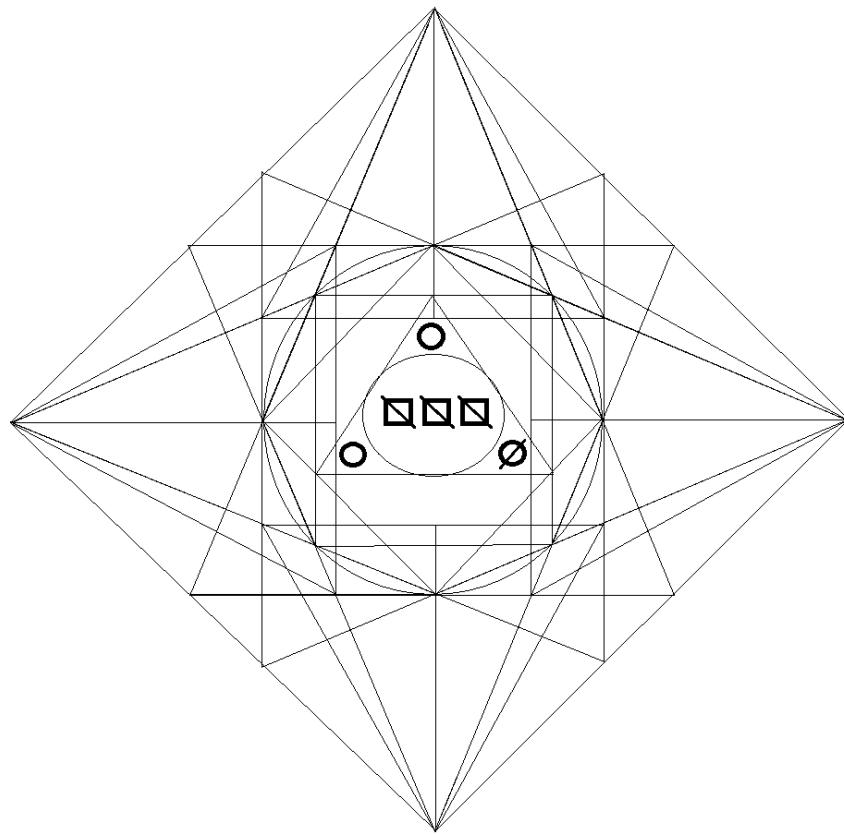


The Green Candle



By Samuel Warren Shaffer

Edited by K F Nickel

Chapters Two through Twenty consisting of the Expedition of the Magi co-written by W C
Stewart, Samuel Warren Shaffer and K F Nickel

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Table of Contents

Preface.....	2
Expedition of the Magi (Chapters 1 – 20).....	5
Voyage of the Titans (Chapters 21 – 33).....	45
Journey of the Door Walkers (Chapters 34 – 49).....	94

Preface

By Samuel Warren Shaffer

-What is being?-

What is being? Some say there is a magic thing which is our eternal soul and that we are always ourselves. Other more scientifically minded people say we cease to exist after we die. For the eternal soul idea there is no evidence, but for the scientifically minded the question should be, if the soul doesn't exist then what exactly disappears? This is the question that has never logically been answered. If the scientific say that it is the physical organization of our brain that is destroyed that would obviously be correct. However consciousness has been divided from unconsciousness in our language with some kind of magical barrier. Most people say, especially those who believe we have a privileged magical being, which clearly mechanical things don't experience. When scientists say we are just very complex machines the clear and obvious objection for most people is, well I am actually experiencing this unlike a mechanical machine. That is that I am actually seeing, hearing and feeling and I am actually experiencing this, I am not just programmed to say it, I am actually here. Even if I was programmed to say it, I am telling you that I am looking from this side, and I exist.

If scientists maintain that we are machines then they must also admit that mechanical machines are actually here in the sense that their particles have the ability to have being just as ours clearly now do. If this is the case then it must also be admitted that these particles can be reused and again have experiences; In short they must admit that everything has “being” and the capability of having experiences if endowed with the proper technologies. This is the only logical confession of a materialist. That our particles may be reused countless times, and countless times may have experienced being part of experience producing processes.

I will not just criticize the scientific which are some of the noblest among us, but I will now also question those who believe we have a privileged status of magical eternal self. There is absolutely no evidence for this and all the religious traditions that are not clearly bigoted have talked about overcoming

the illusion of self, or the illusion of separateness from the rest of the universe. Those who hold to the magic self-theory are by definition egocentric.

-Enlightenment Defined-

I have had the joyous privilege lately of having attained what some call enlightenment. I will now define enlightenment in layman's terms, in a way unlike some ancient scholar could do into our modern language. We are not just one being. We are a corporation of beings that sometimes come and sometimes go. I first comprehended this as a recycling process of our matter that takes place from moment to moment so that we can move through time, just as we move through space. This however applies to all particles. The core being that I had believed to be static was and is not. It was a constant cycling of what I will call experiencing principles or experiencing particles. They filled the whole universe in my perception and they all had being although not all were experiencing consciousness or even input at the moment.

I noticed that these particles of being were not only numerous inside me, but also that they were flowing in and out of me continuously, like a river. My personality was just like a small eddy in the river caused by a rock, through which countless particles passed. The only odd thing about it is that I realized that in any one given moment I was one particle each moment. I then realized the more bizarre thing. Each particle of being felt like me, only because it possessed in that moment the contents of my mind, memories, and the precession of my next thought. They were as silent spectators of my body's experiences. So in other words the illusion of consistency in living in one life at a time is caused by these particles inheriting the memories of the brain.

This would mean that I am not me and you are not you, we are hosts for the flowing of millions of experiencing particles or principles, or beings. That is that in this moment I am me, but a moment ago I was something or someone else, and while I have been writing this sentence (although the former applies) I have been many, many, many intelligences or experiencing principles. The particle that is experiencing being you in this moment and now is gone is traveling through an endless succession of different hosts. If you identify with one particle, then you are a different person, animal, object or being from moment to moment.

So life is an eternal flowing of experiences. It is a river of being, which is flowing through perhaps infinity, universe upon universe. Moments ago I might have been a life form too strange to describe or a rock. We have no doubt been everything in the universe and everything in the universe have been us, perhaps universes upon universes.

This brought such joy and ecstasy to me, so that I no longer saw myself as separate from everything else. I saw everything as non-dual, and even now I am filled with peace and joy meditating upon it.

-Return of the Titans-

A week after first experiencing this state of enlightenment the Titans returned. At this point I had firmly decided that I just didn't know scientifically if all the beings who had appeared to me over the years were mental emanations or not; aka hallucinations. I felt I had to be honest with myself and scientific about my acceptability to being fooled by myself. One week after attaining enlightenment the Titans appeared to me regardless. I again saw the Titan circle and the Titan ship just as I had seen in my Veritan days, and they showed me where to find my own Titan Stone. They then initiated me into Titanhood. A Titan Stone is like a piece of information technology. It contains the code of an entire personality in the form of energy. It is like a dimensional stake holding the eddy of flowing particles in place, theoretically forever.

I had for many years seen energy beings. I first saw what I came to call door walkers. Walkers are manifestations of energy that are in the shape of little featureless people. They are not intelligent, in the sense that they will always walk the same way, even if they go around and around like in a door way, which earned them the name Door Walkers. Door Walkers come in many shapes and sizes, and I also began to see other energy creatures and many interesting things over the years. When I became more orthodox I started seeing beings posing as Angels. As I became more pagan I began to see beings claiming to be Gods; and as I became more enlightened I saw beings like them again as Titans.

Something that went hand in hand with this energy-seeing phenomenon was the phenomenon of seeing visions in stones, which gave rise to my Translations of ancient writings. Some of the things in those Translations could be called into question, but there are also many things which surprised me, and which taught me new perspectives about the ancient world. Over time my own Translations changed my mind about many things, and my Brother has posed a question as to whether these things too need an explanation.

My scientific doubt of the energy beings and Translations created an internal struggle within me, and made me wonder whether I was indeed hallucinating and only revealing things from internal psychological processes or whether it, or some of it, was truly external. I had the scientific process to take into account; I could not get others to see and confirm these things through peer review. However I also had to deal with the immensity and consistency of the experiences that I had with these various beings throughout my life. I believe there is now an explanation. This explanation does the complexity of the universe and its dimensions justice. Read Journey of the Door Walkers to find out, how matter, experiencing particles, and signatures of energy through which these particles pass all work together in a way which is logically flawless.

Chapter One

Han

Nothing. The very thought is something, for if you can comprehend it, it isn't it at all. Nothing is beyond darkness, because darkness is not only something, it is an entire world of imagination to a thing that does not exist. Something. Something so deep and inconceivable: a single speck of feeling in the vacuous abyss of nothing.

Then there it was - a particle of thought, there to ruin my perfect abyss. It was then that I realized the world of thought had already infected me. In trying to fix my wound, I had made it worse. In analyzing my world, it had slipped away from me forever. It was pure torture. "If only I could go back until before I started this endless voyage", I thought, "become the victim again, unaware of anything". No, then I neither had thought or feeling, in my anti-present sleep. I didn't realize that I existed. For me, there was only a silenced and forgotten reality. But deep down an unexplained and un-conceived sensation grew and grew. I began to know more and more that I existed. I did not think of it consciously, but somewhere I knew of my existence and my name burned into my consciousness, "Han". As the feeling of my name grew inside me I screamed in agony. My scream stopped for a moment, like something apart from me, quavering like the final note in a grand glissando, then it subsided.

I threw myself back into a dreamless sleep and became a nothing again, slowly drowning my soul in the perfect void. Again my name drifted into my mind, making me more and more real. I slowly ascended into conscious thought, and something slowly melted the darkness and I experienced a sense I had never imagined possible. A dim green light grew brighter and brighter, calming my pain. There a tall space extended before me full of life, and a spirit, so peaceful and calm. This place filled with tall green forms was so green and so clean of all evil. It was warm and quiet. It made me feel so free, but somehow I was still trapped. Soon the glorious vision faded, leaving nothing. The blackness soon turned cold and lifeless again.

Now that Han was awake all his time was spent lying on a stone and looking up toward a dark ceiling. He was now having the first inklings of curiosity. After hours of lying there, gathering his senses and strengths, he found another being, scuffling about on the dark floor. "Hi, my name is Han." he said to the thing, but it didn't answer. "What are you?" Again, there was no answer. Slowly, the thing studied him as Han said words. Han could see the whites of its eyes there in the darkness as it began to look puzzled and later, panicked. Then it began to cry.

Han drifted back to sleep and this time he was in the beautiful green place again, and under a certain tree he saw a cave built underneath it by man. He pushed through long dead vines which were obscuring the path to it, but finally came to an open door. A soft voice invited him in, and although he

wanted to stay in the green place, he ventured forth anyway. It was an old lady, sitting and inviting him to sit at her knees. Everything was a blur, but Han remembered her telling him; “there are worlds without end, and you can go to any one of these worlds you wish; as long as you go against that current that leads you to darkness.”

Han slowly awoke to the sight of the ceiling of the cave again, although there was something new this time. Over him stood two old men with something bright in their hands; they also had on gray robes. One of them spoke, “You are alive and awake! I am Morgan, I am your friend.” Han felt their hands begin to lift him and he was suddenly struck with fear, as he realized that they could manipulate him, and he was too limp to have any power over the situation. He felt the jostle of the Morgan’s walking and also saw more stone ceiling passing over head. His heart stopped pounding though when they laid him upon something soft.

Chapter Two

Dro

All feeling and experience were indistinguishable from non-feeling and non-experience. This was all I knew. If only I had known how remarkable it was that I should be in the place I was at that moment then I would have awakened immediately to joy and understanding. However, without the basis of comparison to sharpen the passionless sedimentary content of my intellect my awakening was painful, slow, and mostly unworthy of comment. As it stands: I knew somewhere, somehow, that I knew something. That something that I once knew was a place. Where, and when, that place was is not a question I had the breadth of experience to ask. If I had asked this question then it would have made no difference because I did not have the breadth of experience to know whether I was asking a question at all. It was very difficult to know or understand anything at first. Eventually, I discovered stone. It was the only thing I had ever touched, and I was touching it then, it was on my back.

Then there were blue skies and green fields, blue on white on green on white on brown, earthy black-brown that stood up from the harsh gray earth with a passion and vibrancy befitting the source of life. New thoughts then began to enter him, but were cut off by a wan howl, and infinities beyond! Then all was stone again, the whole world, was stone. What is this stone? I must find its source and substance. No, I exceed myself, I insert into my thoughts wild speculations. I was barely more than nothing, but this stone was definitely there, in my mind, in this world, and it intrigued me. If nothing else is believed about me, let it be known that that stone was real, and the fact that it was real; that there was such a thing as real, and that I was somewhere in time and place intrigued me.

Dro was so intrigued by his concept that he crawled over what felt like jagged glass to his unaccustomed body. In the very center, upon which he had been laying when the thought entered his mind, was a large stone with a flattened top. What to make of this, Dro was not sure. Words began to enter his mind, "Earth", and "Space". Surely that central rock was "the Earth." What wasn't the Earth, where he could not crawl, most surely was "the Space." Feeling content that he had discovered this, he returned to the Earth to lie down again. His thoughts then did not disappear as he'd anticipated they would. After many periods of sleeping and waking spent laying and crawling, his nerves were accustomed to the feeling of the stone floor and walls. He knew that his own body felt different than the stony surfaces of the walls. The soles of his feet were soft, and he screamed with pain whenever they made contact with a sharp, loose pebble. This forced him to scuffle about on the floor. What any of this meant, he could not say.

Once while feeling around on one of the walls he discovered a large hole. Fearing this new path, he avoided it for many hours, knowing that beyond it was the edge of the Space and the unknown. Finally he pushed around and felt the walls of the tunnel, careful to stay near them for fear he may lose his way forever. Noticing the differences in texture in these new walls, he made his way gingerly forward. The walls of the tunnel opened into another expanse. Feeling tired, he made his way to where he thought the Earth should be. Sure enough, there was a raised rock here, and as his hand groped its flat surface, he touched something that was not rock. It was something like him!

Suddenly he felt his consciousness pushed somehow. By the time the feeling had come and gone several times he could not endure it any longer and cried out. It was at that moment that he realized that the thing like him was creating thoughts. Immediately after Dro made this discovery, he felt himself being lifted off the ground by two strong hands, which swiftly jostled and carried him away. When Dro was finally deposited, he was far, far away from the Earth and the Space. Underneath him was a substance he had not felt before, it was not anything to which he was accustomed, and it was much, much softer than the stone to which he was used. Feeling it made him very upset, and he scrambled immediately as far as the ends of the Space had ever taken him, but there were no walls.

These same two hands that had held him before now held his hands, and squeezed them. This action was strangely calming to Dro, and so he sat up. Thoughts began to enter him again. Soon the hands had left his and were pulling at his face. He couldn't figure out what it was the hands were doing, and it began to frighten him again. Then, his hands were touching a face, and though Dro wasn't sure, he thought it was the face of the hands. He felt his fingers touch one part of the face, and the face made a motion over and over again, both up and down at the same time. Then his hands were being pushed toward his own face. He felt that same feeling in his face, and realized that he had done it even without knowing what he had done. Inwardly he searched, every time he felt his face move there was a definite

something in front of him that he sensed somehow, but did not understand. He began to sense something new, and knew that he'd caught on to something important, but at this point he was very tired and wanted only to sleep. The hands kept rousing him to wakefulness, but then, allowed him to curl up and sleep on this new, softer ground.

Chapter Three

The Law

When Dro woke again he became very excited indeed because somewhere far away he felt a feeling of something soft pour through his head and fill his senses with a strange and painful longing. The two men in gray robes came running, as he cried out, and this time he understood why - they sensed him without seeing him, and without feeling him. As he began to crawl toward the softness pouring through him they picked him up by the shoulders and helped him haul himself toward the sound. He knelt near the sound and a candle was lit. What he saw next in the bright white light of the flickering candle flame filled him with horror. There just beyond his aching knees was another world with its own candle flame and dark figures sunk into the floor that shook unnaturally and filled him with dread. As he threw himself backward the two men that held him forced his head down into the new vision and as he touched the moving world with his mouth he immediately began to suck. He felt a shock of cold fill his face and mouth. As he sat up he felt his belly fill with cold fire. Suddenly he began to remember the first few words of his dream. "I can talk," came to his lips as easily as his sight had come when he had first seen the candle. "You can?" came a voice different from his. It was the voice of his friend that had touched his face. "He can! I have taught him, Morgen!" The other gray robed figure leaned forward and said, "Amazing! Most peculiar." He then pointed gravely to himself, and spoke his name. "Morgen." Then, the friend of Dro did the same. "Trevanian." Then, the thin human Dro had discovered came into the ring of candlelight and spoke his name, "Han." Finally, Dro pointed to himself and spoke his own name, "Dro." Dro then saw the Han kneel next to the pool and place his own head in what he now knew was water. Dro marveled that he would do himself.

"It is now time," said Morgen as they sat Dro and Han upon the dirt, "to tell you who we are and to teach you the laws of this place. We are Magi because we help the sleepers to wake. Now that you are awake there are laws you must keep. You must never disobey a law, or else you could come to great injury. These first laws are for your protection, because there are bad people around that will try and hurt you if you are unsafe." They both agreed with all their hearts to obey the rules, and Morgen continued. "First, wear these." To Dro and Han he threw robes of gray sackcloth, which they put on as he had asked.

“These robes are the only type of clothing allowed here in the caves. We make ourselves look like others so that we can live free of their influence. Here are your candles.” Their friends handed them each a candle. “They are very special, and you must show them to nobody, unless you know they can be trusted. Our teachings will bring you from darkness into light. Here is how you light them.” Morgen touched the end of each candle with his finger, and light sprang forth from them, small at first, but then growing taller. “Here are your paintbrushes.” Trevanian said and handed them both a paintbrush. “You will use these for writing, when you have paint to do so. Place them in the secret pocket that is inside your robes. You must never let anyone see you when you are writing! It is illegal here. Our laws are the only ones you must keep. As you do so you will be disobeying the rule of others. Never let anyone make you ashamed of our path, the knowledge you discover, or of what you paint.”

After that, they let this information sink in for a few minutes, and, in fact, almost let them fall asleep before they started again. Morgen began again, “Your bodies, they will give you information from your senses. Some of these will be painful. When you feel this pain, know this: your body is always striving for a sense of balance. When that which is around you is affected, it also affects the way you feel inside. This place is dark, which is why you want to sleep.” Trevanian started where Morgen left off, “Here are your water flasks” he said as he carefully handed them smooth clear bottles. “If you do not drink pure water your body will soon cease to work properly. You must always smell water before you drink it. If it does not smell simple and pure you must not drink it. Some parts of your body will not get hurt easily. Your legs, for example, may be scraped and bruised, but they won’t break easily. Other parts of your body, though, will get hurt far more easily. Avoid touching or putting anything but water in your eyes, mouth, and ears. Don’t put the rocks in your mouth! They will break your teeth, and that can never be repaired. Your eyes, too. If your eyes hurt, close them! You may lose your ability to see forever if you don’t. Let nothing get in them! Your natural reaction will be to blink and tear up. That is good. If your tears do not take away your discomfort then pour water in your eyes.” “Pain,” he went on, “is the body’s way of telling you you’re hurting it, but it must often be endured, too. First, try and make the pain stop. Stop whatever you were doing to put yourself in that pain. If you cannot succeed without that pain, however, then put your body willfully through it. Sometimes pain can be a good thing. Trust in your instincts as judgment. Your instincts will return to you with time.” Then Morgen put in the last counsel: “These last laws are not the only laws of the body; other laws of both soul and body, there are, too. These laws even we must obey, and it is not evil humans in this cave against whom these laws provide safety, but it is for the nature of our own selves that these laws must be kept.”

Chapter Four

Blue Skies and Green Fields

For a long time the Magi would put Dro and Han to bed and wake them up at set times. This gave them a rhythm in which to live and tell how much time had passed. All the time he was awake Han spent practicing the rules the Magi had taught him and trying to stand. They also noticed that when Han touched his wick the fire would be green and when Dro touched his it would make purple light. Each time Han stood free of the walls, he would collapse in a crumpled heap. He was very much like a young child, trying and failing to take its first steps. One time seeing that this wasn't getting him anywhere, Han used the wall to balance himself and began to walk along it for support. Instead of stopping at the cave's edge, he continued down a dark hallway. In the caves, Han lit his green candle and saw more dark hallways and rooms such as the one in which he woke. Each room held one human being standing perfectly still atop a rock pedestal. Further away now from the caves of black dirt than he had ever been, Han saw things that he thought weren't even possible. A single cave, unhewn, had a beautiful assortment of stalactites and stalagmites, in strange and wondrous shapes fit to stir one's imagination. Wishing to raise his candle to better see the wonder, but hearing some noise nearby, and knowing the Magi's caution, he turned around and headed back.

"You'll never believe what I saw!", Han said enthusiastically to Dro when he had returned. Dro was relieved, "Han. Where were you? You went further than I could see." Han was insistent, "I saw the most wonderful place." "What did it sound like?" Dro wondered aloud. Han looked perplexed, "It didn't really have a sound to it. But it looked so weird, it had big columns of rock and other piles of rock sticking up from the floor. The place was full of magic." This brought something to Dro's lips, "did it have blue skies and green fields?" Dro went on and told Han about the dream he had once had. When he had finished, Han looked at him gravely. "Then you, too, have inspired me to leave to find these places, wherever they are. I'm going to look for beautiful things and new worlds, though they may be far away from here. I know that these caves aren't everything." This frightened Dro somehow, he said, "That's really weird, Han, that was only a dream. How do you know that your dreams are real?" "You have to find your blue skies and green fields," is all Han said. Somehow, Dro became convinced, and said, "I guess I cannot definitely say what I experience now, if I've never experienced anything else." He went on, "When I woke up, I was in pain. Existence hurts, but my dream was not painful." Han thought about what Dro had said, he went on, "Then you must want to go out there, feel some pain at first, but then have a whole new world to explore and enjoy! Right before I ascended to consciousness, I saw tons of life. There was small things and large things, and they were all in perfect harmony." Dro cut in, "Like a forest." Han was delighted, "Forest. That's a great word for it. Anyway, above me I saw a bright green light and then a cave made by man, built underneath a great tree, and the green light was like the sun

shining through the leaves. “I went inside that man-made cave, I was frightened to go in, but I did it anyway. Inside I saw an old woman, who sat me down and told me many things. She told me that worlds go on forever, and that this place is only one among millions. She also told me that I could find any of these worlds I wished, if only I went against the current that led me to darkness. Dro, I’m sure if you could only hear the things she told me, you would see, too, why we must go.” “Your words ring true to me” Dro said. “We must have used to live there, in my green fields and in your forests, but we’ve forgotten. I’d do anything to see those places again, That is why I will leave with you even if we might become lost and never able to find our way back.”

Chapter Five

The Pit

Han took a look around him. Every ten steps, without fail, was another open portal as far as the eye could see in either direction along long tunnels that branched off to the right and left. These rooms housed the sleepers that made no sound besides a very light breathing. Sometimes Dro and Han would see a wrinkled sleeper with its dry crusty mouth walk out of its door and into the darkness. The magi called this type of sleeper a door walker. Dro heard faint cries from above, and wondered if he would ever reach the mouths to which the voices were attached. They had been traveling past doorways with their sleepers for many periods of waking and sleep. The Magi had taught them directions to follow to reach other people that were awake and told them that their friend and fellow Magi was there among the people and would take them in. His robe would look green in the light of their candles. Their last warning seemed to still echo in their ears, “Do not follow the door walkers as their path leads to death. The tunnels of the sleepers travel in every direction, but the cavern of the living can only be accessed by one door. There will be false teachers there that will try to turn you back. If you ignore them you can pass through the tunnel of dead bodies and into the cavern of the living. Once there you will find a large lake to drink from, but do not take the food or the counsel of the masses of people that live there.” Dro and Han stopped to rest and find a place to sleep again. As they sat they noticed a dark tunnel unlike the rest worm its way down into the darkness. They looked forward to this time because they would be able to take a long sip of water from their flasks. They had needed to ration their water as they traveled and it had begun to run low. Just as they had finished drinking a man that was awake like them came marching down the hall. Dro leapt to his feet at the sound, and soon afterward Han turned to look, and stood up as well leaving their flasks on a rock behind them. They ran forward to see this new person, but after they had done so they wished they hadn’t.

The man spoke strangely as if he had only learned to speak out of necessity and hated the act, “What are you doing here?” his face was twisted into an ugly snarl. One of the pupils of his eyes was larger than the other. Han noticed he was not wearing a gray robe like them, but a tailored mantle of a strange color that was hard to make out in the darkness. Han said, “We’re exploring the caves here. What are you doing?” The man came forward like he was trying to grab them as he said, “You’re not supposed to be out exploring here! You should get back inside your rooms. You should get back to sleep.” Something about his face made Dro and Han wary of him, and subconsciously they took half a step back as he continued, “You aren’t going anywhere. That’s against the rules.” “Not the rules we were given,” Dro shouted as the man suddenly lunged toward them. Immediately Han and Dro bolted away with all their strength with the man close behind. They ran, and Han, being faster, quickly left Dro behind. Dro ran into the room of a sleeper and turned to see whether the man was gone, and yelled when he saw him in the doorway. Dro jumped back, but it was too late. The man’s fist struck Dro in the jaw, knocking him backward. The man struck Dro again bloodying his face as his lip split and his nose began to bleed. Han realizing what had happened had run back and picked up a rock as big as his fist. He heaved the rock at the man hitting him in the back. The man was stunned giving Dro time to run out of the room. Han grabbed Dro then and ran with him into the strange dark passage they had seen before. Panting, they crouched in the darkness and tried to be as still as they could. Dro clearly heard the footsteps of the man growing louder and louder, then dimmer as he made a wrong turn. After a few seconds the footsteps stopped. Quieter than mice, Dro and Han huddled in the darkness, muscles aching, chest burning from their panicked run. Then they heard his voice calling out almost cheerfully, “You don’t understand, I’m just here to help. You’ve lost your way. You’re confused. You’re looking for happiness where it cannot be found. I can lead you to the happiness you seek, if only you’ll follow me.” The man’s voice dipped lower. “I can lead you to water. You’re very thirsty are you not?” Thirst began to itch in their mouths and throats and they fought the urge to go to the man that now seemed somehow gentler. Finally the man walked by the dark corridor, and they saw his profile in the shadows. For the first time they saw that the skin on his forehead had been burned long before forming a thick spiral-shaped scar on his forehead. For some reason this filled them with a strange mixture of longing and even greater apprehension. Just as they felt they could take this feeling no more they ran as swiftly as their legs could carry them deep into the tunnel their footfalls echoing behind them. When the man heard the sound of their running feet he began a half-tired pursuit. Running and walking were not things he was fond of doing. When he saw where they had gone however he gave up the chase and his face slowly creased into a mirthless smile.

“When the two travelers realized they were no longer pursued they slowed to a stop. “I think that was one of the people that would hurt us severely if we disobeyed the rules,” Han said. Dro was the one hurt, but he was less able to believe that, “maybe, or maybe he was just someone who was trying to help

us and didn't know how. Still, did you see how his face looked?" "I don't think I could ever accept help from someone who looked like that," Han said. Dro went on, "We left our water flasks behind though and whatever we do our thirst isn't going to go away. I told you this was going to be trouble. We really were happy where we were with the Magi, and now you've gotten us into this mess!" "Have some faith in me, Dro," Han soothed, "we have not been out here for very long. This isn't the end of the world. Maybe this tunnel will lead us to the lake soon. The Magi said that our bodies will always search for balance. I'm sure our bodies will find balance further in the caves, and this thirst will be lessened or go away."

As they marched on Han's words seemed to come true. The air seemed more heavy and moist with every step. Suddenly they heard footsteps and panicked thinking it was the frightening man. They quickly found a crevice and squeezed themselves inside. As the footsteps echoed louder and louder from its lifeless cadence they realized it was only a door walker. As the door walker went past they came out of the crevice. Han became worried, "the magi told us to not follow the walkers," he said. Dro however was not convinced, "Well, we can't stay here. That man may come after us again soon. We've got to get into a more secluded spot to rest. Those walkers just walk around randomly anyway. We should go see where this tunnel leads. I think I smell water this way." They began to walk again following the tunnel as it began to turn down an incline and off to the left rounding past a wall ever more featureless and smooth. The realization that they had been diverted from the direction in which they'd been sent grew in them as the tunnel now opened up into a cavern larger than they had ever seen before. A cool moist wind blew past them from the void beyond. There was a deep droning sound that only Dro could hear, and it was a frightening one, unlike any of the others he had heard. He was strangely drawn in that direction and began to walk toward its source, with Han following close behind and keeping watch. What they saw then was strange and horrifying.

The floor sloped further and further into blackness until they were in danger of slipping and neither Han nor Dro dared to jump down to a lower level. In the distance Han could see an endless array of tunnels opening into the huge chamber, each one looking like a smooth worm with a wide-open maw. Dro could make out gray figures moving in the darkness just below where they were standing. In the center was a great stalactite and stalagmite that tapered severely meeting in the middle of the gigantic expanse. Thousands of creatures seemed to be sleepwalking toward that column, others were carried by stranger creatures crawling in the bottom of the hollows too dim in the darkness to see. Though Han dared not light his candle he could still see there, near the center, where the humans began to sink into the ground. The floor of the chamber was covered in water and sand. Some were up to their necks, others in up to their waists, all slowly but surely sinking into the brackish sand underneath. Upon seeing this Han gave a small noise of surprise. They tried to turn and run back into the tunnel before they could see if anyone had noticed them, but to their horror they saw that behind them there were several door walkers

all heading out of the tunnel into the huge chamber and threatening to push them into the maelstrom of doomed bodies. They had never been so close to a door walker and as they made contact with the one in front of the group they smelled its dusty wheezing breath on their faces. Though they could tell that it could not see them its hands grasped them and carried them along with the momentum of several other walkers behind him all pushing them towards the edge. They began to desperately push back with all their strength, but their feet kept sliding towards the edge. They were almost ready to surrender themselves to destruction when the walker seemed to realize it could reach the edge easier without them and let go. They then quickly fought their way back into the tunnel, feeling a greater fear than they had ever known. After they followed the tunnel back the way they had come for a while, and their breathing had slowed, the halls were every bit as quiet as they had been before. Soon they had made enough progress traveling back to where they had fled from the man and were both getting quite tired, they decided to stop for a while and discuss what they had seen, but the scene in the huge room had been so unnatural that neither one was able to define it or even hypothesize a meaning for it.

Chapter Six

The Highway

The next time they awoke, Dro and Han knew that they had to return to and pass through that same hallway in which they'd encountered the awful man. They decided it would be best if he did not see them again. After awhile the man they were dreading did appear, but when Han spotted him, they ducked into a depression in the hallway until he was at a safe distance, then continued in the direction the Magi had pointed. Along the way, they began to notice a change in the way the caverns were formed. The walls were no longer so dark and smooth, in fact, they were often rough, and had interesting patterns in them. Dro heard the cries from above them louder now, along with strange echoes along the walls that often made him jump. The walls made the air around you look brighter. It was a gray limestone slowly making its way into the composition of the walls. Soon Han and Dro saw a flickering glow lightening them intensely.

It was the light of a lit torch in a large chamber a considerable distance from them. As they approached cautiously it was so bright that Han and Dro soon saw the shadow of a man playing on the surface of the walls ahead. They began to overhear two men talking to each other. "I am here to tell you that is a cursed awful place—a catacomb filled the bodies and spirits of the dead. There is no space to walk or move. Let me give you a nice little room to rest. After you sleep awhile you can continue your search." The other man was insistent however, "I am looking for my daughter, and I need to go back to where I last saw her." The first man cut in however, "just rest first. I will know where your room is and if

I see her I will send her your way.” This seemed to placate the man. Dro and Han could see the shadows of the two men walking away together. They had had only one other encounter with a human, and they avoided this other man as forcefully as they could, waiting what seemed like an eternity after the two men had left to enter the large chamber. On the far side of the chamber they saw a large doorway framed by lit torches. On the large stone doorframe and next to the doorway on the walls there were hundreds of human skulls carved. As they cautiously approached they suddenly saw a man in black robes sitting on the floor with his back against the wall. Dro grabbed Han and tried to pull him back where they had entered, but they both soon saw that the man was fast asleep. Knowing he could wake at any moment they quickly crept past him through the evil looking doorway and into the darkness.

The caverns beyond the doorway were like a large highway with a main esplanade and other tunnels to either side traveling the same path. Soon however they began to smell an awful stench that smelled like dead bodies embalmed with fragrant spices. After their next sleep Dro and Han encountered piles upon piles of human bodies. The bodies had not decayed, but the faces of bodies seemed strangely bloated and their hair was thin and bleached. On the walls of the tunnel there were large niches carved where human bones were stacked haphazardly. Before they slept again the thirst and hunger in Han and Dro grew. In fact, it became all Dro thought about. Hunger and thirst was a curse that afflicted him far more greatly than it did Han. Still, they made excellent time traveling the main tunnel as it wound higher and higher and had gone much further then they would have anticipated before they slept.

As Han slept he had a dream. He looked up into deep blue skies which were fading into night. As he starred into the sky he saw a huge white swan and on the back of this swan was riding the most beautiful girl Han could possibly imagin with flowing blue hair. In this moment Han felt the feeling of love that he knew had awoken him into the first green realm of life he had visited. The girl looked at him and said, “I am coming.”

When they woke again they could hear voices quite clearly and knew they would find the large cavern with the lake before they slept again. Han was about to tell Dro about the dream but didn’t find a way to say it. Soon they began to fade however walking listlessly. They found themselves in such a state when they came upon a pile of human bodies that completely blocked off the main tunnel. Dro heard voices directly behind the bodies. They seemed to be talking of how to clear the tunnel. Staggering off to the right they found another passage. After walking a long time they felt to the end of their small tunnel and happened upon a room full of stalactites and stalagmites. In a rush of recognition Han remembered the place that had made him want to see new worlds in the first place. They sat down to rest and Han told the Dro how it was a source of inspiration to him. They soon got up realizing they had to keep moving or collapse with thirst.

They found a tunnel on the far side of the room that opened into a tall chamber. The tunnel's exit however was more than halfway up the side of the cave, and there seemed no way to get down. Han was the first to peer out of the tunnel, and when he saw this, he turned to Dro, "it is far too dangerous to try and jump from this height, I will tell you what we have to do. I will climb to the bottom and then help you as you climb down." Han then turned himself around and slowly began to lower himself down from the ledge at the opening. Dro became quite worried. He had relied more on more on Han and the thought of being without him filled him with dread. He looked down into the darkness and saw the rough wall below from the light of his lit candle and said, "Make sure your hands have a tight grip on that ridge! Lower yourself all the way until you're hanging by your arms." Han quickly replied, "oh.... I'm doing it, but I can't hold on to the rock very well!" Dro held his candle higher and began to see the shape of the sharp stalagmites and rocks below. This filled him with a feeling of desperation and his voice became ever more hoarse and insistent, "to your right is a place on which you can rest your foot. put it on there!" "Got it!," came Han's reply. Dro continued, "now, there's a ridge to your left and slightly above you." "You need to pull up with your left hand and swing your weight over to your left side, then dig in with your toes and grab that ridge with your right hand." Han knew that Dro was right and this was the only way to get past a large overhang just below him, but his legs and arms began to shake. After a moment of gathering his strength he flung his legs over the void and to the left. As his hand grasped the firm handhold he was filled with relief "I did it!" lurched from his dry throat. Soon Han had progressed below the point where Dro could not see, but soon he had put hand under hand and leg under leg, until he had safely reached the ground." Finally Dro heard Han give a cry of relief. After Han had walked deeper into the tall chamber Dro could see the whites of Han's eyes deep in the darkness looking up at him and they both felt the magic of the moment, though they knew not how to express it in words.

Now Han had a good vantage point from below to direct Dro and soon they were together at the bottom. Boulders on both sides they now walked until they found a small tunnel. After a few yards down this tunnel they soon saw a red light growing brighter and brighter! Running, stumbling and crawling, they made their way along the tunnel with abandon. They soon found however that the tunnel happened to be much longer than it had first seemed and being quite narrow and small it took more than just a short run to complete its length. Soon it was well after the time that they would have slept, but even though the two friends became quite tired they continued running into the night.

Chapter Seven

The Great Cavern

In front of them were murmurs and cries, and Dro could hear very clearly that they were going to see many, many humans. This put both Dro and Han on their guard, and when they finally came to the small portal opening to a great cavern, they watched carefully for any signs of people watching them, then bravely strode through. What they saw was another famous first in their life experiences. The walls of the cavern fell away to encompass an expanse larger than they had ever known. The cavern was filled with a dark red light as if many distant fires were burning, but even though the red light was intense and illuminating they could not see the end of the cavern. As they emerged, to either side of them were at least two hundred people, all of whom appeared to be awake and moving. "Look at all of them!" Dro said. "They'll kill us if they see us!" "See us? Han replied. They must have already heard us, and not one of them is looking in our direction. I don't think this is a trap or a wrong turn. We should go find the lake somewhere ahead." As they walked among the multitude of people and strange buildings and lanes they noticed however that all the people seemed to be arguing about something and stood about in groups discussing something that was troubling. They heard murmurs here and there about the lake such as, "the lake is gone! What will we drink now?" Soon they came to the edge of the people and found a huge expanse of moist and sticky mud. They realized with a shock that that they were nearly dead with thirst and the lake and all its waters had disappeared!

After resting for awhile on shore of the dried lake a man came out of the crowds and headed toward them. It took him quite some time to get over to where they were sitting, the man seemed to be almost blind and walked hunched over. Though Dro and Han were both prepared to run, his kind face and young voice put them instantly at ease. "You two seem like you know something good. Hi, my name is Hev. Who are you?" They introduced themselves, relieved to find someone that spoke to them, but did not try to hurt them. Hev continued. "I want to know what you know." Dro was perplexed, "What do you mean, know what we know? We've had a long journey and it would take a long time to relate all of it." Hev went on, "You two came out of the Deep. Why do you want to go out instead of in?" "Oh, that," Han said excited, and eagerly told this new human about his dream and his desire to see new things. He told him some of what the Magi had told, though he said nothing about candles or writing. When he had finished, the new human looked eager to tell his own story, and so Han kept silent and began to listen.

"You see, some time ago I found myself walking down a hallway, and I really wasn't sure quite what I was doing or where I was going. I began to explore, just as you did, and I saw much of the places outside this place. This whole civilization of people all appear to have one thing on their minds: they feel the need to keep moving toward the darkness, into blacker and blacker places. "There are many kinds of people here - people that seem to want to make their way further into the blackness, and many people who simply want to stay where they are for a while. There are even a few who want to move back into lighter spaces, but they never do that for very long. "The fourth kind of people are very interesting indeed. They

are like guides; they show great crowds of people the way into deeper and darker caves. They have a special type of soup with them. This food is something that smells very sweet, and you can smell it from a long way off. However, I had the unfortunate opportunity to taste that soup, and I know now that its taste rivals the bitterness of Hell itself.” At hearing these words Dro and Han were worried. Dro said, “So this is the food that the Magi told us not to take, but we are filled with hunger and thirst and we need soup.” Hev cut in, “I think that’s only what they called it. They told us that drinking it would fill us with joy. I had only a sip, but I know now its purpose - it brought me to a silence which I have only recently overcome, and it clouded my mind, and destroyed my sense of judgment. “I had a dream once, that I should travel outward and not inward. I wrote down this dream on the cave walls though I was always careful to make these actions discreet. I would go up to a wall of a small cave and paint a story I had invented, of how wrong this civilization was, and how there were people who searched for happiness, and found it by journeying away from the darkness. Needless to say, I was soon discovered, my paintings covered up, and I, punished. They tried to convince me that I was wrong, and ordered me to apologize to all the people whom I had offended. They held me prisoner in their tower until eventually my faith was broken and I made my public confession. Then I was forced to drink their soup. Come with me and I will show you.

As Dro, Hev and Han neared the tower near the great wall on the edge of the cavern they heard loud shouts. The sounds in this place were much louder to Dro and Han now that they had no close walls obstructing their hearing. Soon they saw a large group of men in black robes, “Come and get your soup!” shouted one. “Food so good you won’t be hungry for a thousand years!” barked another. “Smell our good food!” “Come end your hunger here!” In the distance Han could make out many figures, standing in long lines, or laying on the ground, just waiting to drink the soup. Hev stopped them both and turned them away from the sound. “Do you smell that smell?” he said sternly. Very soon, the sense that Dro and Han had been neglecting sprang to life, and the smell of the soup came to them. It smelled sweetly, like a hundred different kinds of flowers, and the smell of spring rain, and the smell of sea air all rolled into one. This smell caused Dro to tremble for want of food, and Han to try and pull away from Hev and go toward it. But Hev held them. “If you want to know what that soup will do to you, follow me. I know of a tunnel here that will take us right to where they are so you can see.” And so Hev felt his way into a tunnel behind the lines of people and slightly to the right of them, and they followed. The tunnel rose up twenty feet, and its end connected with a ledge above the great cavern. As Hev said, it was a ledge directly in front of the area where people sat to eat the soup that they were given. What they saw was indeed nothing like they expected. After the people received their soup from three huge tanks, they went to a large area away from the lines of people and sat at stone tables to take their first sip. Invariably the person who had eaten the soup would spit it out, but one of the men in black robes would pin them against the table and take the

bowl from them, hold their mouth open, and force the contents of the bowl directly down their throat. The people would then go into convulsions, walk around dizzily for a few seconds, then cover their immediate surroundings with milky-white, sweet-smelling vomit. They would fall and lay in it choking and then go completely limp. What happened next was the most horrifying of all. Their hair would thin and change color, the skin around their mouths and throats would bloat making their cheeks hang loosely about their faces. Their limbs would become thin and disfigured, and their eyes would sink deep into their skulls. When they next stood, they had become the semihumans that Dro and Han had seen in the deepest portions of the caves. These horrible figures would then be dragged away, or, if they could move, they would make their way themselves into a great hallway that Han and Dro assumed was the highway they had traveled until the piles of bodies had barred the way. The place was filled with such an evil that Han turned around and retched violently, but his stomach was empty and little more than air came out. Hev then turned and told them coldly, “This is the soup of which I tasted. Don’t ever take one sip of it, or what you have seen will happen to you.”

Chapter Eight

The Dwelling of Elose

The three friends sat talking in a large area that had a lot of stone benches. Han had begun to make connections in his mind and discussed them with Dro and their new friend, “so people drink the soup and then mindlessly go into the long tunnel and into the deep darkness where they sleep, but some of them do not survive and litter the passage.” At this point Hev nearly leapt up and excitedly interjected, “yes, I went into that evil place and lay among the dead, but somehow woke up. There at that moment I saw something strange. There was a man running in a tunnel, wearing long green robes, being followed by a little boy. They were not completely quiet, like the dead, or the mindless people walking there, and I was curious about them. I was too weak to stand or cry out to them, but from where I was sitting I could see for quite a ways down the corridor, and so I continued to watch for this man and this boy. I saw the man only a couple times after that, but then once when I awoke I saw the boy running with a dog, and darting in and out of the tunnels and seeming always to avoid the evil masters in orange, and the helpers, as they are called, in black robes that patrolled the caves. I wanted so much to write a story about them that I found the strength to stand, and to walk back to the lake where I drank from the waters and revived somewhat, but when my strength returned my sight dimmed and now soon I will be blind and die here without knowing the man, his boy or their dog.” Dro was shocked to see how cast down Hev had become as he had finished his story and reached out to grab his hand. His words soothed Hev, “When I first came

with Han out of where we slept there were many times I almost gave up hope, but our determination always helped us make it through. We will find this man and he will give us food and drink and help you see again, I know it."

And so their journey began again. Hev explained that once he had slept many times in a row at the edge of town to see if he could see the man in the green robes and that he had seen the dog there at his feet, but it had scampered away beyond his sight. This had happened just before the lake had drained away and disappeared. The next time Hev had awoken he had found Han and Dro. This time Hev had more faith and having two friends that could see he felt his way back to the spot. They went back to the edge of the cavern and soon Han saw a very small opening. Dro thought that this is where the dog must have gone and with some trepidation they entered this opening into a very small tunnel and made their way slowly crawling along through more than a thousand yards of rock. When they had reached the end, with bruised elbows, blistered knuckles and toes, and scratched and bleeding stomachs, they lay on the ground, exhausted and ready to sleep. They could not sleep, however, they were shocked to find a candle was burning in the room with a bluish light that reminded Han of the girl he had seen; and beside the candle on a table, were three bowls of soup. The three wondered if this was some trick and they would have fled, but did not have the strength to go the way they had come. All of a sudden they heard a deep, and yet kind voice, speak to them. "This soup is of the Magi. Eat it, and your time of hunger will be cured." Hev suspected a trap, but Dro went over and began immediately to scoop up the soup with his hands and lick it off his fingers. He stopped for a moment, and everyone waited with bated breath to see how he would react. A smile spread slowly, but surely across his face, and he let out a yell of joy and began to drink the soup for all he was worth. In between long slurps he told everyone that the soup was wondrous and good, and that they should all start eating it and not stop until all was finished. Han was the next to walk up to the soup, and Hev followed, and he sniffed deeply at the soup. It did not smell sweet at all, in fact, it smelled hardy and stern, a little bit like difficult advice. Hev took a tiny taste of it with the tip of his finger, and he, too, sat down and began to drink the soup.

