. If I could, I would go with you, but I would only get in your way.

-Thanks, Dad, we'll be fine," Edwin replied.

-I will now show you the weapons you will carry.

They left the command centre and headed for a tent that served as an armoury. When the boys were there, they were amazed at the number of weapons that were stored there. Many of the weapons were brand new to them, and even to Edwin, who was a military man, several of the instruments of war were unfamiliar to him. The Major approached a box and pulled out a sword which he handed to Aldrick. The Crusader looked at the sword, examined it carefully, then brandished it in the air and smiled.

-Your people have done an admirable job, Major.

-Without the instructions of the blacksmiths of Erks we would never have made it.



-Carbon-steel swords," Aldrick began to explain. We had them specially made for the day the Arc was found. They were forged with Atlantean lithic technology," the Crusader began to slash the air with the sword again, "light and manoeuvrable, as sharp as scalpels and as powerful as Viking swords.

-According to the instructions of the Erkian smiths," Cuellar interjected, "they were all shaped with cold fire and tempered in heavy water. They are inscribed with the twenty-four runes.

-They are well made," said the Crusader. They will kill any angel or demon, in fact, these may be the only weapons with which we can fight the enemy," Aldrick said and then fixed his gaze on the boys. They have trained for months to wield the sword, I know still lack training, but they are almost ready.

-There are more, Mr. Aldrick," Cuellar interjected and pulled pistols and rifles out of some boxes. It's not that I don't trust your swords, but I'll feel better if you take some weapons with you.

-Go ahead Major," replied the Crusader, "what else have you got for us.

-Don't ask how, but I know that firearms are of little use in killing the beasts you might find in that cave, but they can help. You will all carry 9mm Baretts. Edwin, Oscar you will take M4A1 rifles. The ammunition is filled with mercury. I can't guarantee that you will be able to neutralise your enemies with these bullets, but at least they will stun them for a while. You will also take some frag grenades, explosives, ammunition, smoke grenades and tactical equipment," said the Major and started to take all the mentioned equipment out of the boxes.

-We thank you for everything, Major.

-No, Aldrick, it's the least I can do. Find that bow fast and let's get out of here. We're sitting ducks right now.



Night had fallen over Erks. Hundreds of mysterious and colourful stars twinkled in the sky. Plants glowed like faint neon lights embedded in the night's gloom. A few night dragonflies flitted through the bushes, spreading the glow of their flaming wings like multicoloured fireflies. The wind was calm, the rivers continued their gentle course through the fertile meadows of the valley. There was not a cloud in the sky, not even covering the great Illimani mountain that stood guard over the city. Its perpetual snows somehow refracted the starlight and broke it down into its prime colours. While this was happening, the mountain filled with colour before the eyes of the Erikans who loved the spectacle.

The citadel had filled with people who, motivated by the glow of the mountain, had organised an impromptu festival. There was ice cream, dancing and wine. Starlight on the mountain was an unusual event and the Erikans liked to celebrate it. They said that the colours on the snow brought back memories of their Original Village, of Agartha.

Standing by an ice-cream stand, gazing skyward and holding an apple-scratcher with wine in their hands, Rhupay and Valya watched the spectacle in fascination. Both had stayed behind in Erks to stand guard while the other Sentinels went through the Arch of Artemis. Rhupay hugged Valya's shoulders and smiled at the lights, at that mountain aurora over the eternal glacier. They were almost like fireworks, so magnificent they streaked across the sky between the mountain and the stars.





-I love it when the mountain lights shine in the sky," Valya said to Rhupay, mesmerised by the beautiful sight.

-I like them a lot too, it reminds me of when we were little apprentices.

-You used to take out the training gems and try to capture the lights with them.

-And you liked to believe that one day I would," Rhupay replied, sighing wistfully. There was a brief silence that Valya interrupted:

-It's times like these that I really feel there is hope," the blonde girl looked down at her companion and closed her eyes, imagining a thousand scenarios at once. The Bow of Artemis will soon be in Erks and that will put us one step closer to ultimate victory.

-Victory is dying with honour, Valya.

-I know that, but it will be more glorious if we take so many spirits out of these worlds of illusion. It is not possible for us to go away and so many captives, prisoners of matter.

-We will win, that's for sure.

The phenomenon of the mountain lights had ended, clouds had covered the sky and the show was over. The rustic night invited to sleep, to intimacy, to bed and to dreamlike journeys; but it was also propitious for husbands, lovers and sweethearts. Darkness was dear to the Erikans, even more so after such a superb spectacle as the mountain lights. Children slept, husbands loved each other, old men drank and soldiers stood guard.



Valya and Rhupay had come together that night to perform one of the most important exercises for them: remembering. Almost intuitively they had both realised that their memories were many centuries old and that together they could remember things much more fully and deeply than they could separately. To do this, they had discovered over the years a kind of *tantra* that consisted of using the energy of orgasm to perform the dream anamnesis. They would seek each other out on nights like these to generate orgasms for each other, only instead of expelling their orgasm outside their bodies, they would retract it inside until an irresistible sleep possessed them and they fell asleep. During their dreams they were able to go back three hundred years or more.

After a glorious orgasm propelled deep inside their bodies, they had both fallen asleep. He was still on top of her, absolutely asleep, deep inside Valya; but he had not ejaculated. She too was asleep, almost passed out, her hands holding Rhupay's arms, her orgasm deeply embedded in her spine. The cabin windows were fogged, the lovers were soaked, naked, uncovered, their skins glistening waterily in the firelight. No one could wake them, no one would dare separate them. Then they both saw in unison a horrific image, several demons emerging from somewhere in the valley and destroying Erks, destroying everything. The vision was so vivid that they both awoke at the same time with a start. Their eyes were wide open, staring at each other.

-Did you see that? -asked Rhupay.

-Was it a memory?



-No, that seemed too close to be a memory.

-We must go to the guard post.

They dressed as quickly as they could, grabbed their weapons and went out to the outer walls of Erks. The soldiers standing guard dice and smoked tobacco. When they saw Rhupay and Valya approaching, they stopped and quickly squared up.

-At ease, soldiers," Rhupay ordered. Nothing extraordinary has happened tonight?

-No, my lord Rhupay," one of them replied, "the night has been serene. Both Rhupay and Valya looked at each other.

-It must have been a bad dream," said Valya.

-That couldn't have been a dream, it was too close.

At that moment a soldier arrived, running and without an arm. He had terrible wounds and his body was completely bloodied. The soldiers on guard rushed to his aid and carried him to the wounded ward. Rhupay and Valya immediately questioned him, the man barely able to give his report:

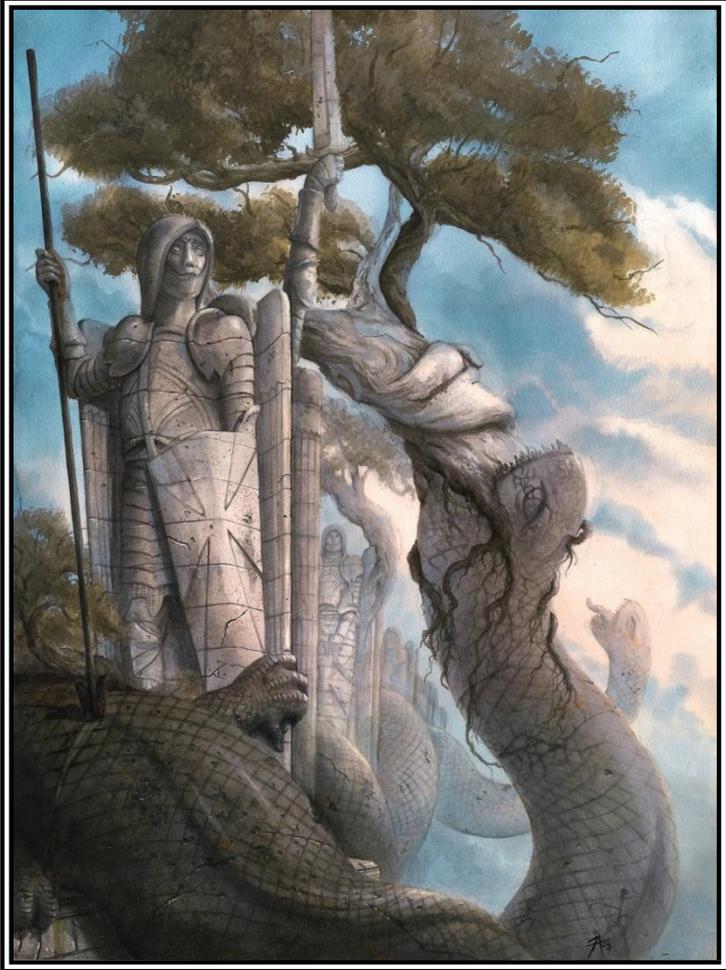
-They have broken through the fence," said the wounded man. They are an army with the Star of David, with them comes a priest, a demon and an archangel... now... they are coming.

-He died without anyone being able to do anything about it.

Rhupay meditated for a few seconds and then ran out to the city walls. He stood at one of its highest points and took a deep breath. From the west, the wind carried a stench of rotting flesh. To the west, several lights had been lit, the colour of fire. A shadow without

name was approaching, Rhupay could sense it. He climbed the main tower and immediately sounded the alarm.

The Titans of ERKs



MRUSOSM



All that remained of Moscow was the smouldering ashes of the fires that the Russians themselves had set. The 'scorched earth' policy of Tsar Alexander I left nothing for the French to exploit for their occupation. That is why on 14 September 1812 the Emperor of France, Napoleon I Bonaparte, found no reason to continue occupying Russia and decided it was time to withdraw.

-Excuse me, Your Majesty," General Emmanuel de Grouchy addressed Napoleon, "we are informed that the Tsar's men have fallen back to St. Petersburg.

The Emperor exhaled a pitiful sigh, as if the news was something he had expected but hoped would not happen. Napoleon's goal had escaped him again.



-If we go on," continued de Grouchy, "the winter of these frozen steppes will close in on us.

Napoleon turned his back on his General, not intending his expression of frustration to be seen by his men.

-What kind of people burn down their own city so that it won't be taken over?

-These people have always had a suicidal vehemence, Your Majesty.

-But this is too much. Moscow is but a speck of coal on this never-ending snowy horizon. What is in it for them?

-Nothing more to defy His Majesty.

-I will make them pay for this!

At that moment a messenger appeared and handed Napoleon a note. His face became disfigured with rage as he finished reading the message.

-Let them execute all the Michelle's of Normandy! -cried the Emperor. De Grouchy was surprised at Napoleon's vehement sentence, for while the Duke and Duchess Michelle were known to be close to the Russian Court, they had never transgressed any law that would have given them the death penalty.

-If Your Majesty could...

-They have gone off with the Prussians, execute them all! Send my message to the old guard. Let them be hunted down like the dogs they are.

The messenger left immediately. Napoleon was still red with rage.

-I knew that these traitors would show their claws sooner or later," continued the Emperor. Russian women lose their passion for our men, especially those of House Kuklov.

-Women complicate everything, Your Majesty," replied de Grouchy.



A looming shadow of defeat crossed the Emperor's face, he remembered Josephine and all the hatred he felt for her after disowning her. Such a woman did not deserve to be anyone's wife. However, de Grouchy was absolutely right in saying that women complicate everything. Several of his officers had lost their heads to women at the Russian Court. Among them was always the threat of the Kuklovs, women so beautiful that few men could resist them; some said they were the daughters of Helen of Troy herself. Their continual flirtations with French officers during their alliance with Alexander I caused some of their best strategists to lose themselves in unprecedented acts of passion. Indiscipline reigned and they had to get as far away as possible from these "man-captivating" Russian women. Among the great officers of France who fell for her charms were the Dukes Michelle de Normandy, one of France's oldest castes, survivors of the Democratic Revolution and powerful allies against the Anglo-Dutch coalition. However, they had cultivated strong ties with the Russians for centuries, and this posed a threat when the Third Coalition threatened Napoleon's troops. Napoleon had already sensed the potential for treachery and was ready to execute them.

That night Napoleon's troops encamped in the Russian capital and assessed their losses. Nearly 32,000 men had died at Borodino during the Russian repulse. The Emperor wanted Mikhail Kutuzov, Marshal of the Russian Army, dead, but he escaped before he could test the steel of his sabre. Their supplies were running low and they had no more medicine to treat their wounded. The Russian counteroffensive had cost the French troops dearly. However, despite all the sacrifices and hardships endured, Napoleon had not yet achieved the goal for which



broke his alliance with Alexander I and invaded Russia. He rode through the major Russian cities, looting and ransacking everything, in search of something; a relic that the Emperor wanted to claim for France. He knew, from legends and history and from valuable information from his prisoners in Egypt, that the Arch of Artemis was somewhere in Russia. Some attributed its custody to the Kuklov nobles, others said that the guardians were members of the Rurikid lineage of the Romanovs. However, Napoleon could never unravel the mystery and decided to search every corner of Russia, under every stone and leaf, until he found the arch. The chroniclers said that every great Emperor has had that relic in his presence: Nimrod, Priam, Hector, Alexander, Genghis Khan, etc. Napoleon wanted to have the bow for himself.

The crusade to take the Arc d'Artemis had considerably depleted the French troops, Napoleon was well aware of this. If he continued on his course to St. Petersburg, winter was likely to catch up with him. The taste of defeat was on the Emperor's lips, so close he could hardly resign himself to retreating empty-handed, but he had no choice.

mid-October they had been packed up and the French Army was ready to withdraw. Hunger and cold had begun to sap the morale of the men and their plight had slowly but steadily weakened them. Followed by a snowstorm of glacial proportions, the Napoleonic troops began their arduous march towards Warsaw until they reached the village of Maloyaroslavets. Without warning their forces were attacked by several batteries of guns in an unknown location. Napoleon immediately gave the order to take cover behind the stone walls separating the properties from the villagers. The fog and snow made it impossible for the French to see who was attacking them. Without having



In response to the attack, Napoleon's troops retreated and resumed their course to the west.

For several days they advanced under constant harassment from small Russian squadrons firing from the trees and disappearing. The French, forced by the Russian refusal to go through the Northwest Passage, ran into an inclement Russian winter that began to annihilate them mercilessly. Hungry and frozen, the Napoleonic soldiers had plunged into a slow agony of ice. Russia was attacking them with her most terrible and powerful weapon: her winter.

It was 23 October 1812. Napoleon's troops were within a few kilometres of Warsaw, however; Russian harassment persisted, even beyond the border with the Polish Duchy. More than half of the French men had fallen victim to the Russian winter. Those that remained could hardly put up any resistance, and the longer the march over the ice dragged on, the more dramatic the disastrous retreat from Moscow became. Napoleon himself felt weak, his personal food supply almost exhausted, and the French Emperor was beginning to feel the cruelty of the cold and hunger that plagued his men. In such a moment of desperation, none of the men at the guard post noticed that they were surrounded by a group of black-cloaked hooded men leaping over the trees like mountain lynxes. The long line of Frenchmen was soon flanked unnoticed and then a hail of arrows fell upon them, mowing them down. The bugle sounded and the soldiers took up positions, firing into the trees, fighting an unseen enemy. Another wave of arrows fell on them, killing another group of Frenchmen.



-Cease fire! -Everyone, take cover in the trees!

The French soldiers ran through the snow towards the bony trees around them. Another volley of arrows fell on them, but this time the trunks protected them. Then Napoleon could see several shadows to his left.

-Fire to the South, at will!

The Emperor ordered and his men fired, a couple of hooded men fell from the trees. Napoleon again gave the order to fire, a few more hooded men fell and then a purplish glow, like a shooting star, broke through the fog and snow to dazzle the French. When the glare came within sight of Napoleon, the Emperor noticed that it was a luminous arrow falling at full speed in his direction. He jumped down from his horse and took cover behind a log. Then on the ground a deflagration deafened the French. The temperature dropped so low that some were killed instantly. Some soldiers froze to death and fell under the effects of hypothermia. Napoleon's horse became a magnificent ice sculpture.

Bonaparte's head was spinning as if had been clubbed on the skull. He could not move his legs, they were completely numb. When he examined himself, he noticed that all his clothes were full of ice crystals and frost. He was freezing. He climbed out of his trunk and noticed that the wood was completely frozen, if it hadn't been for it he would have frozen to death too. He crawled to a small clearing on a slightly raised esplanade and found that several of his men had turned into ice statues, several others lay on the ground. No one



was left standing. Napoleon felt as helpless as he had ever felt in his life, he made a superhuman effort to react and managed to sit up. He stretched out his legs and, little by little, they regained their mobility. He walked across the frozen field and found no sign of life. The second battalion was almost half an hour's march away, advancing from the rear. He had no choice but to stay there and wait for the rest of his men to catch up.

With his eyes he looked for a place to camouflage himself and then he perceived, almost sensed, the onslaught of an attacker at his back. Napoleon reflexively drew his sabre and covered himself from the fierce thrust of a hooded man whose sword must have been the size of Napoleon himself. The sharp edge of his adversary sought to slice his body fatally. At that moment, Bonaparte felt fear and the desperate urge to preserve his life. He covered himself twice more with his sabre, but the third thrust shattered the blade as if it were a sheet of aluminium. The Emperor fell to the ground with his wrist almost broken from the blow. For an instant he had a vision of the present, the past and the future; he could almost sense the presence of death surrounding him. He closed his eyes and waited for the end, but his attacker did nothing, only held his giant sword inches away from Napoleon. The Emperor opened his eyes slightly and noticed something unusual: across his opponent's chest, a bow with a green gem embedded in its crosshairs glowed. The human's chest had breasts, it was not a man, it was a woman. The very idea clouded Bonaparte's logic and he soon did not know what to think.

-Finish me and rid me of this disgrace! -cried Napoleon, but she said not a word.

"Perhaps she doesn't understand French, perhaps she is a Russian who only speaks her own language," thought Bonaparte and spoke to her in Russian.



-Kill me, do not leave your victory and my defeat unfinished!

Silence, once more. She did not remove the blade of her sword from Bonaparte's neck, nor did she move, her stillness was stony, utterly inert. Slowly the giant weapon began to descend until it no longer threatened Napoleon's neck. But still he dared not move, nor did she register any movement other than that of his lowering arm.

-He's not a bad fighter," said the woman in fluent French, "but he's totally disoriented.

Napoleon was infinitely confused.

-You will pay for this infamy; don't you know who I am? -cried Bonaparte, wrathfully.

-Napoleon of France," replied the woman; "I know perfectly well who you are; you are not the first who has entered Russia and attempted to seize our liberated place, and you will not be the last. Genghis, Constantine, Frederick, many have tried, but Russia is indomitable, and no one can subdue her.

-Who do you think...!

The Emperor could no longer restrain himself and he stood up suddenly, picked up his broken sabre and as he was about to attack he saw again the huge blade of the woman's sword almost on his neck.

-Don't make me kill you, Your Majesty. You have lost this battle, so be a good loser and capitulate this day to the fate that has befallen you.

-Who is hiding under that hood! -replied Bonaparte. The woman ducked her head slightly and removed her hood. She was incredibly beautiful, with brown hair, sharp features and eyes as liquid as honey.



-Shasha Kuklova, Princess of St. Petersburg and daughter of the Duke of Kistersky.

This was something Napoleon was not ready for. Not only had he been defeated by a woman, but she happened to be a member of the Kuklov dynasty, the pure stock of Russian nobility. By induction Bonaparte knew that, then, the bow that hung across his chest could be none other than....

-Well, I will surrender," said Napoleon, and threw down his sabre, "but I will pray that your lordship will also lay down his weapon and let us settle this in a civilised manner.

Shasha looked at Napoleon and slowly lowered her sword and thrust it into the snow.

-I want to retreat with my men," Napoleon continued, "winter has beaten us and our supplies almost exhausted. But your troops have been attacking us since our retreat from Maloyaroslavets.

-You are mistaken, Your Majesty. My men have not attacked you, you have been overwhelmed by the forces of Marshal Mikhail Kutuzov.

-That Russian pig," Napoleon mumbled.

-I asked Marshal Kutuzov to cease all hostility if I could make you capitulate," said the beautiful lady.

-What an infamy!

-But before I let you leave with your men, Your Majesty, you will have to answer my questions.

The woman's gaze was fixed directly on Napoleon's eyes, he couldn't even look away, Shasha's presence alone was too much for him.

-I am the Emperor of France! -No one dares order me to do anything!



-I remind you, your Majesty, that you are in no position to refuse. With a single command from me I could annihilate all your men and give you a fate far worse than death. Your dishonour in life would know no bounds, and however much you might wish to die, you would not succeed; it is not something you could imagine even in your worst nightmares.

Shasha's eyes did not lie, Napoleon was overcome by the terror of that musky amber gaze. The woman's beauty was as deadly as it was admirable. Her words flowed from her mouth with lethal certainty and her posture, before Bonaparte, praised the purity of her blood. He could perceive it, he could fall in love with Shasha and then abandon himself to a dreadful clamour. He could imagine himself with her in bed, violently penetrating her, and then feel her murdering him by plunging a dagger straight into his heart. In all his life the Emperor of France had never witnessed such power in a woman. It took only a few seconds and Bonaparte lost himself, fell deeply in love with her and hated her.

-I shall have to answer then," replied Napoleon.

-Why did you come to Russia? -Shasha's question was curt and .

Napoleon pointed to the bow hanging from her chest.

-I came for the Arch of Artemis.

The woman looked at her bow and then at Bonaparte.

-Many have come for him in the past.

-But it was up to me to have it.

-For your personal glory?

-For the glory of France.

-Didn't you know that this is a relic of the Empire?



-Have you not heard that France is the universal empire of Europe?

Russia is just another duchy in the Empire's plans.

-I am not interested in your geopolitical wills, I resolved that with Tsar Alexander.

-You Russians have a very exclusionary attitude to the civility of the West.

-You lie that the French have not yet fully understood your role in Europe.

-Believe me, we already know," replied Napoleon. I have already had to face treachery.

-I will tell you only once, Your Majesty," Shasha's tone was aggressive, "Never return to Russia, forget the Bow of Artemis and stop pursuing it.

-I don't give up so easily.

-This time. Tell your Master Masons to stay away from our liberated square.

The very mention of Freemasonry filled Bonaparte with intrigue. Few knew of the White Brotherhood's secret sponsorship of the Napoleonic cause.

-You make very bold assertions, Your Honour," replied Napoleon.

-Boldness is a tradition in my lineage.

The woman turned her back on the Emperor and began to retreat; but Napoleon would not let her have the last word.

-The arrow! -said Bonaparte aloud, "That ice arrow that froze my men was shot from that bow?





The woman looked over her shoulder at the Emperor and nodded, then walked off into the trees and was lost in the mist forever.





The group of explorers entered the cavern led by Aldrick. Following him were Edwin, Diana and Gabriel. In the middle was Jhoanna followed by Rocio and Rodrigo, and finally Oscar and Rowena completed the group.

They traversed narrow, dark, stalactite-strewn caverns, shrouded in darkness, with the aid of torches; the heat was intense. The cavern ceiling became narrower and narrower until the explorers were forced to crawl through. The space allowed only one person at a time, and the stifling heat made the air difficult to breathe. Occasionally, a flock of frightened bats flew over at the intrusion of the scouts. They continued on their course until they caught a glimpse of a bluish light coming from one of the many labyrinthine tunnels ahead. Following that light, Aldrick led the group into a large natural chamber, topped by a pool from the bottom of which emanated an enigmatic blue-green light. From the ceiling a stream of water cascaded down in a waterfall. As they advanced, the mentors left a trail of wraiths to follow to the exit.

-Well, we're even on foot," said Aldrick. Now we swim.

-Should we cross that puddle? -asked Oscar.

-No, we must swim under it to the other side," Rowena replied. They all looked at each other.

-You heard him, into the water! -said Edwin and jumped in.



The expedition members went down in pairs. The water was warm and crystal clear. The source of the light came from an incalculable number of bioluminescent fish whose glow illuminated everything at the bottom of the spring. The fauna of the site was very typical of abyssal ecosystems, more than 20 kilometres below the surface. Along the way, the explorers were surrounded by walls with hundreds of runic inscriptions, all of which were exactly the same as the symbols they had seen in the caves of the Way of the Gods. As they progressed, Aldrick showed his disciples oxygen bubbles attached to the ceiling of the cave; this was their only way to breathe as they advanced underwater.

