

The War of Fate
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The following story and characters are fictitious. Any resemblance to any persons or events, whether living or dead, is completely unintentional and coincidental.

“In the deepest corners of our country, where no human has ever gone, lie six mysterious diamonds. Apart these jewels are simple priceless artifacts, but if one man manages to gather all six, the gateway to the realm of Evolution will open. However, inside the gateway is a terrible force which, if unleashed, will destroy the entire universe. Before the ritual is finished however, inside the realm of Evolution is the ruler of the universe, the Master Diamond. It will witness all of man’s actions, and if it finds corruption in every area of the human heart, it will send its angel of death, Evolvia, to finish the human race and the universe. Thus begins the War of Fate anew, and to our knowledge no being has ever stood up to fate and succeeded.”

-Old Yakumian legend

Prologue

At the beginning of the universe, when the earth was filled with poisonous gas, before any other kind of life inhabited the earth, a powerful race of creatures known as Destinos, or dragons, reigned over the land. This reign lasted for almost one thousand years until a special Destino mutated and underwent a change that later became known as the “Final Evolution”. The creature that sprung from this evolution, Evolvia, quickly brought other Destinos to his side and incited civil war. After a very brutal and bloody campaign Evolvia overwhelmed the Destinos and destroyed the universe, only to have a new Earth emerge where many different kinds of life were capable of living.

When human beings first came into being a tribe known as the Yakumians, settled near modern day Japan, saw the Destinos as threats to society and sealed the remaining inside of six magical diamonds which could only be unlocked when all six are together. After several thousand years when

archeology became popular no evidence of the Yakumians or the Destinos were found. These were quickly dismissed as myths of the island inhabitants, but underground the Yakumians began to reform their society and began plans to take back their lands.

June, three years prior to the telling of this tale, the Yakumians came out of hiding and led a brutal campaign to take over the Japanese Empire. The leader, Kon, brought the war to Tokyo and quickly ravaged the Empire. Soon, after the major Japanese landmarks were destroyed, excavation began on ancient Yakumian sites. Shortly, though, the newly appointed emperor could not sustain control over the empire and then recognized Kon as emperor. Kon's natural blue hair, major height for a Yakumian, and of course his amazing strength, brought him immediate power among the people. He then turned his attention to the one country that stood in the way of his dreams of global domination; the United States of America. Little did he know that his plan to attack the states would be threatened by a single survivor that came from Kansas City.

* * *

“Sir Kon, there is somebody to see you.”
said the guard at the entrance of the throne room of Yarzon Castle. The throne room was elaborately decorated with the red and gold flag of the Yakumi Empire right above the gold-plated throne created for the Emperor. The guard eased along the polished marble floor as he cautiously approached Kon to give him the news.

“Who is it?” asked Kon, the seriousness and the threat already in his voice. Kon was already known throughout the empire for having a short fuse and when that combined with his power it only meant one thing was certain for whoever set him off; death. This image was enhanced by his huge muscular figure and raging natural blue hair of the Yakumians. Kon rose from his seat and took a couple of steps toward the guard in the typical blue Yakumian armor worn by all soldiers, the fear already in his eyes.

“She- she won’t give me her name, sir, but she says she has vital information about how you can easily attack the United States and get away

with it.” proclaimed the frightened guard trying to stand still and not indicate weakness.

Kon hesitated then proclaimed “Bring her in here. I’ll give her a chance to speak.”

The guard quickly walked out of the throne room and opened the steel door at the end slightly to allow a small draft inside and a quick view at the main hallway outside. The castle was a marvelous feat for only being built three years earlier. The Yakumians fashioned it out of technology that had not been used for centuries because of their beliefs that modern weapons were too dangerous to use. It was in their beliefs that they did manage to sign a treaty with the United States to only use swords and arrows should the U.S. and the Yakumian Empire ever find themselves on the brink of war. It was a treaty that sounded like a good idea at the time, had the President known that it was really a strategic ploy by Kon to give them the upper hand in battle.

A woman then walked inside the room wearing a black dress with dark black armor attached to the top of the body. A dark complexion, possibly South American, and silky long black hair down to her waist Her long legs running down to a

pair of heels at her feet. Kon watched in amazement as the woman walked between the two central pillars and stopped.

“So you’re the emperor Kon?” asked the woman.

“Yes I am. Who are you and what information do you have that I need about the states?”

“Straight to the point. Just like a true leader. But you’re too quick to rush into a battle and that will be your undoing.”

“What?”

“You cannot attack the states by going to their west coast. That’s suicide. The Americans will have troops stationed off of every beach for miles.”

“Then what shall I do?”

“It seems like an expensive endeavor but the only way to get away with an attack is to sail around the South American continent and attack the states from their east coast. From there attack every major city until you make it to the middle and attack a city called Kansas City. There is a boy there that can and will destroy the empire if he is given the

chance. After he's dead escape to the south and sail back here."

"What do you want for helping me?"

"Easy. Around these islands are caves that contain six magical diamonds that have the power to destroy the world. I need you to find those. In return I give you immortality from the destruction."

"Fine. What's your name?" asked Kon.

"Ultemeir will do for now."

Ultemeir turned and walked out of the throne room as Kon sat down and thought for a few seconds. Then he stood up and walked out into the main hall.

The main hall was decorated with Yakumian flags filled throughout the room and several columns lining the red and gold carpet leading up to the throne room and the main door. Kon continued his pace to the west side of the room and opened a small door there which led him into the war room. An ornately decorated map of the world was hanging on the far wall and several strategists in red Yakumian robes were looking at it. Kon stopped at the head of the oval-shaped oak table in the center as his main strategist turned to face him.

“What are our plans for attack, sir?” asked the strategist.

Kon hesitated for a second before responding. “We’re going around South America. Ready the troops. We leave tomorrow.”

Part I: The First Quest

Chapter I

The sun rose over Kansas City on a very early July morning. Dew slid down the windowsill as rays of sunlight came through the window. An alarm clock went off and a hand quickly reached over and shut it off as Christian slowly climbed out of his bed, his long brown hair down to his shoulders completely a mess and his muscular build sore from hours of not being active. Christian got up and walked through his small bedroom to a dresser and pulled out a black pair of jeans with a black shirt. As Christian pulled out a towel from the closet on the opposite side of the room the phone rang and he had to run to pick it up.

“Hello?” asked Christian.

“There’s a town meeting this afternoon and the mayor requests the guardian attend.” said a voice on the other side of the phone.

“Alright. I’ll be there.” Christian replied as he hung up the phone and once again continued his walk to the bathroom. After the Yakumian capture of Japan the President made each city vote on somebody in the town to become their guardian just

in case of an attack. Their purpose was to simply mobilize to forces. Surprisingly enough the city voted Christian Baylor as the guardian. Nobody knew exactly why they voted for him, but Christian seemed to do the job perfectly, despite the fact he was only fourteen years old at the time. Christian readily accepted his responsibilities but did not see that without an attack the job was pretty useless. He only had one month of his term left, however, before the town would vote on a new guardian or for Christian to keep his job.

Christian got out of the bathroom completely dressed as he walked further out into the living room of his house. Neither one of his parents were there. That became common for Christian to accept considering the fact that when they weren't at work they were usually at a bar getting drunk. Christian pretty much ended up raising himself throughout all of his childhood. Christian fixed himself something to eat quickly before leaving the house and heading out to the meeting.

The meeting hall was on the west side of the town but before he went to the meeting Christian made sure he made a stop at Alice's house. Alice

Davens and Christian had been dating for almost a year. Just about the perfect girl in Christian's eyes, long smooth golden blonde hair, deep green eyes, and an always happy attitude, mostly caused the jealousy that ensued among the high school which actually began when Christian was nominated for becoming the guardian.

Christian walked along the street until he saw Alice sitting on the front porch. Alice looked up from her book long enough to see Christian ascending the stairs. She stood up and greeted him. Christian hugged her and gave her a small kiss.

"Christian, I've heard the Yakumians are coming. When are they going to be here?" asked Alice after they talked.

"I don't know but there is a meeting called today. Maybe that's what it's about; but I have a feeling that it's just some type of ploy to get more money for the city."

"Oh, well can I come with you?" asked Alice again.

"Sure it's a public meeting so we'll take Kamo along with us. He likes going to those things." said Christian as he pulled out his cell

phone and dialed Kamo's phone number. He waited for several seconds before finally hanging up and turning back to Alice. "Guess he's not home." he took Alice by the hand and led her down the stairs as they walked toward the meeting hall together.

In the lobby outside of the main meeting hall Christian and Alice met with Mia. One of Alice's friends who escaped Kon's takeover of rule, Mia was a pure Yakumian that displayed all of the features, the natural blue hair being the most obvious of all.

"Good to see you again Alice." said Mia in a suspiciously cheery mood. Mia was usually known for having a very snotty attitude and definitely disapproved of Christian becoming the guardian but kept to herself on most political issues.

"Yeah you too Mia." said Alice as the three of them walked into the meeting hall and sat at a table specifically designated for them at the front of the room.

The mayor of Kansas City walked into the meeting hall and the chatter that was heard throughout the hall all morning stopped. The mayor walked past the rows of seats and a table designated

for the guardian and guests. He then made his way to his podium at the end of the room where he stood and began to conduct business.

“The first order of business today is the subject of securing our trade routes to Omaha and Denver by placing extra troops from our reserves here onto the roads. I believe our guardian has something to say about this.” said the mayor. Christian immediately rose to his feet.

Christian started to walk toward the center of the room when all of a sudden the door to swung open and in came Kamo. Kamo already had a bad reputation for always being late and when he did manage to show up to a meeting or even to school on time he was always in trouble for not doing what he was there to do and trying to make his moves on the women, moves that ninety percent of the time did not work. Kamo opened his mouth to speak before Christian, Alice, and the Mayor all replied at the same time “Shut up and sit down!”

Kamo sat down and Christian continued to say what he was going to. “I think we do need protection for our roads. But I do not think that we should use our military reserves the government

gave us in case of an attack. We should use local authority. Policemen to patrol our trade routes. Leave the military here in case of a Yakumian attack.”

“We’ve already agreed on this that if Kon attacks then he’ll have to attack a coast city first and then we’d have word of it before he got here to gather our reserves.” argued the mayor.

“Everybody here thinks the Yakumians will attack from the west. A city like Los Angeles or San Francisco. But I’ve been watching Kon’s strategies and believe he is much too smart to do exactly what we expect him to. He’s going to attack from the east. He’s going to come from where we’re vulnerable.”

At that moment chatter arose throughout the hall. Several members of the council began to leave when the mayor shouted to the crowd. “Everybody sit down! Now, Mr. Baylor. I hope you have some good evidence to back up this incredibly outrageous claim. I will not risk the trade routes being attacked. I’m sending troops to patrol. That’s the end of this discussion. Our next order of business is to...”

The mayor did not have time to finish his order before the door burst open and a soldier came running into the hallway.

“I have some bad news!” shouted the soldier.

“How bad is it?” asked Christian in a seemingly calm manner.

“Kon’s landed in the United States. He attacked New York City. Troops are meeting him now to try and stop his spread into the states.”

Christian hastily walked out of the hall. “Next time I tell you something you should listen to it!” he screamed as he ran outside.

Along the defensive walls built for the city Christian ran up to see several soldiers preparing for the battle that was about to ensue.

“Get those arrows ready!” shouted Christian as he walked by the archers. Several archers were stumbling from too little practice in the field and kept dropping arrows and caused a mess on the walkway. Christian continued to walk as he made it to the captain waiting for the orders.

“Are they ready yet for the battle?” asked Christian.

“Not yet.” said the Captain as he pointed to a mess on the ground.

“Get them ready quickly.”

“It’ll be done by the time the night’s over.”

Christian ran to the center of the city where the town had become a complete scene of chaos as the citizens tried to abandon their homes and apartments in their attempts to evacuate to the shelters. Alice was there giving orders to some of the confused citizens trying to escape. Christian quickly went to her.

“How is the evacuation coming?” he asked.

“Not good. We never had time to have a drill so right now the problem is trying to get everybody either out of the city or into a shelter.” replied Alice.

“Well hurry. What about Kamo and Mia?”

“They’re already at the shelter.”

Christian began to walk away before responding, “You let a Yakumian into the shelter?”

“Yeah but she’s good. She’s with us remember?”

“I guess so but don’t let your guard down. Be aware of any suspicious activity.”

“Done.”

Christian walked away and back up the wall to see that all of the archers were cleaned up and prepared. The lookouts turned their lights on as the sun began to set over the trees in the distance.

“That’s about all we can do today. All right everybody, let’s go home except for security.” Christian shouted to the soldiers. The archers went away with the exception of a few and Christian walked down to the ground level and toward the front gate.

The guard at the front gate was prepared as usual watching for any suspicious activity. Christian came forward and the officer saluted him.

“I need you to open the gate.” said Christian.

“Will do.” said the guard. “Why do you need to go out?”

Christian just looked out at the large steel gate opening. “I need some time to think.”

There was a small clearing out in the forest that Christian visited anytime he had a problem or just needed to think. A small log sat on the side of the clearing and the sounds of birds chirping and insects whistling away just made it feel like an

ordinary night in the woods. Yet it did not feel like an ordinary night. Something was coming. An enemy that came to kill him and everything he believed in. It was up to him to save everyone and everything in a city that three years ago was like any other city. Cars bustled about on a rush hour morning. School buses packed the roads also trying to get a bunch of whiny kids to school. Now it changed. Now everybody walked. Kids stayed home. Everything their lives had meant changed with the threat of a Yakumian attack.

Then the sounds of nature stopped. Everything that was making noise, including the whistling of the wind through the trees, was replaced by a dark, ominous silence. Christian immediately stood up and looked around. At that moment a sound came through the bushes. A sound that had to have been made by something larger, it had to have been bigger than a deer or any other kind of wildlife around this part of the Midwest. Christian heard whatever it was getting closer. He drew the sword out of his sheath attached to his belt. More sounds came from the bushes. He could then hear noises from every direction. Whatever was

coming close to him it wasn't friendly and wanted a fight. Christian had his back turned to the bushes of the nearest noise when a small rabbit jumped out and ran toward him.

Instinctively Christian turned around and swung his sword at his unknown opponent. Christian stopped and stared at the sight that he had just killed a helpless rabbit that was probably just on its way home. Christian's mourning for the thing he was ready to make stew with, however, was cut short when five Yakumian soldiers dressed in their dark blue armor all lunged out at him.

Christian quickly dealt with the first soldier that attacked him with one slice of his sword. The two other soldiers quickly teamed up and attacked Christian from both sides. Christian turned to stab one and ducked from the other's attack before immediately turning around and stabbing the other soldier straight through the heart.

The two other soldiers left stared at their three dead allies that were all dealt with in under a minute and decided not to have a part of it. Both of them left quickly and ran toward the city. Christian fell to the ground in exhaustion and looked up as a

spark of flame rose above the city walls. There was nothing he could do now. He had no strength left to fight but at the same time was fighting himself for the willpower to move on and save what was left of the city.

All of a sudden Christian looked up and saw a magic barrier cover the city like a blanket and roll over the sides. Christian had nothing left that he could do with his little strength but listen to the screams of people inside the village as he slowly fell into unconsciousness.

* * *

A cliff overlooking the lake in the forest was the only chance left for escaping alive as Alice, Kamo, and Mia all ran out to escape the attacking Yakumians in the city. The shelters had already been attacked and the group was forced to watch as an onslaught took place among the survivors.

“How were they able to find us? Nobody knew the locations of the shelters until today!” asked Kamo as they hurried up the cliff. The grade down to the lake was extremely steep but they had

no other choice. It was either risk death by scaling the cliff or be killed by advancing enemies. Alice made their choice for them.

“We’re going to have to climb down from here. Let’s hope Christian finds a way out alive.” called Alice as she looked back at Mia after Kamo met her at the edge. “Mia?” she asked.

Mia was acting very strange and her suspicious nature was not helped by the evil grin she had across her face. Both of Mia’s hands were hidden from Alice and Kamo’s sight as she slowly made her way toward them. Alice turned around. Whatever was about to happen wasn’t good and there was nothing else they could do.

“Don’t worry about Christian,” said Mia with an overly arrogant tone of voice, “he’s meeting you where you’re going.” Mia pulled both of her hands out to reveal knives being held in both of them. Alice tried to back away but with nowhere else to run she just stared at Mia with a scared look. Mia thrust the knives into both Alice’s and Kamo’s stomachs.

Alice just stared for a second as Mia began to walk away. Alice and Kamo’s bodies fell to off

of the cliff and into the lake below. Both bodies were carried off with the current of the connecting creek and slowly take downstream.

At the side of the creek Alice's body was laying down barely alive. Her heart was still beating and lungs breathing but both were barely there due to the impact of the fall. Alice tried to open her eyes to examine her situation but couldn't find the strength. Alice did find a way to move her hand a bit and pull a part of her long blonde hair out from under a rock.

Alice stopped all movement as soon as her faint hearing left detected something. She began to hear footsteps. It could have been a Yakumian patrol and if that was the case she was dead for sure. Here she was at death's door and only the identity of the stranger walking could be heard. A hand then took hers and she didn't know what to think. She couldn't tell if it was a friend or who it was as she still tried to open her eyes. The hand reached over and began to lift the knife from her body. Alice tried to scream in pain but was cut short due to her lungs not functioning correctly.

The hand gently pushed itself against the wound and at that moment Alice felt several small sparks begin to pulse through her body. She then all of a sudden began to feel regenerated. Her heart began to beat faster. Her lungs were beginning to breathe normally. Her strength was still out of her though so she couldn't open her eyes and all she heard before falling asleep was a woman's voice.

"Don't worry. You must live. Too many things are in motion now that you will soon become involved in. You must aid *him*." said the voice. Alice tried to respond with a question but passed out asleep.

Kansas City was in ruin. Nothing was left. Not a survivor walked away from the onslaught of Kon and his Yakumian army. Kon was going to pay a price for his actions. Vengeance was going to one day knock on his door.

Chapter II

Morning rose from the rubble of Kansas City and the terror that was created the night before in the exact same manner that it rose a day ago. The trees of the forest covered the clearing where Christian's unconscious body laid in a dark cover. Still nothing sounded through the trees. Not a bird chirping. No ants were scurrying along to catch their morning food. Not even a gust of wind flew through the leaves. Everything was at a standstill. An ominous silence still covering what was left of the city.

Christian's eyes slowly opened as he woke up from his exhaustion the night before. Christian found the strength to pull himself up and looked around at the clearing where he had fought the Yakumian soldiers the night before. He looked around and saw no sign of the bodies of the soldiers he killed or footprints telling where the escaped soldiers escaped to. He looked toward the city and saw a black smoke rising from the walls. Christian

stumbled as he began to run toward the city, afraid of what would be found there.

Christian made his way through the gates that were completely broken off of their hinges and into the city to see the ruin that was around. Bodies of the slain were scattered across the ground and fires set by the enemy were still burning along the ground. Christian looked at the carnage that was spread across the city and then stopped to think for a second. He knew most of these bodies should have been in the shelters but they were here. He quickly made his way to the shelter that Alice and Kamo were staying in.

Christian fell to the ground in shock from what he saw when he entered the shelter. It was completely abandoned and the entire place was torn apart from destruction. Burns were along the walls as bookshelves were knocked to the ground with books and food scattered among some dead bodies. Christian looked at some of the dead bodies looking for some trace of survivors. He couldn't find any traces but found some bloodied footprints among the burns on the ground leading out. Christian

concluded it was a woman's shoe and whoever she was she ran outside.

Christian followed the footprints as far as he could until he came to a cliff outside of the city. He searched the area and couldn't find any sign of what happened. He then spotted something on the ground that looked familiar he reached down and picked up the shining object laying in the dirt. After cleaning it off he noticed it was Alice's pendant. The diamond one he had just given her for her birthday a few months ago. Christian put the pendant to his face and began to cry.

Christian continued to cry on the cliff for quite some time before he finally got the nerve to get up and bury the dead bodies. Christian managed to complete the burials himself in about a week before building a small memorial. He did wait around for a while hoping for some kind of rescue team or even a Red Cross team or something that would come and help him. Nothing came. No rescues, no help, just Christian in the ruined city.

Christian found the remains of his house and scoured through the wreckage to find the gun of his father's. He then was able to find the sword he

dropped in the forest during the fight with the Yakumian soldiers. He gathered all of these while preparing for a campfire the next night.

The light provided by the campfire was the only light that was offered for miles around. Christian stood in front of it as he read his newspaper article about the leader of the Yakumi Empire, Kon. After he finished reading, Christian dropped the newspaper into the fire and drew his sword.

“From this point on,” said Christian talking aloud to nobody but himself, “I promise that everything that happened here, everything that was destroyed and every life that was taken by the evil that rests in Yakumi, will be avenged. I know what’s going to happen. I know that Kon attacked for a reason and he has some plan of using these attacks for his gain. I will kill him though. I must kill him. For everything. I will avenge Kamo. I will avenge Kansas City and every single other city that was attacked. I especially will avenge Alice.” Christian pulled the pendant out from under his shirt and pressed it to his blade.

Christian put his sword back into his sheath and sat down on a log he managed to pull from the forest as he began to eat the deer he hunted in the forest. It wasn't much but it was better than eating and Christian needed all the energy he needed for the journey that lay ahead of him. He finished his meal and turned around to check the traps he set for any thugs and looters that may be searching the city. Finally he laid down on the ground and went to sleep. He found sleep that night only from the thoughts of vengeance.

Christian awoke with a startle that next morning and quickly drew his sword and pressed it under the man standing above his head's chin.

"What are you doing here?" asked Christian.

"I don't know where to go." said the man dressed in a black business suit, short well-made black hair greased back and a very serious look on his face. "I saw you and wondered if you could help me. I need to find somebody. Somebody that was living here." Christian's first thoughts were that he was surprised how the man easily made it through the traps.

Christian hesitated before responding.

“Everybody else that was living here is dead.”

“Surely there must be some other survivors.” spoke the man, the anxiousness in his voice getting worse.

“Give me a name and I might be able to take you to where they’re buried.”

“I’m looking for my daughter.” spoke the man getting more anxious.

“I need a more specific name.” said Christian getting annoyed easily. Christian began to head toward where he put the graves.

“My name’s William Davens. My daughter’s name is Alice Davens. Do you know where she is?” said William now seeming calm.