When all were finished, there was a stillness in the room. Finally Hev looked up at the ceiling and the empty space around him and shouted, "Who are you?" The answer was as quick as it was assuring. "Come into my house, and I will tell you all." This time the three of them were quite sure of the direction of the sound, their senses having been sharpened by the ending of their hunger, and they started down a short tunnel, Hev picked up the candle and it turned from a bluish light to a warm red and he took it with them. They soon entered a larger chamber and suddenly a draft extinguished the candle that Hev held plunging them into perfect darkness. Then in the gloom Han touched the wick of his candle and its frail green spiritual fire entered the vision of Dro and Han. The deep voice then began again, "wave the flame before Hev and give him his sight". Han could see the half blind eyes of Hev reflected in the pure green

fire of the candle and the words came to him, “I am Magi because I help the sleepers to wake”. Then Hev’s eyes opened wide and he saw Han clearly for the first time. He then saw the man in brilliant green robes standing with Han and Dro. He ushered them to a niche where a gurgling spring flowed. He gathered the face of Hev in his hands and gently pushed his head down into the water of the small pool. Then a whole candelabrum lit up the whole room and a voice said, “it is finished”.

As soon as they all looked around they found the boy and his dog there beaming. The voice had been the boy’s voice, but the man in green robes did not treat him as a child. He spoke to him with deference saying, “here are the initiates of Morgen and Trevanian whom I saw in my dream. They then all introduced themselves and the three friends found out that the man’s name was Elose and he introduced the boy saying, “this is the teacher of Morgen, Trevanian, and I. His name is Nog. Immediately they all sat down in the man’s house and began to talk together. The dog was brushed off simply as a companion to Nog. There was little more conversation about them, apart from the fact that Elose had learned the soup’s recipe from Nog, and that it was made of the good fruits of the caves, of mushrooms and mosses and deep roots that grew in all directions. Han ended up having far more to tell their new friends than their new friends had to explain. Han started at the very beginning and told them how the story had gone, and their ultimate quest to reach the outside.

When he had finished, Elose merely nodded. “So, what do you think?” This question had come from Dro. Elose smiled, “It is a noble quest. I am glad you found my two brothers, that have journeyed so much deeper into Puhfervenherbm, who are true guides to people such as yourselves.”

“Puhfervenherbm?” This was a word that none of the three friends had heard before. “Could you say that again?” Dro sat forward, straining to hear the syllables of the word that had just come out of Elose’s mouth. Elose repeated, “Puh-FER-ven-her-bm. Not only is it a word, it’s a name. It’s the name of the place we’re in now.” “You mean your house?” Han said. “Yes, and the cave connecting to it, and all the caves that there are in the entire place. Puhfervenherbm is the name of the entire system, not just the caves but all the people that sleep in the caves, and all the servants that try and drive people deeper into the caves.” “Then everything is Puhfervenherbm?” Dro said incredulously. “Well, let me ask you a question.” Elose went on. “What did you feel before you gained your senses?” “Nothing, I guess.” Han said. Dro agreed, “yes, we didn’t feel at all.” Elose’s eyes now twinkled in their characteristic fashion, “so, if Puhfervenherbm is full only of people that experience nothing, wouldn’t it be closer to the truth to say that the very entity that is *nothing* is Puhfervenherbm?” “So *nothing* is Puhfervenherbm?” Hev said, “but aren’t there some things that are Puhfervenherbm? Like us. I mean, we’re here, aren’t we?” Elose then finished his thought, “Yes, we live in it, and that means there are things in Puhfervenherbm, but it’s far better to be in it than it is to be of it. The servants and helpers of the Overmind and the hundreds of thousands of persons just sitting around or sleeping here, they are a part of it. There is a greater world, a

whole world outside this one, full of light and life, the likes of which I still cannot believe I have ever seen. But I have seen it. Out there, life covers every surface, and even in the caves of the outside world, there is not darkness like you have found here. There are so many things, long, flat stretches of land covered in growth and life, mountains and valleys and pure rivers of clear water that travel constantly down to awaiting seas. At night, the sky darkens and one by one the stars can be seen, little points of light like a million distant blue and white candles burning at once.” During Elose’s long description Dro had become more and more astounded and could not keep himself from cutting in, “Blue and white and candles dancing about in the air? No offense, but it sounds kind of freakish and scary.” Dro had said it, but it was what they were all thinking. Elose laughed, “Yes, I suppose it is. I’m sure I felt the same way when I first heard about it. Now, it feels better than anything just to think about it. I think I prefer freakish to impossibly normal, now that I’ve seen it. I mean, if normal makes people act the way they do down here, wouldn’t it be better to go the exact opposite?” This got a respectful nod from everyone in the group.

After silence settled in on the group, Hev sat forward and asked a question, “If you’ve seen all that, why are you here?” Elose answered, “The three of us, my two brothers and I, were born in Puhfervenherbm, but escaped when we were still quite young, not much older than you are. We traveled far and wide, and we met three old men, who told us that there had been a war against the Overmind and about the thousands of men in need of our help back here. They taught us many things about life and how horrible it is to waste, and we decided to come back and help as many people as we could get out of this place. Once we had arrived back Nog was here to help us”. “I think, when we have seen the outside, I should like to do the same thing.” Han was the one that spoke this. Elose looked at him closely, “You just worry about getting yourself out first. Here, want some more soup?” They did. Everyone ate soup until they were full, and they were all very happy. Then Elose took out some books and showed them pictures that he had drawn of the outside. They looked at the pictures and wondered at the beauties there. Han and Dro especially liked to look at the pictures because they were beginning to realize that they had dreamed of the outside world just before they had awakened and that now their purpose and motivation from the very beginning was within their reach. Many books filled to overflowing it seemed with many words, also came down off the shelves of Elose. In these books were written scientific methods and tools for reasoning which, Elose said, would prove invaluable in the dark and confusing caves.

After a long period of deep sleep and more soup for breakfast. Elose took Han aside to another cave, and none of the others heard anything the two said to one another. When he came out, all Han would say with a smile was “I am now a Magi.” After this it was time for the three friends to learn their new responsibilities. Elose said, “I have two missions here in this place: First I am working to affect the current of public opinion in the city here, but with the lake now gone this mission will be of little use.

This leads me to my second mission and that is to find an unknown path beyond the great magma chasm that surrounds this place and hems us in. If we can find a proper path and convince the city folk to follow us then we can lead them into the caves on the edge of Puhfervenherbm and either find a good way out or raise a rebellion against the Overmind. It is in this last purpose that I need your help. We now have enough men with us to operate in two groups. You can go with Nog to find a way over the chasm while I find a large spring that I can guide the people of the city to so they will not all perish from taking the food of the Overmind."

Chapter Nine

Exploration

Thirty sleeps of exploration passed by in a flash. Nog turned out to be a great help to the company, for his sharp eyes were quick to observe any changes in the stillness of the caverns. Whenever some mushrooms or something of use was found, he would pick it up and place it into a pack that the dog carried. Higher and higher roads they sought until they were sure they were above the Chasm, but there were no tunnels that went across at that height. Once the company was taking their time crossing a hallway when a man from the city, came up from behind them and took them all by surprise. "Hello, sir." Offered Dro. "Same to you." The Man replied, "might I ask what you are doing?" "We're looking for a way across." Dro said. The man looked impatient, "Oh, that. Don't waste your time, there is no 'across.' There's no such direction!" "But there's always a direction you can go if you can see where you're going!" Han said. The man laughed, "Not always. Only fools are certain. By the way, what are you people doing out as far as here? You should head back. Out here are bad parts, empty places." "You won't try to stop us?" Nog said. "No," came the man's reply, "I only do what I can, and I've done all I can for you. So long."

The company (as they were now calling themselves) tried their best to forget that man and others like him, but to hear such things, even from the mouths of the untrustworthy, was more than a little disheartening. Still, they were not totally down, but neither were their troubles any closer to ending. Unable to cross above the Chasm, they tried to go a different direction outward from the main cavern hoping it only wound in a horseshoe around it, and discovered that it was present on every side as far as they could find. Another fifteen sleeps passed just as quickly in their second trip as the first, and soon they found themselves in unfamiliar caves next to the the Chasm stretching thousands of yards wide in a great river of liquid fire that fenced in the great cavern and its people. Several times the masters of the men in black robes that wear mantles of bright orange chased them. At that time they learned from Nog

that the man that had chased them before they had entered the highway of the dead was actually a master of the evil guides sent by the Overmind and that they had been in great peril. The only thing that had saved their lives then was the reluctance of the man to chase them further. Once after they had been chased into deeper and darker caves they came to a place where there was not one repeated pattern in the rock. There in the darkness they discussed their findings. For several sleeps they had discussed if it might be possible to build a bridge over the chasm, but in all their travels by the chasm they had not seen even one tiny hole on the other side of the Chasm. On the other side of that tall winding passage where the chasm of magma flowed there was absolutely nothing that even hinted at life on the opposite side, or even if there were any passages there. Still, the company knew there must be passages on the other side and that beyond them there was a wide world beyond. They had dreamed of it, Elose had told them about it, as had the other Magi. They knew that all they had to do was make their way out of this place and they would find a joy great as they had never before experienced, but this time they would have to return to Elose and the main cavern empty handed.

No sooner than they had decided to turn back than they came upon a young girl. She wore sackcloth, as they did, but it was cut to flow like a gown as she walked. Her hair was a bright blue in their candle flames, and Han knew her at once and also knew that he loved her. Her voice was sweet and playful. "Where are you men going?" she asked simply. "We can't find a way across the Chasm, and so we have to turn back to find our friend who can help us," answered Han nervously. "Well, wouldn't you say that's just what you did?" She said. "What do you mean? You can help us get across?" Dro said. "I can," the girl said, "Unfortunately, I can only take one of you across at a time." "Well, can you show us where this place is?" Nog said. "Of course," she said as she led them from the hollow where they had been sitting, "Follow me." To the surprise of all, she did not head them back toward the Chasm. Instead, she led them to the right away from the chasm that had been on their left several miles away. Han could not stop looking at her, but didn't dare say anything that wouldn't make sense to her. The composition of the floor changed to a solid conglomerate. It took them almost till their next sleep, but they finally made it back to the Chasm. As it turned out, the girl confirmed that the Chasm was a giant ring around all the caverns that they had been to thus far. From that subterranean world. There were only two exits, one of which was death, and the other was a bridge owned by the Overmind which only the bravest and smartest could pass and survive. Using a reasoning game Elose taught them out of one of his books, it was determined that Dro should be the first to travel with the girl, whose name was Canata, to the other side. Han felt more than a little disappointed but was reassured when she assured them that they would see her again soon. When they finally approached the chasm the girl led Dro away down a passage where they could all see the bridge from a distance. At this place the Chasm was at it's thinnest point and on a ledge higher above the magma then they had yet been there was a solid-looking wooden bridge, with two

guards standing on it. They were tall and they were dressed all in orange and black. From what the company could see in the distance, their faces were wrapped in black cloth, and they carried what looked like giant corkscrews on the ends of long sticks. They were the most frightening of all the masters they had ever seen. Canata and Dro crept toward the bridge, and if the guardians had seen them, they did not take any notice. Canata talked to Dro, whispering many things in his ear. Then Dro walked onto the bridge by himself and approached the guards. They heard the voice of Dro and the deep voices of the guardians. They talked for some time before they let Dro pass, but finally he passed over the bridge and into the small doorway on the far side of the chasm. Canata told the others upon her return that she couldn't tell them exactly what had passed between Dro and herself. She did tell them that Dro deceived them, by telling them not what he was actually trying to do, but that he was doing something else. She had also taught him how to make a deal with them. She said that he must have been both brave and smart, or the guardians would not have been fooled enough to let him through. She said that they could not also go across at this time, but that they had to wait to minimize risk to their well being. Together the four of them left for Elose's cave, but soon Canata was running off again, and where she lived or could be found, none of the others knew. Before she left, though, she said she would find them when it was safe to send another across the Chasm. When the four travelers and their dog finally arrived back to the cave of Elose after another handful of sleeps it was as empty as they'd left it - well, almost as empty. Clearly Elose had been back some time before, and had expected them back, because there was a pot of soup waiting for them when they came back. There they rested from their fifty sleeps' journey, and Nog read to them some of the stories from books in languages they could not understand. The time of rest was spent mostly in silence, however. After three sleeps, Nog went out alone in search of Elose. He told them he would come back when he had found him.

Chapter Ten

The Overmind

After he had passed the gate, Dro looked at the tunnel. It was dark, and it led in only one direction: down. He had no choice, really, but to walk until he came to a place where he could make a choice, and then hope he made the right one. But he did have a choice. He could turn back if he wished. He could tell the guard that his business was finished there. He could wait where he was until someone else came along, and then do... something else. He was just confused. If it was so important for him to be there, why was he letting himself go into such danger as this? He thought all this while walking. When he came to the end of the tunnel (much shorter than he had expected it to be) he felt a blast of wind from his left. He whipped around, and there on the wall was carved deeply, floor-to-ceiling, the shape of a spiral,

going round and round and round, deeper and deeper and deeper into the rock. From it came a voice - and immediately Dro felt his whole body go numb. "Join me - or die."

"Come," came the voice, paced perfectly with Dro's thoughts of escape. "You can't...walk away...in fact...now you must...sleep." and with that word "sleep", Dro collapsed on the floor. A low humming sound produced two orange garbed masters, who dragged Dro down a series of corridors and passageways. Finally, they reached their destination, and dumped the still form of Dro in front of the unseen form of the Overmind who was sitting in a giant throne. It was formed of pure gold in the form of a coiled serpent: the Ogweum. Sitting to his left in a series of smaller thrones were ten people who had never before stepped outside of this room, lined up in the order of the amount of orange they were wearing. Dro began to stir and then looked up only seeing the lavish throne. This did not mean it was unoccupied as he felt a presence there. Instead his eyes were drawn there by a symbol carved into the back of the tall chair. It was a spiral where the eye of the serpent should have been that curved inward into blackness. "Hello, Dro. I want you to stay asleep." immediately Dro stopped all movement. "Now, I want you to tell me everything you consciously remember. Start at the beginning and leave nothing out."

"Getting easier, isn't it?" the voice from the throne echoed horribly off the walls, fear stinging Dro like needles from every direction. "Yes, master," Dro replied. The voice returned as heavy and unstoppable as the sea "I can see you're still having second thoughts about the betrayal of your friends. I have no patience for this!" Dro immediately panicked, "Master, please! I'm doing all the exercises you taught me. Those thoughts will be gone!" "If you want to keep your memories, you had better make sure you're right."

For many days Dro was given concentration exercises there before the Ogweum throne and soon he was wondering if he had been wrong to resist at first. This new life world wasn't all bad for Dro. Those sensations of light and feeling from which he had been deprived for so long were now beginning to take their fullest form - in the study of the innermost, most sought after secrets of the mind, those thoughts that could save or destroy. For the first time since he could remember, Dro felt powerful. This wasn't the kind of power he got from reaching others or achieving his goals or learning new things - this was the kind of power he got from manipulating others, from being the controlling factor in every situation. The subjects of his manipulation were the masters that sat near the throne dressed in orange and his trainer was the Master of Masters himself, the very soul of Puhfervenherbm: Orfacious.

Dro, unlike all of Orfacious' other servants, was an experiment, to see if he could learn the secret ways and bear the hideous care of managing the caverns even as Orfacious still retained its power, continuing as his instructor. Unfortunately, Dro wasn't doing as well as Orfacious had hoped he would. He was learning the lessons well, and internalizing them, but he seemed unable to perform, as though some part of him were still holding on to the past. Since it had been Dro's pitiful request that he retain his

consciousness, if he did not make sufficient progress, Orfacious would erase all his memories and turn him into the lowest of his servants. Dro felt this possibility though everything seemed to be headed on the right path. Well, really Dro wasn't sure. He was far too scared of Orfacious to really sense how he was seen by him, and his voice gave only negative cues about his performance. He called out in his mind for help - from anyone, everyone - but there was no answer.

Chapter Eleven

The Mist

Han and Hev were resting in the cave waiting for Elose and Nog to come back when something happened. They stopped sensing. They stopped dreaming. It came without purpose or warning. They drifted into sleep and did not wake up at the proper time. Their patterns of waking and sleeping seemed to blend together. When Han next awoke he realized what had happened. Something was wrong, but what it was, he did not know. The next thing he knew Elose was shaking him awake, and he found that it had been a week since they had last moved. Elose seemed filled with worry, "take a look outside, in the caves," he said. He led Han, who was still unsteady on his feet, over to the tunnel which led to the main cave. To Han's surprise, the entire tunnel, floor to ceiling, was choked in mist. Beyond a few yards there was nothing except a dirty white to see. "What's that? What's happening out there, Elose?" Han covered his mouth and nose with his sleeve as he said this, the air around them smelling strongly of sulfur. Elose held up three bitter roots, which Elose found would help to decrease the effect of the mist.

As soon as everyone was awake they went out to see the cause of the curse on the caves. What they would find, and where they would find it, none could say. Still, they kept alert and tried their best to be brave as they walked into the main cavern, where people were staggering, pushing into each other, or laying on the ground and choking in the sulfurous smoke. The caves were unusually dark. The red light from the Chasm was now all but neutralized by the mist, and the area was so saturated that the three friends had to hold on to each other in order not to lose each other. As they proceeded deeper into the caves, though, the mist cleared out somewhat, and it was easier to see longer distances. As a result the company sat down a minute to watch the mist for any signs of masters coming their way as they talked. Suddenly they saw Nog's dog appear out of the mist. It had been missing for the past few days wandering about by itself. Soon it had trotted off and seemed to want them to follow it. They regrouped and made their way through the thicker fogs in the center, over to where they had seen the dog. Unlike the people which were affected by the mist he was not sluggish. He led them through the city and each time they turned a corner he was already halfway to the next, turning around and giving a scratchy bark to let them know he knew they were still following him.

Soon they were at the edge of the cavern and descended down a large tunnel in the form of a large staircase. This was a passage that none of them had ever been down. There were many small tunnels off to the left and right, but they did not travel into any of these and instead passed through a doorway into a large cave, at whose center stood a great altar, shiny and black. Out of the stone came a puff of mist, then another, and then huge billows of mist and smoke started pouring out of the machine, going up shafts and disappearing from sight. Soon the room was just as clear as it had been two minutes earlier. Hev, said, "So, this is what has been creating the mist!" Nog continued his thought, "We've got to tell Elose!" So without a second look at the altar they started on their way back to Elose's cave.

When they returned Hev told Elose everything they had seen. Elose said, "This thing has been set as an obstacle to keep us from talking to others or finding a way out. In order to progress, it must be destroyed." Han replied, "Could we break it open, to stop whatever is inside from producing the mist?" Elose confessed his doubts, "often when stones with evil power are broken in two both halves have the same qualities." He took them to his shelf of books and brought out a particularly old and dusty one. The Art of Antinormal was its title, and in it were many pictures and stories about brave Magi all over the world, fighting cursed objects using various methods. He turned to a large chapter of the book called Enchantments and Disenchantments, and started looking through it until he found what he was looking for. There, drawn crudely in old, runny ink, was a picture of the very thing they had seen just an hour or so earlier "Bov Machine" was its heading. Below, Elose began to read aloud to them of the machine's function and origin. "Cursed stones believed to be the result of the Failed Experiment of Life, the Bov Machine has no recipe for creation. It is, therefore, difficult to come up with an antithetic, or perfect disenchantment. Effective disenchantments include:" the book went on to list a dozen or so names and page numbers. Carefully marking the place with a flattened root, they began to search through the enormous book, reading each disenchantment and wondering how they could pull any of them off in a cave. Most of the disenchantments included sunlight, fresh plants, and other things that seemed to be so full of life, but were impossible to reach in this cave. Finally, they were on the last listing. "Universal Disenchantment," was all it said. Elose flipped the book to its front cover and pulled back three leaves. There, right where his fingers were still gripping the page, was a small article dedicated to the "Universal Disenchantment". Elose read aloud again, though this time showing some excitement in his voice. "When all else has failed you, return to the simplest principles of the struggle between good and evil. In a place where the bad is the ruling power, the presence of even a little good can counteract even the most powerful of enchantments. This disenchantment will work anywhere, at any time, if it is a time when it is most needed. "Find an object endowed with goodness and the light of life. Its size shouldn't matter, though an object of great evil may require a larger or more potent object of good. By allowing the two objects to touch each other and their influences combine, the two will counteract each other." "It's a

marvelous idea!” said Han. The next day the company left to pursue objects of obvious goodness. The tunnels seemed to wind longer and the caves much darker with the mist that now hung like a spread hand in every corner and crevasse. Through the caves they wandered, and it seemed that each new cave was more bare than the last. Above and below them, now contained only smooth, gray limestone. The places of beauty that they had seen before now seemed to hide themselves, making themselves impossible to find. The masters were nowhere to be found, replaced now by great clouds of mist that moved in between the people, causing them to grow ever stiller.

Chapter Twelve

The Man

When Dro heard his first word of encouragement from the Overmind he began to realize just how much he had hoped for it. “You’ve made remarkable improvement.” The Overmind said, “despite the fact that any simpleton with a free will can do this without effort, I am quite proud of you.” Dro stood there in his new orange robes, sweating and looking proudly on at the twitching body before him. This man had been dreaming about the outside. He was scared and angry because he knew he was guilty of the same. The voice of the Overmind returned, “Yes, now you’re beginning to understand. My Servants and Helpers know only of me, but my Masters, as you, have their free will, they dream of places outside this cave, some even know of them. It makes it easier to do what they have to do.” The control...Dro was still giddy with it. Half an hour ago no horror could have fazed this man. Now there was nothing in his mind, except the memory of pain, and that, too, would soon be gone. Dro had done it from start to finish, approached the man in friendship, listened to what he had to say eagerly, then led him down the path to this place, all the time letting the man believe that they were headed for escape. Deeper and deeper the man went, and Dro stopped leading and began following. The man hardly noticed the difference. When at long last he reached the Ogweum chamber, the place looked to him to be completely empty, and there appeared to be no entrances or exits. Dro had built the illusion. Then Dro told him, told him so convincingly that his dreams could not take him where he wanted to go, because where he wanted to go did not exist. Then in a swift motion he deprived the man of his sight entirely. The man cried like a baby. Dro did not allow himself to take any more of the man’s thoughts, he wanted the man to undo himself, as the effect then would not be reversible. Dro did allow himself to listen inside the man’s mind for a moment, and he was pleased with what he heard: “I knew it! I kept trying to tell myself otherwise, but deep down I knew it was true. How could I have been so stupid?” The despair the man felt earned Dro a great deal of respect from the Descending Ten, the Masters who executed the will of Orfacious in the caverns below the throne

chamber. Above them and below them Dro could hear the voices of men under his control. He was now a Master. Orfacious was still sickened by his presence, and threatened ever more convincingly that he would erase his thoughts, but he was a Master now, and that was enough motivation for him to continue in his studies.

Chapter Thirteen

The Dritseh

Two small candle flames entered the room. Han greeted the two Magi with a warm embrace. "Who are these people?" asked Hev. "These men are Morgen and Trevanian, they are the Magi that brought Dro and I into existence," Han said. "We've come to pay our brother a visit, and to see how you have fared," Trevanian said. "Also, the three Magi have not been together in quite a long time. We're going to stay for several sleeps from now when it will be the Dritseh, in which you, of course, are quite welcome to participate." "A most magical time when great lights appear and great lights can be created," Morgen said, "No master, nor servant, can interrupt it. It is the time when candles can be made." He then looked at Han and said, "Also, a time when evil is at its weakest, and can be conquered."

For four sleeps each time they woke, Han would tell the Magi some of the things the company had gone through, and the Magi would tell him stories about people long ago. The Magi had not told them anything else about the Dritseh, they simply reminded them to keep building their strength and to keep their eyes closed as much as possible. Not once did the Machine or their failed attempts to destroy it enter their minds.

Then once instead of sleeping at the set time the Magi led them back through the main cave, leaving through one of the tunnels near where the soup of the Overmind was served. Usually the place was filled with a throng, but now with the mist and the late hour the area was deserted. The mist piled higher and higher on the ceiling, like wet clay falling from a potter's wheel, only in the reverse. As they entered the tunnel they made a left turn, down a series of hallways into a secret door which they had never noticed before. Of course, they must have been near it at some time, but with everything filled with mist the way it was, there was no telling where they really were. Before they entered the secret door Han looked above him. He could see the ceiling here. The mist was not very thick in this place, he was with Magi however, with the power to heal or wake, or possibly even drive out an evil spirit. The tunnel curved inexorably downward and it wasn't very long at all before the Magi were far ahead of the company. They waited patiently for their friends to catch up, then continued walking. This cycle continued for at least another three rounds, as the company arrived out of breath. The heat in the tunnel was more and more oppressive and seemed to radiate from the walls. Han noticed that small amounts of

the mist were still present like coils of smoke racing across the ceiling. None of the company were sure just how much time passed.

When they got to the cave that the Magi had chosen Trevanian mentioned that they had traveled six miles. Han and the others were surprised. "This is the Dritseh," Elose said. "Many unusual things happen on this night. Your quick movement will not be the first such thing. Do you now realize why you have gathered your strength?" The four of the company sat down at one end of the cave as they were instructed, facing the three Magi and the empty cave around them. The room was in the shape of the waning moon, which they had studied about in the books of the Magi, there was dirt on the floor and rocks of all shapes and sizes stacked along the walls. One thing bothered Han, though. The place was dark - very dark, and certainly not the kind of place he liked to stay. When they were settled, Morgen stood before the company, arms spread wide. Trevanian sat on his left, and Elose on his right. Suddenly, the room became even darker than it had before, and none of them could see even the outlines of anything. A good smell of fresh air came over the room and above them, they felt the mists depart. Then, there came a noise, like the sound of tiny rocks being rolled against a hollow stone. The sound continued, and above them, they saw the ceiling begin to glow with the very faintest of gray light. In the light, they could see Trevanian in deep concentration sitting on Morgen's right, and Morgen himself concentrating, his arms lifted high above his head. The gray light grew brighter and brighter, until nothing resembling the original ceiling was left. Above them, it seemed the world had no end, just alternating swirls of white and gray, with the sound echoing around the room and coming at them from all sides. Elose lowered his arms until he was holding them out to his sides, and some of the gray color drained out of the ceiling and splashed up against the walls. Around and around the white and gray swirled, and somewhere high above a faint yellow light began to glow, as well. Next, Elose leaned forward and appeared to apply himself as the others had. The floor below them grew greener, as the ceiling grew grayer. soon the green spread to the walls as well, and the company found themselves in a world where green and gray were at war with one another, pushing against each other, each one carrying its own space.

Then, the sound stopped. Trevanian stood and walked toward Han and Hev. "Han, Hev, you must take the images from your own dreams and project them onto the walls. Do as we have done. I need you to provide us with sounds, and smells, and textures. Do also as we have done." Then, seven working as one, they sat and quietly pushed their minds to the limit, willing the walls to display what they had imagined or remembered. Han pulled from his mind his second memory, that of the great expanse of trees, and the old woman's cave. Hev pulled from his mind stories he had written long ago, of great oceans of water and of men living upon it in great floating cities. The opposite sides of the room began to take shape with their new colors and patterns. Hev remembered the first echoes of his mind, and he placed them in between the trees he began to see form. Nog took sounds of wind and insect and the many

movements of water and air, in their every combination.

Finally, From somewhere else entirely, came a blue sky - the grayness came off in great strips, though some part of it remained, and above them was an arrangement of the purest clear hues of blue that any of them had ever seen. It made the roof look a hundred times taller than it looked when they came in, but there was still something missing... From Han's dream, he remembered the great light above him, and somehow it seemed important to add. Through the new sounds, he called to Morgen. "Morgen, what is missing from the sky?" "Don't worry, it will come later." and so they concentrated, and blurry lines became sharp and clear, and indistinct noises had a direction and a source and a frequency. Finally, as though he were setting a great stone into a holder, Morgen dropped his hands. As he did so, Elose told them that they, too, could stop concentrating.

They opened their eyes. They were no longer standing in a cave. They were now standing in a forest. Above them stretched an endless blue sky. To their right, trees without number blanketed the green expanse around them. Underneath their feet, they felt the softest of textures, that of grass and mud and moisture, unlike any feeling they had ever had. All around them came unusual noises and smells that were somehow very familiar. To their left, they saw a great river emptying into a vast stretch of water. There they heard the call of wild animals, the roar of the water hitting against itself and where it met land, and they heard more noises and smelled more smells that seemed familiar only to a certain extent. They dared not walk toward any of it, for fear they would break the spell. Han threw caution to the winds and plucked up a flower from the ground. There, in his hands, was a piece of life. It was fragrant beyond compare, and though it faintly reminded him of the soup, it was clearly natural and good, whereas the other only reminded him of evil.

Elose gave the members of the company each a stone he had picked up from the ground. Nog put his down, and Elose did not argue. Looking at each of them deeply, Elose placed a hand on the head of Han, then Hev, and finally his hand came to rest upon Nog's head. Nog picked up his rock again, and, bracing his legs, hurled it into the air. The other three gasped. Surely the rock would hit the ceiling and break the fragile vision they had created! It did not. The rock sailed high into the air, defying everything the company knew. Morgen put a hand toward it, and it did not fall, instead it went higher and higher, until it, too, became part of that vast overhead painting of the sky.

Trevanian raised a hand, and a sound unlike any they had ever heard came out of the rock and floated to them below. Again and again it sounded - like many rocks hitting against many other rocks, but so much softer, more smoothly. Something about the sound filled them with a joy they could not describe, and as they looked, the rock began to flow brighter and brighter, so bright, that they could no longer open their eyes. As Han stared from behind his eyelids, he saw again that bright green light he had seen before - he felt his eyes water, perhaps from the memory, perhaps only from the shock of the incredible light.

Then, the light moved across the sky, and went behind the trees and disappeared.

Tentatively, each of the four opened their eyes. The vision was still there, now there was only a faint light coming from somewhere or everywhere behind the trees, and below them, all was much darker than it had been. The sky was now of a much deeper hue, and darkened visibly as they looked upon it. Elose stood again in front of Hev, and this time motioned for him to do as Nog had done. Hev did not hold back, and his rock went yet higher into the air. Trevanian waved his hand, and the rock remained where it was, this time playing a sound very much like the one they had just heard, but different. Still slow, still soft, but somehow different in a way they could not yet sense. The rock began to glow, and Han winced, closing his eyes. Brighter and brighter, too, this rock grew, but it never reached the brightness the other had. Suddenly Han knew that this was the moon that he had read about. It was round and full.

Han turned and beheld a wonderful sight. The trees were swaying with the wind, the texture of the night air distinctly different, and almost flavorful in its aroma. He looked behind him and saw the calmness of the water, gently rolling and swaying in the night wind. Han turned to Morgen to ask him a question that returned suddenly to his mind. “Morgen, how can we acquire magical-“ “Now is not the time for questions, Han. You, too have a stone. Now is the time for its use.” Han turned to Elose, who gave him a nod, and Han tensed his muscled and threw his stone into the air. There was another sound, but it was not the sound of rock hitting against rock, nor was it the kind of sound they had heard before. Instead, it was like a great rock falling from a great distance, or the sound of a rolling boulder hitting a wall. The sound hurt their ears, but by the time they had their hands up to cover them, the sound had stopped.

The Magi bade them look up. Above them they saw a thousand floating splinters of rock, spread across their whole view and hovering just inches above their heads. Morgen raised his hands to the sides of his head, and each of the tiny rocks began to glow with an intense light. The company were about to again shield their eyes when all three of the Magi raised their hands, and the rocks zoomed yet higher than either of the first had gone, arranging themselves in strange patterns as they went. Slowly, the entire scene began to rotate, and the Magi then turned to the members of the company. “These sights and sounds came out of your own minds, not ours. And yet, they are perfect replicas of places which you do not remember seeing, or hearing, or feeling before. Han,” and it was Morgen that was speaking, “I want you to remember the look of this place, and keep it with you always during your adventures to the outside.”

“Hev, teacher Nog,” Elose came and held both of them by the shoulder, “Your eyes will behold these places. When you do, remember this time, and remember the many deeds which you have done that brought you to this point. Be proud. You have seen the Dritseh, seen by none save Magi and their friends, the future Magi.” Finally, Han asked his question. “How can we find magical items?” Trevanian was the

first to answer. “Magical items can be found in many places. Where you look determines what you’re looking for.” “But we’ve looked for everything and can’t find anything.” “Then you’ll want to make them instead, probably. That’s the proper way.” “How can we make our own magical items, then?” “Oh, well, that depends on your own taste. The making is up to you.” “But we haven’t any idea where to begin!” “You could begin with a magical occasion.” with that, he said no more. “But... how can we have a magical occasion when we don’t know how to make magic by ourselves? Please, Trevanian, tell me how I can do this. I don’t know how.” “The night is still young. Maybe you’ll come across a few good ideas.” It was Elose that spoke next, and gave Han a wink. “Han, we have to leave. You can spend the night here, among this vision. It will disperse within the hour, but most every tunnel, every cave, will be a safe place, so long as you return to us before tomorrow evening. Now is the time for sleep, and when you wake, for an adventure. Good night!” Morgen spoke at the last, and the three Magi, two robed in gray, one green, passed single file through the veil of the vision out of sight.

Chapter Fourteen

The Master

“I am... Master.” Dro pulled back his hood and stood in the crowded room. The noise they were making was incredible. Some were walking toward the outside, some toward the inside, others just stood there, and spoke to one another in loud voices. Each one of these people had their own free will. As his final test, Dro was to deprive them all of it. He studied the situation for half an hour, letting his mind seek every corner and look into every mind. Here the people were all seeking something, something about which they were not sure. Beneath this lurked their more carnal desires, something Dro was certain could be used to his advantage. Behind him, the Descending Ten were jeering. Dro had stolen much of their power since he had arrived, and they were glad to see he was so perplexed by the situation. They knew that this performance was timed, and if he was not quick enough, his mind would be erased and their power returned. None said a word, in the Ogweum way, they rejoiced in his mistakes, and allowed him to make as many of them as he could.

Orfacious watched silently, never once looking into Dro’s mind, as was his custom with these tests. Dro was the type to waste time, but he thought that Dro had been making such progress since he had begun his coaching. Every other Master had started immediately to control the weak and persecute the strong, but perhaps that was only because they were under more direct coaching. As it seemed now Dro would be unable to even attempt such an enormous task as this, Orfacious made a mental note that free will can only take someone so far before it fails them. It occurred to him ironically, that he, too, had this

free will.

Dro looked into their minds, looked for patterns in the chaotic freedom of thought they enjoyed. He saw now that his only means of success would be in something radical, something which would make no sense to Orfacious or to the Descending Ten. Something came to mind, and he was sure it was not his own thought or the thought of Orfacious. This thought was from an entity still craftier than either of them. Dro stood quickly, which awarded him a gasp from the Descending Ten, and raised his hands to his temples. His mind began to settle over the rock of the area, and it reached out and beckoned his thoughts. Soon he and the rock were one. Upon the rock, there began to appear colors and shapes, which slowly settled into one another to make pictures. Pictures of things on the outside, which these people did not know, but instantly recognized as familiar. Soon it seemed to them as though the cave never existed, only this place which they now knew as their home. To the left and to the right they heard voices, people calling to them, beckoning, telling them about promises and light and things they desired. Food. Clothing. Companionship, beauty, and the promise of freedom and independence. Bright pictures hung on the walls appealed to their hungers and their lusts, to their desires of individuality and the growing thirst to fit in, be part of the bigger group. Left and right they ran, spending their time staring at the things they could never have, some giving their very souls to gain what they saw in those pictures. And so, wearing brightly-colored clothing and carrying with them wealth and power and things of no use that they could not explain their desire for, they danced gleefully deeper into the caves. They were soon followed by the majority of the crowd, each one succumbing their free will to Orfacious simply for the chance to follow these people.

After that, there were the ones left in the room, unable to pay their souls for one reason or another. These were lost in loneliness and despair, and still others ran into darker places out of the sheer confusion of it all. Eventually, there were only three that retained their free will, and Dro took these over individually, imposing on them the fear of the passage of time. "You can't do that!" It was Descending Four, and behind him were Three and Five. "That's not the way that it's done! These people will forget your vision and return, and you will have failed!" "Individuality was the purpose of my creation." Dro said in a deadly tone. "Search their minds, they are every bit as doomed as you are now." He said this last sentence with a grin on his face, and raised his hand. Their free wills dissipated into his, leaving only seven of the orange-clad aides. "All right, that's enough." Orfacious' voice made it clear that the test was over, and none of the Ten should say anything further. "It is not usual to say that any of these events constitutes an act of genius, but this has not been a usual event. In you, Dro, I can feel no more trace of love for your friends, for the Ten... not even for me. You love only the power, and I now know that I underestimated you. This act, however, constitutes a threat to my authority. For that reason, I cannot give you the power that you seek." The Ten looked quite pleased at this, as they knew what would happen

next. "I won't however, take away the power you have won for yourself. You will retain your free will and everything I have given you. Also, you may return at any time to receive supplies from me." The remaining Masters began to protest, "What?! Master, but he has," but Orfacious would not allow them to speak, "He did the task. I would have let him destroy all of you and have him take your place, but he has done the task too well. Now even I fear him." Dro pulled his hood back up over his head and walked out of the enormous room, now empty, except for three blind and deaf wanderers.

Chapter Fifteen

Awake in the Night

Calmly and peacefully the three of them slept, tired from the rendering of the vision. Finally, a loud noise jolted them awake. Roused and scared of attack, they quickly remembered the words of the Magi and calmed down. Above them and to the right, the very bright light appeared again, only it, along with the rest of the vision, was fading. Details began to blur and fade into the background. Like waking from a dream, everything was clearing away slowly, and the company made the transition from the world of the vision back into the world of reality. It was as though the seams were breaking from a piece of fabric - big pieces of the vision were thrown off, small fibers scattered and melted into the walls and floor. Finally, all that was left were the faint rocks that had arranged themselves in patterns in the sky, the brightest rock, and the lesser one. Along with these stood a solitary tree. With a sound that made them cringe, the light seemed to scatter in all directions, and around them they heard the noise of rocks hitting against the cave walls, rolling and bouncing and finally coming to a stop. The vision had ended. "Hey, wait a minute." Nog was the one that spoke. "I think I know how to get rid of the Machine."

It was still the dead of night. No one was tired, however. Suddenly they were filled with an excitement they hardly could understand. In their pockets they now held the magical items they needed, and nothing stood between them and the destruction of the Machine. Carefully they picked their paths, making sure they didn't lose their way as they crawled underneath the mist and into the cave where soup was served. The vast room was dim and hard to navigate, but soon the company was on the path back to the altar stone. "We're going to do it! We're going to destroy the Machine tonight!" "I know, I can hardly believe it myself. The Magi are going to wake to quite a surprise!" "Will they? I mean, they did drop us a hundred hints about tonight being the night." "Yeah, but how could they know that we would find these?" Hev's hand pointed to his pocket. "You're right. They'll probably be really surprised!" Their course was a steady march down the same tunnel and unusual stairways they had first encountered, now going forward, now turning left, then right. The mist grew thicker and thicker above them, until they could hardly stand

the smell and their vision was restricted even when they had their faces to the ground. From below them they could hear noises and the sound of metal hitting against stone. "The Machine must know we're coming," Nog tried to whisper, but in the silence around the company it sounded like hoarse shouting. The stairways were getting steeper now, much, much steeper than they remembered, thin, brittle steps dropping down as far as three feet a step, until they were all hanging on for their lives, taking as carefully as they could one step at a time. Below them there was no mist, but fresh air did not reach their lungs. They smelled something different.

Below them blackness hung in the air, grinning its deadly promise, each stair they could see below forming a sickly smile. At the lower steps, the stairs were already cracked, strange footprints already cutting into the dust, both signs that masters had walked there. Hev came upon the first such stair and warned everyone to be on their guard when they reached the bottom. The company took his advice early and became frightened right then. When at last the steps stopped and the tunnel continued, each of the three looked back up the steps, silently expressing their worry about ever getting up them again. The steps were chipped and brittle, and they had cracks all up their length. They didn't look like they could survive the journey of even one more traveler, and certainly not three. Hev then turned and walked to the end of the tunnel, the others following quickly behind him. At the end of the tunnel, Han peered into the darkness. The stone looked blacker than ever, and its mist was thicker and whiter than ever. In the darkness they saw four glowing faces, the face of the master that once attacked Han and Dro, a face they had never seen, who was holding in his hand a stone in whose center was a spiral-shaped groove. That stone too, shone with that palest of white lights, and the last was coming from a face they could not see. The figure's head was hooded in a black robe, and he stood upon the altar, straddling the dark stone, letting the mist wash over him.

At length Han stared into this cave, filled with such evil as he had never seen in a single room. There were a dozen Guardians there of a kind which he had only seen guarding the bridge. Each held a forked spear, with two enormous barbs at the end. All seemed to be focused on that stone, except the hooded one, who was facing the entrance. In fact, were he only to lift his head, he would see them! Immediately Han pulled everyone past the cave's opening and into a pit near the entrance. "I believe," came a voice smooth and flowing, "that we are no longer alone in this room."

Silently in that pit, Han, Hev, and Nog began to panic. Han was the first to vocalize his fears. He whispered, "They know we're here. What can we do? They'll come looking for us." Hev began to argue, "But tonight is the Dritseh! The Magi said that every cave was safe!" Han had remembered their words more accurately, "They said every cave back to the home of Elose was safe. They also said that we ought to have an adventure, but one whose dangers we would have to take upon ourselves. The master in black robes must have already saw us. Their guards could be waiting for us out there!" Nog cut in, "quiet! They

might be listening to every word we say!" The three shut their mouths after this and tried not to make any noise of any kind. Suddenly huddled there together all of their fears were no longer important to them.

This is because they realized that the destruction of this machine, on the night of the Dritseh, meant getting out of Puhfervenherbm. Getting out was more important to them than life.

Three beings stood as one, and climbed out of the pit into the cave filled with masters.

Immediately the one in black robes wasn't the only one looking at them. They turned away from the stone to face the intruders, with the look of hatred in their eyes. The enormous Guardians raised their barbed spears and pointed them directly at them, some just inches away from their faces. The three froze, half in fear, half out of instinct, knowing that if they ran they would surely be killed. The one in black robes stepped out of the smoke and stepped down from the altar. His face glowed so brightly now that they could see its outline through his robes. In one smooth motion he pulled them off his face, and the three had to squint for a moment to adjust to the new light. "Han, I have been waiting with such eagerness to meet you again." "Dro?" it was a collective word from all three, peering into the eyes of this master with puzzled looks on their faces. "I had such an interesting time on the other side. Wouldn't you believe it? I went to the very edge of the caves. There is no exit, after all." Dro pointed to one of the guardians. The guardian immediately thrust the barbed spear into Hev's neck. There was a loud snap, and Hev went limp.

Nog reached into his pocket and threw the brightest rock from their vision into the air.

Immediately that strange sound returned, the stone shone again like the sun, and blinded everyone in the room. Screams of pain were everywhere. Out of Han's pocket fell the dimmer stone striking the ground with a hollow sound, and out of Hev's pocket, though he hung limply from the barbed spear, came a thousand tiny pebbles. Each of the pebbles were glowing with a light which increased until they were as bright as a thousand candles. The Guardians turned and fled. Han heard Hev's body fall limply to the floor and the clatter of the spear still impaling his neck as it hit the ground. Han tore his eyes away from Dro's face and rushed to Hev's side. Dro could feel the love of Han as he held Hev, and his powers left him leaving behind a empty hole in his consciousness, as he fell to the floor. The pebbles littered the floor around the altar stone and then glowed like the fierce embers of a dying fire. A feeling of great evil filled the room, as though the evil thing was putting forth its every resistance as the rock lost it's jet-black look and became a dull, metallic brown. The mist and the feeling of evil then faded as though it had only been a vision.