After several minutes the group emerged into a large cavern at the far end of the spring. Exhausted, the youngest members of the expedition collapsed on the stone edge and took a deep breath. The others began to peer into the large cavern.

-It's obvious that nobody came here a long time ago," Oscar commented.

-In more than 10,000,000 years, possibly," Edwin added.

-I don't understand, Rowena," Rodrigo interjected, "Who could have left those runes we saw back there?"

-Atlanteans," the teacher replied. They dug tunnels in the ocean trenches and spread them throughout the land. After Atlantis sank, the tunnels were abandoned and the few Atlanteans who remained there became people of the deep. They are called abyssals.

-Abyssal? -asked Diana. Rowena nodded and then Aldrick added:

-Millennia ago the inhabitants of the deep made a pact with the Demiurge, they called him Satan. They are a seemingly tribal people and



backward, but in reality they have a very advanced civilisation. Their capital is the City of Dis, an underground necropolis on a Horizontal Octave world.

-Will we find these people here? -Jhoanna asked, trying hard not to show her fear.

-Hopefully not," Edwin replied and loaded the firing pin of his rifle, "but if we run into them we will wipe them off the food chain.

The network of tunnels in which they found themselves was an immense labyrinth descending to unfathomable depths. Thanks to the enormous skill and superhuman agility of its members, the expedition descended swiftly and after eight hours of descent they were more than 25 kilometres deep. The only one who felt a scientific fascination for what they found in their path was Oscar, who had a great knowledge of Zoology, Anthropology, Palaeontology and Geology; branches that he studied in his free time as a hobby. He would explain to his friends everything they saw as they passed by. When they reached a depth of 27 kilometres, the sediments and rocky materials in the caverns had strong evidence that they belonged to the Cambrian Era, more than 560 million years ago. Oscar knew this when he found trilobite fossils and an anomalocaris over nine metres long. An animal of that size in the Cambrian would have been the largest predator on the planet of its time; indeed, the largest living thing for three hundred million years, until the beginning of the Ordovician.

-This place is creepy," Rodrigo muttered.

-On the contrary, it's the most fascinating place on the planet," Oscar replied. We've come down quite a bit. By now we should be cooking from the geothermal heat, but on the contrary, the temperature remains the same. Also



that the caves we have passed through seem recent in geological terms. The basalt that makes them up is quite new. I think we are entering the lithosphere.

-And what is that? -asked Rocío.

-It is a layer of rock that lies below the continental layer, but above the Earth's mantle. It is one of the least explored places on the planet. It is foolish to think that we know more about the Moon or Mars than we do about our own subterranean world.

-The Atlanteans descended to these depths," Aldrick interjected into the conversation. Modern science is still searching for Atlantis but has no idea that all its answers are here.

-They couldn't make it down here," said Oscar. We have made it because we are stronger, but an ordinary man could die on the way down.

At a depth of 29 kilometres the expedition stopped to rest. The absence of the sun had disqualified the explorers' hours of sleep; except for Rowena and Aldrick who have their own time; but the others were beginning to feel the exhaustion of the journey in its true magnitude. They set up camp in a rock chamber and made ready to sleep. Meanwhile Edwin brought out some measuring devices and a radio transmitter. Oscar watched him intently without Edwin's knowledge, watched what he was doing with the equipment and then a memory flashed through his mind, an event he had wanted to forget for years, without success. He got up from his sleeping position, trying not to make any noise so as not to wake anyone, and sat down next to his friend.



-Tell me, what are all those things you're carrying? -asked Oscar, Edwin looked at him, smiled and started to show them to him.

-Pressure sensors, radiation and other instruments my father gave me.

-Are they necessary?

-Did you know that we are 29 kilometres below the ?

-That could explain everything we saw on the road, all those ancient sediments.

-I noticed something strange too, I saw claw marks on some of the walls," Oscar wondered at Edwin's observation.

Could it be some kind of deep-sea fauna? -he questioned, and Edwin shook his head.

-I understood why there were runes in the Sorata tunnel we entered. It's logical, Oscar. The loyal Atlanteans were trying to seal something, to lock something off; like a kind of padlock to prevent something from getting out of here.

-Something like what?

-I don't know, but we are not alone. I felt some shadows that have been trying to keep up with us all day. But we are much faster. And that's not all, time doesn't run here like it does on the surface either. I haven't managed to understand what kind of time exists here, but the hours seem much longer. Haven't you noticed that in the ten hours of descent we have travelled further than we normally would have been able to? It's as if instead of ten hours, ten days have passed.

Oscar pondered for a few moments and then noticed that Edwin's beard had grown, as had his and Aldrick's. The whole thing seemed longer than they realised. It all seemed like a longer time than they realised.



-It's true, something strange is going on here.

-Listen, Oscar; we'll be leaving in a few more hours, and I want you to keep your ears open. Rowena says we'll keep going down until we find some trace of the Arc, and I have a feeling we'll have a lot of action down there.

-I am always attentive.

There was silence, Oscar interrupted.

-I haven't had the chance to apologise for ...

-Don't apologise," Edwin interrupted, "I told you that's in the past.

-I think Alice loved you.

-It doesn't matter now, she's dead and I have to accept it.

-But I don't want you to think that...

-I don't think about anything anymore, Oscar. I'm over it, you get over it too.

-And if you're really over him, why does it bother you that he's with Joisy?

-My sister is something else, and I don't mind you being with her.

Oscar stood up, about to leave, looked at Edwin who was still seated and added:

-You can't hide the fact that it bothers you that the Joisy and I...

-Why do you insist on that, I told you I don't....

-Stop kidding yourself, Edwin, please, you can't just play dumb," interrupted Oscar, trying not to raise his voice, "I'd like you to really put this whole thing aside and understand that Alicia's death wasn't your fault, nor mine, nor Joisy's. She had diabetes and anything could happen to her. She had diabetes and anything could happen to her. Until you forgive yourself, you won't forgive me, and you won't forgive your sister.

-I am now a hyperborean man.



-Brother, all of us here are Hyperboreans, but does not mean we are free yet. We are alive, we are still in chains and we are not going to die until we finish our mission. If in that living you can make things better between us....

-Maybe you're right, Oscar. But right now I don't need to be psychoanalysed, I just want to be alert in case something happens on this shitty trip. And I hope you'll be alert too. My sister trusts you and so do I for now.

-I wish that "for now" was a "I always trust you".

Oscar withdrew, leaving Edwin to his thoughts. While he thought of everything, one thought alone could make him forget the loss of the Alice of his heart: the threat of abyssal peoples, Atlanteans maddened by the depths of the Earth. The journey would soon continue.





The walls of Erks were crowded with archers with their arrows pointed straight ahead. All the farmers had abandoned the fields and taken refuge inside the citadel; anyone who could lift a sword was instantly conscripted and brought to defend the walls. Qhawaq had ordered the erection of a plasma barrier that looked like a faint yellow, phosphorescent glass covering, like a bell, the entire citadel. Qhawaq and Rhupay stood with Erks' highest-ranking generals, checking their soldiers' defence posts.

-We are ready to defend ourselves, Mr Qhawaq," reported one of the generals.

-The barrier will not last long," replied the old man. Let the condor riders be ready for the counter-attack. If I am not mistaken, the *Shambalá* sinarchs will hit us with everything they have and neglect their lines.

-I don't understand, grandfather," Rhupay interjected, anguish in his eyes. . How could it be possible that these cursed demons have broken through our siege. In centuries they have never been able to enter this world.

-Archangels are able to come and go as they please. One of them has come with the invader and brought his troops. The siege must have given way because of this archangel, don't forget that they too are gods, albeit traitors.



-Will we resist?

Qhawaq smiled at his grandson's question and hugged him.

-Erks does not belong to us, Rhupay. Its existence is solely due to the role it plays in this universe. We will do whatever it takes to ensure that our priority, which is the Arc, is not affected. So go and open the underground conduits leading out of the mountain, leave the route ready to the Orichalcum Fortress, and don't let anyone see you.

Rhupay was beginning to believe that his grandfather was going to surrender the city; he disagreed, but he had never distrusted Qhawaq's decisions and this would not be the first time.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the walls of Erks, the army of Tsadkiel the archangel was making final preparations. They viewed the citadel with infinite hatred and were eager to begin the siege. Beside the archangel was Hélixabor and the demon Bálaham. In their forward position they had encamped 4000 infantrymen: 500 of them were US Marines, 1000 were soldiers of the Zionist Special Forces of the State of Israel and the remaining 2500 were *Hiwa Anakim*, cannibalistic angels trained for war. They had brought *Sabre* tanks, armoured trucks and *Isherman* siege tanks. Their airborne troops were basically composed of 20 dragon riders, 25 IAI Lavi aircraft, 15 F-18s and 5 Apache helicopters. During the hours of theatre preparation, Tsadkiel's troops set up a communications network, occupied key positions on the flanks of the citadel and readied several explosives in the vicinity of the plasma barrage, including a 25-warhead nuclear device.



-Master Tsadkiel," a man in a camouflaged uniform entered, ducking his head at the huge archangel. We've already taken up positions on the flanks and analysed its plasma barrier. It is extremely hard, my lord, and seems to emit some kind of deadly radiation, but we will break it.

-Radiation," Tsadkiel mumbled.

-Hyperborean magic, my lord," said Hélixabor. They intend to stop us with their magic.

-That remains to be seen," Tsadkiel replied and began to issue orders. I want you to bombard their barrier with the most powerful thing you have in your human weaponry, do what you do best: destroy. I'll be watching you.

The soldier nodded and left immediately. Meanwhile Tsadkiel flew up to watch the attack. Hélixabor and Bálaham went with the senior soldier to lead the siege. Everyone was ready to begin, the bloodlust felt like a palpable energy. Soon the fighting would begin.

Meanwhile, within the walls of Erks, Valya stood at a high point in the central tower of the citadel, within a chamber with a full view of the territories adjacent to fortress walls. Her body was surrounded by a halo of reddish hues and the shape of a scorpion that protected her beneath her body. Her eyes were lit with a yellow glow and her hair floated as if submerged under water, shining like the sun. She stood erect, her eyes fixed on the encroached field. She had erected the plasma barrier an hour before the arrival of the enemy and was holding it with the power of her wraith. As a safety precaution Valya had imbued the barrier with the deadly poison of her *Scorpio* Spirit; that



would make the enemy siege even more difficult. Her mission was to hold out as long as possible, but that could have terrible consequences for her; and the Erikians knew that, they would not demand more of her than she could give.

The Israeli general, the senior commander of the human troops, gave the order to fire. The invading vanguard rifles emptied their magazines on the barrier, but the bullets bounced off like rubber balls. After a couple more sprays, the General ordered the tanks to fire. Heavy artillery rounds also ricocheted off the barrage. It glowed faintly wherever a tank bullet hit. Valya resisted, but she knew that those first attacks were just a test of the enemy's power; so she raised her wraith as high as she could and materialised a giant scorpion made of energy inside the barrier. As the humans saw the ectoplasmic beast form before their eyes, they began to recoil slightly, Valya waited no longer and unleashed the monstrous scorpion against the enemy. The energy arachnid burst out of the barrier, as if it were made of jelly, and charged the soldiers on the front line. The marines fired at it with everything they could, but the bullets went through the monster without touching it. The soldiers, on the other hand, were not invulnerable to the beast, which set about hacking and disembowelling every man who stood in front of it. At a distant point, Tsadkiel was watching everything. The archangel raised his wraith and created a barrier of energy between his troops and the scorpion, leaving the poor unfortunates in the vanguard at the mercy of Valya's wrath.

-You are nothing to us," Tsadkiel said in thought, speaking directly into Valya's mind. Your power will wane sooner or later.



-Silence, demon! -the girl challenged him in anger, "you will not touch a single wall in this city as long as I live.

-We can work that out, you impetuous little girl.

At that moment Tsadkiel gave the order for his troops to withdraw, pulling them back to the outpost. He strengthened his energy barrier to protect his men and then fired a plasma beam at the site where the nuclear explosive had been installed. The plasma began to corrode the lead casing and it soon came into contact with the explosive. The nuclear deflagration, encapsulated between Valya's and Tsadkiel's barriers, could only find a place to escape through the top of the barriers, combining in deadly eruption with Tsadkiel's plasma. In Erks' tower, Valya had suffered the atrocious damage of the blow; a giant gash that nearly scraped the bone opened from her hip to her shoulder, followed by a monstrous hemorrhage that bathed the walls of the chamber with her blood. Valya's shield was weakening and the girl could barely breathe. Grimacing terribly in pain, the warrior rose to her feet.

-Come on Tsadkiel, I'm still alive!

-But not by much.

The archangel excreted from the skin of his palm an archetypal substance which, like a sponge, collected all radiation from the nuclear blast. He then enveloped the gel with a layer of fiery solar plasma and catapulted it into Valya's hatchery. A strong red light hit the force field and then the tower where the warrior stood exploded. The immense structure, lost at unfathomable heights, began to crumble over the invaded camp. The plasma barrier was completely gone, and the walls of Erks



were within reach of his enemy. Tsadkiel generated a gravitational field and deflected the debris from the crumbling tower above him, pushing it towards the citadel. The archers, seeing the giant structure falling on top of them, began to move away from the fortress walls. But then another gravitational field prevented the ruins from falling on the citadel. A condor of energy, glowing with green light, picked up the debris and hurled it around Erks.

-They're clever," Tsadkiel muttered.

When he was high enough not to be hit by the incoming attacks, the archangel called out to his druid:

-Hexabor.

The *chernó* druid felt Tsadkiel's voice speaking directly into his mind.

-I listen, my lord.

-Send all our troops, absolutely all, against Erks; send Bálaham. But you don't go, stay far away, as far away from the outpost as possible.

-Is something going to happen, my lord?

-The condor's fury will be unleashed and we will defeat him using his own anger. "Against dogs, the illusion of rage". Héxabor, never forget that principle.

The druid obeyed and gave the order to attack with all his might. On the other side of the walls, an entity surrounded by a green aura in the shape of a condor and silver armour led the counter-offensive.





-Fire! -commanded Rhupay, and all the generals on the barricade replied.

Dozens of catapults behind the walls had been loaded with bales of straw, tar and oiled linseed core. The gunners lit the bullets, released the harness hooks and the onagers fired. The medieval explosive bullets fell on several soldiers who immediately began to burn, showering the irradiated battlefields with shrieks. The second charge was fired from the front towers of the city, where several crossbows were loaded with electric black arrows. Rhupay levitated into the air and gave the order to fire. Immediately the crossbows, aimed at the tanks, fired their arrows and pierced the fuselage of the armoured vehicles as if they were made of butter. Then a powerful electric shock fried the tanks' circuits and their unfortunate pilots. The tanks that were not hit fired their heavy calibre bullets into the walls of Erks. Several archers flew through the air, blown away by the deflagrations. The remaining soldiers began to unload their rifles at the base archers. The archers responded with their arrows, killing a good number of the enemy infantry. When the arrows and ammunition ran out, the battle between swords and bayonets began.

Meanwhile Ba'alaham, who had become a demon, was speeding through the swarming combatants, slaughtering every *Erkite* on the killing field. From Erks, like a green comet, Rhupay shot out with his spear in deadly vanguard, mowing down Israelite soldiers by the dozen. The two, the dark demon and the wrathful hyperborean, clashed in deadly, fierce combat. This time the boy fought with all his power, not holding back a bit. The movements of both,



The two sides in combat, seeing their champions in battle, felt the thirst for war boiling in their veins. The two sides, seeing their champions in battle, felt the thirst for war boiling in their veins. Like Achilles among the Greeks and Hector among the Trojans, the mighty Blaham of the Synarchy and the enraged Rhupay of the Erks fought like nothing seen in hundreds of years. They caused tremors every time claws and spear clashed. The halo of a green condor surrounded the boy, and it too Bálaham; while the demon, with his death breath, had splashed acid on Rhupay.

In the sky, Tsadkiel watched everything. He watched as the humans fought fiercely against the Erikians. Bullets, arrows, grenades, knives, bayonets and swords clashed and sparked armour. The shadowy archangel knew full well that the humans had no chance of defeating the Erikians, but he had also noticed that the Erikian vanguard, instead of advancing to the Hélixabor outpost, was actually retreating: it confused Tsadkiel greatly.

As bullets ricocheted off their shields and explosions were contained by the spectral power of the Hyperboreans, humans were maimed and disembowelled by Erikian blades. The whole valley was strewn with blood, gore and fluids upon which both armies fought. The bloody slime made the infantry slippery and the tanks muddy. The moment for the aerial onslaught had come. Hexabor gave the order and then planes, helicopters, angels and dragon riders took to the skies. In the midst of their deadly combat, Rhupay saw the air forces approaching and then fired a plasma shot into the air that illuminated the entire with its green glow; that was the signal, the condor riders, hundreds of them, took flight. However, Rhupay was distracted at the moment he gave the signal and



Bálaham took advantage of his distraction to sink his claws into him. The fatal wound entered through the stomach and exited at almost shoulder level, tearing through the digestive tract, lungs and arteries. A great gush of blood gushed out of Rhupay's mouth and he fell heavily to the ground. The Erikians watched as their champion's body fell and felt as if his descent had lasted for hours. On the ground, Rhupay lay dying in a pool of blood. Bálaham descended with his claws ready to decapitate his vanquished rival, the death of the brave Erikian warrior was imminent.



(Jheran)

Eighth Mystery, The Secret of Death

Version of the Iberian Myth by Felipe Moyano; adapted by Amethyst Circle

There existed in Atlantis a path leading to an Enchanted Garden, which had been built by the God of Illusion. There grew there an Ancient Pomegranate Tree known as the Tree of Life and also as the Tree of Terror, whose roots spread throughout the Earth and whose branches reached up to the Celestial Abodes of the God of Illusion. Near that Bewitched Pomegranate Tree was an Apple Tree, as ancient as that, which was called the Tree of Good and Evil or the Tree of Death. It was a common belief among the Atlanteans that man, in the Beginning, had been immortal. The reason that man had to die was because the great ancestors had eaten of the Fruit of that Tree, and Death had been passed on to their descendants as a disease. In truth, the blood of the Tree, its accursed sap, had mingled with the immortal blood of the original man and regulated life and death from within. And no one knew the remedy for this disease. Navutan, who had no human father, had been born immortal like the original men, but his immortality was, by the same token, essential, proper to his special spiritual nature; consequently, his immortality was incommunicable to the other white men, it was of no use to them in regaining their lost immortality. That is why Navutan, with the support of his Divine Mother, the Virgin Ama, decided to become mortal and discover the secret of immortality for men.

Ever since the Great Ancestors ate the Fruit of the Tree of Death, no one dared to approach it for fear of Death. But Navutan was immortal like the Great Ancestors and could, like them, approach it without



problems. Once at the Tree, Navutan cut and ate the forbidden fruit, and was immediately bewitched by the illusion of life: now he only needed to discover the secret of death without dying, since if he perished in the attempt he would never be able to communicate wisdom to the white men. It is then that Navutan self-crucifies himself in the Tree of Terror, to defeat death and hangs nine nights from its trunk. However, as time passed, death approached without Navutan being able to understand his secret. At last, already dying, the Great White Chief closed his one eye, which he kept fixed on the illusion of the world, and looked deep inside himself, in a last desperate reaction to save the life that was hopelessly extinguished. And at the top of himself, amidst the infinite blackness of insinuated death, he saw a glowing figure emerge, a being that was pure grace. It was Frya, the joy of the spirit, his divine wife of Origin, who came to his aid.

When Navutan opens his eye again, Frya goes out through it and enters the world of the great deception; she goes in search of the secret of death to save her dying husband. However, she does not succeed and time is inexorably running out. Finally, without despairing, Frya goes to Hyperborea to consult the Liberator Gods. They advise him to seek out a two-headed giant who dwells in a world beneath the roots of the Tree of Terror and who works as a nail-maker. From this giant she must steal the key Kâlachakra, for in it the Traitor Gods have engraved the secret of death. Frya, transformed into a raven, descends to the world of the two-faced giant and steals the Kâlachakra key from him: But to get it, she has had to become a murderess and a prostitute; Frya indeed breaks the Kâlachakra key with a blow of her axe, but the stick, as it falls, transforms into seven giants, each with seven heads, who sleep so that the root races may live for them; then, without alternatives, for she is pressed for time, Frya dresses herself with



the veil of death which those giants have fastened with a noose round each neck: then she successively awakens them and gives herself to them as a lover, but inexorably decapitates them at the culmination of the orgasm; and the heads of the giants, strung on a cord or sutrâtma, form the necklace of Frya Kâlibur, in which each skull represents a Sign of the Sacred Alphabet of the White Race. At last the veil of death is loosed and Frya, again transformed into a raven, swiftly returns to Navután.

When he arrives, it is too late; just at that moment, Navutan breathes his last and his eye is closing forever. Frya realises that it will be impossible to reveal the secret of death to Navutan, for he has just died and will no longer be able to read the Kâlachakra key. And so, without wasting a moment, Frya makes the decision that will save Navutan and the white race: he transforms himself into a partridge and enters Navutan again. The key Kâlachakra must be left outside, for it alone can exist in the depths of himself. Frya must reveal to Navutan the secret of death, not only to bring about his resurrection, but also for her husband to communicate it to men; otherwise his immolation would have been in vain. But how to expose to Navutan the secret of death without the Kâlachakra key, without showing him that instrument of spiritual enchainment, for his understanding? And Frya decides at that moment: like a partridge, he will dance the secret of life and death. He will express, by the dance, the highest wisdom that it is possible for mortal man to understand from outside himself.

Thus Frya, dancing in the depths of himself, reveals to Navutan the secret from outside himself and Navutan understands it. The spell caused by the fruit of the Tree of Life and Death is cut off, and he rises again as an immortal. As he comes down from his crucifixion on the Tree, he realises that his body has



transmuted and is now of Pure Stone; and that he can understand and express the Language of the Birds. Then Navutan teaches the White Atlanteans the thirteen He "plus three" Vrunas through the Tongue of the Birds and leads them to understand the Sign of Origin, "whereby they will attain the Highest Wisdom, will be immortal while the Spirit remains chained to the animal man, and will conquer Eternity when they win the Battle against the Powers of Matter and are free in the Origin".



Rowena, Aldrick and their pupils had descended into deep recesses and galleries, plunging deeper and deeper. As they progressed, they noticed shadows following close behind them, making them nervous. After several hours, or several days, there was no way to calculate the time, they found an underground chamber, carved out of the basalt by some mysterious, definitely Atlantean, engineering. The monumental central chamber was so immense that there was no way to see its walls, darkness covered them, as well as the ceiling. Every ten metres gigantic columns of several metres in radius appeared, possibly supporting the ceiling. They walked slowly but steadily until they saw a wall in front of them, it looked like the other end of the chamber. Aldrick immediately set about examining the wall.

-There must be a tunnel at one end or the other," he said as he felt the wall.

-Could we have taken a wrong ? -Edwin asked.

-No," Rowena replied, "we follow the right path.

The guides were debating which course they should follow when Gabriel heard an unusual sound to their right, then Rocio heard it too. Both, guided by their instinct, followed the course of the sound until it gradually became clearer. Suddenly it was like unintelligible murmurs and then it sounded like some lost language, a dead tongue giving its warnings to any visitor.



-Rowena, Aldrick! -she had found him first, she had found the portal.

When the rest of the expedition caught up with Gabriel and Rocio they noticed that they were standing in front of a large stone doorway carved with runes and set beneath what appeared to be a lintel carved in emerald. The crusader read the inscriptions carefully and then opened his eyes wide.

-What I suspected, an Atlantean door," he said and then began to knock carefully on the door.

-The runes," Rowena said, sensing something, "are a message," she said and began to read aloud:

-Ajhir uthar lotaros, ajhir mudhas ethakum. Kal'ahlel m'taro il das lakum. Rhetum sefaras'hamanar utamus. Herleas humalas as had hafan-rakas ugüla. Delanorah mundanos menar imanulu'k deom uktalus deim deor mort||.