Christian stopped dead in his tracks. The father of the girl he loved and had let die was standing right before him and he had no words to even explain it to him. He stood there for a few seconds while tears once again started to fall from his eyes. William saw this and just waited.

“If you’re looking for Alice then I’m extremely sorry. I couldn’t protect her. I should

have but I couldn't." said Christian as his tears became worse. "I... I couldn't even find her body."

William finally started running toward him. "You knew my daughter? If you didn't find a body then there is still hope."

Christian looked at him directly. "If there's one thing I've learned, it's that clinging to hope is probably the worst idea you can ever think of. Sometimes it's better to accept fate as it is."

William finally gave up and said. "I guess you're just trying to survive."

Christian responded. "I'm not staying here. There's nothing left. No family. No friends. I'm training, training for my revenge against Kon and the Yakumi Empire."

"Then you're going to need help. I can do that. I'll stay here and help you get your revenge." replied William.

"Thanks. Well, time to get to work. It's time for me to start to train. I could use the company though."

William and Christian both ran off to find materials to prepare for training.

Christian managed to find a gym on the south side of the city that was destroyed but the equipment was still in tact. Christian called William over and they helped carry the equipment to the camp they had set up. William prepared a target range for gun shooting, and Christian had built a small area for sword training. The rest of the day was spent training. Christian had developed a rigorous program for himself that included over an hour of warm-ups in the morning, then a quick breakfast, followed by around four hours of sword training.

After resting and having lunch then he would join William for several hours of training to become accurate with his gun. Christian would then quit training to hunt and eat dinner. After dinner Christian would lie down and talk with William about various topics which changed nightly. Then Christian would go to sleep and wake up in the morning to begin his routine all over again.

Finally one day after about three in the afternoon Christian and William decided to stop and take a small break. Christian had just turned fifteen years old. William pulled something out of his sack

and gave it to Christian as they sat around the campfire.

“What is this?” asked Christian curiously.

“I’m interested in seeing how your journey progresses, so I’m giving you this journal to keep track of what happens.” replied William.

“But... I’m not ready.”

“You’re almost there. Just a couple more months and you’ll be ready to go. You’re stronger than most people already and are more accurate with a gun than anybody else I know. You should start preparing because it is coming.”

“Thanks.” said Christian. Both of them sat around the fire for a few minutes without saying a word.

“Christian,” said William finally. “I’m curious how you knew my daughter.”

“Do you want the truth?” said Christian starting to become afraid.

“Yeah.”

“We were friends. In fact we were actually good friends.”

“You mean you two were dating?”

“Yeah. I just keep thinking of what I would do if I could go back and protect her. Order her to get out of there.”

“It’s not your fault. It’s Kon’s and the Yakumi Empires’ fault. You should go get your revenge.”

Christian agreed and then rolled over for the night and in the morning began his regular routine once again.

It had been a total of six months since the carnage that was wreaked upon Kansas City that night. Christian knew he was ready for his quest for revenge against Kon. He started preparing a sack full of weapons, food, and other materials he would need to get to Yakumi. The last item he put into his was the journal that William had given him for his birthday. It was the least he could do for somebody who helped him for the last six months.

Just as he wrapped up his sack and prepared to go see William to leave an alarm sounded from one of the traps he had set for looters in the city. Christian hurried to the site where the alarm was sounded and found two robbers trying to loot a destroyed bank. William had made it there first and

tried to hold them off but by the time Christian arrived it was too late. William had been shot in the stomach. Christian hurried inside the bank where the looters were clearing out.

Christian drew his sword as he ran through the front door and toward the opened vault. The two looters were emptying sacks of cash from the vault as Christian entered.

“Let that money go. It’s not yours is it?” said Christian as the looters turned to face him. The looter on the left pulled a gun and tried to shoot but Christian beat him to it. He shot the robber with the gun and it immediately killed him. The other looter tried to run and Christian pulled his sword to the side and caught the robber with it killing him. Christian put away his sword and his gun and looked at the spilled money on the floor. It would take a lot of money for the journey and all the people who had money here were dead.

After putting some of the money into his pockets he walked out and met William laying on the ground holding his wound as he fought to stay alive. Christian pulled out a bandage and tried to cover the wound but it was too late.

“Christian,” spoke William his voice very faint. “She has to be alive. I can feel it. Please stop Kon, save everything.” William tried to say something else but couldn’t find it as he died slowly.

Christian buried William with the rest of the bodies he had buried earlier. After he prayed for the people who had died during this incident he picked up his sack and headed out the west exit of the city. His journey had begun, and the fate of the world was riding on him.

Chapter III

It was March and the snow around the Colorado area had not yet melted but trying to get through it was still hard. Christian had been traveling for a week and it was beginning to tire him. Strange creatures had infested the roads that made travel for anybody even more perilous. Christian was already almost out of money which also would be difficult because the Yakumian currency was more as valuable than American money which would deplete his money supply when he made it to Yakumi.

Christian became tired when it became close to nighttime so he stopped at a small lodge on the side of the highway. He stopped inside and looked around as he headed for the front desk to obtain a room for the night. There was a bar in the front rooms of the inn so Christian was forced to make his way through the tables, broken bottles, and the occasional tipped over drunk man on the floor.

Christian finally made it to the front desk.

“I’d like a room for the night.” said Christian.

“Just one moment, Sir.” said the man at the desk as he began to look through the guest book for an open room. “I’m sorry but it appears that we’re filled for the night.” he then said. Christian turned and began to walk back through the bar.

As he made it to the door he all of a sudden heard a familiar voice coming from the bar.

“I’m sorry. I didn’t know she was your girlfriend I swear!” said the voice as Christian turned to see who it was, even though that kind of talk could only mean one person. Kamo was backed into a corner by three huge guys that apparently wanted to take care of him.

One of the big guys approached Kamo and raised his fist to strike. He didn’t finish his swing, though, as a knife hurled through the air and into the back of the brute. Kamo finally opened his eyes that were closed the whole time. Christian walked forward and picked up the knife and turned to Kamo.

“Didn’t you hear the lesson I gave you about not picking fights with people older than you!”

shouted Christian as he joined Kamo in the corner. The other two brutes came closer and pulled out large knives.

“I.....uh.....guess this won’t be the first time you guys have used those...” said Kamo as they came even closer. Christian pulled out his sword and prepared an attack stance.

The two brutes came even closer and Christian finally got tired of waiting and cut them both down. Christian pulled his sword out of the last brute to fall and began cleaning it. Kamo looked at Christian in amazement.

“Wow,” said Kamo as Christian finished placing his sword back into its sheath “I can’t believe you actually made it out of there alive.” Christian didn’t say anything and began his walk out of the inn. Kamo became confused and then ran out the door after him.

On the snowy bank on the side of a hill Christian stopped for the night and lied down and tried to get some rest. He started a fire to warm himself up as he tried to get some sleep. The hill was on the other side of the road so Christian thought he was safe from the tourists and other

travelers. Just as he was about to fall asleep Kamo made his way toward the small camp that had been set up.

“What do you want?” asked Christian even though he didn’t turn and look at Kamo. He just knew he was there.

“I... I just wanted to know how you got away.” replied Kamo as he approached Christian.

Christian finally sat up and drew his sword. “You were supposed to take care of her. And now I find you alive.”

“We... we were separated after Mia hurled us off of that cliff. I stopped downstream a bit and was just able to catch a glimpse of Alice floating downstream. I tried to get up but was too tired until later I felt the pull of a woman as my wounds strangely began to become healed. I’m sorry. I did look for her though before coming here.” said Kamo as he sat down on a log that just happened to be there.

“So... You headed out here for no apparent reason?”

“No. I’m traveling to Yakumi to stop Kon.”

“What a coincidence. I guess I’ll have to take you with me.”

“Really? You mean then we’re allies again?”

“Yeah but let me warn you. If you get in my way or I find out you’re lying, I’ll leave you, so rest up tonight.” Christian rolled over and began to sleep.

In the morning Christian woke up and found Kamo not only had everything packed already but had made breakfast for them. Deer meat had been the only thing Christian was able to eat for six months, and he was getting tired of it but it did give him the energy he needed to fight the monsters on the roads.

After almost two weeks of traveling, Christian and Kamo had finally made it to the refugee camp outside of Los Angeles. Upon entering the guards forced them to turn in all of their weapons and then they went inside unarmed. They made their way through the plain hall that had nothing decorating it but stone. Inside the next room was the office of the Commander. Outside the room Kamo turned to the officer.

“Does this guy have a name?” asked Kamo curiously.

“I’m sure he does, but around here everybody just calls him Commander. Show some respect when you’re in there. He keeps hearing bad news and he’s not been being very forgiving recently.” said the officer without even blinking an eye.

Christian and Kamo walked inside the room and stood at the end of the desk while Commander looked at the latest reports from the attacks.

“Can I help you?” asked Commander in a frustrated voice. He had a military uniform that was completely unwrinkled as he sat up straight for his tall six foot height.

“I need a pass to go to the Yakumi Empire.” said Christian before he backed away.

“After everything that’s happened in this country and you still want to take a vacation there?”

“This isn’t for a vacation.”

“Really? Then what’s it for?”

Kamo immediately jumped in front of Christian and whispered to him “Are you sure that you should tell him the truth?”

Christian pushed Kamo to the side without even wasting any energy and then turned to Commander “I want revenge. I’m going to kill Kon.”

Commander stared at Christian for a second and then started laughing. “You really want to take on Kon? He marched through this entire country and didn’t even get a scratch, and now a thirteen year old wants me to let him visit Yakumi to kill Kon. Listen to me. Go home. Be a kid. Forget about this. I can’t let everyone who wants to kill Kon through. There are a whole lot of survivors downstairs from other cities and...”

Christian immediately cut him off. “Other survivors?” He then turned to Kamo.

Kamo thought for a second before realizing what Christian was thinking. “Alice.” Both Christian and Kamo ran out of the room ignoring the woman that was coming in. The woman then turned to commander with her smooth face and dark brown hair.

“What are you going to do?” asked the woman “The boy obviously is serious to come all this way from Kansas City.”

“Michelle. I don’t have time for this. Let’s see how serious he is.” replied Commander.

Downstairs Christian and Kamo made their way through the sea of refugees from all of the deserted towns Christian combed through the west side of the room as Kamo searched the east. Christian finally saw a girl about Alice’s height with her back turned to him exposing long blonde hair that was about her length. He touched her on the shoulder and she quickly turned around to face him and he realized he was mistaken.

“Sorry.” said Christian trying to cover his mistake.

Kamo joined him at the opposite end of the room. “I couldn’t find her either.” Christian just shrugged his shoulders and walked back upstairs. Kamo turned around and saw a small girl with short blonde hair and deep green eyes walk right past him. “Could it be?” he said as he got the thought out of his head and followed Christian back up the stairs to commander’s office.

Chapter IV

Christian and Kamo walked into the main hallway before Commander walked toward them with Michelle following behind.

“Kid!” shouted Commander causing Christian to immediately stop. “If you want to go to Yakumi then I’ve got a deal for you.” Christian became interested and turned around. Commander took off his jacket and handed it to Michelle as she walked to the side of the ornately decorated hallway. “We’re going to have a duel. One-on-one. No killing, but if you can knock me down then I’ll let you go to Yakumi.” Commander reached under his belt and pulled an ornamental sword from a sheath Christian never saw before.

Kamo turned to Christian “Don’t worry we’ll fight together.” Christian didn’t say anything but put his hand on Kamo’s shoulder and gently pushed him aside. Kamo understood that Christian was willing to fight alone. Christian pulled his own

sword out of its sheath and took a couple of steps forward to the center of the room.

Commander took his sword and prepared himself in a fighting stance. Christian did the same and after a brief moment of pause both of them swung their swords at each other as the clash was heard throughout the rest of the facility. Kamo looked up after the first few swings afraid that it would be decided quickly and up on the balcony he saw the same blonde girl standing there watching the battle, but not too surprised because quickly other refugees all came from different doorways and crowded around to watch the fight ensue.

Christian ducked underneath the next blow that came to him as he backed up and did a small leap off the wall to the other side of Commander. Christian took a few more swings at his opponent before once again taking the defensive position. Even more refugees had gathered to watch the ensuing battle as they seemed to keep going neck and neck with each other. Christian finally backed up enough where both of them ended up ascending a small staircase. Christian kept the upper hand when Commander took a wide swing at him as he

rolled underneath the swing and ended up on the bottom floor.

Commander took another swing as Christian blocked this time and their swords remained locked in the dead heat for several seconds. Commander finally let go of the lock and juked Christian straight in the chin instantly knocking him to the ground.

“You’re good. I’ll give you that.” said Commander as he took a step toward Christian.

Christian grabbed his sword and jumped up. “I’ve been here long enough for you to know that I don’t give up.” he said as he quickly jumped to his feet and took several more swings at Commander. Commander blocked the first two that came to him but at the third Christian knocked the sword from Commander’s hands and slightly pressed his blade against Commander’s throat. “I think we had an agreement.” he replied as he withdrew the blade and placed it back in its sheath.

“All right. You can go to Yakumi. But not without help. Michelle, you’re going with them.” proclaimed Commander as he put his jacket back on. Michelle started to respond and then shut her mouth knowing that an argument was useless at this point.

The girl Kamo recognized earlier came running into the hall from one of the side doorways.

“Wait! I’m going with them too!” she shouted as she made her way to Commander. “Schala Erdenson. I can fight too.” Commander didn’t say anything just gave a small nod of approval out of complete frustration and then turned to Michelle giving her a stern look that was meant as a warning to watch over the three teenagers left in her charge. All four of them turned and left.

Christian and Kamo waited at the main gate when Michelle and Schala came out with their bags packed. “Well let’s get moving. Don’t want to miss the boat now.”

Michelle gave a small laugh. “A boat? Really now. Commander can’t risk that. What we’re doing is going five miles north to a place known as the Black Hole Mine. Inside of there is an underwater passage that leads straight to Yakumi. It’s a tight squeeze in there but it’s the best way to slip in undetected by Kon and our own government.”

Christian turned and walked toward the plains as his three other companions followed him.

* * *

Inside Yarzon Castle Kon and Ultemeir walked through the dimly lit staircase leading down the southwestern tower to the castle library. At the bottom of the staircase Kon lit a single candle over a shelf containing ancient scrolls.

“This is where we keep our records of the locations of ancient landmarks. Those diamond things must be explained somewhere in here.” said Kon as he searched through all the scrolls. Ultemeir just stood in the corner of the room being conveniently disguised in the shadows. Kon searched through several other scrolls until he came across one with gold plating over it. A red cloth taped on with the word ‘laei’ inscribed on it.

“The Yakumian word for forbidden,” Ultemeir finally responded with a dark tone in her voice. “This must be the location of the diamonds.” Kon remained still staring at the scroll in amazement. In the Yakumian religion of Kaiylo there weren’t many things forbidden and if they were then they were forbidden for a good reason.

Ulteimeir finally grew impatient and pulled the scroll from Kon's hand. She yanked the cloth off and pulled the scroll open to reveal a map. The islands were all together which was believed true for the time the map was made. She looked as at the top of the map was a picture of two dragons fighting each other and the map in the middle. Six areas were colored on the map indicating the general location of the diamond. At the bottom of the map was some Yakumian text. Ulteimeir gave the text to Kon to read.

“Lo kaiso sme may sores pleepem, esan les epian wikh meiatah.” said Kon with his sharp Yakumian accent coming out.

“What does it mean?” asked the impatient Ulteimeir.

“To those who seek the power, only great destruction will come.”

Kon dropped the scroll on the ground and stepped away. The problem with the ancient scrolls was that those weren't warnings. If he allowed this Ulteimeir to search for these diamonds then he may end up paying the consequences. Uleteimeir picked up the scroll and walked away.

“I’ll have troops begin to search the area.” she declared as she walked out of the room. Kon sat down at a small desk and rested his hands wondering if he had just made a deal with the devil.

* * *

The moon shined through the windows of the main entrance hall as Ultemeir walked down the hall hurriedly to the soldiers’ quarters.

“Getting the soldiers to do your dirty work because you’re too lazy, huh? Is that it? Or is it that the boy may figure out what he’s carrying before you have the chance to extract it?” said an unknown voice from behind Ultemeir. She turned around to see another woman about her height with crimson hair down to her waist over an elaborately decorated white robe of a Yakumian priest standing at the door to the throne room. “You know he’s alive don’t you? You know that he’s coming here. He wants his revenge.” The woman took a few steps closer as Ultemeir finally prepared a response.

“Why do you side with the humans? You saved those two at the waterfall too? I foresaw that.

That doesn't matter anymore, however. My plans are almost complete. All I need to do is find the diamonds and release the Destinos. After *he* recognizes they're still alive he'll come out of his sleep early to finish the job he should have finished millions of years ago. Then, the universe will be mine." Ultemeir said with a dark smile stretched across her face.

"It doesn't matter. You'll never find the sixth diamond."

"Why?"

"I hid it. To stop people like you of obtaining the forbidden power."

Ultemeir raised her right hand in the air as a black sword took its shape as she made a few violent steps toward the priest. "Tell me where it is!" she screamed.

"Your mole couldn't have been standing more than two feet from it. Now it belongs to the only one that can end this. Our final hope. You would be wise to give up now." Ultemeir finally took two more steps toward the woman who immediately vanished. Ultemeir stood in shock as Mia walked into the hall.

“I thought I heard talking.” said Mia as she advanced toward Ultemeir. “I guess the troops need to get ready then.”

Ultemeir blinked and then turned to Mia. “Yes, we leave at dawn. We leave for the Black Hole Mine” Mia started to walk away before Ultemeir grabbed her hand. “Wait, I have a new job for you.” Ultemeir followed Mia to the barracks. She was going to have her way one way or another.

Chapter V

The initial cavern of the Black Hole Mine was dark and dusty as the group made their way to the underwater area. Christian's first thought was that Michelle wasn't kidding when she said things were going to be a tight squeeze through there. Every once in a while the tunnel would open up and allow for them to rest and get some fresh air.

"How was this built?" asked Schala as she marveled at the limestone gathering on the cave walls. Schala pressed her head to the side of the wall and could hear the faint sound of ocean life underwater.

"Careful," said Michelle "we've never actually been through here so we don't know how sturdy the walls are. They could cave in at any second and we would be dead."

"Wow. You can here the ocean from here." Schala replied as she made her way back to the ring of stones.

“So you’re telling me we’re in one great big seashell. Wonderful.” said Kamo sarcastically as they all sat down to rest.

“How far are we?” asked Christian to Michelle as she pulled a fire starter out of her bag.

“No clue, but the time we’ve taken we should be about halfway to the hidden gate.”

“The hidden gate?”

“A security device we installed so that if the Yakumians came in here then they wouldn’t know where to start looking for it. In other words we can see in but they can’t see out.”

Schala got interested “Why do we need a security device in here? I think the narrow tunnels would provide enough protection.”

“They do but there are a lot of people that come here. You see, the Yakumian side of this houses one of the oldest discovered Yakumian Kaiylo temples to date so there are a lot of visitors. But I do think this mine harbors something more important. That’s why there’s increased soldier activity in this area.”

Kamo fell off the stone he was sitting on and fell asleep. Michelle and Schala didn’t say anything

and rolled over themselves. All of them had a long day and Christian finally decided to join them and tried to sleep himself. The problem was he couldn't. He saw a small alcove and decided to visit it as he went inside the dark alcove and turned on one of his lanterns to see as he started to think.

Christian all of a sudden heard a noise and looked up to find Schala coming in to join him.

"Can't sleep." she said as she sat on the stone opposite of him. Christian didn't say anything just listened to the sound of the ocean coming through the walls and the dim glow of the lantern. "I just love listening to this sound. I wish we were here under other circumstances."

Christian finally stood up and responded "Why are you here then? You could easily be somewhere else."

"My... My hometown was also attacked by Kon. I want my revenge just as much as you do."

"Really?"

"Why are you being so heartless?"

"No real reason. I just had everything taken away from me and now I'm afraid to trust again

because the same thing could possibly happen again.”

“But you trust us, right? That’s why we’re all here.”

Christian sat back down resting his head on his hands. “I don’t know anymore. One thing has led to another and I’m just going with the flow right now. All that matters is killing Kon right now.” Christian turned off the lantern and went to sleep.

* * *

Christian woke up a few minutes later but didn’t find himself where he slept that night or even in the mine at all. Instead he was inside a room that looked like it was primarily used for the use of magic spells. Torches set in a circular pattern around an ominous looking alter. Christian saw a body atop the alter and walked closer to it to get a better look. When he got in front he realized that the person on the alter was none other than Alice.

“Oh my...” said Christian in shock as he took a couple of steps backward.

“Don’t worry. She’s alive.” said a voice in the dark shadow of the corner of the room. Christian reached for his sword and found that it wasn’t there. Christian immediately looked around for something else he could use as a weapon. “You won’t find anything here. Anything of use that is.”

“What do you want?” asked Christian.

“Easy. North of Yarzon city in the frozen snow fields lies this tower in actuality. I want you to bring your diamond pendant to the top room. As soon as I have the pendant, she will go free.”

“You promise?”

“I always keep my word.”

“Who are you?”

The woman walked out of the shadow and into the light wearing dark armor. “Ultemeir, but trust me, names are of no concern here. Now bring me the pendant or I will kill her. I don’t think you want that do you?”

Christian started to run after her before he felt an arm grab his side.

* * *

“Relax, buddy. It was just a bad dream.” said Kamo as Christian snapped back to reality. He began thinking about the dream, about how he saw Alice lying there, and if it was real or not. Everybody was packing up and Christian decided to do the same. The last thing put into his bag was the journal of his travels that he had made an entry during their stay.

The tunnels through the caves seemed to get wider as they advanced through the mine toward Yakumi. Christian was still pondering the dream last night and wondered what it meant. Schala looked over to see Christian holding the pendant and became her curious self again.

“Who gave that to you?” she asked trying to sound cheerful.

“Nobody. This is actually something I gave somebody a while back.”

“A girl I’m taking it. Did you love her?”

“Yeah, a lot to tell the truth. But she died when Kansas City was attacked.”

Schala stopped talking and just said one more thing. “I’m sorry.”

Finally the group made it to what seemed like a dead end. Michelle made her way to the front and opened a small console. “Are we ready? Because when we go through here we’re not coming back until Kon’s dead. Even then we might not be able to go home for a while. Is everybody here willing to continue?”