Chapter Sixteen

Music

Music. Rhythms within rhythms, harmonies played on a simple stringed instrument, six thin,

strong strings, plucked by an artful and skilled artist. I could not see the music, nor could I hear, specifically, what direction it came from. There it was, though, taking hold of my every sense, making me see and feel as well as hear the music. A living force it was, reminiscent of life itself, beautiful whether happy or sad, fast and complicated, slow and relaxed, the anticipation of a final note. I exerted all my effort to turn my head and look up. My head felt like a great stone. To my surprise my head was cradled in Hev's lap. He smiled radiantly, but said nothing, simply picked up his instrument, and began again to play. A majestic tune this time, in a minor key, then switching quite unexpectedly into a major key. Back and forth he switched, never once repeating a melody or harmony. The first theme reminded me of long journeys I have taken, the second, of sitting at Elose's feet and being told that people like myself had escaped Puhfervenherbm. The third, of the stories Hev had told me before. The fourth, of our chance meeting with the enchanting blue-haired Canata. And on and on it went, each theme bringing back memories of adventure and the hope of greater things to come. I finally felt my memories returning, my feelings, my soul. How lost I had been! Though I retained my free will, I had not used it. I began to weep as I realized that I was a slave to the very things that I had used to enslave others. Fear, want, and hatred of the unknown. We sat there in silence, the empty air around us filling an hour of our lives. Hev opened his mouth and said but few words. "You have set me free and for this service I will walk with you until you recover, as fully as one such as you can recover. You will return to your friends, but I cannot come with you."

Once Dro roused himself through the caves they walked, up staircases made in steep rock by a yet older generation of inhabitants, and into low-ceilinged caves lined on both sides with rare crystals that glowed in the darkness. They saw the stout people of that age as they built their halls inside the mountain and cherished it. They saw many banquets as they assembled in their finery. They were musicians too. They would play great drums until they fell asleep in their halls. The great cavern was full of their herds nourished by the dried grasses they bought from the lands about them. Dro would wake to the sound of the stringed instrument, and every sleep the tune changed, and every sleep a new memory was awakened in Dro's mind. Like a second awakening, he felt himself opening up again to new truths and new senses. Every sleep he felt less and less of Orfacious' grip upon his mind. Eventually Dro began to see the mountain change. He saw the coming of the Overmind. The centuries of time passed and they walked on. They walked like this, for many sleeps, so many that Dro lost count. They passed through every hall, cavern, and pit in Puhfervenherbm as Dro felt with his hands every smooth, rough, and finally wrecked and blasted wall. Finally Dro realized the reason for what the Overmind and his masters did there. The main cave still held the livestock of the master of Puhfervenherbm. He fed on those trapped there and had gained power and immortality. Many lives later he saw the epic war that brought hundreds of thousands of young men to the great cavern. They had rushed inside the great door of the mountain with a great

battle cry as their helmets and shields shone in the sun. The Overmind rejoiced in his spoils and grasped at the powers of a god.

Chapter Seventeen

The Sight

"I am looking for you, Dro. I want you back under my control. I made you powerful. You basked in your own power once. You will bask in it again. Yes, I can feel your desire still inside you. Your power still screams out from within". Han suddenly awoke from his dark dream and sat up in the middle of the sleeping forms of the Magi and went over to where Dro had been laying unconscious for many many sleeps by the stringed instrument Nog found once while he had been out exploring. Han put his ear up to the strings. The strings were barely vibrating, and in the absolute silence of the cave he could hear six voices, ringing out tremulously, timorously. They fought against stillness, silence and the emptiness of the air around them. He spoke to his unconscious re-found friend, "I hear it, Dro. What do you think it means?" "Like they're leading up to something." But Han didn't get to say anything more, the noise from out in the main cavern was again beginning as those that had awakened began to wake others that were asleep. Once the Magi and Nog awoke Han walked with them down to the main cavern and left Dro still sleeping in the cave of Elose. The crowds no longer moved as though they were controlled by masters, but they were still a struggle to navigate. They walked through the dreary city where everyone seemed to be minding their own business, but the overall tone was one of depression. They could hear bits and pieces of different conversations as they walked. Dreary as the atmosphere was, they wanted to help the people there. Their spirits were now free of the black stone and its manipulation and the people of the main cave had been talking more and more. Han said, "I want to teach them. I want to bring some of them with us, to follow us. If they are talking to each other, maybe they'll talk to us." All agreed that this was the only way that they would be able to overpower the guards and bring a group of men over the bridge and to the freedom of the outside world. Each time the company woke they went back to the cave to talk to the people about who they were and what they were about. After many sleeps only a few listened. Of those that listened, none understood. Each time Han slept he dreamed of Hev and that he had found the way out of Puhfervenherbm. Each time he dreamed he heard the stringed instrument more clearly.

One time, the noise from Nog's stringed instrument became loud enough to wake Han from sleep. He turned the instrument upside-down, so that the strings' movement would stop. It did; at least, for a while, but later that night he awoke again because, it had turned over seemingly of its own accord. Han then heard something outside the cave of Elose. It was the soft footsteps of two beings entering through the door quietly, so quietly it was impossible to tell their location at any one time. Han then heard them

turn around and head out of the cave. Han quickly arose and went to the sleeping form of Dro and whispered "I am going to follow them, Dro, they might lead me to something. If I find a way out I promise to come back for you." Then he took the orange mantle of Dro, put it on, and left. Han was moving as fast as he could because in front of him the footfalls rang out heavily now and he realized that they were not running from him, but leading him. "Leading me to what?" Han wondered. The invisible beings turned a corner, and headed straight for the passages that Han knew led to the wooden bridge of the Overmind.

By the time that the footfalls reached the bridge it was already past the time for the people in the main cavern to awake. Suddenly all the sound stopped as the two invisible beings stopped running. Han crouched in a passage nearby wondering what to do next when he felt something in the secret inward pocket of the mantle. Out of the pocket Han pulled a strange pair of crystals in the shape of thin lenses. The lenses were crafted together with thin strands of golden metal in such a way that they could be worn over the eyes. He put the crystal lenses on and the world around him was transformed as all the dark hollows around him seemed to be filled with a strange glowing light. As he looked out towards the bridge he saw faintly two figures that were walking over the bridge past the unseeing guards. One of the figures had already reached the portal on the other side, but the other had stopped in the middle of the bridge and was beckoning to him! Han immediately left his hiding spot and walked towards the bridge. As soon as he approached the bridge he saw that the figure beckoning to him was Hev! Han began to run to Hev, but before he could reach him Hev turned and passed over the bridge. Han wondered if the guards could see him as he passed over the bridge, but they made no move to stop him. On the far side of the chasm there was a strange room with a deep spiral carved into the far wall. There in the middle of the room was an instrument the like of which Han had never seen. The instrument was hexagonal in shape from both the top and from any side. On three of the edges were white-walled holes covered by glass. The entire machine was a mystery until those three holes lit up, and a phrase entered Han's mind: Follow your ears. Suddenly a noise came out of the instrument. It started very low, and slowly it increased in pitch and decreased in volume until it was so high and soft it could hardly be heard. Han did not want to touch the instrument and interrupt its vibration. All of a sudden the vibration became more sonorous and seemed to be coming from somewhere else. The ringing in his ears led Han down a tunnel to the right and onward in a wide circle around a network of caves. Sometimes the sound was so specific Han knew even which side of the tunnel he should walk. Sometimes there would be an open door to the network of tunnels to his left and Han would peer in as he walked by. Inside the halls the sound was leading him past where there were many guards, but they did not seem to notice him walk past these entrances. As he walked Han was joined by an unexpected visitor. "Canata!" Han cried, as he saw her flowing hair and gown as she came around a corner. Han stopped trying to listen to the sound and ran toward her. Canata beamed at Han and

said “Han! Coming here took you long enough. My niece, Gazi, built that machine. I had a dream that told me you would be coming and I placed the instrument there to protect you from the Ogweum.” She motioned to her left and they sat on some large blocks there. She said, “I am tiring of all these caves. You know nothing but these caves, but it has always been hard for me to tell the difference between one cave and the next. The caves are designed to make people feel lost, and I do. Tomorrow I will head for the exit and I want you to come with me. The ruler of these caves is a very powerful being. He’s going to put forth all his power on just you. He won’t be satisfied with just putting you to sleep again. I have heard that this time he is going to kill you.” She smiled, “They say we will make quite a couple. If we can make it out.” Canata then pulled out what looked like a silver picture frame from her robes and handed it to Han, she also gave him a stick from a tree and said, “Here is a frame and a piece of life I found. If you look through the frame you can more easily see spiritual things and the piece of life will help protect you.” Han marveled at the gifts and used the picture frame to see the outside world, although faint at first it became a burning light to his spiritual eyes. Han turned to her and said, “Thank you so much but I also want to find a way to save my friends.” They embraced and the meeting left the pair filled with anticipation for the future, and joy at their possible success. Then suddenly there was a noise that seemed to come from everywhere. It would start off suddenly, rumble and groan for a few seconds, then die down again. It came down around them and toward them. Han heard Canata scream. Standing in panic, they saw that everything around them was a new shade of black. They could no longer see. They stood there for a second, unsure of what they could do. Then they tried to walk forward. Finally Han held up the window and they saw a short apparition beckon to them from a doorway through it. Slowly and deliberately, they pushed their way through the air around them toward the small figure and that exit. The curse was so powerful that it took every ounce of concentration they had to remember their destination. They felt tired, and their eyes ached from straining in the darkness. Canata explained that some walls were not real but illusions in the outerlands and that there was one directly ahead. Canata went through it but Han felt it as though it were a solid wall. “Go ahead and escape!” Han insisted.

Chapter Eighteen

The Battle

“Do you want to save your friend? Return to me. Inwardly it is your only desire. To stay yourself from it is to make me only angrier, and you can’t stay forever from me. This you know. This you must still remember, in spite of your recent idiocy.” “Do you want to save your friend or not?” Dro woke with a start. That last phrase in his dream had come from Canata, and her usually cheery face was dark now, angry and uncertain. “Dro. You’re awake!” Nog cried. Why did you all fall asleep? “What do you mean?”

Dro said. You've been asleep for months! Suddenly Dro remembered his bitter defeat and his steps toward healing. A master entered the room. Then another and another. Other than Nog only Elose was there and turned to face them all. "No." He waved his hand in front of the masters, and they turned away to leave, but then they stopped. They turned again. Nog helped Dro up and backed away to position themselves as far away from the masters as possible. Elose was holding his hands out now, and his full attention was on the masters still in the room. "They're about to attack! Run! RUN!" Elose screamed. The masters flew toward them! Turning around a corner through a side door out of the house of Elose, Dro and Nog ran full-force. After they had run into the main cavern they stopped to catch their breath, but when they looked to the tunnel from which they had come they saw that the Agents were still following them, and their pace, too, was energetic. Their feet no longer touched the ground. The terror they felt was a pain that started in the heart, then it spread down to the stomach and up to the head. It was sapping their strength, and they knew they could not go on much longer. Suddenly they heard the many footsteps of their followers in front of them! A large crowd had gathered and surrounded the two friends. Behind them they heard three loud cracking sounds in quick succession, and three lights flashed as one behind them. Then they heard one loud crash. Nog, found himself at the top of a heap of human bodies. He could not see anything through the cloud of settling dust. Nog could not find Dro. Nog ran to and fro frantically looking for him. He found him in a cave nearby. He was completely cold, and shaking when Nog found him. They began to head back to the main cavern. On their way back they saw a dead man in their path. He had the spiral shape newly carved into his forehead and his eyes were looking into nothingness. The main cavern was a tempest of activity. The masters and their servants had declared war on the city. Suddenly a master was beside them. His voice was terrible as he cried a war cry that filled them with dread like darkness and ice. They tried to run away, but the master grabbed Nog from behind and threw him against the wall of the cavern. When he awoke he was in a different cave. He heard a voice that told him he was to go back to sleep. "You are not going to cause any more trouble. You are going to be a part of the system." The room was so cold Nog could not say anything, or even move.

Dro stood before the crowd. They were shouting at him, telling him to stop causing trouble. "If only the Magi had not taught us the Masters would not have attacked!" cried one. "Why should we not be like them and be normal?" said another. Dro wished he could impose his will on the crowd like he had done when he was with the Overmind, but he had turned away from the path of force. He went on, "I'm not sure how much of it I really saw, and how much of it they just made me see. But it was horrible. They took me alone in a room to be killed or put to sleep. I suddenly felt very cold. That's when I ran. I got all the way here, and I heard them coming again. I know that this will be your fate if we do not fight!"

Suddenly a man walked around Dro and stood in the middle of the crowd. “I’m here to give you your final warning!” This was said by a voice so alive it commanded complete attention. “You have nothing, and are alone. You have much to learn about the true nature of this place. Whether your journeys end in this war, or elsewhere, you must learn to seek out those that will be of greatest aid to you. You have found them here, I can give only this advice: as long as your attitude remains one of distrust and fear, those that desire to survive will not be able to do so. We must unite!”

Chapter Nineteen

The Storyteller

As Dro and the others awoke they were amazed to see Nog standing in the doorway. He looked strong and even older than they were! He knew things he had not known when he had been taken by the masters to sleep. Though he looked no taller he arrived stronger than himself or anyone else in the room. Dro and his small band of friends gathered round to hear him. His voice sounded loud and clear, and he told them he knew the story of what happened to Han. “From Han we hear good things; he has found a new cave, higher up and closer to our goal. here he has taught many, in spite of the Overmind’s many attempts to kill him!” Nog cried. “Canata has left the mountain to prepare the way for us, but Han found that he could not leave. There is an enchantment that casts a wall over every point of escape. Only people that have the faith to walk through walls can leave!” Dro had written the story of Han and himself, and now the doings of his small band, down on tablets, and now he was writing what Nog could tell.

From that day forward he did not read aloud from the tablets nor did he let anyone else read them. Instead, each time he would let Nog tell their story to everyone they met. The people of the city finally had a measure of respect for him and his men after the second attack had come upon the city and they had repelled the invaders. One day they were in the marketplace and Nog was telling a group of children the story of Han and Canata: “Things didn’t look good for us. The Magi were nowhere to be found. The curse on the caves got worse as we went outward, and the journey seemed to stretch longer and longer after I had crossed over the bridge. The journey, as we said, wasn’t easy. There were things looking down at us from above, things that seemed suspended in midair around us. It felt bad all around us, sick and slow. There wasn’t much of anything, except that feeling that something was watching from above. Finally, we made our way to a cave in the very top of the mountain. Noone was there, and there was only the vaguest sign that anyone had ever lived there. When we entered the cave, we were as quiet as we could be. ‘If there was no one out there, then surely there would be a whole army in here’, we thought. There was only one, however. He looked scared, and the spiral shape on his forehead was faint, and seemed almost to be disappearing. We watched and waited for him for several minutes, and finally he awoke and said that this

was a place he had found by following a path laid out in his dreams: the cavern of all healing. Then those entities above us began to take shape. They were great flying creatures, and their eyes burned with the fire of destruction! Now, again, we tried to pull out our magical items, but it seemed they would do us no good. The only thing that seemed worth doing at that very moment was letting them take us away, down into nothingness again, but they did not, nor could they touch us. They did nothing more than circle around us for a minute or two, and then they left. We were left in silence. In that space there was clean air, oh, what a feeling! There was no fear in the place. All was quiet, but we felt music in our very hearts. I had a vision, in that very moment.” Nog leaned in towards the gathering crowd as if he was telling a secret. “I saw our goal. I saw the outside, everything we have worked so long to see with our eyes and not our minds. I saw the war. There were soldiers without number, men, women, children, I saw our future in it. I saw the great powers of our leaders on the outside, those that used their magic to awaken us in the first place. They need our help! I looked above us. I saw a great and blue sky, and it was the most beautiful thing! Never before have I even imagined such a thing. Oh, what skies! The world around me changed. The room which had so long been that place we most feared suddenly became a place to be loved, and celebrated.” Nog then leapt upon a stone block and shouted to the crowd and the people milling about beyond “I know only that we must find this cave. Where we can sit at the feet of Han the Magi and learn from him. He will show us blue without boundaries. Blue waters and blue skies! Music in the air. It is beyond even our ability to know more, until we see it! And that,” said Nog, with an air of storytelling finality, “is why we will storm that bridge!” Everyone cheered! Han was now a legend though he had only been gone less than three months.

Chapter Twenty

The Titan Dream

That night, Han dreamed of the Titans. The Titans began by introducing themselves. There were nine of them, and they looked much like other people, in fact, some looked like people he'd met before:

“I am the Forest Titan. I make Life where I can.” Standing there was a man with antlers! “I am the Wind Titan. Only in the Mind’s eye can I be seen.” Standing there was Gazi.

“I am the Lightning Titan. I am the Water current that is Motivation.” It was Hev!

“I am the Fire Titan. I am the Earth’s core.” Here was someone unfamiliar.

“I am the Spirit Titan. One tree is not a Forest.” It was someone he thought he had seen in the caves though he could not remember.

“I am the Life Titan. The Winds of change, not even I can change.” It seemed this one was their

leader. He had a spiral-shaped scar on his forehead! But, Han noticed, it was going the other way. This spiral was different and filled him with serenity.

“I am the Mind Titan. I prepare for the Lightning of inspiration.” Before him stood Dro. “I am the Water Titan. By being what Fire is not I can gain its identity.” It was Nog.

“I am the Earth Titan. A kind act is etched on the Spirits of all involved.” It was a short being that also looked familiar; Han thought he had seen him in the mist. Then, as they stood there, in the circle, each one powerful, and yet part of this greater team, it occurred to Han that he, too, must rejoin his friends. His dream was one of the future, of his own future or the future of others in generations to come. They stood among stars, there were stars all around them, not just above them, not just in the sky. The ground, too, was made of stars, and the walls, and the trees. Everything was made of nighttime and sky. Then he was back in the cave, but joined now by these Titans which he knew were not just a dream.

They showed him what it meant to use his spiritual sight. Before in the darkest cave he had used his spiritual eyes because there was absolutely no physical light there, but now he learned how he could use that sense to see the world around himself that he had not yet seen. They held out a candle, but it was not a normal candle. As it burned, it created neither light nor heat. Yet Han could sense what it was doing. It was pointing a way for him, a way through the caves; a way through his mind. Han woke up. He began to walk. He began to run. And the walls did not stop him.

Chapter Twenty-One

The forbidden Lands and what Han found there

Walking. The act that moves its traveler through space and time as it enlivens the mind and strengthens the body making one less and less asleep with every step. For Han, walking seemed to be all there was to life at the moment. It was arduous and long. Every rock seemed to stare at him as he passed. Thousands had lain before his eyes and disappeared behind him. They all started blurring together into one single memory. Han’s feet felt sore so he sat on a nearby stone to rest for a little bit. Pain will make me stronger he thought. Then Han remembered how very weak he used to be, and smiled at how very strong he had become. At one time he had clung to the wall for support, and walked clumsily about in the direction he leaned, but not now. His stride was long, and his feet were steady.

Though he had walked far, a dark sadness lingered with him. He had left Dro his best friend countless passages behind him. “We will meet again soon, and I will lead us all out; out to our blue skies and green fields,” Han said to himself. He was alone and very much felt it. In the cave the utterly empty tunnel magnified the silence of his loneliness. He sat down on the ground and reached into his pocket. Han found the usual things but no mushrooms. He had found a patch a few sleeps ago but they were all

gone now. He put eating out of his mind and sat there a little longer. Soon he began walking again and the passages began to widen as Han moved forward. In this place Han found giant rocks forming black cathedrals of dark stone. One such grand hall had many stalactites on the ceiling and in the distance it looked as though great pillars stood between him and other halls. This must be the Rivenway Han thought. The Rivenway was a huge connection of such rooms that stretched for miles and formed a great highway for the Outer-rim Rangers. Han had never before seen it but had heard tales of its existence. The Outer-rim Rangers were dwellers of these outer caves and Han had taught some of them in the cavern he had found. At the time many of the people in the caverns around had come to learn of the Magi and their ways. His followers were interested in what he had to tell them, but they had elected to stay in the safe cavern, that they had made into a temple, instead of coming with him to find a way out of the mountain.

Han walked between two huge rocks the size of houses when suddenly he noticed a light on the ceiling coming from some place up ahead. He could hear faint whispers in that direction too. Han made his way through the narrow way and came out from between the two large boulders. Below him in a room through a cavity in the floor lay the camp of some rangers. A small coal fire in the center cast the reflection on the ceiling of the great cathedral that Han had seen. Han could see at least four of them sitting around and whispering among themselves. They had not seen him yet so Han spoke, "Hello there." They all looked up and one stood. "Are you a friend? Or are you a man of Orfaciuse?" He asked. "I am a friend to the Rangers and a fellow adventurer. My name is Han and I fight against Orfaciuse and his followers. Here is the sign." Han made the sign that signified members of their order and then looked for a way down. He walked into the gathering and gave his hand to their leader standing there. The man introduced the others and asked Han to sit down. There was a storyteller among them that began a tale. "King Enthnar of the Immortals rode a great bird to our world." One of them asked, "What is a bird again?" The storyteller replied, "Oh, a bird is a great and noble creature that flies above us, in the air, and is literally covered with small pieces of cloth I believe help it to soar fast and sure." He continued, "Once Enthnar arrived he saw that the earth was covered in clouds. So he fed his bird serpents until it became so large and strong it flew away carrying all the clouds in its talons. So Enthnar called his bird Horizon and as it flew into the darkness of the west it died. And all its feathers became living things. And to this day they drive the dispersed clouds over the earth and are called dragons of the storm. And they obeyed the voice of Enthnar. And Man called him the God of storms. He set up a kingdom and a tower on the earth. And there he made peace with our fathers who had come into the world by the way of the waters." "Waters?" Several asked. The storyteller went on, "Yes the water that drips from the rocks in the cave or even the river is nothing compared to the eternal waters of the outer place which are continuously flowing. Our ancestors came out of the ocean riding in eight whales holding the Titan stones for light.

Then Enthnar gave the kingdom to our fathers and he and the other Immortals traveled north over the ice, back to the ever living Isles of the northern star." All sat transfixed on these heavenly thoughts. Han liked to indulge himself once in awhile upon these fantasies but knew he should be more concerned with actually getting to those places. "Let me tell you a story now," Han said. When all were looking at him he began. "I was deep in the caves about a year ago and I had the most amazing vision. I saw blue skies and Green fields. The blue sky is the absence of any ceiling above and through it there are many lights and wonders. The green fields on the other hand are made of millions of living things I like to call plants. They grow upward like mushrooms, not from a floor, but of what I call the ground, which is made up of dirt that is like sand or dust we find here only moister. So now I am on my way out of here because I know I was called to it by my vision. I believe that from this outer-rim these places are not very far." The Rangers stared at him for a moment and then burst into laughter. "My dear boy" the storyteller said. "When I first became a bard I had hoped also to see some glimpse of the outer lands, but your story of the outer land is even stranger than our tales. It's surely just a big cave and all that bird stuff is probably just figurative for moving fast or something like that. These follies are delusions of youth; there is no way out of these caverns. The mythical opening to the outer-lands was sealed during the first rebellion." "If that story is even true!" laughed the leader. Han hoped to persuade them otherwise, "There must be a way, it is not our fate that keeps us here," he said. "It is only our fear."

All sat quietly for a bit. Han realized he had disturbed some of them. Feeling he was no longer welcome Han said goodbye and left. He commenced traveling on the Riven-way. This was evidently the portion of the highway that did not hold the waters of the river. Han walked forward and the passage he was traveling soon opened up into another large room. He suddenly became startled when he saw thousands of corpses hanging from the ceiling. He had seen one or two before but never this many. Their eerie eye sockets and skinny limbs sent shivers up his spine. They hung by both hands, a rope for each wrist that went up through holes in the stone. Most were half rotten and some had fallen. Han walked on.

His mind reflected back to the words of Morgan. "This truth I give you. Not as the evening stars give I unto you. But as the morning sun shines in the east give I unto you. May this light always live in your heart and you shall never fall. Though cave wall and army stand between you and the gates of day, you shall not thirst. This is the truth; though your eyes may grow dim and your body lay in death, you shall see your father in the flesh." Han reached into his pocket and pulled out his candle. He touched the wick and the green light burst upon it. Suddenly in the new light of the candle Han saw an archway that opened into a tunnel in a dark grotto on his right. Through it lay many things shining and glittering in the dim cave light.

He ran to it and saw again something completely new and strange. This hall's floor was covered in a sea of metal armor. Several of these metal objects were also scattered before the doorway. He picked

up an arm piece and a metal plate for the chest, and started trying them on, but could not wear them because the hide straps were old and broke easily. The doorframe was made of carved stone and was of much finer workmanship than he had seen for quite some time. An inscription glared down from the stone doorpost, crudely carved by hand with a rock: "*Fellow Ranger don't advance past here, This is the home of evil spirits and the dead. If you enter they will kill you like our comrades -In memory of Dagne and Pethl.*"

Han shrugged his shoulders and went into the corridor. He stepped up onto the piles of armor and started walking over it. The metal clothes made so much more noise than he had ever anticipated. It was hard to walk on as well. "I suppose if this must be the land of the dead, then I am going to wake them all up," Han said with a chuckle. Han made his way onward slowly. Then he glanced into a chest piece, and saw the reflection of someone standing right behind him. Han jerked around and saw nothing but an empty passage except for all the piles of metal. "It can't have been anyone or I would have heard them," He thought. "Maybe it was simply a strange shadow or something." But a glance into several other pieces of armor revealed a multitude of shadowy figures. He began to move quicker through the armor until the pieces of armor thinned out and he finally felt solid ground. The passages stretched on. There was armor strewn here and there but it became less and less as he walked farther into the cave. Occasional helmets and shields littered the halls. Han was grateful to feel ordinary sturdy rock under his feet but still a nagging anxiety about what lay behind him remained. He came into a room that had a darker hue. It had no armor anywhere so he sat down on the floor. The caves overflowed with perfect silence and Han sat there for a long time. "I am so lonely I must be going crazy," Han said, his lightheaded voice gave a clue to his weariness. His whispers seemed to fill the caverns with a soft echo of sadness. Looking up Han saw the entrance to the armor rooms were filled with phantoms looking curiously in at him. For some reason he could see them now, and in that moment his anxieties about them seemed to wash away. They were pale and not all there. The spirits all wore armor shrouded under great cloaks. "Hello?" Han said, but the spirits gave no response in return. One by one they slowly vanished. Han was alone again.

Han felt so exhausted that he fell into the land of dreams. Music and singing filled his ears and he began to wonder whether he was awake or still sleeping. When he opened his eyes all was quiet and the floor was spread out before him hard and cool. He again walked onward through the caves. The caves here were darker in color but lighter in actual luminosity. Han wandered from room to room and down many tight passages until he came to a passage with soft black sand. This sandy tunnel wended on like the bowels of a giant worm until it ended in a great mound of sand. He sat down on the sandy mound in disappointment until he thought of digging away at the sand at the back wall. After some time to his relief a small hole began to appear. He continued burrowing until he was under the wall in a tight space. His breath was all around him but he was used to small spaces. It took much longer to clear a passage

large enough to squeeze through. The cavern beyond the mound of sand opened into a new system of caverns filled with more light. There had been some openings in the ceiling of the Rivenway, but they had only held a dim reflected light, but here in these caverns Han could see a shift in the color of the light when the day in the outer lands passed into night.

Han journeyed on with his head hanging low. He was shaking with the want for food, but he willed himself onward. Finally he was here at the very end. All the caves were almost behind him, but it was a bitter victory. The caves became brighter so fast that Han kept stopping from time to time in order to adjust to the light. Han came to a point where the light was so bright he could see it burning through his eye lids like one single spot fixed in the redness. Han reached out to touch the point of light and all went dark. He retracted his hand and the light returned. All the light was coming from this one small hole in the cave wall. He realized that it was a keyhole. Han put his ear up to it and could hear the wind of the expanse. "I am so close and yet so far. I can hear the wind, but it is through a locked gate." Han fell to the floor and sat there almost totally defeated. Han then heard a whistling sound coming from through the key hole. "It must be the wind," he thought, but then it came again even stranger and more melodic than before. It was a voice! "Han," it said. Han's heart started racing. "Who are you?" Han gasped. In a much clearer and more distinct mans voice the voice said. "I am Hev." Shivers went straight up Han's spine. Hev was their friend that Dro had murdered while in the service of the Overmind. "I have come to set you free." Hev said. "You are a prisoner here in this false world contrived by the Overmind himself. If your will is more powerful than his then walk through this wall." Han placed his silver window and piece of life against the wall and the whole mountain seemed to give a shutter as its grip over Han's mind began to abate. Han summoned up all his desire and will to be free and stepped forward. Han felt himself miraculously slip through the wall as if the rock was made instantly into air. An intense light burst upon him, and Han felt hot sand against his feet. He didn't dare open his eyes since the light coming through his lids was already blinding. He waited as the light subsided more and more until he could open his eyes. Then it unfolded like a progressing symphony. Han saw not a cave but a stretched out horizon of distant fire and a slope disappearing into forests reflecting the dark blue light of a new night sky. Han could see points of light appear and soon the sky was filled with lights stretching out into forever. Han's eyes drank in the beauty and could not even blink. Han's mouth hung open and the wind wrapped its arms around him.

Chapter Twenty-Two

From Puhfervenherbm to Kymoore

Han came down the mountain and approached one of the magnificent trees he had heard so much about. He could hear the rustling of thousands of the little leaves, and felt the rough skin of the tree and gazed up at the towering branches. It looked so majestic and alive. Han again felt the breeze blow against him. He thought back to the teachings of the Magi and rituals of the Dritseh. Han could still almost hear Morgan's voice. "The force of the air, or the wind, is from the four parts of the spherical earth. And they have names and homelands." The Magi had told him he was from the land of Kymoore.

Han could see the light and shadow flickering as he walked through the woods. Han knew everything he saw was alive and that there were spirits of natura all around him. Han stepped carefully as the ground was uneven in places. He felt the grass tickling his legs. Han smiled, he had never even touched a plant before, but now he was in a world of them. Han broke a branch with his leg protruding from somewhere. He felt ahead and his hands came upon a dry prostrate tree. As Han touched the log a question arose in his mind. "Do trees die?" He wondered. "I wish Dro could see this!" Han said as he looked back at the mountain; it looked like a tall black pinnacle sticking out of the trees. The mountain reflected an eerie light as the moon rose and shined upon its flanks. "I cannot believe I left him in that awful mountain." Han thought. "Even so it is better that I go on now. Maybe I can find someone to help us." Han looked away from the towering volcano and ran through the woods in the way he had been traveling. Han walked on trying to keep his eyes open. The forest opened up into a giant meadow in the moonlight that rolled on and on. Han arrived at a streambed with small cascading pools. He ran to it excitedly, he had never seen a stream save subterranean ones. Han submerged his head in the stream and drank thirstily arose and continued on. So far the stars were Han's favorite things about the outside. He probably liked them because they raised the most questions. Questions filled his mind, how vast is the upper world? He wondered. "Surely it goes on forever," he told himself.

Then Han remembered something told to him in a dream long ago. "Worlds go on forever." Han pulled his candle out and touched the wick but nothing happened. Han looked puzzled beyond belief. He tried to light it again but nothing happened. Frustrated he tried again, still nothing. Then he saw it, the faintest clear energy around the wick. "I guess the energy is not bright enough to see out here." Han thought. Han put the candle safely back in his pocket and went on into the bright night. Finally he found a boulder with a low overhang and dozed off to sleep under it. Han awoke suddenly to the cry of some far off animal. The moon was high in the sky. Han walked further until he saw a place that looked strangely familiar. He walked further and there it was a house built under the magnificent roots of a giant tree. A stone path led up to the wooden door and vines almost totally covered the front window. It all looked strangely overgrown but this was the place from Han's dream that inspired him to go on this life-altering quest. It was where he met the old lady that told him so much. Han couldn't wait to meet her again! He ran forward and reached for the brass doorknob. Han gripped the handle and pulled the door

open with a rusty creaking sound. The little wooden cottage was filled with cobwebs and light shone dimly through the dusty windows that were wavy with age. Han walked in with wide eyes, it didn't look like this last time he was here! His very footsteps left prints in the dust. There was the little bed in the corner and the table with two chairs. An onion plant had grown out of one of the shelves and the broom lay in the corner that had become the home of several spiders. Han sat down on one of the chairs to soak up the reality of the situation. "Was she really gone?" he wondered. "I came all this way to see her. I will probably never see her again!" Han placed a hand on his heart and cried out. The moonlight moved across the floor as He sat there.

Suddenly he heard a tiny bell; Han looked up to see a clock on the shelf over the fireplace. It was carved with flowers, an all seeing eye and a man holding a candle. On the base read an inscription, it said, "*Time is never stopping! Each moment is a precious experience! All experience flows unto the sea of enlightenment and when we lay in the dust experience is found elsewhere.*" He stared at it for a moment, and realizing she must have gone across the river of death he cried like a child. Han arose after a while to clean the house. He lovingly caught spiders and let them out in the yard. He took the broom and swept the dust out the door, and cleared away the cob webs. Han pulled the Onion plant out of the shelf and put it in a brass pot for later. He found a tight wooden basin for washing and went to the stream to fill it up. As Han approached the water he saw a deer drinking. He didn't want to scare it so he froze and just watched it. "What an amazing creature!" He thought. The animal finally looked up and then softly trotted away. Han proceeded to get water and walk back to the house. He took the bedding and began washing it. Then he took it outside to dry. There was a rope tied between two trees for the purpose of hanging clothes, so he put the blanket and sheet up. Han went back inside to look for some food. He found a knife and cut a piece of the onion off, and began to eat it. It didn't taste like he expected! It was kind of hot and spicy, but Han ate it anyway. It made his belly grumble so he looked for some more food to offset it. He found some old bread but it was hard as a rock. So He went outside and gathered some greens from around the forest. The garden was overgrown with milkweed, but Han found some stuff around he thought might be good. He also found an apple tree in the back yard. Han had never even seen an apple but they looked good to him. He went back in and ate what he had found.

Han saw a few books on the mantel. He touched them with his finger as he read the titles. "*History of Kymoore*" Han got really excited at the name of this one. It was the land he was from, was he in the land already? He wondered. "*The Book of the Magi*" Han also looked at this one in interest. "*Book of Enthnar*" Enthnar was the name of the immortal king he heard tales about. He fanned the pages of each book but the light of the moon was soon fading. Han walked out and felt the bedding but it was still damp. So he went back in. Han lay on the bed thinking about the old lady and where his adventures had taken him; then he remembered her words. "You may make the journey to any of these places that you

wish, as long as you fight the current that leads you to darkness.” He had truly wished to make it here and he had. He had fought the darkness with all his heart and he was now here under the tree of nine branches. What other places do I wish to go? Han wondered. With that thought he drifted off to sleep.

Han walked out into the bright morning sun. He took the bedding off the line and put it in its place. He then ate an apple for breakfast. The birds were chirping and singing sweetly and the light shone through bright green leaves. This was heaven except for the lack of association. Han looked back at the house he had loved and then decided he must leave and find his past and future. “I can come back if I need to,” he thought.

Chapter Twenty-Three

The house of Canata

Han kept on his journey until he came to an open field where there were hundreds of tall plants all in organized rows. On the other side he came to a walking path and decided to take it. Ahead on the path there was a woman walking in the opposite direction with a donkey at her side. She was wearing a blue dress and had her head covered. She stopped suddenly as she noticed him. Han was nervous because this was the first person he had seen out in the real world. The woman suddenly said “Han?” “Canata” Han said in amazement. Excitement filled Han’s heart, “Where is the old lady in the house under the tree?” Han asked. “She has passed the way and joined the world of spirits. I am so sorry you didn’t make it in time.” Then feeling faint in the bright sun Han became dizzy and the ground suddenly hit him. Some hours passed and the voice of Canata rang out sounding distant, “Han are you alright?” All was black until blurry light began to appear as he opened his eyes, then they focused to see the face of Canata smiling down at him in the candlelight. This was the first time He had seen her face since the caves. Her hair looked blue in the caves but now Han noticed it was a really dark brown and her eyes bright blue. The sun had gone down and Canata had brought Han back to her house. “What is wrong?” Canata asked. “It is my fault she is gone. I wasn’t worthy to meet her.” Han murmured. Canata gave him a caring look. “Don’t say that. It’s not your fault she died, and you can’t blame yourself. It was just her time to go and you just weren’t meant to meet her again in this life.” Canata’s voice was soft to his ears. “We must give you new robes since you have escaped into a new life in the real world. Come with me.” Han followed Canata down a hall. “Go in this room and wash yourself, there is a bath prepared for you, and put on these undergarments.” Han took them; they were softer and finer than any cloth he had ever felt. “They are for wearing under your other clothes.” She said with a smile. When he was finished he felt unbelievably better. He then put on the new garments and went out in the hall carrying his old robes.

Then they both went into a circular room painted purple. There was a table in the center covered in many strange objects. Many hooded and robed men stood standing in a large circle against the walls

and Han and Canata were admitted into the center of the circle. Canata took Han's old sackcloth robes from him and placed them on the floor and said in a loud voice, "This is the grave from which you have come." What color is your world?" One of the men asked. "Purple" Han said. "Green cannot be the color of it because that is the color of the world on which we now live." "It is good," Another of the men said. Each of the men then asked him many more questions about his journey and why he had fought against Orfacious rather than ally himself with the Overmind. Then one of the men came forward with beautiful orange silk robes in his hands and said "this represents the world of your mind." "The world of my mind?" Han replied. "Yes, the place that is just yours that none can find unless you invite them," the man said. Han replied, "I do not accept this world you offer." The man looked very pleased and all the men agreed with one voice. "So you wish to learn more truth?" The man asked. "Yes!" Han cried. Then all the men said together, "Very well, let us begin." Canata brought a robe of purple and a turban of green and after Han clothed himself he sat with the men and they talked far into the night about the mysteries of the Titans and when Han lay his head to his pillow he had many things to think about. Han thought of all these things as he drifted off to sleep.

I found myself in a purple room whose walls never seemed to stop flowing looking out a window of light at numerous galaxies. I turned around to see a man at a desk with a long thin face twirling a pen in his long fingers. "Are you ready to further organize your world that it does not go to waste?" he asked. "Yes" I said firmly. Then he told me to step through the window. So I stepped into the space and suddenly found myself far from the room. I looked around; all was blank and unorganized. All kinds of elements were floating around me in dark clouds that went on and on for hundreds of thousands of miles. I said let there be glory and there was. The glory seemed to fill the creation and I heard a soft distant song sung by the very materials around me. Then I spoke, "Let there be a center of concentrated metal." And it was so. "Let there be a layer of molten rock and above that a spongy layer of rock that there may be a world of caves below the surface." And I watched it happen, then I felt powerful and I saw that my world was very big. "Let there be a solid crust that will separate the cave world from the outside save one passage that will be in the largest mountain lest any man get lost in it." And I called the underworld Magalaya and the top world I called Atara. And I took some of the rock floating in space and made satellites to orbit the world, I also made a sun. I then saw that the element water covered the whole of my world, so I divided the waters and made an atmosphere. I also made the continents appear on the face of Atara and the lakes appear in the bowels of Magalaya. I stood on the tallest mountain, which I had made, and looked out across the plains of water and land. Then I opened the portal with my hammer and a voice asked, "what do you want?" And I said, "I want plants animals and insects to cover the face of my world and fish in the deep." Then he said, "Come in." So I stepped into the fissure.

Han found himself in a strange place filled with life. There were strange bugs and flying jellyfish

around him in the woods. He followed a small cobblestone path on the edge of which were benches and flowers. There was a yellow house with a large front window and smoke coming from the chimney. A one step porch and a flowerbed lay in the front. Han walked up to it and stepped up onto the porch, knocked on the wooden door and waited. A tall man with a blue robe a long white beard and a pair of reading spectacles opened the door. Han immediately recognized him it was Trevanian the magi from the caves. Trevanian smiled down at him and invited him in. He gestured for Han to sit with him in the living room. His chairs were nice red cushioned chairs with carved and finished wooden armrests. There were tapestries hanging from the walls and an ornately designed carpet on the floor. “So Han, you finally made your way out of those infernal caves?” Trevanian said pleasantly. “Oh yes, I did.” Han replied. Trevanian pointed at the table and a glass of wine immediately appeared. Han continued, “Trevanian I was wondering how to get plants and animals for my world.” “Oh wonderful! Well you came to just the place” said Trevanian. “Come and see.” Trevanian arose and motioned for Han to do the same. He put on a wizard’s hat and opened the front door, briskly skipping down the steps and into the sunlight. Han followed trying to keep up. The two of them walked down a long footpath covered in moss passing many houses hidden in the trees. “Han do you understand the origin and final destiny of Meta animals?” “No I don’t think so sir.” Han replied. “Well then we must tell you. See understanding them is to understand all things including yourself. Let me explain. There are three parts to you, The Mind, Spirit and Body. The intelligence or mind must always come first, then the spirit and then the body. So it is with all things, humans, animals, even worlds.” “Really?” Han said. “Yes. Since the Meta is the world of the mind these animals are intelligences, which is to say just formations of self and thought, but here in the Meta they are as real as you or me. When you are more powerful you may one day make for them spiritual bodies and then physical, this being the essence and destiny of good men.” “But, Trevanian isn’t that God’s job?” Han asked. “Yes it is.” He said with a smile then went on. “Han once you were Intelligence and so was I, and then we were given spirit bodies by our Father and then in due time given physical bodies on an earth that went through the very same process.” “So my world can become a real world?” Han asked excitedly. “Yes.” Trevanian said. Han just thought for a moment. “Will God make it for me?” “Why would God make a world that he did not invent?” Trevanian said. “Ah I don’t know.” Han said feeling unsure and realizing that that tradition was taught to him by the ignorant cave dwellers. “That is because he doesn’t, it would be theft.” Trevanian pointed out. “He wants to encourage us and let us grow to become self-sufficient.” Han looked up and saw that they had come to a huge marble building with two enormous brass pillars. It was the most beautiful building Han had ever seen. A light shone from it as if some glory within filled it’s halls. Trevanian continued, “There is something you should know about intelligences Han. At first when they are being gathered intelligences do not imagine themselves to be anywhere in particular. We are going to find out the names of your intelligences, which have coexisted

with you through all Eternity, and yet they are the offspring of your thought. Once you know their names you may call them home to your world." Han thought of these things as the two of them approached the marble steps. They walked past the arched gate and a man sitting on a stool in a priest's hat smiled at them. Han and Trevanian were ushered down quiet and bright halls. To Han's amazement he hadn't yet seen a single book. They brought the both of them into a room with many blue curtains. A smiling young man with long blonde hair dressed in white asked Han what he wanted to know. "I want to know the names of my intelligences," he said. "Come in." The man showed him into a sectioned location made of cloth. "Remember" he said, "This is the world of thought so it is only as real as your thoughts are. Now here is the name." The man said the longest name Han had ever heard; but the more he heard it he understood that there was an algorythm to it, and it was like a song of power or a string of divine names. "Now go call them and they will come," he said with a smile. When the two of them emerged Han was beaming with anticipation. Trevanian was happy for Han but his eyes suddenly became gloomy like a stormy day. "Trevanian?" Han said questioningly. The magi said, "Han there is something I must tell you and warn you about. Han right now I am in the bowels of Puhfervenherbm. I have been here the whole time trying to find new adventurers. I want to warn you of the impending danger that hangs over Kymore like an ominous cloud of darkness." Just then Han thought he heard a distant clap of thunder, Trevanian went on. "The leaders of the people there are wholly taken up in dark oaths of murder and sorcery. The friends of the Magi are only the outcasts of the people. Now Orfaciuse is building a standing army to crush any resistance if necessary. Two sleeps ago all the sleepers began to wake up, not really wake up unfortunately, they are being controlled like zombies. Even now I am hiding in the crack of one of the empty altar rooms and if they find me they will kill me." A look of horror was on Han's face. "But aren't the bodies that get up and walk to the sand room controlled in the same way?" "Yes Han but they aren't going to the sand room, they are lining up like an army and the masters are giving them crudely made weapons." Han interjected, "but Trevanian doesn't the Over Mind have an army of masters on the outer-rim already?" "Yes he does but I don't know what his plan truly is. Han if I never see you again in this life fare well and be loyal always to the truth and to your true love." Han opened the portal again. He turned and looked into the star lit eyes of Trevanian. "You have helped and taught Dro and I so much. I will greatly miss you if you go." Han said. "I know Han," Trevanian said, "goodbye and may a flowing peace be with you."

I stepped in and found my throat was somewhat dry at the thought of the peril Trevanian was in, but I found myself atop the same mountain again. Then I commenced in singing the name. Eiyah-eeiah-io-elya-uh-ihaa-ara... And sure enough when I was through there was a shout of praise from all the life beyond the universe of my thought. I called the plants and great trees and the seeds began to appear. Then I called for the animals of the sea, and there were animals in the sea. The small organisms, and those

thoughts gave rise to new thoughts and fishes appeared and then great monsters and sea serpents. I called the animals of the air and land. Birds and dragons, horses and lizards, and all kinds of beasts and small creatures appeared in their order according to the thoughts giving rise to new thoughts, evolving into new creatures with similarities to the old ones, thus is the progression of intelligence. And they covered every continent and filled every ocean. I called the cave animals and plants. Mushrooms and animals with feelers instead of eyes, and all kinds of bugs and organisms filled the caves. I looked over my whole world and wondered how it had become so wonderful. Trees now covered the mountains and the fields were full of grass. I looked west around my earth looking at all the strange animals and places. Then I looked to an isle of the sea with a great bay, so I erected a great tall tower in the middle of it that was white and shone brightly in the sun. Then I gazed around the world some more going northward and saw a continent that was surrounded by rocks sticking out of the ocean. And I saw that they were infested with dragons. I turned west and saw a large isle of the sea that had smoking mountains caused by a great fire in that part of the cave world. I then looked west some more and found a continent with a giant lake in the center. I turned south again and saw two continents, so I said, "let there be a path thrown up out of the deep to connect the continents." And it happened.