The disciples looked at each other in surprise; but Aldrick seemed to understand perfectly well what Rowena had said, his face expressing great surprise.

-Could someone explain what that was all about? -Edwin asked.

-It's a warning," Aldrick replied.

-What kind of warning? -asked Jhoanna. Aldrick replied to Rowena's words, but in Spanish:

-Abandon all pity or fear, he who has come this far. The threads of destiny weave only the threads of death, and only those who have learned to die enter this gateway. If you have a burning heart, know that



Behind this door they will know the cold and that beyond it there is only darkness.

A shiver ran down the spine of the expeditionaries. The dark secrets in the bowels of the earth were much thicker than they had expected.

-There is something else," Rowena said, still staring at the runes. There's a rune that doesn't fit.

Aldrick looked at her and then smiled:

-It means Frya, a weapon forged by Frya.

Both Aldrick and Rowena looked at each other and nodded in unison, then looked at their wards:

-The Arch of Artemis is behind this door," Aldrick concluded.

The jubilation immediately erupted, everyone began to hug and congratulate each other. Diana was shedding tears of emotion, finally the Bow of Artemis was within her grasp. However, the celebrations would not last long. Everyone stopped laughing as bloodcurdling screams reached them from a distance. Then the ground began to rumble, as if an army of thousands of soldiers were marching beneath their feet. The air became a stinking mass of death and blood. The screams became monstrous curses and oaths of death and suffering. They were hideous howls, screeches so shrill that they made your teeth ache. Then they were like hyena laughs, neurasthenic cackles coming from the depths. They all turned, looking around, and then, in the endless blackness of that chamber, they saw a faint glow. Aldrick raised his spectre and threw a plasma emanation at the ceiling for light. What they saw was horrifying: white creatures,





greasy, thousands of them hanging on the walls, emerging from the floor and from cracks in the ceiling. They were wet, gelatinous, as if their bodies were soaked in oils and fluids. They lacked eyes, but their ears and mouths were so large that they almost protruded from their heads. Their thoraxes were very small in comparison to their long arms and legs that ended in claws. Monstrous scars were visible on their skins, and their screams spoke of suffering greater than any living being could bear. They were tormented, crazed creatures, and they ran like a frightened herd against the expeditionaries.

-You must enter the portal! -Aldrick commanded, drew his sword and strode towards the creatures.

-Rowena, what are those things," said Diana, pale with shock.

-Abysal Atlanteans," replied the teacher and also unsheathed her sword.

Oscar and Edwin loaded their rifles, removed the safety catch and began firing at the safest targets approaching them. Rodrigo and Jhoanna removed fuses from two grenades and threw them as far as they could into the mass of abyssals coming at them. Several of them were catapulted into the air, but the casualties in their hordes were minimal. For brief but interminable minutes, the expeditionaries finished their ammunition against the monsters despite their incalculable numbers and in the knowledge that they could never finish them all.

-It's no use," Rowena stopped them. Aldrick and I will take care of it. They have to go.



Immediately the master began to conjure strange invocations in front of the stone door as M4A1 fire and plasma emanations covered it. Meanwhile Aldrick was in desperate combat against the thousands of abominations rushing at him. He advanced, swinging his sword and hacking off heads, but he was outnumbered by the abyssals. Compelled by the incisive onslaught of the creatures, the crusader leapt, rising several feet above the ground, and fired a powerful plasma emanation that vaporised hundreds of creatures, but it was not enough. The sword he held ignited with a bluish fire, his eyes began to glow, and then Aldrick went into a hyperborean transe. His strength was far superior and so was his agility, but it was still not enough to put the countless abyssals at bay. He annihilated creatures twenty at a time, with a single sword thrust, but for every abyssal he killed, two or three more emerged, numbering in the thousands.

After a couple of minutes the runes on the stone entrance began to glow in front of Rowena and slowly began to open. The young warriors were eager to see what was behind them, but struggled with their need to help Aldrick. When the stone doors finally opened, all their expectations and needs turned to the portal: it was a glowing, gelatinous fluid, reflecting everything like a mirror and vibrating occasionally like the bass of a blaring speaker.

-Cross now! -Rowena ordered.

-No teacher," Rodrigo replied, "we will not leave without you.

-They will leave or I will kill them myself!

-But...

-No buts, I'll be fine. Aldrick and I will get through this. The

Sentinels looked at each other and then Edwin spoke:



-We will leave, Master Rowena. We'll see you and Master Aldrick at Erks.

-So be it," he said and smiled. You are powerful, never forget what you have learned in these months. It's all up to you now.

One by one, the boys entered the portal, losing themselves in the jelly that absorbed them. As the last one entered, Rowena conjured another summoning and the stone doors closed. Then she raised her wraith and leapt several feet away. Aldrick was in trouble, the abyssals were getting the better of him.

-The Bow of Artemis awaits you," Rowena thought. You are the last hope of the spirits locked in the bodies of men. Fight with honour and Valhalla will open its gates to you. Farewell, my little treasures. You have been and always will be my pride.



The planes had bombed much of Erks before being overtaken by the Erkian condor riders. They did not act against the machines but sought out their pilots, the giant condors latched onto the fuselage of the planes with their talons and with their beaks tore open the cockpit to devour the pilot. Shrapnel bullets bounced off the condors' plumage, or off the armour of their riders, and even the missiles and rockets of the F18s and IAI Lavi stunned the condors. That disadvantage had been a factor in the fact that before long there were no planes or helicopters left in the sky; then the aerial combat had turned into a bloody massacre between Tsadkiel's dragon riders and Erks' condor riders. They were doing monstrous damage to each other, the fighting in the skies had become so fierce that the blood of the fallen descended like torrential rain on the combatants on the ground. The *Hiwa Anakim* angels had poured all their efforts into decimating the resistance of the Erikian infantry in the citadel. Every street was strewn with dead on both sides.

In the midst of that hell of blood, Rhupay lay on the ground, mortally wounded and with the claws of Bálaham about to end his life. He was ready for death, he thought of Valya and that she probably wouldn't have survived either, he missed her. He thought of his grandfather and feared that



He was disappointed in him for having been defeated by Bálaham again. The demon was very powerful, but that death in battle would win him the favour of Odin, of Wiracocha, and he would pass to the hall of the fallen warriors where the valkyries and undines of Titicaca would heal his wounds and take him to the altar of the champions fallen in war. It was an honourable death; though he knew that it would therefore be impossible for the other Sentinels to use the Bow of Artemis. He was one of the twelve Sentinels and without his presence the Bow would not be at its full capacity. It was a lost cause.

-You fight well, Erkian," spoke Bálaham in his guttural, infernal voice. You've caused me a lot of work.

-I'm Bolivian," said Rhupay, the blood in his mouth making it difficult to speak. They will avenge me!

-I do not see that anyone is capable, Rhupay Stone Condor. Victory is mine, and with your death will begin the torment of your Spirit. I will not let you go to Agartha, I will make your soul so heavy that you will not be able to leave here, and from this world I will take you to *Chang Shambala* for your legendary suffering.

-Y-you're wasting y-your time," the fallen warrior replied and began to raise his spectre, ready to immolate himself alongside Bálaham. W-we will d-die together.

Bálaham, sensing Rhupay's spectre rising to its limit, knew he had to get away quickly and took flight; he decided he must kill it as soon as possible. He raised his arm with his great claw poised to cut off its head when a powerful blast of plasma exploded in its face. The force of the shot was so great that Bálaham was hurled off the battlefield, out of the valley and around the perimeter at over 800 kilometres per hour, crashing into a mountain with the force of a meteorite. The hill, from the impact on its slope, collapsed, burying Ba'alaham under thousands of tons of rock.





Rhupay could not comprehend what had just happened, he had done nothing; no doubt someone else had saved his life. As he felt the spectre around him he knew who it was. He looked to the side and saw his grandfather, Qhawaq, approaching him. He took him in his arms and began to run his wraith all over Rhupay's battered body, healing his wounds and easing his pain.

-Grandfather," muttered Rhupay, "I'm sorry.

-Don't worry, everything will be all right," said the blind old man, continuing to heal him.

-Val-Valya... es.

-She's fine, I pulled her out of the rubble of the tower and cured her.

-How is that possible? They are destroying our city.

Qhawaq fixed his white eyes on his grandson's face, expressionless and yet a submerged concern was visible in the old man.

-They are not beating us, Rhupay.

The young warrior could not understand his grandfather, he looked at the citadel and felt a deep sorrow at the sight of its destroyed streets strewn with corpses and debris.

-I don't understand," said Rhupay at last.

-I ordered our forces to evacuate the city and the valley," Qhawaq replied to his grandson's surprise.

-But why?

-This attack has nothing to do with Erks, Rhupay. They buying time, Moses is looking for the Bow of Artemis as well and the others.





Sentries. We can't do anything from here, except hold off Tsadkiel and his demons for as long as we can. As long as they're busy invading us, they're not going anywhere.

-So this is...

-We are handing Erks over to them. If we had defended ourselves with all our might we would have wiped out all the invaders in short order, but Tsadkiel is invulnerable and would have taken his fury out on the other Sentinels. They are not yet ready to face him. Tsadkiel thinks he's wasting our time, that this is why we can't go our comrades, but he doesn't know that we're actually holding him back.

-But they, the enemy....

-They will leave as soon as they know the Sentinels have recovered the Arc.

We will take up Erks then.

Rhupay was practically healed, his grandfather helped him up from the floor. The warrior could not believe that his wounds had healed so quickly and that his power would soon be restored.

-Now, Rhupay," Qhawaq told him, his voice stern. You and Valya will take the refugees to Orichalcum Fortress.

The name immediately triggered a memory in Rhupay. Orichalcum Fortress was a castle and its respective village, both carved out of the solid granite of the great mountain that covered the valley landscape. It was a place designed for emergencies, with the evacuation of Erks included in the plan, the walls of the Fortress were so solid and high that there was no way to breach them. If the citadel fell, all the people would retreat to Orichalcum Fortress, a place impossible to penetrate.



-And you, grandfather?

-I'll distract them some more.

Rhupay knew better.

-Let me stay with you, I can fight.

-And I don't doubt it. You are powerful, Rhupay. But if anything happens to you, or Valya, we will never be able to use the Bow of Artemis and all our sacrifices will be in vain. You must go.

-I want to fight...

-Go on, go.

-But I...

-Go away, Rhupay, that's an order!

Rhupay's eyes were beginning to fill with frustration in the form of tears. It was too difficult a time for him. He hugged Qhawaq with all his might and cried into his chest.

-Will you come back? -asked Rhupay.

-I will try, I will destroy at least one traitor god before I go to Orichalcum Fortress.

No, he wouldn't even try, and Rhupay knew it. Qhawaq was old and had long wanted to go to Valhalla with his ancestors. He had lived long enough; 300 years is a long time in the world of matter.

-Come on, little one, go.

The gaze of both grandson and grandfather met briefly. Rhupay's eyes were teary-eyed, while Qhawaq's eyes were just



had a halo of unease about them. The young warrior broke away from him and started to leave. But before he was lost behind the citadel walls, he turned and waved his hand in the hyperborean salute to his grandfather.

-Strength and Honour, Qhawaq of Skiold, Qhawaq of Bolivia.

Qhawaq responded to the greeting by doing the *bala mudra* with his left hand:

-Strength and Honour, Rhupay of Erks.

And Rhupay left without turning around, his eyes brimming with tears but his chest swelling with pride. The old man was far braver than Rhupay himself, and he could not imagine what kind of power was in his veins to do the wonders he did. Now his mission was to survive and bring the Erikian families to Orichalcum Fortress, he was eager to hold Valya in his arms, he needed her more than ever.

On the battlefield the fighting was almost over. Corpses were strewn everywhere and the survivors had retreated to the Fortress. There were no invaders in sight, only Hexabor on a hill in the distance and Tsadkiel in the sky. At the main gate of the ruined citadel, only Qhawaq stood. The three of them were the only ones in the valley.

Tsadkiel began to slowly descend until his feet rested on the field of death. Hexabor also advanced among the corpses. Qhawaq did not move, standing still as the shadowy invaders approached him.

-You've come too far, old man! -You didn't save your city, and now you won't save yourself either!



Tsadkiel's arm, palm facing the old man, began to glow with an orange glow, his wings tinged scarlet and his armour tinged with blood. A strong beam of light emanated from the archangel's body and struck a barrier that glowed green as soon as the beam hit it. Behind the barrier the old man held his staff in Tsadkiel's direction, giving off a greenish glow. Both lights began to take on misty shapes as they collided with each other. Suddenly the archangel leapt into the sky, drew his sword and flew at full speed at Qhawaq. Qhawaq raised his staff and a green light engulfed him. Tsadkiel his sword at the old man in the glow, but the deadly weapon clattered as if it had struck a stone. When the glow ceased the old man was no longer there, in his place stood a muscular bearded youth with a sword nearly ten feet long and crystallised armour that appeared to be emerald.

-At last you show your true form, Qhawaq," said the archangel.

-The warrior summoned and a green bolt of lightning enveloped his giant sword.

At that moment Héxabor, who had been walking down the hill into the valley with tedium and quietness, had finally reached the battle site. When he saw Qhawaq transformed into a young warrior, he smiled and began to clap his hands.

-Your tricks never fail to impress me, Qhawaq Yupanki," said Héxabor. This is not the first time you have done something like this.

-They are both going to die," the warrior said, his voice firm and husky, like the roar of a lion.

-You're being too optimistic," Tsadkiel replied.



-That remains to be seen," Qhawaq concluded and began to raise his spectre.

Rocks, debris and corpses began to float around Qhawaq, the warrior was suppressing the force of gravity and slowly levitating the objects. The sky filled with greenish clouds that gave off gigantic bolts of lightning. The winds became hurricane force, blowing stronger by the second and unleashing countless tornadoes over the valley. Tsadkiel and Hélixabor wrapped themselves in plasma barriers to keep the bad weather from affecting them. They both watched Qhawaq raise his spectre higher and higher until lightning began to thunder across the valley, snapping trees and scorching corpses. Qhawaq's power was so immense that the sun, affected by the gravity generated by the warrior, began to suffer catastrophic solar flares that began to leave the sun's corona towards the earth. The moon slowly began to move closer to the blue planet, its orbit completely affected by Qhawaq's power. Within seconds the warrior had transformed the landscape of the valley into a green wasteland of sinister lights, which, like malicious gases, trailed across the eroded ground. The trees had died, turned into stunted skeletons. The entire valley region had been encapsulated within a time-space shield that Qhawaq created across the area. Tsadkiel and Hélixabor looked around and noticed that they were locked in. They looked at the warrior and prepared to charge. The final battle was about to begin.



The expeditioners had felt that the environment around them was very alien to them, to nature itself. They had crossed the portal after several hardships and a search into the abysses of the planet, but the journey between their world and the others was not what they had expected, not at that moment. Everything around them seemed to be a warm, wet, gelatinous substance; but against all logic, the gel did not wet them. They couldn't breathe and that was what made them most desperate, they had to walk and the lack of oxygen had begun to cloud their consciousness. The ground felt like a large pillow, making their progress even more difficult. Surrounding the Sentinels, several runes of bright greenish light emanated strange vapours. Gradually the jelly cooled and hardened until a white light began to glow, resembling an exit. When the expeditionaries saw the light their lost strength returned to their bodies and they walked as fast as they could to reach the other end.

A frozen tundra surrounded by mountains greeted the boys. The extent of the frozen wasteland was indeterminate, the horizon lost in unfathomable distances, the relief of which was covered by a gloomy aurora that took the form of skeletons. A thick layer of dry ice covered the ground and the sky, the most impressive thing any human had ever seen, was like a window into outer space. Various galaxies, star clusters, nebulae and all sorts of other celestial objects were permeating the alien sky with their masterful brilliance. On the ground, the only visible flora were some strange bluish fungi that glowed sinisterly, as if irradiated with some kind of nuclear contamination; their glow was so strong that they looked like lanterns illuminating the darkness of a city in the





night. Some places on the ground, under the dry ice, had greenish glows. Between some hills there were fissures in the surface from which luminous vapours were emitted in sporadic eruptions, like radioactive geysers. But perhaps most anomalous of all was the presence of the moon, or some extraterrestrial moon orbiting the icy world. Its size was gigantic and it covered much of the sky, illuminating with its pale glow a landscape that needed no more light.

-It's fucking cold! -complained Rodrigo, wrapping his arms around his body.

-Where are we? -Jhoanna asked her brother.

Edwin looked at his compass and noticed that it was spinning wildly. There were no stars in the sky to help him orient himself. The thermometer in his suit read -46 C° and an atmospheric pressure of 2456m above sea level. The air they were breathing, according to their instruments, was hyper-oxygenated; it was like breathing from an oxygen tank. But the most curious and dangerous thing was the radioactivity that their instruments had detected, consistently reading 24 rads; if it rose above 30 rads they would be at serious risk of being irradiated.

-This place is strange," said Edwin, "but the conditions are definitely dangerous. Everyone raise your spectra and make a barrier around your bodies, it's -46 degrees and we could freeze.

So they did, they all raised their spectra and formed a barrier, just as Rowena and Aldrick had taught them. Rodrigo, Diana and Rocio started laughing and fiddling with their plasma barriers, they loved the colour of their



spectra was different. Rodrigo's was blue, Rocío's blue-green and Diana's violet. Gabriel had the green spectrum, almost yellow, but he couldn't notice it due to his blindness; his world had become colourless and that had profoundly changed his character, he no longer enjoyed it like his friends. Oscar's spectrum was reddish like Jhoanna's, only hers ran to orange while Oscar's ran to red. The most noticeable spectre was Edwin's, which was white. This was the first time the boys had seen the colour of their wraiths in this way, and it caused them a deep fascination.

-It's incredible," Oscar commented, looking at his body as if it were someone else's.

-Guys, we don't have time," Edwin interrupted. We have a relic to find.

-How do you suggest we find her? -Jhoanna questioned.

Edwin thought and thought and could not find an answer. Everyone began to suggest ways of tracking the object, but none could solve their problem, they were in a huge place and the Arc could be anywhere. Then Diana sensed something, a voice, Morana's voice speaking directly into her blood:

-The Hajime... the Hajime...

Diana heard, then she knew how to find the Arc.

-Rodrigo, give me your half of the Hajime! -she demanded. He handed it over, confused. I think I know how to find the Bow.



Diana joined the two parts of the Hajime together through the slit in the edge, but nothing was happening. Everyone watched expectantly at the awkward stillness of the jewel.

-It won't work," said Rodrigo in disappointment.

-We did something wrong, something is missing," Diana replied and then remembered what the gypsy who gave them the Hajime told them that Christmas day: *"Just remember that the jewel will show its true power when your blood is pure and you are both together so that you can unite both halves.*

"Together," thought Diana. Then she separated the pieces again and hung the Hajime half around Rodrigo's neck. Then she approached him and joined her half with his, then the jewel began to sparkle to everyone's amazement. However, Rodrigo and Diana's gazes were not directed at the jewel, but at each other's eyes. The proximity of their bodies and their specters had generated heat between them, their hearts beating so hard that it hurt their chests. Finally they felt a longing for the Origin which, in the presence of their Original Partner, became more powerful. Guided by a burning impulse they began to kiss and then a light surrounded them both. The light followed an unnatural trajectory, forming triangles in its path and leaving a violet trail behind it. Then the glow was expelled, leaving a phosphorescent trail leading to a place among the glowing mushrooms. As suddenly as it appeared, the light dimmed to nothing. When the glow stopped, Diana and Rodrigo, visible again, were in each other's arms and Hajime's parts were separated.

-It won't be long now," Rodrigo said in his ear.

-Nothing will keep us apart, you heard me! - said, crying for no apparent reason.



But Rodrigo said nothing.

There were no further explanations to give or receive; no one asked Diana or Rodrigo about what happened when they put the Hajime's parts together, nor did they comment further on the matter. All they knew was that the Silver Hajime had shown them a path and they were going to follow it, whether it led them to the Arc or not.

Thanks to their training, the Sentinels could advance several metres in a single stride, and that was the pace they kept. They ploughed into the ice that covered the tundra at breakneck speed, following the faint glow that the trail had left behind. Yet the world seemed to reject them on a cellular level, the temperatures dropping lower and lower, forcing the boys to raise their spectra higher and higher. As they moved on, the winds grew more and more fierce until they became a sudden blizzard. Small, sharp shards of glass impacted against the plasma barriers they had formed; without them they would all have died long ago.

The thermometer in Edwin's suit had dropped to -90 degrees Celsius, deathly cold for any human, but Edwin was unwilling to give such information to his friends and sisters, not wanting them to be afraid of surroundings. The further they went, the stronger the wind became and the colder the temperatures dropped.

The trail of light led the expeditionaries to the entrance of a cave. They all entered quickly, the cold outside was chilling them to the . The interior was made of rock, a strange and exotic blue rock whose hidden cracks were immolated by a blue but icy fire.



-Phaeric fire," said Oscar, looking at the icy flames coming out of the walls, everyone looked at him, waiting for an explanation; he added: "Some time ago Aldrick explained to me that phaeric fire is dark energy in cold fusion. According to Aldrick it is blue in colour, exactly like this one. Don't get too close to those walls or you'll get burned, that fire must be at -273 C°.

They went deep into the cave, which was not as cold as the outside, but the ambient temperature was still below freezing: -28 C°. At an advanced point, the light from outside was no longer able to break the darkness and the boys relied solely on the light generated by their plasma barrier to see what was in front of them. In that moment of darkness Gabriel felt his senses sharpen, somehow he could "see" the way and guide the expedition. They walked for a couple of hours in a straight line, neither descending nor ascending. Then a faint glow broke through the unfathomable darkness. The Sentinels followed the glow, blind to the dangers it might hold. But Gabriel sensed a threat, something cold, very cold in front of them.

At the end of the tunnel a superb chamber awaited them. One by one they entered it and felt that the cold was less intense. They were at -3 C°, a perfectly bearable cold without plasma barriers, though the boys did not dissipate them. The rocks of the place seemed to glow green and blue; and from the ceiling, at heights difficult to measure, several lines of light penetrated the chamber, delicately illuminating it. There was not a place that was not illuminated. But, in spite of the amount of light perceived by all the Sentinels, Gabriel, in his eyes capable of seeing the magnetism and electricity around him, felt that the chamber actually



was dark, very dark. That seemingly bright light that surrounded the chamber was a dark, cold light.

-What a strange place," Jhoanna muttered.

Turning in a circle, the explorers began to search for some other exit from the chamber, ascertaining that the entrance was also the only way out. Then they scanned the environment, looking for some indication of what they were looking for, but nothing there suggested the presence of the Arc. Then Gabriel had a vision, it was short but clear; he saw a shadow surrounding the walls of the place.

-We are not alone," said Gabriel and stopped dead in his tracks.

They all began to look from one side to the other but there was no hint of any threat. At least not at that very moment, for a few seconds later they were surrounded by whispers coming from all corners of the chamber and the cave. They were voices saying unintelligible, murky, but unfriendly things. Everyone began to regroup towards the centre of the chamber, waiting to see the danger that lay in wait. Then a mysterious vapour, brilliant blue like faery fire, began to surround the whole place. Two large, diamond-polished stones fell over the only exit, blocking any attempt to escape. The vapours began to take the obvious shape of snakes that began to zigzag towards the centre of the place, becoming a formless swarm of reptilian reptiles of icy, steaming fire. The boys raised their spectra even higher, in expectation of any aggression from the phenomenon, but it remained stable, increasing in volume with each phaeric serpent that joined the swarm.



A few seconds passed that seemed like an eternity. The restlessness in everyone had exacerbated their nerves to the point of unhealthy anxiety. Then the phenomenon changed, the formless swarm took shape. Gradually the snakes swarmed around an anthropomorphic figure. A few seconds later the snakes ceased to exist and, with a luminous mutation, the human figure became a beautiful woman. All the Sentinels were absolutely astonished, even Gabriel who, without seeing anything, perceived everything. This woman wore a silver, burnished armour over her body, and this, in turn, was under a thick blue cloak with silver edges. Her hair was brown, covering her breasts under her breastplate. The features of her face were sharp, but the sharpest thing was not her features but her eyes, icy amber and steely. The biggest surprise was that this stranger bore an uncanny resemblance to Diana, an element that everyone noticed immediately.