Everybody just shook their heads as Michelle input a passcode in the terminal and the wall slid open and the team quickly rushed inside.

Inside the mine became a temple and Christian and the rest of the group began to marvel at the ancient writings on the walls and more. Michelle stopped them suddenly as the sound of a Kaiylo chant was heard in the main sanctum. Christian turned the corner to see Mia standing around several other soldiers as the chant was finished and the altar in the front of the sanctum began to glow green. Christian looked around the sanctum and didn’t see seats but circles that also began emitting a green luminescent glow. Above the altar was an elaborate statue of some type of large scorpion. He began to wonder if it wasn’t some sort of deity. Christian stared at the statue

almost as if it were alive, that there was something inside of it struggling to break free.

At that moment the altar released a wave of energy and disappeared. Christain and the group looked at it and noticed it had an amazingly large diamond in its center. Mia grabbed the diamond and stuffed it into a large bag as the soldiers all paid their last respects to the temple and followed her out of the door. Christian and the others all hid themselves around the corner praying they were just leaving because any other business in the temple meant they were going to be caught. Luckily the last soldier left and Christian and everybody else were able to relax. They both began to move on until they made it past the sanctum.

In the hallway in front of the sanctum Christian stopped when he heard a low sounding noise coming from inside the sanctum. Christian drew his sword and slowly proceeded into the sanctum where the noise got louder.

“What is it?” asked Michelle as they entered after him. Kamo heard something too and drew his own sword.

“Get out of here. Let me handle it.” said Christian as he walked further and saw the scorpion statue begin to vibrate. Schala began to hesitate and then turned around to leave as stones started to fall from the roof of the cave.

“You sure you’re going to be alright?” asked Kamo as they began to run out.

“Yeah I’m fine. Wait for me at the first village north you find.” replied Christian. Kamo nodded and then joined the two girls outside. Christian left his sword in his right hand and drew a gun in his left as he started to see green skin, or armor, or something else break free of the statue as it began to come alive and release a high pitched squeal as more stone fell off of it.

Finally the creature broke entirely free of its stone prison and fell to the earth right in front of Christian. Christian surveyed the large reptilian’s green armor that he knew not even his gun could break wondering if there was a weak spot anywhere. The scorpion let out a large squeal again and raised its large claws in a threatening attack stance. Christian finally noticed that each one of the plates of armor was bent backward toward the creature’s

tail. If he could find a way to get his sword or a bullet between two of the plates he knew he could probably hurt it and then eventually kill it. Christian got ready to dodge as the creature opened up its claws and appeared to begin a descent down on the small human standing in front of it. Instead, the claws opened wider and sparks of fire began to emerge from it as flames came out in a flamethrower effect at him.

Christian ran away from the flames as he began to feel the heat of them gaining on him. He turned just before making it into the hallway knowing that he would easily become trapped in there and the largeness of the room made it easy to maneuver. He made his way by the creature as it finished its flamethrower attack and then threw his claws at Christian as he expected earlier. Instead of dodging he made a daring move and slid right under the claws as they came down on him and slid all the way to the creature's underbelly. He saw a small opening and took it with his gun. He pulled it out again and quickly fired right into the creature's shell. The bullet missed though and bounced off a plate of

armor and into the side of one of the claws that annoyed the creature more than anything else.

Christian knew he didn't have much time and quickly aimed and fired again. This time the bullet made its target and left a small hole in the creature's green colored skin. The creature flung itself into the wall on the side and began to scream in pain from the gunshot. The creature was infuriated and turned to face Christian for a second round.

It worked, thought Christian as he tried to think of where to find the second hole. The creature finally opened its eyes to reveal two blood red spheres staring at him. Christian realized he could use the creature's poor eyesight to his advantage and threw one of his empty bags to the side. The creature, not realizing the trick, chased after the bag and Christian easily had a shot into the back end of the creature. He aimed and fired as the creature retracted itself into the wall again writhing in pain.

Christian knew it was now severely wounded and jumped on top of it to deal the finishing blow. He rolled around trying to dodge the tail swinging at him and keeping on top of the large

body. He made his way to the soft area right behind the head and fired one last shot. The creature began to writhe again as he was tossed off and the creature's movements became more spastic and more desperate.

The creature turned around and swung its tail at Christian in a complete circle as he jumped over it and swung his sword cutting off the tail. Christian took advantage of the creature's screams in pain and jumped back on top of it as he stuck his sword in the spot behind the creature's head one last time. The creature gave one last scream before finally falling to the ground. Christian looked at the guardian he had just slain and wiped some sweat off of his forehead. The creature was dead, but where was the treasure the guardian was supposed to be guarding?

Chapter VI

Michelle, Kamo, and Schala all were looking at a map of Yakumi at the inn they stayed in the night before. Christian had come in late that night exhausted from his fight with the guardian in the mine.

“Look,” said Schala as she pointed to a spot on the map when they realized where they were. “We’re only a few hours away from Yarzon.”

“Which means it’s almost over already.” replied Kamo as he saw pictures of Kon on the opposite wall and some sort of Yakumian writing under it.

“No it’s not.” said Christian as he came downstairs from the room.

“What do you mean?”

“I... I found Alice.” said Christian as he turned to the map. “There’s a small mountain range on the north side of Yarzon. According to what I believe then there should be a tower about here.” he pointed to a point on the highlighted section of the map. Kamo looked down and saw a note saying that

highlighted sections should be avoided. “That’s where they’re keeping Alice. I’m going there before taking on Kon.”

Christian began to leave when Michelle stopped him. “Do you realize what you’re doing? We’re here on a mission. We can’t just abandon it to save some girl!”

Christian drew his sword without thinking. “I’m going. If you guys, if you don’t want to then stay here and I’ll be back later; but I am going to find her.” Michelle walked away as Schala and Kamo both stared at him. Finally without saying a word Christian grabbed his sack and left the room.

Christian turned around and faced the gates of town as he made it out. He knew it was ten times more dangerous to go alone and he should probably wait for after Kon was killed and then come back here to save Alice; but he didn’t know how long that woman was going to wait for that answer to come to him. He stopped to think, and quickly decided that one of the few people he still cared about was still alive, and he knew he was going to save them no matter what the cost or risk. He turned and started walking north as Yarzon castle already

could be seen in the distance. He continued on his path with two thoughts going through his mind: why the pendant was so important and how he was going to get past the castle undetected.

* * *

Back at the inn Michelle came downstairs as Schala and Kamo were playing a traveler's game with marbles left on one of the lobby tables.

"Get up and get ready to leave." called Michelle to the two. "There's somewhere we need to go." Michelle grabbed their bags and tossed them to their respective owners.

"Where are we going?" asked Schala in a calm manner.

"To the US embassy in Yarzon. Commander's waiting there and I need to brief him on a few things."

Kamo and Schala both tried to respond. If she told Commander about Christian disobeying Michelle's orders and going to find Alice, they would all be on the next trip home. However, if that

happened it may save Christian some beatings or even his life if he's captured by Yakumian forces.

* * *

There was a trail leading up into the mountains where the snowfield began as Christian made his way through he could constantly feel a drop in temperature as he moved further into the icy valley. Christian wrapped his jacket around him tighter as he continued his path into the mountains.

Inside the valley, it seemed like a maze for Christian to make it through. He found a sign that seemed to point his way toward the tower, but ice had covered the entire sign and what he could read was Yakumian. After trying to decipher the Yakumian writing he gave up and pressed onward in the direction the sign was pointing.

The wind picked up and it became even colder as a breeze of flurried snow came falling from the darkened sky. Christian hurried through to find the tower before nightfall because he knew that if he couldn't find shelter before nightfall, he was dead for sure. The snow soon picked up as if

somebody was trying to stop his progress, and the view he could see became shorter and shorter before the horizon he saw in the distance was just a faint glow.

He saw a cave up ahead and headed for it. Christian kept moving trying to escape the cold that was encroaching on him. He grabbed his heart and felt it begin to move slower. He was losing body heat, and fast. If the shelter was not reached and a fire was not made soon enough, then he would be buried under the now even faster snowfall that came around.

Christian saw the cave get closer before it seemed to just magically disappear. He wondered if it was a snow mirage caused by that sorceress that summoned him here. He couldn't think for too long because soon five goblins all jumped out of the snow wearing the fur of some kind of white animal he couldn't recognize. The goblins all pulled out some jagged and sharp looking knives as they continued their approach toward Christian.

"I'm really not looking to fight," said Christian at the approaching goblin. "I actually could use your help in getting to the tower that's

around here.” The goblins just made a few eerie grunts and continued their approach. One finally raised its knife and Christian realized he had no choice. He drew his own sword and swung it around a few times. After about ten seconds he put the sword back in the sheath and all of the goblins fell to the ground dead.

“I don’t have any more time for this.” said Christian as he quickly moved back down the mountain.

* * *

At the main gates to Yarzon Castle, Michelle approached both guards that were standing in front of the gate. The guard on the left stopped her.

“Tu mai sai duemo?” asked the guard in Yakumian. Kamo and Schala were both confused at the words since neither one of them spoke Yakumian and became worried Michelle’s cover might have been blown.

“Wese cara er vew er laisiko, io cenmponas weg mare les ilsento als o stroma.” replied Michelle

in the same language. The guard said nothing, nodded to his partner, and the partner opened the gate.

Inside the town Schala became amazed at the actual size of the town, remarkable as it was to only have been built a few years ago. All of the buildings looked new, and there seemed to be no sign of crime or any kind of slums in the streets at all.

However, first glances were deceiving. Just then a small boy came running out from behind a building, holding some kind of bag. Three soldiers appeared from nowhere and immediately killed the boy. Schala and Kamo both stared in disbelief at the sight of the murder of just a small kid. What shocked Kamo, however, was the armor the soldiers were wearing. Kamo had grown up in the underground and had even been interested in the Yakumian army before Kon took over, but these soldiers were not Yakumian troops, they seemed to be something else.

“We should probably hurry.” said Michelle to Kamo and Schala. “Yakumians tend to not react nicely around Americans exploring their own

territory.” Kamo agreed and both followed Michelle to the side of the street. In the corner of town was a building that Michelle seemed to be heading toward.

“I thought you’d said there was an embassy here?” said Schala as they continued walking.

“Well, not a legal one, if you want to put it that way. Commander prefers to call it a ‘temporary spy operation’.” replied Michelle. Kamo was still wondering what the soldiers actually were. The green, glowing eyes he saw underneath their helmets seemed to suggest some type of creature that wasn’t human. He tried to shake the thought out of his head before rejoining the girls into a small building in the corner of the town, tucked between two walls.

* * *

Back on the mountain Christian was tired, hungry, and freezing. The mountains had proven treacherous and Christian was not sure how much longer he could hold out. Finally he knelt to the ground. He leaned against a hard surface he found behind him. He felt behind him. It was stone, but

not like the other stone in the mountain. It was flat and somewhat polished. Christian gathered some of his energy and looked at the colossal structure in front of him. He looked up and could not even tell where the tower ended. This was the tower he was looking for, and inside he knew he would find more than just Alice. He snuck around the back where there was no path and rested in an alcove for the battle he knew waited inside.

Chapter VII

By the time Christian had regained his strength, night had fallen on the snowy mountainside. Christian gathered his belongings and headed into the large white tower. He swore to himself he couldn't hear anybody leaving or going into the tower while he was recovering, but the way things had been in the world the last several months Christian wasn't about to take any chances about what was considered impossible.

Inside the tower was a large carving on the floor in the shape of some large dragon-looking creature. Christian walked inside and saw the inside bricks were just as white as the outside of the tower. The ceiling was about fifty feet above him so Christian knew that he would be going up, and from the shape of the tower, a long way up. Christian decided to quit looking at the tower and move toward the small alcove containing some stairs upward. When Christian entered the alcove he seemed to be pushed back by somebody he couldn't quite see at the time.

Christian stumbled to his feet and looked back at the entrance to the alcove. He drew his sword when he noticed it was the one person he was waiting for his revenge on.

“Been a long time, Mia.” said Christian as he walked toward the center of the room.

* * *

Michelle took Schala and Kamo down a flight of stairs which led into an underground base for the Americans to spy on the inside of the Yakumian Empire. Once at the bottom of the staircase Michelle led the two through a seeming labyrinth of green dots and maps and other high-tech equipment. Finally they reached the end where Michelle ushered Schala and Kamo into a small office. Inside was Commander, already waiting for the two.

“We have a bit of a problem.” said Michelle as she entered the room.

“I know. I got a report saying that the kid left the group and headed for the mountains toward that weird tower, which has of course once again

disappeared on us.” replied Commander as he stood up and looked at a monitor on the other end of the room above the doorway.

“So, what are we going to do about it?” asked Kamo.

“Nothing,” continued Commander, “All we can do is sit here and wait until we either find the body of your friend or he returns. It may sound cruel, but I won’t risk giving away our presence here just for some kid who feels he has to save the world.”

“That’s not good enough! Now there’s a reason why they wanted Christian alone and I don’t think we want to see what will happen if they get him! I’m rescuing him. Anybody else can just stay here.” shouted Kamo. Kamo was enraged and stormed out of the building.

Inside of the strategic room, Schala stopped Kamo.

“Look,” she said. “I know you want to rescue your friend, but you need to understand that Christian is on his own out there. We don’t know what will happen if he’s caught but I don’t think we

can let anybody else be captured. Please try to understand, Kamo.”

“Don’t worry. I’m a Yakumian, remember? Nobody’s going to notice me.” said Kamo as he left the room.

Outside of the building, Kamo casually walked down the street, trying to blend in. When he made it to the entrance, however, he found himself surrounded by seven Yakumian soldiers. He didn’t want to give away his position as an American, so he allowed the soldier to wrap the rope around his wrist and was dragged off toward the castle.

* * *

Christian and Mia didn’t have any other words for each other. Both of them ran toward each other and clashed their swords. Mia seemed to be giving Christian a hard time, but Christian easily fought back showing no signs of wearing down. Their swords continued to clash for several minutes before Mia knocked Christian back several feet.

Christian was unable to get to his feet before Mia pressed her blade against Christian’s chin.

“You don’t know how many years I’ve dreamt of this moment.” said Mia confidently. Christian quickly grabbed his sword back and cut Mia in the leg, sending her back holding the wound.

“Keep dreaming.” said Christian as he jumped back to his feet and back into the battle.

Mia answered back within a few seconds and cut Christian across the cheek. Christian jumped toward Mia, who fell to the ground when all of the torches in the building suddenly went out. Christian and Mia both stood up and looked at the alcove to see the black-dressed Ultemeir standing in the doorway.

“That is enough. Mia, bring the boy here. I need to show him something.” spoke Ultemeir as she began to walk up the stairs. Christian thought about using the darkness to kill Mia, but shrugged off the thought and followed the traitor up the stairs.

Christian walked up several flights of stairs before finally reaching the top. When he emerged in the doorway into a similar round area like the ground floor, Christian saw the same alter holding Alice as was in his dream. Ultemeir was standing at the alternate end of the alter.

“Did you bring the pendant?” asked Ultemeir. Christian reluctantly pulled off the pendant from around his neck and handed it to the woman. Ultemeir laughed in a dark way and smiled at Christian.

“All right. I kept my end of the bargain, and now you need to keep yours. Give back Alice.” said Christian seriously. He had enough of the tricks Ultemeir pulled on him and was in no mood for anything else.

“Of course,” said Ultemeir, “I said you two would see each other again, but I never said where. I think at both of your executions should be a well enough time for you two to say goodbye.” Ultemeir waved her hand and several Yakumian soldiers ran into the room. Christian was quickly tied up and taken to Yarzon castle.

“At last. The final diamond is mine. Now everything on Earth shall witness the power of the Final Evolution.” laughed Ultemeir as she stared at the glistening diamond in the pendant.

Chapter VIII

Christian woke up in a damp cell in the dungeon of Yarzon Castle. He felt a few drops of water fall on him as he looked up at the cracked ceiling. He saw no water coming from the ceiling, only his hands tied to a bar above him. To his sides he could see both Kamo and Alice tied up the same way he was. Christian tried to wriggle himself free of the ropes, but they were too tight to get out of. He finally gave up and stopped struggling.

The door in front of him opened and in walked the person responsible for everything that had happened, Kon.

“I guess this is the little kid who’s been giving my soldiers a rough time,” said Kon as he entered the room and stood right in front of Christian. “You really thought I wouldn’t find you on my own territory?”

Christian looked Kon straight in the eye. “This was never your land. There was a group here centuries before you Yakumians ever set foot on this land.”

Kon became angry and punched Christian in the stomach. By this time Kamo and Alice had woken up and were watching what was going on.

“Prepare for public executions. We’ll hold them at dawn.” said Kon as he left the room with two guards. Christian just drooped his head in despair at the inevitable.

“Christian,” said Alice. “Do you think you can find us a way out of here?”

“I’m... I’m sorry, everybody.” said Christian, almost to the verge of tears.

“For what?”

“I thought I could do it. I thought I could save everybody and get my revenge, but I guess I’m still just a kid after all. I should’ve just stayed in the ruins of Kansas City and waited for the government to react instead of coming here.”

Kamo gave Christian a stern look. “Oh, come on! You can’t tell me that we came all the way here to give up now! Look, Christian. You’ve led us here and now you’re about ready to go home. This isn’t you. Now, I say we find a way out of here, go talk to Commander, and take on Kon before he

has a chance to attack the States again. You with me Christian?”

Christian finally cheered up. “You... You’re right. This wasn’t about me. It’s about my country. All right. Let’s get out of here.”

Alice looked at Christian. “That’s what I was expecting!”

Christian continued to think of a plan before the door bust open and Commander, accompanied by Schala and Michelle, walked in.

“What are you doing here?” asked Kamo as they began to untie the three.

“I wanted to tell you something, Kamo. You were right. We should protect all citizens of our country,” said Commander. Christian was untied last and Commander handed him his sword. “I think you’ll need this.” continued Commander as Christian once again tied the sheath to his belt.

Christian drew his sword and looked at the blade. “Everybody,” he said, “New plan. We head on up to the throne room and give Kon a little parting gift!” Kamo and the rest of the group nodded as they headed out of the room into the dungeon hall. Inside the hall the first group of

guards came after them and Christian almost immediately defeated them. After the battle, Christian leaned down and grabbed two swords, handing them to Kamo and Commander.

“We should split up, in case we meet any more troops.” said Commander as they arrived at the stairs going up. The rest of the group agreed, and the boys split up heading down one side of the hall while the girls went down the other end.

Christian, Kamo, and Commander met the most troops going upstairs as they fought their way to the throne room. However, more soldiers kept coming, and Christian had no idea how so many soldiers from the Yakumian army were able to keep coming into the main hallway. Finally, Kamo got an idea.

“Just keep them here for a second. I’ll be right back!” said Kamo as he left for the door in the corner of the room.

“I sure hope your friend knows what he’s doing.” said Commander as he and Christian continued to fight off Yakumian troops.

Kon came down the back staircase into the throne room from his bedroom infuriated. As he sat down to begin giving orders to his guards, Ultemeir appeared out of nowhere from behind a pillar in the corner of the room.

“You should have killed the kid when you had the chance.” said Ultemeir in a dark tone as she advanced toward the throne.

“Your prophecy is what got me this far. Now, Tell me how it’s going to end!” demanded Kon harshly as he gave Ultemeir an evil glare.

“This was none of my fault. Your ambition gave way to common sense. In truth, you paved the road for revenge. If you hadn’t attacked Kansas City, the boy wouldn’t be on his way into this room right now.”

At that moment the sky turned dark and the sounds of thunder were heard outside of the castle.

“What have you done, witch!” screamed the infuriated emperor as more thunder began to roar outside the window.

“It has begun. Soon the Destinios shall be released from their seven-billion year old prison and

shall once again wage the civil war that led to their destruction. In the end, all that shall be standing is me! And after I have the power to control Evolvia, I shall become the empress of the universe!”

Ultemeir began to laugh hysterically as Mia came down from the back stairway also.

“But,” said Mia as she walked toward Ultemeir, scared from the speech Ultemeir had just given, “you said I would be spared also when the Destinos were released.”

“Oh, I lied.” laughed Ultemeir as she began to walk out.

“You mean... I betrayed my friends and my adopted family for a lie!” screamed Mia. Mia drew her sword and lunged at Ultemeir. Ultemeir raised her hand and used her magic to stop Mia dead in her tracks.

“Mia, I never got to thank you for how helpful you’ve been.” said Ultemeir as she flung Mia through the wall, leaving only a small pile of stone where she had flown out of. “I guess that’s one pest out of the way.” She then turned to face Kon again. “Oh, by the way. Before Christian kills you, tell him I’ll be waiting at the ritual tower at the

northwest corner of this castle.” Ultemeir turned around and began to walk out of the tower. Kon motioned to his guards and they tried to block her from exiting. She flung them out the same hole she threw Mia out of and left the room.

Kon put his hand over his mouth and watched the door to the main hallway. For one of the first times in his life he could actually feel fear.

Chapter IX

As Christian and Commander continued to fight the hordes of Yakumian soldiers coming toward them, Kamo ran his way through the underground tunnel through where the soldiers were seemingly spawning from. Kamo slashed his way through the soldiers rushing through the tunnels until he found a large door.

Kamo defeated the two guards and walked through the door into a large underground dome structure. Kamo looked in amazement wondering how the Yakumians could build such a large structure underneath the castle. Kamo forgot his trance at the structure and moved to the large machine at the center.

“Hm,” said Kamo to himself. “Just when you thought you’d found all the dirt Kon was hiding, you find Kon violating one of Yakumi’s most sacred rules. What’s next, guards run out here with rifles?”

At that moment five Yakumian soldiers, all carrying old-fashioned rifles, appeared out of the

shadows and surrounded Kamo. “That just figures.” said Kamo as the guards moved closer to him. As the guards got closer Kamo looked into their eyes and saw that faintish green luminescent glow in them as he saw in the soldiers in the city. He then turned to the large machine. Kamo thought about the enclosing soldiers and then pulled out a typical American fragmentation grenade.

“Gift from the States!” shouted Kamo as he threw the grenade toward the large machine. The grenade exploded and although it didn’t destroy the machine altogether, it did manage to make the machine short circuit and stop producing the soldiers. The four soldiers around Kamo instantly dissipated into thin air like ghosts. Kamo looked around for a second. “That... was really, really weird.” said Kamo as he ran upstairs to help Christian and Commander.