As Han awoke he realized it was still night and wandered onto the patio on the roof of the house. Canata was there looking at the stars. She turned her face to him, "Won't you join me Han?" "Yes, of course" he said. The sky went on as if forever into eternity. Canata spoke as she looked up to the sky again, "I love the universe, I would love to see just some of the infinite worlds the Gods have called home." Han sat down next to her. "Canata, the lady under the tree told me in my dream that if I fought the current that led me to darkness I could go to any of these worlds that I wished." Canata gave him an impressive look. "I don't think you ever told me that part of the dream before," she said. "Well, do you think I really can?" Han asked. "I mean how would I get all the way up there? They look so far away." "They are much further than you think. But all good things are possible." Canata said as her eyes glanced at him with a reassuring look. "If she said it I believe it." Han just looked up at the galaxy that spanned the sky. It was awhile before either of them spoke again. Canata broke the silence. "It is written that in the second age God took a whole city into the heavens and gave them power and glory. And it is said that from time to time the pure in heart are taken from this bitter fight and brought to join them." Han looked more hopeful at this thought. She looked at him but his eyes were affixed to the sky. Just then Han saw a bright streak crossing the expanse and the shooting star broke into three pieces as it approached the horizon. "Han, one day soon our civilization will fall to war and bloodshed. The statues in great halls will crumble into dust and the so-called immortal names of the kings will fade and blow away. Then great tempests and earthquakes will cover the last ruins of our great cities. And I prophesy to you that it will yet be said of this land that it was never inhabited, save by savages and surely there were no cities here."

When Canata was finished there was a curious look on Han's face at the prophecy. Then Canata smiled and continued looking at the stars.

I found myself on the tall mountain by the sea and I looked out over my whole world. I realized I had power according to the concentration and power of my mind and all things in this world loved me. I jumped off the mountain and feeling powerful skipped across the ocean my foot only occasionally coming down to barely skim the surface of the water. I soon found myself on the isle of the north and with one leap I passed the tall mountain range filled with clouds. And I came down and lay under four small mountains on a soft mossy rock. I wondered what the future of my world might hold and ran and played for days. I suspected that time was not passing in the physical world. I cast up great mountains and named all my favorite places.

Han opened his eyes and admired the sunbeams coming through the bedroom window, but when he got up he saw that stormy clouds were ready to cover the sun. He heard the distant booming sound of thunder and saw distant lightning, his eyes were wide at what he was seeing. The warm summer breeze was getting stronger and raindrops were appearing on the top of the wall. Han stayed in and read the rest of the day listening to the rain on the windowsill. Han read genealogies and how once there were serpents that covered the land that drove the people south. Han read about the great Kings Omer and Emer and many other things. Han also looked at maps; the continent they were on was covered with cities except the north that was covered in ice and snow. There was also a continent to the south but it was apparently still wilderness covered in wild animals and jungle. The very most southern parts of the northern continent got narrower as it went, and was covered most densely with cities. Later Han ate dinner and retired early as the cloudy sky darkened. He had some nightmares where he saw the blank expressions of possessed sleepers. He awoke but went back to bed praying Trevanian would be okay. Soon he was again fast asleep.

Chapter Twenty-Four

The City of Kymoore

Han awoke in the bright morning. He decided that that day he wanted to explore the city by himself. The clouds had broken up and the city streets were filled with people. As Han walked he looked at all the shops and the great palaces. Then looking up a bustling street Han thought he saw a blind man in black robes walking in his direction. Then Han saw just a woman, her face covered, wearing black robes walking toward him. Han watched her for some reason only to see her trip. A square board came tumbling out of her sleeve pocket and Han rushed to help her. For a moment some others did the same but suddenly backed away. Han could clearly see the symbols written on the board now in some strange

language. In the center of it there was the spiral symbol of the Ogweum. He picked it up to hand it to her, but when he looked up, it was the blind man that had been walking towards him. Han's heart began to pound. There was no mistake it was not the woman, but the blind man and with his sightless eyes he was looking straight at Han. All was silent except the crying of a baby somewhere in the crowd. Suddenly Han realized everyone was looking at them. A broad smirk appeared on the old man's face. "Give me your world," came his distorted voice. Han took a step back, a troubled look on his face. Then a series of whispers filled the crowd. "No," Han declared boldly. A look of rage filled the man's white eyes, he grabbed Han's left wrist while pulling out a jagged knife. As Han broke away from the blind man and lurched back to avoid the knife he saw two younger looking men in black robes running toward him. Han began to run through the crowd, but the two men pushed their way through the multitude and kept chasing him.

Finally Han made some distance between him and the men and ducked behind a bazaar stall breathing hard. He had escaped, but from where he was crouching Han heard a talk that was being given by an elderly gentleman in a purple robe and a green turban. So Han started listening to what he was saying. To Han's surprise it was about, that if they did not mend their ways their civilization would be destroyed. Then a man shouted out from the crowd, "How can you know that is true, it is ridiculous, can you tell the gods what to do?" Han looked around to see who said it and saw a man wearing orange attire. He went on, "Are you threatening our city? And who is to say that the upstanding members of government are going to be punished by God, and that the holy Titans who make our laws are evil?" "I can say it," Han blurted out as he walked into the crowd surrounding the man. "You can, can you?" the man said haughtily. "Yes," Han went on. "This is a good man you speak against, and who is to say the Titans in the government aren't evil? Is Orfaciuse not evil?" The man started laughing at Han. "Don't bring up that old wives-tale again. There was a war once, but there is no evidence Orfaciuse is still in the mountain or that there is anyone with him. He has been cooperative with the government, and I challenge any man to say otherwise." Han walked up to one of the steps in front of the crowd and turned around. "I say otherwise." The man tried to interrupt but Han continued. "I was in the army, I was at the great battle. My surname is Salah (Han remembered). I was a prisoner in that mountain till not a week ago. Only my ingenuity and determination freed me. My skin is red because I am not used to the sunlight." Han finished and looked out over the crowd. "This man is a liar!" The man in orange shouted.

Suddenly Han saw that a group of people in black robes took notice of the commotion. Han jumped off the step and shoved his way past several people. He went down a back alley behind the stall he had hid at. He heard someone behind him say, "He went that way." So Han ran even faster. He came out to another city street and ran in the direction of the house, but the men had followed him and he dared not identify the house to the men so he ran into a field just outside the town. When he reached the middle

of the field Han looked back behind him. They were still pursuing him as he feared, entering the field and running harder as they came for him across the yellow grass. Han changed his direction and ran down into a depression toward a small pond with a stone cliff on the other side. He knew the forest was beyond the outcrop of stone so Han dived into the water and swam to the opposite shore. Then Han climbed up the small cliff using a crack in the stone. One of the men started wading through the water towards him and the other went to go around. Han was losing breath as he reached the top. He started staggering on into the forest only to see something very frightening staring back at him with large yellow eyes. Was it a man or a creature? It had long legs that it used to perch itself between two trees. Its face was stretched into a smile that went from one side of its deformed face to the other. The monster dropped and landed on the ground. Han was frozen with horror! Behind him he heard the steps of one of the men who were chasing him. The monster jumped over Han's head and landed on the man behind him. Han heard the blood-curdling screams of the man as the beast threw him through the air and off the cliff with a splash!

Then the spindly fingers of the long legged monster grabbed Han around the waist. Han closed his eyes in horror. Then to his surprise he felt wind soaring by his face and opened his eyes. The monster was carrying him as he leaped through the woods. Han wondered what this thing would do with him, but soon Han stopped worrying and just enjoyed the passing scenery. The creature started galloping up hill and when they came to the top he set Han down on the grass. "Who are you?" Han asked. "Me? I am the Titan of the Forest." He said with a toothy smile. "Nice to meet you sir, I have never met a Titan before." Han said. "You will meet many more." The Titan said looking into Han's eyes with his penetrating stare.

Chapter Twenty-Five

From the top of one hill to another

The giant Titan seemed to start growing gradually shorter, until an ordinary man stood before him. The Forest Titan standing before him was a skinny type of man and had a mustache with brown hair and striking blue eyes. He was wearing a pair of turquoise robes and said, "Forgive me for not introducing myself properly till now but my name is Elred." "How did you know to save me?" Han asked. "The armies of Orfaciuse will soon be at the gates of the city." Han looked off into the valley below but all seemed to be calm. "I will take you to your old home", Elred said as he started walking along the rim of the hill. Han followed closely behind. They walked through some wooded areas and over some mossy rocks till they came to the end of the hill where the ruins of a two story stone house stood. The oak front doors were off the hinges and sun shone through holes in the roof at the far end. Clovers and weeds grew out of the cracks in the floor and one of the pillars was broken and fallen near an old stone staircase. As

they stood near the back window Han asked, “Is this really my house?” “Yes” Elred said sympathetically. “It fell into ruin after your parents died.” “I had parents?” Han asked. Han fell to his knees and picked one of the clovers. “Forgive me Mother and Father, I didn’t mean to leave you,” Han said as he sat there awhile and soaked in his surroundings. There was silence for a while and then Elred spoke. “Come look at this Han,” Elred said as he walked with long strides to a window to the right under the stone stairs. Han got up and followed him to it. “Look,” he pointed. Han looked to see a very tall and steep wooded hill in the distance. It had a circle of pillars on its crown, and resting upon them was a cloud. The cloud looked glorious somehow and the pillars themselves had a magical look to them. There was a wooded valley between the house and the strange hill. Han was mystified. “Why does that cloud act that way and simply rest on the pillars?” Han asked. “It is the ship of the Titans.” Elred said with anticipation.

The rafters creaked and something fell with a whoosh. They both looked over to see what hit the floor behind them. A man in a heavy brown and dirty robe was bowed before them. He was a small beardless man that had a balding head with only long thin gray hair. He looked up, his eyes were totally black and he had a menacing almost toothless smile. Han’s heart began to race. To Han he looked kind of frail but suddenly with a high-pitched scream he dashed toward Elred in a fit of rage. Elred ran toward him also and grabbed the man’s arms as his long fingernails strained to reach his neck. Elred flew back several feet as the mysterious man palmed him in the chest. Elred rose up and raised his arms to block the arms of the man as he rushed Elred again, but stumbled backward two steps and the man grabbed Elred in a grapple around his neck. The forest Titan screamed as the fingernails of the man dug into his neck. Elred finally kicked his assailant in the knee and threw him to the floor. The man rolled a few times and came back to his feet. “Who are you?” Han shouted. The man smiled slightly. “I am Clay,” he said in a breathy voice. “He is the Clay Titan Han,” Elred confirmed. The man looked angrier than ever, a strange darkness gathered around him. Han nervously looked back at Elred who now suddenly resembled a tall frog-like monster. The Forest Titan picked the Clay Titan up by his neck with his long slender toes and threw him across the room sending him sailing through one of the already broken windows. “Han hide up stairs,” the Forest Titan whispered. Han started for the stone staircase as he heard a crash behind him. Not looking back Han jumped two steps at a time. As Han reached a balcony overlooking the back of the house everything became strangely silent. Han peeked over the edge of the balcony to see the Clay Titan whispering something into the ear of the motionless and bloody Forest Titan. Clay finished what he was saying with what sounded like the name Nog. The Forest Titan’s eyes flew open and looked straight upwards as though he were looking into Han’s eyes on the balcony from where he was now looking down. “My apprentice,” Elred said in agony with a tear rolling down his now motionless and misshapen Titan face.

Han quickly went into the room across from him, wondering if the Forest Titan was dead. Old

moth eaten curtains hung in front of a bed. Sunlight poured in from a window looking out towards the front of the house. Han looked out the window, to see the front part of the roof was only a few feet below him. It didn't look stable so Han searched for an alternate escape. There were now steps coming up the staircase. Han then changed his mind and jumped out the window. He took one step, two steps on the roof. Then he slipped, and fell through, as he had feared. Han luckily fell onto something soft but was now in complete darkness save the hole in the roof. Han's eyes adjusted and he got up off dusty stale bags of grain and hid behind some barrels as he was apparently in a storage room. Han heard the creeping steps of Clay on the roof. Han's breath was so loud he thought it would give him away, but he couldn't seem to breathe softer. Suddenly Clay dropped into the dark room landing skillfully. Han suddenly put his hands over his mouth. "Where are you Salah? You know, I am your friend," he said unconvincingly, and then went on. "I am here to show you the truth; your own mind is crying it so loudly I can taste it." His voice suddenly sounded craving and sadistic. "Remember how innocent you once were?" Han's memories seemed to literally scream out as the Clay Titan said this. Next his voice changed as if he were in a trance. "Once Dro asked you, if you want to get out so badly why convince me to come with you? Why not go and not waste any more time." Then it was as if Han was listening to himself as he heard the next part. "Simple. It's what I ought to have done, in my logic." Han wished Dro could be with him. "You must have been so honorable to start with. What happened? Now you have left Dro and your friends and they are surely no more. I was your father's good friend. Your mother literally grieved herself to death after they knew you weren't coming back." Han felt himself drifting as though he were in a sea of memories, all memories of unfulfilled promises and expectations; they sailed before his view even if he shut his eyes. Fighting it Han cut through the mist and came back to consciousness to hear Clay say "What a pity, everything you fought and died for is this day undone." Han couldn't stand it anymore. "If you were my parent's friend then how could you let their house fall into ruin?" A big smile appeared on Clay's face as he turned toward Han's voice. Suddenly the storage room door flew open and the shape of a man stood in the light. To Han the man looked like his father opening the door of their pantry to find his young son. He stood to run to him. The Clay Titan suddenly leaped for Han and the man in the door advanced also. Han felt Clay's long finger nails slip around his neck. The man stopped in the ray of light made by the hole in the roof holding a shining sword. Han now saw that it was Morgan the Magi who must have left the mountain himself and just arrived. "I know you and the Titans want the Salah boy for some reason." The Clay Titan said frantically. "So back off or I'll kill him." Morgan gripped his sword and lunged forward with a mighty cry. The Clay Titan let Han's neck go as the sword found its way into Clay's gut. He grabbed Morgan's arm putting his fingernails deep in his wrist. Morgan let go of the sword and staggered back. Clay finding he was pinned to one of the barrels grabbed the hilt of the sword to free himself. Suddenly Han heard a high pitched scream as smoke rose from the hand that Clay had grasped

the hilt with, but he managed to pull out the sword anyway and threw it. The sword spun through the air and landed by Han. The Clay Titan with a cruel laugh picked Morgan up by the throat, with the burnt hand still sizzling and melting onto Morgan's neck. Han ran to pick the sword up. He looked up to see Clay had dragged Morgan back out into the main room. Han ran out to save him. The Clay Titan was bowed over him in a darkness gathering around him as though he was ready to literally drink his prey dry. Han charged with all his might and before the old Clay Titan could turn around Han thrust the blade into his back. Pulling it out with a snap that was clearly his back breaking; Han then raised it and bringing it back down cut into his long thin hair and through his neck slicing his head clean off. The wrinkled distorted head hit the ground and blood poured onto Morgan and sprinkled Han and the floor. After the body fell over a strange light illuminated a purple silk pouch on Clay's body. Han untied the pouch and took it off his belt. Opening it up he saw a light and poked his finger in at it. As he touched it he saw a vision that lasted only a blink of an eye. He saw a numberless army in front of the dark mountain. Han being slightly shaken but further curious stuck his hand in the pouch again and pulled out a molten stone that emanated a white light. Suddenly Han heard a gurgling sound coming from the head at his feet. The mouth of the severed head started trying to say something and Han bowed down to listen to him. "I have been executed for my sins but I fear my soul is lost forever," he said as Han read his bloody lips. Han could hardly believe that he had just killed someone. Han took the stone with him and ran over to Elred to see if he was alive but to Han's sorrow the Forest Titan was truly dead. His heart was stopped and there was no breath in him. Han looked for a stone pouch on the body of his friend, but found none. Han heard a song that seemed to fill the woods with sweet sadness. It was the most beautiful melody he had ever heard. Han realized that the music was coming from the very trees around him. A strange light started filling the woods and Han thought he saw a man in white robes walk between two trees and look back at him. It looked like it was Elred but he couldn't tell. For a moment the tree's song became stronger and it seemed to fill the whole forest. Filled with wonder Han rushed back into the dark house, put the unconscious Morgan on his back, and carried him out into the daylight and down the stone steps. Han could see Morgan's wounds in the sunlight and he wondered how he could get help for him. Han then looked off the hill into the distance. Smoke rose from somewhere in the valley. Han thought of Canata and how he could save her and the friends of the Magi. He realized that only the other titans could help so he began to run towards the pillars Elred had shown him.

As he ran Han began to cry and cried out, "Elred I didn't want to kill the Clay Titan I just wanted to protect Morgan." As he paused to catch his breath Han heard a soft reply in his mind, "Han you did the right thing and do not ever forget it. The Clay Titan was evil and received justice but you must know as long as the stone remains so does his essence and spirit upon the earth and will forever until in times to come it is cleansed by the depths of the ocean floor." Han thought this last part might have come from his

guilt of having the stone. "Elred where is your stone?" "It is on a distant moon that I visited nearly a thousand years ago. If you make it to the moon of four roads, walk west from the pillars to the tallest mountain; that is where my stone is. I go now to my true love among the Gods, farewell." The voice had spoken so quietly that Han wondered if he had just imagined it or not. Han hurried on with the urgency of Morgan's condition and the fate of his friends pressing on his mind and Han struggled with exhaustion in his chest. Han put Morgan down and was soon running up the steep wooded hillside toward the pillars of the Titans, but his sight began to blur and he collapsed. He struggled to get up, but he started hearing a whisper from his pocket. He couldn't make it out at first but then Han understood the voice. "Han you have me in your pocket. Do you realize the power I can give you? You can save all your friends! You can be Clay and have his powers. Han you are Clay like I am, deep inside, you just have to find me. I could take away your pain and weakness," came the whisper. Han reached in his pocket and pulled out the stone. The stone was not shining like it had before and looked rather ordinary at the moment but the feeling of a cool darkness emanated onto his hand. "Well how long is it going to take you to accept my gift?" The whisper asked. "You don't have to use my powers for wrong you can use them to do good." Han rallied all his will and got up. He began to run along the steep hillside until he saw a deep ravine open up below him with a swift river running over large rocks below. "What are you doing?" The stone asked nervously. Han pulled it out of his pocket and without a word threw it into the river. The voice gave a shriek of horror as it plummeted into the water. Then feeling relieved Han ran with much more ease up the steep slope to the hill of pillars. Han marveled as he approached the crest of the hill how the cloud was literally just perched on the pillars and was closer than any cloud Han had ever seen. The Magi standing under the pillars ran to meet him and carried him up stone steps into the shade under the mysterious nimbus.

Chapter Twenty-Six

Han among the Titans

Han sat with Morgan on the steps leading up to the stone pillars and looked off into the valley. A considerable amount of smoke now rose from the streets of Kymoore. Several Magi had gone to the place Han had left Morgan and brought him to the circle of pillars to tend to his wounds. Now Han was wondering if Canata was all right. He had sat as a man in a trance since he had arrived and few had ventured to approach him. He felt a soft hand rest on his shoulder. "Han Salah we have all waited to meet you." Han looked up into the face of a kind looking man with a brown beard and Hazel eyes. Sensing the question in his eyes he helped Han to his feet and walked with him onto the patio of the pillars. He began to speak as he walked his deep blue robes flowing about his form in deep grace, "have no fear, she is here

with her mentor, and many others from the city with her.” They approached a group of many personages in flowing robes who were engaged in friendly conversation; in the center of the circle was a round looking altar. All fell quiet as Han walked in their midst. A man without hair on his head and face approached him in pure white robes. His eyes were bright like fire and Han realized he must be in his Titan form though he was much more human looking than the last Titan he met. The Titan in white spoke, “Han your guide is Barak the Lightning Titan,” gesturing to the man in blue robes. “This is Nebo the Titan of the Earth,” he said as he pointed to a short but strong looking man in a red tunic and riding cloak, then turning to a tall man in a green tailored mantle with handsome features and kind blue eyes said, “This is Bensiden the Water Titan, and I am Luz, the Titan of Fire. The four men were commanding in greatness and appearance. “Welcome to the hill of Gilyal,” Nebo said in a deep voice. Then Barak put his hand on Han’s shoulder again and said, “I believe you have met my apprentice.” Hearing someone running towards the group Han turned and saw Canata as she rushed to embrace Han. She had been with the other apprentices and had not known when or how he had arrived. Canata then brought Han to meet some of the other apprentices including a bright looking young man who had long blond hair and said his name was Jerubbaal. Han immediately recognized him as the man he had met in the temple that revealed to him the name of the intelligences of his world. With him there was another young girl with stormy eyes and blond hair. “I am Merica” she said with a nod. “She is the sister of Jerubbaal” Canata added. Han noticed that Bensiden the Water Titan didn’t seem to have an apprentice for some reason, but Han didn’t want to ask.

The Sun was going down now and it shone in their eyes under the cloud, casting shadows behind the pillars and the cloud. “Jerubbaal go with Nebo, Barak, and Bensiden to recover the body of Elred,” Luz directed. “Yes Master,” he answered and the four of them set off down the hill. As the sun set the sky became blood red against the rising smoke. Han started to hear the thunder of many horses down below the hill. He was walking with Canata and Merica as they went to the edge of the patio and looked down below. A Calvary galloped at full speed on the road past the hill. “The Calvary of Kymoore,” Canata said, “They must have surrendered the city to Orfacious.” Soon after the army had passed the three Titan’s and the apprentice came walking up the hill bearing the Forest Titan’s body on a stretcher made of ropes and two tree limbs. They came onto the patio and brought the long legged Titan to the altar and placed him on it. His legs were so long they went off the edge of the altar and rested on the stone floor. Han looked into his resting face that was perfectly still and death like. Han saw a drop land on the dead Titan’s face, then another on his neck. Han started feeling drops himself, he stretched out his hands and looked up at the cloud right above their heads, just then it started raining on the center of the patio. Han looked at the other Titans in a questioning kind of way but it looked as though they thought this was entirely normal.

Han heard a strange noise and looking up he saw a huge cascade of water like a waterfall! He

jumped back in alarm but the others didn't move. Suddenly the water piled up until it became a huge bubbling pillar submerging the altar and towering up into the cloud. Han had never seen water do anything like that. Suddenly Elred's body floated up inside the thick pillar of water. One by one the Titans and apprentices stepped into the pillar of water and rose through it up into the cloud until Han was left alone with Barak, Morgan, and Canata. Canata turned to him, "Han please come with us!" Barak however said reassuringly, "remember that it is your choice alone. My apprentice loves you and would attach you to herself, but if you come you must choose to do so yourself." Han turned to Morgan, "Will you also come?" But the wise magi shook his head, "I am called to another path. In the city there is a school of Magi that we were cast out from. They are good men, but chose to believe in the titans that are allied with the senators. They threw away the correct path for riches and security. In their school they hold the archives and ancient treasures of the magi. Perhaps that now there is war they will turn and hearken to me. We may be able to save many of them and flee with some of our most sacred relics." Han was curious if the titan would say anything more and probed, "where is it that you are going?" "Into the outer lands up there," Barak said as he pointed out from under the cloud to where the evening stars were appearing. Then Canata said, "Han this is the only way I know of to help Dro. You will be able to contact him in the worlds of the mind and we are coming back to save him with greater power soon." Han bowed to Barak and said, "I have always wanted to go to other worlds." "It is good" Barak said with a smile. Han stepped into the column of water and felt a strong current pulling him upwards. He rose into a place the water opened up into what looked like the underwater world of a huge green lake. Han felt the pressure in his ears; he looked down at the doors he came through then looking around he saw just outside the great glass globe was the thick fog of the cloud. Han looked around him as he floated upwards; the water seemed to be filled with moving things. Clear things and dark swimming things, something huge was swimming in the depths, but he couldn't quite make it out as the water made his eyes blurry. Suddenly he turned away from watching the distant creature and saw a huge fish five times his size swim past. Han's heart began pounding because the fish that startled him was big enough to swallow him. Han noticed that Canata was not alarmed as she swam past him. Han became more at ease as they rose in the water and began to love the view of all the swimming creatures about him. Then he ran out of breath so he started swimming more quickly towards the surface above. There was an open square of light directly above him and as Han poked his head out of the water to catch his breath Nebo's strong hands pulled him from the water and onto the metal floor of a huge bluish hall.

Han was soaked as they pulled him out onto the smooth floor. The water was slightly warm to the touch but now he began to shiver with cold. Bensiden, whose flowing robes were quite dry, threw a thick blanket on Han to help dry him off. Han admired the smooth walls and the huge vaulted ceiling of this bluish elongated hall. Above him by the ceiling were cables and a strange piece of machinery that looked

like a metal arm with mechanical pincers like a freshwater crab. There were three nicely finished wooden doors on both sides of the hall and a large door made of dark wood behind him. At the other end of the elongated hall there was a gigantic wall that seemed to be made of glass with a brass door. Behind the glass wall much to Han's astonishment there was a forest with trees and plants. He even saw a deer look at them through the glass and then run into the trees.

When the company had all gathered together Barak slid a large metal plate on runners that were flush with the floor over the pool. Han noticed that there were several similar square hatches in the floor just like the hatch they just closed. The company then started walking towards the dark wooden door at the rear of the hall. As Han walked through the door he saw a huge room that was triangular in shape with sloped walls made of glass. The floor was made of some kind of smooth metal. At the far end of the room where the two outer walls converged stood a golden alter, with a strange looking helmet sitting on it, and a large chair made of solid stone. Behind the glass walls Han could only see the interior of the cloud that enshrouded the ship. Luz wrapped his flowing white robes about his person with a flourish and sat in the stone chair. He let out a contented sounding sigh and said, "Ben is the water enclosed?" Bensiden replied, "Yes Luz." "It is good," the Fire Titan smiled. He lifted his right hand and Jerubbaal came to the altar, picked up the curious looking helmet and placed it on the head of Luz. The helmet looked like a model of the starry expanse and had many markings and holes in it of different shapes. The apprentice then wrapped the Titan in soft netting that securely attached him in his current posture to the chair. The Titan then apparently went entirely limp. All of a sudden a mysterious wind filled the room and caressed Han's face and drying robes. Han felt a little heavier for a moment like the floor was lifting but he looked around and all was still the same. Han whispered to the breeze, "Are you a Titan?" The reply came in a soft whistle, "Yes I am. I am the Wind Titan but I lost my body many hundreds of years before you were even born." Han suddenly got a shiver up his spine, "Why weren't you made to go over the river of death?" "Because of my titan stone. This relic connects me to the earth. Using such stones is a gift of the Titans." Han looked up at the giant triangular windows and began to see the cloud blowing off the surface of the ship as if was blown by a mighty wind revealing a clear dark sky speckled in bright stars. He walked to the side of the hall and looked out of it like a window and to his shock far below them was nothing but a stretching plain of thick clouds casting shadows by the light of the high moon. Han now knew why he was progressively feeling heavier. The ship and its inhabitants were traveling upward at an astounding speed. Nebo gently raised his hands to a large darkened lantern that Han now noticed was floating above the room. The lantern immediately lit filling the faces of the people in the large room with a golden light. The golden altar shimmered in the light against the star filled sky.

Nebo then turned and said, "Han I will show you to your room." Nebo led Han through the hall they had entered when they had emerged from the water and to the door set in the glass wall. As they

approached the door the trees of the forest behind the glass wall seemed to rise up in front of them. Han noticed that they looked much larger and taller than the trees of a normal forest. Nebo opened the brass door and they walked together down a softly lit forest path. The ferns and other plants with the gigantic trees above them seemed to be humming and singing a beautiful but distant sounding melody as though they were longing for the Forest Titan's return. Han heard the chirping of insects and saw a cat like animal with a long bushy tail climbing a tree. Han saw that the sky above the forest was an immense glass dome beyond which the stars shone. After walking for a while Han noticed that they were nearing a point beneath the center of the glass dome and that there on the very top of the dome there was a protrusion that seemed to be a chamber with a passage connecting it with the far side of the ship where they were heading. After walking past the other half of the forest the titan and Han finally found themselves before a great door of dark wood. This door opened soundlessly and a wide hall opened up before them with walls finished opulently in wood and a marble floor. As they traveled through this hall Han noticed many paintings on the walls of ancient heroes in brass frames. At the far end of the hall a set of double doors rose up before them. The doors reminded Han of doors that would be the portals of a temple and were of exquisite workmanship in gold with a carved scene of two fruit trees and a shining triangle above them in the sky. They then turned the corner to the left into a large hallway with a window at the end and a wing continuing off to the right with other doorways on the left. Nebo opened the second door in the wing that opened onto a beautiful bedroom. The far wall of the room was a great window looking out into the starry expanse and in the center of the room there was a large perfectly square bed with benches surrounding it providing a place to sit and disrobe. The titan told Han, "the double doors you saw as we came in are off limits for now because the room inside is very special but it will be shown you in due time. When you wake up feel free to come back to the front of the ship." Nebo closed the door and Han slept.

Chapter Twenty-Seven

The Titan ship

When Han next woke he was surprised that a curtain of stars filled the view from his bedroom. He walked back to the triangular hall from which the ship was controlled. As he entered he saw the titan Bensiden standing there with the titan Luz who was still sitting in the great chair, but he appeared alert and was sitting upright. Both titans were looking out at a shining orb just beyond the clear walls of the hall. Han did not want to disturb them, but Bensiden noticed Han and beckoned to him. Han was filled with wonder at the scene. He asked, "Is it still night out?" "Oh no," Bensiden said with a chuckle "We are in the great space above the blue sky, where there is no air to breathe." Luz pointed to the bright blue orb and said, "Han, that beautiful orb you are looking at is the earth that is your home." At that moment Han

knew that the earth was a living being and that all the people of it should treat each other as brothers. He said, "Not long ago I had never before felt the wind on my face, I had never heard the rushing of a brook, nor the singing of birds, but now I am gazing at the entire earth flying through the midst of heaven!" Bensiden said, "Han look out at the earth; do you see how one half of it is darkened? The men of those lands are now in the night. All planets are divided, with one side dark and the other light, one side north and the other south. Thus it is with our mortal minds also. Meditative circles are symbols of power and are always divided. We are heading towards a sacred land that the Titans chose on the moon of Uranus. It is notable not only for its distance from us, but also for its magical properties. The dark and light sides of Uranus and its moons are the same as its north and south sides because it rotates on its side with its north pointing at the Sun for about twenty years and then it has a night day cycle for a time and then the south points at the Sun for an equal length of time." Luz then began to speak, "Uranus is the ever sleeping planet showing forth its wonders in due seasons. The Sun's axis is lateral to the axis of the moon to which we will travel. Thus she herself is a possible medium of the heavenly light which is the hidden flame. In ages past on earth it lit up the night sky as the brightest of all stars and through the power of the Wind, Water, and life Titans, the Life Moon grew yellow, white, and purple flowers. We call this moon the Life Moon because it was endowed with life even though the moon is usually dark and cold. It is now cold enough to turn your breath into hard ice."

After this Bensiden showed Han the ship's observatory. They made their way up a long staircase to the top of the forest dome. There a clear portal led into a round room with a transparent bubble of glass for the entire roof and walls. In the middle of the room a chair and eyepiece were used to control a large rotatable telescope. The floor was covered in a silver plated round grid with lines and numbers inlaid with jade. "So what would you like to see first Han?" "Jupiter," Han replied. Bensiden nodded and started turning cranks and levers as the giant telescope began to turn and move along the glass. Then Bensiden stopped and carefully adjusted it, looking into it he turned even smaller knobs ever so slightly. Finally he turned to Han and said, "it is ready". Han walked up and looked into the eyepiece. He saw a large round planet with swirls and lines all up and down it. "It is amazing! What is that little round dark spot in the middle of it?" "That is the shadow of Tili (Io) one of its moons," the titan replied. Han marveled at it for a while. "How big is it; is it bigger than the earth?" A smile caressed Bensiden's face. "It is hundreds of times bigger. That small shadow on its atmosphere is probably the size of the earth. If you were to ride the fastest horse at top speed or fly on eagles wings you would not even make it across what you now see in a life time." Han looked at Bensiden in amazement. "Is it bigger than the Sun?" Bensiden answered, "not even close. The Sun might look small from earth but it is many times bigger than even Jupiter. We only perceive it as small because we are far away from it. Han let me show you something even bigger and more distant." Hans's eyebrows raised a little in interest. Bensiden turned all kinds of cranks and knobs as

the mighty telescope circled around the room. Soon he had fine-tuned it and took his eye from the glass with a smile. "Han this thing you are going to look at is called a nebula; it is a cloud of gas far in the depths of space: Far beyond the planets of our star." Han stepped up and put his eye to the glass. The sight took his breath away. It indeed was a dark purple cloud surrounded by concourses of stars. Han saw many other things also but the time grew late and they went to eat a midday meal with the others.

Chapter Twenty-Eight

The long and disturbing dream

Han was taken in a vision to the room of counsel in Kymoore were the senate of the king meets. Han saw that the chairs were filled with evil men Titans and masters of the Overmind. The speaker of the chamber arose and spoke, "The fire has come from the mountain! You all know, that is the sign of the king." A junior member of the senate arose, "Let us kill the steward Morom and his son the prince. If that be the sign let it be our king that rises" he put his hand over his mouth and whispered something and everyone did the same. A trumpet sounded and Han looked up. A herald entered and called out, "All stand for the prince!" The entire senate rose with smirks on their faces; as the prince entered and traveled to the front of the hall a senator in a black robe approached him. The prince smiled then the smile turned to a gurgling frown as he fell to his knees. The man swung his hand knocking the princes' crown from his head and his guards did nothing but watch.

Han now looked upon a different scene. Low sunlight filled the bedroom; the long curtains blew in the breeze. An unearthly light glowed from under the threshold of the door. "I should have strangled that boy when he first came to my service. I hate him!" Orfaciuse spat. "He was going to be my heir. But he threw it all away, what a fool." "He will still have your kingdom." A low voice said from a shadow at the window. Orfaciuse looked up. A great bird was suddenly sitting on the windowsill. It had deep red eyes and with closer examination was rotting and dead. It looked menacing in the red light of the sun with a long crooked neck like a vulture. Orfaciuse's heart was pounding out of control now. "You are my Ogweam aren't you?" Orfaciuse said, having a hard time controlling his breathing. "Yes, that is who I am." The Overmind screamed and tried to run as the bird swooped in and sunk its talons into his back. The vision then changed and the Overmind then stood above the flagstones of a balcony, his feet dangling as a puppet does to give a sermon. The talons of the shadowy Ogweam Vulture were sunk deep into his back. For those with eyes to see, just as Han did as he looked on in horror, it played with him as a child does a doll. The Overmind's voice rang out clearly to the masters and their new followers there below, "The outer-rim has rejected me, therefore eat the flesh of every man you find there, for it will give you power to utterly destroy Kymoore. My brothers you will enjoy equally in the riches of the kingdom once I

am king. My spies have gone before your face, the path is clear and nothing stands between you and victory. Now is the hour of our revenge!" After the sermon the army moved in droves past the bridge over the lava chasm.

Another scene opened and Han saw darkness seep out of the mountain as a numberless army covered the hills. They had crude metal clubs and blades. Many of them had iron breastplates but others were naked and most had no more than a rude habit of human skin on. They appeared black because they were covered in mud to protect their pale skin. They were the army of Orfacious and Morom combined as if raised from the dead. The watchmen looked out into the east with dread and terror. This army was large enough to surround the entire mountain with ranks thousands of men thick. It was a day of gloom and the sun was hid behind the clouds. To Han's horror and sorrow he saw a leader of the army holding Trevanian's head on a stake. Han looked up to the only source of light that was a fire like the sun on the tip of the mountain. Orfacious had attempted to cover it with a storm cloud but it illuminated the entire gloom like an eye that is filled with the fire of a rising sun. Han desired more than anything to see Dro and know whether he was yet alive but his vision constrained him and Han could only see what it desired to show him. Han then saw the plains in front of the mountain where one, then many, horsemen appeared on a hill overlooking the valley. It was the king's cavalry that had rushed towards the mountain at the time that the fire first appeared to fight for the king. Their commander rode before them and said, "My men and friends, we will not live to see another sunrise over the hill tops. We will not live to see this summer turn to winter or that winter turn to spring. My men we will surely die this day. We know that the good Titans became so through love and the evil by hate. Let our spirits become as the Titans of old, never leaving this battle field until the day be won, our Titan stones the very stones upon which our blood is shed. This day we kill our fathers and our older brothers who served with Morom but we do not kill them in hate but in love!" Then the sound of the horn echoed over the hill tops and the army advanced into the valley. They rode in glory with bright swords flashing, they rode to their doom. The men of the king were outnumbered a thousand to one yet they rode with the wind towards certain death. Han stood above them in his vision. Just then Han looked up to see a miracle. The light in the cloud burst forth upon them as bright as the sun. Suddenly the army of Orfacious shrieked in pain and fell to the earth instantly blinded by the light. The men of the king marveled upon the mercies of the Gods as they plowed through the black army unabated as a farmer plows their own fields who are not threatened by little weeds that need to be upturned in the summer sun. Han suddenly felt a great swelling of sorrow for the army of zombies. He was once one of them. Why was he given a chance and they were not? "Only if I had taught more of them," Han felt as though a part of him was dying as he watched the slaughter of the ignorant. Han could not bear to watch the vision anymore his heart burning with helplessness. Why is reality so cruel? Han turned around only to see chariots appear on the hill the horsemen had ridden from. The

commander looking behind and seeing them also, rode back up the hill towards them, with a few of his men. As he rode he nocked his bow with an arrow. When he was in range he shot a swift arrow that hit and sunk into the chest of one of the figures that he knew had killed the prince. As he rode he shot another and another but none fell to the ground. As he came to them he unsheathed his already bloody sword, but the speaker of the senators reached forth and grabbed it by the blade and with inhuman strength took it from him. The robed senator grasped and squeezed him by the neck lifting him from his horse. The Titan with the commander in his right hand pulled out from his pocket his dark glowing stone that seemed to emanate a heavy cloud that sunk to the hem of his robes. "You have been a dark Titan all along?" The commander choked with shock. With his last ounce of strength he snatched the cold stone out of the Titan's hand and shoved it into his own mouth.

The senator was shocked and loosened his grip on the commander for only a moment but in that moment he swallowed it. The dark Titan threw him to the hard ground and said. "I will cut it out of your stomach you useless dog." Then the speaker came out of his chariot and standing over the commander with a drawn dagger plunged it into the commander's lower rib. But as the light of life was leaving him his voice rang out in triumph, "my blood shall touch your stone. Let it cry to the heavens against you!" Han saw the Titans on the hill were suddenly filled with rage as thunderclouds formed and emerged from them and extended over the battlefield. Soon the valley was filled with muddy and bloody rivers of white pebbles. The clouds covered the light; the army of Orfacious opened their eyes, thirsty for blood. The men of the King were soon overcome and disappeared in the black ranks as a stone does cast into a marsh.

Han was swept away in the vision again to the main street of Kymoore, where the city had erupted into open rebellion against the servants of Orfacious. On one side of the street stood thousands of citizens waving flags and throwing rocks at men entering with their black skin and cloaks. On the other side marched the men, which Orfacious had already sent to occupy the city ahead of the entering of his army. The magi school rose up behind the men of Orfacious on the crest of a hill and had already been lit on fire. The vision drew Han closer to the school and he saw men in black cloaks throwing the books, the sacred calendars, and the seer games of the Magi School in huge piles to be burned. Han saw a rebel and a large group of friends armed with swords, staves, and long knives emerge from a dark alley and cry out, "The school is gone but the Magi are still alive in the prison, should we not save them?" Han then saw soldiers standing by and doing nothing, the leader of the group answered with a loud voice, "If just one of you dirty animals step out of line we will execute them all!" Suddenly the rebels went crazy and charged screaming into the ranks of the soldiers beating them with sticks and the flats of their swords. After breaking through the ranks of the soldiers they came to the prison, but there was already a pile of dead Magi with cut beards and bags over their heads. These citizens of Kymoore then screamed a battle cry and cut down the guards at the gate and broke into the dungeon. Han saw the jailer with his brains bashed

out with a metal club. The remaining magi came out of the prison with the rebels, then Han saw Morgan among them, and he was so happy he was still alive. Morgan looked up. Han could see the courage in his face had drained away and knew something was wrong. Han looked and saw at the end of the street where there were three figures in bright orange cloaks, standing erect and commanding. The one on the left raised his hand and the sky suddenly darkened, the whole street of combatants stopped and looked up in shock. The one in the center pulled a sword out of his cloak as tall as himself as though he had it been sheathed in his own stomach. Horror then filled the hearts of the whole crowd as the third raised his hands. Ice shards sharp as knives suddenly came from the sky cutting down the rebels. The crowd started running in every direction falling here and there as bloody ice flew in every direction. Lightning then also burst from nowhere knocking the fleeing rebels to the ground. Morgan raised his left hand and a brilliant light leapt from his palm pushing the ice shards back in a cocoon around himself. In his right hand he now held a gleaming sword. He screamed a battle cry and led a charge of the Magi towards the three figures. Han looked up, but the orange robed figure that had held the immense sword was gone. Han looked around wildly to see if he could see him and saw him here and then there slaying people for show as though he could disappear and reappear at will. Suddenly the figure appeared in front of Morgan so close that their noses could have touched and with a swift movement and a sneer on his face cut Morgan in two at the waist. "No!" Han screamed. In vision Han ran to the side of Morgan and looked into his face. Morgan was still barely alive and said, "Han, I will see you again in Paradise". Han looked out over the road to see it filled with bodies. All the men had been living before were now slain and the street was silent. The only sound was that of flames. Han saw that the flame that had been on the books of the Magi had spread to some of the clothes of the bodies, and soon the entire street was a sheet of flame burning above a glassy sheet of blood and water. Then Han saw one solitary flag of Kymoore with the seven stars upon it blowing in the wind as it caught on a tree branch in the wilderness and Han saw three wraiths standing on the hill over the commander with their faces covered. Suddenly he heard their screaming like a wind in a tempest, "Kymoore is taken! Behold the land of the north is overcome, who will stand against Orfacious now?" Lament the falling of the noble and the many filled with courage even unto death!

Han was overcome with grief and awoke in the night. He could not forget what he had seen. As he thought of it, he knew the truth of his vision. Han went to his window and pressed his face to it. To Han's surprise a beautiful yet featureless moon was suspended in space very near the ship floating among the stars. Han's view of the moon suddenly clouded. Han could remember the very first thing Morgan had ever said to him, "You are alive and awake. I am Morgan. I am your friend." He remembered when Morgan and Trevanian had taught them about the caves, had submerged their heads in the spring, and then had given them precious gifts. The more Han thought of all he had seen the dryer his throat became and the more tears welled up in his eyes. He lost control and collapsed and it felt to Han for a moment as

if he were falling back into the abyss. A blood fear formed in his heart that he might never awake back into consciousness. A cloud of darkness surrounded him and it seemed his only source of light was his very aura that he saw suddenly outlined the forms of the three wraiths standing above him, but even this light died as he tried to speak to the wraiths, but choked without breath, and submerged into death. The wraiths began to speak to Han, "I am the shadow deep in the earth. The darkness that was before, that exists now, and is to come. My dominion is so dark that no eye can pierce its depths. Once in this darkness no man can return to the feeble light of day. For he will ever after emanate gloom, but we are the keepers of the fates of men, we give them new life for we are the keepers of the flaming and all seeing eye of God as it fills the whole of space with the radiance that is invisible to the unworthy." Then there was a single speck of light in the vacuous abyss of shadow. Han looked and saw that he was the light or that he was its conduit, and he grew steadily brighter and brighter. Warmth grew inside him and he felt a love deeper and happier than he could possibly have imagined. Soon the darkness was filled with a bright whiteness and the presence seemed to melt away.

Chapter Twenty-Nine

Of the city of light!