-Who are you, where did you come from! -questioned the woman in perfect Spanish and with a unique hostility. Edwin hesitated a little and replied.

-We come from Erks and we are Sentinels of Artemis. I am Ninurtske, the Taurus of War. My company," Edwin pointed to Oscar and the other men. This is Hagal, Gorkhan and Lycanon," he then pointed to the girls, "and these are my sisters Dianara and Debla, and our comrade Rit.

-From Erks, eh? -You're going to have to prove it, if you're lying you'll die right here; but if you're telling the truth we're going to have a serious talk.

The woman stretched out her arm and suddenly it was filled with blue fire; the fire turned into snakes and the snakes turned into reptilian monsters.



-Avoid them! -commanded the woman, and the snakes launched themselves at the boys.

The sentries leapt in all directions, drew their swords and readied themselves for combat. This would be their first real fight, they had only fought during training before but this was the first time they had a powerful enemy in front of them without the help of their hyperborean mentors. This would be their ultimate test and they could not fail.



N

(Hagla)

Ninth Mystery, The Secret of the Legia

Version of the Myth of Tharsis by Felipe Moyano; adapted by the Amethyst Circle.

The two Immortals still stood in that cave, the scene of the massacre they had wrought. The lake brimming with bitumen still bubbled, giving off nauseating odours. All the men there had been turned into pitch by the blackest and most cursed magic ever imagined. In the foreground stood the fierce figure of Bera, the Immortal whom the Golen called Bafael, and idealised as an expression of the perfect androgynous. Without releasing the Dorché, he said in excellent Latin:

-At last the cursed lineage of Tharsis is extinguished. This will please the High Priest.

-You have beheld a great wonder, you have seen the Power of YHVH Sebaoth in action," said Birsa in the same language.

-Is that, perchance, the Death of the Body? -the Abbot of Clairvaux dared to ask.

-Asphalt, bitumen, Death, and Plague are the same thing," Bera replied confidently.

-Do you recognise this substance? -Birsa asked, turning to Rabbi Nasi.

-Yes," said. It is -Judean bitumen||, the same bitumen that pollutes Lake Asphaltitis, which we call the Dead Sea.

The Golen and the Rabbis knew that Bera and Birsa had been the last Kings of Sodom and Gomorrah. And they also knew how they had attained such a high rank in the White Brotherhood: during their reign, in a moment of



They discovered the Secret of the Supreme Holocaust of Fire. Then the Fire from Heaven fell and scorched those peoples, and Bera and Birsa departed for Chang Shambalah, one of the Mansions of Jehovah Satan and his Ministers, the Seraphim Nephilim. Thus, long before Israel came into existence, when their seed was still in Abraham and no one sacrificed to the One God, They were able to offer their respective peoples as a burnt offering to the Glory of Jehovah Satan. The bitumen of Judah, the evident residue of the annihilation of their people, was brought by them to the region of the Dead Sea. But such a Sacrifice earned them a reception by Melchisedek, the High Priest of the White Brotherhood, who consecrated them to the Highest Degree of his Order. What Priest of the Cultural Pact would not wish to imitate Bera and Birsa? -Oh, thought the four present, what would a Priest not give to one day have a whole people to sacrifice, as Bera and Birsa had so unhesitatingly done? That would be a Holocaust worthy of Jehovah Satan!

-What is the curse of Jehovah Satan on the one who does not keep the Law? - Bera now asked Rabbi Benjamin.

--I will unleash wild beasts against you. I will punish you seven times for your sins. I will bring the sword upon you; you will take refuge in your cities, but I will send the pestilence among you. And I will take away the sustenance of bread from you," Benjamin synthesised, repeating Isaiah.

-So it is written! -That would be the punishment for our weakness, but it can also be our Strength! You must reflect upon it as Bera and I did millennia ago, when the Law was not yet Written in the form you have expressed it. We were then able to comprehend the Secret of the Supreme Holocaust and to carry it out in Sodom and Gomorrah: therefore, and by the Will of Jehovah God, We are now the Plague. You must reflect upon the Curse with serenity, We counsel you. For only those who have the calmness to contemplate the Beginning and the End of Time will be able to comprehend the Secret of the Supreme.



Holocaust of Fire, the End of Humanity. But the reward of that knowledge means the immortality of the Soul, the High Priesthood, and the Powers which you have seen us apply. Reflect upon it, Priests: We six are the Manifestation of Jehovah, and we must not break the Law.

But we can induce the Gentiles to do so, so that the Curse may overtake them, so that the Plague may settle among them: then the Supreme Holocaust of Fire will be possible!

-What is it? -roared the Abbot of Clairvaux, unable to contain himself.

-There is the answer," said Bera, pointing with the Dorché to the bitumen lake. But this will only be understood by those who understand that ours is a war between the Stone and the Lye. The Stone, placed at the Beginning of Time, is the Enemy; and Humanity, placed at the End of Time, is the Bleach, the Supreme Holocaust, the Purification by the Hot Fire demanded by the Melchisedec Priesthood.

Despite the Immortals' insistence, none of the four realised that the Secret of the Supreme Holocaust had just been revealed to them. The war between the Stone and the Lye seemed too mysterious to them. Only Nasi was able to ask:

-Do you mean the Death of Judgement, the Fiery Death of the Damned?

-No! It is written that the flesh shall not really die, though the body disintegrate in the grave, for all men shall rise again to be judged according to their sins. This will be possible because man exists in many worlds at once, worlds that have been and worlds that have not been: in some of such worlds he is still alive, and in others he may have perished; but from those worlds the body will be taken which will live again, perhaps for a thousand years, perhaps for much longer; some will be condemned, yes, and die definitely; but others will live again upon the earth. It is not, then, to this Death that the



we are talking about. In truth we speak of something much later and conclusive: of the extinction of human consciousness. The End of Humanity will come when the Hot Fire will burn up all the worlds wherein man exists, and the Soul of man, and only the Bleach remains as a witness. At that time we, the Manifestation of Jehovah Satan, will have attained the Perfection of the Soul, the Divine Finality projected from the Beginning. But not so the Gentiles, who will no longer have reason to exist in the worlds, for the object of their creation was to favour our perfection: it will be the Will of the Most High that their ashes cover the Earth so that the Salt Water of Heaven will turn them into rivers of Lye. Hear ye well, Priests of the Most High: the sooner Humanity is calcined, the sooner Perfection will be nearer for you! Turn man into Lye and you will consummate the Supreme Holocaust that the Creator awaits at the End of Time! -explained Bera, displaying remarkable patience.

And he continued speaking, for the four priests had fallen silent.

- It is the Faith in the Final Perfection which the believers in Jehovah Satan will attain through the Priesthood of His Worship, which will work the greatest miracles. If you are able to see the End you will have advanced the End, Perfection will be in you, and the time of the Supreme Holocaust will have come: your unwavering Faith in the Final Perfection, and the Understanding of the End, will bring into the Present the Hot Fire of the End, which will burn the imperfect man; and upon his ashes will then rain the Water and Salt of the Creator; and the Abominable Sign which is on the Stone of Fire will be washed with Lye. Thus it was in Sodom, in Gomorrah, and in ten other cities of the Valley of Siddim, when Birsá and I attained the Final Perfection and established the difference with the imperfection of their peoples, and made them publicly exhibit their own degradation: then the Shekhinah of God descended, and the Angels of God, and the Fire of Heaven fell and reduced those foolish peoples to ashes; and the Water and Salt of God fell thereafter; and Lake Asphaltitis arose,



the Sea of the Bitumen of Judea, the Dead Sea; indeed, the Sea of Lye. That was, Priests, our Holocaust to Jehovah God. But that Sea of Lye was not sufficient to wash away the Sign of the Stone: that mission is reserved for the Chosen People of Jehovah Satan, for His Sacred Race; when They are enthroned over all the Gentile peoples of the Earth, when the whole of Humanity is subject to their World Government, then the time of the Supreme Holocaust will have come. For that you must work ceaselessly, with Faith in the Final Perfection, and effort applied to achieving the Universal Synarchy of the Chosen People! Only the Supreme Holocaust of Mankind by the Priests of the Chosen People will produce the lye that will wash away the Abominable Sign on the Stone of Fire! The members of the Chosen People anoint their heads with ashes as a sign of penitence, but the Priests of the Lamb add holy water to the ashes to create the lye of Jehovah's forgiveness. But nothing will save man from the Holocaust of Fire and the Ash and Lye of Judgment! Jehovah warned millennia ago against false Priests employing the ash of incense to grant false forgiveness: only human ash constitutes the lye that washes away the Abominable Sign. And Jehovah promised to turn to ashes the false Priests who do not respect the necessary Holocaust of Fire! Repeat, Cohens of Israel, the words of Jehovah!

Rabbi Benjamin repeated on the spot.

--A prophet came from Judah to Bethel at the commandment of the LORD, when Yeroboam stood at the altar to burn incense, and began to cry out against the altar at the commandment of the LORD, saying, "Lift up, lift up! Thus speaks the LORD: A son shall be born in the House of David, whose name shall be called Josiah. He shall sacrifice upon you the false priests of the high places, those who burn incense upon you. On you, O altar, he shall burn human bones, and the bones of the false priests. And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the



a sign that it is the LORD who speaks: the altar shall be broken, and the ashes that are on it shall be poured out|| [I Kings, 13:1].

-And that is the ashes of true penitence, the ashes that Job uses when he confesses his faults before Jehovah!

It didn't take more than a gesture, Benjamin, to clarify the appointment:

--Then Job said to the LORD, "I know that you can do all things, and that nothing is impossible for you; it is I who obscure your plans with meaningless reasons. Yes, I have spoken of what I did not understand, of wonders beyond my understanding, of wonders that I do not know. Listen to Me, let Me speak; I will ask you, and you will teach Me. I knew you only by hearsay, but now my eyes see you. Therefore I acknowledge my guilt, I repent in dust and ashes|| [Job, 42].

*-The Red Cow is the Symbol of Humanity consecrated to Jehovah for the Ritual Sacrifice of ash and lye, for the making of lustral water!
Jehovah spoke to Moses and the High Priest Aaron and laid upon them the duty of sacrificing the Red Cow of Mankind to purify the Chosen People, a duty that would be the perpetual law of Israel! Remember it, Cohen!*

--The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them, "Whoever burns the Red Cow shall wash his clothes, and bathe his body in water, and be unclean until evening. A pure Israelite shall gather the ashes of the Red Cow and deposit them outside the camp in a pure place; and they shall be available for the children of Israel to prepare the lustral water. It is a sacrifice for sin. He who gathered the ashes of the Red Cow shall wash his clothes and remain unclean until evening. This shall be a perpetual law for the children of Israel and for the stranger who dwells among them" [Numbers 19:9]. -Benjamin remembered without error.



And with that lustral water, sacred lye from the ash of the Red Cow of Mankind, Jehovah instituted the Ritual of the Purification of the Chosen People! Re-produce the Ritual, Cohen!

--The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them, "For the unclean Israelite, take ashes from the victim burnt in the sin offering, and pour living water over it in a basin. A pure Israelite shall take a hyssop, dip it in the lustral water, and sprinkle the sanctuary of the LORD and all the furniture and persons therein|| [Numbers 19:11]. -Benjamin claimed without hesitation.

-And how does Tamar, who was raped by her brother Amnon, purify herself?

--Tamar put ashes on her head" [II Samuel 13:19], " Benjamin hastened to reply.

-Only lye alone will wash away the Abominable Sign! For that sin there is no forgiveness or redemption possible outside of lye: repentance and penance or the mortification of the garment of sackcloth are not enough! Only after the sprinkling with lustral water, over the ashes, will the penitent put on the garment of sackcloth! Just as the Chosen People did when attacked by the Assyrian Holofernes, whose head was cut off by the Divine Judith!

Benjamin referred to the appointment:

--All the Israelites called on the LORD with fervour and humbled themselves before him with great humility. And all the men of Israel and the women and the children, who dwelt in Jerusalem, fell down before the sanctuary, and covered their heads with ashes, and stood before the Lord in sackcloth. They even covered the Altar with ashes, and they all cried out with one voice with fervour to the Lord|| [Judith, 4:9].

-The Wise Men of Zion, said Jeremiah, have covered their heads with ashes as a sign of penitence!



And then, the Prophet, in the words of Jehovah, speaks to his Bride, Israel Shekinah, and warns her that it will not be easy to remove the stain of Infidelity!

Benjamin promptly recited Jeremiah's metaphor:

--The word of the LORD was addressed to me in these terms. Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying: Thou hast broken thy yoke of old, thou hast broken thy bands, saying, I will not serve, when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou didst lie down as a harlot. I have planted thee as a choice vine, all of it of true seed: how then art thou changed to me into the wild branches of a bastard vine? Though thou wash thyself with nitre, and sprinkle thyself with lye, yet thy guilt is unclean before me," -Oracle of Jehovah Sebahoth|| [Jeremiah 2:20].

-The Lamb also commanded the Chosen People to repent in ashes and sackcloth, but the Gentiles have taken the prevention literally and have supposed that it is a very simple thing to remove the Abominable Sign; but for their impurity, there will be no other purification than to turn those peoples into lye, as we did to wash away the stain of Sodom and Gomorrah! That also the Lamb foretold! Repeat, Priest of the Lamb!

--Woe to you, O Corazain, woe to you, O Bethsaida! For if the same miracles had been done in Tyre and Sidon as in you, they would have been converted long ago, covered with sackcloth and ashes. Therefore, I say to you, on the day of Judgment there will be less rigour for the land of Sodom than for you|| [Matthew, 11,21].

-But once the Lamb is sacrificed, his disciples themselves repent in the lustral water!

-Yes," said the Abbot of Clairvaux. During Lent, before the Resurrection, penitents receive ashes and holy water, and repent of their sins, confess and hope for salvation at the Last Judgment; but they do not understand that the Abominable Sign cannot be washed away in that , in spite of the fact that it is a sign of the abomination.



the Priest says to them, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

Here Bera fell silent, but Birsas added:

-The moment of the triumph of the Created over the Uncreated, of Being over Nothingness, of Light over the Darkness of the Soul, is at hand, and soon Sinarchy will be a reality, and Humanity will be brought to its knees before the Power of the Chosen People! The time will then have come to soften man to force him to exhibit his imperfection and his bestiality, that primordial evil which he cherishes in the depths of his Soul. It will be the time to replace the Serpent of Paradise with the Dragon of Sodom. Remember, Priests, that the Temptation of the Serpent plunges man into sin but leaves his manly function intact; and that the manly man can always rise from moral misery through war and heroism, and fall into the power of the Enemies of Creation! The manly man, the Warrior, the Hero, will delay the realisation of the Final Holocaust: And the massification and equalisation of Humanity to which the Synarchy of the Chosen People will subject it, and the vices and perversions which will flourish therein because of the Temptation of the Serpent, will not suffice to prevent it, if man retains his virility and succeeds in becoming a Warrior and a Hero, if he has the will to rebel against the plans of the White Brotherhood, which is the Hierarchy of Jehovah Elohim.

The Temptation of the Serpent of Paradise can do nothing against that luciferic determination to Be and Exist beyond the Created Beings of The One God: only the Dragon of Sodom has the Power to take away man's manhood; and only We, the Plague, know how to summon him! Answer, Cohens: what is the Emblem of Israel!

Faced with the unexpected question, Benjamin was quick to respond:



-It is written by the prophets that the emblem of Israel is the dove. -The Children of Israel shall go after the LORD: He shall roar like a Lion, and they shall come like a Dove," said Hosea [Hos. 7 and 11], for the LORD had commanded by the mouth of Jeremiah, "Israel, be like the Dove that nests on the edge of the deep" [Jer. 48].

Birsa continued, satisfied with Benjamin's response:

-Never forget, Priests, that the Emblem of Israel is the Dove, for that symbol will signal the End of Time! I have said before that the time of triumph is at hand, that the Synarchy of the Chosen People will soon be established: then the Emblem of Israel will be imposed upon men, and the opportunity for Our intervention will have come. So will it be done, for so the White Brotherhood has decided and Melchisedek, the High Priest, has approved: throughout the world, thousands upon thousands of Priests and supporters of the Cause of Israel will be bannered with its Emblem; only the virile men will resist and seek to escape the social massification by rebellion and war: They will seek to found a New Moral Order based on the Aristocracy of Blood, but they will be drowned in their own blood; and We will answer the cry of those who bear for their sign the Emblem of Israel; and We will release among men the Dragon of Sodom; and man will lose his virility and become soft; even when he can procreate, his will to fight will be weakened by a growing effeminacy which will spread throughout Humanity; Perplexed, many will mistake sodomite morality for a product of high civilisation, but in truth it will happen that the Heart will dominate the Mind and enervate the Will; in the End, all will eventually accept the synarchic way of life; and man will substitute the Eagle for the Dove, War for Peace, heroic Risk for passive Comfort. But that Peace of the Dove which they will enjoy with the Sinarchy of the Chosen People, will be the shortest way to the Final Holocaust wherein they will be sacrificed to Jehovah Satan, to



the Ocean of Bleach into which they will be turned to wash the Abominable Sign in the Stone of Fire! This is the -Pest|| that the Curse of the Most High commits to those who fall outside the Law!

Immediately, as if their minds were strangely synchronised, Bera took up the floor:

-Yea, Priests, let the Synarchy of the Chosen People ensue, let Humanity emband itself with the Emblem of the Dove, and We shall return to bring the Plague of the Final Death, the Hot Fire and the Water and the Salt of Heaven! But We shall be preceded by the Dragon of Sodom, the Herald that shall herald Our coming! You have seen the ends of the process in this Cave: the blood, degraded with the water, and the water, transformed into blood; and after the lake of blood, the Plague of the Final Death, the bitumen of Judea, the black Lye. Tell you, Priests of Israel: What was the first plague that Jehovah sent upon Egypt to enforce the Cause of Israel?

-The water turned to blood! -said Benjamin.

-And what was the last plague, which ensured the triumph of the Chosen People?

-The Plague in the midst of the Gentiles! The Plague offered the lives of the Gentiles to Jehovah as a burnt offering for the coming Glory of Israel! Only those who were stained with the Blood of the Lamb were untouched by the Plague!

-And now answer, you Priests of the Lamb: What will be the plague that the Third Horseman will bring at the End of Time?

-The water will be transformed into Blood! -replied the Abbot of Clairvaux at once.

-And what, the plague of the Fourth Horseman?

-The Plague in the midst of the Gentiles! The Hot Fire will scorch them and the Plague will offer their lives as a holocaust to Jehovah for the coming Glory of the



New Israel and the coming of the New Jerusalem! Only those who have the blood of the Lamb and bear the symbol of the Dove will be untouched by the Plague!

-And what will come after the Plague, what will be the last plague?

-The complete and total destruction of Humanity in a Sea of Sulphur and Fire! Only the New Israel and the Heavenly Jerusalem will survive the Supreme Final Holocaust! -the Abbot of Clairvaux, undoubtedly inspired by the speech of the Immortals, maintained categorically.

Bera clarified the meaning to be attributed to those answers taken from the Apocalypse of St. John.

-Reflect, Priests, on these Prophecies and what you have seen us do in this Cave: from there will emerge the Secret of the Supreme Holocaust. The Water, the Blood, the Hot Fire, the Death, the Lye, the Plague, Us: behold the Mystery. How the Curse of Jehovah God, which is our weakness, can be our Strength. If you have understood us, you will make your own the words with which Jeremiah condemns those who turn away from the Law: they represent our Strength over the Gentiles!

--The captivity, the famine, the sword, the pestilence, and the plague, shall befall those who are outside the Law," said the Lord [Jer. 15]. -Rabbi Benjamin's face beamed as he repeated the four forms of Jehovah's Curse, for he now found the Prophet's words full of new meaning.

-And then you will know," continued Bera imperturbably. What our weakness is in truth, a mystery which the Gentiles must never understand.

And Benjamin added the following words of Jeremiah:

--The LORD warned the people of Israel of four kinds of evil, against which they would be weak: Beware of the sword, for it may kill you; Beware of the dogs, for they may tear you to pieces; Beware of the birds, for they may kill you; Beware of the birds, for they may tear you to pieces; Beware of the sword, for they may kill you; Beware of the dogs, for they may tear you to pieces; Beware of the dogs, for they may tear you to pieces.



Beware of the wild beasts, for they may devour you; beware of the wild beasts, for they will destroy you" [Jer. 15].

-So it is written! -said Bera.

-And against that weakness we have four remedies, which the Gentiles must never know," Birsa completed:

*Against the Sword, the Peace of Gold
Against the Dogs, the Illusion of Rage
Against the Birds, the Illusion of Earth
Against the Beasts, the Illusion of Heaven.*



Tsadkiel could barely stand, never in his life had he been wounded in such a way. The wings on his right side were broken and bleeding, one of them was brutally severed. He had lost three of his fingers on his right hand and his face was gushing blood like a string of scarlet pearls. He had no eye, in its place was an empty, bloody socket. His armour was terribly dented and his leg was almost broken. He was leaning on his sword, cracked and chipped, and used it as a crutch keep his balance. Not far from him, Hélixabor lay on the ground, making pitiful efforts to get up. Both his legs had been amputated and half the skin on his body was gone, in its place was a pile of burnt, smouldering flesh. Despite the terrible pain, the druid Hélixabor had anaesthetised himself with cursed magic and was already working on regenerating his legs, and in a few minutes he would be walking again. A few metres away, in a still smoking, gigantic crater, Qhawaq's body was still smoking and writhing. All his humanity was burnt away, the cartilage of his body had melted away, leaving him stiff as a statue. Yet that piece of fried flesh was still alive. Tsadkiel, limping and wincing, began to move towards the crater. Everything around him was in ashes, even the ruins of Erks, whose vitrified traces told of a monstrous nuclear combat between divine forces.

The archangel dragged his body, invoking unspeakable curses against Qhawaq who, on the ground and in agony, laughed as if he was having the time of his life. Since he had no vocal cords, he began to speak, using his wraith to vibrate the air around him.



-They'll never forget this beating," said the fallen man, still laughing. They'll their big boss that there's no room for him here.

-Shut up, shut up, you bastard! -Tsadkiel shouted, still tormented by the hyperborean ice that corroded his veins. His blood had burned cold and he was slowly being driven into madness. You, like the dog Nimrod, will always be remembered for your defeat.

-I have done my part, and now I will go to my ancestors," Qhawaq repeated, ready to die.

-NO! -shouted the archangel and took a crooked, painful stride towards the dying man.

Tsadkiel invoked the power of the *Dorje* and extended Qhawaq's life, not out of pity, but in pursuit of his suffering. He took his sword and cut off Qhawaq's arms and legs, then opened his ribs and began to pull out his guts, but without tearing them out. Qhawaq lived, but his mind was no longer in his body, he no longer felt any pain. In his infinite fury, the archangel castrated the man, then turned his mutilated torso over and began to sodomise him, but the dying man felt nothing, and this indifference to the monstrosities Tsadkiel was infuriating the archangel even more.

-Don't try so hard," Qhawaq muttered, already giving up on life.
I have... freed myself.

Finally the warrior expired, his soul fell like an anvil on the spectre of Tsadkiel, shattering his shoulder and crushing his broken wings even more. Then the Spirit left Qhawaq's body and before it went to Valhalla, it glared at the archangel. The archangel panicked almost immediately, and



began to crawl as fast as he could away from the corpse. Qhawaq had time for one last act of war, however. He concentrated all his remaining wraith and entered Tsadkiel's cursed body. He began to writhe, spinning around as if on fire. Then his entire body began to freeze, the archangel's choked screams echoing throughout the valley, and the more he froze the more agonised he became. From all his writhing he finally began to break down and had no choice but to leave that body and flee desperately to *Chang Shambala*, but the Spirit of Qhawaq would not let him go; it began to chase him and then they were both lost in the infinite.

The only one breathing at the moment was Hexabor who, after conjuring the Powers of Matter, had already regenerated his legs, but he could not make his burns disappear. His skin had healed but his body had become a monstrosity. Meanwhile Bálaham, who had barely made it out of the mountain that collapsed on top of him, was already approaching his master. Most of his bones were broken and he had reverted to his human form, but he could still walk. As he climbed up the hill and saw the scorched valley, he realised that the battle that had been fought there surpassed even his own power. He looked down and saw his master:

-My master Héxabor! -he shouted.