In the main hallway of the castle, Christian and Commander stared in shock as the soldiers that were surrounding them dissipated into the air. Their way was now clear and they could head into the throne room. Commander stopped Christian before he opened the door.

“Wait,” said Commander, “I should get back to the base, tell them what’s going on. You go on and finish Kon. I’m rooting for you, kid.” Christian nodded and he and Commander walked in different directions.

* * *

The woman in the white robe walked into a small central chamber in an unknown area. She walked into the center of the area that a large horseshoe-shaped table encircled and stared at the six people wearing brown cloaks sitting at the other end of the table.

“So, I see that Ultemeir has reawakened the Destinos.” said a man’s voice from one of the men in the brown cloaks.

“Yes,” said the woman. “Ultemeir knows Kon’s rule will not last past this night so I see she is making other plans.”

“Other plans?” said another voice from the group of people in brown cloaks.

“Ultemeir is planning on something more powerful, and more deadly, than the Destinos. I

think she's planning on using the boy to reawaken the one thing we've feared for centuries. We knew the time when 'he' would return to finish the humans was coming, but we had no idea that if the boy gets his revenge tonight, his reawakening will be only a couple of years off, instead of a couple centuries like we had predicted."

A murmur of voices rose into the group and then another man looked replied.

"However, what happens if the boy fails to stop Kon and Ultemeir?" said the cloaked man.

"Then Ultemeir will use the Destinos to destroy Earth and build her own empire."

"So, you're saying that either outcome of this battle will result in the destruction of the universe either sooner or later."

"I'm afraid we've found ourselves in a lose-lose situation." The woman looked up at a ceiling that seemed to blend in with the dark walls. She knew that one way or another, things were going to change tonight.

* * *

Ulteimeir was waiting at the top of the ritual tower in a ceremonial room with six pedestals around a raised platform in the center. She looked outside in delight as the sky became darker and an even darker cloud began to hang over the castle. She had chosen this spot to be the site of the revival of the Destinos. This way she could destroy everybody who stood a chance to stop her before she began her sweep across the planet. Only a couple of hours remained until the revival.

Ulteimeir's self-gloating to herself was short lived when Alice burst through the door to the ritual room.

"So," said Alice, "You're the one who captured me and used me for bait. Time for a little payback." Alice walked forward and stood on the raised platform. Ulteimeir smiled and stood on the platform facing Alice. "You like deals. Let's see who's the better woman. No magic, no weapons. Just fists. Deal?"

"You haven't got a chance." said Ulteimeir. Ulteimeir drew her sword and threw it to the side of the room. She then removed the skirt of her black

dress to reveal a type of loose pants. “Well, let’s begin.”

Ulteimeir ran forward and started to throw several punches toward Alice. Alice blocked all of them and counterattacked with a few punches of her own. Alice and Ulteimeir continued to fight while they circled the platform. Ulteimeir gave up on her fists and spun around kicking Alice square in the stomach. Alice was sent flying back and landed on her back on the platform, barely missing landing on one of the podiums holding a diamond.

Alice quickly jumped back to her feet and countered Ulteimeir with a few more punches as Ulteimeir fought back fiercely.

A few minutes later, lightning struck the roof. The roof was sent plummeting toward the ground in flames and Ulteimeir and Alice were left under a black sky.

“It’s almost time,” said Ulteimeir as she walked to the dead center of the platform. The six diamonds around her began to glow and Ulteimeir looked up at the sky. “Humans, your existence is about to end.” Ulteimeir chuckled as Alice looked around for some way to stop her.

A few feet above where the roof used to be, a large portal of some sort began to open up. Alice stood in shock as several dragon-type creatures flew out of the portal and began to circle the castle. Ultemeir continued to laugh as more dragons began to flow out of the portal.

Michelle and Schala had now made it up to the top of the tower as the Destinos were emerging from the portal. Schala looked around and noticed the glowing diamonds around the platform.

“Alice!” said Schala. “She’s controlling them through the diamonds! Maybe if we destroyed one of them...” Schala couldn’t finish her sentence before Ultemeir sent a bolt of magic flying right into her. Schala lied on the floor injured while Ultemeir continued to call even more Destinos.

Michelle wasn’t about to waste any more time. She grabbed one of the diamonds closest to her. The diamond seemed to be resisting, and was very hot to touch. Michelle ignored and looked for a place to toss it. She noticed a window to her right as Ultemeir finally noticed that a diamond was missing. Ultemeir tried to stop Michelle but couldn’t as the diamond went flying out the window and fell to the

ground below, shattering after impact. Ultemeir screamed in anger and the portal began to violently dissolve.

A Destino then landed on the platform behind Ultemeir and Alice, Schala, and Michelle all looked in shock as the Destino stared at them for a few seconds.

“What exactly do you think you can do? The Destinos are already here! This world is mine!” said Ultemeir.

Alice just pointed at her as she turned around to see the large, gray-scaled dragon looking straight at her. The three girls watched as the Destino grabbed Ultemeir and began to fly off with her. Ultemeir’s pendant fell to the ground as the Destino carried her off into the portal.

“Well,” said Schala, holding her wound. “That’s one problem out of the way.” The portal had dissolved but several Destinos were still circling the castle. The girls looked out the window facing the castle and saw on the roof Christian standing face to face with Kon.

Chapter X

Christian burst into the throne room as Kon drew his sword. He turned to the side noticed a large hole in the wall and then continued to walk toward the emperor. As Christian took a few more steps Kon ran to a side door and Christian followed him through the door and up the stairs.

In the main hallway Kamo walked back in to see no soldiers or Christian and Commander anywhere. Kamo walked toward the center when he heard a voice coming from one of the dungeons downstairs. He thought for a second and then decided to go to the dungeon.

Christian followed Kon up a couple of flights of stairs before emerging on the roof. He could see the taller towers around him, but otherwise all that could be seen is the stretch of mountains in one direction, the plains in another, and plains leading to the beginning of the desert in another.

Kon ran to the edge of the roof and looked down. Anybody who fell from this height was

automatically considered dead, but Ultemeir prophesized that Christian would win this fight. Kon seemed to believe there was no way out of this fight. Kon turned to face Christian.

Kon and Christian were only a few feet away from each other. Kon tried to speak but he couldn't as Christian had been waiting for this day for months now. Christian immediately began to lunge at Kon. Kon blocked the attacks.

Kamo continued to walk through the dark tunnels of the dungeon as he made it to the cell he heard the voice from. Kamo looked inside the damp cell and then opened it. He checked for traps and then walked toward the body he saw.

It was a young girl, probably not much older than he was. He stared to check if there was any way to identify her and found only one thing; a Yakumian royal pendant.

"This girl's a member of royalty? But, not even Kon would stoop that low, would he?" said Kamo as he picked the girl up and carried her outside.

Back on the roof, Christian and Kon fought almost equally. Christian jumped around and

continued to surprise Kon with his speed. Kon continued to counterattack with amazing agility. Kon managed to scrape Christian in the leg, but Christian then spun around and cut Kon across his back.

After one high attack Kon sent at Christian, Christian blocked the attack and the swords clashed and remained tangled as Kon and Christian moved closer to each other.

“Why are you even fighting, kid?” asked Kon.

Christian quickly replied, “Millions of lives were lost to your invasion. You made one mistake though. You forgot to kill me!” Christian kicked Kon back and Kon fell to the floor of the roof. Kon quickly jumped back to his feet. The next several attacks seemed more of desperation than an actual attempt at winning.

Kon then made a low swing to Christian’s legs. Christian jumped over the blade and used the side of his own sword to slap Kon across the face. Kon went flying to the other side of the roof. He then jumped up again and rushed toward Christian with even more a speed that suggested desperation.

In the cell, the girl had woken up as Kamo was taking care of her. Kamo had finally realized she had to be a member of the royal family. Her tattered violet robes she was wearing and the pendant all but guaranteed it. Even the dirt on her face and in her long, flowing blue hair wasn't enough to hide the royalty in her eyes. Kamo stood up as she began to wake up.

"W... Who are you? Another guard?" asked the girl.

"No, I'm actually part of the rebellion against Kon. Why exactly are you here?" replied Kamo.

"My name is... Miion. Princess Miion of the Yakumian Empire. Daughter to the rightful emperor of Yakumi, Matumo. You see, after the invasion of Japan, the three generals of the Yakumi army fought over how the new government should be run. My father was chosen as the first leader of whatever government was set up. My father wanted an empire, while Kon wanted a dictatorship, which is of course what our government technically is right now, and the third, Layo, wanted a republic. Layo was the first to be killed by Kon's assassins. He had

a daughter named Kasumi, but nobody exactly knows where she is right now. My father was the second targeted by Kon. After my father's "illness" killed him, Kon assumed rule, and as you've seen from the town life has been a living nightmare since then. It only took a few months for him to declare me suspicious of plotting a rebellion and I was thrown in here."

It took a couple of minutes for Kamo to fully absorb what exactly happened. He knew the struggle to choose a leader was difficult, but had no idea Kon was pulling the strings to make himself leader.

"We should get you out of here before the guards come back." said Kamo.

"No, you don't understand," replied Miion. "If Kon finds out I'm missing..."

Kamo interrupted her. "I don't think Kon's going to have any say in this country much longer. I should probably take you to see the fight." Kamo ran out of the room and Miion instantly followed him.

Kon and Christian's swords clashed once again as a large clap of thunder rolled over their

heads. Christian and Kon quickly dodged each other's attacks as a heavy rain began to fall. The roof almost automatically became slippery and Christian began to lose his footing on the wet surface.

Kon used this to his advantage and knocked Christian's sword out of his hand. He then kicked Christian into the ground and Christian was now lying on the floor, defenseless. Kon kicked him in the stomach.

"Get up." said Kon as Christian rose to his knees. "I can't believe she told me to be afraid of you. After all this, you only came this way to die. Well, I guess I can do that." Kon raised his sword in alignment with Christian's neck. Kon then quickly lifted his blade into the air and came down on Christian at an amazingly fast speed.

Christian then managed to dodge the blade stroke and grabbed both of Kon's wrists. Christian squeezed tighter and Kon managed to drop his sword. For a brief moment, both Christian and Kon glared each other in the eyes.

"You never realized something. Some things are worth fighting for." said Christian. Christian

then instantly spun around and kicked Kon square in the chest. Kon slipped on the wet tile and went falling off the edge of the castle.

The rain almost instantly let up. Christian walked to the end of the roof and looked down to see Kon's lifeless body on the ground in front of the main gate to Yarzon Castle. He instantly dropped to his knees and breathed a heavy sigh of relief. Kon was dead. His revenge had at last been completed. He looked up at the largest tower and saw the three girls, Michelle, Schala, and of course Alice, screaming and celebrating Kon's defeat.

The rain stopped and the portal reopened allowing the Destinos to return to their own realm before the rift between the two worlds was sealed forever. Only one Destino stayed, and it landed in front of Christian. Christian stood at the edge of the building as the Destino got closer to him.

The Destino then disintegrated into a yellow light. Christian became confused at what was going on, but glad it wasn't something worse. The yellow light then flew right into Christian's body. A surge of power began to flow through him, and Christian had no idea what exactly happened, but he seemed

to be safe and in one piece. The black clouds parted and sunlight once again lighted the land over the city of Yarzon. The first rays of light that shined down landed right over Christian.

Chapter XI

A week had passed since Kon's defeat. Miion had assumed rule of Yakumi, and Christian and the rest of the group were just happy to be able to sleep in peace again.

Miion had built a balcony overlooking the city of Yarzon and Commander, Schala, Michelle, Kamo, Alice and Christian were all standing in front of the gates to Yarzon Castle.

"We are gathered here this morning," said Miion, "to honor these six heroes who defeated the tyrant Kon, saved the world from an unspeakable evil, and in the end averted a war between the Yakumi Empire and the United States of America. From now on, these heroes shall be granted unrestricted travel throughout the Yakumi Empire, and are under the protection of my personal generals while they remain in Yakumi territory."

Alice looked up and saw the generals. One, a small, but heavy man with a black beard and semi-wrinkled skin, was standing to the left of Miion. To her right was a younger woman, with

short-cut blue hair and a sinister look behind her beauty. Alice was sure they would be running into those two soon.

Miion continued the celebration throughout the night and Christian and the others left for home in the morning. While surveying the damage caused by the final battle, Miion found a small pendant. When she picked it up, several images began to swirl through her head. She quickly gained knowledge about the Destinos, Evolvias, the Final Evolution, and all the events that led up to this point. Miion quickly began to be corrupted by this new wealth of knowledge and a dark smile fell across her face. She knew then that Yakumi hadn't seen the darkest of its days yet.

* * *

Christian and Alice stood on a cliff overlooking the slow rebuilding of Kansas City. He had spent the entire afternoon after their arrival home telling her of the event that transpired after the attacks leading to her rescue.

“It was a long journey, but... it’s over, right?” asked Alice.

“Yeah, it’s over.” replied Christian as he leaned over and kissed Alice. Christian and Alice continued to kiss as the sun set over the horizon of Kansas City.

* * *

In the distant plains, out of sight from Christian and Alice, stood the woman with the blonde hair, who was watching Christian, waiting for the right time to tell him of what was about to happen.

“So,” she said to herself, “he thinks that by getting his revenge he can just go home happy. Even he should know that revenge, even saving the world, has consequences. Enjoy your revenge, Christian. Enjoy your time of peace. While it lasts.” The woman then walked away into the emptiness of the plains, waiting for the day the next story would begin.

Part II:

Serenade of Destruction

Chapter XII

Two years had passed since the defeat of Kon in Yarzon Castle. The Yakumi Empire had slowly begun to walk the road to recovery. Princess Miion had almost immediately begun to reinstate the freedoms Kon took away during his rule. It seemed that the entire world once again rested in peace, but peace was only skin deep.

The pendant Miion found after the final battle had filled her head with several thoughts, most of which were about the Destinos and several other things Ultemeir had used to nearly take over the universe. The thought that remained in her head was that if Ultemeir was able to use magic and conquer the universe, than so could Miion. She would have to find a quieter way to do so, however, because if Christian found out about it, he was sure to stop her as well.

The young princess' thoughts were disturbed by one of Yakumi's top generals.

“Your highness, I’ve received a report about the Plainswalkers from the guards outside the gate.

These creatures that have been attacking our country seem to be growing. What are your orders?” asked the female general, Kristie.

Out of the top military in the Yakumian army, Kristie was known as one of the most decorated soldiers, if not also one of the most brutal. In fact, she was one of the few veterans of the invasion of the United States left in government service. Even though Miion had given strict orders to honor all American tourists, Kristie had other plans, plans that would, like Kon, bring the war to American soil. In fact, Kristie was renowned with such a warmongering and brutal reputation, rumors were always flying about her own soldiers considering abandoning her if it wasn't for their own safety to stay in the army.

“Wait a few days,” said Miion, staring obsessively at her pendant. “We'll track the monsters' growth, and then, you and the army will take care of them.”

Kristie was in shock. Usually Miion would turn down any request for military action, even if they were monsters. Kristie decided not to say anything and left the princess' room.

Miion forgot everything that Kristie said. She continued to stare at the pendant and plan her strategy for universal domination. Since one of the diamonds was destroyed Ultemeir's plan was no good. She decided to wait for this 'Final Evolution' to take place and then would make up her mind about what to do.

* * *

It was a cold night in Kansas City as the usual problems with reconstruction had begun to occur. Many of the buildings and stores had not been renovated or even occupied since the destruction which made these stores open to looters.

Two robbers came running down an alley way between two decrepit buildings. The police cars that had been following them stopped at the edge of the alleyway. One of the looters looked back to see that the police had stopped following them. On the rooftops there was a masked figure chasing after them that neither one of the looters noticed.

Finally the two looters arrived in a corner area of the alley where even the flashing lights of the police car were not visible. One of the looters turned around to talk to the other.

“Hey, Jim, I think we’re home free.” said the looter as he turned to find his partner missing. The looter looked around and drew his knife. He took a couple of steps back toward the entrance and at that moment the body of the other looter fell to the ground in front of him. The looter instantly became scared and started to run back toward the police cars.

Just then the masked figure dropped in front of the looter. The looter was so shocked that he fell to his feet and looked at the tall figure. The figure removed its mask to reveal that it was Christian. Christian had gotten a little stronger and a little more masculine in the two years since the attacks on Kansas City, but otherwise Christian still looked pretty much the same as he did two years prior.

“Y...y...you’re...” muttered the looter as Christian drew his sword and began to advance toward him.

The looter picked up his knife and lunged at Christian. Christian didn't say anything and dodged the attack. He then turned to face the looter who tried to regain his balance and as the looter managed to get up and lunge again Christian stabbed the looter once. After removing his sword Christian gathered the bodies and made a call to the police.

After Christian hung up the phone, he swung around to see a woman in a white robe staring at him. Christian placed his sword back in its sheath as he walked toward the blonde-haired woman.

"What do you want?" asked Christian as he continued to walk forward. The woman closed her eyes and then looked straight at Christian again.

"I'm here to give you a warning. A dark power is once again regaining power on an island nation to the west, and I need your help to fight it." said the woman.

"What kind of power are we talking about, and why am I the one who could stop it?"

"Because she is seeking you. You are the one who stopped Kon when the empire was at its

weakest, and now she fears you will repeat it and stop her before her plans are completed.”

“It can’t be...Miion’s planning something like Kon?”

“Yes, but this time things are on a much grander scale than what Kon and Ultemeir planned. I suggest you immediately leave for Yakumi before Miion discovers you’re headed this way. When you reach Yarzon, seek Kasumi, the rebel leader, and find a way to stop the princess before she can start a war on an unimaginable scale.”

“I should go get Alice and Kamo first.”

“There’s no time. Every second you waste here gives the universe a smaller chance of surviving.”

“Who exactly are you?”

“Just call me Master Destiny.”

Christian tried to answer but in a flash the woman was gone. He stood in the emptiness of the alleyway and pondered the events that had just occurred. For some reason, he decided to take Master Destiny’s advice and leave Kansas City once again for the Yakumi Empire.

Chapter XIII

It took about two weeks for Christian to reach Los Angeles port from Kansas City. From the many ships docked in the harbor Christian was already sure that something was going on. It appeared that trade was stopped from Yakumi to the States.

He passed several dockworkers on the way to the main office on the port. Many of them were just lounging on the side of the port, and a few had even taking up their free time to do a little fishing. As Christian made it to the door into the port master's office, he found the door locked and decided to wait until the port master arrived.

Christian waited until nightfall and still the port master did not show. He tried several times to get some rest, but the dockworkers staying overnight, whether it was fishing, arm wrestling, or poker, seemed to cause enough noise to forbid anyone of sleep.

Finally, during one of the early hours of the morning, Christian finally managed to get some

sleep. In a few hours, however, he was awakened by somebody yelling down the side of the pier.

Christian jumped to his feet and looked around as the sun was beginning to rise on the port. He then found three large sailors were chasing a small, young man with straight red hair and glasses. The kid looked to be slightly older than Christian, but with the way he was running it was hard to tell anything about him.

Christian ran after the sailors. The boy had some speed, but the sailors seemed to be catching up with him quickly. Several of the sailors enjoying their free time stopped to watch the chase. Finally, the red-headed boy backed himself into a corner. The three sailors began to close in on him as Christian approached.

There was a parked car on the side of the pier and Christian used it to propel himself over the sailors and in front of the boy. Christian drew his sword and faced the sailors, who were glaring at the boy and had pulled out knives in the meantime.

“What exactly is going on here?” asked Christian.

“Out of our way,” said one of the sailors, “or we’ll cut you down just like this piece of garbage here!” The sailor took a menacing step toward Christian and the boy, but Christian swung his sword, slightly scratching the sailor and drawing a little blood.

“I don’t think you’re getting this kid until you tell me what he did to deserve to die.” continued Christian.

“You little rat,” said the sailor, “This kid cheated us out of fifty dollars at the poker game last night and we want our money!”

“That’s a small amount of money to kill over. I don’t think so.”

The three sailors had quit talking and all three of them began to advance on Christian. The sailor to the left of the leader lunged at Christian. Christian stepped to the side as the sailor missed him and went tumbling into the ocean below. The other two began slashing their knives wildly and seemed to be completely unaware of how to actually fight. Christian kicked one of the sailors into the other and both of them fell to the ground unconscious.

Christian then dug through the pockets of the main sailor and found a small bag of cash.

“Thanks for the tip.” said Christian as he stashed the bag in his own and turned to the boy. The boy seemed to be in awe and unable to speak from how quickly Christian defeated the three of them.

“You do realize you just beat up the three toughest sailors in L.A. in under a minute, right?” spoke the boy as Christian returned his sword to its sheath.

“And your point is?” replied Christian as he started to walk back toward the port master’s office. The boy turned and started to follow him.

“Those were really some cool moves out there. How old exactly are you? To be that good you’d have to be about twenty-four, twenty-five...”

“Seventeen.”

“What? How long did it take you to learn those abilities?”

“About six months. I saved your life. Now, I need to get to Yakumi, and I could use your help.”

“Oh, I don’t think you’ll be going to Yakumi for a while. The government’s ordered all

travel to the empire restricted until after the summit in Yarzon this weekend.”

Christian looked away and started to talk to himself. “Summit? If Miion’s planning on starting any trouble then while the President is in Yarzon, this would be the perfect chance. She would need some type of excuse though; a rebel faction, or defecting general, something of that sort to stop all relations with the States. I think... I bet she’s planning on starting a war...” He turned back to the boy. “We need to get to Yarzon, quickly. If we don’t something terrible is going to happen.”

“Like I said before, the only ship bound for Yakumi is the President’s private boat, and your chances of getting on that are slim.”

“Then you’re coming with me. I’ve lived through slim chances before, I can do it again.”

Christian and the boy went running down the dock toward the private pier for governmental use.

“By the way, the name’s Leon.” continued the boy as they continued to run down to the dock.

Leon wasn’t kidding. Secret Service officers were everywhere as Christian and Leon approached

the dock. Christian also checked the sides of the boat and saw security cameras on each corner of the boat. He knew he wasn't getting on easily. Christian was already sure there was no way he could sneak onto the boat undetected. He turned and walked down a set of stairs to the dock. He decided he would try to talk to the president.

At the gates to the dock, two Secret Service agents stopped the two boys.

"We can't let you through here, kid. Government business." said one of the more muscular guards at the gate.

"I need to talk to the president concerning something very serious." replied Christian.