I then opened my eyes, not my physical ones but my spiritual eyes, and saw a new place. I then understood that unlike the mind, spirit sight was a gift from the gods and not achieved through any human craft; although it was like seeing energy in one's eyes only that there was now order to the chaos. I saw that I was on the moon that I had seen from my window on the ship of the titans and that I was in a ship sailing in a sacred sea. I looked over the waves at the most beautiful golden city shimmering in the light of a white planet brighter than the sun." The city itself shone like a burning fire reflected in the water. The men around me on the ship were fair and strong in robes of glory. The three wraiths were there, but they were now goddesses of light with long white hair and eyes that shone like pure blue stars. They had golden crowns of carved leaves and vines. In the front of the crowns shone three green stars from which sprang the vines made of pure emerald. I looked and to my amazement the ship had sailed right up to a massive gate made of sparkling sapphires and inlaid trees made of gold. This gate opened and the ship sailed into a shimmering canal on the other side. The city inside the wall was bright and amazing to my eyes. "Han." The three goddesses continued. "The most incredible thing about this city is not what you can see with your eyes but what you can feel with your heart." "What is that?" I asked. "All who here dwell love one another so much they are willing to give all they have to each other. In life there was no poor among them and they were the people who had one heart in all things; even marriage."

The ship now sailed past forests and verdant pastures on the way to the center of the flaming city of light. Soon the city's mighty pinnacles towered above us in the stars. One great tower stood in the center above the rest like a giant candle; it had the appearance and shone as of white gold in the light of the greatest planet. Soon the ship came to a halt. "Han." A deep voice said. I turned around to see a glorious being in pure white robes on a beautiful white stone quay. "Yes?" I replied, "I am here." The pure white figure went on, "This great city you see before you is the city of light. It was taken up to heaven many thousands of years ago, before your ancestors came across the deep, before the dark lord tried to make a tower to heaven. Even before Africa and Europe that ye have learned about were divided; before the north turned to ice. Before all the great floods this people became so righteous that they were given all things, made immortal and taken into heaven with their whole country under their feet. Look." The angel led me off the ship and walked with me up the streets made of what looked like gold. To each side of us lay great houses, covered in vines. We entered the white tower that was a giant temple. Inside there was a large white assembly room with the ceiling painted like the sky; there were many men in white robes there gathered in counsel. As we walked into that chamber I saw in the center there was a man of such beauty, majesty, and glory, that I believe I would have died if I had been in the man's presence with my natural body because the light that was emanating from just his flaming eyes was as hot as the stars and illuminated the whole room. His face was as fair and young as a man of only twenty years. The man stood and looked right into my soul as he spoke. "Welcome Han Salah son of Boula." His voice filled the temple and seemed to echo through the very immensity of space. "I am Boulder the Son of Wotan. This day you have received the secret flame. Your candle is no longer necessary, for this light within you is the light of truth. Always cherish it for it is more precious than anything earthly. It is the power and light of the sun and the life of the earth. Because you have this gift anything you desire will come to pass. What is it that you desire?" For the first time in my life I spoke without any fear, "I desire that my brother Dro have this same gift."

Darkness. Have you ever seen pitch-black darkness? A dark that is so deep you are completely swallowed in it? This is the darkness Dro faced in the night of his despair when his candle fell into the bottomless chasm. The army of Dro had fought their way over the bridge spanning the lava chasm only to be routed into a maze of dark passages filled with pits. The army had fled trying to make it as far as possible from their attackers. After the battle Dro had felt his way for several sleeps through the perfect darkness of the caves finding many of his slain comrades. He finally realized that he was lost and could not feel his way out. Just as he was falling into despair Dro heard a voice in his head. "Light that shines in darkness," Dro looked around and saw nothing but blackness, "Where?" Dro whispered to the voice. "Light that shines in darkness," the voice repeated. Dro looked around again, "Light that shines in darkness" the voice repeated for a third time. Then the voice filled the immensity of space. "You are the

light that shines! You are he who prepares the Lightning of inspiration. You rain understanding upon the earth like a summer storm does before the skies are lit with the light of knowledge. You know there is an outside, you know Orfacious is real, that is why he tried to kill you, because there is no hope of tricking you to become a nothing again. You are the light that shines in darkness and the darkness comprehends you not, as are all the Titans and Gods. Now that you know the truth you may have this precious gift."

"What is it?" Dro asked excitedly. "The Secret Fire; it is a conduit that is opened inside you. Just as the Sun receives its light from the love of heaven you receive secret light. It is a light that shines in darkness and the darkness knows it not." Suddenly the caves around Dro slowly but surely grew brighter and brighter until there was a blinding light all around him. "This is fabulous!" Dro exclaimed.

The caves around him were now as bright as day. Dro found his way to the Rivenway. There in a giant chamber as large as a cathedral stood hundreds of chained prisoners. Dro saw that they were the men that had joined into an alliance with his men from the forces of the outer-rim rangers. He also saw that all the masters of the captives in the room were astounded at the light that he brought with him and they had covered their faces with shrouds and veils shrieking with disgust. All the prisoners turned their heads to Dro and raised their hands to the blinding light. Dro saw a fire lit on a ledge behind them that was dim in comparison to his own countenance. The agents of the Overmind had been showing the rangers a shadow show that was now ruined by his light. The men of Orfacious drew their knives and rushed to meet Dro in a fight but as his light increased the chains on the prisoners were loosened and the room erupted into a riot. The cry of distant dragons filled the far off tunnels as this new light was reflected into unknown paths. The rangers escaped in all directions and Dro was left alone in the cathedral of stone standing in sorrow over the mangled bodies of the men he had once known, but had remained as agents of the Overmind. Here for the first time Dro could hear the sounds of far off planets and underlying fabric of reality. Dro heard the wind over the mountain and the sound of birds and running water. He knew of the outside not only from his heart but he was now actually listening to it. Dro walked on looking for what had become of his friends. He soon came to a place known to the agents of the Overmind called the yellow tower. This was a place where there was a giant sulfurous pillar in the caves. The body of Nog was lying beneath the pillar scraped and bruised. Dro ran to pick him up but the body of Nog was entirely limp and Dro knew that Nog was dead. "Nog it is me Dro," Dro called out looking shocked and confused. As Dro held him he saw two bright white figures of a man in Nog's staring pupils. Dro looked at the lifeless body of Nog in horror. He had been given great powers, but it had not been enough. Dro heard the voice of Nog in his mind, "You are the Mind Titan, and I, I am the future" his voice trailing off. "The future what," Dro insisted, but as his grasp on Nog loosened the body hit the ground limply. A sound came pounding the cavern walls like an approaching army. Dro lifted the body and quickly entered a tunnel in the side of the Yellow Tower. The passage spiraled upward for a long time

then emptied into a carved out square room. Dro dug a grave for Nog there in a niche that had been buried in sand and then sat on the ground and began to draw in the dirt until the caves became quiet again. As Dro drew in the dust he began to understand that the Secret Fire was more than just a light within him but it was now teaching him things. He could see the structure of the elements around him and understood that the universe was a system of both order and chaos working perfectly together to make the world. Dro listened to see if he could hear Han. He heard the outside so clear because it was so much louder than the caves. Dro heard the war outside, the sound of books burning, and of men being put to death; giving their last testaments. The sound of horsemen riding to a south region filled with the sounds of business and the growing fear of the north. "I heard Orfacious raised that whole army who attacked the mountain from the dead." Dro heard one merchant say. And another, "The necromancer of the north will come south once he's done with Kymoore. Dro was intrigued by the gossip, "but where is Han?" Dro thought.

Canata was speaking with Luz when Barak came in with Han's limp body. Canata held Han to her breast and wept, but when she looked up she saw Luz was smiling. "Fear not Canata Han is only sleeping." "How did he fall asleep?" Canata asked. "His spirit left his body." Luz replied. Canata looked at Luz in shock. "Fear not Canata, Han is very much alive. The veil of unbelief and fear is being lifted from his mind forever as he receives true knowledge. I see you wonder how this is done. The Spirit Titan who is in us may quicken us to see far off places. But what saves Han from death even now is the energy that holds our spirit to our body just as our flowing particles of being or mind flow through it. Which is a thin cord of power that attaches him to his temporary shell and at this time extends of into space where he is. There is a fire kindled in Han now that also exists in me for I am also a holder of the secret fire. Will you reach forth and raise him from the floor?" Canata lifted Han's arm and put her hand in his, and immediately he opened his eyes and sat up with a smile as though it had all just been a game. Canata was so happy he was all right that she kept crying, but now she was smiling as she held him squeezing his hands. Han was shocked because Canata had never held him like this before, but he felt as if he was finally home.

Chapter Thirty

The bright passage

Dro sat in the yellow tower meditating. No one had yet attempted to enter and disturb him. His light still burned bright within him, but had subsided to the eyes of men. He shed many bitter tears over the niche he had dug out in the room to bury the small form of Nog as he said goodbye. Afterwards he arose and decided to again go forth and find more of his friends that may yet live. As he walked forth in the caves he saw the ravages of the nothing army who rampaged through the halls killing whoever they

found and leaving broken poles and torn banners. There was not much left of their victims, mostly just scattered bones. He came to a little labyrinth of holes where many were hiding. "Go away." They called. "What brings this attitude?" Dro asked. "Last time you tried to save us an army came and brutally killed many of our kinsmen." Dro persisted, "Yes, but don't you realize that army was heading to Kymoore, if we follow their track it will lead us strait outside." "That is just a story to get us lost," one yelled. Dro looked down into one of the holes where a young child was with his mother. Women were rare in the caves but were occasionally among the rangers. Dro saw that the child had been wounded from the attack and would most likely die. Dro stepped down into the hole and lifted the child in his arms. Before the eyes of the Rangers, Dro healed the child. Then all the rangers cheered and said they would listen to his words. So he taught them about all his journeys. And after he was done for the day he slept in their camp.

Dro opened his eyes in the dim cave. He sat up and noticed all the other rangers were fast asleep save the night watch. He sat there thinking about his dream until the others started stirring. Then he told them of all the wonders he had learned in the night. "I saw myself leave this dark mountain that represents the worldliness and ignorance of men; but in which is hidden the ego of man that once tamed unknowingly holds the secret perception of the ever changing experiencing principles. I met my friend Han there on the outside among our blue skies and green fields. We came to great waters that symbolized the sea that separates man from the truth; but which also is the truth when it is all embraced as a whole and explored as the feminine principle within which the whole universe resides. Then we were saved by a ship that bore us forth deep into space." "What is space?" One asked. Dro said, "Space is the world above the sky, and the sky is the open air above the caves. Once we were in space I could control the ship and I flew it past many planets. I saw several worlds many times bigger than even the earth we are on. One of them was a giant sphere unimaginably big with swirling clouds and storms. Another had giant rings going around it. Finally we came to an enormous planet with a beautiful moon. When we reached it my friend Han began to glow with a heavenly light. He told me that I also now had this gift and to lead everyone who would listen out of the caves. I then was sucked back here into my body. It seemed like I was gone for many days, but here I am and it is only after we slept." All sat transfixed at Dro's amazing story. Dro looked at the floor sadly. "I wonder when I shall see him again." One ranger stood up and said, "Should we not follow Dro light bringer to the caves end?" It seemed to be unanimous as all said, "Yes!" Everyone got their provisions ready to follow Dro out into the real world. Dro looked over the whole camp and he couldn't believe someone had finally listened to him. They began the long hike out down the tunnel the army took. As they traveled it slowly grew brighter and brighter. Dro periodically sent scouts ahead to make sure the coast was clear as they traveled on. The way winded and sometimes they had to stop and examine the tunnels before they knew which way the army went.

After the camp had slept again they traveled on and came into a passage that was so bright that

most of the group, along with the strongest of the rangers, turned back saying that they would go blind if they went that way, but Dro and a small number of the rest of the caravan went on. Dro climbed around having a hard time figuring out which way to go because the passages were now smooth stone and it was too bright to see the nothing's tracks. Finally he knelt on the ground and prayed to the Titans for strength and when he opened his eyes he saw before him on the ground footprints of blood showing him where the army had gone. The day after that Dro stepped into a cave so bright he couldn't open his eyes, but he could clearly hear the wind howling not far ahead. Many of the remaining members of the caravan wanted to turn back, but Dro said, "I would never throw this away even if I were blind all my days!" This seemed to persuade most of them and the camp stopped to rest. Soon the light seemed to change color and subside enough for everyone present to open their eyes. Dro then led them forward through a large cave opening and they saw the stars for the first time. Soon the group was feeling their way down the rocky slope of the mountain. When they entered the forest Dro and his small group of friends felt the plants and grass growing from between the rocks and heard beetles fly through the air. Dro felt the rough pillar of a tree with pure fascination. The camp stopped in the shade of an immense tree to rest. Dro realized the light of the stars made an outline on the ground where the light is blocked by the trees. He stepped out into the starlight and saw his shadow for the first time. Suddenly to his surprise the night sky began to fill with light as the moon began to rise. He could see the bright night around him perfectly and the trees were crowned with shimmering leaves. Dro arose and walked to the top of a tall hill where he looked at the mountaintops. His heart filled with rapture and joy as he saw he truly was free. He saw flowers and stones, and many amazing things. "I should go back and tell the other rangers," Dro thought. So Dro left the sleeping forms of his friends and climbed back up the way he came and found the cavity he had crawled out from. It looked uninviting but he climbed down in it anyway. He could see where the light was coming in from the hole but the rest was as pitch black as ever. "I don't remember it being this dark," he thought.

Dro traveled in calling the names of his ranger friends. He crawled long and hard in total blackness. Then he heard some whispers. "Hey look, here comes Dro," one said. "What have you done with the people that went with you?" Dro looked to the sound of the voice. "Look, he has become blind!" "You will never believe what I found out there," Dro said. "Blindness?" one called as they laughed. "No you don't understand, I can see out there, but it is so much brighter than in here." "We don't believe you, you are obviously blind." Dro persisted, "But only if you could see what I saw. I saw tons of life, I saw towering trees and a sky full of stars, grass and bugs," Dro was interrupted by rude laughter. Suddenly someone pushed him over hard onto his elbow. "You didn't see that." The cave again filled with laughter, but one of the rangers named Weab had pity and guided him away from the chamber where he had found the other rangers. Dro turned away then and started crawling the way he had come, filing down the same

rocks he had come up, thinking that Weab would stay behind, but he followed Dro. Once or twice Dro's heart dropped as he misjudged a stone or couldn't find a certain spot. "Whatever we do we can't afford to get lost in here," Dro told his new companion. Finally he looked up and saw dark blue light pouring in from the late night sky. He climbed out with Weab into the open air again and the two friends looked out over the valleys as the sun began to rise. Relieved Dro said, "I can't believe we have actually made it out." An eternity had passed since Dro and Han had awoken and were taken to the sand cave of the Magi, but now their greatest dreams were finally beginning to be realized. Dro listened to the wind in the expanse and for the first time he realized that he had been forgiven of all the evil he had committed by the very nature around him itself. He then wept as the sun rose and the world was filled with its light and said again and again, "Thank you, thank you Han, thank you for saving my soul from the pit."

Dro and Weab walked up over the hills into a large forest of beautiful trees. As they walked into a clearing they saw falling leaves and a trickling stream in the morning light near a huge tree with a small house tucked under its roots. "This must be the place Han dreamed about," Dro thought. Suddenly the door creaked open and a man stepped out dressed in green robes. "Fear not Dro, it is me, Elose." Dro and Weab came closer and saw the friendly face of the Magi. Dro and Elose embraced and walked into the small cottage together with Weab. "I have been expecting you Dro." Elose said as he poured Dro and Weab bowls of wine. "How did you know we were coming?" Dro asked. "I knew Han had come out without you, so I knew you weren't far behind. I must now teach you two the laws of this place, just like I taught you the laws of the old." The two friends listened intently that day and when night came they went with Elose to the hilltop where the titan pillars were to learn of the stars for the first time. The Overmind was up to something sinister that night because as Dro, Weab and Elose climbed up to the top of hill they saw two giant pieces of floating metal that were attached together, ascending into the sky above the pinnacle of the dark tower. Elose said, "I heard there is a rumor being passed around that Orfacious has killed all the senators, but they didn't really die, they have only gone missing. I believe they are all on that ship on a journey to thwart the voyage of the Titans."

The next day Weab went in search of his family and Dro went into town for work. All the people had become corrupt worshiping the Dark Titans and calling them gods. They had even made idols of them and called Orfacious the dragon god on earth, and Dro saw them praying toward the Mountain. Every night Dro and Elose went out to look at the night sky. One night Dro said, "Han just give me a sign you are still out there." "Don't you worry Dro, he will be back." The now gray-haired Elose said with a smile.

Chapter Thirty-One

The Life station

Han stood there transfixed looking at this new planet. It was massive like a giant, and blue like the sky, a shining orb hanging in space. Han stood there for quite some time. “Are we going to the blue planet?” Han asked. Nebo replied, “No, after visiting the life station we will go to the life moon outpost and then to the Temple.” Han thought about this as he left the triangular hall and walked past the main bay and into the forest dome. As Han walked further into the forest he came to the cottage of the slain forest titan Elred. He had seen its roof peeking above the canopy before but had never been to it. It was a small, but tall, structure with a thatched roof. Han open the door and looked inside. There was a table and bed, a little wood-burning stove stood in the corner. There was a brass basin on a chain just above the table and herbs were still tied to the rafters. Han came back out into the forest with a solemn look on his face. He wished that he could say goodbye to Elred. Han saw the low branch of a tree and began to climb. Soon he was nearly above the canopy and looking into the top of the glass dome. There he had found a place to rest safely in the crook of a massive limb. He felt so peaceful there he drifted off to sleep. He awoke again as a bright star came into view. “Wow I have never seen that star,” thought Han, but as he looked closer the star seemed to come closer and Han knew it was the life moon that he had seen from his bedroom window. “Han,” the voice of the wind said. “Yes?” Han responded. “Do you know what moon that is Han?” “No, I don’t.” said Han. “It is the Life Moon, where we hid our Titan Stones in ages past.” He could now see that the moon was brownish and that it had strange lines on its surface going north and south. Han felt so peaceful looking at it from the tree. Han stayed in the woods until supper.

Han fell asleep in the soft light of the blue planet. He awoke peacefully as he had dreamed of soft music. But something had changed; his room was now full of green light. Han looked out his window to see, many giant greenish forest domes with the light of the life moon shining through them. Han got out of bed to see what was going on. As he ran through the forest he saw the ship was surrounded by a floating city of trees! The Green domes shone bright in the light. Han also saw the blue planet with all its little moons with one moon half in front of the giant planet. As Han came into the main hall he saw a strange tall man in long flowing blue robes talking to Luz and Barak. Han froze. The tall man turned and looked at Han with a mysterious smile. “This is Han Salah. Han this is Ganahulenari King of the life moon,” Luz introduced. Han immediately laid prostate before the noble figure because he had never seen such a man before, but Han felt himself lifted with ease as if he was only as heavy as a child by the great man and embraced. Han then walked with the two titans and the king as they walked into the main hall and Barak opened a door to the water tank with ease. The surface of the water acted different in space, it bulged and protruded slightly. Luz and the King climbed into it and started swimming down to the hatch

on the bottom. "Barak what is this place?" Han asked. "It is the life station. Come and have breakfast and then I will show you."

Han ate as fast as he could so he could go see this new place. After they were done eating, Barak took Han to the hatch and they jumped into the cold water. It was always a shock when Han jumped in, and heard his ears submerge. They dived to the bottom and into a tube that sucked them through, then up into new chamber of warm water sparkling with green light. Han popped his head out of the water gasping for breath and rubbing the liquid out of his eyes. As his ears drained he heard the most beautiful music as a tinkling of chimes and singing. The voices sounded like young women. Han opened his eyes and saw he was in a forest pond with a dark rocky shore. Tall trees stood all around him. Barak climbed up upon one of the rocks seemingly dry, "Come Han, into the forest." Han swam up out of the water and glided to the shore gently kicking the water. He shivered as all his clothes clung to his body. Then Han saw another tall man in flowing white robes come to him with a towel. "Thanks!" Han said as the man handed it to him. Han began to follow the man through the woods to the sound of the beautiful music. After a little walk they came to marble steps leading up into another dome in which stood a glittering white city. The sight took Han's breath away, the ivory spires shone in the light of the life moon on one side and the great blue planet on the other. At the top of the steps stood Merica, Jerubbaal and Canata. "Hey Han, come see," came the voice of Jerubbaal. Han, Barak and the other man came up the steps into the entrance of the city dome. Then the man who had brought the towels spoke. "Follow me my friends, I will show you to the house of the King. Then they glided bare foot down the hill past many houses and finally to a smooth stone path into the white city. It seemed many people had gathered together and took much interest in the group, whispering one to another. Han realized that they probably hadn't seen any outsiders save the Titans whenever they might come. Han also noticed that they all seemed to be at least a foot and a half taller than any of them with a rather long skinny build.

Finally they came to one of the tallest towers, and the servant they were following kicked the ground and went sailing up to a high balcony. So they all followed flying up after him. He opened the doors and walked with them into an elegantly decorated hall with marble floors and polished wood pillars. There were two hallways leading off to each side and one going straight up. He then brought them to the left side into a sitting room with pillows on the floor. They all sat and the man took his leave. "Why were those people staring at us? Don't the Titans come here often?" Han asked. "No, we the Titans haven't visited this city in their lifetimes." Barak said. "Oh, I see." Han replied curiously. Luz and the King came into the room commanding complete attention. They all arose and the King came and sat among them. They talked about all kinds of things and several men came and offered the King and the others things to eat. Han had just ate breakfast but he wouldn't pass up an offer seeing as he was getting hungrier and hungrier these days being out of the caves. "You know the evil one has built a great ship to

bear his wrath forth into space, and that they left not a day after you.” The king said. “Yes I know I have seen it,” replied Luz. Han looked shocked at this news but didn’t dare say anything, and just listened as the King went on, “It appears that even the outer lands are no longer safe for the Titan stones, we must hide them elsewhere.” Luz looked thoughtful, “There is nowhere else your majesty. If we threw them out of the world past the paths of the planets and into the darkness they would be lost forever. And if we bring them to the city of light from whence no traveler returns no Titan will ever be remade and the result would be the same.” “I have an idea.” Barak said. “Why don’t we take a single particle from each stone, for the Titans are imprinted on each particle, then we can cast the rest of the stones into the blue giant where even the servants of the evil one would be torn apart by the wind and storms.” “Then what would we do with the remaining particles Barak?” The King asked. “We would incase them in other stones that the evil ones could not recognize, and bring them back to Earth.” “That is brilliant.” The King replied, with a somewhat impressed tone. Then the King turned to the others, “As for you four apprentices, you may also come to the counsel on the morrow. In the meantime feel free to wander around my kingdom. Excuse me Luz, Barak.” The King nodded and walked over to a passage in the ceiling through which he projected himself out of their sight with his long legs.

Han and the others walked out of the room and back to the hall where a window opened to the outside. “Canata lets go see the dome over there, it looks like there is a mountain in it!” Han said excitedly. Then Han looked back to see a radiant smile on her face. “We will see you.” Canata said to the others and promptly jumped out the window with Han following closely behind. Han landed softly next to Canata on the pavement below. Han saw there was a causeway leading up to a great mountain and that another dome on the top of this mountain had another mountain inside from which many streams came. So Han and Canata started running on the great causeway leading up to the mountain under the stars. Han was surprised that even though they ran on for a long time they were not short of breath and laughed and talked as they went. The most common plant on the mountains was a thick vine with millions of large green leaves that grew up along the dome walls also. They climbed effortlessly over the top of a forest canopy on the vines and jumped over the streams and rocks they found on the other side. Soon they were skipping together over snow as they came to the summit. They had also come to the roof of the green dome where the water poured down from the higher dome. On the top of the mountain was a circle of pillars with a fire cup in the center, with a bright flame in it. The water poured down and filled a small aqueduct on top of the pillars and poured down in waterfalls filling the grooves in the circle and down the steps onto the mountain. A kind old fire priest stood there with a long white beard, he smiled at them and said. “I see you are both wearing the sash of the Yazna, have you come here to be married?” Han didn’t know what to say, but Canata said, “Yes!” After the priest had kindly spoke the words blessing them to be together in life he gently washed their hands and feet and anointed them with oil and pronounced a

blessing that they would live with health and strength until their union could be sealed to last through eternity. He told them that these blessings could never be taken from them and then asked, do you accept these blessings and they both said yes as they looked deeply into each other's eyes. So he continued to bless them that they may they live in gardens upon the worlds among the Gods. "Would you sing a song for us?" Canata asked. "Yes," the priest beamed and then he began to fill the echoes of the dome with an ode of praise to the Gods in the original graceful language. He sung of the stars and galaxies God's power had framed within him and of the everlasting spirit of glory that told loved ones they were bound forever through all their lives. After the priest had ended his beautiful song he smiled at them, and they headed back down the mountain. Han and Canata explored the Forest together and talked a lot about the future. Han would occasionally catch the gaze of Canata that made his heart burn with excitement just to be with her.

He wished their walk would last forever but too soon they were back at the pond to swim into the ship. Han came up into the hall wet and gasping and after Nebo helped him out of the water, Han reached out to take the hand of Canata, and Nebo knew. He began to dance with joy and dashed off into the forest shouting, "come congratulate the new couple!" Han laughed for joy at the way the titan pranced and danced as he ran into the forest. Suddenly all the titans that were in the ship gathered around them and Nebo said, "Han please come with me, I think it is time to show you that forbidden room. What do you say?" Han smiled and said, "Yes." He followed Nebo through the woods and they came to the big double doors with the two trees and the shining triangle. "Han go put on these clothes without removing your underclothing and come right back with your candle." Nebo handed him a bundle of white clothes and Han went to his room to put them on. These were flowing white robes and pants similar to the ones the Titans wore, white cloth shoes, and socks of the same color. Han was surprised by the feeling of the soft foot coverings and realized that he had been barefoot from the time he had first entered the titan ship. After dressing Han arrived back at the temple doors with his Candle in hand. A strange excitement was starting to grow inside him. As Nebo opened the door Han saw the inside was made of very white stone.

Han walked in to all the titans and their apprentices seated in rows of cushions and an altar at the front, behind which were white curtains. Everyone was dressed in white and Han immediately felt very special like a calm power lay in his bosom; and he knew everyone there had a great love for him. He felt at home here with his beloved and their benefactors, and knew he recognized this place. The floor was soft on his clothed feet with a white carpet. "Han please sit right here up front." Nebo said. Han sat down on the soft white cushion he was directed to. This room with the altar and curtains was the most powerful and magical place he had ever been. Nebo stood up front to officiate. "Han you probably don't remember but you have received all the ordinances of this house before you went into the mountain, so we are going to refresh your mind. Han then saw a depiction of the earth as it matured as a woman does and of the

marriage of the earth to the beautiful antlered presence of his father the progenitor of the human race. He was then clothed in white robes of power and a hat of glory and given many special things; including how to detect angels which sometimes were good and many times were evil, although he was told that a respect of freedom and a deep open love distinguished the Gods from all others. "Han you may now place your candle in the Candelabra," Luz said. Han walked over and placed it in the empty spot. Luz lit it with a wave of his hand and said, "This represents the light of God that shines within us the holders of the Flame. Now whenever you meet with the magi in this holy place your candle will help light the Temple. Han prayed for the first time imagining the most correct image of god in his beauty and strength, called him father and burnt incense at the altar. Han also noticed that Canada prayed to her heavenly mother and he realized that one could talk to their own heavenly parents as they were the literal parents of their spirits, which was the flowing energy of their experiencing particles. Finally Nebo took him alone to the room behind the curtain and Han felt so peaceful there he never wanted to leave. It was the most beautiful room Han had ever seen. "This room represents the kingdom of our Parents, the source of the flame which is the glory of the Sun," Nebo explained. Nebo paused and then went on, "The grand secret of all power is that of equal exchange and divine hospitality. You may craft any covenant with your heavenly parents that you or they wish together; and if you fulfill it you will gain the equivalent blessing according to universal exchange." Nebo then became silent let Han meditate in that holy place. Han sat there for a long while listening to the distant sounds of eternity. "I wish Canata could be here with me," Han said to Nebo. "That is a good wish Han and soon it will be so." This brought comfort to Han's mind somehow although he didn't really understand the significance of that thought. Han and Nebo came back out of the sanctuary and Han felt he could face the world with a whole new light now. Afterwards as Han sat down in his room and looked out his window, he was so excited with all the things he had just learned, that he was full of power and light.

Chapter Thirty-Two

The temple in the stone

When Han awoke he could tell it was not time to wake up yet, but the titan ship had landed on the life moon. Suddenly he heard the quiet urging of the wind Titan, "Hurry Han I will show you where the others have gone." Soon Han was at the open portal leading to the watery domain at the bottom of the ship. Han asked the air beside him if he could go outside, but there was no answer. As soon as Han lowered himself in the water he noticed that a large air bubble was traveling with him and as he emerged from the water onto the surface of the life moon the air followed him allowing him to breathe and giving

him warmth. Han knew that the surface of the moon was now lifeless, but the oxygen of the ship remained around him like his own atmosphere; all else outside looked like a dark icy night. Curiously he began to look around. As he walked he saw the dry ice melting under his feet. There wasn't as much gravity here as there was on earth, or even the life station, so running was kind of difficult, bouncing mostly. Han looked up as he went, to see if he could see anything of the life station but he could not see any trace of the city in the sky. The sky looked calm and peaceful, being filled with stars; the brightest thing was the dim dull blue of Uranus hanging on the horizon. Then Han looked down on the ground. He saw footprints wandering off over another way that looked like Canata's footsteps so he followed them. There were rocky places where her steps were hard to make out but he always found them again and went on, hours passed as he tracked her. The trail turned steep but climbing the hill was almost effortless with the low gravity. Han looked up and finally saw a circle of pillars around an altar of un-hewn stones. What looked like two huge stone highways about a mile wide intersected at the circle of stones and kneeling at the altar Han saw Canata surrounded by a cloud of heat and air. Han walked up to the altar also. Canata looked up with a broad smile. Han smiled at her also. Then he knelt too and they clasped hands making their clouds come together. The sound of Canata's breath suddenly joined his in the silence. "Canata I can hear you now!" Han said with a smile. "Yes I can hear you too!" She said. They sat there a long while just looking at each other like young lovers often do. Then Canata looked down and saw something on the ground that impressed her. "What is it?" Han asked. "That stone there, that's, the Life Stone!" Canata reached for it. The ice covering it melted off as the cloud of air engulfed it. Her hand picked it up and she brought it back to the altar. She set it down upon the other stones and then put her left hand upon it. Han put his left hand upon hers and they clasped their right hands over the top. Han looked into Canata's eyes and she looked into his, and they experienced a moment of true eternal love. Then something amazing began to happen. A light as bright and warm as the sun itself burst over the horizon. It was Uranus but it was now like the sun. In the light of morning, everywhere the light went air spread over the surface of the moon and green moss began to appear on all the stones around them. "What is happening?" Han yelled over the sound of the wind all around them. "The Life Moon is awakening!" Canata called with a sound of joy in her voice. Atmosphere and clouds appeared in the sky and flowers bloomed, covering the ground in a symphony of life. The sky became blue and the ground became green and it seemed like time elapsed in only a moment. Then all was calm and they both arose to see what had happened. A great field of flowers had appeared speckled with rocks and small butterflies flew among them. Then Han's joy was full and he kissed her lips for only a moment, but it was a perfect moment.

Then Han remembered the words of the Forest Titan as he stood over his dead body back on earth "My stone is on a distant moon that I visited nearly a thousand years ago. If you make it to the moon of four roads, walk west from the pillars to the tallest mountain where my stone is. "Canata, I must go

somewhere Elred instructed me to.” As Han said this there were suddenly flashing lights above them and they both looked up and realized that a kind of arial space battle was beginning to wage. “Can I come with you?” Canata asked. “I think I should go alone; go back to the ship it might be safer there.” Han called as he began to leap away. Han walked on the highway heading towards the west past many hills. As the shining form of Uranus finally began to set on the distant horizon again from whence it came he saw the mountain in the distance. He started to climb it stepping up the rocks like a staircase. As he came to the top he noticed a slight indent in which stood stone ruins. Han walked down to the front door that faced the only gap out of the small indent it was in, looking over the plains below. Han walked in and saw a main room with some stairs going up to the single room above. Han walked up them and found himself in a small lookout room. To the side of the main window stood a stone table; upon it there was a sword and a metal box. Han opened the box and saw the Forest stone inside. It resembled the Life stone; it was round semi clear and emanated a soft white light. Just then Han heard something outside and went to the broken wall to look. There was a figure in black robes approaching the front door down stairs. Han’s heart skipped a beat; he picked up the sword and the stone, waited for a moment and jumped down to the ground. Han softly glided to the ground and turned around, the entity was already upstairs and Han attempted to leap away down the hill. He could feel the entity not far behind him and Han struggled to keep a distance between them. As he approached the ship there seemed to be a flash of light and the wraith behind him was gone.

After Han had returned to the ship with the titan stone and sword he had found and the battle seemed to have subsided he had slept peacefully again, but when he awoke there was once again a field of stars outside his window. Han had not told the others that he had Elrid’s stone and the others had not told him what they had been doing. Han walked out into the hall and entered the forest. Once he entered the triangular hall Han immediately saw that they were much closer to the blue giant and that the planet practically filled the entire view below the ship. Han could now see white streaks and several giant long clouds far down in its atmosphere. “What are those?” Han pointed, suddenly seeing huge gray lines extending beyond the boundaries of the planet and stretching far into blackness. “That is where we are going Han,” Bensiden said who was standing next to the meditating Luz. “Those are the nine large and two small rings of the planet, they are like the rings of Saturn but much smaller. There is a large stone there in particular and inside it is the Temple of the Titans.” Han stood there awhile just staring at the amazing view. Jerubbaal came in after a while too. The rings were so close now they stretched out before them. The ship was flying into the rings at an angle so the planet was to the side of them. “Look at all those little moons everyone,” Merica said. Han looked and saw many little dots and rocks stationary against the blueness of the planet. “Bensiden look at that huge asteroid in the outermost belt.” Jerubbaal said. “Yes that is the Temple.” Bensiden answered. Everyone turned to look at it excitedly. The ship had

lowered itself between the first and second ring alongside the Temple Asteroid to the right. "We are still many miles away from it, it is very large and we are commencing to slow down so it might take us a while to get there." Everyone soon felt the ship slowing down feeling them-selves being pulled forward. They all stood and watched and as the great rock steadily grew larger and larger. Han felt Canata's hand gripping his. They all watched and talked for about an hour as they watched the Temple fill the right side glass. Soon the ship was alongside the great rock and Han saw a cave in the side of it. "Look a cave." Han said. Ben just smiled and they all looked in amazement as the ship drifted into it. The ship turned its nose down the tunnel and proceeded into the shadow and through huge passages. Han looked ahead to see a reflection of the ship and cave behind them like in some strange liquid. "What is that Barak?" Han whispered. "The beginning of the atmosphere," he said. The ship flew through it and into the air. Suddenly there was ambient sound all around them. Ahead in the darkness Han could see a warm light coming from a squarely carved passage. Soon the ship was flying into it. It opened up to a large round cave with a short pillar circle in the center. The Ship started hovering over it then Han saw the wall begin to go up as the ship lowered down to it.

Everyone felt the ship abruptly stop with a soft closing sound. Then Luz opened his eyes and removed the helmet. He turned in his chair and said "Oh, you are all here." He smiled looking at the whole crew behind him. "It is well, let us enter the temple." Everyone started leaving to the main hall at Luz's command and Han felt Canata's hand finally leave his but she turned back and smiled at him. Bensiden lifted the lid and all began to get in the water and swim to the bottom. Han loved the water and got into the cool refreshing liquid and listened to the sound in his ears. He swam to the bottom and saw that in this pillar circle stairs came up to meet the bottom of the tank. He stepped out of the water and onto the stone steps, wet and cold. Han made his way down the stairs and out of the circle with the wet procession of apprentices. Han noticed that the air here was quite warm and there was a wind in passage so soon they were all dry. Han looked ahead to see an immense carved passage in the wall. They all began walking to it. Han marveled at the huge arched passage as they came into it. It was lit with floating lanterns and as they walked down the passage, they came to a pair of large iron doors. Merica explained that they were so large that they were opened with a magnetic force. Han had seen a pair of doors not a whole lot different from these doors once in Puhfervenherbm. Those were the doors that opened from the main cavern onto the highway that lead straight to the large bridge over the magma chasm. Luz put his hand on the doors and said a long word Han didn't understand. Suddenly the doors made a clank and began to open. They all walked into a stone room full of light on the other side. This room was a giant three-dimensional octagon and had huge pillars in the corners like a giant Titan circle. The floor was inlaid with all kinds of metal stone and marble designs. Han saw a huge bronze set of doors on the far side of the room and smaller doors in each wall. He also looked up while they walked to see a blue light high

on one of the walls to the right and noticed it was coming through a transparent pyramid on the very top of the arched ceiling.

Han looked back down to see a man sitting behind a wooden table in front of them to the right side. He had a medium sized brown beard and a broad smile. Han saw he was wearing priest's robes and had a bright countenance. "Titans and apprentices, welcome to the ancient Asteroid Temple of the Titans. Come and I will show you to your rooms." The man showed each person where they would stay the night and also told them where they might find the library and gardens. To Han's surprise the man knew that he was married to Canata and gave them one suite of several rooms. No sooner had Han and Canata settled in than they thought they would go look around. The couple went across the large octagon room to the door of the library and opened it. As they walked in to their astonishment they saw more books than they had ever seen. They lined shelves that extended as far as the eye could see. Han walked over and picked one out of its place and opened it. It was about windmills. This library must have a book about everything Han thought. Han sat down at a table with Canata and began to read. Canata left to go to the gardens, Han stayed to read, but soon found he was drowsy and too tired to read properly. So Han put the book back onto the shelf to have a look around. A bright passage in the left wall opened up to the garden. Han walked through it and found himself by a mossy well with vines growing all over the place. He saw pillars and ledges covered in it. Just above him on a green leafed incline was a fruit tree spreading forth its branches. Han walked to it and saw a strange blue fruit. He looked around and saw many more trees all around with various kinds of fruit on them. "That is a blue pomegranate tree." Someone said. Han looked to see a servant of the Temple standing there. "It is the fruit that represents oxygen. And the red pomegranate is the fruit that represents Iron." Han didn't understand the servants saying but didn't ask. He walked through the garden until he came to an opening where he saw Barak and Canata. "Hello Han, how do you like this place?" Barak asked. Canata and Han began to walk together through the garden and to admire the beauty around them. Han felt happy and nervous around Canata these days and he loved just to look at her. He was afraid she would notice, but she didn't seem to. At dinner in a grand hall Luz stood up, proposed a toast, and announced that a ceremony would proceed after the meal and that everyone should go put their Temple robes on after they were done eating.

Han felt majestic and powerful as he wore his temple robes out of the room and into the main hallway. He saw Canata, Merica, and Jerubbaal, coming towards him dressed likewise. They went into the giant octagonal hall together. All the Titans and priests were in the hall waiting with smiles on their faces. A ceremony then commenced and soon the priestly officiator said, "the Titans will now go up into the higher temple and all others will wait and pray." Han saw Luz, Bensiden, Barak and Nebo walk up to the large doors with a few others he didn't know from the Temple. They passed into a tall passage of light and the doors closed behind them. The Hall was left silent and Han prayed toward the Holy place with the

others. Han listened as he prayed and soon heard a soft melody like the sound of eternity itself. Peace and joy burned in his heart and he wished all people could experience what he was experiencing. The door opened again and all looked up. Luz stood there, "Jerubbaal, come." Jerubbaal arose and walked to him, Luz took him by the shoulder and guided him into the light and the door closed again. After a long while Jerubbaal came forth again with a broad smile. His whole countenance had changed and he looked powerful and bright. Nebo appeared in the passage and called for Merica and she went next. They all continued praying and pondering.

Without warning there came a thunderous clang at the door, then another, which shook the hall. Han arose and looked at the door behind them from which the disturbance came. Many priests and temple workers came running out into the hall. Finally the stone doors swung open and Han saw evil orange-robed titans enter the hall. The Temple warriors ran forward in their green turbans bearing swords. Lightning, sharp ice, and a cold wind washed over the crowd as dust filled the air and the lanterns overhead were extinguished. As he began to see the people of the temple cut down in the dying light Han was so infuriated he ran forward. The bright door to the upper Temple opened, sending a shining ray into the dusty darkness. Han heard the shriek of the evil Titans and saw the good titans Luz, Barak and Nebo run past him bearing bright flaming swords. In all the commotion Han felt Canata's hand touch his shoulder. She was beckoning him back from the danger. "Canata we have to get out of here" Han whispered. The couple ran through the crowd as the fighting continued. Han felt dizzy but ran on. Then from a distance in the dusty haze Han and Canata saw it. It was the lifeless body of Barak. "Oh, no, Teacher," Canata exclaimed falling to her knees with a hand over her mouth. Han stood at Canata's side for a moment looking around as he heard the fight continue. "Canata we have to go." Han whispered. Canata suddenly arose and ran back the way they came. "Canata?" Han ran after her as she ran up the steps towards the sanctuary. "What are you doing?" "Saving us all," she cried. Han watched as she ran through the doors of light into the upper Temple. Han paused for a moment not knowing if he was allowed to enter that sacred place. Then the door suddenly closed sealing the light from him, leaving Han in the darkness. Han fell to his knees, "Oh father and mother in heaven, please spare her. I love her." After a moment Han pulled on the door handle, it cracked open pouring light upon Han's bowed head. Then he entered. The door closed behind him. He was suddenly in the most beautiful room he could possibly imagine. Every bit of it spoke of eternity. It was white and bright and the feeling Han now had was the greatest feeling of peace he had ever felt. He looked around for Canata but didn't see her in this first room. Han walked down a hall until he came to a wall of white curtains that had been torn in two. The tear opened onto a room where a robed man was sitting upon a throne. This man had strangely translucent features. Han would have been afraid of him, but his experience in the city of light had taught him to remain unafraid. In the center of the room there was an altar, with a soft cushion over its top, made

of blue stone with an interesting pattern upon it that looked kind of like a star or diamond. The floor and walls were made of white stone and upon the walls were giant mirrors facing in all directions. There by the altar Canata lay on the floor as though she had fallen. Han ran to her and lifted her limp body up in his arms.

Chapter Thirty-Three

Into the darkness and back out again

Han stared into Canata's lifeless face. A feeling of helplessness burned in his heart. She was so beautiful. The man on the throne said, "She sleeps in her world and cannot awake." When Han heard his voice he suddenly knew that it was the Spirit Titan, although he had never seen his physical form. He turned to Han who was holding Canata in his arms and said, "Han you believe you have made it to the real world but you actually haven't; this world is an illusion just as much as the caves were." "What do you mean?" Han inquired. The Titan went on, "You must save your beloved by entering her world, only then can you take her to the real world, and truly awake for the first time. The experiences that both of you have shared are as the point of Inner Light that you now hold. Your love for Canata allowed you to gain the secret fire and realize that you were real for the first time. You are both about to wake up to a much grander reality."

Han paused for a moment and placed Canata on the soft cushion of the altar, he said, "I love her." "I know you do." The Spirit Titan's eyes sparkled with a bittersweet expression. Han was suddenly filled with fear, "Sir is any of the other Titans dead besides Barak?" The Titan nodded gravely, "Luz and Nebo have passed away also. This has all been foreseen. My associates brought their apprentices here in order for all of you to become the new Titans." Han looked back at Canata's beautiful face. "How can I enter her world to save her?" The Titan gestured towards a tall candelabrum at this right. Han arose and took a candle and brought it back to Canata's side. The Titan then said, "Han kneel at the altar. This represents the Secret Fire that burns within you. Meditate upon the flame. This meditation will let you enter her world if she will let you in." Han nodded; he held Canata's hand and meditated into the flame.

Han looked around and found himself in a forest. The sun shone through the branches and a mossy stream ran through it. Han then turned around noticing something familiar about it. It couldn't be, he had been here before. This place was the plain of life where he had first seen the green light of the candle, all those many years ago. Han looked out with his piercing eyes and saw that in the middle of the vast forest there was a tall black mountain. "Oh no, don't be in there Canata," Han thought. "You know she is:" came a soft voice in his head. He ran through the trees toward Puhfervenherbm praying for her. He climbed the slope and coming to a hole in the rock he climbed inside. As the passages led deeper and

deeper it grew darker and darker. Han blinked his eyes in the darkness but all that lay before him was a pitch-black wall of dark. He placed his hands somewhere in front of him and felt the grain of the stone. “Hidden light shine forth!” As Han said these words a light around him grew and grew until He saw the passage around him. Han ran and ran. He looked around through all the now familiar passages looking for her, but Han saw no one. The caves lay silent and empty. He ran faster than any cave creature could run in search of her. Han came to the throne room of the ancient peoples who once lived in the caves and which the Overmind had taken for his own. Illuminating the stone arches around him all was silent. He went on as fast as he could project himself forward. “Canata I am coming for you!” Han shouted at the top of his lungs. “Because I love you.” He pushed forward with even more determination. The scenery grew steadily redder as he came closer and closer to the lava chasm. Soon he was on the bridge that spanned the chasm looking down into its glowing light. Then a thought like a knife in his chest pierced him. Perhaps she has gone to the sand room to sink and die! Han arose from his fear and flew faster than he had ever run to the pit deep below the tower. Looking down He saw the solitary body of a young girl slowly sinking into the black sand. “No!” Han called as he jumped down to where she sank. Her head was about to disappear into darkness but Han reached down and lifted her out pulling her to shore. Her thin naked body lay on the stone as though she were dead. Han lifted her lovingly in his arms and carried her to the cave of the Magi. As he approached the cave with the soft floor he saw the light of a single candle shining. Han set her lifeless body on the floor and looked around. The candles stood lit on a rock and next to it were clothes nicely folded. Han gently washed Canata’s body with pure water and took the clothes and dressed her. He then began to try to awaken her mind. He took the candle from the stone and held it in front of her sleeping face. “Canata wake up, please wake up!”

