

REVEAL

Among Us Trilogy

Book 3

BETA READERS edition – this novel is only 50%
complete

Anne-Rae Vasquez

AR Publishing

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Reveal – Among Us Trilogy (book 3)

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For Joseph, whose vision and support inspired me to write this book. For my kids, who inspired me to learn about the hidden talents of online gamers. For my parents who always supported my creative madness. For Josefina, who pushed the borders of my creativity to help me bring Harry, Kerim, and Cristal to life.

Finally, for you, my Truth Seekers who dared to believe.

Note from the publisher

If you haven't read *Doubt book 1 and Resist book 2 of the Among Us Trilogy*, we highly recommend you do so before continuing. We've provided you with a plot summary and [a list of Characters](#) at the [end of the book](#) for reference.

Prologue

Limbo

A year passed. The instability caused by the global earthquake of 2013 brought numerous uprisings and invasions. The Ebola virus wiped out tens of thousands of people in the US, and hundreds of thousands across Europe, Asia and Australia. During this time, the international offices of Global Nation served as provisional governments for each nation.

“Mankind has really gone mad!” Carlos said, waving his hand. “A Nobel Peace Prize for Aaron? He’s gaining more followers calling him the Savior!”

Bina looked up, the images from the world of the living were playing out on the smooth water’s surface of the pool.

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She shifted her weight on the stone ledge, her gaze going past him, across the yard to the house.

She was picturing how Harry looked, the last time they were together. She heaved a tired sigh. The moment with him was brief—too short for a mother to enjoy with her only child.

Watching his life unfold in the reflection pool was the only connection she had left with him after her multiple attempts at contacting him. Was he ignoring her and if so, why? The doubts in her mind left her feeling empty.

Carlos snorted, bringing her back from her thoughts.

“Look at how mankind is eating out of Bezel’s hand! Why is God letting this happen?” He pounded his hand on his knee.

Unwilling to add to Carlos’ tirade, she touched the water, changing the coordinates, the images now picking up the video feed from the GN network. Her face lit up when she saw the images of Harry with his arm around Serena.

“Shush. They’re replaying Harry’s wedding anniversary

bash,” she said.

Carlos replied, “Such good news to hear that Lionheart appointed Harry to be GN’s top political advisor and Serena to be the Communications Secretary.”

She nodded, knowing he was going off on another of his political mantras. She shut out his words, focusing on the images in the pool.

“...and it’s just hilarious that Lionheart doesn't know that Harry is the leader of the resistance! The very movement that she is trying to destroy.” His laughter filled the air, and echoed into the courtyard.

The image was now of Serena, Harry’s wife, standing in front of the podium addressing the people.

Carlos wagged his finger. “GN needs to get the youth vote. I guess that’s why Lionheart has poor Serena delivering GN's messages now.”

Bina threw him a frown. “Hush. I want to hear what she

has to say.”

His eyebrows shot up as he glanced over to her.

She hunched over, focused on the speech.

“Good evening, fine citizens,” Serena said, “As you may have heard, arrests are under way as we speak for those who choose to disobey the new orders. The detainees will remain in an undisclosed area until they have been rehabilitated and safe to re-enter society. Do your due diligence and stand up for America by standing in line for your microchip. It will save your life. Together we will make the United States of America, the powerful country it once was.”

Carlos snorted again. “What a bunch of bull!”

Bina gave him a glare. “Hush!”

He pressed his lips together and nodded.

“...health care and food rations are determined on the basis of the data we receive via the data from the microchips. More rations will be delivered in the next scheduled mail drop

day in your area.”

Bina shook her head and sighed. “That’s enough. I’m sick of this.”

Carlos leaned forward and touched the water, the images now showing familiar streets. He knew that Bina enjoyed watching what happened in Megiddo, in the parallel world of the living.

He cleared his throat. “Aaron Doub or someone who looks exactly like him was seen in the streets of Megiddo.”

Bina frowned. “Oh?”