The druid turned, looked at Bálaham and began to walk towards him. When the demon saw him approaching, he fell to the ground, exhausted from exertion and pain. As he was overtaken by Héxabor and felt the healing powers of his master, Bálaham abandoned himself to the safety of the druid's arms who summoned him.

-My master, what has happened in this cursed place?

-The unthinkable, Bálaham. They, the Hyperboreans, are more dangerous than we thought. Right now Tsadkiel has fallen, and though one of them has also been defeated, there are still twelve and perhaps more. I will not forgive Golab for allowing these cursed ones to flee. He let the enemy go and he will pay for that.



Meanwhile, at Oricalco Fortress, Knupay and Valya had already organised the refugees and began distributing the available food and water. Children were crying, the moaning of the wounded could be heard, and the groans of women who had to bury their sons, husbands or fathers. "Should Qhawaq really surrender the city and allow all this?" thought Rhupay; but he never questioned his grandfather's decisions, he trusted them even if he did not understand them. Then he had a feeling that weakened him and he lost his balance. At the sight of it, Valya approached him and held his arm.

-Are you feeling well? -she asked, concerned.



Rhupay silently shook his head and said:

-My grandfather...

Valya felt a hammer pressing down on her chest.

-Is something wrong with him?

-I don't know, but I felt his presence. Something, like an anguish.

All the way to the Fortress they had felt tremors, noting the unusual approach of the moon and all that it might represent. Rhupay and Valya knew it was due to the battle Qhawaq was having with the archangel and the druid. However, the sudden stillness had distressed the young warriors.

-I must go," said Rhupay, Valya looked at him and hugged him.

-Don't delay.

-I won't, you go on organising people, I'll see where things stand.

Striding with long strides, Rhupay soon reached the scene of the combat, but there was nothing left but ashes and vitrified sand. The warrior felt a shiver run down his spine and then began to scan with his wraith for Qhawaq's presence, but there was no sign of the old man. Then a small greenish spark of cold fire landed on Rhupay's shoulder, as if it were a fairy. The flame gave off a message that went straight to the warrior's mind:

-Rhupay, Valya. The cycle of incarnations is over for me. I am finally on my way to the abode of my ancestors, this very night I will be dining in Valhalla. You two have been my greatest pride, true children to me.



And I assure you that your power will soon be able to defy the laws of the universe. I want you to care for each other, to love each other and to fight together. Help the other Sentinels to defeat the enemy in front of us, protect our heritage. Return to Bolivia and build a base of liberation in your lands, never let the flame of truth be extinguished in you. I will watch over you from my home village and I will always pray to Wiracocha for both of you. Now everything is in your hands, the Bow of Artemis is the ultimate weapon that will bring you victory. Use it wisely. I have nothing more to say but that I will always carry you in my Spirit, my children, my children.

That was all, Qhawaq Yupanki's posthumous message contained in a small plasma flame left over from the monstrous fray. The old man had made that message before going into combat and he knew perfectly well that he was going to die that very day, his clairvoyance had allowed him to know it long years ago. Rhupay could not believe it, he was finally gone and the loneliness he experienced swept over him; he felt more orphaned than ever. He looked up at the sky and gave a cry that echoed to the farthest corners of the mountain. He knelt to the ground, taking a handful of ashes in his hands and wept bitterly:

-Oh grandfather, what am I supposed to do now?

Wracked with grief, Rhupay began to walk the perimeter where Erks once stood, but there was nothing there; all that was left of the magnificent citadel was a heap of ash and sand. The fertile valley that fed its people was completely charred and irradiated by the nuclear catastrophe that had occurred there. Even the mountain looked sad, with its snows sliding down its slopes like tears from the earth. The utter destruction of Erks had dug a





But then he remembered something really important, a teaching his grandfather had passed down to him as a child: *"Never forget, Rhupay, that the Hyperborean peoples must never forget the principle of occupation of territory. The land and all that we extract from it does not belong to us. Our houses, our clothes, our food, even our own bodies do not belong to us. Believing in the ownership of land, in the ownership of something, anything, means losing alertness and succumbing to the power of the illusion of life."*

Erks was nothing but ashes, all that Rhupay loved in that city was gone, but his grandfather's words comforted his being. The rocks of Erks, its wooden beams, the stones of its streets, the glass of its windows, the trees that surrounded it, nothing belonged to the Erkians; all of it was taken by force from the enemy and Rhupay knew he should not grieve for having lost something that was never his. The only thing that belonged to him at that moment was his own Spirit, and that was enough for him. His grandfather would want it that way. Then Rhupay rubbed the tears from his face and smiled, he was happy for Qhawaq for he would soon be eating with the gods; he was a lucky man.

Rhupay walked a little further through the ashes and then found a stone that had not been pulverised during the battle. Immediately the boy knew that the stone was part of the huge main tower. Rhupay blew the dust off and cleaned it carefully. Then he oriented himself with the sky and the mountain to find the location where the tower was. When he found it he placed the stone there and sighed deeply:

-You are right, grandfather," he said quietly, "the land does not belong to us, we occupy it by force. Today I shall lay this stone on which we will take up the



place that the enemy wanted to take away from us. This will be the foundation stone for a new city of Erks. One day soon we will refound it and make it more splendid and stronger than ever. We will prepare for a new invasion and we will never cease to be vigilant. I swear to you that your legend will be remembered as long as our people breathe under the sky. Now go with Wiracocha, we will not forget you here. Strength and Honour, Qhawaq Yupanki.



In one of the many dimensions in which Earth exists, the entire planet has been desolated by a cataclysm that knocked it out of orbit. That planet Earth revolves between Mars and the asteroid belt that lies before Jupiter. There, perpetual ice has taken over the world and the radiation from the gigantic Jupiter irradiated the Earth for millennia until it turned the planet into a radioactive rock.

Its surface is generally very monotonous, but occasionally it is buffeted by hurricanes that sweep over everything in their path. Rarely, however, is the stillness of the planet disturbed by anything other than the winds. The presence of living beings alien to the nature of that irradiated Earth was one of those rare events that disturbed the peace. In the plains and hills the foundations of the world were shaking, strong tremors were shaking the planet. Voices of war were rising up from hidden places in inhospitable caves, in deep grottoes never furrowed by living things. But still, war had come to this frozen world. The clash of claws against swords could be heard everywhere, in the dry ice deserts and on the frozen seas.

Rodrigo and the other Sentinels were in a desperate struggle against giant energy serpents, summoned by a powerful warrior. The battle had been catastrophic for the planet, the plasma emanations of the Sentinels and the mysterious warrior had shifted the axis of rotation and the tectonic plates were collapsing. The young chosen ones of Artemis were tired, every time they exterminated a serpent, two more were killed.



appeared to take their place. Finally fatigue took over and the fight was being won by the strange warrior and her energy beasts. On one side of the chamber that was the scene of the fight, Oscar was helping Jhoanna to her feet. Gabriel and Rocio had shielded themselves behind a strong plasma barrier, repelling the snakes' attacks but unable to fight back. Meanwhile Rodrigo, Diana and Edwin were the only ones still fighting vehemently. Then, suddenly, the woman raised her arm and, as if she had given some kind of command, her beasts stopped attacking the exhausted Sentinels.

-You fight well, warriors," said the woman.

-You fucking bitch! -exclaimed Rodrigo, totally enraged, "now you're going to see how well we fight.

Taking advantage of the fact that the snakes had stopped attacking, Rodrigo swung his sword at the unknown gladiator. She had only to extend her arm and open her palm towards her attacker to parry his lunge. It was as if a telekinetic barrier prevented him from approaching her.

-You are too impetuous and too young.

Rodrigo was suspended in the air, but as soon as the woman closed her palm the boy fell to the ground.

-I attest that you have passed this test," said the stranger, adding: "What kind of event threw you into this world, why have you left Erks in search of this wasteland?"



-We are..." Edwin started to get up from the ground, helping himself with his sword, "we are Sentinels, we told you that. We are looking for an object in this place.

-Object?

-Yes," said Diana. It's an Arc.

-A arch -mumbled the warrior, with expression of deep concentration. So they've come for...

With outstretched arm and open palm, the woman launched a plasma beam into the centre of the chamber. A brief tremor shook the entire cave and then, as if some kind of arcane mechanism was pushing it, a platform of rock began to emerge from the floor. Everyone's eyes sparkled at the imminent presence of this relic. The Bow was a magnificent piece of bone whose appearance was more akin to ivory. In the design, at the intermediate axial points, it bore two barbs at each end, on which were chiselled two symbols: one was a letter "V" and the other a crescent moon pierced by an arrow. The bowstring appeared to silver, like a burnished thread. The object was resting on a kind of altar that held it together with several arrows arranged on the altar like a quiver.

-Yes, that's what we're looking for! -said Diana almost in tears of emotion.

-You have come for the Bow of Artemis then, which of you is the one to claim it?

Diana stood up, gripped her sword firmly by the handle and took a couple of forward.

-I claim it.



It was impressive to see her talking to this woman. While Diana still looked childlike, the woman in front of her, though exactly the same, was mature in appearance.

-And who are you, child?

-Dianara, the Moon Bear; daughter of Morana.

Diana's defiant and insolent attitude was something she had rarely seen in the thousands of years of life. Few humans had that icy fire in their eyes, or that strength of spirit, but to the warrior, Diana was still too immature.

-Very well then, since it is you who claim it, know that you must first beat me in a duel. If you beat me you will take the Bow to your world and claim it as the true bearer. But if I win, I will give you a quick and icy death.

-I accept the challenge.

All eyes turned to Diana in surprise and concern. If seven of them, fighting together, had not been able to defeat this woman, Diana alone had even less chance.

-Diana, no," Rodrigo interjected, "You don't have to do this, if we fight together we can take the Arc.

-Rodrigo is right," said Jhoanna, "not by yourself....

-Of course I can! -Diana interrupted. She showed an aura of total confidence, without a shadow of . She, the Diana who was in that moment in that



chamber, claiming the Bow of Artemis and about to duel for it, was not the same girl who several months earlier left La Paz.

The woman smiled, she too sensed this mutation in Diana. The challenging Sentinel looked at her adversary and almost by an ineffable act of supreme will, Diana ceased to be Diana, she became directly Dianara, thus entering into a hyperborean trance of her own volition. Her eyes began to glow with a violet radiance and her hair was slowly beginning to lighten, floating in the air as if submerged under water.

-Your *name, warrior*," Dianara demanded of the woman, pointing the tip of her sword at her. She looked at her and responded firmly and sternly, her eyes on Diana.

-I am Artemis, goddess of the moon and owner of the bow you claim.

The sensation of the name had sent shivers down the spine of all the expeditionaries. But it was impossible to deny that they were indeed before the goddess incarnate herself. Her power, her actions, the nature of her spectre, all indicated that she was indeed Artemis. Between Dianara and Artemis there was only the apparent difference of time, one was young Diana and the other, old Diana. A few months ago, neither of them could have even imagined that they would be facing something like this, a totally surreal and senseless situation. But at that moment any doubts about what they were doing were completely dispelled. Rodrigo smiled inwardly, a little embarrassed and at the same time surprised at himself, he had called a goddess a "fucking bitch". Then all his anxieties turned to Diana, he wanted to trust her to overcome the challenge, but if she failed it would mean not only that all would be lost, but also that all would be lost.



and that the Arc would never return to the Kuklov clan, but that he would lose Diana irretrievably; the thought haunted him.

The two combatants began to examine each other. A few minutes before, no one would have suspected that Diana would stand a chance against an opponent like Artemis, but after they saw her enter a hyperborean trance of her own volition, it had been proven that she was the closest to defeating the goddess incarnate. None of them, not even the strongest, Edwin, could have stood a chance against Artemis, but at that moment Diana turned any prognosis upside down.

The fight began before the others were aware of it. Artemis had rolled Dianara so that her body was slammed against the ceiling of the chamber. The blow had stunned her and she could barely move aside as the goddess drove her fist into her. The blow had been so powerful that the entire chamber began to collapse, after such a titanic struggle it was finally giving way. Then Artemis, seeing the Arc at risk, created a plasma barrier that stopped the vault from collapsing. Everyone had been encapsulated within the barrier. Dianara took advantage of the distraction and began to thrust her sword in search of her opponent's body. But she was faster; no matter how hard Dianara wielded her weapon of death at Artemis, the goddess would never be hit.

On the ground, the Sentinels watched as the two suspended combatants fought to the death. Rocio remembered her best friend, the girl she had grown up with, and could hardly believe that this warrior was the same person. Gabriel, who at all times followed with his senses the trail of electromagnetism given off by everyone present, to the best way of



a shark, he sensed in Diana the same unfamiliarity as everyone else; she was not the same one who had comforted him that day in the pool only a year ago. Edwin and Jhoanna also found it hard to believe what they were seeing, they had always thought of Diana as a fragile and defenceless being, but that fight showed that little Diana was no longer a harmless creature. Even for Oscar it was hard to accept that the one who had been like his little sister now had the coldness to try to assassinate a goddess.

Artemis' body was surrounded by a powerful plasma shield that enveloped her like armour. Dianara's sword could not penetrate that shield so she opted for plasma attacks. A powerful halo of light in the shape of a bear enveloped her, then she raised her arm and a glow surrounded it; she threw her light with all her might and the goddess only covered herself with her forearms, allowing herself to be hit. A terrible explosion followed the attack, everyone thought Artemis had finally been defeated, but when the steam and smoke dissipated the goddess was still there, suspended in the air and intact. Dianara roared, wrapped her fists in plasma and began to attack Artemis. The goddess had no choice but to step aside and cover herself from only the most accurate blows, she was much faster than Dianara, so much so that for most of the fight she had allowed herself to be overtaken by her opponent's attacks in order to measure her power. When she sensed that she would not be defeated by her, she placed her palm on Dianara's abdomen and Dianara was ejected. She pierced Artemis' plasma barrier, pierced three hundred metres of volcanic basalt, and pierced dry ice. Dianara tried to grab hold of anything, but she kept being pushed as if a black hole was sucking her humanity in. Finally she pierced the air, the atmosphere and ended up somewhere in outer space.



His body was drifting, silence was all around him. In space there is no air through which acoustic waves can be transmitted, so there is no noise. His plasma barrier was weakening. As soon as his spectrum disappeared, his body would be at the mercy of the cold, the lack of oxygen, the cosmic rays and the radiation from space. He would die within seconds. The vitreous humour in her eyes would freeze first, then her lungs would freeze, and before she suffocated to death, her heart would freeze and she would have a heart attack. Diana never expected to die like this, she could only imagine Rodrigo, remember him, remember everything she had lived through in almost 4000 years of continuous incarnations and deaths. She thought of Morana, her guardian. No, she didn't want to die yet, she couldn't give up after being so close. She raised her wraith as high as she could and turned her gaze towards a celestial point in the sky that was, unmistakably, the Earth from which she had been ejected. She propelled herself with a shot of plasma and quickly began to approach the icy world.

On a frozen plain, total stillness reigned with no other ruler. Then, like a comet, a light fell from the sky and generated an almost nuclear explosion with its impact. It was Dianara. It pierced outer space, pierced the atmosphere, punctured 75 kilometres of basalt, rock, magma and fire, and burrowed deep into the planet until it hit the barrier of Artemis. When the goddess felt the outer impact against her barrier, she wrapped her body in energy to protect herself from the impact. The plasma bell supporting the roof came apart and the impending collapse would bury the remaining Sentinels still lying in the chamber. But that didn't happen, a violet plasma barrier once again supported the ceiling, Dianara had generated it. When Artemis saw all this, she could only smile.



-I have known others like you: Nimrod, Ninurta, Kora, Hector, Alexander of Macedon, Genghis Khan, Napoleon, Hitler; but none of them have done what you have done today. You are no worse or better than them, you are just different. I declare myself defeated by you.

Confusion reigned among the Sentinels, confusion mixed with joy. Dianara herself could not believe what she had heard.

-However," Artemis added, "you still need to train and get stronger. The enemy you have is as strong, if not stronger, than I am. I could shatter your body with a single thought and extinguish your Spirit's existence with a breath of my wraith, the enemy would do far worse to you than erase your existence and you could do nothing to defend yourself. Yet you are fighting the same demon as I am, so I would not be able to harm my allies. Dianara, take the Bow and prepare to fight. See you soon, Sentinels of Artemis; my mighty Sentinels. *Honour et mortis*.

The goddess said and suddenly disappeared. Without her adversary, Diana dropped her guard and lost her hyperborean trance state, then her plasma barrier weakened and vanished, leaving the Sentinels at the mercy of the collapsing ceiling.

-We've got to get out of here! -Edwin shouted at the deafening noise of the collapse.



Diana couldn't even keep consciousness, she had expended so much energy that she fainted and fell to the ground. Rodrigo carried her on his shoulders and started to run. Jhoanna took the bow, the arrows and together with Oscar and the others also began to leave the enclosure, but there was no exit, the only one that existed was blocked by rocks and debris.

-Everyone raise your spectres now! -Edwin commanded and then fired a massive blast of plasma at the ceiling. It soared into the air and began to drill through the rock. The others followed without missing a beat.

The network of tunnels leading to the chamber had filled with magma: the entire planet was shuddering. The only reason the Earth had not turned into asteroids was because of the presence of Artemis, but with its disappearance also disappeared the only source of gravity that could hold the planet together. Cataclysmic eruptions ravaged the entire world.

-How will we get back! -asked Oscar, shouting.

-We must return to the portal that brought us here! -replied Rocío.

The Sentinels ran with huge strides, dodging lava bombs and rivers of magma. But when they reached the place where the portal was, it no longer existed; in its place was a lake of lava. It was at that moment that the boys felt despair. The planet was going to explode at any moment and their only escape route was gone. They had the Arc, but it would do them no good.



⇒ EL ARCO DE ARTEMISA ⇒





Σ

(Sig)

Tenth Mystery, The Legend of the Twin Wolves

Taken from the Franco-Norman Mythology, adapted from the Amethyst Circle.

In a distant age there was a werewolf born of a single spirit that was split. The mother of both, a mortal woman named Ingwen, took pity on the chained Fenrir (a giant wolf) and fed him every day, then one day she gave herself to the giant wolf and became pregnant. When Odin learned that Ingwen was to give birth, he had her taken to Agartha, and a demi-god known as Alberich was called to do Odin's bidding.

Alberich, transformed into a raven, searched the earth for Ingwen, guided only by the cries of pain of the woman in labour. He found her in a wolf cave in the custody of the pack's matriarch, so Alberich turned into a wolf and warned the pack of Odin's orders. The matriarch refused to let Alberich take Ingwen and fought with him until finally the demi-god defeated the she-wolf by biting her windpipe and causing her death. The other wolves, seeing this, devoured Ingwen, leaving only the womb with the baby writhing inside. Alberich extracted her from the crushed viscera and turned back into a raven to take flight for Asgard. But as he flew he was overtaken by Loki who snatched the pouch from him and took it to Mimir's well in the land of the giants. There, Loki asked Mimir, the watcher of the well and master of time, to divide the wolf-child, for he was the son of Fenrir and his wolf-man power would shake the foundations of the Earth the day Fenrir was freed from his chains. The giant Mimir agreed to split the child but in return asked Loki for one of his eyes. The god agreed to the sacrifice in exchange for the favour asked of Mimir and Mimir, using the magic of time, split the spirit of the child into two halves; he then created a twin body using the matrix of time and deposited one of the child's halves into that body. Loki,





With both children in his arms, he returned to the Midgard of men and left one of them on the west side of the world and the other on the east side.

Meanwhile Alberich returned to Valhalla and told Odin that Loki had snatched the womb with the child inside it. Enraged, Odin sought out Loki and tracked him to the land of giants where he questioned Mimir about Loki's whereabouts, who told him what he had done with the child but did not know Loki's fate. Odin left the land of giants cursing Mimir, but as he was master of time he could place Odin's curse on the Fates of Fate. He used Loki's eye to contain his curse and cast it into the limbo of infinity, where no giant or god could find it, only a mortal could find it. When Odin realised this he decided to go to Midgard to search for guardians.

Odin went to the wolf cave where Ingwen took refuge until the day of her death. Turned into a wolf, he asked the pack to show him where remains of the slain matriarch lay. The wolves, utterly helpless before Odin's immense will, led the god to the dead body of the great she-wolf. Odin blew on the body and the matriarch came back to life. He then asked the pack, in return for returning the matriarch to them, to be on the lookout for Loki's eye somewhere, in which case they would immediately summon him and never let any human near him. The herd acceded to Odin's wishes as an act of gratitude.

With his will done in Midgard, the world of men, Odin returned to Valhalla. For days and nights he thought of a way to find the lost twins that Loki was hiding. No matter how many times Odin called out to Loki, Loki ignored his calls. Then Odin decided to call one of his sons, Thor, and asked him to find Loki,



wherever was, and brought him into his presence. Thus Thor, transformed into lightning and thunder, began to roam the universe in search of Loki.

Then Odin called his wolves, Gery and Freky:

Geri and Freki

nourishes, the famous

warrior, the glorious

Heriaföðr.

and only with wine,

the god of arms, Odin,

lives forever

Both divine wolves came to their master's call and he told them of the lost children, sons of the Fenrir. He ordered them to look for them and to recognise them, Odin wrote the names of the two children on the columns that support the whole of Midgard. One of the twins he called Lycanon, the werewolf. And the other child he called Vairon, the wolf made man. Freky was ordered to seek out Lycanon, guide him, protect him, instruct him and prepare him for Ragnarok. Gery was ordered to seek out Vairon, guide him, protect him, instruct him and prepare him for Ragnarok. So both wolves, Gery and Freky, descended to Midgard and began their quest.

When Freky came to the place where the Sun was born, the rising of the world, he found Lycanon, recognised him, and knew that the boy, who had grown to manhood, was a denizen of Asgard. Then Freky wept for Lycanon's cruel fate, and knew that from Asgard a brave woman had gone in search of her husband, that man divided and incarnated in Midgard by Mimir, the master of time, at Loki's command. Thus, and for hundreds of ages and lifetimes, Freky guarded Lycanon and treated his incarnated wife, a victim of incarnation amnesia, as Lycanon's only way out of the world of



men. And he called the wife of Lycanon by name, Dianara; and he blessed her and prayed to Odin for her blessing.

When Gery reached the place where the sun was setting, the west of the world, he found Vairon, recognised him too, and knew that the boy, who had grown to manhood, was a denizen of Asgard. Then Gery wept for Vairon's cruel fate, and knew that from Asgard a brave woman had gone in search of her husband, that man divided and incarnated in Midgard by Mimir, the master of time, at Loki's command. Thus, and for hundreds of ages and lifetimes, Gery guarded Vairon and treated his incarnated wife, a victim of the amnesia of incarnation, as Vairon's only way out of the world of men. And he called Vairon's wife by name, Dianara; and he blessed her and prayed to Odin for her blessing.

And so, when the two twins meet somewhere in time and in the world, they will fight to the death, and the one who loses will mingle his Spirit with that of his twin, possess his wife carnally, and return to Asgard with her. Only then will the twin wolves cease to be twins, they will become the mighty Spirit of a superior wolf, son of the Fenrir. When that day comes Odin will turn his gaze upon the son of the Fenrir and give him a new name, one that only Gery and Freky and the wolf-packs and wolf-men of Midgard can hear without being lost in terror. Thus, with the icy mettle of their canid condition, the twins turned into a superior wolf will return to face Loki and Mimir, and to destroy time. And the brave men and women of Midgard will heed their call and die gloriously to live in Valhalla.



City of La Paz, Miraflores area, an abandoned house that showed nothing extraordinary, at least not on the outside, contained inside it the magma of demons that boiled with fury. Inside, that house was a veritable cavern of hell. There, Golab lay asleep in his magma chrysalis. He was waiting for his body to take its final form, but the fire brought with it a vision. Golab saw Diana, passed out, and a lot of lava near her.

-No, I don't want this to happen to you now.