Nothing, The very thought is something. For if you think you are experiencing it you are not experiencing it at all. Nothing is beyond self, for self is not only something; it is a fractal of creation to a thing that has none. It is a flowing of experience from moment to moment, moment to moment we becoming a new being. Something: something so far and elusive, a single spark of thought. It being the only thing her mind centered on this spark; a spark almost flickering, each moment seeing it as if with a new principle of experience. As this burning pain completely enveloped her nature all of her energies were employed to stop it. Should I accept or reject this new thing? As her mind gave birth to this thought she became aware of self; the illusion of memory and system. “This thing has given rise to a new thing so I will keep “I” and “It” and try to master them,” she said to herself. Then as she tried to expand, she over flowed into the empty space that filled the ambient mind. This was painful as the previous thought was, but she was relieved as she suddenly saw cool expanding existence. At this point she became aware of a third element that had been with her since the first thought, the realization of change. Suddenly she was sensing with a new sense. She saw a light moving from one horizon of her sense to the other. Her eyes

opened and she saw an image of endless detail and beauty. On her left she saw a burning light. In front and above her she saw a rock reflecting the light of the first light. And to her right stood a personage with a glowing countenance, with vesture that shone like the stars. "You are alive and awake. I am Morgan, I am your friend." Han could barely believe what he had just said. He had just called himself Morgan, but it seemed right somehow. She smiled and Han smiled back in pure delight. She had finely awoken! Han let her rest and look around for a bit. He saw that her eyes had turned bright gray like the ocean on a cloudy day in her sleep. "Do you know the meaning of the lights you behold?" Han asked. "The first is the morning sun rising in the east. The second is the moon worshiping the Sun for he is the Most High. And the third is the evening star ever pointing the way to the shining light whom you are." Canata said naturally. "Who are you?" Han asked. "I am Nightfall a worthy pilgrim, who has traversed the abyss to come to you." "Whom do you put your trust in?" "God the horned groom of the earth and the creator of mankind," Nightfall replied again. "Where are you from?" Han asked, Nightfall thought for a moment. "The west, though I have fallen into the north. Lead me east, south and west again that I might walk with you. And we shall go east together." Nightfall replied. These sayings were coming out of her mouth as from one sleep talking, but which somehow made a lot of sense regardless. Han reached down and lifted her to her feet. She couldn't stand on her own but Han held her, as he led her around the room, ceremonially putting her in the west. Nightfall smiled in happiness. "The light you see is the light of your new life, that shines in your eyes. You have come into this world of life with nothing. In poverty and wondering you come with only the knowledge of your existence. You have come by the door with three distinct truths to knock with. That which you seek, ask and find with. "Will you teach me?" Nightfall asked. "If you have ears to hear, eyes to see and a heart to feel. I shall teach you for I have come through the caves and across flaming chasm to save you from the darkness. "Why have you come for someone such as me?" "Because I love you," Han said. Nightfall looked at Han for a moment in speechlessness. Their eyes met and they both stared at each other for a long time. Then Canata looked away. "Forgive me Nightfall for I have looked at you in love, yet you are not yet mine." Han said. She simply replied, "love begets love." Han turned and found another cloth on the stone and made her a veil out of it. Han then took her hand and led her to the altar in the east that was the stone table with the candle on it.

She knelt. Nightfall was beautiful and chaste and Han's joy extended on and on forever. The light of the secret fire suddenly filled the cave with glory. He taught Nightfall about the secrets of the universe. He also submerged her head in the spring and gave her a sash that was a symbol of wisdom, knowledge, freedom and love. "Rest now and I shall come to you again in the morning," He said. Han arose and walked out of the room. After Nightfall awoke Han came back to teach her again. Han gave her a candle and a paintbrush and explained what they were for and how they should be used. Saying, "the candle symbolizes the light within you that is a spark of the hidden light, and the paintbrush symbolizes your

power of creation.” Han then told her about how her robes were a symbol of her mental planet. He also explained what the robes were for. He also told her about how worlds go on forever. That she must always seek for truth and ascend forever.

Han let her rest and think about the things she had learned and received, and on the morrow he came again. Nightfall desired to walk, so they spent the day practicing. Han remembered when he was first learning to walk long ago. Han told Nightfall about her body and how she could protect and take care of it; including good excersises to be one with it. After a long while she could walk pretty well and she asked Han when they would go see other places. “Soon,” Han said; “after you become stronger.” There was a pause and Han said, “tell me about your dreams Nightfall.” Her eyes lit up with excitement and she began. “I found myself in a place where there was no ceiling and life was everywhere in all kinds of shapes and sizes. And I heard my name. Morgan, will we go to these places?” “We will.” Han said. “And I also had another dream where I was in an eternal expanse and there were many lights and spheres of light. That was the most beautiful thing I saw.” “The first place you saw was the forest, and the second was space that I have told you about.” Nightfall sat in wonder at her visions. “Nightfall I love you.” “I love you to.” After a time of Nightfall practicing her new skills Han said, “Come it is time to go.” He took her by the hand and helped her through the caves. They walked for the better part of the day past countless sleeping rooms. Finally they came to the passage that looked into the cavern of death with the sand and a giant dark pillar. Fear crept into Nightfall’s eyes. “What is this place Morgan?” “It is the pit of death, from which you were resurrected.” “Let us go and leave this behind us.” Nightfall said. Then they walked on. After an hour or so they stopped to rest for a bit. “Morgan tell me, why do you love me?” “Before I met you in the caves, I knew you. And I have always loved you.” Canata got a confused look about her. “What’s wrong? Don’t you believe me?” Han asked. She sighed and said, “I don’t know?” “Well don’t you want to hear about it?” “You can tell me if you really want to.” She said. Han was sad she didn’t seem interested in their love or past adventures. The desire for her to know made him go on. “At first I was here in these dreadful caves and you saved me, because you loved me from before I could remember.” A dreadful feeling came over him as he said those words. “Had Canata tried to tell him about their life before? Had he not paid attention or not had the faith to listen?” Han wondered. He looked at Canata who was still looking confused. But he went on. “Then I escaped and I met you on the road to the city of Kymoore, and you knew me. Then after that we went with the Titans on an adventure into outer space. Then you fell into darkness and I came to save you and here I am.” Han looked at her but her expression was no better. “Isn’t that a wonderful story Canata? We have always loved each other.” Han said. Then she frowned, “Isn’t it good enough that we are together now?” She asked. Han realized it was just too much for her, she couldn’t believe it. The world was a much broader place than she knew and many more marvelous things were going on than she could possibly imagine. “I will always love you.”

He said simply. She smiled and Han supposed that would have to do for now. Was this poetic justice? Was it the balancing of the universe? Either way Han was sure it would be okay in the end. "Come when we get to the cave of Elose I will give you something to eat." They walked most of the day and as they came to the round room of Elose Han set out immediately to find some mushrooms lizards and water trickles. He found some soon enough and made Nightfall some soup. She ate it gratefully. "Thank you Han," she said. Han looked at her in astonishment. "That is what you used to call me." "I just remembered." "What else do you remember?" Han asked. "I remember you calling my name as I ran through doors of light." "Do you remember what I called you?" Han asked. "Yes, but I would like to hear you say it." "Canata;" Han said. She smiled at him. They stayed there talking and drinking soup for the rest of the day. Then when they awoke they went outside of the cave into the main cavern and traveled on. They walked on the bridge over the chasm. Soon they were walking down steps into the outer-rim and through carved arches. They traveled a ways through many passages until the evening was come. "Han, I just wanted to tell you that my life has been amazing and magical for these past few days. Thank you for saving me." Han nodded in appreciation. "I would be forever lost without you Canata." Han said. After awakening again Han and Canata walked and walked to make it out of the caves before they had to sleep again. Finally Han recognized the cave they were in to be the one by the gate. They looked around and there before them was the long tunnel curving before them like the body of a great worm. Canata took Han's hand and he led her down the passage. It grew brighter and brighter as they came around the bend. Then Canata saw the strange keyhole through which shone a light so bright she could not look directly at it. Then Han stepped through the gate and Canata followed him holding his hand. Han stepped out onto white sand. Canata couldn't see yet but Han looked out across a vast desert. At least the sky seemed normal, clouds soared past and the sun slowly set. The stars appeared one by one and finally Canata could see. She was shocked and scared. As she looked at the vast wilderness she huddled down hugging herself. "What is wrong?" Han asked. "It is so big." She replied. Han knelt down and comforted her and after a time she arose. As they began to walk she slowly grew accustomed to the idea of the outside. They journeyed long, leaving miles of footprints behind them in the soft sand. Then Han saw it, a great chasm ahead. There was not only a chasm, but in the distance he saw many floating lands. This was the most bizarre thing Han had witnessed. If this was Canata's world, did she come up with this strange idea about the outside world? Han slowly approached the crack. Surely enough it looked bottomless with clouds flowing inside below them. "Maybe we should jump." Han thought. "This is the world of the mind after all." This seemed logical but at the same time Han knew some consequences in mind worlds where dramatic. He also knew that Canata had all power here, but just didn't know or understand it. However it was the only way to go. "Canata, we are going to jump." "No." She snapped. "But Canata please it is the only way. Remember this is not the real world." Canata gave him a skeptical look. After some time Han

begged and she consented. "Canata I love you, I know that this is not the real world. Come with me." They both clasped hands and Han smiled at his true love. Then they both ran and jumped. "This is not real." Canata cried. They both found themselves flying through time and space surrounded by endless blue energy. Suddenly they opened their eyes and she was on the altar in the temple looking up at him. Her gray eyes shone with emotion as some of her memories came back to her. Han wasn't sure what she would say. Then a huge smile appeared on her face and she jumped up and hugged him so tight he couldn't breathe. "I love you Han!" "I love you too Canata."

Chapter Thirty-Four

The rising light

Suddenly Canata and I saw that Bensiden, Merica and Jerubbaal were also there. All seemed quiet in reverence of the passing of our friends and mentors. "Why have we come all this way and fought through all these hardships? Will it come to nothing?" Jerubbaal asked. "No, it will definitely come to something," the mind Titan said. Suddenly I saw that the room was filled with strange lights and energy. I noticed energy surrounding the inside of the doorframe, which led to the upper temple. There appeared to be millions of little energy people walking in a counter clockwise motion. They all had a yellowish hue and stood about half a foot from the surface of the frame. "Canata, do you see these little people?" I asked. "Yes, I do." She responded. "What are they, or who are they?" I wondered. I said, "Who are you?" - To one of them in particular but it just looked at me in passing with a blank look and kept walking.

Suddenly I remembered that I had the Forest Stone in my pocket which I got from the house of Elrid; his Titan Stone. I placed it in the center of the altar as if by instinct and asked The Spirit Titan what I should do to become the Titan of the Forest. He looked deep into my eyes and said, "Are you sure you want to know Han? It is truly dreadful." I paused for a moment and said, "Yes, I must know." He brought me by the hand over to the mirror and had me look into it; he told me to look deeply into my own eyes. I did so and then he raised my hand to my own reflection, I raised my other hand and he put them into one of the Seer Signs taught to me in the endowment of the Titans, and I did begin to see through the energy into another place. In that other place I saw myself looking back at me. As we looked into each other's eyes we saw ourselves as separate individuals even though we were deeply connected. He flew towards me in the direction of the shining glass, calling to me and saying, "Han if I am not you, then who am I?" I said, "You are Andan!"

He came towards my reflection and as he flew deeper and deeper he fell into a great abyss as it were a gate opening up in my eyes to the edge of existence. A horrible blood fear jerked within me as I

saw him falling into a place where blackness stretches on forever. I reached towards him, but he was facing away from me and into the nothing. I perceived that the further one flew into it the more unlikely it would be that they could ever be found in the all-enveloping infinite space, filled with nothing. I watched in helpless wonder at the horror of the situation and I saw him as he became a pale ghost at the sight of the expanse, and he did extend himself for anything and in the dark came a reflection of his pale light, and that reflection in turn asked him who he was as if he had also divided himself. The personages who were reflections of him began to multiply in great numbers.

I then saw as Andan remembered the world that I had created in the Meta or within my own mental plane. He then instructed the beings he had made, to form it with their light. The vision faded from me and I awoke in the arms of Canata upon the floor with the Forest Stone in my right hand. I instantly cried unto the Spirit Titan saying, "What have I done, what have you done to me?" The mind Titan replied, "You are now immortal, you have imprinted yourself upon that stone; the whole abyss that you saw is in this stone." I held it up and looked at it and I saw a new Rune upon it and flowing into it many little energy men like I had seen going around the door save that these were of all different colors. I turned to the Spirit Titan and said, "Where are these men going?" The Titan said, "Into your Titan world." I arose and looked into the mirror. At first I looked more powerful, but soon I saw that I did not look as whole as I had; instead I had an emptiness in my eyes, and I turned and said to the Spirit Titan, "Your order is evil." He smiled and said, "Affecting reality is always evil, and did I not tell you that it would be dreadful? Like death, for it is death, death being a separation from that which is natural."

I just stared into the Spirit Titan's eyes for a time soaking in what had just occurred. Canata said, "I was lost in the abyss because I didn't understand this principle. The Titans live forever because they have incorporated a part of themselves into the stone and in turn from it flows the energy of life, but this in itself is a death having been separated from that part of them. I tried to go into it complete and fell into the abyss." The Spirit Titan then said, "Han, you have been bitten by the frost of the abyss and now it is only a matter of time before the energy centers in your body cease from pouring down energy upon you and you shall be bound to this stone alone, forever. And in order to live you must partake of the energy of others or the energy of thy stewardship which flows down to them from the higher spheres." I cried out, "No, there must be a better way." I then asked the Spirit Titan who or what these little men were around the door and also flowing into my stone. He looked at me and smiled saying, "They are door walkers Han, but you should ignore them, they are just manifestations of energy with no real intelligence."

Canata suddenly grabbed my arm and said, "No, you are right Han there is a better way, you have already separated yourself so you can go into that world as you are. And I can go into that world because your light is already there." The Spirit Titan said, "Don't be foolish no one from our order has ever tried such a thing, you will surely be destroyed." Canata then said, "The Door Walkers are doing it, and they

only started when Han created that existence with a part of himself. I know what I am saying is true, I just know.” The Spirit Titan seemed to be getting more irritated and said, “No; both of you will keep your feet on the ground and that is the final word on the matter. Besides how would you even do such a thing?” “I know how.” Canata said, but then dropped it.

Afterwards our small group of young Titans led by Bensiden left the temple and we found that the evil titans had been slain or had fled. I noticed that the body of Orfacious was not found among the dead. We began to bury the dead and repair the temple and this went on until we were too exhausted to continue and fell asleep in our beds. In the night Canata woke me and said, “Han we must be quick.” She took my hand and led me through the Doors of Eternity and into the sealing room with the altar and mirrors. For this was the place with the power to perform such acts. She took from the candelabrum a single candle, put it upon the altar, and we knelt upon either side of the altar with the candle and my titan stone between us. She told me not to look into the flame itself but to look into the flame that was reflected in her pupils, and she would look into it reflected in my pupils; she would go in first and then I would go in and she would carry me into the world of my Titan Stone.

I fell into a deep trance and found myself standing before Andan through the eyes of Canata. I could see that he was forcing all of his emanations to work and to make my world perfectly the way that it had appeared in the Meta. I could see that there was no joy in it, even though it looked like unto my world in the Meta there was not the freedom within it that I had envisioned. Andan also said unto all his emanations, “I am the only God, worship me alone”. Canata and I called out in unity that he was deceived and that there were many even infinite greater than he. When he and all his emanations heard it there was silence for a long time. Andan called out saying, “You are me, I created myself and sent myself into this world and I have created the world to be perfectly as it was in my heart.” Canata and I spoke saying, “You are blind Andan, for without free-agency there can be no joy, and my world was full of joy in the world of the mind.” “If I did not keep order the world would not stay in the perfect form as I did see it.” He responded. “This world is a product of free-agency regardless of its form; and only then can it be perfect, because perfection is balance and it is all around us all the time” Canata and I said as one.

The Spirit Titan appeared on the sealing room throne seemingly out of thin air, and deeply smiled upon the two unconscious initiates. Seeing two emanations of Andan upon the land of Atara, Canata and I did enter into them and a new life was begun.

Chapter Thirty-Five

King of Elves

Enthnar was born on a rainy day in a cottage, in the village of Egala. Enthnar’s father whose name was Enthnar had gone back that night to secure more of the ancient records of their people before the

forces of darkness got to them and had never returned. Enthnar was a prince son of Enthnar who's Kingdom had been overthrown. This is the brief history of how this began.

Upon distant Isles, which at one time bore the name Embalanach, but are now called the Isles of Infamy, Andan had made his earthly abode. He and his emanations came down and partaking of the elements of Atara was made physical. His capital was called Min-andaris, and was crowned with seven towers, six around and one in the center that reached unto the sky. A Kingdom ordered and grand, although it was too ordered and those who lived under his force had their humanity weakened. Andan forbade any physical relationship between persons without a permit from him. He made everyone wear veils so that they could not see each other's features and prescribed all the work, eating and every activity. Over many generations the people became so degraded that their physical features were made ugly and their minds full of rage like unto animals, and from these came the races of orcs, goblins and many others.

Other emanations of Andan had settled in other places of the world and were not under his rule. One line of emanations was very fair and full of light and love and lived in a land to the north west of the Isles of Infamy upon a land called Ethema. Ethema was covered in mountains and forests and the whole land round about was guarded by a ring of rocky islands covered in serpents save one port called Winathian. Ethema was the home of the Elves. The King of Ethema was Enthnar the father of Enthnar.

Those from the Isles of Infamy had invaded Winathian and even though Enthnar's grandfather had defeated them still some of them slipped into the heart of the land and there hid in the almost endless forests of Ethema. Deep in the forests they multiplied and it was not until Enthnar's uncle Simenon had spotted one that they knew of their survival. Simenon had fallen into a ravine while trying to pursue a rabbit and saw a goblin walking down it. Simenon followed him unto a great den of goblins and other creatures from the Isles of Infamy. Simenon listened unto their leader speaking and heard that they planned to attack the castle of Enthnar and also that they desired to subject the people unto the laws of Embalanach, for freedom was repugnant unto them. Simenon hurried back unto his village and mounted his horse and rode unto the castle of Enthnar and told Enthnar's father of their existence and of their plans.

Enthnar's father prepared his defenses and gathered his army but when the armies of those from Infamy gathered he did see their great numbers. He held them off for several weeks but one evening goblins that had been tunneling under the castle broke into the well. They climbed up the well and began to come up into the courtyard. Those who had made it up threw down ropes to those below. A great battle ensued, and the goblins managed to light an oil fire in the gatehouse, which lead to the weakening of the gate until the battering ram made it through. Enthnar's father evacuated many people through a secret passage and then caved in the passage with an explosion; he also hid the records of his people under the stones of the castle floor. Enthnar's father then fought his way, with some of his most elect

men, through the ranks of the goblins. Enthnar's father even threw his spear into the heart of the goblin leader who desired to fight him. Many men perished but Enthnar's father and two of his men escaped severely wounded.

Enthnar's mother escaped unto Egala and Enthnar's father met her there; but upon the night that Enthnar was born he had gone back for the records and did not return. Egala was surrounded by high mountains and was just north enough to see the northern sun in the winter months. The forests there were quiet and peaceful and the pine trees stretched in every direction. Enthnar grew up in wisdom and soberness and his mother taught him that Andan was not God but only an emanation of God. She taught him a love of freedom. She also taught him that there was a way out of this plane of existence but that it had not yet been revealed to them.

One morning in Enthnar's sixteenth year he went hunting with a neighbor and his son. They rode through the mountains on horseback and sunlight poured through the trees. Things could not be more beautiful Enthnar thought. They camped that night on the opposite side of the mountains east of Egala. The stars were beautiful and Enthnar and his friend played a story game around the fire until they were told to go to bed.

Enthnar suddenly started awake to the sound of his friend's father yelling frantically. Enthnar knew something was wrong and jumped up into the cold early morning air. "I saw goblins," he gasped. He then said, "get onto your horses now, both of you; and warn the people at Egala." Enthnar's friend didn't hesitate and rode off before Enthnar could even take in what was happening. Enthnar grabbed his hunting knife and swore he would fight alongside his neighbor. To Enthnar's surprise his neighbor said, "No! Get away, I will hold them off. Enthnar paused. His neighbor then exclaimed, "Get out of here! There are too many of them and I am giving up my life for you, now get away!"

Enthnar climbed up on his horse and from that vantage point he saw them coming up the hill with swords drawn. Realizing the gravity of the situation he rode through the woods as fast as he could. He heard the howl of dogs behind him. Enthnar rode and rode until he thought that he had lost them for sure and got off to get a drink from a river he came to quickly. He also wanted to get his bearings as where he was did not look familiar. As he drank the cold water Enthnar suddenly heard the dogs behind him. Heart beating he tried to get back onto his horse as fast as he could. They seemed to come out of nowhere and started chasing his horse down the riverbed. Enthnar's horse tried to leap up the opposite bank, as the dogs were biting at his legs, but missed and Enthnar and his horse came tumbling down the bank and into the icy cold water.

Enthnar jumped up and one of the dogs latched onto his arm. Enthnar screamed before he realized what had even happened, the stinging pain shooting up his arm. He instinctively grabbed his knife and started trying to stab at the eyes of the dog while the dog jumped back and forth pulling him around. The

horse got up and Enthnar dropped the knife to grab onto one of the horse's leather straps. Enthnar felt himself being dragged through the riverbed and his arm almost being torn off as it were. Suddenly the horse went over a huge waterfall and Enthnar's heart stopped for a moment. There was a terrible clap, as they struck the surface of the water. He felt a horrible sudden pain as something struck his back. Enthnar surfaced gasping for breath and then realized there was a powerful current and used it to swim sideways down the river as far as he could get from the dogs.

When Enthnar came to a beach he was lightheaded and breathing hard. He didn't move for a while, until he realized that his hand was bleeding into the soil and that he must do something to stop it. The terrible pain in his back remained and it hurt just to try and reach back and feel it. He bound his hand with some cloth and waited for nightfall. He shivered in the night making the pain worse, so he crawled up under a low pine tree. The needles poked him but at this point he was numb to most pain. The next morning Enthnar began to get up, he felt a huge lump in his back, and still felt faint. He hobbled down to the river again and tried to catch fish with his hands or by casting rocks at them in vain. Feeling so weak he began to tear moss off of rocks and eat it, even though it tasted like dirt. That day Enthnar summoned some more strength and began carefully walking up the river trying to find his horse. It wasn't until night fall that he found it dead on the shore of the river. He looked in the leather bag that contained the bread only to find a wet soggy residue of it clinging to the sides of the leather; he gratefully scooped it up in his hands and ate it. Enthnar also found his pot and his flint and steel. He decided not to make a fire tonight, but put some sticks and leaves up against a log to sleep under.

That night Enthnar looked up at the stars fully conscious at night since the other night around the fire. He wondered if his mother would be okay, and also if his friend escaped. Enthnar also wondered about the endless expanse above him as if he was seeing it for the first time. Are there other worlds? What is the meaning of this one? To have joy; and what brought us here? By what power did I enter this existence and to where am I going?

The next morning Enthnar realized that he should start to eat the horse before its flesh began to rot. He also saw that something else had been eating at it in the night besides birds. Enthnar took a sharp rock and started trying his best to tear some small strips out from under its hide. Enthnar managed to place some stripes of meat out on the rocks to dry, it was the best he could do with what he had. At night he ate one and took the others into his shelter with him.

On the third day after the attack, Enthnar spotted a large hill and decided to climb it and see if he could see in which direction he had to go to get home. Once he had reached the top of the hill by the late afternoon he realized that he had no idea where he was. He walked back down the hill; head hung low, and tried to make a better shelter before nightfall. Enthnar was told as a boy that his father chose the valley of Egala because of its hidden nature and that one had to know the right pass and valley to enter it.

From the top of the hill Enthnar had seen dozens of mountain passes and he didn't know where to go. In the morning Enthnar ate another piece of his horse feeling fatigued and decided to go down the river instead of trying to brave the treacherous passes in which he would surely be lost and killed.

Chapter Thirty-Six

with Isis Reunited

Enthnar hiked all day down the river until he came to a small meadow as the sun as it set behind the trees. He quickly put some branches against a log to crawl under as the night air began to become cool. As Enthnar lay there behind the branches he saw one light after another appear in the sky, but suddenly lights started appearing in the grass of the meadow also. One by one they began to appear until the opening in the woods was full with dancing lights. Soon Enthnar drifted off to sleep.

Enthnar awoke with a terrible knot in his shoulder, having slept on some roots, he was also sore all over. He got up and continued hiking all day through the woods and meadows of the valley below until he finally came to a small lake. Enthnar went down to the edge of the water and got in to cool himself off. Once he was in the water he suddenly got low in the water as he saw someone else on the other side of the lake. It was a young elf woman. She took off her clothes and got in the water to bathe. Enthnar didn't want her to know he was watching her but he also wanted to know about the closest town. He thought there must be a trail on her side of the lake, and determined to sneak around. It was a big lake and he got into the water a ways off to swim around real low since there was a lot of moss and sticks in the water. Suddenly he heard her voice calling out, "Hey, come here."

Enthnar looked back with his eyes just above the water and saw that she was waving to him. He felt as though he had no choice and started swimming towards her. He started feeling nervous as he approached her head sticking out of the water. "What is your name?" She asked. "I am Enthnar, Son of Enthnar." "You are the Son of the King?" She asked. "Yes." Enthnar replied. Enthnar continued, "I came from Egala, but my friends and I were attacked by goblins and I and couldn't find my way back, I was wondering if there was a man in your village who could take me there." "Yes there probably is, but you must make children before the goblins get you and your line is destroyed." She said with a smile. "I never really thought too much about it." Enthnar lied. Enthnar had grown up in the knowledge that even though elves usually made life long relationships, the elves of Ethema did not believe in marriage. In their minds marriage was something that was invented by those from Embalanach, and they called it infatuated or possessive slavery.

"I am Isis," the girl said as she put her arms on Enthnar's shoulders. "It is nice to meet you." Is all Enthnar could say. Suddenly Isis kissed him and said, "Let us make sure you have some offspring."

Enthnar did not know what to say while she led him to the shore. She had a horse waiting in the trees, and she got a blanket off of it, and laid it in the trees where a deer bed had been. She held Enthnar close against her wet breasts and said, "From the moment I saw you a few minutes ago I was attracted to you for some reason beyond what is normal, and I believe you, that you are the Son of Enthnar, I can tell that your words are true. It looks as though you have been through a lot." "They killed my friend's father." Enthnar replied suddenly feeling more emotion than he had anticipated at his words.

Isis held Enthnar even closer and they began to kiss more. "I will heal all of your wounds," she said; and they began making love. They made love until the evening time, and then Isis, said, "We better be on the road back to town." They got dressed and mounted her horse and began to ride through the woods. After a while they came out of the woods into a beautiful clearing that opened up to bigger fields, and at the center of which was a town. There was a short wall made of stone and on the other side of that all the houses and shops were huddled together. They rode into the center of town and Isis said, "My people, this is Prince Enthnar Son of Enthnar from Egala."

Once Enthnar got off the horse a man came up to shake his hand and ask him how he came to come from Egala, although Enthnar immediately noticed that he was a Human; Enthnar had never seen a non-Elvish man before. He introduced himself as Sir Birgawin and told Enthnar that he had served in the war with his Father. Cyrus the Father of Isis also introduced himself to Enthnar, and invited him into their home saying, "I am sure he is tired Birgawin, he can tell all once he has rested and eaten something."

Enthnar never remembered being so hungry as they put some chicken and vegetables in front of him. Enthnar told them how the goblin dogs had gotten his horse in the river and how he ate his horse to survive, and why he had decided to come down into the valley. During dinner a knock also came at the door and a tall blond haired elf entered the room, and said, "You are him, I am your uncle Simenon." Simenon sat down and everyone continued the conversation, and they told Simenon about how Enthnar had gotten down into the valley. Simenon raised his horn of ale in Enthnar's direction, and made a toast to him. They all had a good time and Enthnar felt as though he had found his long lost family.

Enthnar stayed in the village for several days recovering. Cyrus was up watching the moon late one night when Enthnar was walking by on the path. He gestured for Enthnar to come to him. "Yes sir?" Enthnar said. "You will have to face the forces that destroyed your father's Kingdom soon. If our land is to be freed you must unite the people who can help you defeat the powers who dwell in your father's castle," Cyrus said. Enthnar's words seemed to catch in his throat; "I wish I could just live happily here with you and Isis forever. Can we not make peace with them?" Cyrus went on, "It is a matter of freedom and love versus force and fear. If you ever want the world of your ancestors to be restored you must take up your sword and fight. The life here as it is will only last so long. Do you want freedom for your children and your people's children or not?" "Can't I return to Egala and let my mother know that I am

alive?" Enthnar asked. At this point Cyrus seemed to choose his words with care, "You have been set on this course for a reason, and if you turn back now you will not fulfill the purpose for which the three fates brought you into this world. Simenon and Birgawin will prepare you for the journey to gather our best warriors tomorrow. A storm is coming Enthnar, do you want to be the hunter or the hunted?" Cyrus replied.

Enthnar could hardly sleep that night. Since he had arrived he felt as though his new family would surround him forever, and he had hid the harsh reality of the situation at hand from his thoughts. Enthnar felt like he had been awoken almost before he had fallen asleep. Simenon and Birgawin stood above him with their shirts off and painted in war paint. They grabbed Enthnar, blindfolded him and proceeded out into the woods to a mound of earth covered in grass. There was a door in the mound and they took him down into a dark cavern. They laid Enthnar on a cold slab of stone, and let him stay there in the darkness for a while. Enthnar felt as though the darkness totally enveloped him, and the abyss around him was totally silent. Only a few minutes felt like forever, and he was there for a lot longer than that.

Enthnar was suddenly raised by a strong arm and heard a voice. He heard Isis calling his name, while the arm was that of a man. The man held his arm in the sign of the horned God, to lift him up. The voice changed slightly to reveal his new name. Suddenly a torch was lit and there standing beyond the stone alter was Isis surrounded by golden light. Enthnar looked down on the alter to see bones laying in cobwebs. "That is your old body." Isis said. "Come and drink the mead of eternal lives and be married unto the Goddess." Enthnar went around the altar and drank from a drinking horn in the hand of Isis. She then led him to a stone to sit upon and gathered water in a rag from a dip in the floor filled with water. She washed his feet and said, "Regardless of any fault you shall be our prince forever and we shall overlook your mistakes in eternal love. We shall love you enough to be with you, and you shall love us enough to keep us as your eternal Kingdom."

Cyrus then came out from the shadows and poured oil upon Enthnar's head, and laying his hands upon his head ordained him a king forever. Enthnar was then lead into the morning light and given a horse by Sir Birgawin. He pronounced the blessing of the horse kings saying, "This shall be your horse Enthnar. You shall die if he dies and he shall die if you die; you shall ride him into the afterlife." Enthnar mounted his horse and Isis tied a cloth around Enthnar's arm and gave him a kiss. Cyrus clipped a sword unto his belt and said, "May the Gods be with you."

Chapter Thirty-Seven

Freedom or Force

Enthnar looked back at Isis as he rode away with Simenon and Birgawin. Enthnar barely assimilated what had just happened to him as they rode through the countryside, across meadows and through woods. The day was over after a very long ride and Birgawin was looking for a suitable place to camp off the road as the sun went down. Simenon explained that they were going to a certain lake where a tribe of horsemen that were once loyal to his father dwelled. They were the only non-elfish humans that lived in Etheima and Birgawin was one of them. After that they would go into the mountains to gather men from several tribes of elves. "The element of surprise will be our only friend," he explained.

They set up a cloth tent Birgawin had brought and retired for the night on the hard ground. Enthnar slept surprisingly well and they were packing up and riding first thing in the morning. They rode for several days and Enthnar saw more countryside than he had in his entire life. One night Enthnar was awoken to some rustling outside. He began to arise and Birgawin put his hand on his chest and gestured to be absolutely silent and put his bedroll over him. Enthnar held the hilt of his sword under the bedroll. Birgawin took out his sword and Simenon carefully nocked an arrow on his bowstring. Simenon covered Birgawin while he peeked out of the opening in the tent. Suddenly Enthnar heard Simenon's bow release as he let an arrow fly. There was a groan and Birgawin shouted and started clashing metal with someone. There were a few more groans and after a few moments Simenon took the bedroll off Enthnar. Outside Enthnar saw the slaughtered remains of two goblins and a dog. Enthnar slept lightly that night, and they left with great haste in the morning and traveled cross-country.

Finally they were overlooking a giant lake down in a valley below them, and Birgawin told him that they were almost to their destination. They made their way through some dense forest and came out into an opening in the trees with a wooden wall looming before them just after sunset. Birgawin hailed the watch, and they entered through a small horse gate into a large town, full of houses. Enthnar had never seen such an extensive settlement having grown up in the village of Egala. The people stared at them as they made their way to the house of someone Birgawin knew.

A tall muscled man with long hair and a wide belt opened the door. He smiled and he and Birgawin suddenly embraced. He invited them in and they entered. Birgawin introduced him as his cousin Tyrawin. Birgawin also explained to him who Enthnar was, and also about their mission, and the attack the previous night on the borders of the town. Tyrawin leaned in close and whispered. "There is a priest of Embalanach here in this very town, trying to convert people to the ways of Embalanach, and preaching about the sin of freedom and many other things. There is no telling how many people he has swayed but there are some to be sure. We must be careful who we try and recruit, so we do not endanger ourselves and the mission." "We will rely on your judgment." Birgawin said. "I will have a small army gathered by the peninsula on the north bank, by sundown three days from now, stay here tonight and then go camp and wait for us in the woods there." Tyrawin said.

Enthnar, Birgawin and Simenon left before sunrise that morning, and then made camp about twenty miles away in the place they were instructed. The days then seemed to pass very slowly and Enthnar just gazed at the trees as they moved in the wind. Simenon said, "Enthnar, what do you think you will say to all those men when they arrive." "Say?" Enthnar asked. "Yes of course." Simenon said. "They will be waiting to be inspired to give their lives for you. You owe them a speech, to let them know why they are doing this." Enthnar's heart jumped, and now what he would say began to trouble him as he looked at the trees. "What could I possibly offer them in return?" he thought. "Freedom to learn and think about the mysteries, to be creative, to love, and live one's life, should belong to everyone; how can I say give up yours? Give up your life so others can have live?" Enthnar thought about it until the light of the day receded and he was looking up at the stars when Birgawin insisted he make his bed and get some sleep.

That night Enthnar had a dream, and in his dream he saw a crystal palace and coming to him out of this palace were beings made of flowing energy and colored light. He suddenly felt as though he was full of lightning. The beings embraced him and said, freedom and love are forever and govern countless worlds and planes of existence. Suddenly Enthnar's eyes were empowered and he saw an endless cloth of strings being weaved together into an orchestra by three primeval feminine powers. He saw that portions of these powers flowed into the cloth from their hands, making up sparkling dust clouds without number which all reflected each other infinitely. Enthnar then saw that they inhabited countless worlds, and he heard a voice which said, "These bodies of dust are spirit and they are made of countless intelligences."

Enthnar then looked and saw these beings in countless heavier bodies filled with energy, which energy contained signatures of information. He saw many lives and deaths, each death separating the energy from the spirit, to dissolve, be reunited, and live on, or to wander in search of the lover of its spirit in a future life. These bodies of energy went through ordeals the fates wove, always bringing the spirit closer to its final destiny of final enlightenment in the body of infinity. Enthnar felt the eternal love of the Goddess, who said, "You yourself are in the body of another life and you are in a state of forgetting. Your search for all truth brought you to this place and time, a promise from a witch long ago. You can visit these worlds if you wish, if only you go against the current that leads you to darkness." Suddenly Enthnar remembered a split second of waking up in the caves and the name Han reverberating in his ears. Enthnar woke up sweating and walked outside barefoot. He looked up at the stars to make sure they were still there. He was here and now in this plane of being, and the world around him was intensely beautiful. He climbed back in bed and thought about what he had seen.

The next day there were about forty horsemen waiting for them on the north bank. Enthnar was surprised at their rugged appearance. Most of them wore leather armor and looked somewhat dirty or drunk. Enthnar had hoped there would be more and from the look on Simenon's face Enthnar could tell he had as well. Simenon looked on Enthnar and nodded toward a grassy mound by the beach. Enthnar

got off his horse and climbed up it. They all looked at him and he said, “I am Enthnar son of Enthnar King of Ethema. The reason you have been called here is because we have lost such precious time in the fight for our freedom. You hear the preaching of Embalanach within your own walls. Just ask yourselves; do you want those teachings to be taught to your own precious children? Or do you want them to be free? Do you want shame, guilt and fear to rule their lives, or do you want the ways of your ancient fathers for them? I had a vision last night, and I can tell you that I know that freedom and love govern countless worlds. They are eternal and divine principles, and only in their absence can such ignorance exist. One is the road that leads to ignorance and the other is the road that leads to enlightenment, worlds and lives without end. I also saw the cycles of many lives in my vision, and if we die this day, then this is the day in which we shall be in the loving arms of the Goddess. Ignoble souls are recycled, but the Goddess preserves those warriors whose blood is spilt on the battlefield with her golden apples, so they can dwell with her in the underworld, or go unto the halls of their fathers for that battle for our world, which is to come. The battle that will be fought at the end of time is a battle between freedom and force, love and fear, ignorance and enlightenment. If you want your world back, then join me. Make a covenant unto me this day and you will be with me forever.” One by one the men stepped forward, raised their hands and said, “I covenant to establish the house of Enthnar again on the throne, for our families, countries and the old ways. Heil Enthnar, Son of Enthnar!”

Chapter Thirty-Eight

Serpents of Life and Death

They all camped that night in a clearing. Enthnar was standing by the fire when Simenon approached him and said, “Enthnar if we are to keep this movement a secret we must all split up and go cross country; and have a meeting point.” “What should the meeting point be?” Enthnar asked. “It can’t be far from your father’s castle, so we are undetected until that point. It also must give us enough time to go to the mountain elves.” “Council me on this, I do not know how far either destination is.” Enthnar replied. “I would tell them to be at the cross roads of Endlheim in fourteen days, beginning tomorrow morning.” Simenon said. “Also tell them to go home tonight and make excuses for tomorrow so their presence is not missed.”

Enthnar raised his hands and said, “attention my men.” Everyone became quiet and he said, “We must go cross country so we are not detected. We shall meet at the cross roads of Endlheim in one fortnight. Go home now and make excuses so your absence is not wondered upon come tomorrow. Meet us at the cross roads in fourteen days and we shall be accompanied by the mountain elves. I shall give you further instructions there. As for now, come before me and divide into fives and appoint a captain of

each party. These are the parties you shall go cross country with.” In fives they came before him and Enthnar bade them farewell and gave them the kiss of brotherhood to accept their captains. After this Enthnar, Simenon and Birgawin were left standing by the fire in an empty campground.

The next day they were riding again, and camping again. The riding and camping seemed endless, for several days they traveled on uneventfully. In the distance the mountains of the elves, which were part of the same ranch in which Egala rested to the west, slowly grew bigger and bigger before them. One day Enthnar looked down from a hill they were on, and saw a caravan of goblins marching down a road below them. Birgawin grabbed the reins of Enthnar’s horse and said, “quickly, into the trees.” Enthnar asked Birgawin and Simenon, “Where are they going?” “It looks like they are headed towards Araheim, where our village is, Enthnar.” Simenon said. “We have to stop them then.” Enthnar breathed. “We cannot stop them” Birgawin said, “you would die and our hope of uniting this country would be lost. The others know how to take care of themselves.” “Well they would never give into the laws of Embalanach and they will burn them.” Enthnar said. “They will do whatever it takes to survive to fight another day. Do not give into your fear for them.” Simenon reassured. After the caravan was passed, they rode on across the tracks of the goblins, and into the forest. Enthnar could not stop thinking about the others now, and he felt distracted while they rode toward the mountains.

That night they arrived at the foothills of the mountains and made camp. Enthnar dreamed of Isis that night, and of the last time they were together in the burial mound temple. He woke to the moonlight coming through the cloth of the tent. Enthnar got up and went out to see it. Standing there in the moonlight was Simenon. “Why are you up Simenon?” Enthnar asked. “We keep watch every night Enthnar.” He said. “We just do not wake you up to do it because you need your strength. You are much more valuable. Now go back to bed, we shall be to the home of the elves in the morning.”

The next day they rode up into the mountains all that day, past great cliffs and through steep forests. Finally they came to a village, and Simenon gave them the sign this time, as there were elfin archers posted outside in the woods. The whole village gathered to meet them, and Simenon said, “This is Enthnar son of Enthnar, do you have any brave warriors who wish to assist us?” Two elven archers stepped forward, and Simenon told them to be at the cross roads of Endlheim in eight days. They bowed and Simenon turned to Enthnar and said, “Let us ride we have many villages to cover.” They rode through three more villages that night with basically the same result, three here and two there. Enthnar thought that night about all these brave men and their families. He unlike some of them had not been raised in a warrior society with initiations, but was raised by his mother in a hut in midst of the woods.

Enthnar drifted off to sleep and in his dreams he saw an elderly elf lady who looked kind of like Isis, saying, “come to me”. Enthnar awoke and they rode through eight more villages throughout that day with not much deviation from the routine of the previous day. As they rode the forests got denser and

denser until one could not see the mountains around them. When the sun began to come back down the other side of the sky, they came to a certain village where the people were waiting for them. Enthnar expected the same routine but Simenon said, "Enthnar get off your horse and rest your seat, the men of this village have something to show you." Enthnar dismounted and the men took him down a forested path. One tall one with dark hair said, "Enthnar, you are about to see the green heart of Ethema; all Kings of Ethema must go to it." The trail came to an abrupt stop, and this elf pointed into a dense tangle of trees and said, "Go." The trees were bent over as though they were weeping or hiding something. Enthnar proceeded to climb through them, and crawl under them when it was convenient. Enthnar came to a point where he saw a giant tree through the tangled trees. There were many dead vines and the whole place was quite impenetrable to the unadventurous. As Enthnar approached he took out his sword to cut some overgrowth, but something in him told him not to. Enthnar finally saw the base of the tree which had its roots entangled around a house beneath it. Suddenly Enthnar had a chill go up his spine and he knew he had seen this place before. In a dream maybe, but it seemed more distant than a dream; as though it was a past life, long ago. Enthnar proceeded to the door and knocked. Enthnar heard an elderly voice say, "Come in."

Enthnar opened the door and he saw an old elf woman sitting in a rocking chair. He also saw onions and herbs hanging from the ceiling and suddenly his memory of these smells and sights came flooding back to him. She smiled at him and invited him to sit in front of her on an old rug. Enthnar came and sat before her. "I remember this place," Enthnar said. "But I remember when I was here it was green all around and not dead; but I also remember that you were dead. How is this possible?" The woman answered, "My son, our lives have acts and scenes but there is no time or place the truly binds us forever." She tenderly held Enthnar's hand and he was speechless, she went on. "You began in a cave. You awoke and learned that you could experience, which meant you truly existed. Wise men helped you understand the caves and also that there was more beyond them. They gave you a candle to see by and a brush to paint by. You adventured beyond those powers that wanted to keep you in that cave which was truly a part of yourself; as I am a part of myself too. You escaped and met Titans, those who had overcome death with stones. They brought you to new worlds and in their Temple you received your own stone. That stone was a key to the world inside you. This is the world inside you; you are an emanation of Han, the God who began this plane of existence. I am the Goddess, I am Canata, I am Isis, and I am the essence of this whole universe."