The agent thought for a second before bursting into laughter. Even Christian knew that his comments were a pretty lame excuse for a reason to board a government vessel. The guard continued to laugh at the two teenagers before having the other guard escort them out of the port.

Outside the gates to the port, Christian stood next to a sign wondering what they could do to get into the Yakumi Empire. It seemed that travel by

boat was out of the question at that point as the President's ship departed from the pier.

Chapter XIV

A couple more days had passed and still no ships left the port of Los Angeles for the Yakumi Empire. Christian had found a way to make enough money on the monsters on the roads outside of town to support himself and eat while he waited for the ship to arrive to take him to Yakumi.

What's more was that Christian had begun to have some dark nightmares every time he closed his eyes. In his nightmares, he was standing off against a man who looked a lot like him, and this man easily destroyed the universe around Christian. Christian tried to shrug off the nightmares, but something inside him said that something huge was going to happen to him when he arrived in Yakumi.

* * *

General Kristie walked down the hallway toward Princess Miion's room carrying a sheet of paper. Kristie walked into the dark room as Miion

was sitting on her bed staring obsessively at her pendant as usual.

“We’ve got a big problem.” said Kristie as she threw the paper down on Miion’s bed.

“Somebody told Christian that something is about to happen and that he needs to stop us to prevent the end of the universe!”

Miion smiled. “Let him come,” she said.

“He’s the key to Evolvia and I need him to tell me what exactly I need to do to unleash him. So you see, everything is falling right into my plans.”

“Then, you’ve planned this?”

“Of course. Now, I want you to go to the kid’s hometown and pick up some *leverage* for me so we can make sure that he doesn’t pull any moves on us while I’m preparing for Evolvia. Also make sure all the preparations for the President are finished. Do you understand?”

“Yes, Ma’am. So it’s true, the war is beginning?”

“Yes. The war has just begun.”

Kristie was walking out of the castle when the second general in Miion’s army, General Leo, stopped her.

“What’s our plans?” asked Leo as Kristie walked by him trying to ignore the question. As General Kristie was known as the warmongering general in the Yakumian army, Leo was known for the exact opposite. In fact, Leo was so liked with the townspeople that they nicknamed him the Peace Keeper. This was primarily named to him because not only did he serve as a law enforcement officer in the city of Yarzon, but also was rumored to have been so well groomed every day that it made anybody not want to cause any problems while he was in a mile radius of the town.

Leo and Kristie had been known to have several disputes throughout the last couple years about the possibility of going to war against either the rest of Asia or the United States. Miion tended to listen to Leo more, which irritated Kristie to the point where there were whispers Kristie may be planning some kind of military coup against Miion.

“We prepare training our troops tomorrow even harder. The war is coming.” replied Kristie as she went and walked with Leo down the road to the town.

“What war? Miion’s been against any kind of military action since she took power.”

“I don’t know. Something’s changed her. It’s for the best, I’m sure. Kon should have finished off the United States when he started.”

“We can’t attack the States! Their military is still too powerful, treaty or no!”

“No, the Americans rely too much on their firearms and the treaty forbids the use of firearms or any modern weapons on the field of combat, thus giving us the advantage.”

“What about Christian?”

“I’ve got him taken care of. He may be powerful, but he’s got a weakness, and I’m betting he would even die for this particular weakness.”

“You can’t be serious. Christian was prophesized to destroy the empire and it looks like you’re giving him the motivation to do it!”

Kristie gave up trying to reason with Leo and finally grabbed the general by the collar of his dark blue armor.

“Listen to me,” she said with a tone of hostility in her voice, “In a little over a month both the United States President will be dead along with

Christian. This leaves the States vulnerable to attack and that's when I march my army straight through their pathetic country. My only issue is that the princess won't be able to go through with it, and that I have a problem with. Now, you can either join me or I could execute you as a traitor and a spy for the States right here and now. What's your decision?" Kristie removed her ornamental gold sword from its sheath and pressed it to Leo's neck. Leo swallowed and then bent down on his knee.

"Your... Your desire will be done. I will follow you to war if it does come to that." proclaimed Leo as a small tear welled up in his eye. Leo may have been known as a Peacekeeper, but he certainly wasn't known for being able to stand up for what he believed in.

"Good. Go back to your fortress and wait until I summon you." Kristie walked out of the city. Leo remained on the ground and wondered what he could do to get himself out of the mess Kristie had created.

* * *

Outside the gates to Los Angeles port, Christian woke in the middle of the night as a cold wind blew through the lifeless harbor. Leon was sound asleep, which made the harbor even lonelier than it was before.

There had to be a way for Christian to get to Yakumi before Miion had a chance to do anything to the President. Christian thought of a way. The Black Hole Mine had been sealed by the military just in case anyone in Yakumi decided to use the passageway as a center for illegal immigration, so getting through most of the blockades and landmines was out of the question. Most planes also refused to make runs to Yakumi, and with all planes needing clearance to even get off the ground nowadays, he would be caught before he even got close to Yarzon.

Christian stood up and walked to the edge of a pier, staring into the black horizon. As he looked around in the corner of his eye he saw a small cargo ship docking in one of the nearby piers. He ran to Leon and then went to the pier where the ship had docked.

The Captain of the ship was standing in the doorway as a few people proceeded to get on.

Christian ran to the Captain.

“Excuse me,” said Christian, trying to regain his breath from running around the port. “Where is this ship headed?”

“I’m not supposed to tell anybody,” said the Captain, who proceeded to whisper “but we’re headed to Yakumi with American fighters who are planning to compete in the Yakumi Festival fighting tournament. The grand prize is an audience with Princess Miion herself, and I hear that that’s one girl you really need to see.”

Christian turned to Leon. “This ship’s headed to Yakumi. I think it would be best if we got on now.” said Christian.

“I think you’re right,” said Leon. “I’m guessing that if we don’t get on now we won’t be getting to the country in time to stop the incident.” whispered Leon.

“Wait a second!” yelled the Captain. “I know you’re not going to get on my ship without paying me.”

Christian thought for a second and then pulled out some car keys.

“It’s a Toyota, but it works wonders.” said Christian as he handed the keys to the Captain. The Captain pressed the unlock button and the lights lit up on a red sports car in a nearby parking lot.

“I think it’s a fair trade.” smiled the Captain as he allowed Christian and Leon to go inside.

After a couple more hours the ship departed the United States toward the Yakumi Empire, and Christian was determined to find out exactly what was going on.

Chapter XV

It was quite a long sea trip from Los Angeles to the port town of Raiyko and Leon had gotten sick several times on the trip. Leon continued to get seasick and Christian was never happier to be on Yakumian soil again.

After the ship finished unloading and Leon and Christian gathered their bags, they immediately headed for the gates to the town.

“I hope you brought comfortable shoes,” said Christian as they left the town. “The Captain said it’s about a two day walk straight to get to Yarzon from here.”

In front of the gates the two were stopped by an old man.

“Kids,” he said. “Are you planning on traveling to Yarzon?”

“How did you know?” asked Christian.

“I could tell you were ready to cross the plains, but let me warn you. Be careful when you travel the plains because a vicious monster known as a plainswalker has been wandering the plains lately, searching for the flesh of humans.” Christian

honestly did not believe the man. He had seen his share of monsters, but none that wandered empty plains. Most snuck around outside populated areas for food.

As Christian and Leon left the small port village behind them they could see nothing but beach and ocean; and in front of them, nothing but plains. Christian looked at a map of the Empire and was amazed at how well the Yakumians were able to artificially adapt different parts of the country to different environments. To the south were forests and swamps. West of Yarzon was the snow fields Christian visited in his last trip to Yakumi. To the east were the plains that Christian and Leon were currently on, and to the north was nothing but an endless desert until the very top part of the country, which was Princess Miion's private villa.

About halfway to Yarzon Leon stopped and Christian turned around to see what was wrong.

"I heard something," said Leon as he looked around at the ground. "I think it's coming from below the ground."

As Leon finished his sentence Christian could hear the sound of something running through

the dirt beneath him and drew his sword. He looked at the ground for some sort of indication of what they were, but couldn't find anything. Just then several light brown tentacles flew out of the ground and began to swing wildly at the two.

Leon tried to duck out of the way as he took the brunt of the attacks and Christian began to swat the tentacles away as a few more sprung from the ground.

"Don't tell me you didn't bring a weapon with you!" screamed Christian as he slashed at the tentacles coming straight at him. Leon pulled out a small dagger and started to lightly stab the tentacles that were attacking him.

"I don't think these are all on one creature!" yelled Leon back. "I think we ran into an entire herd!" Just then a couple more tentacles flew out of the ground and one grabbed Leon and picked him up a good seven feet off the ground. Leon's glasses fell to the ground as the tentacle began to swing him around like a doll. Christian ran to the tentacle and hacked at it to try and free Leon. The tentacle writhed for a second before dropping Leon and withdrawing itself into the ground.

After the tentacle was clear underground, Christian formulated a plan. He ran around the circle taking small pieces out of the tentacles, causing enough pain in the creature for it to withdraw the tentacle. Leon also joined in and started to hack at the tentacles until most of them were gone.

“Let’s get out of here, before they decide to come back.” said Christian as him and Leon ran toward Yarzon City.

The city of Yarzon was pretty crowded, as usual, when Christian and Leon entered the front gate. Some sort of festival seemed to be going on.

“This must be the Conquering Day festival,” said Christian as he saw people dressed up and dancing through the streets. The Yakumian people had built their whole lives around war and their festivals were no exception. “We should find a hotel before they’re all taken by tourists.” continued Christian.

It was a couple of hours before Christian and Leon were able to find a hotel with rooms still available. Christian walked into his room, set his bags on the floor and got some rest. It had been

such a long trip and he didn't even care about his nightmares anymore. The room was nice and even had a balcony that gave a decent view of the gargantuan castle in the distance. The clay walls painted white gave a sense of calm to Christian as he shut his eyes and gently went to sleep.

* * *

That night a chill from the western mountains sent the city into freezing temperatures. Several of the citizens who had been celebrating had put on their jackets and headed for their homes. In the main plaza in the city Master Destiny walked to a platform to meet another hooded figure. The hooded figure removed her hood to reveal a small, but beautiful woman with long brunette hair and deep green eyes.

"You're late again." said the girl as she stepped off of the stage for festival performances.

"Well, when you're trying to save the universe, you tend to be a little preoccupied, Kasumi." replied Master Destiny as she stared at Kasumi.

“Has the kid arrived yet?”

“Only a couple hours ago. I think it’s best if we let him sleep through the night.”

“I’m worried. Kristie’s planning something and if I’m correct it has something to do with Christian coming.”

“Yes, Kristie’s planning on taking out Christian, the United States President and Princess Miion herself all during the same incident.”

“How is she going to do that?”

“The tournament is a trap. She’s going to lure all of them there and then unleash her army on all three of them to stop all of them without her being tied directly to it. She’ll blame it on a rogue captain or something after she becomes empress.”

“I need to find a way to stop her.”

“There’s only one way. Talk to Christian and send him to Leo’s fort. Leo knows something’s about to happen to the empire and if Christian forms an alliance with him then Leo’s army might just be enough to stop Kristie. However, Christian getting involved in this crisis might just be what Miion’s planning.”

“What do you mean?”

“There’s something that’s been growing inside Christian since he was born. Now, it wasn’t planned to be released anytime soon and was meant to be passed through Christian’s bloodline, but since Kon and Ultemeir summoned the Destinos the creature inside of Christian is gaining power and very soon it will be released and unleash a wave of destruction so powerful that the entire universe will be consumed by his hatred.”

“So, we need to kill Christian.”

“No! Christian’s the only one who can stop the creature and save the universe.” Master Destiny sighed as she looked straight at Kasumi. “You should know that Christian needs all of us to help him get through this. Things are about to get really bad around here.”

“I know that Kristie’s planning on doing something and I know that Christian is needed to stop her. I guess I’ll go along with your plan as long as nobody gets in the way of my fight against Miion. Agreed?”

“Sounds like a good idea to me. Just make sure to get to him before Kristie finds out he’s here.”

“Good. Now you need to go before we’re spotted by one of Miion’s troops.”

Kasumi waved to Master Destiny as they both ran their separate ways from the stage for the festival.

* * *

That morning a knock came at Christian’s hotel room door. Christian immediately grabbed his sword and walked carefully to the door. As he opened the door he immediately caught sight of three Yakumian soldiers.

“Drop the weapon. We come with a message from General Leo. It says ‘I have the information you seek. If you wish to save both our countries come see me at my desert fortress later tonight’. We don’t want a fight with you.” The soldiers left Christian, who was easily stunned. It was, in fact, the first time he had run into Yakumian soldiers who didn’t want to take his head. Leon was still sleeping as Christian sat on his bed and wondered what he should do. If Leo was being sincere, then

his luck may just turn around; but if he wasn't, then Leo could just be leading him into an ambush.

Christian continued to ponder the situation and decided to go to Leo's fort. The only problem he was facing was Leon. He didn't want to lead him into harm, but he was pretty much doing that if he left him in the middle of the Yakumi Empire. His red hair and green eyes were sure to stand out in the middle of Yakumi. He then remembered that when he left Master Destiny told him to seek Kasumi when he arrived in Yarzon. The plan was simple. Find Kasumi, drop Leon off with her, and then head into the northern desert to find Leo's fortress. If only he didn't have the feeling that things were about to take a turn for the worst.

Chapter XVI

The city of Yarzon was a big enough place to get lost in, and it certainly was the last place Christian would have picked to find a single person, not to mention that probably half of the Japanese who converted to Yakumian named their children Kasumi.

It also appeared that Princess Miion had begun to persecute those who disagreed with her, and if he was looking for some type of rebel leader, he might be attracting the wrong group of people. Mercenary and bounty hunter work paid pretty well in this part of the world. The festival was still occurring which made the streets extremely crowded with people, and where large crowds gathered, so did the body odor, and Christian was about sick from the stench. Yakumian patrols were also at every street corner. Miion must be expecting something. What had once been a peaceful city recently looked like it was more under martial law.

“Where do you think we should be looking?” whispered Leon to Christian as they

passed another security guard. Christian waited until the guards were out of sight.

“My guess is that if we’re looking for a rebel faction then we should start by searching the sewers.” said Christian after the guard was several feet away and looking the other way.

“The sewers. Come on, that’s a real cliché place to hide while planning a rebellion against an empire. What do they think...” Leon didn’t have time to finish when Christian grabbed him and pulled him down into the sewers below.

The disgusting scent down in the sewers was even worse than it was in the chaos above. All of the spilled liquor and other things the citizens were doing spilled into the system and created a major mess down in the tunnels. No Yakumian soldiers even wanted to deal with the stench, which left both the tunnels and the passageways into Yarzon Castle relatively safe for any rebellion.

Leon had finally pulled his shirt up over his nose as the two made their way through the dimly lit tunnels. A labyrinth seemed to sprawl out and Christian had a hard time finding his way to wherever Kasumi’s base actually was. Only a few

lights lit the way to a small room in a crevice of one of the main tunnels. Christian pressed his ear to the crevice and listened to the small voices that came from the room.

“I don’t think striking now is a good idea. Miion’s got the President of the United States hostage!” said a man’s voice from one side of the room. As Christian listened he saw out of the corner of his eye a young woman with long, flowing brunette hair. If it was blonde it would have reminded him a bit of Alice and it also made him think about how things were going back in Kansas City.

“We don’t have enough time to think about this! Now somehow Miion’s managed to keep the kidnapping a secret and if we blow the secret then we not only blow our cover but we also break several international laws and risk another war!” screamed the woman.

“Can’t you listen? This already is a war! And we’re right in the middle of it. They’re searching for Christian right now! If Miion finds him...”

The woman cut him off. “She’s not going to find him. I’m betting Christian’s found us already and is standing right outside the crevice on the eastern wall.” Christian walked a few feet away and stood against the wall as the man walked straight toward the crevice and looked outside.

“There’s nobody there, Kasumi. You’re just being paranoid.” said the man as he walked back to his seat. Christian breathed a sigh of relief and then continued on to find a doorway as he now knew that that woman was Kasumi.

The labyrinth of sewage continued for a while before Christian found the door to the secret base. As he opened the door he was instantly surrounded by a group of men with knives and swords pointed at him.

“Whoa. Relax, I know this is a secret base and all, but do we need to have the death threats?” joked Christian as he and Leon were pushed into the center of the first room.

“So you must be the famous Christian Baylor everybody’s been talking about. You don’t look like much of a hero to me.” said Kasumi as she walked into the room. Most of the rebels had put

their swords up but a few were still skeptical of him and stared at him with hostility and their swords ready to attack if the need arose. “Swords down, you guys. He’s one of us. A friend of democracy, or so I’ve been told.”

“By who?” asked Christian.

“I’m guessing you’ve had an encounter with the fortune-teller too?”

“Yeah, I have. She told me to come here to find you and then figure out what to do about saving the universe or something like that.”

“Well, you came to the right place. I don’t know if you’ve realized it, but in the last couple months this whole empire has gotten really corrupt. Miion’s started torturing people in ways that not even Kon ever did, and Kristie’s just as cruel to the citizens that most are afraid to even leave their homes anymore.”

“I thought Miion was different from Kon? I thought she was going to work for peace?”

“She was, and that’s what I can’t seem to understand, and why we haven’t taken any action against her yet. When she first took rule, she was everyone’s favorite person in the Yakumian

government, but lately it's as if she's become... possessed by something."

Christian stopped to wonder about the events that had just been explained to him. Miion had been acting completely different from her usual self and was now siding with General Kristie on everything? Something wasn't adding up in his head and he knew that a good explanation was somewhere. "Could Kristie be doing something?" asked Christian as he continued to ponder the possibilities behind Miion's recent transformation.

"We originally thought that, but believe me if Kristie wanted her way she would have had Miion done in months ago. With no heirs and no husband, Kristie would have assumed control of the Empire. Kristie's tower in the southern forest has also been unnaturally quiet." Christian still couldn't put everything together and decided to head to Leo's fort and see if he couldn't find a missing piece to the puzzle.

"I need a favor," said Christian. "I need you to look after this kid while I'm away." He grabbed Leon and shoved him toward Kasumi. "I'm going to

Leo's fort, and a surprise may be waiting for me there. I'll be back when I find out any news."

"We'll wait, and I've got spies in the castle trying to find out some news for me. I'll contact you if anything important comes up." Kasumi said as Christian began to walk out the door. Christian nodded back at the group of rebels and headed outside to prepare for the long trek through the desert.

Kristie entered the throne room where Miion was waiting. She then waved to her guards, who dragged the President into the throne room.

"It is done," said Kristie as she bowed to the princess.

"Good, General. Now, I have a big favor to ask. Go to the desert and take care of our traitor. How is the interference by the fortune-teller going?" replied Miion.

"Exactly the way we want her to believe. She thinks I'm acting alone and planning on overthrowing you at the tournament tomorrow." The two quickly began laughing. Miion ordered the

President to be moved to Kristie's tower, and everything was going their way to obtaining Christian as their prisoner as well.

Chapter XVII

General Kristie rode up to Leo's fortress in the desert with a small convoy. As they approached the main gates Kristie stopped and looked at a small balcony above the main gate. General Leo walked onto the platform and stared straight at the general and her small army of convoys.

"Kristie," he shouted down so they could hear, "What brings you to the middle of nowhere?"

Kristie squinted into the desert sun as she replied to Leo. "I have some information about Christian you're going to need." she said. Leo nodded and signaled to his guards down below. The gates slowly opened afterward. Leo walked off of the balcony and around an upper-floor terrace that surrounded the courtyard and training grounds of the fort. Leo continued to walk around to the other side where he entered into his office.

Leo waited in his office as Kristie walked in. "You can let the guards leave. They don't need to panic over this." said Kristie. Leo pointed to the two bodyguards as they left the room.

“Now, what about Christian did you need to tell me?” asked the irritated General. Nobody was going to give any more orders to his troops.

“You do know he’s coming right this way, right?”

“Of course. I have my own spies and watchmen too.”

“Then you should also know that he’s planning on taking us out one-by-one. He’ll start with you since you’re the weakest, of course, and then move down to my tower and try to kill me.”

“I don’t think you know how powerful Christian is. There’s no way you’ll be able to stop him.”

“That’s where you’re wrong. I’ve got a little leverage, you see.” Kristie pulled a few photographs out of one of her pockets and handed them to Leo. Leo picked up the pictures and looked at them a little closer. The first one featured Alice, while the second one was a picture of Kamo all tied up. The third, and most shocking, was a picture of the President of the United States.

“This is just sad,” said Leo as he bowed his head in disbelief, “that the Empire’s greatest general

would resort to common kidnapping in order to duck out of a fight with a kid. You really are worse than scum, you know that?”

“Oh, believe me, I know. Now, as I’ve said, Christian’s coming right here for you, but I’m going to do the merciful thing.” Kristie quickly pulled out her sword and cut a small slice into Leo. Leo fell to the chair, holding his wound in pain. “I’m not about to let you give away everything me and the Princess have been working six months on! In case you’re wondering, Miion herself ordered your execution, but I’m putting a little bit more emotion into your death. You see, I’m going to leave you alive and bleeding to death here for a couple of hours before Christian arrives. When he does, he’ll come here and I want you to tell him absolutely everything you saw here. I want you to show him the pictures and tell him that if he cares about both his country and the people he loves then I’ll be waiting in my tower.” Kristie leaned forward and then whispered into Leo’s ear as the sound of his troops were heard screaming in the background.

“Kon’s plans are about to be fulfilled, and there’s nothing anybody can do about it now. This

world is about to be ours. I'm really sad you won't be there to experience our vision for the world."

Leo spat into Kristie's face. "I'd rather be dying here right now than live in your demonic world!" he screamed as he tried to hold in the pain. Kristie stood up and sheathed her sword as she sternly looked at the bleeding General. As Leo arched back in pain Kristie gave an evil smile as she walked out into the massacre in the fort.

Miion's orders had been fulfilled. Leo was dead and all of the members of his army killed during a "revolt". Miion was prepared to blame the revolt and the death of the President on Christian and use it as an excuse to start the war. Kristie walked outside of the fort very satisfied.

* * *

A couple hours later Christian arrived at the front of Leo's fort to see a dead body lying in the road. Christian instantly ran to the body and saw Master Destiny standing in the main gateway.

“What happened here?” asked Christian as he saw several more Yakumian soldiers killed and scattered all over the interior of the fort.