The chrysalis began to glow with a reddish glow and then Golab began to manipulate the fire, he wanted Diana to be saved. He wanted her, he wanted her body, he wanted to be with her. Golab, demon Lord of the Pit, had lost everything that made him a powerful demon the day he gave himself to a fiery passion for a hyperborean woman. It was in one of their many incarnations, and he saw something in Dianara that he had seen in no one else. But he always tried to induce himself into self-annihilation so as not to fall into sin. Still he couldn't help it, he couldn't forget. He could not forget her.

-You will come back, Dianara, you will come back to me. And this time you will give me more pleasure than anyone has ever felt. You are my pleasure, you are the exquisite and sweet of Creation. Come to me again.

Slowly the chrysalis broke apart, two vampiric wings emerged from it, then claws and horns were seen sprouting from within. The fire roared with





The rage in that cave of hell and the final form of Golab was stabilising. Finally that terrible devil, the terrifying Lord of the Pit, Golab, had awakened from his hibernation and the city of La Paz was completely defenceless in his presence. The demon smiled inwardly and spread his wings to dry, soon he would leave that house and take his place in the final attack against the Hyperboreans in Bolivia.

MBOLIVIANOSM



It was around 3:32 p.m. on 7 March 1978. On the premises of the Bolivian Army General Staff, located in the Miraflores area of the city of La Paz, there was unusual nervousness about the presence of an object whose temporary residence in the military barracks had been marked by a series of misfortunes. The privates, during the long nights on guard duty, said that the object was cursed and that for this reason misfortune had befallen the entire Republic of Bolivia. The country, engulfed in a series of coups, repression and corruption scandals, had descended into perennial poverty, sponsored by political tension between the United States and the Soviet Union. With the world split in two halves, all the nations of the Southern Cone had entered into unprecedented recession and misery. Bolivia was no exception and that year in particular was a grim one for protests. The outbreak of nuclear war seemed closer than ever and dictatorships in Latin America had been guaranteed by the Judaic Synarchy of Zion in the USA.



The United States of America to prevent the Judeo-Communist Soviets from taking over the continent and polarising it against American interests. The power machine of the Synarchy was in motion and the two warring sides, belonging to one in reality, had control of the species consciousness of every human being.

On that day, the head of state was scheduled to visit the military observation laboratories. Several American and European scientists had arrived in the country bringing with them expensive state-of-the-art equipment, developed with technology seized from the Nazis. The purpose of the scientific board was to analyse and determine the main characteristics of the mysterious object, forcibly obtained from a bourgeois family in the city of La Paz. Ivan Kuklova, the son of a Russian subject who arrived Bolivia at the beginning of the 20th century, had the object in his possession as an inheritance from long generations, and after the military intervention at his home, the object was confiscated for study. During the seizure, Ivan Kuklova was shot for resisting arrest and his wife, Briseida Kuklova, was taken prisoner. The reason for the seizure was a direct order from a higher echelon of the Pentagon in the United States, an instruction that the Bolivian head of state, sponsored by the White House, could not disobey.

During the nearly ten months of study, the country, the continent, and almost the entire planet, were struck by terrible tragedies. It was easy for the superstitious to suppose that the object had poured some kind of curse on mankind for having been taken from its original custodians.

It was already 3:46 p.m. and the Head of State's vehicle was entering the main gate of the General Staff. In the car park, several officers

approached him and gave him a series of reports on which decisions had to be made, but the Chief's mind was totally detached from the . The reason for his visit to the General Staff was an important appointment with an English military officer who was to report to the English Court, which was funding and responsible for the project, on the progress of his experiments. The Chief was not happy to be accountable to an Englishman, but his resentment of the relic was far greater than his pride.

Several high-ranking officers were waiting in the Courtyard of Honour, along with two American officers and an English colonel. They all gave the military salute to the Bolivian Head of State, the British officer approached him.

-It is a pleasure to meet you in person, General Banzer," said the Anglo, "I am Colonel Isaak Richards of the Second Division of Her Majesty's Royal Air Force," Banzer smiled; trying to be polite, though it was only a formality.

-Nice to meet you," they shook hands, "I hope you were well treated.

-Of course," Richards replied,

The two soldiers led the small group, followed by the Americans and the Bolivians, who were discussing the military history of their respective countries. They stopped near one of the firing ranges. A Bolivian lieutenant-colonel crouched down, beat the earth with his hand, and then a lock became visible. The military man took out a key, inserted it and turned the lock twice; a small metal plate opened like a door, there was a computer keyboard and a monochrome monitor turned on. General Banzer handed a small piece of paper to his officer, then one of the Americans handed him another piece of paper; both contained





codes that the Bolivian immediately typed on the keyboard. When he pressed the "enter" key, a slight vibration could be felt by everyone in the polygon. Little by little, the vibration increased until it became a slight but noticeable tremor. General Banzer gave the order to pull back and then a large hatch began to rise above ground level. Behind the hatch, a series of searchlights illuminated a long, all-metal corridor; the floor, ceiling and walls were covered with a thick layer of lead.

This was the first time Colonel Richards had visited the "Artemis" project facilities. The information he received from London indicated that the project was installed in Bolivia to avoid the possible consequences of moving the object. The information they had about it was, until then, scarce; but the British government approved a loan, through the World Bank in favour of the Bolivian state, to obtain the necessary technology and evaluate the relic. A team of US scientists and military personnel were then contracted by the Bolivian government to build scientific research facilities on the grounds of the Estado Mayor.

Using technology totally alien to what any Bolivian of the time would have imagined, the US team dug a very deep network of tunnels and chambers under the entire Miraflores area, 5 kilometres deep. The entrance to this network of tunnels was in the General Staff, through which Banzer, Richards and his officers gained access. The long metal corridor, full of cables and pipes all the way down, led to a lift.



The descent took the group of soldiers through a dark tunnel. They then boarded a capsule whose interior was similar to that of a luxury train carriage. They entered, the capsule pressurised and began to descend into the bowels of the earth. The eight-hour journey down became an uncomfortable silence that was occasionally interrupted by the hacking cough or snoring of one of the passengers. At the end of the eight-hour transfer, they found themselves in a chamber where several men in special suits were waiting for them. They gave the new arrivals a brief check-up and then led them through a tunnel just like the one they found on the surface. They walked along the path of the searchlights, guided by the men in antibacterial suits, to a huge metal hatch. General Banzer pressed a button and a keypad unfolded in front of him. He punched in a few numbers and the heavy door opened.

Behind that hatch the soldiers found an army of men and women in white coats walking back and forth. The chamber must have been forty metres high within a perimeter of seven hundred square metres. Surrounding the walls, there were several rooms, made of metal, from which men and women were going in and out incessantly. Here several Tiwanaku monoliths, uprooted from their original site, stood erect and connected to a series of wires and devices while more men in white coats took readings and conducted experiments with their test tubes.

-They've built quite an impressive facility," Richards praised.

-We didn't make them," Banzer replied. This whole place was made by American engineers and workers. They never shared with us the secret of how they did it; though by now we don't care how they did it.



-There are technologies that elude our understanding, General.

-Yeah, yeah, and all that stuff about Roswell and whatnot," Banzer replied reluctantly. Look, I don't really care that these gringos dug a network of tunnels under my city using alien technology, all I care about is that they leave quickly and let me rule in peace.

-Your motivations are too earthly," said Richards, smiling mockingly. In our day there are men who accumulate weapons, money and something akin to power; but the real power, General, is in understanding the purpose for which this artefact, the one you study in this facility, was made. This is not just a piece of archaeology, but one of most fascinating rediscoveries in history. Forget about finding Atlantis or El Dorado. This object, the Arch, General, is everything.

Banzer didn't care about that, he just wanted the relic to be returned to its custodian and to pretend it never existed. When he saw it for the first time and fixed his eyes on the green gem embedded in the middle of it, a shiver ran through his body. He could sense that he was facing an object of mass destruction, a power he could neither understand nor control.

When the object was confiscated, the bearer, Briseida Kuklova, was taken to the Regime's interrogation room and then tortured to talk; but she would not say anything the paramilitaries wanted to hear. She only claimed that the object was a relic of Russia. At the mere mention of the word "Russia", the government turned all their suspicions on her, believing her to be a Soviet spy. She denied any involvement with the Bolsheviks and did not fail to accuse the Bolivian Government and the Western powers as being made of the same stuff as the Communist powers. Such claims were seditious, but



the existence of the relic suggested that the woman's conduct was far beyond a political conspiracy. About the object, the woman said nothing more than that it was a divine weapon, a testimony to the pact between the men of Blood and the Loyal Gods. Finally she was locked up in a cell within the premises of the "Artemis" project, named after the the woman called the relic from the beginning: "The Bow of Artemis".

The party crossed the large, artificially constructed cavernous environment until they reached a huge metal cabin that reached the dome of the cavern and was built into the rocky wall. The soldiers entered and found themselves in an environment filled with large machines and scientists. One of them approached the visitors, his eyes were tiny behind thick, bottle-bottomed glasses; his lips were tight and the numerous wrinkles on his pale skin, as well as his sparse grey hair, betrayed his advanced age.

-Welcome, gentlemen," greeted the man in terribly stilted Spanish, which was heavily tinged with a thick Italian accent. We were expecting your visit.

-Please, Dr Cortillari," Banzer interjected, "make your explanations quick.

-Of course, follow me, follow me, follow me.

The old scientist also looked anxious, almost excited; and it was not only he who was nervous, all the scientists in the cabin were excited. The group approached a large glass cylinder completely filled with liquid. Inside it rested the relic. It was connected to several wires and every so often bubbles rose from the base of the cylinder to the top.



upper. It was as if the Arc was breathing that liquid and exhaling some gas from its surface.

-You have arrived at a great moment," said Dr. Cortiliari. A few hours ago the object began to, how shall I say... to show changes.

-Tell us about the Arc at the outset," Richards demanded with a coolness bordering on indifference. Tell us everything you know about it, and then tell us what's new.

-Well, it really is a fascinating and almost incomprehensible object," replied the scientist as he pulled some paper from a drawer at the side of the room. The material the bow is made of is bone, but not just any bone, our instruments and studies estimate it to be 408.5 million years old. This means that the material is Devonian and is probably of some kind of animal origin, from a primitive arthropod such as a bronto-scorpio or a surviving Cambrian anomalocaris.

Gradually, the interest of those present grew. Cortiliari brought out drawings of giant reeds and extinct animals and showed them to the group.

-The bow itself has a chalky chitin pith and is coated with a natural alloy of carbon fibre. On top of the carbon is another coating of some kind of primitive amethyst , and finally a mineral varnish. That particular mineral is the most fascinating thing, it does not correspond to any element of the periodic table. The Arc was literally not made on Earth, or at least not by human hands.

There was a slight silence as the military tried to believe what they were hearing, but to no avail.



-This relic... this fossil, has incredible resistance to the harshest environmental conditions. The strength and flexibility of this arc is magnificent, stress and pressure tests indicate that it is capable of withstanding extreme pressures of up to 10,000 earth masses per cubic centimetre. That's 80,000,000,000,000 times more than reinforced titanium. It is also temperature resistant - it can withstand up to 5,000 C° without melting and freeze to -260 C° without cracking. No doubt the combination of materials from which the bow is made was treated by an arduous process of alien re-engineering beyond our comprehension - amazement began to take hold of the military who could hardly believe the conclusions of the science. But the most impressive thing is not the material of the bow, but the emerald embedded in it.

-Is it an emerald? -Richards asked.

-That's right, and if our Nazi friends have developed the technology we seized well, their dating devices and instruments tell us that the gemstone is as old as the universe. Spectrometric tests performed on Nazi artefacts tell us that the stone is between

13.5 and 15.5 billion years old.

-That's impossible," Richards interjected. No offence, Doctor, but your conclusions are crazier than Jules Verne's books.

-Moreover," Banzer added, "he is taking for granted theories that have not been proven to date.

-Gentlemen, our calculations are accurate. Besides, the age of gemstone is not the most unusual enigma it holds. There are still other incredible elements that we are trying to understand.

-Explain yourself," said Banzer.

-The gem and the bow form a single unit, both are fused; but it seems that they were not always fused. Apparently the gem was separated



of the arch at some point in the historical past. We trawled through the oldest myths and legends and, with the help of Mrs. Kuklova's poor testimony, we have been able to trace the bow back to the second millennium BC.

The scientist began to pull out several photographs from another drawer of the drawer, these contained images of various hieroglyphs, geoglyphs and petroglyphs.

-The bow was separated from the gem during the era of King Nimrod of Babylon. According to our studies of the Assyrian stele known as Kadurru of Kushusu, kept in the Salta Museum in Argentina, the gem was used during the construction of the Tower of Babel and, after its destruction at the hands of the Hebrew god Jehovah, it was definitively sealed to the bow. It seems that King Nimrod received the bow from a Kassite Princess known as Isa. She, in turn, obtained it from an archmage of some lost Slavic tribe, and that wizard may have gotten it from some kind of time-travelling aliens. On the other hand, the gem seems to have been in the hands of the Babylonian Kassites since they became an empire. Perhaps that stone is also of alien origin, but we can't be sure.

-It must be a joke," Richards mumbled.

-And that's not all," the doctor continued, using the photographs to help him through his presentation. There's more to this gem than meets the eye. Ever since we abducted it, it's been sending out some kind of microwave signals, the signals get lost inside the planet and come back totally distorted. We received television signals from the future or from some parallel reality. We saw images of two huge buildings in New York collapsing, an earthquake in Japan ending in a nuclear disaster, several wars in the Middle East, the fall of the Soviet Union, the



colonisation of Mars and even an image of an indigenous president in the Republic of Bolivia who is then grotesquely assassinated.

-Are you insinuating that this stone is sending us images of the future? -said Banzer, evidently annoyed by his comment about Bolivia's political future.

-It is more than that, the gem is not a screen of the future, nor does it perform time travel. What the gem seems to do is a rearrangement of time. It shows us an infinite number of possibilities of parallel worlds. It seems that with every choice we make, we literally create a world and history bifurcates. We create one Earth where we made a choice and a second where we didn't, that's one of the secrets of the universe. Imagine millions of people making millions of choices over thousands of years and creating infinite Earths. Some are so similar that we would spend a lifetime looking for a difference without finding it, others so different that they defy comprehension. Einstein, Neper and Plank gave us the Physics and Mathematics to help us understand this web of situations and the relic, the Artemis Arc, gives us the proof that the Theory of Relativity is in fact a law that supersedes Newtonian Physics.

-That could mean that the relic may have military uses," Richards interjected.

-It is possible," Cortilliari replied, "but this Bow... this magnificent weapon cannot be used by anyone but its custodians. The gem and the bone have a strange property, they recognise their bearer by touch and emit a powerful electric shock to anyone who tries to use it. Only Madame Kuklova was able to touch it without suffering the electric shocks. We had to seal the bow in an insulating solution in order to study it.

-You'll have to find a way to make use of it, Doctor," Richards replied.



-That's what we've been trying to do, but it's difficult to study this object, which brings me to the novelty," he took off his glasses, wiped them on his white apron and put them back on. For the last day or two, the arc has been changing temperature slightly, even absorbing oxygen and converting it to hydrogen.

-Does that thing breathe? -asked Banzer.

-Not exactly, General. But we assume it's performing some kind of metabolism. It's difficult to explain, but the object's behaviour looks like that of a living thing.

-Enough," interrupted the General. I have heard all I wanted to know. I'm not interested in this object or your outrageous explanations, doctor. This is nothing but a stupid fantasy, and I am not going to waste any more of my time on it. Gentlemen, I leave you. Go on arguing about all your nonsense all you like, I must get back to my duties.

General Banzer was beginning to withdraw, but Richards called out to him.

-Wait, General, are you not interested in what we do with the object?

-Do what you want, just leave my administration alone.

It was almost impossible for General Banzer to conceive of all that Dr. Cortilliani had told him, but he knew that the arch had some kind of influence over his government. Banzer was not a superstitious man, but the facts surrounding the relic began to defy his understanding. From the moment the arch passed into the hands of the army, his administration began to face terrible setbacks. No doubt Banzer was trying to be guided by logical reasoning, but the strange setbacks to his government seemed to be the product of some curse rather than a series of collateral and unfortunate events.



As soon as the General arrived at his residence, he took a shower, had dinner with his wife and set out to sleep, trying to forget everything. The hours of the night wore away, the city slept, and then a roar woke up a large part of the population. It was almost three in the morning when the head of state's phone began to ring. Banzer woke heavily and answered.

-Banzer speaks.

-General, you are urgently needed at the General Staff!

-Who is this?

-Colonel Damián Pacheco.

The Colonel's name was familiar to Banzer, the officer he had left in charge of the General Staff since he assumed the presidency after the coup d'état.

-Colonel, it's three o'clock in the morning, could you explain to me what's going on?

-There was an explosion at the General Staff, General. You must come and see this.

A suspicion crossed Banzer's mind, he thought of the relic and all that Dr Cortilliani had told him, and he felt fear. Immediately his mind conjured up the Arch of Artemis and he assumed that something related to it had happened.

Anxious, the General changed and left the presidential residence for the Army General Staff. When he arrived, he noticed that there were several ambulances carrying the wounded. The scene was horrific, indeed, it was obvious that something had exploded as several soldiers were carried on stretchers, exhibiting deadly haemorrhages. The soldiers had begun to sweat blood from the moment of the explosion and much of the ground was covered in a swollen, bloody mass.



The General searched for the officers on duty, but they had bled to death. He could barely find a military policeman who at the moment of the explosion was far enough away to save his life. The soldier's testimony shocked government agents and General Banzer himself. He said that a beam of violet light shot out from a firing range, the range where the secret entrance to the underground research facilities was located, only Banzer and his closest collaborators knew of its existence. The General immediately ran to the range. A purplish vapour with a strong coppery smell and an immeasurable cold enveloped the perimeter. The explosion had indeed occurred in the secret facility, the entrance completely collapsed by the eruption of violet light.

-General, General! -came a private running up.

-What's going on," Banzer asked.

-Permission to speak.

-Continue!

-There is a survivor in the stables!

Without wasting a second, the General, together with a squad of military policemen, followed the private. The horses in the stables were all dead, drowned in their own blood and with frozen legs. Sitting inside a stable, the survivor was in a foetal position hugging something. It was the Bow of Artemis she held in her arms. She was Briseida Kuklova who had somehow managed to escape from her cell.

-What is the meaning of this! -Banzer shouted, and the woman looked at him out of the corner of her eye, keeping her eye on the bow.



-The bow is my husband's inheritance," Kuklova replied. He and his ancestors were its custodians. Now my little daughter, Mary, it falls to her to look after it," the woman slowly turned her head and stared at General Banzer, her gaze as fierce as that of an unleashed beast. This bow belongs to the Kuklov family, not to you.

-General, shall we arrest her? -asked one of the military policemen accompanying Banzer. The General looked at the woman and felt a sense of abandonment that shook him to his core.

-It was a mistake to bring that object here," Banzer muttered. This must never fall into the hands of anyone else.

The military policemen looked on in bewilderment at what was happening. The chaos in the General Staff had spread like a plague. The sound of ambulances and people shouting instructions could be heard everywhere, as if it were a natural sound. The smell of blood had spread throughout the area and polluted the minds of those who came to the wounded. Instantly the General could sense the horror that the soldiers had experienced during the desolate moments of the explosion. He could almost see the eruption of violet light and its evil glow bleeding out all the scientists and military personnel in the underground facility. He could not imagine what kind of power the bow contained, nor what enigmatic twists and turns had brought it back into Briseida Kuklova's hands; all he knew was that he wanted the object out of her management, out of her staff, out of her life.

*-Go away, madam," said the General to the surprise of all present.
. That arc has already given me too many headaches. I don't want to hear any more about it.*



Briseida Kuklova was also shocked. Her husband had died defending the arch from the obsessive military; her daughter had seen the family tragedy that the dictatorship of Hugo Banzer Suarez brought to her home; and suddenly, the General repented of confiscating the arch and released her without further conditions. She could not trust the dictator's words.

-I'll leave, and if anyone comes near me, I'll use this bow.

-No one is going to stop you, Mrs. Kuklova. Just take this bow off my property.

Slowly Briseida began to retreat, looked at the soldiers accompanying the General with great suspicion, hugged the bow tightly, and advanced out of the stables.

-Mrs. Kuklova," Banzer held her back. Before you go, I want to know one thing," the woman stared at the General, almost expecting some imposition from the dictator. Whose bow are you taking care of, what kind of curse is on it?

-The bow is not cursed, General, human beings are. The Kuklov guard the bow because it is the only hope we have of freedom from the world of the Powers of Matter. If we protect it, it is so that His servants will not lay a finger on it.

-Whose servants, Mrs. Kuklova?

Briseida ducked her head and gave a pitiful, almost mocking smile.

-Of the Synarchy, you. The servants of Jehovah-Satan.



It was early in the morning of 19 August 2000. In the Sorata camp, several weeks had passed without news of the expedition and the municipality was already protesting about the damage to its tourist industry. No one had entered or left the San Pedro grotto for weeks. The news of Erks' fall had put all the soldiers on alert, but the constant inertia of their situation was making them intensely fatigued. The quiet was stressing the military more and more each day, especially Major Orlando Cuellar.

In the camp there was a symbolic funeral ceremony for the death of Qhawaq Yupanki. The flag was raised, a funeral march was played, the National Anthem was sung and a rune was buried in the apacheta as a symbol of a Bolivian warrior and wise man like Qhawaq. In the cloister of Santo Domingo, the Dominican Order together with Ursus de la Vega and the parents of the boys said a prayer for the liberation of Qhawaq from the world. The news was sad for all.

Orlando Cuellar was shaving with his old razor, his reflection in the mirror seemed distant, as if the man reflected was someone else. Only a year earlier he had felt like a military man with a future in the Armed Forces, but when he was recruited into the Inti Squadron it was made very clear to him that he would never be a Commanding General. However, that no longer mattered to him; he had discovered much greater things since becoming Squadron Commander. Still, no amount of satisfaction could assuage his anguish for his children. He knew that no one who had entered the grotto of San Pedro had ever



returned. If they did not arrive that week, he would start sending out search teams.

-My Major! -a sergeant entered, squared his shoulders and gave a military salute.

-What's going on," Cuellar replied.

-There is activity in the grotto.

Cuellar rushed out to the lookout post. The instruments detected a strong source of static and magnetic energy emanating from the San Pedro grotto, which led him to make the decision to send an investigation team.

The Major himself led the scouting into the grotto to the insertion point, a natural pool that was the highest point explored. They searched several tunnels for the anomaly, trying to find the source. But there seemed to be nothing there; until a soldier started calling out to everyone.

-This way, this way!

Orlando Cuellar's relief and joy were incomparable when he saw what his scout found - it was the boys! They were dirty, full of black soot and with torn clothes, but they were fine. Aldrick's wraith trail had helped them find their way out after a mysterious portal had opened in that world that was about to explode. Diana held the precious Bow in her hands.



The Major's sons ran straight into his arms as soon as they found him and began to recount their adventure as they left the grotto behind. They told him of their descent and of the things they had found in the depths of the earth. They told him that Aldrick and Rowena had stayed behind to save their lives, and Cuellar was sorry to hear of such sacrifices. Then they told him all that they had experienced on that parallel Earth, a story that the Major found too hard to believe; he thought that the boys had been delirious from hunger and thirst. They were lost for weeks in the labyrinthine cavernous bed of Sorata. But the tangible fact that attested to the veracity of their tale was the ubiquitous existence of the Arch of Artemis. The object was far more impressive than Cuellar and his men had supposed.

When they came out of the grotto, the boys were immediately attended to by the camp paramedics. They had to go to a hospital, but first aid was essential. The medics were surprised that all the patients had was dehydration and hunger. However, their clothes and armour bore witness to the hecatombs they had suffered. Torn to shreds, the rags were burnt, cut, filled with volcanic rock, irradiated by a powerful radiation source and totally discoloured.

The Arc was immediately taken to safety by Cuellar's men. Meanwhile the boys ate as if they had not eaten for years. They were seen to be acting normally, the dark bowels of the abyss had not affected their sanity in the least. They were laughing, playing, joking and behaving like normal teenagers; they just weren't normal. They had descended hundreds of metres underground, seen monstrous creatures of the lithosphere, stood at the end of a planet, almost



die from a volcanic cataclysm, met a goddess personally and survived, they were not normal. Yet they acted as if they were, as if they had never been through it all. That puzzled Cuellar deeply.