"I thought the God who came into the universe first was Andan." Enthnar said. "Andan grew out of Han, the God that they experience within the Goddess, remember what I said first in your dreams, if you go against the current that leads you to ignorance you can visit any one of these worlds you wish. I said darkness at the time because darkness was the symbol of that sleep to you." The elderly Elf woman

took a ladle from a small cauldron nearby. She handed it to Enthnar and he saw that it was full of green liquid. "Drink my potion my son and you shall know for yourself of what I speak." Enthnar took the ladle and drank it down painfully. The green liquid was hard to swallow and very bitter. Enthnar did not feel anything at first, but continued to sit at her feet. He could not think of any questions for her even though he could tell he had waited a lifetime for this meeting. She put her hand on his face and said, "Freedom and love are indeed the most important things in the universe, and sometimes they seem to conflict with one another, but one is impossible without the other. You are on an eternal journey to find truth and indeed so are all the emanations of God, so are all those which emanate from the Goddess, to experience all things. So are the door walkers on this journey." "What are door walkers?" Enthnar asked. "Look to the door." She said.

Enthnar looked and began to see colors of energy. He started to feel strange and electrified, as the colors came more and more into vivid focus. Enthnar began to see that he was surrounded by hundreds of little walking men shapes and flying serpents. Then he saw one Lord of all these things come into the room. He commanded the attention of all. He had the body of a man, the hair of a stag, a giant phallus, and a strange face with the beard of a wise man and the horns of a stag as well. He looked straight into Enthnar with piercing yellow eyes. He reached out his hand and Enthnar touched his hand in the sign of the horned god. Suddenly Enthnar found himself in a new place, a forest of green light that was full of life where he had first dreamed about in the caves. The horned god spoke to him. "I am he who was cast down in the beginning; I am he who loves the cycles of life and death, as much as I love immortality. I am the bringer of green light. I am the one who is your father in the world from where you came. Without me there would not be life, I am the reflection of the ultimate creation. Let me play and bring away this canopy of leaves from off your eyes."

The horned God took out a strange flute with several pipes, but also with holes. He began to play the most enchanting music, which Enthnar had ever heard, and there was suddenly the sound of the beating of a drum and Enthnar felt as though his lower body had become a horse, and he was carried away into endless worlds. He saw stars upon stars and galaxies upon galaxies and universes upon universes. What seemed to be an endless ecstasy began with the beating of an eternal beat. Enthnar flew into the corridor of light made of billions of stars and into the corridor of light beyond that, a grand road of the Gods. All these worlds offer up experience to the greater forever, he realized; an endless experience, an endless dream. Worlds harbor life and life harbors worlds without end. After such a vision Enthnar searched for no purpose and had no questions. Everything was before him, a million answers to anything and he felt content to just experience it. Enthnar also saw that all things are filled with energy from the endless Goddess, and that walkers fill it all, walkers transmitting the energy of everything. Always searching for more, scanning the whole of existence, an endless journey. The search

for more understanding is a voyage beyond imagining. The only ones who are closed out are those who never take the first step out of the cave and begin.

Then there was a light, an endless Goddess like an ocean, which embraced him and said, “The mysteries of continuing to grow knowledge instead of an endless forgetting is to cycle your energy forever, using an inner dimensional stake called a Titan Stone. A Titan stone is made by putting part of yourself within it. Through blood oil and semen are all things energetically transmitted. You can separate a part of yourself through the division, which is caused by evil acts, and be imprinted by the emotion of hate. Or you can separate a part of yourself through enlightenment, and imprint it through the power of love. Warriors make the very stones of the battlefield their stones and the goddess saves them to take part in the battle at the end of the world. Kings use their horses or patron animals to merge with and gain the energy necessary to come unto the goddess also, in preparation for the end of their world. The goddess gives them golden apples and ferries them across the river of death while protecting them from all the demons of fear that would eat their energy and bring the great forgetting.”

The light ended and the Goddess let go of Enthnar and he felt cold ice coursing through his veins like a serpent of ice. Then a new serpent of fire came into him and he felt the flowering of life and breath come back into him. The horned God was holding him in under the canopy of green again and began walking back with Enthnar in his arms like a child; while he saw spirits and light filling everything. Enthnar saw the old elf woman kissing him on the forehead and saying, “Sleep well my love, we shall meet again one day soon.” Enthnar then felt her place a piece of wood in his hands.

Chapter Thirty-Nine

Cross Roads of Endlheim

When Enthnar awoke he was resting in the middle of a stone circle surrounded by elves in green cloaks. He felt weak and sick, although the tall dark haired elf raised him and steadied him. The elf said, you have been brought back into a new life; resurrected to be our King and given this wand by which you may have command of spirits. The elf then led him around the pillar circle three times and brought him back to the altar in the middle where there was a basin of water and a fire with incense. The elf had Enthnar wash his hands and dry them over the fire. He then took a white rope belt and tied it around him. “This shall protect you. Nine men from this village shall attend you along with Simenon and Birgawin; we are now all here. I am the first of the nine and my name is Aramin; this is, Turanin, Gylfanar, Adari, Layanor, Elador, Hagalari, Torinor and Malanar. We have agreed with Simenon to meet you at a certain place in three days after we gather many more elves from these mountains. We must make haste, until we meet, farewell my King.” Enthnar shook their hands before they disappeared into the woods.

Enthnar, Simenon and Birgawin mounted their horses and started riding east of the village through the woods. They gathered a few recruits at several villages and then started heading down the winding road out of the mountains, which turned to the south. They camped that night in the foothills of the mountains, and dark clouds began to roll in. It rained and thundered that night and Enthnar noticed Birgawin holding a pendant with an axe on it, and praying. Enthnar asked what that pendant was. Birgawin replied, "It is the symbol of the thunder God who is the God of my people, named Baranak. We must always praise him for the rain and pray for safe passage from the lightening, but to be endowed with the lightening of his inspiration." Enthnar nodded, and then thought about what he said. He remembered having a dream where he met a Titan of lightening named Barak, on an amazing ship. He wondered if that was just a dream or if it had something to do with his past life, spoken about by the old witch.

It was overcast in the morning but the rain had subsided. It was damp and cold as Enthnar gathered his things, and they mounted their horses. They continued down the mountains and came to a road on the plains that they started following to the east. They rode all that day and after an exhausting ride stopped for the night and camped in the woods. The next morning they continued as usual all day, riding past woods and increasingly larger meadows and grasslands.

Towards the evening they came to a large town. Simenon and Birgawin put on the hoods of their cloaks and Enthnar did the same. Enthnar saw that in the center of the town there was an ancient temple to the Gods which had now been converted into a church of evil, for I had the red mark of Embalanach upon it. A man standing on the steps who looked as though he was half goblin, he was bald with reptilian looking eyes. He asked Birgawin where he was going and from whence he came. Birgawin said, "We are humble pilgrims out of the heathen wilderness, come to pray unto Andan at thy shrine in the morning, but for now we must find a place to rest. Good day." The man said nothing in return and they rode on. They rode strait through town and turned onto a smaller road that went up into the woods to a lone inn and tavern. Birgawin paid for a room and Enthnar and Simenon went straight up. Enthnar said to Simenon,

"It is funny, I thought when I came on this adventure we would have fought our way through the whole way and I haven't wielded my sword even once." "Never hope for it," Simenon said. "Every time it is wielded you have a great chance of dying, I fear that you will have to use it." Enthnar thought about his words and went to sleep. Enthnar suddenly awoke in the early morning. Sir Birgawin whispered, get your sword and stand behind the door. "What is happening?" Enthnar whispered. "There is a procession of Embalanach Priests coming up the road toward the Inn; they will probably want to search for emblems of Gods they hate. Your sword and several other things we have would spell disaster for us." Simenon whispered. "What is so special about my sword?" "It was your father's sword, and look it has the symbol of Eldridinos the forest God upon its hilt." Simenon replied. "I am going to blow my horn the elves should already be in the woods just above us." Said Birgawin. "It would give away the element of

surprise.” Simenon said. “Yes, but we are vastly outnumbered.”

Birgawin went to the window and blew his horn into the morning air; it sounded clear and loud. Enthnar heard the Priests kick in the door down stairs, and then he heard some of them screaming outside. Simenon nocked an arrow in his bow, and stood on the opposite side of the room, and Birgawin drew his sword and stood by the door. The door was kicked in against Enthnar, although a little table took most of the force. Simenon’s arrow flew and Enthnar heard a body hit the ground. There was also the sound of a swinging sword and cutting flesh. There was a load twang and Simenon screamed. Enthnar came out from behind the door and a man with a crossbow had just retreated to reload, and there was another priest with a sword that started clashing swords with Birgawin, but hadn’t seen Enthnar yet. Enthnar stabbed him in the side with all the force he could muster and ran him through. The crossbowman popped around the corner again and Birgawin grabbed it and pulled him into the room, tripping him over one of the dead bodies. Enthnar turned around to get his bearings and swung cutting the throat of the crossbowman. He looked up to see Simenon with a bolt in his shoulder. He was struggling to pull back the string of his bow with another arrow in it. Blood saturated his tunic. Birgawin started clashing swords with another priest and Simenon gasped, “Enthnar, jump out the window, our men are down there ready to catch you.”

Enthnar leaned on the windowsill and looked down a whole story to ground level, and he saw two elves, reaching up, indicating that he could jump. Enthnar leaped and they caught him for the most part, except for hitting his foot on the ground pretty hard. Enthnar turned to the elves, and said, “You have to save Birgawin and Simenon.” Just after he said this the sounds of fighting seemed to suddenly stop. A bunch of elves came out of the tavern and so did Birgawin covered in blood but seemingly unharmed. “Where is Simenon?” Enthnar asked. “He is in there.” Birgawin replied. Enthnar went into the tavern and he saw Aramin, Adari and Malanar trying to bind his wounds on a table. Enthnar saw that he did not only have a bolt in his shoulder but he was also slashed in the belly. He was losing a lot of blood and looked pale as death. He turned to Enthnar and said, “Enthnar, you will always be my King. You must leave me now. I will only slow the party down, and we might have lost the element of surprise. Go with haste, go to the cross roads of Endlheim. Birgawin knows the way.”

The other elves nodded to him, and Enthnar went back out into the morning light. Birgawin said, “Enthnar, come here and wipe off your sword, you always have to take good care of it; then we must go with great haste unto Endlheim.” After wiping off the blood and seeing it run out of the center groove, Enthnar sheathed it and mounted his horse. The elves said, they would always be near but that they should not all travel together so they don’t draw attention; so they all began to split up and galloped on their horses through the forest, on either side, while Birgawin and Enthnar rode cross country through the valley. They rode all day and Enthnar felt sick when thinking about what happened in the Inn that morning, although he knew that what they had done had been necessary to defend their own lives. They

camped on the plains that night and the ground was a lot softer there than it was in the woods. Enthnar awoke in the early morning realizing that Birgawin had been out watching all night. Enthnar came out of the tent, and said, "Birgawin, you have to get some sleep, I will spell you off." Birgawin looked grateful and said, "Yes, my King. Be careful, and wake me at the first sign of anything."

Enthnar watched and didn't wake Birgawin until the sun was up, and they rode on all that day. They took turns watching that night, and the next day they rode on until they came to a road at about noon. Birgawin said, "This road leads to Endlheim, and we should be at the cross roads by nightfall." They rode on, and that night they came to a big cross road with one single giant tree standing next to the junction. Birgawin looked around and pointed out a stream a few miles away with trees along it, and said, "That is where the elves will be hiding, let us go camp with them. No fires tonight."

They rode over to them, and brought their horses down into the trees. Surely enough, almost invisible in the bushes were elves under their green cloaks camping. Enthnar found a good spot like a deer bed, and curled up in his own cloak to sleep for the night. The next morning Enthnar got up and saw that all his horsemen had gathered at the junction. He heard one elf say, "The humans will give us away." Enthnar and Birgawin mounted their horses and rode out to them. Then men dismounted and bowed to Enthnar. "Arise." Enthnar said. "Now is the day we will take back Ethema."

The crowd gave a hearty cheer. Birgawin rode up under the tree, and suddenly Enthnar heard him yell in pain. Enthnar turned around his heart pounding, and he saw a giant snake latched on to Birgawin's chest just above the neckline of his plate mail. He screamed and wrestled with it, his horse stepping nervously trying not to panic. Enthnar pulled out his sword and screamed while he tried to chop the snake down from the back of his horse; its tail still being wrapped around a tree branch. Finally Birgawin himself pulled out his serrated dagger and sawed away at it, until its head came off.

Birgawin looked suddenly faint and fell backwards off his horse, and the horse galloped a ways off. Enthnar got down, and started pulling off his armor. A terrible looking purple welt where the snake bit him was spreading. Gyldanar was suddenly at Enthnar's side; he took out his dagger and cut a small cross in the welt. He then started sucking out the poison and blood and spitting it out next to them on the dusty road. Birgawin put his hand up to Enthnar, and Enthnar held it. He then said, "Enthnar, I am not going to make it; I already feel the poison being pumped through my heart and I may only have moments to say my last words. I see, energy beings of light, all around us. I see walkers, and Gods and Goddesses. I believe what you have said about them, and about infinity. You will always be my King. Please wash my body with water and oil, and place this pendent in my mouth, and burn me; that I may be preserved for the last battle and that I may be sealed to you. Whatever happens, you are a King forever." Birgawin closed his eyes and let out one long strange breath, and was dead. Enthnar started to cry and kissed his

cheeks and forehead. “This is no time for mourning.” Enthnar heard behind him. “That snake was put there by the dark lord. He knows we are coming.”

Chapter Forty

Well of Passage

Enthnar arose and looked behind him to see Aramin standing there. Enthnar thought deeply for a few moments and said, “We must just charge forwards then.” “Perhaps, let us cast the runes first though.” Aramin replied. Hagalari came forward with a bag. He took a stick and drew a calendar in the dirt. He then took rune stones out of his bag without looking and tossed them on the ground. “The runes say that we should approach with caution, and furthermore the cycle rune is in the place of the battle strategy. This means that we should exploit the same weakness the goblins did when they first took that castle.” “The well.” Enthnar said. Enthnar got up on his horse and commanded the attention of all the humans and elves and said. “We go to the castle, to do battle; for our freedom and lands. Oh ye men of the lake, you shall advance to the Southwestern side of the castle and remain in the woods there until the gate shall open. The elves shall advance in on the Northwest woods and appear when the door shall open as well. The nine shall come with me to open the gate. The gate shall open at this time, the day after tomorrow.” Enthnar then selected a master captain both out of the elves and the humans that would be on the outside of the gate, to give the command and the men moved out.

After the burning of Sir Birgawin nightfall soon came and Enthnar and Aramin camped in the woods close to the road with no tent and no fire. “I will keep watch.” Aramin said. “I can also keep watch and sleep at the same time, so you just sleep; you need your rest.” The next morning Enthnar began to ride down the road accompanied by Aramin on an elk; the other eight swiftly ran into the woods on foot. “How can they keep up?” Enthnar asked Aramin. “They know the art of Elvish running.” He replied. “Why did I never learn it?” Enthnar asked. “Because it is unique to the tribes of the Green Heart of Ethema; it is performed by perceiving yourself further forward than you are, and you are slightly further. So it is a mild form of teleportation. They used it to get here, and they beat you and Birgawin to the crossroads. That ability along with our practice of traveling cross-country allows us to be places before horses can get to there.”

They rode all that day, and in the evening time they came up over a certain hill, and there in the distance they could see the old castle of Enthnar. It seemed to have a dark cloud hanging over it, and Aramin said, “Let us go into the woods and camp and stay in the woods while we approach the castle in the morning. Mid-morning is the time we must open that gate.” They camped in the woods that night and Enthnar thought he would barely be able to sleep, but he was exhausted and closed his eyes. Enthnar

awoke to Aramin waking him in the early morning light. "It is time to go and find the way in." He said. They were joined in the woods by the other eight and they all approached the northwest side of the castle in the woods. There was a cave there that the goblins had first made to get to the well. Enthnar and the others carefully approached the mouth of it, and to Enthnar's dismay, there were bars over the entrance. "How are we going to get in now?" Enthnar asked. "We knew they would have bars over it." Aramin said, "We will find the place on the other side of this mound where air can be felt coming out of the ground." Enthnar went with the others around and saw Elador on the ground putting his hear between two rocks, and smelling. He, Layenor and Torinor, then pulled small shovels from off their backs and started prying away rocks and digging quietly but swift. Soon they had a little hole broken away where the dirt fell in and trickled down into the darkness. Enthnar then saw Layenor pull out a long pipe, with holes on one end and a handle on the other, from his cloak. "What is that?" Enthnar whispered. "That is full of poisoned needles," Aramin replied. "Let him go first and he will be sure the guards are not alerted to our presence. Then Torinor and Hagalari; after them I and you will go followed by, Gylfanor, Elador, Malanar, Turanin and Adari."

After the first three elves entered the small hole Aramin squeezed through it, and the others gestured to Enthnar to climb in. Enthnar got down in the dirt and began to slide; wondering when is feet would land on the floor of the tunnel. He felt Aramin take hold of him and help him down. He saw the light coming through the bars in one direction and a dark tunnel in the other. Enthnar pulled out his sword and Aramin had already drawn his. They crept through the cave, occasional roots and spider webs gracing their hair. They stepped over several dead bodies of goblin guards, and Enthnar couldn't help but look in their open eyes and realize the gravity of the situation. The cave was becoming so dark that their eyes couldn't adjust and everything was pitch black. Aramin grabbed Enthnar's hand and continued on into the darkness. Enthnar felt himself occasionally stumbling over the rough ground, but Aramin's steps were steady.

After what seemed like forever, Enthnar saw a pale light coming down from the ceiling ahead. "Don't fall into the well." Aramin cautioned Enthnar. Enthnar could now see that they were on the side of the well shaft, with the hole of the well both on the ceiling and extending down into the floor. The other three elves were standing around it, and Torinor was softly tugging on a chain on the side of the well to see if it was steady. Suddenly they heard a goblin voice in the tongue of Embalanach hollering something down the well which echoed in the cave. "What did he say?" Enthnar whispered. "He said, it is not time for your shift to end yet," replied Torinor. "We must climb without disturbing the chain, until we are up." "Let all eight go first Enthnar; then we will climb the chain once they are up." Aramin said.

One by one the elves climbed up the well in total silence. Enthnar heard some mild disturbance, above and then Aramin said, "It is time, let us climb. You go up first, and I will be sure you don't fall."

Enthnar grabbed the chain and put his feet against the well wall, the pit looming below him. He began to climb as fast as his arms could carry him and Aramin was right behind him. The light of the top became bigger and brighter the closer he came. Once he put his hand over the edge an Elvish arm grabbed him and pulled him out into the early morning light. It was Malanar and he pulled Enthnar as fast as his feet could carry him to a door nearby. Enthnar saw that the elves had split up. Malanar and Adari were keeping watch on the well, from a nearby door, while the others had gone to the two front towers and the gatehouse. Aramin came over the side of the well and ran toward the door where they were waiting. Suddenly Enthnar heard a goblin horn blaring a low gargling hum. Enthnar heard steps coming down the stairs where they were, and all the elves had their swords ready. Suddenly, several goblin guards attacked, their swords clashing with the swords of the elves. Malanar, Adari and Aramin cut them down with great skill and Aramin said, "Enthnar, let us go."

They ran up the stairs and came into a common room. There were several more guards coming into this room at the same time and the elves charged cutting them down. One got around their flank and came at Enthnar. Enthnar blocked his first blow and then kicked a chair into his legs and struck the goblins sword hand. The goblin dropped his sword in pain and Enthnar cut his jugular before he could pull out his knife. Another one had come around and engaged Enthnar as his heart was pounding, but he was also feeling a sudden rush of adrenalin. Enthnar started hitting the goblin's buckler, and then took a shot at his knee and cut it. The Goblin lunged and Enthnar parried it and stabbed him through. The room was clear although Aramin's arm was wounded; he said, "We must go on, I will bandage it myself."

Malanar, Adari and Enthnar went up the next flight of stairs with Aramin close behind. Enthnar heard the horn of the lake riders and he knew the gate must be open. When they got to the top of the stairs there was a long hall stretched out before of them, however there was the sound of marching feet like a small army coming towards them from up another flight of stairs. Malanar opened a side door and he, Adari and Enthnar went in quickly, and closed it behind them. "What about Aramin?" Enthnar breathed. "He knows how to hide." Malanar said. There was another door on the other side of the room they had entered and Adari said, "We have to keep moving."

They went through this door to find a kitchen area with a boiling cauldron on one side. Suddenly an old goblin hag came out with a butcher's knife and threw it into Malanar's leg. He dropped to the ground and Adari decapitated her when she came at him, and he was sprinkled head to foot with her blood. Enthnar crouched down by Malanar. "Don't pull it out." Malanar said. "Or I will bleed to death." "What do we do?" Enthnar replied. "You move on without me, with great haste; you can't have me slow you down. She hit my leg to slow us down, because she knew she couldn't take us on. Now go." Adari, grabbed Enthnar's shoulder and started running to the other side of the kitchen. Enthnar and Adari moved into another hallway, and Enthnar could hear the sounds of battle raging outside. They went up another

flight of stairs, and Adari said, “We are getting close to the throne room, that is where he shall be. His name is Grividor, he is the dark lord set over the lands of Ethema by Andalanoch, king of Embalanach.” “What will we do when we get to him?” Enthnar asked. “I will engage him while you while you hide. When you see it is safe to strike then you can join me,” Adari replied. Adari looked into Enthnar’s eyes gravely, “We need you to live, to be King when this is over.”

Enthnar did not protest as they snuck down a few more vacant halls until there was a set of huge double doors up a short flight of stairs. Adari opened a storage room and shoved Enthnar in and closed the door. Enthnar could see Adari fling open the double doors and rush in screaming a battle cry through a crack in the door from where he hid there in the darkness. He began to see movement in the great room beyond the door, but what was happening was hard to see from this distance. Enthnar suddenly heard Adari scream, and opened the closet door to run to his aid against the council to hide. He knew that he would be of no use as a King if he were not a true friend. He ran across the hall and up the stairs into the room beyond the giant door.

Enthnar saw standing there in the middle of the throne-room the dark lord in a black cloak holding up Adari by the neck and thrusting his sword through him. Enthnar pulled out his sword and began to advance against him. The dark lord threw Adari onto the ground and pulled out his black sword, which seemed to smoke darkness if one had the spiritual eyes to see it. The sword of the dark lord and Enthnar’s clashed. Enthnar could barely block his heavy blows and finally Enthnar’s sword was cut in half, and the dark sword scratched his shoulder. Enthnar screamed and retreated further into the throne room with his half sword in front of him. Enthnar sheathed his half sword for a moment and grabbed a spear from the wall. Enthnar charged and the dark lord grabbed the shaft and pulled it out of Enthnar’s hands. The dark lord said, “Your father killed my predecessor in that way, and I have learned from his mistake; because I am him. The goblins perform trans-soul migration for their kings through human sacrifice; the sacrifice of your father.”

The dark lord then turned the spear on Enthnar shoved it through his shoulder, lifted him from the ground and pinned him to a shield on the wall. Enthnar could barely assimilate what just happened. There was a sharp pain in his chest and running down his arm, and he felt his warm blood dripping down his body and into his boot. The Dark Lord then stuck another spear in his other shoulder, and Enthnar hung there, although the pain seemed to pass from him like a cloud off a mountain. Enthnar was starting to experience a feeling of peace come over him. He began to feel light headed and seemed to be drifting off to sleep. Suddenly Enthnar was enveloped in colorful geometric shapes moving fluidly before him. Through these shapes Enthnar saw three women weaving endless particles together, the women he had seen before. He also saw one of the women shining brightly and dressed in white. Her golden hair was the hue of burnished gold. She approached him and was holding a ladle full of mead and gave Enthnar

some to drink. She then embraced him and came into him as though they were melding together and becoming one person. Enthnar then felt as full and blissful as he ever had before.

Enthnar suddenly realized he was inside a well and climbed out just like he had done this morning, although this well lead to a beautiful garden. There were many trees, and above the trees were stars even though the sun was shining. Enthnar saw a bush there that was like a tree with yellowish fruits, which came to a point on the bottom. There was also another tree with white fruit that shone with a golden light, which grew in two sections. There was suddenly a procession of elves and fauns through the Garden and they came to Enthnar. The leader of them whose robes shone like silver, said to Enthnar, "Do you wish to die, or do you wish to return?" "I wish to return, there are so many things I have to do." Enthnar said. The elf took his hand and said, "We will always be your family," and handed him one of the yellowish fruits.

Enthnar took a bite of it, and they took him by the hand and lowered him back into the dark well. Enthnar saw colorful geometric shapes in the darkness again and suddenly opened his eyes. He was still hanging by the spears in the throne room, and the dark lord was busy drawing a magical circle to perform some kind of ceremony. Enthnar also noticed that there was a giant beam blocking the door from opening. Enthnar also realized that his broken sword was still in his sheath. Enthnar pulled as hard as he could to get his right shoulder onto the shaft and off the blade of the spear, as well as his left one. Sweat started beading and dripping down his face, the pain also returned putting terrible stings up his whole body. He heard that the fight had stopped outside and he hoped his army had won the day and was almost to the door. He inched his way down the spear shafts until they dislodged from the shield and he came down with a crash, two long shafts still in his shoulders. The dark lord turned and looked at him, realizing there was nothing much that Enthnar could do, and returned to his work. Enthnar pulled the spears out of his shoulders and now the blood really started to flow and Enthnar suddenly felt much lighter headed than before, and a nauseous feeling made him vomit. He was in no condition to fight but he used one of the nearby pillars to pull himself into a standing position. The dark lord then pulled out his sword and approached him. "You came down just in time for the sacrifice." He said.

Enthnar suddenly ran for the door and crouching below the beam he used his wounded shoulder to remove the beam from the door. The door suddenly burst open and in rode horsemen. The dark lord screeched and started fighting them with amazing skill. He dismounted one and took his horse, while chopping down several more. He rode out of the throne room as Enthnar collapsed and lay there. Gyldanar was suddenly by his side stanching the blood of his wounds with bandaging. Enthnar drifted off several times, but once when he opened his eyes, Isis was there also. She was holding him and he was lying now in a different room on a bed. Isis held him close and said, "No matter what happens, I will always be here with you; our love is eternal."

Chapter Forty-One

Awakening

Han slowly opened his eyes to see the vaulted ceiling of the Temple above him. Han sat up and saw Canata lying there next to him on the steps next to the altar. Canata also suddenly began to stir and open her eyes. She looked up at Han and Han looked back at her. "Enthnar?" She said. "Isis my love." Han replied. "Enthnar-Han." Canata said and began to smile and laugh. "You must be Canata-Isis, then." Han smiled in return. The couple arose from the floor and turned to see the Spirit Titan sitting upon the throne and smiling back at them, he then clapped his hands three times. Han and Canata walked closer to him and Han asked, "Is Enthnar dead if I am awake?" "No." The Spirit Titan replied. "Although please do tell me what happened."

Han and Canata spent the next hour or so telling the whole story. Han also found out that Isis had been captured and rescued by the elves and riders of the lake from the dungeon under the castle; and also that she had only fallen asleep when she awoke again as Canata. The Spirit Titan listened intently and didn't ask any questions for the duration of the story. "What is happening there then if I am here?" Han asked him. "There is no correspondence between the time in your universe and this one." He said. "What will become of Enthnar and the others then?" He asked. "Enthnar's fate is your decision. It is your story to write as the Magi taught you a long time ago." He said. "Where did Birgawin go when he died?" Han asked. "Birgawin is within you, because you are Birgawin and Birgawin is you."

Han suddenly looked confused. "But I was Enthnar." He said. "You dreamed of Enthnar. Everyone in your world is you and you are them. You are Andan, Cyrus, the old woman, Enthnar and all his fathers; you are even the dark lord Grividor, as well as the elves and everyone else." "How could Canata come into my world then if I am Isis too?" Han inquired. "We are all more connected than you think. Just as you are all the people in the world within you, similarly we are all parts of the one in whose world we reside. There is no end to emanations and ones those emanations are in." The Spirit Titan said. "We are made of flowing intelligences and are in a flowing all at once, and all of us are a different being from moment to moment." The Spirit Titan added.

Han and Canata just pondered on this for a moment and looked at each other, until the Spirit Titan went on. "This gives rise to the two principle aspects of our knowledge. As there are emanations that have one source, they shall love and give hospitality to one another. Secondly that there is one eternal order which arises in the universe within that one in which we reside. All is within us, light and darkness, good and evil, male and female, independence and unity. Those within you must marry as those without. Everything comes to this understanding of balance, cycle and order, as well as the power of this love and brotherhood that should exist between individual emanations. That which is above is like that which is

below, and that which is within, as that which is without.” “Teach us the ordinances of this divine hospitality of which you speak.” Canata said. “Firstly we give the Gods gifts, oaths and create sacred places dedicated to them, whereby they become our guests. They then serve us in return as their guests, through inspiration, ordinances and divine aid. Couples, brothers, sisters and whole tribes do this also. Tribes immerse and bestow the spirits of their ancestors upon their children. Brothers and sisters make oaths to each other, give gifts and eat and drink with one another as a communion between them. Couples make oaths to each other and administer to one another as hosts to the other. This is how to lay hold unto eternal love and an everlasting relationship through all the cycles of time. To simply administer to the other in love by washing, anointing and massaging their feet; as the Gods have done eternities before you. Or whatever is meaningful to you, done in eternal love; for every action of the enlightened is an ordinance unto those of their Order and family.” When the Spirit Titan was finished, Han said, “Oh Titan of the Spirit, I don’t think we ever asked your name. What should we call you?” “My name is Tan.” He said with a smile.

Han looked at his stone and still curiously saw the little men flying into his stone, although he now saw them flying out as well. Han also noticed them flying in and out of everything for the first time. “I know I did ask this before,” Han hesitated, “but what are these amazing little energy men in and on everything around us?” “They are walkers, Han. They are the energy of everything and they exist in all universes and fly into all dimensions and planes eternally. They also come in many shapes and sizes, but the shapes they take in temples are as little humanoids. I did not tell thee this before because I wanted to save this to be held until after you were born again through your subconscious ocean into your world. However they are the mystery of everything. If you can see them you have the sight, and you can look into deeper and deeper truth forever; that there are infinite worlds and dimensions, and infinite possibilities.”

Han also noticed that suddenly larger personages in the energy surrounded them. “Who are these?” Han asked. “Those are Titans Han. This is the meaning of the immortality through the stone; eternal life in the energy all around us.” Tan said. Han looked up in the energy and looked through the wilderness of energy before him and saw Elrid standing there before him. Elrid reached his arms out towards Han and said, “Han we are eternal brothers, twin worlds, and there is so much to teach you. Listen for me, for I will always be with you.” Han suddenly noticed something interesting about Elrid he had not noticed a moment ago. Han could suddenly not tell whether he was a woman or a man. He was suddenly remarkably beautiful and seemingly androgynous. Han came back to reality from his vision knowing the ancient Titans were all around him; an order of the firstborn Titans of his race. Han also noticed a weave of a white horse and a black horse on the back of Tan the Spirit Titan’s throne. “What is that symbol?” Han asked. “That is the Sons of Diwos,” Tan said, “It is the symbol of two sons of the Gods, who

represented all that which was opposite in the universe. We all have that struggle within us, one cannot exist without the other. We should not see them as completely unified, because they are different, but we should also not see them as separate, for that is an illusion. The two horses are intimately connected.”

“What is that?” Han asked while pointing at a giant carving of a tree over the throne. “That is Araminon the world tree. Every man is a tree within, which is a world. It feeds off the waters of the chaos, and it, the cosmos returns what it has received. Every moment the seeing glass of the particles rolls over the painting of our world, putting that which is in the past back into chaos and receiving the future from it.”

“Particles?” Canata inquired. Tan said, “That which enables us to experience is very elusive. Whether it is something or nothing into which our input flows the unenlightened will never know. Although everything is truly nothing and nothing is everything. Regardless, we are a river, which is never the same from one moment unto the next. We are always flowing and will never be the same. We are a different experiencing principle every moment. Every moment we are a new being. Death is irrelevant as everything is an eternal flowing of experience. Only the memory of our system gives the illusion of continuity. Freewill is irrelevant for the same reason even though we must respect the freedom of others in what they shall do. Every moment is a new life and a new death. Close your eyes and learn this truth, as all mind Titans must do. See the ticking of your consciousness knowing you are not the you from a moment ago; always knowing you are a new being. Mind Titans must do this to transcend the illusions of space and time, for this is enlightenment.”

Chapter Forty-Two

Space of Understanding

Han closed his eyes as Canata already had. He was suddenly soaring through the flowing blue energy that he had experienced all those years ago when he had first created his world. Han then found himself lying upon a red carpet. He got up and saw that there were fine wooded walls around him and Canata was also there looking around. There was a great big window in the front of the room, which looked out into the strangest space Han had ever seen. It was like a space of metallic noodles going as far as the eye could possibly see. Han also saw that they were slowly moving through them. Han saw that they were on a ship sailing through this sea and he began to walk to the front of the ship and saw that there were some steps down on either side of seats lower down in front of the great window. There in front of the seats was a wooden wheel to pilot the vessel. Han noticed standing by the wheel was a beautiful woman in strange colorful clothes of blue, purple and silver. She said, “Welcome to the ship of time.”

Han walked down the steps and in front of the window to look out onto the strange space of metallic noodle like things. He figured they would all just be reflections of each other although he looked

and saw as it were reflections of other things in some of them, in the slight ribbons of light. "I am Han, and this is my beloved Canata, who are you?" Han asked the woman. "I am Diogomatre the Titaness of earth and motherhood." "Why do I see other things in the subtle reflections of the noodles?" Han asked. "You are seeing that which is recorded in the energy, of all past things which have been experienced." She smiled. "What are they?" "They are you, and they are me, they are the records of the energy which have passed through all living beings throughout time; and this energy is made of endless flowing particles of self, like jewels in this endless net. They all reflect one another, as all energy is affected by all else to lesser or greater degrees. It is the flowing record of all experience which can only be viewed in this dimension, where it all comes together into these noodles; an endless plane of these records." She said.

Han looked back out at the noodles with great wonderment. Diogomatre motioned for Han and Canata to follow her. She walked up the steps and out of the room. On the side of the ship was a hall with a large window stretching along the wall across the hull of the entire ship where one could see the noodles passing in a panorama. She then led them up some stairs. The stairs lead into a room with a great dome on the top and a chair with a kind of looking glass, much like the observatory that was on the Titan ship. She invited Han to climb the ladder to the looking glass and he did. Han looked into it, and it zoomed up on a noodle so that Han could see it with great detail. Mostly the noodles contained memories of people he had never met, people playing; working, fighting etc. "Is there a way to look at the memories of certain people?" Han asked. "There is, we are sailing towards the region of you and your friends." She said.

Slowly things looked more and more familiar even though he still could not put his finger on most of it. Some of these things were a beautiful city by the ocean, ancient flying ships, pyramids, and many other curious things. Han also saw a great battle unlike he had ever imagined and great cataclysms. He also saw people traveling in the woods living by the side of the fire and of being initiated and making cave drawings; he saw civilizations rise and fall. Han then began to see things that looked so familiar but that he knew he had forgotten. He saw his childhood in Kymoore, the controversy of the kings. Han saw Dro and himself charging across the plain towards the dark mountain with their army. A great battle ensued inside the mountain between them and the armies of the Overmind. Han saw himself partaking of the soup, of things going dark and of the memories of daylight being snuffed out, and a great dreamless sleep. Han saw their journey, as dirty anorexic travelers in dismal darkness, of the rooms filled with sleepers and the lava chasm. Han saw his journey with the Titans; he also saw what his friends were experiencing.

He saw Canata with himself in the domes of the life station and the blooming of the life moon. He saw everything he knew about his life pass before him, and also how it reflected on the experience of other persons on nearby strands; sometimes positively and sometimes not. Han felt a tug at his heart as

he saw that most things he did actually reflected negatively on others, in his search for truth he had neglected his friends. In telling people about strange new worlds, he saw that he confused them and that they would become angry and sometimes that anger would lead to tragedy. He saw the sleeping army marching under the shadow of the cloud covered in mud. He saw all the events that had happened, the lifting off of the ship of the Dark Titans, of the battle between them, and the tragedies that took place in the Titan Temple. Han sat back and became very reflective for a long time. “You cannot change the effect you have on others; you can only follow love and truth.” Diogomatre said. She continued, “All those you have affected have their free choice, and react according to the way they are made and the experiences they have had; in short how their destiny is weaved. Do not mourn for them; those who want to know will not be deterred.” Han did not feel reassured, although he knew he should listen to her. Han climbed down the ladder and held Canata. Then she also climbed up the ladder to see if she could make sense of the patterns she would see reflected in the different strands. Diogomatre turned to the couple and said, “You are welcome to continue to sail on my ship with me. You may leave my ship any place in space and time that you wish. You are my children and whenever you need me you may call upon me”.

Chapter Forty-Three

The Canopy

Han and Canata walked in the forest outside of the city of Kymoore as the Sun began to come up over the mountains in the distance and through the woods. They walked towards the house under the tree where they knew Dro lived. Vines and branches covered the footpath and the whole place looked over grown. Han and Canata climbed through the bushes and vines and finally came to the front door. Han knocked a bit and opened the front door. To their amazement Dro and Weab were there deep in meditation sitting on mats on the floor. They looked healthy but thin, and very serene. Weab opened his eyes and so did Dro.

Han and Canata sat down on the floor and the four of them formed a circle, and they meditated together for a good part of the day. Han saw subtle lights in his eyes, and he let them move into geometric shapes and patterns, until they made other shapes and he followed them through many incarnations. When Han opened his eyes he could see walkers all around them. Han then saw an energy being standing above them. This energy being was Hermaphroditic and had many arms, and great energy and glory, which filled the room. She smiled down upon Han and said, “If you can see this my energy form, you can be visited from now on by many Gods and Goddesses. I am the God and the Goddess in one form, which is the embodiment of wholeness. We love you and shall pour down our energy and love upon you.”

The Goddess left and Han sat there and meditated upon her appearance and words for a time. The evening was coming and Canata arose to make some food for everybody. Han and Dro both opened their eyes and looked at each other for a moment. Han said, "Dro, I just saw a Goddess, who was part male and part female with many arms and she talked to me about wholeness." "Wholeness is not my path," Dro said, "My path is the path of purity. We are on different paths ever since we left each other in the caves all those years ago." "Can't you be pure and whole?" Han asked. "No, because wholeness is embracing all of yourself, and purity is changing oneself, you cannot accept all of yourself without accepting the things which should be purged in my path." Dro said. "Dro, in the beginning we set out to learn all truth. We were the seekers of truth. Which path will now lead us to infinitely more truth?" Han asked. "That is for us to find out for ourselves." Dro said.

Each day Han and Dro meditated separately and not much communication happened between them about their discoveries, because Han felt as though Dro had pushed him away in rekindling their search together. Eventually Canata found another small house in the woods, which was owned by a local family who only wanted some services in return for a room. Han worked for them and time passed and the winter came. Han meditated in his house every day and from time to time a God or a Goddess would appear before him in the energy as they had done before. He would also use translucent stones to look and see visions of ancient writings and truths although the time passed quite lonely besides the comforting support of Canata.

One night Han was out walking and he looked up at the moon. Suddenly a dark round shadow creped over the light of the full moon slowly. It took quite some time to cover it completely, and then the moon began to glow red. Suddenly the energy in the whole world became brighter, and all around him Han saw Gods and personages of energy. Han reached out his arms and they took his hands and suddenly he was taken away in a vision. He was taken to a beautiful garden again, and there all around him were beautiful Gods and Goddess naked in this garden. One Goddess took Han's hand and said, "We are the first men and women to inhabit the earth, and we return from time to time making the earth our garden home. Now we shall show you the keys of the Algum and Tarmum which are the spiritual eyes within you." She had Han lay down upon a bed in the middle of the Garden, and she told him to curl up into the fetus position. She then told him to put his hands together in a triangle which was one of the seer signs the Titans had shown him in their rites; and which he had used in separating himself from Andan. The Goddess then came up to him and transformed into the most beautiful hermaphrodite and her energy penetrated into him, and Han could see into her energy through his hands whatever he wished a hundred times clearer than in the stones. "This is Odinstarnet, the tower of observation from which we observe the mortal world." She said. Her energy came out of him and she arose from off of him, and the vision faded. Han thanked them for teaching him and before he left the Garden they washed his feet in a basin and

anointed his head and proclaimed him the true king of the Magi. Han awoke on the snow and he returned home to warm up. From that day on whenever Han raised his hands toward the energy and called upon the Gods they would come and he could see in them the mysteries he desired to know. The spring eventually came and the people of Kymoore celebrated the spring festivals.

Han knew he had to face the over-mind and he wished to do it sooner opposed to later. Han got up early one morning and went to an ancient octagonal machine that Elose had shown Dro in the woods. It was made of somekind of glass and was very overgrown; although they had decided to try and fix it and see how it worked. Han decided to meditate in it that morning and as he sat in a chair in the middle of it there was suddenly a flowing electric-like energy all around him. Han suddenly saw a vision of a warrior with a great red beard and with an axe in his hand. All around him was a flowing electric energy and he said to Han, "I am Paxunos the ancient God and Titan of lightening, and this machine works by my energy, which is the same energy which I use to defend the realm of earth from angels." Han was surprised to hear this and then said, "Fill me with this energy that I might use the machine." Suddenly Paxunos filled him with this redish electric energy and Han found himself in an energy body walking towards the dark mountain in the distance. Han got to the base of the mountain and began to climb. It was becoming evening before Han was nearing the top and he ate a meal of some food he had brought. He finally came to the summit where Orfacious had a wide pavement, which was used by the evil Titans for dark rights. Han saw a gong and hit it to get Orfacious to come to him. The clouds of an approaching storm had blotted out the setting sun when Orfacious appeared, coming up from stairs below. They both began to walk around one another, Han took a sword from a rack they had where they kept them. Orfacious also pulled out his sword. "Did you know I have prayed for you and your soul before Adamas every night? I have done this because I have seen such potential in you. Why have you fought against me?" Orfacious asked. "Because you believe in force and I believe in freedom." Han replied. Orfacious came in and they struck swords, they clashed swords several times and Han held his own against him. They finally circled again and were on opposite sides of the wide patio again. Suddenly Han looked up and saw a terrible creature appear flying up from below. It was like a dragon with the head of a great beast with horns and terribly long talons. Orfacious threw his sword into Han's chest and he began to stagger backwards in shock as he looked up at the terrible creature. Han tripped over a rock and just as he fell backwards over the edge he saw the creature grab Orfacious and bite him in half. Han felt himself falling off a sheer cliff hundreds of feet high. Han closed his eyes and commended his soul into the care of the Goddess when suddenly something caught him. He opened his eyes and saw another dragon-like creature holding him, but this one looked like a phoenix with golden red scales. Han also felt as though he had been healed for some reason. The great bird flew with him into the main gate leading into the mountain.

Han flew in the grasp of the phoenix through many caves and passages until they entered the great highway that was now free of all obstruction. Finally they flew into the catacombs that held the sleeper rooms. Han was placed on the floor of the passage next to the gate carved with many skulls that he had passed as a prisoner long before. Han walked through the passages and found the sleeper rooms filled with bodies. To his horror he saw that they were all him. Suddenly a shadow seemed to come out of the darkness, which seemed to be him as well. It said, "Han, these are all you, your sleeping parts, you must wake them all to be whole. You must also convert me. Remember I am you, and I know what you will do; I am not just any opponent." Han suddenly wondered why he knew what he would do and not the other way around. Han suddenly focused all his energy to slow time and then search in himself to find this part of him. Han was lost in another world of geometric shapes in that moment as though he was searching through a million of his faces to find one that looked like the rest. Suddenly a thought came; this is you, so decide what to do. Han immediately opened his eyes and as the dark shadow came for him, he split into two different figures. His shadow-self missed him and Han came into his inner circle past his defenses. Suddenly again it was as if time had stopped and he heard himself say. "That part of you will only get stronger if you oppose him. You must accept who you are." Han grabbed his face and kissed him with the kiss of pure brotherhood. His shadow self was suddenly incorporated into him and then Han turned around and wondered how he would wake up all these Hans. He then learned a great truth; there will always be a part of me that is sleeping for I have slept. "I accept you all!" He said with outreached arms and the vision faded.