“A sort of civil war broke out. Only all of the opposing party were annihilated in a single battle. Miion’s serious about her plans, I’m sure of it now.” stated Master Destiny as she walked alongside Christian.

“So, it’s true that Princess Miion is behind everything.”

“Maybe she’s not the real Miion. Maybe she’s just a puppet of somebody else.”

“What?”

“A puppet of one of your old enemies. You’re still young and don’t quite understand what’s going on like me, but I’ll try to understand. You see, evil... true evil, it never really dies. Usually when somebody is so evil that they dedicate their lives to it then that hatred and that darkness cannot be undone. I believe that your old enemy put all of her hatred and of us, the human race, into a certain object, a necklace, perhaps. When Miion picked up that necklace at the site of the final battle two years ago, it reawakened the darkness inside

her heart and slowly began to eat away at her. Thus, the last few months she's turned into somebody I'm sure you know quite well." She looked straight at Christian. "You can't tell me you've forgotten her?"

Christian knelt down on the ground at the painful thought that ran through his mind. "Ultemeir. Miion acquired all of Ultemeir's knowledge and is currently using that knowledge to start the new war. One that will destroy our world."

"You're starting to get there, but I don't think that's the case. Miion is the new Ultemeir. Haven't you noticed it when you arrived? That same foul air is running through this land like it did two years ago, one that is now threatening to consume us all."

"Then, I go to Yarzon and finish off Ultemeir like we did before. That'll end it, right?"

"No. This time the entire universe has something else to fear from the outcome of this battle."

"What now?"

"You."

"Me?"

“Yes. You’re carrying something that if it is released, will destroy us all.”

Christian sat on a chair in the courtyard. Everything was riding on him, but if he did anything to stop Miion, he would doom the planet anyway. This seemed like a dead end for him. “What do I need to do?”

“Go to Kristie’s tower in the south. She has your friends and I’m afraid something may happen to them if you don’t act soon.”

“She’s got Alice and Kamo?”

“That’s why you need to hurry. I will go to my superiors and figure out what exactly to do about the other issue. After you save them head back to the United States as quickly as you can. Things are about to get really ugly around this country.” Master Destiny immediately disappeared. Christian found some stables nearby and took a horse. He rode off into the desert toward the southern forest, where he knew the general waited.

Chapter XVIII

A dark night had settled in the forest where Kristie's tower sat as Christian approached. Christian was relieved that amid all the commotion that had surrounded the recent events, the animals and the plants remained relatively calm. As he approached the tower he noticed it did look similar to the white tower Ultemeir had in the snow fields when he visited. Christian stopped at the main entrance to the tower to make sure he had everything he would need.

The inside of the tower violated just about every Yakumian teaching known today. The entire building seemed to be comprised as one large machine, even though nobody knew exactly what it did. Christian made his way up the large staircase toward the center of the tower. As he entered the main area at the top of the tower he could instantly see Kristie's three prisoners tied up on a platform hanging several feet above him to the back of the room.

Underneath that platform was a door in which Kristie walked out of. Kristie was holding an ornamental sword as she approached the center of the room.

“General Kristie,” said Christian as he drew his sword. “You’re both a traitor and a murderer. I still don’t know what you’re planning, but I will stop you and then tell Miion what you’ve been up to.”

Just then several Yakumian soldiers ran out from the doorway Christian entered and surrounded the room. At the end of the procession of soldiers Princess Miion herself walked into the room.

“Christian, what if I ordered Kristie to do all of these things?” asked Miion as she laughed.

“You... I’ve doubted it until now. You are Ultemeir.” said Christian. Miion thrust her hand forward and it sent Christian flying into the ground below.

“Ultemeir. Such a worthless name. She’ll be nothing once I get my ultimate goal. Yes, what I’ve been planning these last two years, my union with Evolvia.”

“Evolvia?”

Suddenly Christian heard a voice from the platform above him. “Christian, don’t worry about that! You’ve got a job to do, remember?” proclaimed the voice as Christian made it back to his feet. Once he was standing he turned around to see Michelle standing next to Alice and untying her ropes. As Alice, Kamo and the President were being freed Miion sent a small group of troops after her. When the troops made it to the top floor Michelle and Kamo quickly wiped out whatever soldiers came across the balcony. The group quickly ran to the exit and Michelle turned back to Christian.

“Don’t worry about us! Just come back in one piece and we’ll figure out what to do from there!” shouted Michelle. She then turned to run out of the door.

“Worthless soldiers! I guess I’ll do it myself!” screamed Kristie. Kristie pulled a small knife out of her shirt and threw it straight at Michelle. The knife pierced itself straight into Michelle’s heart. Michelle stood for a second before finally falling to the ground.

“Michelle!” Christian said as he turned to face the psychotic general. Alice and Kamo came

back and picked up Michelle's body when they left the tower and headed for a boat Commander had reserved for the evacuation. When they were gone Christian readied his sword and faced Kristie.

"This time there's nothing to stop us." said Christian as he started to run toward Kristie.

"Well, I'm afraid I'm just not in the mood to fight today, so your execution is going to have to wait." said Kristie who signaled to a couple of the soldiers who formed the perimeter around the room. Two soldiers grabbed Christian and managed to hold him down as Kristie left. They then turned to face Miion.

"We have a guest room ready for him in our dungeon. Make sure he gets there in one piece." said Miion as she laughed her way down the stairs. Christian tried to struggle but with that many soldiers and the confiscation of his sword, it appeared that there wasn't much hope for him as they loaded him onto a wagon and headed for Yarzon Castle.

* * *

A week later, Alice, Kamo, Commander and Master Destiny were all bowing their heads and praying during Michelle's funeral. The humid, outside warmth of the summer accompanied by the thickening fog made the ceremony even harder for the group as they said goodbye to one of their companions. Schala had just received word on what had happened and was planning on taking some time out of her schedule to help Commander.

The President had been returned safely to Washington, and an emergency meeting of congress was expected to take place on the recent turn of events in the Yakumi Empire during Miion's summit. Commander had been awarded a medal for strategizing the extraction and rescue of the president, which stayed next to Commander's bed out of modesty.

After the burial Alice was in her hotel room packing as a clam rain began outside. She took a few of her clothes and packed them into a backpack. As she started to finish her packing Kamo walked into the room and stared straight at her.

"I understand how you feel," said Kamo, "but I have to ask you not to go. Christian is alive,

we all know that, but you won't be if you go chasing after him. The Empire's unstable as it is let alone trying to march straight into Yarzon. Now, once things settle down..."

"Don't you understand?" asked Alice.

"Christian is in danger and if we wait for this to end then he won't be alive! I have to go save him!"

Alice sat on the bed and started to cry. Kamo thought for a few seconds and then sat next to her. He was Christian's friend, after all, and knew exactly how Alice was feeling.

"It's too dangerous to go to Yarzon alone." said Kamo.

"I don't care what you think." cried Alice as she looked away from him.

"You don't understand. I'm not letting you go to Yakumi alone... which is exactly why I'm going along." Kamo smiled at Alice. Alice smiled back and then hugged Kamo as they stood up and started to walk out the door. Alice was grabbing her bags when Commander burst into the door.

"You guys better come quick," said Commander, "Things are getting really nasty outside."

“What do you mean?” asked Kamo.

Commander gulped a couple of times and then looked straight at the two teenagers.

“The United States has just declared war on the Yakumi Empire.” All three of them looked at each other. No more words needed to be said.

Part III:

The Final Evolution

Chapter XIX

The ocean uttered an unusual calm as Alice stood on the deck of one of the thousand ships headed for the Yakumi Empire. She still had trouble believing that war had actually erupted. Everything seemed to be moving so fast, nobody was able to keep up anymore, which made Miion even happier.

Commander walked out onto the deck with Alice as she saw the Empire coming on the horizon.

“Don’t worry,” said Commander, “When we seize Yarzon we’ll find Christian or find out where Miion’s hiding him.” Alice nodded and looked at the horizon as several more American soldiers walked onto the deck carrying swords.

“We’re still under the treaty?” asked Alice.

“The President doesn’t feel that the danger’s too great yet to break off the treaty.”

Alice disapproved of the measure, but knew that if Miion notified other countries about the States breaking off the treaty, they would come and help her fight them off. The Yakumian troop strength

was already high without the aid of foreign governments.

About twenty minutes later the ships began to dock on Yakumian soil. Both Alice and Kamo had been named captains of their own units, which made them the youngest ranked officers in history. The American army ran off the decks of the ships to meet the Yakumian army who had already gathered to meet them.

* * *

One of General Kristie's captains, Salo, walked into her tent to deliver news of the battle.

"General Kristie, ma'am. The United States army has arrived and has prepared for battle. What do you want the army to do?" asked Salo.

"Have them wait," replied Kristie. "The troops are more than enough to take care of the American forces. When the Americans make their charge, have my troops wait until the Americans make it to our lines, and then unleash everything on them." Kristie nodded to Salo, who immediately ran out of the room and went to notify the other commanders.

Kristie looked at a map on the table in front of her. Since the Americans were on the beach, if they won this battle it would be enough to push them back onto their homeland. From there things would get trickier due to the increase in urban fighting and the unfamiliarity of the States. Overall she figured that if everything went as planned, she should have Washington captured in about six months. Kristie finalized her plans, picked up her sword, and headed out onto the battlefield.

The Yakumian army was lined up in standard formation by the time the United States army was assembled. Kristie was surprised at the sudden discipline the opposing army showed as they began to march in uniform toward the Yakumian troops. Kristie could do nothing but smile as the troops began to walk straight into her trap.

On the frontline of the States, Alice ordered her troops to stop.

“What are you doing?” asked Kamo as he also ordered his troops to stop. Only Commander’s troops were left marching toward Kristie after a couple of minutes.

“Kristie’s leading us right into a trap,” said Alice. “There’s a reason why nobody’s moving on their lines. Remember how Kon attacked Kansas City? He used some kind of a magic barrier so nobody could escape, and I’ve got a feeling...” at those words a barrier went up surrounding Commander’s unit and enough Yakumian troops to easily take it out. Alice looked straight at Commander on the deck of one of the main boats. Commander was leaned over on a desk in shock as he tried to reformulate his strategy. Alice and Kamo also could do nothing but sit at their command posts on the ship and watch the small massacre that was taking place.

For every Yakumian soldier that fell, at least five American soldiers also fell and there seemed to be no stopping it. Alice continued to watch as Master Destiny appeared and noticed the battle.

“I see Kristie’s breaking the treaty,” spoke Master Destiny as she walked straight toward Commander.

“What?” asked Commander, stunned that Master Destiny was helping with war strategy.

“You didn’t know? Sure, the treaty forbids the United States use of firearms, but on the positive side for us it forbids the Yakumian use of magic.”

“I didn’t know that,” said Commander as he immediately pointed to a supply officer near him. “Alice, Kamo, I want you to get every soldier under your command equipped with a rifle as fast as you can.”

“Done.” said Kamo as he started to carry rifles out of the lower decks and began handing them out to his troops. By the time the units were done being slaughtered and the barrier lifted, every American soldier had a rifle in their hands ready to fire. “Wait for our orders!” yelled Kamo out to his troops. Commander watched the rest of the battle and gave the two young captains advice as the battle proceeded.

* * *

Kristie looked at the now armed troops.

“Very smart, Commander. I break a rule, you break a rule. But, I’m only just beginning.” laughed Kristie as she ordered her troops to charge. As the

Yakumian troops charged several bolts of magic flew from the air and began to pierce the army like bullets. Several troops fell while others in their panic began to fire back at the troops.

Finally, too many troops had fallen and the battle was easily lost. Commander bowed his head in shame and then ordered the retreat. Kristie stopped the magic and watched as the ships were boarded and the American troops retreated back to their homeland. Kristie laughed at the American mockery as she knew she had won her first decisive victory in the war.

Chapter XX

Alice and Kamo stood on the deck of the ship they had departed on as the Yakumian Empire shrunk in the distance. A defeat on Yakumian soil really damaged the morale of the troops and heavily damaged those that believed until now that the American army was invincible. Everybody's big worry now was that the next major battle would be on American soil, a spectacle not seen since the Civil War.

The Yakumian army was probably already preparing a horde of ships headed for the States and Kamo wondered if anything could stop them now since the main force was just decimated in a single day. That night, through that sunset, even the calmness of the waves were unable to ease Kamo's nerves as he wondered what the people would think if they knew a Yakumian was helping the United States.

Master Destiny walked out onto the deck.

“You know, you two should really get some sleep and not worry about what’s going to happen next.” said Master Destiny as she joined the two.

“That’s easy for you to say,” said Kamo as he pointed toward Master Destiny in an irritated tone. “You know everything that’s going to happen! You probably know how this war is going to end too!”

“That’s where you’re wrong. I don’t see exacts. I see possibilities. Where one sees an absolute, I see a crossroad. For example, you see a definite end to this war coming. The Yakumians will march straight through your country and conquer it as they did Japan. However, there is another route. If, for some reason, Christian should return and face Kristie, then I believe there may be hope for victory left.”

“So you mean we need to find Christian?”

“Oh, believe me on that. He’ll come to you. Just stay here and face your enemies the way you have for the past several weeks and just leave the rescue missions to me.”

Kamo smiled at Master Destiny who once again instantly vanished. “Do you really think she’ll find Christian?” asked Kamo as he looked at Alice.

“Let’s hope so,” replied Alice. “It sounds like we don’t have much of a chance without him.”

“What’s with you? I thought you loved him.”

“I thought I did too, but lately I’ve been feeling... I’ve been feeling that I need something else than somebody who’s going to constantly put his life on the line to save someone else, even me. I need somebody who’s only a hero to me, not a hero who saved the world and is getting attention every ten seconds.” Alice began to feel upset and Kamo decided not to say anymore. Alice continued to stare at the waves of the new night as Kamo began to move toward his room. “The night before he left,” began Alice again, “Christian and I, we got into an argument about him always trying to protect me. I guess I said some things I really regret now, and we broke up. I just never got the courage to tell anyone about it.” Kamo stopped for a second and thought about what Alice had told him. He then realized there was nothing he could do; only leave the two of them, Christian and Alice, to work things out after the war was over.

* * *

Inside the throne room of Yarzon Castle, General Kristie walked in to find Miion laughing hysterically. Miion usually let her hair down but now had it tied up in the back just like Ultemeir had two years ago.

“I am here to report,” said Kristie as she knelt right in front of the Princess. “That the Americans have been run out of our Empire. I am currently planning on boarding my ship and meeting with the rest of the fleet. I am planning to catch them off guard as I attack their naval forces head on. Soon their army will be smashed enough to create an easy ride through their country.” Both Miion and Kristie began to laugh as one was now just as insane as the other.

“Good,” spoke Miion. Miion then stood up and ushered a couple guards in. “Do me a favor. Take the Baylor kid with you and see what the taste for battle does for Evolvia. The kid’s gathering too much attention here.” Kristie turned to face the guards who brought in Kasumi, tied-up with strong Yakumian rope. “It’s a shame really that one of my half-sisters would be the one to try to save Christian.

Nevertheless, she will be executed at dawn while you sail toward victory.” Miion grasped a sword that was sitting on the armrest of her throne and handed it to Kristie. Kristie took the sword and walked to Kasumi.

“You’re both crazy! You know what’s going to happen, don’t you?” screamed Kasumi. Kristie ignored her and stabbed Kasumi straight through the stomach.

“They know about Evolvia,” said Kristie unfeeling after the murder. “Send someone to round up the rebels and find out just how much they know.” Kristie handed the sword back to Miion and walked out the door.

* * *

In the dark room of the Council of the Elders, Master Destiny walked through a portal into the council chamber where she saw the leader, Ralfor, standing in the light.

“Have you discovered the key?” asked Ralfor as Master Destiny walked to the center of the circle as she always did.

“Yes,” said Master Destiny quietly, “The key to the Final Evolution, the awakening of Evolvia, and the final battle for the universe is not nearly what we thought. I’ve tried everything, but nothing seems to be working in driving out Evolvia. He doesn’t seem to be budging, no matter how hard we elders try. Evolvia is not something that chooses when he’s released. He set a timer for himself.”

“A timer? If it’s a timer, then when is the timer going off?”

“I had trouble pinpointing that out, but after some careful analysis on the Destino extinction, I found the answer. The Destino that underwent the Final Evolution was approximately 267 years old, which in human years equals...”

“Eighteen. That means he’s going to be here in the next few weeks.”

“That’s what I’m afraid of. Evolvia’s coming, and unless I can teach the boy a few tricks about Evolvia, he doesn’t stand a chance. But first, we need to stop this war so I can get the boy to the artifacts!”

“Agreed. Go, save the boy, and lead the American army to victory.”

“I have another favor to ask.”

“What is it this time?”

“Evolvia gave the Destinos a choice, didn’t he? A choice between joining him and letting the species survive, which is what you all want and what the Destinos chose, or facing him in battle for the fate of all. Now, I know it’s our tradition to... shall we say, sway the victim of Evolvia toward survival, but I have a good feeling about this kid, and I think he may be the one to destroy Evolvia forever and let us finally rest.”

“You will stop right there! No member of us has even considered chancing the end of the universe! We have always chosen survival, and that’s the way things must be!” Ralfor slammed his hand on the table in front of him as Master Destiny took a couple steps back. Ralfor was furious at the request and none of the council members around the table wanted to challenge his judgment. “If you even think about challenging our tradition, I’ll personally destroy you. Do you understand?”

Master Destiny was too petrified to answer and only nodded. Ralfor sat back down as Master Destiny left the room. The human race was meant to

survive this, and Master Destiny even knew what she had to do in order to ensure it.

Chapter XXI

The next morning, Kamo was washing up when he heard the sound of gunfire from the upper deck. He quickly put his shirt back on and ran upstairs to see what the problem was.

As Kamo opened the door outside he nearly escaped being pierced from a flaming arrow headed straight toward him. He quickly ran to where Alice and Commander were standing giving orders to the troops who were firing back.

“What happened?” asked Kamo as he approached the flustered Commander.

“Those dirty cheats attacked us during retreat! Kristie has no respect for international treaties” Commander was running his hands over his hair and looking at the sky, wondering how he would survive this. “Tell the captains of the ships to push a little harder! We’re going to need all the acceleration we can get!” He shouted to one of his runners. Three ships had already gone down in flames as more tried to make it back to the mainland.

Kamo began giving orders to some of his troops when he noticed Alice pick up a rifle and begin firing at the Yakumian vessel.

“What are you doing, trying to get yourself killed?” asked Kamo.

“We need everybody we can get firing at those Yakumian scum!” screamed Alice as she continued to fire at the soldiers. Kamo watched as five archers on the opposing ship fell to Alice. Kamo then decided to pick up his gun and also fire at the Yakumians.

The battle continued to rage for several hours before Master Destiny finally arrived. She searched the main flagship to realize that over a hundred ships had been destroyed already. This was no longer a war, it was a massacre.

“Commander, I need you to get as far away from these things as you can.” said Master Destiny as she looked at the darkened sky.

Within an hour the flagship managed to get to a distance Master Destiny said it was safe, but was unclear about what it was safe from. Commander wasn’t sure what she was doing, but ended up agreeing to all of the terms she insisted on.

“So, Kristie,” she said to herself as she looked at Kristie’s flagship, “You like to play with magic. Let’s see how you like your own strategy used against you.”

Alice was in awe as Master Destiny raised her hand and a small opening in the sky appeared. All of the soldiers in the group stopped firing and watched as several beams of light came from the sky and began to cut their way through the Yakumian fleet. Kristie stopped the attack and even more ships around her flagship fell to the onslaught of Master Destiny’s magical abilities. Soon, after several other ships sunk, Kristie had no choice but to order the retreat and give the Americans time to flee the battle.

After the ships began fleeing, Master Destiny stopped the attack and went to the command post to meet with Commander.

“Remind me to take your advice more often,” said Commander as he breathed a sigh of relief that most of his army escaped the battle unscathed.

“We need to prepare.” replied Master Destiny in a serious voice.

“Prepare for what?”

“The next battle will determine everything. If you don’t come away with a victory, then we’re all doomed.” Master Destiny was sure that the next battle, already planned for the plains outside of Los Angeles, would be a turning point in the war for both sides. The only hope was that finally, the Americans could have some good luck on their side.

Later that night Master Destiny walked down into Alice’s cabin. Alice was already preparing her stuff for the quick time she would have to leave the boat once it docked in Los Angeles. Commander had already ordered that the entire fleet should be evacuated within fifteen minutes as the ships docked on a twenty mile stretch of land.

“I’m sure you’re worried about him,” said Master Destiny as she walked into the clean room, the only room on the ship she could say that about.

“No, I’m not. I’ve already prepared for the bad news,” said Alice as she continued to pack. Master Destiny was shocked that Alice seemed pretty unconcerned about Christian.

“For Christian’s girlfriend...” Master Destiny tried to say something but Alice immediately cut her off.

“As I told Kamo, that’s not the case anymore!” Alice screamed, although anybody could have seen a tear well up in her eye at that moment. “I’m tired of him treating me like I need to be protected all of the time! I want my own life. I want to protect myself!” Alice sat down on her bed and began to cry. As Alice lied down on her bed crying Kamo rushed into the room.

“Did I... uh... come at a bad time?” asked Kamo as he saw Master Destiny hovering over Alice.

“You know he needs you, Alice. He won’t be able to do what he has to if he knows you’re not supporting him,” said Master Destiny. Alice gave her a stern look while crying.

Alice all of a sudden recognized Master Destiny’s voice. “That night, at the cliff. It was you who saved me wasn’t it?” Master Destiny nodded to her.

“I’m not having any part to do with this,” said Kamo as he tried to walk away.

“Wait, Kamo. I need you to hear this too.”

“What?”

Master Destiny managed to make Alice sit up as she also made Kamo sit on a chair in front of the

door. “Now listen to me, both of you. Alice, I’m not saying you have to love him, but I need you to at least help him. Kamo, you know him better than anybody and you’ll know he’ll try to do this all alone. He needs both of you to show him the truth. It’s going to take a powerful bond to help Christian survive the coming battle. Now do both of you understand me?” both of the teenagers nodded. They knew that Christian needed help, and the next battle they would give it to him. “Good. I have information that I want you two to know. Kristie’s brought Christian here under Miion’s orders. You two are going to help me save him.” Master Destiny looked at the two of them and smiled.