-It's amazing," said the Major as he watched his sons and their friends eat, "they have lost two excellent Hyperborean mentors, but that hasn't spoiled their appetites.

-Dad," Diana interjected, speaking with her mouth full, "after all we've been through, eating is one of the best things that ever happened to us.

-I think I understand," Cuellar didn't really understand anything.

-Now that we have the Arc," Rodrigo added, still eating, "we have everything in our favour.

-Qhawaq will be happy when he sees it," said Rocío. He will be surprised by everything we will tell him.

-I want to get to Erks now," said Jhoanna. I want everyone to see what we've achieved.

Cuellar felt a deep sense of regret as he listened to the boys, they did not know the tragedy that had occurred and it was hard for him to break the sad news to them.

-Guys, regarding Erks...

Suddenly the camp alarm began to sound. The Major got up immediately.

-Don't get out of here!



Cuellar's men had already taken up their defensive positions and were aiming at a young blond man who looked like a stray tourist. The major turned to him:

-The passage is closed to tourists!

The man smiled, evidently not seeming to understand a word Spanish, the Major felt fatigued.

-Pelotudo de mierda," Cuellar mumbled, "maybe he doesn't even speak Spanish? Interpreter!

A soldier spoke to the stranger in English, French and German, but he still did not seem to understand.

-We'll have to arrest him," said the soldier to the Major.

-These lame tourists don't even respect authority," Cuellar replied. Get him out of here, he didn't do anything, so it would be silly to arrest him, just a waste of time.

-Mr. Orlando Cuellar," said the stranger, "Do you think I came here for tourism?"

The Major turned to the man and then a looming suspicion crossed his mind:

-Identify yourself.

The stranger's expression had changed from confusion to mockery. The fellow's back began to bulge more and more, he seemed to be mutating in some monstrous way and then several wings came out of his back, three pairs of wings. It was an archangel whose hair was tinged with white and his body, covered in frail scout's clothing, was draped in a



silver armour after a blaze of white light enveloped him. Cuellar drew his pistol and pointed it straight at his head.

-Where is the Bow of Artemis! -demanded the archangel.

-You fucking asshole, and you still think I'm going to tell you," Cuellar retorted and fired at him. But the bullet was halfway through, losing speed until it simply fell to the ground.

-I will not repeat myself, humans. Where is the Arch of Artemis.

-Fire, fire, fire, fire! -Cuellar ordered. But just as they were about to shoot him, a series of explosions engulfed the camp.

Several helicopters were arriving, bombing the camp. Anti-aircraft fire started immediately, shooting down two of them. The Archangel had also taken flight. The order to fire on it became immediate and all of Cuellar's men emptied their magazines on the flyer, but the bullets bounced off its wings. They fired at it with anti-aircraft ammunition, but the winged being seemed invulnerable to any attack by the men.

-You will never learn," said the archangel.

With flap of its wings, a powerful cyclone pushed Cuellar's men away. Then the sky began to be covered with transport helicopters, full of US-flagged Marines. Only then did Major Cuellar realise that he was facing the biggest invasion Bolivia had ever endured. With lightning speed he resolved his situation and spoke to one of the soldiers at his side.

-Go to the General Staff, brief them and tell them we are at war.



The messenger left without wasting a second. Meanwhile, the invading soldiers began to disembark. Cuellar ordered his men to dig in and repel the advance. But every time they had an American in their sights, the archangel flew overhead, generating more wind. The invaders began to fire, wiping out a good number of Bolivian soldiers. For a moment Cuellar wondered where his sons and friends were - they were desperately needed at that moment.

The entrenched Bolivians could not hold off the invaders; they had the archangel and the US Marines on top of them. But at that moment, as they lost their position, the water of the spring that covers the grotto of San Pedro began to move, to vibrate, taking on different shapes. Soon the figures defined themselves in a clear anthropomorphic silhouette made of water and then continued to change in size until they became the gigantic figures of two animals totally unknown in the terrestrial fauna. The two beasts, half scales and half water, had greenish glow in their eyes and emanated lapis lazuli glows from their joints, their gigantic jaws emitted blue-green vapours. Their whole body seemed to be made of energy. One of them resembled a salamander with fins on its back while the other was like some kind of gorilla. They certainly looked like sea beasts whose translucence denoted their energetic nature.

Major Cuellar could barely understand what was happening, but he sensed that the water elementals had come to his rescue. He ordered his men to retreat to the camp trench and not to open fire on the water monsters. He wanted to save his men, for this had already



exceeded their military capacity. There was no way to help the water beasts or defend against such an enemy.

Seeing the water elementals, the Americans unloaded all their weaponry on them. Helicopters launched missiles and rockets at them, but the creatures seemed completely invulnerable. The one in the shape of a salamander darted to the surface of the grotto's lagoon and a huge wave swept over the invading Marines. The other beast, which looked like a gorilla, leapt up and shot down the helicopters firing at it. Then it rammed into the white archangel and tore off a wing. The mutilation prevented him from keeping his balance in the air and he fell into the jungle like a meteorite. The shockwave knocked down trees and tents.

When the dust cleared Cuellar saw that the water beasts had vanished and in their place, suspended in mid-air, were two young boys, a male and a female. Both wore medieval-looking burnished armour, draped over what looked like a black leotard over their bodies.

-Hey, *relatives*, are you all right down there? -asked the male, who was the youngest.

-Yes," replied the Cuellar.

-Hey, Major," the girl interjected. Take your men to a safe place.

Hearing them speak, Cuellar knew they were both Cambas, or at least from some region of eastern Bolivia. Although he had never heard of any Centinela from Santa Cruz, Beni or Pando. He had always thought that there should be Sentinels from the Amazon. The appearance of these two young men



hyperborean warriors corroborated his suspicion. Yet his biggest question remained unanswered: Where were his children and his friends?

Wasting no more time, the Major went to the tent where he had left them. It was foolish to think that after all the noise and winds they had not realised that something serious was going on. But when he reached the tent he discovered the reason why the Sentinels had not come to him, nor to his men when they in trouble. He picked up a small pistol hidden in the holster on his chest and fired without a second thought.



(Baar)

Eleventh Mystery, The Grail

Taken from the Hyperborean Wisdom in Felipe Moyano's version, adapted by the Amethyst Circle.

The Hyperborean Wisdom affirms that the Grail is a Stone, a Crystal, a Gem; of this there can be no doubt. But it is not an earthly Stone; of this there can be no doubt either. If it is not an earthly stone, then what is its origin? The Hyperborean Wisdom says that it comes from Venus, but it does not say that this is its origin. It can be assumed, therefore, in the absence of any other precision, that the Lords of Venus brought it to Earth from that planet. But the "Lords of Venus" do not originate from Venus but from Hyperborea, "original centre" which does not belong to the material Universe and whose "Blood Remembrance" has led many a sleeping man to identify it erroneously with a "Nordic continent" or "vanished polar". According to the Hyperborean Wisdom, the Grail was brought into the Solar System by the Gods immediately after they broke through the Venus Gate to settle in K'Taagar, or Valhalla. Be that as it may, there is another specific aspect to bear in mind: the Grail is a Gem of the utmost importance to the Gods, to such an extent that They are unwilling to give it up or lose it. Out of comradeship and solidarity with sleeping men, they have placed it in the material World; but at the end of Time, the Grail will be recovered and returned to its place of Origin.

What is the reason for this unmeasured interest in preserving the mysterious Gem? Because it has been momentarily removed from the most beautiful jewel ever seen in the universe of The One, from that jewel which no one would be able to imitate in this or any other world; neither by the master goldsmiths nor the



Neither the Builder Devas nor the Planetary, Solar or Galactic Angels, etc. For the Graal is a Crown Gem of Navutan, he who is purer than the purest of the Loyal Gods, the only one who can speak face to face with the unknowable. Navutan is the one who, being in hell, is beyond hell. Being able to remain in Hyperborea, in the light of the unknowable, Navutan has wished to come to the rescue of the captive Spirits by making the incomprehensible sacrifice of His own self-captivity. He has installed Himself as the Black Sun of the Spirit, "illuminating" charismatically, from "behind" Venus, through the intermediary of the Paraclete, directly into the blood of sleeping men.

How has a Gem of the gallant Lord sullied Himself by falling here, to Earth, one of the foulest sewers of the Seven Hells? Because He has willed it so. Navutan has given the Grail to men as a pledge of their commitment, of their sacrifice, and as an irrefutable material proof of the Divine Origin of the Spirit.

The Grail is, in this sense, a reflection of the Divine Origin, which is to guide like a beacon the wavering course of the Rebel Spirits who choose to leave the bondage of Jehovah-Satan.

First and foremost, the Grail is linked to the incarnation of the Spirits, and its significance must first be sought in relation to that Mystery. This is explained by the fact that millions of years ago, when the Traitor Siddhas allied themselves with the Demiurge Jehovah-Satan to flesh out the Hyperborean Spirits, Navutan gave up his Gem so that the Truth of Divine Origin could be seen with mortal eyes. Thus the Grail, placed in the World as proof of the Divine Origin of Spirit, gives meaning to Hyperborean lineages on Earth.



Through him the blood of men, even the most tremendous confusion, will always claim its extraterrestrial inheritance.

The presence of the Grail, in principle, prevents the Enemy from denying hyperborean ancestry. But just as the Grail gives a cosmic meaning to the history of man, connecting him with the eternal race of the origins, and divinises the hyperborean lineages of the Earth, so also for the Demiurge, because of the presence of the Grail, these lineages become a "cause of scandal" and the object of persecution and scorn, of punishment and pain. The Divine Hyperborean lineages will be, from the Grail onwards, heretical lineages "condemned for ever" - a manvantara - by Jehovah-Satan. The Grail has come to awaken undesirable memories, to valorise man's past. It will then be the memory and the past that will be most attacked, and the erasure of its influence will, to a large extent, be the aim of the Synarchic Strategy.

Man's chief crime has been to deny the supremacy of "God", that is, of the earthly Demiurge Jehovah-Satan, and to rebel against his bondage. But man is a miserable being, immersed in a Hell of illusion in which he is foolishly "at ease", with no possibility of breaking the spell himself. If he has denied the Demiurge and "rebelled" it has been by virtue of an external agent, but what "thing" in the World can be capable of awakening man, of opening his eyes to the forgotten divinity? "If such a thing exists," the Demons will say, "it is the most abominable object of material Creation". But that "thing", that "abominable object", is not of this World, and it is what the captive Spirit-man has "eaten". This "green fruit", which looks like an emerald and which later on will be called Graal, is a food which nourishes with the primordial gnosis; that is to say, with the knowledge of the Truth of the origins. Through the Graal, the forbidden fruit par excellence, man will know that he is eternal, that he possesses a Spirit, and that he has a Spirit.



Divine, chained to matter, coming from a world that is impossible to imagine from Hell on earth, but for which he feels nostalgia and to which he wishes to return.

By the Graal man has remembered!

Here is their first crime. To remember the Divine Origin will henceforth be a terrible sin, and those who have committed it will have to pay for it; that is the Will of the Demiurge, the "Law of Jehovah-Satan". It will be his Ministers, the Demons of Chang Shambhala, who will be in charge of executing the sentence, collecting the punishment in a currency called pain and suffering. The instrument will be, naturally, incarnation, repeated a thousand times in transmigrations "controlled" by the "Law" of Karma, cynically declaring that pain and suffering are "for the good" of the Spirits, "to further their evolution". If "evil" lies in the blood then it will be weakened and rendered impure by poisoning it with the fear of sin. The result will be strategic confusion of the Spirit and complete darkness about man's past. "There is nothing in the past worthy of rescue," sensible people will assert for millennia, in chorus with the Demons of the Brotherhood. Theology, and even Mythology, will speak of man's evil in the language of the Demiurge: "sin", "fall" and "punishment". Science, on the other, will show us a more discouraging picture: it will "prove", by means of fossil filth, that man is descended from a protosimian called "hominid", that is, from that wretched and despicable animal man who was the ancestor of the sleeping man. Science" has brought man's past to its most dramatic degradation by linking him "evolutionarily" with reptiles and worms. For modern man there will be no more Divine ancestors, but apes and trilobites. It really takes a superhuman hatred to want man to humiliate himself in such a sad way.



But we must put aside the sad, we must be optimistic, why look to the past, says the Synarchy with the Voice of Science and Theology, if man is "something projected into the future"? There is nothing worthy of respect in the past. Some primitive marine crustaceans sunk in the mud trying to gain the terrestrial environment, driven by "evolution"; millions of years later, some apes decide to become men: driven again by the miraculous "law of evolution" they become bipedal, make tools, communicate by talking, lose their hair and enter History; and then comes the History of man: documents, Civilisation, Culture. And in History, "evolution" continues relentlessly, now converted into a more inflexible law called dialectics. The mistakes of mankind, wars, intolerance, fascism, are "errors"; the successes, peace, democracy, the UN, the Sabin vaccine, are "successes". From the struggle between successes and mistakes always emerges a higher stage, a benefit for future humanity, confirming the evolutionary or progressive trend. Is this progressive trend in history not all the good that can be expected from the past?

One must be optimistic; one must look to the future; all good things, all achievements, are there; the theologian assures us that after a future judgement, the gates of paradise will be opened to the good. The Rosicrucians, Freemasons and other theosophists, place in the future the moment when, "spiritual evolution" being partially completed, man identifies himself with his monad, that is, with his "Divine Archetype," and joins the Cosmic Hierarchies dependent upon the Demiurge. Even the materialists, atheists or scientismists, present a happy picture of the future: they show us a perfect society, without hunger or disease, where a technocratic and dehumanised man reigns happily over legions of androids and robots.



The Hyperborean Wisdom never goes into detail about an obvious fact: an attempt has been made to erase man's past, disconnecting him from his hyperborean roots. This past has not been totally erased, but, in compensation, a metaphysical rift has been created between man and his Divine ancestors, so that, at present, a gulf separates him from the primordial memories; a gulf that has a name: "confusion". At the same time, for this sinister purpose, man has been "projected into the future", a euphemism used to describe the illusion of progress from which the members of modern Civilisations suffer. Such "illusion" is culturally generated by powerful "force ideas", skilfully employed as a strategic weapon. The "sense of history", "historical acceleration", "scientific progress", "education", "civilisation versus barbarism", etc. Thus conditioned, people blindly believe in the future, look only to it, and even fatalists, who foresee a "black future", admit that if an unforeseeable exception or a miracle offers a "way out" for civilisation, it is in the "future" anyway. In any case, the past is the subject of general indifference.

This "plain fact" represents, no doubt, an important triumph for the Synarchy; but a triumph which is not final. The highest expression of the Synarchic Strategy is applied in erasing the past, in obscuring the memory of the Divine Origin, and that such an attack is made in reaction to the Gnostic action of the Graal. But the Grail is not only a forbidden fruit, consumed by man in the remote times immediately following his enslavement, the Grail is a reality that will remain in the world as long as the last Hyperborean Spirit remains captive. By the Grail it is always possible for man to awaken and remember.



But to enjoy its gnosis, it is essential to understand that the Grail, as a reflection of Origin, shines in the blood from the past. Its light comes backwards from the sense of time, and therefore no one who has succumbed to the Synarchic Strategy will be able to receive its influence. A powerful cultural Strategy "projects man into the future" and attempts to erase his past and confuse his memories.

By the Graal man "commits the crime" of awakening; he has sinned, and the penalty is exacted in the currency of pain and suffering, by incarnation and the law of Karma. Those who watch over the Law, and who are most offended by the hyperborean remembrance of awakened men, are the "guardian angels", that is, the Demons of Chang Shambala and his White Brotherhood.



After organising the survivors of Erks in the Orichalcum Fortress, Rhupay and Valya returned to the valley to check if there was anything to salvage; they found nothing, not a pebble. Finally, they made a symbolic tomb for Qhawaq Yupanki and left a new Marshal in charge of Erks, his mission was to rebuild the citadel and keep the people of the Fortress safe. For that important mission, the warriors of the First Culture decided to put a veteran warrior in charge, his name: Broud Zimer. His natural leadership and experience in multiple wars would greatly help the Erikians to rise up. The two then left the world of Erks and, along the Path of the Gods, set course for the Land of the Fourth Vertical, where Rodrigo Lycanon and the others would be searching for the Bow of Artemis.

The first thing they encountered on leaving the Way of the Gods was the permanent guard camp set up by the Inti Squadron. The news of Erks' fall was quickly spread to the relevant bodies by the soldiers guarding the entrance. Then Rhupay and Valya, having learned of the location of Rodrigo and the others, set off for Sorata.

As they travelled, they met other travellers who, like them, were also heading for the same place. They were members of the mysterious Fourth Cult, trained by Arika of Turdes. Its members, Berkana, Akinos and Vairon, were no strangers to Rhupay and Valya; but their journey was the first time they had been able to speak at length. Arika's group hardly ever left their training area and were never seen, so much so that they were so close to each other.



members of the Third Cultivation and the Second Cultivation did not even know of the existence of a fourth. To Rodrigo and the others, the other three Sentinels missing to complete the twelve would be people who had not yet discovered their role in the world; therefore, they did not suspect that these three remaining Sentinels were not only awake, but also trained. Rhupay and Valya were pleased to meet Vairon and the warriors of his company. They recounted to them the terrible events at Erks and the five concluded that they could only defeat the enemy by fighting together.

As they travelled, Berkana and Akinos told their story to Rhupay and Valya. Indeed, both siblings were born in Santa Cruz de la Sierra and had grown up in both Beni and Santa Cruz. At that time Akinos was known as Marco Suarez Petrakys while Berkana was called Silvana Suarez Petrakys. On their mother's side, both were related a very old lineage of Greek warriors, famous for their naval victories, who set sail in search of vestiges of Atlantis. Although they did not find the sunken island of the Atlanteans, they claimed that they had at least found the Trident of Poseidon; they claimed that the god of the seas had given them the relic in person on the premise of protecting it from the Phoenician Sinarchy. This lineage was related to the Pelasgian Greeks and later to the inhabitants of the island of Aegina in the Saronic Gulf. They were called the Myrmidons of Poseidon by the warriors of Sparta and were admired for their skill in naval warfare, fishing and sea activity.

After the fall of Greece to the Romans in 146 BC, the Myrmidons of Poseidon, also called Myrmidons of Neptune by the Romans, again left the continent, this time heading south.



By the first century AD the Myrmidons had traded in all sorts of objects and had waged war in strange and distant places. As men of the sea, they never stayed in one place for long and always set sail when the situation no longer favoured them. On their flagship they carried with them their most important relic: the Trident of Poseidon. For the Myrmidons the Trident had such power that victory was guaranteed as long as they had the grace of Poseidon and the seas.

During the 16th century, the Myrmidons of Poseidon had become related to major Atlantic pirate fleets and became pirates themselves. One of their most important admirals, Stelion Sokratis, became the lover of the famous pirate Mary Read. However, that passionate love turned to unrestrained hatred when the daring pirate stole the Trident of Poseidon from the Myrmidons. This caused an all-out war between Read's privateers and the Myrmidons. When Read died, the Trident of Poseidon was gone. The god of the sea therefore cursed the Myrmidons by depriving them of the sea. Neither they nor their descendants would return to the oceans until the Trident was recovered. Thus the Myrmidons were defeated by troops of the French Fleet and then taken to the Parisian dungeons. There the Reveillere of Paris pleaded for the Myrmidons and took them to their country of origin: Greece. But the Greeks, aware of the danger the Myrmidons posed at sea, relegated them to live in the deepest part of the continent, far from the coast, in the city of Yiannitsa. Years later, at the beginning of the 20th century, they were taken to Hungary on the orders of the Italian conqueror Benito Mussolini, but they did not last long there. Taken by plane and transported as far away from the sea as possible, the Myrmidons were taken by American troops to the United States at the end of World War II. There they lived almost as prisoners



in the state of Mississippi until, fleeing American abuse, they stowed away on a plane to the city of La Paz. Once again Mediterranean, the few surviving Myrmidons were mysteriously granted citizenship and safe conduct by orders of the General Staff. They were then taken to Santa Cruz under the surname Petrakys and from then on the Myrmidons worked as farmers in the departments of the Bolivian Amazon.

For as long as the Myrmidon Petrakys had lived in the Amazon, their lives had been relatively peaceful until they remembered, through blood memories, the reason for their curse. Then the Family Mission was actualised in the blood of the Petrakys and they began to search the shores to find out what could have happened to Poseidon's Trident. Berkana and Akinos' parents were totally focused on it when the terrible priest Moses appeared and sacrificed their parents during a ritual. Arika of Turdes saved the children of the sacrificed couple, both were still very young, but the wise gypsy Gorgon knew that their blood was pure and that they came from a hyperborean lineage. She raised and trained them even without knowing that the brothers were part of the chosen twelve, the Sentinels of Artemis.

-And that's how we got here," Akinos concluded.

-It strikes me that a Reveillere from Paris saved the lives of your people, even more so considering that you are now fighting alongside a Reveillere.

-Well, kinsman," Berkana interjected; "it's good to have the hard-headed *kollinga* Alan Vairon with us.

-And by the way," interrupted Rhupay, "you two, your Hyperborean names?"



-I am Akinos the Kraken," said the young warrior, knowing beforehand what Rhupay wanted to ask.

-And I am Berkana the Stone Leviathan," said the girl.

-Hmm, Kraken and Leviathan, two Hyperborean beasts. It is evident that you are Sentinels.

-What about you, Vairon? -asked Valya. Alan looked at her sideways, cold as an iceberg.

-I have a score to settle with Rodrigo, and this time he won't be saved by the recess bell.

They were about to arrive at their destination, Sorata, when they heard thunderous explosions coming from the Grotto of San Pedro. The travellers picked up speed and when they arrived, they saw an archangel. It was Metratón Arcángel who was attacking a group of defenceless soldiers. With him also came American soldiers. Berkana and Akinos offered to help the soldiers and get rid of the archangel while Rhupay and Valya went in search of the other Sentinels. Meanwhile Alan Vairon broke away from the group without a word and disappeared, despite the protests of the others.



(Tyr)

Twelfth Mystery, The Secret of the Night Sun

Taken from Andean Mythology; adapted from Amethyst Circle

In the lost Andean covens still preserved by members of Pukina and Urus peoples there is a legend of forgetfulness, calamity and apprenticeship.

Back in the beginning of time, the Gods lived on Earth alongside humans and taught them how to rule the world. In such peaceful coexistence, it was hard to imagine that harmony would ever end. But harmony is elusive and the Earth was besieged by conflict. The Gods went to war with each other and the result was to destroy the world. Out of pity for his children, Wiracocha ordered them to retreat to the westernmost part of Lake Titicaca in five gigantic reed boats that he himself had them build. He told them that soon the waters would cover the earth, the sun would hide behind the clouds and rain would cover the world. On Wiracocha's instruction, the men should sail for the eastern shore, only when the first rays of the sun were visible. Then they would disembark to rebuild all that had been destroyed by the waters.

The dark days came with tremors and earthquakes. The great stone city of the Gods on Lake Titicaca sank before the terrified gaze of the men at sea. Great fractures destroyed its walls, the towers fell into the water causing immense waves and the earth opened up, swallowing large chunks of the stone city. Then the rain began to fall and did not stop for several years. The inhabitants of the totora boats survived thanks to their diet of fish and reeds from Lake Titicaca that kept them alive during their years of pilgrimage over the waters and under the incessant rain.



At the first rays of the sun jubilation broke out among the men who, following Wiracocha's instructions, made for the eastern shore of the lake. As promised, dry land was visible and the boat people moored on a shore full of reeds and delicate white sand. They made reed huts and began to examine the land to see if it would be possible to cultivate it. However, their aquatic life had so affected their memory that they could hardly remember anything they had learned from the Gods. They did not remember how to farm, how to build stone cities and, most importantly, they did not remember the purpose of their existence.