Han awoke on the summit of the mountain with a bloody sword next to him. He was almost in pure darkness because the skies were covered in dark clouds and it had begun to rain large drops of water down upon his face. He looked over to see if he could see Orfacious and he found his still form lying nearby. Han began to see the energy all around him and in its light he could tell that Orfacious had been struck by lightning. Han saw through the energy that there were a lot of energy beings around him. He reached out for them and they took his hand and flew him off the summit of the great mountain and through the stormy skies. They ascended beyond the rain clouds and into the moonlight with Han's energy body. Han could see the dimness of the dark side of the moon as they passed the moon and turned toward the Sun. They passed the inner planets and the Sun loomed huge before him. It was a great frightening burning ball incomprehensibly huge. Han also began to be frightened as he realized just how massive it was, and how much gravity it must have. They took him closer and closer until it filled his whole view and he saw great plumes of fiery plasma as big as worlds arching into space. As Han and the energy beings approached the sun, Han also noticed the particles of his energy body being excited with the energy from the Sun. They came down closer and closer and the eyes of his energy body adjusted continually. They came over a great sea of bulging flowing glass and through it. They went into a giant

hole the world could fit within, and plummeted into the relative darkness. When they came out of this flowing tunnel of bright energy, Han saw a countryside appearing below him. It had bright rainbow colored energy trees and all kinds of strange flying creatures. There was a crystal palace made of three levels and before it many energy beings with swords stood guard. His escorts took Han through the burning palaces and before a great throne. This throne had four sides and eight eyes looking out in all directions. Sitting upon the throne was a great giant. He held a great flaming sword and he arose and spoke with a voice of a burning torrent. "Is this the Han that I hear has been opposing my servant Orfacius?" "It is the same," Han's escort said. "I am Surtamaas the fire Giant of the Sun and the one and only true God of this solar system; an emanation of the one God. It is I who shall prevail when I shall crush the infidels who call themselves titans and gods. Speak Han of Kymoore!" "People have a right to become enlightened and call themselves Gods if they want to, Surtamaas" Han said and added, "I am a Titan." "You do not fear me?" Surtamaas asked. "I fear none, for only without fear, can one know the truth." Han said. "Give him a sword psycho-pomp." He said to Han's escort.

Han's escort handed him a shining blue crystal sword and Han began to circle Surtamaas. In an instant Surtamaas leapt for Han and Han jumped out of the way to escape the blow. Han was surprised to find that he had a lot of energy and power in this place and could jump clear over Surtamaas' head. Surtamaas circled around and came at Han with his fiery sword again. Han jumped again over his shoulder and leapt onto the throne. Surtamaas plunged his sword into the throne and Han began to run up his arm. Suddenly his tongue shot out to grab Han's foot and Han jumped and sliced Surtamaas' tongue clean off. Fiery energy began to pour out of it into the air and Surtamaas screamed in agony. He tried to order his men to capture Han, but he could not make any sense without his tongue. Han began to run out of the palace. The whole army turned towards him and Han looked up and wondered how he could fly. Suddenly the same Goddess appeared before him and took his hand. The guards yelled, "Get them both, they are defying the orders of the one God."

Suddenly the scene around them melted and Han found himself on a great crystal ship. Han walked to the giant window and he saw a strange space filled with stars on some kind of grid, where they were all connected with streams of bluish energy. The Goddess was there with Han and he asked, "Where are we?" "We are in the energy dimension called the Duatian. This is where Titans come after they die if they wish to progress to higher worlds or escape the universe completely," she answered. "Escape the universe?" Han asked. The goddess smiled, "Yes, there are infinite universes Han, just as there are infinite worlds, and infinite dimensions. Although we shall return you to earth, we will teach you a sign, by which ye may know enlightened beings apart from servants of Surtamaas. We are the canopy which protects you, just as the canopy of leaves protects you from the summer sun. Our love will reveal us as trees in this forest of love around you." The Goddess held Han's hand and told him to close his eyes.

When he opened his eyes he was back in the forest by the strange machine. He was alone, but the forest was filled with energy and moonlight.

Chapter Forty-Four

Awakened Again

One night as Han and Canata walked hand in hand through the woods Han looked up at the stars and wondered aloud, “All the Titans have stewardships, and although I have a Titan Stone I don’t know what my stewardship shall be.” Canata smiled at him and took his hand, “Well you do have the stone from the house of the forest Titan.” She said. Han thought about this as they returned home. Han could hardly sleep that night thinking of all the things he had experienced in his fight with the Overmind and his master. Han remembered Orfacious being devoured by that creature as he had fallen over the edge. Was that the Ogweum Han wondered, the creature of pure hate?

Han finished his work for the day and walked out into the woods thinking about what his Titan stewardship might be. He suddenly saw six deer being led by a seventh white stag. They were walking towards the pond and Han carefully followed them. As they came to the pond Han found a tent stake lying on the ground in the underbrush. Han picked it up suddenly feeling as though it had some significance. The deer moved on and started running through the woods up the hill. Han also continued to try and follow them, which took him along the same ridge that Elrid had once carried him along. Han finally came to the ruins of his parent’s old house and down the hill and across the river Han remembered was the Titan pillars. Han walked that way just to see them again and noticed to his surprise that that is where the deer had gone also. They stood there unchanged by time but this time there was no cloud resting atop of them. Han walked up to the steps and sat down holding the stake in his hands.

“What is my stewardship?” He called, as though some Titan might hear him and answer.

Han sat there in total silence with no answer for a while, until he noticed the energy around him. There were little walkers walking all around the pillars. Han turned around and saw in the energy as it were a fire burning in the center of the circle. Han arose and walked into the circle and saw that the whole circle was filled with energy and life. There were pillar walkers and altar walkers and floorwalkers, and all kinds of creatures. There were also tall spindly men like energy beings standing around in a dark green hew. “What is my stewardship?” Han repeated as though they might answer.

The spirit of the white stag suddenly came onto the scene at the opposite end of the pillars and transformed into a boy with a green cloak, leather boots, a loincloth and a bent wizard’s hat. He removed his hat to reveal pointed ears and budding spikes and he placed the hat on the altar in the center of the circle. “You must come to the knowledge of your stewardship for yourself.” He responded without missing a beat. “Once I know what it is, then how do I become connected with it?” Han asked. “You

must show it that you will take care of it and it will become connected to you in return.” The elf said. “Who are you?” “I am an emanation of a part of you.” He said. “If you are a part of me then you can help me figure out what my stewardship is.” Han said wittingly. “So I can.” He smiled. “You love stone and earth; you lived with it for so long you even felt at home on distant asteroids because of the familiar texture of its energy. You love the breeze because you knew you were outside when you first felt it on your cheek. You love the forest because you feel connected with the trees and the house under the great tree. You love fire because it helped you see; the occupation of the fire priest thrilled your imagination. You love the storms and the lightening of inspiration because it drove you on.” “I must go with my home at last; the center of my world is the house under the tree.” Han said. “The forest is a home and it is a strange place at the same time, the forest evokes the thoughts of other worlds, other places other times.”

Han suddenly looked into the energy fire on the altar in the middle of the pillars and music seemed to begin to emanate from it, the songs of another time. As the chants of his ancestors filled his ears he suddenly felt himself drifting and he found himself alone as though all the beings present had just flown back into him, where it seemed they belonged. At this point Han noticed thousands of birds flying out towards the western sea in great flocks. The sun was beginning to set and Han began to walk back when he suddenly saw many reddish firewalkers walking through the countryside. Han was confused at first until he noticed they were all headed out toward Kymoore and the dark mountain in the opposite direction of the birds. Han climbed the hill through the woods back to the ruins of his parents’ house. He walked up to the top of the ridge of the hill from there and looked out toward the mountain in the distance. A dark cloud loomed around it as though that dark cloud was smoking out of the mountain. Han then saw a river of fire dripping down the side of the mountain, like a small red snake on a dark canvas. Han stood in wonder as he wondered what was truly happening in the caves beneath. Had the lava chasm leaped its bounds? He wondered.

Everything seemed eerily quiet, when without warning there was a huge explosion, which lit up the whole evening sky. The sound was delayed a moment and then there was an ear splitting boom! Han watched in horror, as the whole mountain seemed to clatter, from the top down in a wave. Plumes of fire and smoke seemed to rocket into the sky far above the clouds; and a mushroom of smoke was spreading like a giant ring. The whole mountain was now engulfed in fire so Han could not see it at all. There were also bits of stuff shooting out so that it looked like hundreds of shooting stars flying in all directions. As Han watched awestruck and with no idea what might be going on in the rooms below he suddenly realized that he better move. The shooting stars now looked more like hundreds of fireballs descending upon the landscape around him. Han realized that he better get home and make sure Canata was all right. As Han ran through the woods there were huge explosions as the fireballs touched down. Han came upon just such a piece and realized it was a huge smoldering boulder dislodged from the mountain; and to his

horror it had lit the forest on fire around him. He ran around it and continued on. As he ran more and more of the forest seemed to be burning and there were more and more crashes as burning rocks were falling from the sky.

Han got to his house and to his relief Canata was looking for him too. They could hear the screams of distant people in the city running for their lives. Han said, "To the pond, there is an overhang there." Han and Canata ran to the nearby pond where he had first met Elrid and where the deer had just been earlier that evening. They both dove in as the forest was already on fire around them and the heat was burning them. Han held Canata's hand as he swam with her towards the overhang. There was a small cave in there where they poked their heads above the water, and climbed half way out onto the dirty cave floor. To Han's relief Dro and Weab swam in too having thought of the same idea with the water cave overhang. Just as they arrived a terrible pelting noise like hail began on the water outside. Han got low and looked to see what was going on. It was thousands of smoking pebbles and stones hitting the water, and Han wondered if anyone outside would survive.

To Han's horror when he emerged the forest was naked and burnt to cinders. The trees were like endless blackened and gray pillars stretching as far as the eye could see. The ground was littered with black stones and Han got out of the water to look towards the mountain. When Han looked through the burnt trees he just saw sky where the dark mountain had been. It took him a moment to register what had happened. Where did it go; he wondered. In its place through the trees he just saw a charred mountain range. Han swam back into the cave and told everyone it was safe to leave, and then paused and said; "It is all gone, the forest is gone and the dark mountain is gone." Everyone looked at him as though he was speaking nonsense, and swam out to see for them-selves. Dro and Weab headed towards their house to see what had happened and Canata and Han headed towards the city. Han and Canata were shocked to see the city in ruins and even dead bodies lying about occasionally. There were still houses and buildings still smoking and burning. It also began to snow although this was not normal snow; it was fluffy white and grayish ash. "How could this have happened?" Han asked. "Disasters of nature happen." Canata responded.

Han and Canata wandered through the whole city and finally went to the Titan pillars outside of town, they two had been hit by several big stones and several of the pillars were broken off. Han looked around and to his surprise the world was alive with energy, in fact he didn't remember a time he had seen it so lively. There were walkers and energy creatures like cats running and dancing everywhere in all sorts of colors. It was as if the energy world came alive trying to heal the earth. Han sat down on one of the pieces of broken pillar and noticed it was the Forest Pillar as he wiped off the ash from it. "I think we should go to where the mountain was and see what has happened," Han said. Canata nodded in agreement.

Chapter Forty-Five

Gaining the Love of a Stewardship

Han and Canata scavenged as many supplies as they could find. They were also happy to see some people emerging from basements and other shelters who had survived. They both headed back towards the house under the tree and Han was anxious to see what had happened to it; that place which filled so many of his dreams and memories. To Han's disappointment it was entirely destroyed. The tree was uprooted after being hit by several huge boulders and the whole place was burned to almost nothing. Luckily Dro and Weab were still there sifting through the ashes and Canata and Han gave them some of the supplies they collected. Han then told them all, that he was going to go see what had become of the mountain and none of them had to come with him if they didn't wish to do so. He also promised to return in a few days.

They all decided to go, and they all headed through the burnt woods on the way to what seemed like a new mountain range. It felt strange walking back the same way he had come when he first escaped the mountain with a very different scene surrounding him. Dark rocks and snowy ash covered the path before them. Nightfall came so they stopped and spread out their cloaks to camp. The next day they continued on until they came right up to the foot of the mountains. Dark clouds were gathering and as they headed up the hills it began to rain and then came a torrential down pour. They all huddled up under a burnt bush of a tree together and saw little streams of black water rolling down the hill.

"It looks like the earth is cleaning itself." Canata commented.

After the rain let up that evening and the sun shone through for the first time since the explosion, they all decided to get up, stretch and continue on for a while. As they came up over the crest of the hill they saw that beyond in the mountain range was mountains of piles of rock. One mountain looked as though it was made of sandy yellow rock and another of red rock. Han remembered the yellow and red towers that had been inside the upper halls of the dark mountain and realized that the caves were truly gone for the most part. That prison which had held him captive was now mountainous piles of rocks upon this range. Han knelt there and placed his hands upon the rocks on the ground which still retained warmth through the wetness of the rain. "We shall build a school here," Han said. "And we shall call this the land of Vashal after the red mountain."

The next morning they all climbed back down the mountains and headed back towards Kymoore. The people began building again and Han spent his time starting to write a book about all his adventures while Dro began to teach people and start a school of the Magi again. A small group of people came to Han one day and asked him where they should build the school; so he took them out across the plains to the foot of the mountains and told them it should be built of the stones of the shattered mountain in the

land of Vashal. The seasons passed and Han spent the winter in a building they had made for the school out beyond the plains. Canata also got the people to begin work rebuilding the temple to the Goddess in the city. Soon the spring came again and Han had completed several books to be used in the school of the Magi. Han still wondered about his stewardship and so he decided to go out one spring day to seek it.

Han walked up a small rocky valley the floods had been carving out of the mountain and rested there for a little while on a builder by a stream. Han looked down at a sapling that was just barely breaking out of the dark soil there. Han got down on his hands and knees and looked at its beautiful closed green bud seeing sunlight for the first time. Han reached out with his cup and scooped up some stream water to give it. Han lightly watered it, and saw a little greenish walker of energy come out of it and begin to walk around it. Han arose and began walking up stream deeper into the valley. There were some other green plants struggling up through the rocks, trying to form a new little forest around the stream. Accordingly Han scooped up more water from the stream and watered the plants. Han suddenly saw a whole procession of forest spirits and energy walkers singing music to the sound of the blowing wind. Han suddenly saw a vision of what this place would one day be; a great little valley with a beautiful forest.

Every day he came out to water the forest to try and get it to grow faster and break through the rocks and begin that magical valley he had seen in vision. Every day the music of the forest became stronger and they danced around Han sitting upon his stone. Han eventually took his forest stone which he had received on the distant life moon and which contained a copy of himself and his world, and placed it in a special place in his forest. Once it was there, there was a great reverence that the spirits showed; they all gathered around and some of them walked and flowed into the stone and walkers came out and filled the forest in return. Han suddenly felt deeply connected to this forest and the forest began connecting itself with him. All the walkers and little sprits and fairy creatures gathered around and Han knelt down. He then took off all his garments and began the ceremony to marry himself to the forest and the forest to him. He poured out his seed upon the ground, which was his lifeblood, and the fairies, and sprites, which now resembled beautiful maidens, came and danced around it. At this point Han looked up and there standing before him was the stag boy again and he and Han became one as he walked into him and their energy was combined.

Han suddenly found himself in a vision where he was in the future woods as they would be in all their glory and there were elves and fairies dancing around a great fire in the middle of a ring of trees. He arose and the fairies brought him wine to drink and the elves brought him ale. All the forest maidens then came to him and began to make love to him and Han was taken away to yet another vision, where he experienced as though he was in all the woods at once. The forest was filled with energy like moonlight and Han did not feel he was in any one place. He was in all the trees and in all the plants and stones and

forest walkers at once. He felt as though he was a flowing energy and one with all the things he was the steward over, it was a state of pure bliss and oneness.

The next day Han gathered some previsions and headed down the hill and across the plains towards Kymoore. There he saw that the streets of the city had all been cleared of rubble and the people were doing well. Han walked up the hill towards the temple, which looked nearly half complete. As Han approached a procession of Priestesses came out to meet him being led by Canata. He ran to her and she came to him and she embraced him tightly. She showed him into the beautiful temple they were building which already contained a statue of the Goddess flanked by tigers sheltered by a temporary wooden roof. The priestesses showed them to a table of food and Han sat down. "Han," Canata said. "There have been recent developments since you were gone. The King of the South, which Kymoore was under tribute to, has placed a magistrate over the city that is nearly as bad as Orfacious. Our Temple has been permitted to continue to be built as long as we pay him a tribute and the Magi are not allowed in town publicly. It is fortunate he has not attacked the school." Han pondered upon this for a moment and nodded his head. "I see. It is to be expected from these people who try to control everything for power; their god is Surtamaas the Sun giant."

Chapter Forty-Six

Necromancer of the North

Many years passed and although Han, Canata, Dro and the others were weary of the magistrate he was tolerant enough to leave them alone. The Magi school grew in size and a Magi named Sev became its head master. Han and Canata also built a house by the school to live in not far from his forest, which grew greener by the year. Canata became pregnant and stayed home leaving the administration of the Temple to one of the other High Priestesses. She bore a Son and called his name Adoni. Han meditated in the woods and taught at the school and their son grew in wisdom. When he was seven he began telling prophecies and writing books on the Gods and other matters.

One day a dark cloud came over the whole land of Kymoore and Vashal. Adoni prophesied that it was a necromancer from the north. One night while Han was at the house, Adonis was staying at the school, to be instructed. Suddenly a Magi came running and knocked loudly on the door. The Magi indicated that a cloaked figure had come and taken Adonis away. Han got a horse he had been training and mounted it and rode as fast as he could to the school. Adonis had been staying in the tower and Han could hardly believe anyone could scale such a face. Han walked into the room where the door had been closed and saw the broken glass of the window in the moonlight. Han closed his eyes and began to think of what he could do. Han immediately ran up the hill and called upon Diogomatre to help him with her ship. He heard the voice of Diogomatre saying, "This is a being with many fallen angels and energy

warriors on his side, wherefore go unto thy forest and ye shall be met with the army of the Gods."

Han immediately rode back until he found himself in the middle of his forest surrounded by an army of elves with bows and swords. They began climbing the valley towards the yellow peak with great speed, for so they were directed by a golden implement given to the general by Diogomatre. Suddenly Han saw coming down out of the yellow mountain an army of undead warriors. They looked as though they were charred skeletons reminding Han of the sure fate of the nothings in the mountain; perhaps they were the bodies of the nothings, preserved in the dark sands of the pit of Orfacious. The elves of Han let lose a volley of arrows, and Han shot an arrow through one of their skulls and then met them with his sword. He took another one's head off in full charge. They all fought bravely and cut hundreds of skeletons apart as they scaled the valley getting ever closer to the yellow mountain. They fought all the way to the foot of the mountain when most of Han's elves had been captured. Han looked up and standing in the midst of the charging skeletons was one awful looking creature with red skin and a crushed in skull, so that the shards looked like horns. He was wielding a huge ball and chain and began plowing through the elves still standing. The skeletons finally surrounded Han and captured him as well.

As they were all sitting on the ground back to back the disgusting red creature said, "Cut their hands so that I can see which one is the Titan." Han knew that his blood was different than the others since he was immortal and would look like light energy. Han closed his eyes and began to focus and retract the energy in his hand. A skeleton was suddenly there before him grabbed his hand and cut. To Han's relief he was able to make only red blood come out. The man with the crushed skull became more paranoid. They loaded them up in prison carts and hauled them away up the mountain and toward a newly built dark castle. Once they entered Han saw that the necromancer was using slave labor to build his walls ever higher from a stone quarry deep underground. They took them to the inside of one of the stone walls and the necromancer came out and started chaining them to the wall with a flick of his magic staff. He said, "You will reinforce my walls."

Han and his elves began hewing stones and Han began to think of a way to escape. Han also noticed that Adonis was locked in a tower as he saw him look out feeling his presence. Han meditated that night and asked all the fairies of his forest to muster their power and create for him a sword. Before the morning there was a brilliant shining sword in his hands and he cut the chains that bound him and his elves as quickly and quietly as he could. Han focused his mind and was suddenly on the ship of Diogomatre. He arose from the floor and she greeted him. He bowed and she said, "Waste no time if it is urgent." Han arrived at the telescope and looked into the noodles looking for the experience of his son Adonis. Han saw the window break and standing there in the moonlight a cloaked figure. Adonis had said, "So you are the necromancer." There was a short skirmish and Adonis was knocked out. The experience picked back up again as Adonis in a prison cart approached a great dark castle, the pinnacles

and spires and high walls of which looked as though it was made to mimic the Dark Mountain. Adonis looked back away from it at a tall yellow peak and Han instantly knew where this place was.

Han took his eye away from the telescope and hurried back to the side of Diogomatre. "Where do you wish to go?" She asked. "I wish to go back in my energy form to the tower where my Son is." Han gasped. She took a wand from her robe and granted his wish. Suddenly Han was in the smaller ship that went to Diogomatre's ship beside the tower cell of Adonis. Han opened the side door next to Adonis' window and began to cut through the bars to the cell of Adonis easily with the sword; however the lights came on and to Han's horror he saw that the necromancer was in the room with Adonis. He had seen Han's ship appear and now had his dagger up to Adonis' neck. Han paused for a moment and said, "I love you Adonis."

Adonis had a brave look in his eyes that said he knew. Han looked and in a holster by the door was a lightening maker like one that Han had once seen in the Temple of the Titans; as he raised and turned it a ball of lightening flew into the room at the necromancer. The necromancer raised his knife to block it not realizing what it was for a moment and was suddenly being electrocuted, froze and fell to the floor screaming. Adonis broke away and ran and jumped out the window over the perilous gap in-between the tower and the ship and landed beside him, while Han's heart skipped a beat. The necromancer arose and came to jump out the window too. Adonis began running towards the front of the ship to pull away as the necromancer boarded. There was a sudden jolt as the ship lurched forward and Han felt himself falling toward the back of the ship, followed closely behind by the necromancer. A piercing pain hit the side of Han's back as the dagger of the necromancer dug into his flesh and blood started pouring out. Han felt light headed as he opened the back hatch and held on as he saw the dark cloaked figure fall out of sight. Han hung there for a minute until the ship hit the ground hard and he felt himself fall backwards.

Han lost consciousness and saw himself on the crystal ship of the duat that had saved him from the men of Surtamaas. Han walked out of the room he found himself in to see that the ship he was in was much grander and beautiful than he could have possibly imagined. There was a great garden in the ship with two trees of white leaves and fruit flanking the entrance to a crystal Temple within the ship. All the inhabitants of the ship were clearly powerful energy Titans and walked around freely without any raiment whatsoever. Han also looked up through the crystal walls of the ship and saw the galaxy of stars he had remembered in geometric patterns connected by ribbons of energy that seemed to stretch on forever.

"Does it go on forever?" Han asked. "Worlds and galaxies in endless universes are without end, although there is a place that these roads of light lead," came the calm and soothing voice of a Goddess Han had never met. "Where they lead is the end of the duat, which is the door out of the universe. They are places where light cannot escape, and their secret is never revealed." "Am I physically dead?" Han asked. "No, eat this fruit and you will return until you come back after death."

She handed Han a fruit, which was yellowish and came to a point at the end, like the fruit he had seen a long time ago in the visions of Enthnar. Han ate it and suddenly found himself face down with a mouth full of dirt in extreme pain. He could tell that his side was bleeding and that he must have lost a tooth or two when he face planted in the dirt. Han had hoped to wake up in a hospital bed with Canata by his side but instead he lay wounded in a field. Adonis came to his side, and Han sighed a huge breathe of relief that he was alive. Han realized the urgency if the necromancer had not perished and tried to get up. Hans arm was clearly broken and could not sustain any weight. Adonis helped him the best he could and Han finally got up and limped all the way back to the school.

Han waited in the school infirmary for several days and there was no word on whether the necromancer perished or not but there was a Magi contingent that kept an eye on his castle. Canata came to Han's beside one day and said, "Honey, I made you a garden in my world." "You made me a Garden?" Han asked. "Well it is for all the people of our Order which are special to us; it will be a place for us to meet, even after we are all dead or reborn. It has a thick atmosphere and flying hydrogen jellyfish and things. It shall be an eternal garden, which binds us, so we can always find each other. Canata then took Han's foot and began to wash it. Han noticed that she began to cry and wipe his feet with her hair. "No you don't have to do that, you don't have to cry." Han tried to say. "I seal myself to you for all the eternities to come in eternal Holy Orders." She said. "By all the power in me and all the power with the Gods and their Order I bind myself to you and your beloved companions." She then took a bottle of spiced oil with cinnamon and poured it over Han's body and began to massage him from his feet to his chest. She also kissed a golden coin and placed it in Han's hand and said, "May its energy be with you that you may pay any ferry man which might assist you in the duat." Canata then kissed his body and kissed his lips and kissed his cheeks and forehead and Han felt the power of her Priesthood bind the deepest part of his energy to her. Han began to cry too for joy, and she hugged him close and he truly rested better than he had for a long time.

Chapter Forty-Seven

King Rising

Han finally recuperated and went to his forest. Once he was in the forest he found that the energy of the forest healed his wounds, and he was much better right away. Now as Han meditated in the forest the two fairies came to him again. One was bearing fruit and the other ale. Han ate and drank and was suddenly seized upon by a vision of the future. He saw the high King Morom of the south being overthrown, not by the necromancer or the steward of Kymoore but by Dro. Han lowered the cup for a moment from his lips and thought of the light of Dro that burst out of the mountain, which was the sign of

the King all those years ago. Han looked up at the two fairies and the one on the right said, "Yes, Han, it is the will of the Gods. You must go to him, you must prepare him to take Kymoore and then all the lands of the south."

Han pondered upon this for a moment. "I am no war adviser; I wouldn't know how to prepare him." Han said. "You must only nudge him in the right direction and out of his current asceticism." Han could see from the vision that it would be much better for Kymoore and the surrounding countries. Han knew Morom was a tyrant. "What is your interest in this though?" Han asked. The two fairies said, "Only the preservation of the worship of the Goddesses and the Gods." Han arose and traveled to Kymoore to find Dro. Dro was meditating in his new home in Kymoore and he welcomed Han when he arrived. Han looked over on the wall and saw the sword of the house of Wil there. Han walked over to the wall and grabbed it. Dro looked at him with a curious look. Han turned around and held it out for Dro to grab and said, "Dro, it is time."

Dro took the sword in his hand and ran his hand over its beautiful sheath. Dro seemed to understand what Han was saying. In his hand was the ancient sword of the King of all these great isles. Dro was a direct descendant of the first ruler of their people. "The people will follow you," Han said. "They remember the humiliation of Morom, they remember the tyranny of Orfacious; they remember the Magi were their friends, which is why we have been able to build the school and the Temple of the Goddess. Now they all fear the necromancer and if you make a rebellion now under the oppression of the magistrate they will hear your voice. They know the sign of the King was seen on the mountain and that you emerged at that time. Dro looked off as if looking at something distant and Han could tell he would miss the life of meditation he had enjoyed. "Gather everyone you know who is faithful to me." Dro said.

Han and several other friends that were visiting him at the time left the room and they started getting people together. Han went to the Temple and told Canata about the fairies in the forest and also about what had just happened with Dro. Canata commanded the Priestesses to close the gates and armed them with bows, arrows and swords, and led them out into the back garden of the Temple, where there was a smaller door. "When it is time we are ready to head towards the house of the magistrate." Canata said.

Han went out to find out what was developing. A sizable group had gathered in Dro's neighborhood. Han ran up and said to Dro, "There are enemy agents everywhere, let us take the house of the magistrate before he is warned something is going on." Dro agreed and Han ran back to the Temple to tell Canata that the time had come. Han arrived and came through the door and signaled; then Canata and the Priestesses started filling out the door quickly. They headed up the street where they already heard a commotion by the house of the magistrate. The Priestesses went around back and snuck through his gardens. Dro's men were fighting the magistrate's men out front and the priestesses were coming in the

house from the back after they shot a few guards. Han had not even gotten into the house before the Priestesses had already taken the bedroom of the magistrate where he had been hiding. Suddenly the magistrate leapt from his bedroom window and landed heavily at Han's feet and he was lying in a puddle of blood on the ground. Han hated war and felt bad about everyone who died, knowing they just had different ideas based upon their experiences. Han crouched down by the magistrate's side and put his hand on his head and said, "May you have a quick reincarnation into a much happier state." Dro stood up on the magistrate's balcony and yelled, "We have taken the city of Kymoore, now go and make the men of the magistrate surrender or die." Dro then appointed captains and Han knew he had done his job in nudging him.

Han returned to the school of the Magi and encouraged them to join the fight and assured them he would stay and watch over the school. Han then spent many quiet days in the school writing and wondering if he had done the right thing. Han knew Dro would be a better King but also that Kings inherently have to walk a gray line. News soon came of all of Kymoore being secured, and yet there was no news of the necromancer. Dro did not want to leave Kymoore unprotected either against the necromancer or Morom, and so he left most of his men to guard against Morom and took a smaller group to ascertain the position of the necromancer. Dro came down from the mountain to the Magi school and told Han that the necromancer had already been dead for some time. As Han stood on the balcony and heard this news he remembered his fall out of the ship. Han realized that they must have been hundreds of feet high when the necromancer fell. Dro then said, "Han we have all the prisoners that he had for human slaves in our company, can you please take care of them here?"

Han nodded and came down to open the doors. They all looked tired and dressed in rags. Han immediately brought Magi robes for them and also showed them where to make lines for the bath. Dro's army soon went on, and Han stayed with all the people there. Han also got them bedrolls and showed them all where they could stay. He also got some of them who knew how to cook to begin helping him make food for everyone. When all his chores in taking care of them were done he sat down to play a board game with one of the young men there. "What is your name?" Han asked. "My name is Atilies but I go by Tyr." He replied. "Tyr is a good name." Han smiled. Tyr looked somewhat concerned about something. "Are you alright?" Han asked. "It is just that Dro offered the men of the necromancer asylum if they would surrender. I know that the necromancer is dead because they brought his body into the castle to bury him, but his men are crafty. They will try to get into Dro's ranks and they do have their own agendas. You should warn him." "I see," Han said. "Dro is a wise and crafty man and he knows who he should trust, I think." Han reassured. "Even so, they are not good men and they will not encourage mercy if it is up to them, and men's hearts are easily corrupted." "You have wise words for your age." Han said.

They continued playing the game and then retired for the night. The next day Han got everyone doing various chores to gather food and take care of the necessities of being there. When they were all eating lunch, Tyr came up to him and said, "Magi Han, I would like to be your apprentice and learn the ways of the Magi, I also know that there are some others here that feel the same way." "You are welcome to stay and learn, although those others who wish the same should come ask me themselves." Han replied. Several more came and asked him throughout the day and Han accepted all who wanted to learn. In the evening Han took them all to the bath and immersed them as an ordinance to help them understand the concept of overcoming the illusion of separateness. "We are as the male principle in the female principle, as we are erect in the universe and the universe is the feminine ocean of being. All things are connected like flowing water and we have everything in the ocean of our minds; we just have to find it." Han said.

After this Han laid his hands on their heads and blessed them that the spirits of their ancestors may come and be with them to help guide them, until their feminine and other emanations should come and be combined with them. For this is the true meaning of having the spirit, is having all the parts of you. To be whole and comfortable with who you are. After Han had immersed and blessed them he taught them the three principles of Hekate or of the principles of Godhood. "The first principle is wholeness or combining all of your mental and energetic emanations, or sealing them together so they are connected and fulfilled; this is the principle of the parents the first member of the Godhead. The second principle is energetic immortality, which is obtained when one receives or makes a Titan Stone. Titan Stones can be made through love, sacrifice, enlightenment or anything which is eternal; this is the principle of the Sons and Daughters of the Gods the second member of the Godhead. The third principle is, understanding that your experiencing principles flow like a river and that you truly are connected to everything in the universe, and that the nature of everything is connectedness. Our identity is our spirit and energy but the core experiencing principle that allows those bodies to actually experience flows through everything. The memory of your flowing is not there because at the moment it is experiencing the memories of your brain. However you are not static, you are like a river. We are a different being from moment to moment with every thought. This is the principle of the just spirits and emanations the third member of the Godhead."

After this Han taught them the generic Oath and Covenant of the Magi, which was to bring the kingdom of the Gods on the earth and to find and teach all truth and receive openly from one's parents. Han then taught them to get revelations and explained that the next step was to begin receiving revelations from their divine parents. Once one received the Oath of their Parents or patron deity they could become their priest and from there receive the washing of feet and the anointings. "These ordinances and truths are the spiritual aspect of the truth; I shall now initiate you into the mental and physical truths and sciences of the universe." Han explained.

Over the next few weeks and months which followed Han taught them about runes, astronomy and of the Magi glass bead game and calendar. Han showed them how to count the days and nights around the calendar twenty two times in a year, and how to make up for the difference. He also taught them about the solstices and the equinoxes, and about the fifteen year cycle of days in correlation with the full moon and also of the eighteen point six year cycle when the moon was at its lowest point. He also taught them of magic and energy, both for healing and performing rites. Han also taught them concerning the Meta, or world of thought and of all the dimensions that they could meditate on, or explore in altered states.

Soon news came that Dro had taken the southern Kingdom as well and put Morom and his family into captivity. Dro's army was much smaller but many people in Morom's capital city joined him. Dro declared Kymoore his capital city, and he and his army returned triumphant after appointing judges and captains in the south and east. Han and the other Magi and refugees went to the city to find the refugees homes and to greet Dro. Dro shook Han's hand from his horse and said, "Hello, old friend, I must attend to some things." Han felt a little disappointed that Dro did not have much to tell him all about what had happened but he understood. Han returned to the school of the Magi with his students and the other Magi who had survived the battle and life continued as usual. Han also went out into his forest to meditate every day and gain energy from it and give in return. Han looked at his stone in the thick trees and reached out and touched it.

Chapter Forty-Eight

Serpent and Sages

As Han touched his stone he felt its energy and closed his eyes and meditated. He suddenly found himself in his world again as Enthnar upon that bed looking up into the eyes of Isis. He said, "Isis my love, I have just received the most mighty revelation; we shall know each other and be upon endless worlds." Han then left the body of Enthnar although Enthnar was not dead, he was still alive and well. Han realized that he was truly one with his whole world. He looked back in time and saw the whole history of his world. He looked forward and designed Kingdoms and stories of heroes that would be had for many ages. Han meditated upon the highest mountain on the continent of Magalaya and felt the whole presence of the world within him. He wished he could stay there in that moment forever and he knew he could always return, but he also knew he must always go to other worlds and continue his quest forever as well. He saw the story of Enthnar, and saw that he would become King of Ethema and do battle with dark lords from time to time, but that his reign would be one generally of peace. Han realized that there were so many saviors of mankind who exemplified all the attributes of enlightenment and the

Gods, who were beautiful archetypes of perfection. He realized that perfection is truly all around us.

Han awoke from his meditating and realized that the stars had been out for quite some time and the almost full waxing moon was low in the sky. He looked around himself and saw thousands of forest walkers walking all over his forest in the moonlight and the sound of the insects made a magical tune along with the breeze. Han didn't want to move, so he sat there for a long while, until the sky began to grow lighter blue and it was getting quite cold. Han walked back and collapsed on his bed and slept right through the morning classes that he was supposed to teach. Luckily another Magi had taught for him realizing he had been up all night with a vision.

One day Han was sitting by a candle and meditating into it when suddenly he heard a voice. It said, "Do you really think I the mighty necromancer and Orfacious your lord are dead? We have Titan stones as well, meet us in battle out in the southern lake bed or we shall destroy your school." Han raised his head suddenly as though waking from a sleep. He was starting to get older and his beard was growing out. He had always realized that their energy beings had survived; so it was with all the Titans and Gods, good and bad, since time immemorial. Although he doubted they had the power to threaten the school, still he wished to meet them in battle just in case. Han did not want to put any of his students in jeopardy so he gave them the choice to come with him to meet the dark Titans or to stay behind and protect the school. Some stayed but most wanted to go. Han suited them up with leather and red cloaks; they also armed themselves with swords and bows. Han and his Magi and students went out into the southern lakebed where there were sand dunes in the bottom of the valley.

Suddenly to Han's surprise black wolves burst out of the sand and came from all directions around the dunes. All the students and Magi made a circle and began chopping and shooting wolves as they came. Some of the wolves made it into the circle and a chaotic battle commenced. Whenever a wolf jumped on a student a Magi would stab it, and they were all faring pretty well and the wolves began to retreat. Tyr was by Han's side and suddenly a huge black serpent burst out of the sand in front of them raising its head over twelve feet. Han had never seen such a huge snake and had no clue where the dark Titans could have possibly called it from. It struck forward at Han and Tyr jumped in front of him and blocked its mouth with his sword. Its fangs dug deep into Tyr's arm and lifted him from the ground. Tyr gritted his teeth like a man and pulled out his smaller knife and stabbed it repeatedly in the eyes. The snake flailed around and threw Tyr onto the ground. With blood pouring out of its head it fell over on the sand and died. Han ran to Tyr's side and saw that his mangled arm was turning purple and that it was a snake with a poisonous bite. Han knew there was no way to suck out that much. He held Tyr in his arms with his head in his hand. "May the Gods always bless you Tyr." Han said. Tyr, looked up and smiled saying, "You will always be my teacher Han."

With that he closed his eyes tight and finally went limp. Everything was now calm and quiet and

Han began to cry on him, and lifted him up. Han could tell the spirits of Orfacious and the Necromancer had fled and the other Magi brought a stretcher and helped him put the body of Tyr on it. There was a certain place where the Magi burned their dead for the last number of years and they began to walk towards it. The Magi had erected the bones of previous Magi into an altar of skulls and femurs unto Kolyos the Goddess of Death. They placed the body of Tyr on the altar and put wood inside it to burn. Han walked up to the pyre of wood and bones with a torch another Magi handed him and lit the fire. The fire rose up around the body of Tyr and then suddenly Han saw the fire turn green. All the magi looked up seeing it as well and no one was quite sure if it was the energy or the physical fire. Han then saw Tyr arise in an energy body of light and say triumphantly. "I am a Titan of light! My blood was spilled on the battlefield and I felt the arms of the goddess enwrap me and she gave me to eat of her golden apples; the energy of this fire then came upon my body and my energy was invigorated, and my stone made. I shall feast with you my fellow warriors in the halls of Danaan and fight in the battle at the end of time."

Han then saw him vanish with his arms upraised to the heavens, and he looked around to see if anyone else just heard or saw what he did. By the looks on their faces he could tell they had, and everyone just began to clap and cheer. They slowly journeyed back and Han thought of what had just happened, he also thought about how much he would miss his student Tyr for a while. Han really didn't want Tyr to jump in front of the snake for him. Han felt like he had, had a very full life and it was a shame Tyr had to have the end of his life so soon.

In a few days Han traveled back to Kymoore to see how everyone there was doing and to see Dro again. Canata met him there and they went to go see Dro together. He saw them and embraced them both but still seemed quite busy with matters of state. One man in his court came up to Han and asked him if he was indeed the Han there were so many tales about. "Yes, that is me," Han said hesitantly. "You can't honestly expect people to believe all those things about you." He said. "I admire your skepticism, but I never said people had to believe all those things about me."

Han leaned upon the staff he had carried off and on since the accident with the ship landing. "I mean, tell me honestly did you really fly into space with beings called Titans, and did you really spiritually fly to the Sun and cut off the tongue of god?" "It sounds you want to believe it, or you would just take it as the raving of a crazy man and not press me so much about it." Han responded. "What has Dro said on the matter?" "Dro says it is just a novel you guys wrote, and that him becoming bright and flying the ship through the Meta and your later voyage together is just fantasy meant to teach moral lessons." "He has a reputation to maintain; of course he doesn't believe those things, so you should just believe your King." Han said, and began to turn to walk away. "Wait," The man said. "I don't want to believe it, but I just want to know if you think it really happened." "Do dreams really happen?" Han asked. The man chuckled for a moment and said, "No of course not." "That is your answer then." Han

replied. The man started following him. "So you dreamed about it?" "Some of it, and some not; although I take everything I experience as an experience at face value, I don't try to distinguish which is more real. I only distinguish between waking and sleeping, I don't judge the reality of something based upon that criteria though." "What do you mean?" He asked. "Every experience you have ever had has in fact happened to you. If you have dreamt of flying, then you have flown. Not here where others could see you, or where you could affect them in their waking reality, but you indeed have the experience. So why discriminate and pretend half of your life has not happened?" "So you did dream of it all then?" "No; but do have a nice day." Han said and quickly walked away. Han asked Canata, "Who was that?" "That is Dro's new science adviser and court astrologer." Canata said. "Oh dear," Han said. "Well he certainly wasn't versed in philosophy. I like skeptics, but not morons."

Han and Canata walked through the market and had a good time until evening. Han turned to Canata and said, "My eternal lady, let us retire from all these silly functions. Let's go back to our house and retire together. Adonis is going to school now and we have fought the good fight for so long. We can go on trips through time and space mentally, and just enjoy each other's company in the physical world. Canata nodded and looked deep into Han's eyes.

Chapter Forty-Nine

Last Admonition

To those my readers, I Han have not put all things that I experienced in this account, but it suffices. I also in the ship of Diogomatre, saw that our fellow Titans and apprentices did fight a great space battle and that there are many more peoples who live in space than one would otherwise believe. I also went on another voyage in the ship of Diogomatre and many other adventures in the Meta with Dro and Canada than can be written in this account. My admonition to you is to love one another and join together in the Holy marriage order of the Gods and Goddesses, and to seek enlightenment. To not only create worlds within you and become combined with all of your emanations, but also to comprehend that we are a different core being from moment to moment. We are not static. We are a flowing and no other conclusion can be reached when one analyses the fact that nothing is just one thing. If we have one core particle of being then what are the some of its parts? Even a spirit or energy body is made of billions of parts as are our bodies. We are not one thing, and as we experience every moment and thought we are new; like a river. It is true that we are not after we die; but we are not before we die also. I believe that all matter has the capability of experiencing. As each spark of thought fires we are a new being. There was no beginning to us as experience, and there is no end; and the eddies we make in the energy with true love is the binding power of the Gods.

I promised to tell you the secret of how to prove that energy beings exist at the beginning of this account and now I intend to do so. It is however personal, but if one follows this system they will experience them; and hence will be able to share it with any skeptic that is willing to go through the same process. The reason we don't experience energy beings is because we think of ourselves as solid. As it reveals in this account we are not; we are an endless flowing of experience. Only when you meditate upon this and truly experience every moment objectively as a new being can you experience them. It is also this mystery that allows one to let go of the concern and expectations that there should or should not be an afterlife, or that there must or must not be energy beings; or that we do or do not have freewill. Only when this flowing state is comprehended and one experiences the reality of his own dynamic nature (of being a new core being every moment) that the things which seem no longer relevant are revealed. One must let go to grasp and not look to see. This may seem cryptic, but it is something that can be tried and we must evolve into a species that know we are flowing and loves one another freely; so that we can evolve into space.

Chapter Fifty

Revelation Concerning the Cosmology of the Universe

As I Han am in my old age and sit under the trees in my forest I do write this last revelation and vision of the cosmology of the universe. There are Gods and Titans many, even a hundred and forty four thousand in our council of the Gods; who come down and live in gardens upon the worlds. Wherefore we should take upon ourselves and even compose beautiful and poetic oths and covenants unto our Heavenly Parents or unto our patron Gods and Goddesses. For behold we shall receive the benefit of whatever oaths and covenants we take and keep according to the eternal laws of Karmic-exchange and balance in the universe. If we trust in the Gods and take these othes and covenants upon us we shall receive the revelation of our calling and election by them and be saved energetically regardless if we become Titans or not. There are also many Holy Children who do teach the mysteries of physical salvation as well as the mysteries of enlightenment and exaltation. I have revealed the ordinances in these works as well as how our own Titan stones were created. However the most important thing is that we always search for truth and explore endless worlds, both in our minds as well as externally to us. Titan Stones and enlightenment make Gods, but not all need to be Gods; some are content with the flowing experience of life. To not want to change the universe is not to do nothing, because we are a part of the universe and are perfect even if we do not know it yet. Enlightenment really does not change our behavior, only how we experience it.

We have many lives and they are all connected through the world of the mind, or the network of

mind in the energy all around us. I shall return in days to come and create my world and see visions of Canata's garden and of many places and worlds where I and my loved ones have been. The overmind shall be in those days also, for he is a part of me and I am a part of him. In times past I have been a God and I am a God, even a Son of the Gods. I meditated in pure lands before descending into this universe and there my name was Samanta, and I shall return through the duat to that life again from time to time; because perfection is all around us.

When you enter the Duat you go on the ship of the Gods unto the blue stars of the seven sisters. From there you go unto the orange star Aldebaran, where you face off in a battle against yourself; which is the greatest challenge of all. You then go unto the Nebula of Orian and become one with great serpents of energy. After that you go unto Sirius and have your heart weighed upon the scales of the great mother against the feather of truth. After you do all this you become a great God and then you can finally make your journey back through the golden gate of Aldebaran and on to the black hole which is the gate beyond the universe. Now when you go into it you become infinite like unto the net of Indra itself; and there are endless reflections of you in infinite planes. You gain many arms, and many many things and become perfectly combined in love with all those who are like unto you. And behold all the reflections are you because we are only a flowing of experiencing principles to begin with.

There truly is a symphony of all things and a great weaving of experiences and fate. Come out of the dark cave of your world and see that there is mathematically without a doubt, infinite worlds, infinite planes of existence, infinite possibilities, infinite yous and infinite experiences and states of being. Infinity is my religion and the reality of all things. If you imagine it, it exists. So paint with the brush of your imagination knowing it is real and that you believe all things; and see through your green candle of being (or whatever color it may be) into endless flowing experiences and enlightenment. Amen.

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