Chapter XXII

Christian woke up in a dark room and saw nothing around him as he stood up. The floor was covered in a deep mist and Christian couldn't tell what exactly he was standing on as he continued to look around and saw nothing but darkness around him.

Christian took a few steps forward thinking he might find a way out of this area he was in, but every foot taken looked exactly the same as the last.

Finally, Christian stopped and wondered just how he could get out of here when he heard something behind him.

"Surprised to see me?" asked the voice behind him.

Christian turned and saw a young man who looked almost exactly like him. He had the same height and weight as he did. The only distinguishable difference in the two was that the one who was not Christian had long blonde hair tied up to the back as Christian still had his brown hair,

but due to the six months of captivity and torture, he had it down to his shoulders.

“W..Who are you?” asked Christian, who was still stunned as he looked a near-mirrored image of himself.

“It’s been almost eighteen years now and you haven’t figured that out yet?” said the other man as Christian began to look for another way out. “I’m you, or rather, a compilation of your species. I’m here to pass final judgment on you right here and now, Christian.”

“Final judgment? And how do you know my name?”

“Are you kidding? I’ve been inside of your body for eighteen years. I know everything about you. What you like, what you hate, your favorite foods, television shows, movies, games, books, everything there is to know.” The man ran to Christian and suddenly appeared behind him as he whispered into his ear. “I even know what you want the most.”

The man disappeared again as Christian turned around. Just then an image of Alice appeared.

“Christian!” shouted the apparition as it ran toward Christian. As he ran toward it the image disappeared and the other man appeared again.

“What exactly do you want with me!?” shouted Christian as the other man smiled at him.

“I’m only fulfilling my fate. Mine is to destroy the universe and rearrange it, creating a new dominant species on the only planet where life is capable. Now, I’m admitting my destiny was not supposed to be fulfilled until about five million years from present date, but I realized I made a mistake. The chosen Destino who faced me chose to survive while the dinosaurs chose complete extinction. The Destinos should have been destroyed along with the dinosaurs, but something that even I can’t explain happened.”

“You’re telling me that you are the one who destroyed the dinosaurs?”

“Perfect. You’re catching on already. Now, I’m giving you a choice, as I’ve said before. The first one is that we face each other in a bloody battle to the death over the fate of your species. Not the smartest choice, as I’ve never been killed yet, but it is a possibility. The second choice is to submit to

your destiny and allow me to destroy the universe. Earth will be reorganized but you and a female of your species will be allowed to survive and carry on your species.”

“So you’re saying I need to sacrifice everybody else just for me to survive?”

“Precisely. It’s for the good of the species. You see, the universe will be destroyed one way or another, and I’m giving your species the chance of survival.”

“Why?”

“Because that’s the way things have been for the last several billion years and I’m hoping that you follow that same belief.”

“And if I don’t?”

“Then your entire species go extinct just like the dinosaurs and you will be the one responsible for it.” After that the man disappeared and Christian was left all alone. He ran for a few seconds looking for a way out once again but still couldn’t find a way out. Finally Christian gave up and sat on the misty ground.

After a few minutes of thinking about how to get out of the area Christian heard a noise behind him.

He turned around to see the man standing right above him, hovering in the air.

“I’m giving you a choice,” said the man. “Now, when I come again I’ll expect you to choose.” The man disappeared and all of a sudden Christian found himself in some sort of wagon, tied up. As he looked outside he saw at least four Yakumian soldiers walking alongside the wagon and carrying swords or bows.

As he laid down on the ground he tried to figure out exactly what that person that looked like him meant.

* * *

In the tents where the commanders of the army had set up for the battle of Los Angeles, Commander was preparing his maps with Master Destiny to strategize for the coming battle.

“We’ll need to cut off Kristie’s troops on the field so they can’t escape,” said Master Destiny as she drew some arrows on the map representing Kristie’s troops and the way they would be marching. “Pull the same trick on her she pulled on

us.” Commander nodded and closed the map as he walked outside to meet the troops.

All of the soldiers in the army possible had gathered in the field as Schala drove into the battlefield accompanied by a small caravan of trucks all carrying army soldiers.

“What’s with the new troops?” asked Commander as Schala approached him.

“A gift, courtesy of the New York National Guard,” replied Schala as she walked to Commander.

Commander took Schala to a small tent where Kamo and Alice were preparing to go undercover.

“We’ve caught a few Yakumian outfits and we’re going to dye our hair later tonight. It won’t fool Kristie but it should fool the smaller-ranked soldiers,” said Kamo as he placed the armor over his shirt and jeans.

“Exactly why are we going undercover?” asked Schala.

“We need to rescue Christian. He got himself captured trying to save us a few months ago. Now it’s time for the two of us to repay the favor to him.” Schala then understood as she left the tent

with Commander and began preparations for the morning's battle.

As the two walked through the camp Schala could feel a sense of uneasiness about the troops. She knew they had all suffered terrible losses in the Empire and if it weren't for Master Destiny and her magic, most of them wouldn't be here right now.

"You can probably tell that we need a victory tomorrow, if for all else to keep the morale of the soldiers high. But still, the Pentagon estimates that if we lose too much strength here then Kristie could make it all the way to Washington with almost no resistance." Commander spoke that knowing what needed to be done. Everybody on the American side knew that as long as Kristie lived, there was little hope of winning the war. That's why Master Destiny devised a plan to rescue Christian and only prayed that he had enough strength to deal with Kristie almost immediately after his rescue.

Finally, nighttime had arrived and Alice and Kamo were ready to sneak into the Yakumian camp. Schala, Commander, and Master Destiny had all stayed up and wished the two of them luck.

“Now, when you finish rescuing Christian, the battle will probably already have started, so make sure you find your way back to our side,” said Master Destiny as she gave the two swords. Alice and Kamo both grabbed the confiscated Yakumian swords and headed out west toward the beach, where Kristie awaited in her camp.

It was almost two hours before Alice and Kamo found the Yakumian camp. Kristie must have been paranoid of spies with all of the guards who were waiting outside of the camp. Alice noticed the large flagship docked on the beach and was pretty sure that’s where Christian was being held, but also knew Kristie was there as well.

Kamo and Alice snuck around to the side of the camp and watched the guard movements for any opening where they could easily sneak into the camp. Once they were inside, it would be easier to explore since they were in their Yakumian armor. No matter how hard they looked forever, Kristie’s guard schedule seemed impervious from anything coming from the outside.

In a few minutes Alice looked up and saw Kristie walk out onto the deck of the ship

accompanied by two soldiers. Alice nudged Kamo and pointed to the general yelling orders at a group of soldiers who had gathered to meet her.

Apparently something had happened to upset Kristie and possibly shaken up the Yakumian military.

Just then Alice saw an opening as the soldiers ran to the ship to see what the commotion was all about. Alice noticed this and quickly ran for the hole to get into the camp unnoticed. Kamo quickly followed Alice as the two managed to enter the camp and blended right in with the Yakumian soldiers.

“Good, we made it. Now we need to find out where they’re keeping Christian. My guess is it’s on that ship, but we’ll have a hard time getting past Kristie and her guards. Maybe we should wait until the battle begins.” said Alice as she continued to think of a plan of how to save Christian without giving away their cover. She watched as the sun began to rise over the horizon behind the ship.

While the sun was rising Kristie quickly gathered her troops and headed for the battlefield. Alice and Kamo managed to hide in the kitchen tent

while the troops left. Even after all they'd been through Alice still couldn't believe just how well disciplined Kristie's troops were. It was almost like Kon's, only this force seemed stronger. As the troops left the two snuck onto the ship, making sure not to be spotted by any of the guards who stayed around, but both of them knew that it would be a fight to get out of there.

Kamo counted six soldiers on the ship as they entered the interior to search for Christian. The corridors inside of the wooden ship were narrow and it would be impossible to sneak around anymore. Kamo and Alice both grabbed their swords and began to walk through the corridor.

The corridor seemed to continue as far as the two could see. What was weirder was that not a single Yakumian soldier seemed to be on the ship. It seemed pretty lax security, especially for someone as highly regarded as Christian, for them trying to keep someone prisoner. Kamo and Alice continued to walk along the empty, dark corridor until they reached a door that they heard noises coming from. Kamo pressed his ear to the door and listened for what the soldiers inside were talking about.

After a few seconds Kamo stepped away and whispered to Alice.

“It seems that that’s the room they’re keeping Christian in,” said Kamo. “I’m guessing there’s about seven guards in there.”

Alice looked straight at Kamo. “Seven? Since when have those odds stopped you and Christian?”

“They never have.” Kamo tightened the grip on his sword and the two burst into the room.

When the door opened the seven guards all jumped to their feet and began to attack. Both Kamo and Alice quickly wrapped around them and within seconds all seven of the soldiers were lying on the ground. Alice waited at the door they came out of while Kamo walked into the cell behind him.

Two more guards waited for Kamo as he entered Christian’s cell, and once again, they didn’t pose much of a threat. Once Kamo was finished pushing the bodies to the side of the room, he went to the far corner and unchained Christian.

Christian was so disheveled and beaten that most people would have hardly been able to recognize him. Kamo picked the unconscious

Christian up and dragged him into the guards' room where Alice helped Kamo place Christian on a table.

"I hope we can get him awake before the battle's over," said Kamo as they looked at Christian.

* * *

Commander looked over the battlefield as the Yakumian troops approached. Master Destiny was sitting on a horse right next to Commander as her and Schala began issuing orders to their troops. The American troops split into three forces as they began to flank the Yakumian army.

Kristie realized the trick Master Destiny and Commander were trying to pull and quickly set her troops up to avoid the flank. She divided her troops in half and separated them about a hundred feet from each other.

"I hope those two kids find Christian soon," said Master Destiny to Commander. Kristie was outsmarting them every step of the way and she knew as well as every other member of the army Kristie had to fall today for any chance of a victory.

After a few more seconds of marching and dividing Kristie immediately stopped all of her troops. As she turned to Salo she looked at the massive American force.

“Leave no prisoners.” said Kristie coldly as she then ordered all of her troops to charge. The Yakumian troops charged at an alarming speed as the Americans used their rifles to kill some of the charging soldiers. For some reason, Kristie was unable to use her magic, a trick that Master Destiny had set up for once Kristie landed on American soil.

As soon as the Yakumian troops made it to the American front lines all rifles were shouldered and each American soldier grabbed a sword and began to attack the Yakumians. The entire battlefield soon became mixed with a cloud of Yakumian and American troops covering it.

* * *

Christian woke up and the first thing he saw was the bright light of the lamp above the table. He squinted as he struggled to sit up, surprised at not being tied up.

“Where is this?” asked Christian as he finally managed to sit up on the table.

“We’re docked outside of L.A. right now, but I don’t think we can wait here any longer,” said Alice as she quickly left the room. Christian looked at Kamo. Kamo took his helmet off so Christian could tell it was him.

“What’s wrong with her?” asked Christian as he began to stand up.

“It’s been a long six months. I’ll tell you everything after the battle, now come on!” replied Kamo as the two ran out of the room. In the corridor Kamo stopped and handed a bag to Christian. “I almost forgot. These are presents from Master Destiny.” Christian opened the bag and inside was a fancy sword with some clean clothes. Christian went into another room and dressed into the jeans with white shirt, and the black jacket he usually wore. After he changed, Christian placed his sword in a custom-made sheath with ancient Yakumian writing on it. When he was finished the two of them left the Yakumian camp.

The battle seemed to be going into the Americans' favor and Kristie wasn't going to let that happen. After the Americans started to outnumber her troops two to one she charged into the battlefield and began slaughtering countless soldiers on the field.

Commander watched as he saw Kristie's reputation come true in front of him. On the battlefield, the general truly had no rival. No wonder Master Destiny said Christian was the only one who could take her on.

All of a sudden Commander watched as both Alice's and Kamo's troops appeared out of nowhere and joined the battle, led by their commanding officers. The battlefield became even more crowded as the American forces began to once again outnumber the Yakumians.

Kristie continued to wreak havoc on the soldiers. Nothing the American forces threw at her seemed to stop her. Even Master Destiny's magic wasn't enough to get through the general's defenses.

"General Kristie!" shouted a voice from the far end of the battlefield. At that moment the battle

became eerily silent as both sides watched as Christian, cleaned up and prepared for battle, walked onto the battlefield holding his sword and advancing toward Kristie.

“I knew this was going to happen sooner or later,” said Kristie as she started running toward Christian. The other soldiers would have started fighting again, but everyone was interested in seeing the outcome of the battle. Even tourists and Los Angeles residents set up lawn chairs outside the field to watch the battle that was ensuing.

Christian and Kristie met in the middle of the battlefield, if one could call it that. It now seemed like more of a middle-school fight between two rivals where everyone was crowding around to see. As their swords clashed, everything else became a blur. Even Schala and Alice were surprised to see how fast Christian and Kristie’s moved during the fight.

As the fight ensued, neither Christian nor Kristie managed to show any signs of weakening after almost a half hour of fighting. As Kristie managed to cut Christian somewhere along the torso, he instantly cut her back. Kristie tried to knock

Christian on his feet by sweeping her legs under him, but she couldn't seem to catch up with his agility.

Finally, Kristie grew tired of dealing with Christian. "H...How can you still be standing? I've thrown everything I've got at you!" Kristie exclaimed as she fought to catch her breath. She decided to run away but as she did a barrier of light surrounded the area.

"Sorry, general," said Master Destiny as she watched the feud from outside the barrier she had created. "You've been dying for a fight with him ever since he defeated Kon, and now you're going to run away as you near defeat? Is your life that important to you?" Kristie glared at Master Destiny. She must have taken the last remarks as an insult. At that moment, Kristie could feel her magic returning to her and smiled back at Christian.

"I'll show you what's important. Now nobody can stop him! Nobody will be able to be your 'savior'!" Kristie laughed as she used her magic to fling a bolt straight through Christian.

Christian fell to the ground, holding his hand against the wound Kristie had given him. The

wound was on Christian's lower stomach, which gave him a slight chance of survival. Kristie continued to laugh as she brought her sword above Christian's head, knowing that she had actually won. "So, the great Christian *will* die by my hands," proclaimed the general as she remained on her psychopathic rant. Christian looked up to see Kristie, which he thought would be the last image before his inevitable death.

However, to the right he saw someone. Alice was standing on the hilltop in front of him watching everything. It was at that moment he knew he had to survive. He quickly grabbed his sword and raised it up to stop Kristie from completing her savage execution.

"I've had a lot of time to think while I was captured," said Christian as he stood up to stare straight into the general's eyes. "I think I learned something as a soldier that I think you never have, Kristie. I learned that in order to fight successfully you need three things. The first of which is to love the country you're fighting for. The second is to know exactly why you're fighting. And the third is to never, never forget the other two. You've lost all

three of these things, Kristie, and have been fighting this entire war for your own selfish reasons. And that is why you'll never be able to defeat me."

Kristie tried to push back Christian but he quickly knocked her back instead. While she was trying to regain her balance, Christian quickly stabbed her in the heart and then pulled out his sword just as quickly. He watched as within seconds Kristie's body fell to the ground.

In an instant all of the American troops began to celebrate as the new general, Salo, ordered his troops to pull out. The battle needed to be won, and it was. Christian even began to celebrate while Commander walked onto the battlefield.

"All right, soldiers," yelled Commander so everyone could hear. "Tonight, celebrate your well-deserved victory! But make sure you're here tomorrow morning to leave again for Yakumi! We still have a war to win!" Everybody shouted as they began to walk back to the city. Christian tried to walk to Alice, but she quickly ran away from him. Confused, he then went and celebrated with Kamo as they too walked toward the city for the celebration.

The troops had the right to celebrate victory, but Master Destiny seemed to be the only one who truly understood what was going on. It may have been the turning point in the war, but as she looked at the stars she noticed that the night sky was becoming emptier and emptier. It seemed that something was happening, and it was only a prelude to what would happen once Evolvia released himself from Christian.

It was getting close to the day she feared. She knew she had to tell Christian the scope of what was about to happen.

Chapter XXIII

The victory celebration was way too short as the morning after the battle Commander had every soldier on the boats ready to ship out toward Yakumi before the sun even began to rise. On the central flagship Christian was welcomed aboard by Commander and Master Destiny.

“Welcome aboard the Liberation, Christian,” said Commander as the three walked toward the cabins.

Inside of Commander’s cabin Christian gazed the surroundings of the room in amazement. It seemed that Commander had not only won several awards for his military service, but was also a respected leader of the community. Christian continued to gaze at all the awards and recognitions placed across all the walls before Commander finally stopped him.

“Christian, I’d hate to distract you, but there’s something that needs to be discussed immediately.” spoke Master Destiny. Her voice was as serious as it was concerned. “Now,” she continued. “Before we

arrive in Yakumi you need to know a few things about the upcoming battles. First, I need you to know that you will probably not be able to engage in any of the army's movements from now on. The next battle has been set for the island of Mouktou, five miles east of Yakumian shore. On this island is a temple that will tell you about what you are about to undergo."

Christian was already confused. "Wait a second. What exactly is going to happen to me?"

"I don't even know the exact answer to that. All I know is that you have something inside of your soul that threatens all of our lives. I'm trying to help you fight it."

"Something inside of me... While I was in captivity I had a dream in which a person who looked almost exactly like me spoke to me and gave me the choice of surviving some kind of universal destruction."

"So Evolvia has already spoken to you. It looks like things are worse than I thought."

"Who's Evolvia?"

"He's the angel of death, minion of the Master Diamond. It chooses a race that has grown corrupt

beyond civilization and sends Evolvia to destroy everything, thus recreating the universe anew, beginning the dawn of a new dominant species on Earth. This is the third time this cycle has been started. First with the Destinos, then with the dinosaurs and now it appears humans are the next species in Evolvia's sights."

"But we saw the Destinos three years ago during the final battle with Kon! How did Evolvia destroy them and yet they reappear?"

"The Destino that underwent the Final Evolution chose survival of himself over fighting to save his species. As the centuries grew on he began to reproduce and that is what we found. At the dawn of man we sealed what was left of the Destinos in the other world, completing the seal with the magical power of the six diamonds Ultemeir was after three years ago. After she unleashed the Destinos Evolvia quickly learned and knew he had to destroy the humans in order to finish the job he should have finished millions of years ago. Everything moves in a cycle, such is the way of life."

“So, you’re saying that because I saved the world three years ago, it started a cycle that led up to this moment?”

“Exactly. Everything has consequence. Even saving the ones you love. The choice is yours, but I do ask you a favor.”

“What kind of favor?”

“For several centuries the Council of Elders has remained hidden in a timeless realm awaiting the return of Evolvia, and each time Evolvia wins we must await his return in a new species and take shape as that species. Christian Baylor, I ask that you destroy Evolvia and finally allow the elders, including myself, to rest.”

Commander stopped the conversation. “Wait a second here. You’re saying that you’re not even human? And that you thousands of years old? And now a threat greater than Kon is preparing for the destruction of the universe?”

“That’s about the summary of it.” replied Master Destiny as she once again turned to Christian. Commander was still dumbfounded as he struggled to comprehend what was happening.

“I need to defeat Evolvia to save the universe. If he’s really that powerful, is there any hope of defeating him?” asked Christian, almost as confused as Commander.

“Of course,” said Master Destiny, “Evolvia, when you face him, will be, in essence, your very shadow. That is why he will look almost exactly like you. Think of your confrontation of more as an inner conflict. If you make the right decisions, fate will predetermine you as the victor, but make a wish against Evolvia’s plans and all is lost, or so the Council has said for centuries. However, I believe that even if you face fate and challenge the road already laid out for you then there is still hope. Hope for a better tomorrow. I believe you, Christian, can finally end the centuries old conflict against fate.”

“But why me?”

“The Master Diamond chose you to be Evolvia’s host for a reason. It fears you, fears what you may become. I think it knows you have the strength in your heart to stop Evolvia and it wants him to kill you as soon as he can.”

Christian pondered what Master Destiny said for a couple of minutes, wondering what he should do. “I’ll sleep on it and tell you what I’ve decided in the morning.” he said as he left the room. Master Destiny shook her head and reclined in her chair. She wondered if the trip to Mouktou would bring a change in heart for Christian, who she knew was still unconvinced about risking everything.

Chapter XXIV

Alice sat at the edge of her bed pondering what she was going to do. Life seemed so much easier before she became involved in the war. She remained unsure about how she would talk to Christian, and how she would survive the next battle. Master Destiny ordered everybody to be on alert. They would be docking on Mouktou Island in about twelve hours.

Not helping her was the fact that midnight was fast approaching and Alice knew that it was the night of Christian's eighteenth birthday. Master Destiny predicted something was going to happen and the few who knew what seemed very edgy during the evening hours.

A few seconds later Kamo rushed into Alice's room.

"Something's wrong with Christian," he said, flustered by something. "Master Destiny wants you and Commander in his room right away."

Alice ran outside with Kamo as they ran down the cramped corridor toward the room designated

for Christian. Inside the small room the two saw Master Destiny and Schala as they all looked at Christian sitting upright on his bed. His eyes were squinted as if they were in pain and he was holding his chest and Alice could see some yellow sparks coming from him.

“What’s happening to him?” asked Alice as she approached Master Destiny.

“It’s his eighteenth birthday. The day Evolvia chose to revive himself into this world. Soon this world will be consumed as part of the universal destruction depending on the wishes of the Master Diamond.” Replied Master Destiny as Christian continued to writhe in his bed.

All of a sudden Christian fell off the bed and fell unconscious. A large yellow light flew from Christian’s chest and outside of a porthole. Everybody watched as the light flew toward the Yakumi Empire at an alarming speed before disappearing behind the horizon.

“The Final Evolution has begun,” said Master Destiny when she walked out of the room. Doctors then came into the room and carried Christian to the infirmary.

Christian was in his coma for over twenty-four hours even when the ships docked on Mouktou Island. The troops left and prepared for the coming battle while he rested in the medical room. Alice, Kamo, Schala and Commander all went to the battlefield while Master Destiny agreed to stay on the ship and wait for Christian to wake up.

* * *

Christian woke up again in the dark room where he met Evolvia earlier. This time Evolvia wasn't trying to hide and was standing right in front of Christian.

“Have you made your decision?” asked Evolvia.

Christian still hadn't made up his mind. “If I chose to survive, will there be a chance that others will survive?”

“Impossible. You see, one way or another, everything in this universe is going to die. You are special, Christian. You have been given the choice of surviving when the rest of your race is doomed to extinction. This is the path that has been laid out for you.”