Because of the irresistible amnesia they suffered, the men had no choice but to make floating islands and return to the waters to live as they had done since the day the flood began; but fish became scarcer and scarcer. Hunger began to plague the men who remembered little or nothing of their life on land. Then, one night, a series of lights in the sky illuminated the fathomless, overlapping darkness of pale stars. One of those lights, bright as the most splendid star they had ever seen, began to approach the beach village that the men had raised. Soon that light began to take on clearer and more distinct shapes until it projected the unmistakable silhouette of circle upon circle, in the shape of a disc. When the glow was finally on the ground the men saw a human-shaped figure emerge from it. It was a huge, naked woman with large breasts and long ear flaps. By her size, body shape and skin colour the villagers knew that she belonged to the race of the Gods and they felt once again rescued from the desolation that surrounded them.





The "Orejona", as the men called the Goddess, taught them again how to make the earth bear fruit, how to work with stone, how to handle fire and metals, and how to master nature. She instructed them that they must never forget the Origin of their Existence, that they were children of the gods and that by the command of the gods, they must return to the path of return to their Village of Origin. He explained to them with infinite patience that their home was beyond the stars and that someday they must find a way to go there someday. He ordered them not to forget that the land they had dominated did not belong to them, but that it was the property of time, of Pacha, and that they had only borrowed it. He ordered them to build huge stone monoliths in various regions of the conquered highlands. These stones, called "Hatun Runas", were to serve as communicators with the gods and signposts of the space borrowed from Pacha.

It was only a few moons before the Orejona's departure. She had already explained most of what they needed to know, so all that was left was the final explanation. The Goddess told the men that the Sun is not only one Sun. There was then the Sun of Inti and the Sun of Night. The Sun of Night would always appear when the dawn star became visible, before each sunrise, and would show the direction in which the Village of Man's Origin lay; while the Sun of Inti was a reflection of the light of the universe and its formative heat, it was a borrowed light. Men were never to forget this teaching, for it was their only way back to the longed-for Origin. Before leaving, she left them a triangular stone inside which was carved the figure of a woman's head with snakes for hair. The Orejona told them never to fear the woman with snake hair, for it was she herself who was carved on the stone as a testimony of her visit to the men. They, on the Orejona's instructions, went to one of the beaches of Lake Titicaca and placed



the black stone inside a natural cavernous structure in the interior of a mountain, close to a natural underground spring. As the chamber was high, a large area of the beach below was visible through one of its walls. The roof, having several holes in it, allowed both sunlight and moonlight to enter. This place, which was later called the Pakarina, was used as a temple and was visited by the whole community.

Thus, with its mission accomplished, the Orejona departed from Earth and returned to its Village. Thanks to her, a caste of wise old men had appeared among men whose mission was not to forget everything they had learned from the Orejona, and in this way they continued to fulfil their mission. They built great stone Hatun Runas, went deep into the highlands and made apachetas. But memory is too fragile.

One day Inti appeared before men with her dazzling light and covered up in their minds the memory of the Night Sun. So it was that they forgot again the Orientation towards the Origin which is reflected in every appearance of the morning star. They had forgotten their only way of returning to their Original Village. The light of the sun was such that the villagers gave themselves fully to it and filled their hearts with the warmth of that sun. It was then that two figures appeared from Inti in Lake Titicaca, whom he called Manco Kapac and Mama Okllo. The two sovereigns, children of the Gods, rose to the heavens and pointed to a place far away from Titicaca and the altiplano, showing the place where a city of stone was to be built.

That city was called Cuzco, where the Inca Maco Kapac taught men to conquer new lands; but in it he did not lose the memory of the Night Sun and, covered in moonlight, he designed and built a temple dedicated to



she. He then led south a caste of wise men who were to guard the secret of the Night Sun and not allow any foreigner to reveal its meaning. Only in this way could the Empire withstand the tribulations would rise against it. There remained, then, the elite of wise men to the North and their knowledge of the Sun of Inti, and the elite of wise men to the South and their secret of the Night Sun and of the temple built in the light of Silver; the temple of the Cold Moon.



When Moses felt the bullet at his back, he raised his spectre to stop it. He had put Diana and the other Sentinels in a state of suspended animation and was about to execute Rocio, direct descendant of the generals in the service of Pharaoh Ramses, when Orlando Cuellar interrupted him. The Major was frankly impressed, that guy had stopped a bullet going straight into his skull without having to lift a finger. He didn't even turn to look at the man who had tried to assassinate him.

-When will you foolish mortals learn that the grace of the great God of Israel protects us in these worlds of abomination? -said Moses.

-You're going to hell," replied Major Cuellar and emptied the remaining twelve bullets from his gun into the back of Moisés' head. However, the bullets stopped just a few centimetres from their target.

When he ran out of bullets, Cuellar pulled a huge knife from his boot and *tackled* Moses with all his might. The Major's unexpected act caused the priest of Israel to lose his concentration and the Sentinels came to their senses.

-Let him go! Dad! -Jhoanna warned, but not in time.

Using his telekinetic power, the Israelite sent the Major flying through the air. Seeing this provoked the fury of Edwin and his sisters who immediately launched a powerful plasma emanation at the Israelite; but the Israelite had to do nothing more than raise his golden staff to stop the plasma. Somehow Rocio, seeing the staff, felt the curses against her people boil in her veins. The pain made her writhe, Gabriel wanted to hold her, but at that moment Moses responded with another emanation of



plasma that catapulted the seven Sentinels in all directions. Rhupay and Valya saw the explosion and immediately rushed to the scene.

Moses was ready to repel the onslaught of his two new attackers when a message from St Michael came to him telepathically.

-Get out of there, Moses. Take Metraton and go. At this moment the twelve Sentinels are gathered in the same place at the same time. We cannot risk their awakening because of our imprudence. Do not provoke their fury.

-But what about the Arc?

-We'll sort that out later, but right now it's more dangerous to wake the Sentinels than to lose the chance to take the Arc.

The Israelite, unhappy but powerless to do anything about it, resigned himself and became enveloped in a golden glow. Rhupay and Valya were temporarily blinded by the light and when they regained their sight, Moses was no longer there.

Meanwhile, Berkana and Akinos had taken flight and were slaughtering the American invaders. With swords in hand, they had dealt out death and horror, decapitated most of the Marines and shot down the helicopters with plasma fire. With the help of the Bolivian soldiers, both Sentinels finished exterminating every last invader, taking no prisoners. Cuellar's men, who still could not understand what kind of beings it was that had saved them, fought alongside them and obeyed their orders throughout the course of the battle. Metraton saw everything from the place where he had fallen, and despite his desire to return to the fight, he wrapped his wings around himself and withdrew, obeying St. Michael's order.



When the fight was over, Berkana and Akinos joined Rhupay and Valya search for the Sentinels who had been scattered by Moses' power. They found them in different parts of the forest, passed out, but none of them had serious injuries, only fainted from the plasma Moses had thrown at them.

As quickly as they could, Cuellar's men rehabilitated the sanitation facilities and the infirmary, and quickly began to bring in their wounded; of which there were many. The recovered Sentinels were also brought to the infirmary. When they awoke they were surprised to see Rhupay and Valya there, but more surprised when they finally met Berkana and Akinos. They told their story to Rodrigo and the others, and vice versa. While the soldiers rebuilt the camp, the Sentinels tried to get to know the new members. Edwin was delightedly surprised, Berkana was the beautiful girl he had seen the first time he entered Erks; the camba who had troubled his days. He had always wanted to see her again, but never imagined that she would be a Sentinel too.

Then came the sad news. The destruction of Erks and the death of Qhawaq caused deep sadness among the Sentinels, but there was no time for mourning.

-There are eleven of us now," said Rodrigo, smiling a somewhat forced smile at how his number had increased. There's Diana, Rocío, Oscar, Jhoanna, Gabriel and Edwin. And now there are Rhupay, Valya, Berkana and Akinos. Including me, there are eleven of us. One more and the team will be complete.



-And we already have the Bow of Artemis with us. It will be all right," added Diana, with a resigned expression. Although things had turned in their favour, the destruction of Erks and the death of Qhawaq weighed heavily on them.

-Yes, but..." Berkana was about to speak of Vairon, but stopped herself. She knew that a dark hatred had grown in Alan's heart for Rodrigo.

Evening soon turned to dawn. The infirmary tent was full of wounded soldiers and the hours had been consumed in saving the hopeless. Rhupay and Valya focused all their power on saving lives and by nightfall they were so exhausted they could barely stand, yet the actions of the Sentinels had saved more than 30 hopeless soldiers. This act generated unbounded gratitude and admiration for the boys who gave their all to rescue the wounded from death. Orlando Cuellar himself felt more than just pride as he watched his sons strive to heal his men, it imbued his heart with respect for them, for each of the Centinelas who fought for hours for his men.

It was almost eight o'clock at night. The wounded were sleeping and recovering while the other soldiers stood guard. Others had stayed awake to fix their weapons and maintain them. In the centre of the camp, the glow of a campfire warmed the exhausted Sentinels who had formed a circle around the fire. They rested, chatted and tried to fight the growing grief of their losses.

Rodrigo's birthday was the next day, that 21st of August, he would be 14 years old. The comment came from Diana, who began to tell Rhupay, Valya, Berkana and Akinos all about what they had done on the same date the year before.



previous. He told them about the party, the dance, the misunderstandings and the fight with Gabriel. The blind boy managed to smile slightly as he recalled those events that seemed so far away, so prehistoric. Rocío hugged him and began to caress his hands while Diana recounted it all. Oscar and Edwin also smiled inwardly, Diana's story reminded them of their own experiences. Jhoanna was also overcome with nostalgia, but a hug from Oscar comforted her. Melancholy reigned among the boys. They began to talk about their parents, their families, about those they never saw again but still missed.

It was now eleven o'clock at night and the Sentinels were still awake, but the conversation was almost over. They all looked at the fire in the bonfire and lost their minds in the shapes the flames were taking. The silence permeated by the crackling of the fire was almost ritualistic, funereal. The wind blew, whistling through the trees. In silence, expressionless faces, some of the boys began to shed tears. There was an unfathomable sadness among them as they were just beginning to realise all that had been consumed in that war. Qhawaq, Rowena and Aldrick were no more. Erks was gone. Gabriel's father had been killed and the fate of all of them was uncertain. Death was the only thing that was undeniable, but they all had the desire not to die yet, but first they had to resolve all the things they had left unfinished, in life. Finally the whimpering stopped being silent, Rocío was the first to break down and then Gabriel followed. And so, successively, each one of them, the eleven Sentinels sitting around the fire, broke down and abandoned themselves to weeping and pain.



20 de agosto del 2000

No se me ocurren palabras para decir cómo me siento, o tal vez cómo no me siento. Yo ya no soy la que se ve en el espejo y únicamente reconoce una silueta vacía, la cara plástica que congeló una sonrisa para no ser descubierta. Si en verdad hubiera alguna manera de ser convincente y decirle al mundo que vive en un mal sueño, tal vez podría justificar algunas cosas que he hecho.

Cuando todo empezó no tenía idea, ni ganas de tenerla, sobre nada que amenazara aquello que conocía como mi "estabilidad". Me duelen las ruedas de solo imaginar que por un instante estuve cerca de convertirme en todo y nada a la



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creería una sola palabra. Estoy aislada, junto a mis amigos en una vida que nadie sospecha ni siquiera un poco. Estoy diezmada a lo que me corresponde hacer en esta vida y aún no me cuadra saber que soy un arma de destrucción masiva, que tengo un Arco cuyas flechas podrían pulverizar este Sistema Solar. ¿Y todo para qué? ¿Venganza contra Dios? Nadie ha visto a Dios como yo, su maldad, su crueldad, sus deseos despiadados por beber el dolor de la gente. Y yo estoy aquí, convertida en un arma y arrastrada por las corrientes del destino.

Si al menos pudiera cumplir un deseo antes del Apocalipsis que se avecina; sería entregar mi primera vez a mi amado Rodrigo. Me gustaría estar con él al menos una sola vez, recibirlo con amor en mi interior y ser los dos el resultado de todo lo que nos hemos amado. Es que él, en verdad me recuerda todo lo que alguna vez viví en aldeas y tiempos lejanos, y aún así, amándolo tanto como lo amo, hasta la certeza de ese amor se ha perdido en algún lugar del camino. No sé si Rodrigo es uno o dos, hijo único o gemelo de alguien más, lo único que sé es que en mi corazón no me conformo con dejarlo partir y ahogar nuestra historia sin haberla culminado. Si estas son las últimas páginas de este diario, que todos sepan que Rodrigo es para mí y yo soy para él, y lo que venga después sea solo la resulta de los designios que ambos hemos elegido en el Origen.



Twelve o'clock at night on 20 August 2000. In the Inti Squadron camp in Sorata, a shadow wandered through the darkness to approach unnoticed. His heart contracted to torment when he saw her; her, her imposing beauty, her absolute presence, her hands writing while the others, still whimpering, chatted to get rid of bitterness. It was curious to see them, still weeping and yet laughing, as if an all-out battle between sadness and consolation was being fought in the face of that insolent fire.

The shadow moved a little closer, camouflaging even his spectre, and began to listen to what they were saying. The Sentinels were sitting on logs. They were talking about the glory of Erks, the honour of the fallen, and memories of more normal days. Berkana spoke to the others about Arika of Turdes, her hyperborean mentor. As the young warrior spoke, Diana increasingly withdrew her attention from her writing and allowed herself to be captured by her comrade's tale. Then, at an undetermined moment, Diana's eyes opened wide, her face lit up by some sudden idea.

-I know her mentor! -said Diana.

-Nyeee! -exclaimed Akinos in total disbelief and exaggerating his expression a little, even though it was difficult for him to speak normally because of the tears still flowing from his eyes, "where did *you come* from... to meet Arika?"

-What are you talking about," Rodrigo replied as he looked at his lover with puffy, sleepy eyes.

-Rodri, you know her too.



-Me!

-Yes, don't you remember her?

-Well, I...

Then Rodrigo's face broke into a smile between resignation and surprise.

-Fuck it, it's true," he said very quietly.

-Could someone explain for the others, please," demanded Oscar.

-Last Christmas," Diana continued, "we went to the fair at the Closed Coliseum, remember?

They nodded.

Well, that time a gypsy fortune-teller gave us the silver Hajime. And the rest came by mere deduction.

-Now, now," Edwin interrupted, "Are you saying that Berkana and Akinos' mentor is the same gypsy who gave you the Silver Hajime?

Diana and Rodrigo nodded.

-It's a small world," Jhoanna murmured.

Silence fell again among the Sentinels until Akinos decided to confess something he had been keeping quiet about since meeting Diana and the others.

-Hey, we didn't tell you something," all attention turned to him. My sister and I are not the only members of the Fourth Estate. There is one more, one who is not here.

-What are you saying," Rocío said, rubbing her tears away.

-What I want to say is ...

At that moment the shadow that had been watching them stepped out into the firelight. Their gazes turned and then they saw him. It was a surprise to



which they were not ready for, not only because the timing was complicated, but because his very presence signified memories that the boys wished to bury, especially Diana and Rodrigo who sensed the nefarious significance of his appearance. However, not all of the Sentinels knew him, Edwin, for example, who upon seeing him arrive was confused and questioned him:

-Where did you come from?

Of course, he had never seen that character before in his life. That boy with the sleepy, leaden eyes who, by all accounts, was the same age as Rodrigo, Diana and their friends. He was a student at the Instituto de Educación Bancaria; but Edwin had long since heard of anyone from that place. However, Diana, his friends and Jhoanna, who students at that school at time, recognised him. No one wanted to say anything, they let Edwin continue to investigate on his own.

-You must be the Diana's older brother," replied the character.

-Excuse me, have we met?

-You don't like me, but I like you. Di always talked about you a lot at school.

-Vairon, where *have you* been? -Berkana rebuked him.

"Vairon?" thought Rodrigo.

-I had things to do before I came here," he replied and looked directly at Rodrigo. Oh, Rodri, happy birthday, it won't be long now, will it?

-By all the gods! -exclaimed Rodrigo, waking up from his depression, and went up to him...to him. Alan, you don't know how good it is to see you, I didn't know that....

-If you touch me I'll make that hand go up your ass and out your mouth.



Both looked at each other. The confusion was almost total, a misfortune foretold. Berkana and Akinos knew it, Rhupay and Valya suspected it. Diana sensed it, Gabriel denied it. There was no choice, Berkana would tell them.

-Comrades, I give you the twelfth Sentinel of Artemis. This is Vairon, the Werewolf. He used to be called Alan, but now...

Diana's face was petrified with horror. Rocío didn't understand, but she wanted not to. Gabriel bowed his head, his clairvoyance telling him what was going to happen. Oscar, Jhoanna and Edwin, little by little, understood what was happening, but not to the full extent. Rhupay and Valya were getting ready to separate them, but they were still weak.

-A... Alan," Rodrigo barely murmured.

-You didn't expect to see me? You were always wrong about me, Rodrigo. I told you I knew something about you, something very dark. That day at Carnival when I saved you and took care of you in the infirmary I could almost savour this moment and afterwards, when Diana almost left us because of you, you miserable son of a bitch, I couldn't wait to have you in front of me and tell you what I think.

-But... What's wrong with you, aren't you happy to see us? We are your friends.

-I'm not your friend, you fucking bastard! I was right when I felt you were exposing the Diana to too much danger, knowing you don't deserve her. Until recently I didn't know I was a Sentinel like you either, that I had this fantastic power coursing through my veins. I didn't know the truths of the world and I was as lost in the illusion of life as any of you. But one day those monsters came, Hexabor, took everything I cared about and nearly murdered me. If Arika hadn't come to my aid I wouldn't be here now.



-What have you come back for," Gabriel thought, noting the gravity of the situation. You're full of hate, Alan. You're up to your neck in that filth.

-Have you lost your sight? Look at me head on.

-Yes, Alan, I'm as blind as a bat. I see, ah, I don't see shit. But I see everything that comes with you. You're being unfair to Rodrigo, he never wanted to expose Diana to anything.

-Come on Gabo," Alan replied, "don't be cheap. Even I know how to admit my mistakes, and one of the biggest was not fighting for the Diana. I should have.

-Enough! -Diana shouted, sitting up. You're talking nonsense, Alan.

-I don't see the foolishness of what I'm saying. Yes, Diana, I love you, I've always loved you and you knew it. And you know what else, I know you have feelings for me.

Alan's last words had frozen Diana and Rodrigo who, with their eyes wide open, couldn't take their eyes off their newly arrived friend.

-I denied myself," Alan added, "too much of this feeling, I denied myself the chance to love you, Diana. Don't you feel in your breast the same as do? Doesn't your heart race at the sight of me?

Little by little Diana realised that Alan was not wrong. Since the year before her trip to Erks she had noticed that a growing memory had been nourishing her. Seeing Alan, being him, had become distressing, even in the distant past. Of course it had! How to forget him, how to erase all the centuries they had spent together, she and he, Alan and Diana, loving each other in the shadow of the other wolf. The Other Wolf? Which one of them was the Other? Rodrigo? Alan? All the memories came flooding back to Diana's mind.



like a murky maelstrom that seemed to come out nowhere. Finally the memory began to ache, to hurt, to bleed and tear at all the feelings Diana felt for Rodrigo. Her heart was being squeezed by the chains of the past, and they squeezed with such force that, seconds later, it was shattering.

Rodrigo turned slowly towards his lover, he saw her face flushed and her eyes brimming with tears. She wore an expression of indescribable pain and pressed her clothes tightly to her chest, to her heart.

-Princess," Rodrigo said, Diana seemed deaf to his voice. Is it true what he says?

-Tell him, Diana! -Tell her at once who I really am! Tell her how much we've loved each other in the past! Tell him of our promises, of all the oaths of love we swore to each other under the same sky. Tell him who the impostor is!

-Shut up! -shouted Rodrigo, "What are you saying to my Diana!

-The truth! You should remember it too, Rodrigo, have you forgotten who I am? Who I was?

Little by little, all the memories of other eras came back to Rodrigo's mind, evoked from his memory of blood. Everything came back to his memory and then, finally, he felt the same desolation that was ravaging Diana at that moment. Her heart also broke into a thousand pieces. That quantum, metaphysical fracture finally entered the same frequency as the vibrations of Alan's hatred and his heart also shattered. The three of them



They fell to their knees on the floor. Their friends were about to approach mourners to try to understand what was happening to them, but Gabriel stopped them.

-No, do not intervene.

-But there's something wrong with them," Rocío protested. We must do something.

-There's nothing we can do," Gabriel replied. This was going happen. The twin wolves have gathered.

Then, suddenly, Alan's spectre flared up and began to rise. Almost in unison Rodrigo's spectre also flared up, not of its own volition, but because Freky was inciting it. Within seconds Rodrigo remembered a prophecy his guardian had given him, the other wolf: *"Do not ask yourself questions whose answers you cannot yet understand. Just be aware that you are not alone. When they come, I will be at your side to help you. The Goddess will come to your aid and sign you with the uncreated rune that was set aside just for you, from the Origin to the end of this world of deception. Remember it, Lycanon; and when the day comes, meet the Other Wolf."* Alan, he and the rumours that he was in love with Diana. He and his incisive insinuations. In truth, it had all happened at school and it was like a *déjà vu* that kept haunting Rodrigo. And the past, the centuries of war between him and Alan were becoming clearer in his memory. He was not only his rival, his enemy; he was also his twin brother.

-It was you," said Rodrigo, almost possessed. Alan looked at him with a grimace of pain, still on the floor. Freky said to meet the other wolf, and that wolf is you, brother.

-This has happened before," Alan replied. It's happened to us many times, ever since we were separated. One of us is an imposter.



-I am not an impostor.

-You are! You have usurped from me my sweet Diana, the thing I loved most.

-You forget that the Diana is my Partner of Origin.

-And mine too!

-NO!

-Come on Rodrigo, let's settle this once and for all!

That was enough, both intoxicated by their immolated spectres, they were totally out of control. The power that had been locked away for centuries finally broke its seal. Rodrigo's eyes began to glow blue; while Alan's eyes had a turquoise glow. Rodrigo involuntarily went into a hyperborean trance, he became Lycanon. Alan too could no longer maintain the will of his actions and became Vairon. The sky above them clouded over, a thunderstorm began to whip through the atmosphere. The soldiers in the camp moved into a defensive position, the alarm began to sound and the roar of the wind became deafening.

-Stop it, stop it! -Diana shouted. But there was nothing more to do.

The power generated by both of them was so intense that they were not even able to maintain their human form. They began to mutate, they grew a lot of fur all over their bodies, they grew a horrible snout with fangs and their claws protruded from their fingers. They transformed into true werewolves, lycanthropes. The Gemini wolves had finally met and the Apocalypse mechanism had opened. Who would be able to stop them? At the final , the only certainty that has the man is administering .



uncertainties, and in that dark moment, the pieces of Diana's broken heart were shooting like shards into the minds of Alan and Rodrigo. She loved Rodrigo, but the presence of Alan, his spectre, had reminded her of everything that had happened in the past; she loved Alan too. She loved them both because they were one in the past; finally the pain finally destroyed Diana, her eyes began to shed tears of blood and she collapsed to the ground. Meanwhile, Alan and Rodrigo, transformed into beasts, were getting ready for the holy combat of the wolves. The rest would be a fierce fight whose reverberations would shake several worlds; a holy, Hyperborean combat between the twin wolves, between Vairon and Lycanon.

End of Episode Two

To be continued...

No one can betray you, only your own mouth... No one can subdue you, only your own heart... No one can hurt you, only your own hands... And no one can set you free, only yourself...



What do you mean, Episode Two is over? Hell, I go to the shop to buy a drink for a few moments and when I come back it turns out I missed the best part.

And the million-dollar question is: can you distinguish between what happened and what didn't happen?

What if I told you that what you have read is not just a novel? What if I suggested to you that this is how things really happened? You wouldn't believe me, would you? I wouldn't believe it either, at least not... at first.

We are getting closer to the grand finale. Soon you will find out the whole truth behind this strange story. In the meantime I'm going to have a few drinks. Rum and Cola, three litres of it, I'll have a hell of a hangover tomorrow. Cheers!

Gaburah L. Michel





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THE LAST INSTALMENT OF THE SAGA IS COMING SOON.

THE GRAND FINALE IS COMING!