“So, you’re saying that Fate prepared this decision for me?”

“Yes. Fate chose everything you would do, from surviving Kon’s attack on Kansas City, to defeating Kon, to being captured by General Kristie all were choices Fate made for you long before you were born. No matter what your choice may have been, Fate would make sure you completed your destiny.”

“What about everybody else? Commander? Alice? Kamo?”

“You’re actually concerned about others? You’ve grown up, Christian. The American Commander will fall in battle before the end of the war. Alice will survive as the last human in the world with you. Kamo, he will die with the others.”

Christian remained silent for several seconds as he thought about what he would do. Then he found himself thinking about what would happen if he chose to survive. Everybody he had journeyed with for the last four years would all die. Everybody in the world would be killed because of his one decision. This wasn’t even a matter of one city anymore, it was the entire planet. His choice was clear.

“You’re not destroying this universe.” Christian finally exclaimed.

“What? You don’t have a choice in the matter.”

“No. I’m going to fight you. I’m going to show you that humans should no longer be forced to follow the paths Fate lays out for them. Humans should be allowed to write their own destinies. You won’t be allowed to control us humans any longer.”

“How pathetic. I give you a chance to survive and you throw it away. Very well. The Master Diamond has no tolerance for those that try to oppose her order. At the place where you faced Kon three years ago will be a portal to my realm. When the time for the final battle comes, I will be waiting. Until then, try to survive.”

In a flash Evolvia had disappeared. Christian blinked and found himself on the ship with Master Destiny hovering over him.

“Did Evolvia speak to you?” asked Master Destiny as she helped Christian sit up on the bed.

“Yeah, he gave me the choice of surviving the end of the universe again.”

“And what did you tell him?”

“I told him... I said that humans are going to write their own destinies from now on, that I will destroy him and end this all. Did I make the right choice? Can I even have a chance at winning against him?”

Master Destiny smiled. “Only time will say whether you made the right choice or not. What’s done is done and now we must prepare you for your final battle with Evolvia.”

“Is it almost that time?”

“All our lives we write pages in the book of history. You have also followed this tradition and been writing you own part in history, even if you don’t know it. Now it’s you turn to decide how you’re going to finish this particular chapter in history. Will this be another installment, or the final chapter?”

“Final chapter?”

“You’re facing Evolvia in combat instead of surviving. Now you’ve put everything on the line. If you fall, nothing will be left alive except for Evolvia and the Master Diamond.”

Christian put his hand over his forehead. He knew how important the next battle was going to be.

It was like Master Destiny said; it was his turn to decide how he would finish the chapter.

Chapter XXV

Every soldier was lined up in several rows that spanned the length of the eastern beach of Mouktou Island. On the ship was Commander accompanied by Kamo, Alice and Schala. Christian and Master Destiny snuck off to the interior of the island to find the ancient Yakumian temple which held the key to stopping Evolvia.

On the western side, Salo was in command of the Yakumian troops as he prepared his army. Princess Miion ordered only about a quarter of the army to attack the island. All other soldiers were gathering in Yarzon in case the Americans forced their way through the island. After all of the Yakumian troops were lined up precisely to cover the width of the island, Salo ordered the troops to march toward the center of the forested isle, hoping to catch the Americans unguarded.

“They’ll try to catch us off guard in the forest. We can’t let that happen. Our troops need to watch their feet as well as their heads. No doubt Salo will use the trees to his advantage. I say we also use the

trees.” said Commander as he pointed to some diagrams of the island.

“What are you saying?” asked Kamo.

“I’m saying we send a few camouflaged units into the forest early and see how many we can take out before the Yakumian troops make it to our frontlines. The fewer troops the better since our sword skills are still in need of practice.”

Kamo and Alice nodded as they both left the ship to prepare their troops. Each one of the four commanders chose five of their best soldiers to camouflage and sneak into the interior of the island. Finally, all of the camouflaged troops disappeared from the island and Alice, Kamo and Schala all positioned their soldiers in a semi-circle surrounding Commander’s main brigade.

Commander used his telescope to see into the interior of the island and how the pre-battle preparations were going. Almost fifty Yakumian soldiers had already fallen to the stealth troops but the Yakumian army was still managing to push through the forest to the American camp. However, the Yakumians’ blue armor stood out in the forest and it made all of the soldiers easy targets.

Commander quickly ordered his troops to advance toward the forest. Within an hour the battle seemed like it had already been won. Salo soon had no choice and ordered his troops to retreat to Yarzon Castle, where the decisive battle would begin. The American forces began to celebrate a second victory in a row as Commander joined in. Before the full celebration began, however, Commander decided to give a short speech.

“Soldiers, I know we have been faced with hardship in this war the last several months. However, luck seems to have turned us around toward our final battle. Celebrate tonight, for tomorrow, we march toward Yarzon City and end this war!”

The soldiers all cheered as many loaded themselves onto the ships to celebrate. Kamo, Alice and Schala all joined in the celebration as well even though Christian had still not returned with Master Destiny.

* * *

Master Destiny had to light a second torch as the two began to reach the interior of the Yakumian temple. Aside the walls were drawings of Destinos and what seemed like ancient Yakumian leaders, but since Christian couldn't read the ancient Yakumian writing, he couldn't tell what it was. The writing all looked like hash marks with dots and joints at the two ends. Maybe the number of dots was supposed to symbolize which letter the symbol represented. That brought him to his sword that Master Destiny gave him which had similar marks on it.

“What exactly do these marks say?” asked Christian as he stared at the sword.

“I had to engrave them myself,” said Master Destiny. “But they say ‘I am the one who fights against my own destiny to free others from theirs.’”

Christian was surprised. Master Destiny must have known that he would choose the path he chose. He began to think about how he would fight the battle with Evolvia as the two entered the large sanctum of the temple. The temple itself seemed to be about as big as the one in the Black Hole Mine

with the same glowing circles on the floor where the faithful were meant to sit.

“Was Ultemeir here to collect one of the diamonds?” asked Christian.

“Yes she was. She alone destroyed the guardian of the shrine and stole the diamond from the Alter, thus bringing the world closer to turmoil.” replied Master Destiny as she raised the torch high enough to see the large mural on the back wall. The mural had two Destinos, one of a gold Destino with the other being black with both of their claws entangled.

“This was the first showdown of the Final Evolution,” said Master Destiny as Christian continued to be amazed at the mural. “The Destinos fought until the chosen one was brought to the edge of death, when he gave in to Fate and chose to survive. I hope you will fight until the end, Christian, even if it means your own death.”

Christian swallowed, unsure of what to say. He began to wonder if the same thing would happen to him, would he have the courage to face his own death?

“I see you disobeyed me,” said a voice suddenly from the entrance to the sanctum. Christian and

Master Destiny turned around to see an elderly man in a brown cloak with similar designs to Master Destiny etched into the cloth.

“You are wrong, Ralfor,” replied Master Destiny. “This boy is different. He will defeat Evolvia!”

“He will destroy us all!”

“Please! Do what you want with me, but let this boy free us!”

“He does not have the strength, isn’t that what I’ve been telling you? None of the ones chosen for the Final Evolution have ever been strong enough to defeat Evolvia. It is unfortunate, but we must continue our eternity of servitude to Fate, we must abide by her will.”

“No! We can’t serve Fate anymore! We must protect the humans. Isn’t that what you said when we created the council after sealing the Destinios?”

Ralfor stopped for a second. It seemed Master Destiny was using everything she could to let Christian face Evolvia. “Fine, let me test the boy. If he can wound me in battle, I will let him face Evolvia. However, if he loses, I will kill both of you. Agreed?”

Master Destiny nodded. “Christian, consider this a test for Evolvia. Use all your strength as I’m sure he won’t hold anything back.”

“Is he that powerful?” asked Christian.

“Well, he did defeat a Destino single-handed while his legs were bound in his younger days.” said Master Destiny

“Okay, he’s really powerful, I get the picture.”

Christian drew his sword and began to walk toward Ralfor. Ralfor placed his hand in the air and a double-bladed sword appeared in his hand. After a brief pause the two ran toward each other and quickly clashed swords. Their swords clashed about three times before Christian leaped over Ralfor and tried to attack his back. Ralfor swiftly turned around and blocked Christian’s attack as the two continued their battle.

Ralfor then hit Christian across the head with the blunt end of his sword and Christian was sent flying into the wall behind him. Ralfor began to run toward him, but Christian rebounded off the wall and lunged at Ralfor. Finally Ralfor did an overhead sweep of his sword toward Christian’s neck. Christian quickly ducked from the attack and

managed to cut Ralfor in the back of the leg as he rolled away from him.

Ralfor looked down and saw the blood that began to come from the wound.

“We had a deal,” said Christian as he placed his sword back in its sheath.

“Very well,” replied Ralfor. “Just promise me that you will defeat Evolvia and restore peace to this universe.”

Christian looked toward the ceiling and saw even more murals. “I can’t promise anything, but I will try my best to end this.”

Ralfor looked almost as if he was smiling before he disappeared a second later.

“He’ll be waiting for me in the chamber of the Council,” said Master Destiny. “It’s time we went back to the ship. The battle should be over by now.”

Christian nodded as the two walked out of the temple.

Chapter XXVI

The following day all of the American troops had set up camp outside of Yarzon. The city could slightly be seen on the horizon from Commander's tent where a meeting of Captains from all squads were meeting. The sun had begun to set as the meeting began.

"This goes without saying, but tomorrow is the deciding battle of the war," began Commander. "We're going to need a good strategy. We're estimating that we'll be facing a Yakumian force larger than we've ever seen. The fact that Miion will be issuing commands within the comfort of her own castle won't make the battle any easier."

"Ultemeir my be psychotic," interrupted Master Destiny, "But she's a military genius. Chances are she'll be able to figure out anything we throw at her."

"Then we need to send somebody in to kill her," replied Alice, "If I went in I think I could destroy Miion."

“That won’t be a good idea. Miion is more powerful than she was three years ago. It will take all of us to take her out.” continued Master Destiny.

“I agree,” said Commander. “We need to all stay here and command each brigade to make sure we can win the battle.” Everybody agreed with the plan. After the battle was over Commander, Alice, Kamo, Schala and Master Destiny would all storm Yarzon Castle to defeat Miion.

The meeting continued for a couple of hours while everybody gave ideas on a strategy for the final battle. Nobody seemed to be able to reach an agreement about which strategy would work best as each wanted their own strategy to be used. During the heated debate Leon walked into the tent.

“I heard the American troops were here, so I decided to come and offer my help. I’m Leon, leader of the Yakumian Resistance.”

“Aren’t you a little young to be a rebel leader?” asked Commander.

“Kasumi Layo used to be our leader, but she was captured by Miion and executed. Now I’m in charge. I’ve got two hundred and fifty rebels ready for you to take command of, if you want them.”

“No,” said Commander, “they’re your troops; you should take command of them. However, we could use some help in the battle tomorrow.”

“Good. I’ll order my troops alongside yours. I need to tell you a few things about the battle. Miion’s going to have archers on the rooftops of the city. She’s ordered all citizens into the castle and set her army up throughout the city. The soldiers are expected to start gathering at the main gate at daybreak.”

“Thanks for the info. It looks like we have about twelve hours before the battle begins then,” said Commander. “Everybody get some sleep and make sure you’re well prepared in the morning.”

Everybody then left the tent for their own tents as they began to prepare for the morning’s battle and then went to sleep. Separate tents were made for Leon and the rebels.

Master Destiny walked to a small ridge where Christian was standing, looking at the castle.

“When are you leaving?” asked Master Destiny.

“Tonight. I was just saying goodbye,” replied Christian.

“Goodbye?”

“Evolvia wants me to face him in his own realm. There’s a chance that even if I do defeat him, I won’t make it home alive. I want to see this earth one last time before the final battle.”

“I hate to say it, but Fate won’t take kindly to you if you manage to defeat Evolvia. Even if you survive, the Master Diamond will seek you. It will seek revenge for what you did.”

“Why was it named the Final Evolution?”

“It was named that to be mankind’s final test. To tell you the truth it has nothing to do with evolution at all.”

“It doesn’t?”

“Evolution is a fraud. A fraud created by some scientist to explain what he couldn’t so he made up a story. Humans have never gone through an evolution. They have only gained knowledge. One man learns the knowledge and passes it onto their children, who in turn pass it on to their children. We ‘evolve’ only because of what we teach our children. That is what has made humanity the people we are today.”

“So, the chain of knowledge will continue or end today.”

“Yes. It’s all in your hands. I never mentioned it to you but there is one thing that you never learned about the Council. We call this ongoing cycle of the Final Evolution ‘The War of Fate’. In actuality, it’s the war against Fate, as every species tries to write its own destiny and eventually falls to the cruel hand of Evolvia. The Destinos decided to live, while the dinosaurs made a decision that led to their extinction.”

“Well, this time things are going to be different.”

Master Destiny smiled as Christian left the ridge to gather his belongings inside of his tent. After he grabbed his sword he stopped by Alice’s tent and looked inside. Alice was fast asleep and looked peaceful as Christian only smiled and then left. He quickly mounted a horse tied up at the side of the camp and rode off toward Yarzon Castle. He followed the river to the main gate. He then dove into the grate leading into the city which would take him all the way to the castle where Evolvia waited.

Chapter XXVII

Before the sun had risen every American soldier was in their respective place for the battle.

Commander and Master Destiny had worked out a strategy for the battle and had begun to place their troops where the strategy would benefit. Miion couldn't pass up the opportunity to march straight through the American troops to the camp and that was the plan. Give them a clear shot to the commanding officers and then close them in.

All of the commanding officers watched as the Yakumian army began to march toward them in unison. Not a single soldier was out of step from the rest of them. On the left side of Commander, Alice and Leon were prepared with their own troops.

"Are you scared?" asked Alice to Leon.

"Who isn't?" replied Leon as he saw that the American troops were largely outnumbered.

In an instant the Yakumian troops broke their formation and blindly began to charge the American forces.

“What’s going on here?” asked Commander to himself. “Miion’s not this stupid. She would never blindly charge an enemy like this. Everybody! Reform ranks!” The army struggled to attack the Yakumian troops as the battle quickly became enveloped in a mess of soldiers.

* * *

Christian managed to make his way through the empty castle to the roof where the portal to the realm of Evolvia was, just like Evolvia told him it would be. In front of the portal, however, Ralfor was standing. Christian drew his sword as Ralfor stared at him.

“You do realize the penalty for failure, don’t you?” asked Ralfor suddenly.

“I do. That’s why I can’t afford to lose to him.” replied Christian.

“If you manage to defeat Evolvia, you should be aware that the gateways between the realms will disappear. Magic will be gone forever. Everything will change back to the way things were before the Yakumians even existed in this era.”

Christian stopped and paused for a second.
“Maybe... Maybe things will be better that way.”

Ralfor agreed silently as Christian stepped through the portal into the Realm of Evolvia.

The inside of the realm seemed like a thick sheet of glass underneath Christian’s feet as he walked toward where Evolvia was standing. Around Evolvia were two large blue rings etched into the glass with some sort of symbols wrapping around the large diamond below the glass in which the rings seemed to revolve around. That must have been the Master Diamond as Evolvia was in the center of the rings.

“I was beginning to wonder if you would come, Christian Baylor,” said Evolvia as Christian entered the rings.

Christian quickly drew his sword and raised it to his shoulders. “It’s going to end here,” he said as he took a couple of steps forward.

“I see your beliefs have made you stronger, but I must know something. What are fighting for? Is it someone who you may indeed love, but she doesn’t feel the same way? Or is it for your own selfish reasons?”

“Shut up. I’ve had enough of your riddles.”

Evolvia began to laugh. “You really think that defeating me will end the War of Fate?”

“It’s a good starting point.”

“I see there’s no convincing you of joining me. I guess that your universe is just going to have to be destroyed...” Evolvia swung his hand around and a black sword appeared in his right hand. “...and you’ll just have to be the first victim.”

Evolvia and Christian both jumped toward each other as their swords clashed. Christian immediately spun around and kicked Evolvia in the chest sending him flying back a few feet. Evolvia quickly regained his balance and ran at Christian once again and jumped toward him. Their swords then locked once again.

“I see you are more powerful than I expected,” said Evolvia. “But still, it won’t be enough to save the ones you love.”

Christian only glared at Evolvia and sent him flying back again. He then jumped toward Evolvia. Their swords clashed about four more times when Evolvia managed to cut Christian across the stomach. Christian stumbled back and then noticed

Evolvia lunging for him. He quickly evaded the attack and then cut Evolvia across the back.

“So we’re even. What makes you think that you can kill me here?” asked Evolvia.

“Because six billion people are counting on me to win!” shouted Christian as he made a lunge for Evolvia. Evolvia jumped over Christian and quickly made a leg sweep for Christian, who then jumped and back flipped to clash with Evolvia’s sword once again.

“We’re the same blood, Christian,” said Evolvia. “Anything you know I also know. I know even the person you love the most in this world. And I think wherever Alice is will be the first place I’ll strike when I begin to destroy the universe.”

“There’s just one problem,” said Christian, “You won’t make it back to Earth alive!” Christian kicked Evolvia who instantly fell to the ground. Evolvia then jumped straight to his feet and lunged frantically at Christian.

“Just face it boy, you can’t defeat me,” yelled Evolvia.

“Funny, that’s what Kon said three years ago, too,” responded Christian.

“Isn’t your revenge against Kon the reason I’m here?”

“Yeah, I know. I’m here to correct my mistakes, though. Not run from them!”

Evolvia swung at Christian’s feet and Christian kicked away his sword. Evolvia rolled to grab his sword once again and then stood at opposite ends of the circle.

“Any last words for Alice?” asked Evolvia.

“I’ll tell her myself...” exclaimed Christian in return. “... when we return home together!”

“You going to tell her that you love her?”

“No. I won’t tell her that.”

“Why? It’s what you want to say. I’ve been inside your body for eighteen years. I know what you want the most.”

“If I learned one thing these last four years, it’s this. True love... True love isn’t loving somebody who loves you back. It’s loving somebody and having the courage to do what’s right! Now, Evolvia. Let’s finish this!” Christian drew his sword and began to run as fast as he could toward Evolvia. Evolvia then also began to run. At the

midway point the two jumped in the air and slashed each other as hard as they could.

Christian was the first to fall to the ground. He had a deep gash in his left shoulder that was quickly starting to draw blood. He then turned to Evolvia and noticed him floating at the point where they had met.

“You... You... actually... wrote... your own... destiny...” muttered Evolvia as he looked down to notice Christian’s sword stuck straight through his heart.

“It’s finally over.” said Christian back as yellow sparks began to emit from Evolvia’s body. In an instant Evolvia’s body became enveloped in a bright yellow light that surrounded the entire area. Christian became lost in the wave and couldn’t figure out what was happening at all.

* * *

On the battlefield everybody stopped as a large explosion was heard in the direction of Yarzon Castle. Commander noticed the roof was emitting

yellow lights that were being sent in every direction. Master Destiny was the first to jump up and down.

“He’s done it! Christian defeated Evolvial!”
shouted Master Destiny.

The Yakumian troops soon surrendered. The leader of the Yakumian army who officially signed the surrender spoke about how Princess Miion and General Salo left without any word and left the Yakumian army to fend for themselves. Later investigations into Yarzon Castle confirmed that. Everybody began to celebrate the end of the war and the defeat of Evolvial, even though few people knew about the actual events.

Epilogue

Soon after the battle was over, magic began to wane from the planet. Anything that was created by magic, including the monsters that roamed both countries, began to disappear as well. Alice watched as Master Destiny was standing on a ridge away from the celebration.

“Master Destiny, why don’t you join the party?” asked Alice as she joined Master Destiny.

“I think I’ve stayed in this world too long already.” replied Master Destiny as she began to disappear.

“You can’t... We still need you to help find Christian.”

“Thanks, but I’ve been waiting to go where I’m going for thousands of years now, and I think that you humans can help each other now. You don’t need magic to help you anymore.”

Master Destiny smiled back at Alice as she disappeared into the sky. Alice looked up at the clouds and a tear fell in her eye.

“Thank you,” said Alice as she walked back to the party.

In Yarzon City, Leon gathered all of the citizens of Yarzon for an announcement.

“Citizens of Yarzon, I bring good news. The war is over! Furthermore, I announce the formation of the Yakumian Republic!” the citizens also began to celebrate in the city as Leon visited the graveyard and stood at Kasumi’s grave.

“It’s what you wanted, isn’t it?” Leon said as he placed a flower on the tombstone.

* * *

One week later Commander, Alice, Kamo and Schala all met in Washington D.C. for an awards ceremony with the President. Each of them received an honor for their heroism during the Yakumian war. Afterwards, Kamo and Alice met in Kansas City for their own homecoming celebration.

“It just doesn’t seem right without the hero of this story,” said Kamo as he looked at Alice.

“No, it doesn’t. But I’m sure Christian’s out there somewhere trying to find a way to get back

home. Meanwhile, I think it's time we start acting like regular eighteen-year olds. I think it's time to get back to school. How about you?"

"I think I'll go back to New York and go to college with Schala." Kamo smiled at Alice.

"You didn't..."

"Yep, I did. It looks like she's going to be coming here next week for the ceremony." Kamo and Alice laughed as they looked at the horizon.

Alice later went to the cliff where Mia knocked her down four years earlier.

"Christian, I know you're still alive out there somewhere. Please, hurry home." She looked into the sunset and remembered the four-year journey they had all had together.

* * *

"I seem to be stranded in some sort of unknown world. After Evolvia was defeated I woke up on the mountaintop and began to journey around, hoping for somebody to point me in the right direction. I thought that defeating Evolvia would be the last chapter in my adventure, but it appears that I was

wrong. Evolvia was only the end of the first episode of my journey. I do not know where the path ahead of me will take me; all I know is that Fate can't control it anymore. I'm free to write my own destiny, my own story, my own chapter in history, and continue to walk down this road until I reach the path home."

Christian finished writing in the journal William gave him and placed the journal in a goatskin bag. In a cave where he decided to rest for a while, Christian looked at the horizon in front of him, at the endless plains at the base of the mountain. He knew this couldn't be anywhere on Earth. He must have been stuck in another realm, like Ralfor predicted. The gateways may have been closed, magic may have vanished, but Christian knew that he could find a way home. "It looks like I have another journey ahead of me," said Christian to himself. "But, now, we are free."