“But Walid knows better than to let the real Aaron out on the streets, right?” he asked.

Bina fell silent. She had contacted Walid on several occasions, giving him instructions on how to keep Aaron in hiding. She made him believe that the real Aaron Doub was part of a witness protection program and that Bina was a secret agent.

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He never questioned why she only appeared at his home, and for that she was grateful. It was the easiest place for her to appear to him as a living person. It was the parallel version of where she and Carlos lived, where both worlds overlapped.

Bina touched the water, this time bringing images that she knew Carlos dreaded seeing.

Cristal lay on the ground in her ten by ten foot cell, her hair serving as a pillow. Apart from not having a bed, she was treated better than others imprisoned at GN Tel Aviv. GN guards gave her three meals a day, daily showers and a regular change of uniforms. But Bina knew that was of little comfort to Carlos.

He stood up and waved his fist. “Cristal! Can you hear me?”

His previous attempts at communicating with her were futile. And yet, he never gave up trying.

Bina got up and grabbed Carlos’ hand. “At least, Bezel has given up asking her about where the real Aaron is.”

He squeezed her hand, his body shaking as the sadness overcame him. “Will he ever release her?”

Bina drew him close to her, unable to answer.

He looked up to the heavens and cried out. “Raffe? You were supposed to protect her! You coward! How can you call yourself an archangel of God?”

At that moment, a cold breeze blew across the surface of the water. The waves erased the former images, replacing it with a new scene.

A man walking barefoot, dressed in red and white striped pajamas was wandering up a dusty street of small shops. He passed a young couple that turned to watch him.

Carlos muttered. “How can a grown man walk around on the streets like that in his sleeping clothes? And talking to himself, no doubt.”

Bina’s eyes widened. “He’s not talking to himself. Look!”

She pointed at the grey shape that seemed to follow the

man.

Carlos leaned forward. “Yes, yes, I see it.”

Bina touched the water, the images zooming into focus. She gasped when the man turned. Despite the gauntness in his eyes and cheeks, his beak-like nose was a dead giveaway.

“It’s Aaron,” she said.

“Aaron? What is he doing outside wandering around alone?” Carlos cried out.

“He’s not alone,” she said in a quiet voice.

“What?”

“Gabriel is with him,” she said.

“Why would Gabriel be with him?” He ran his hand through his hair and shook his head.

Bina turned to him, a look of confusion on her face.

“Gabriel isn’t the only one with him.”

Carlos raised his eyebrows. “What?”

Bina shrugged her shoulders. “There is a man with a beard; he’s wearing a white robe with sandals on his feet.”

Carlos cut her off. “Aaron is wandering the streets with Gabriel and another ghost, identity unknown.”

Bina put her hand up. “Wait a minute, I wasn’t finished.”

“Okay, finish,” Carlos said, crossing his arms.

It was then that Bina smiled.

“There’s an army of angels behind him.”

Part One

Deception

Slipping in and out of both worlds

The land of the living

and the realm of the dead

Where do I belong?

AR Vasquez

Chapter 1 Cristal

Patient 878

Days blurred into the next, weeks turned into months and in two days Cristal was facing the anniversary of her first year as a “patient” at GN Tel Aviv’s secret labs. GN guards and staff referred to her as Patient 878.

The first day after the botched exorcism, she had woken up tied to a gurney with white masked staff poking and prodding her for hours. It followed with Bezel’s first of many interrogations. By the time he was done with her, she had welcomed the moment when she was thrown into this cell.

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She gazed into the darkness, her face pressed against the cold ground with only a mat between herself and the dankness of the cement. Her fingers slipped under the cuff of her sweatshirt and brushed against the tips of the charms on the bracelet, a comforting habit.

Distorted jagged memories seeped into her mind. Anyone reading her thoughts would have mistaken them for innocent fragments of her childhood—meaningless and trivial moments of her past. But in reality, her thoughts were far from trivial. Twisting her memories was an art she had learned to perfect—encrypting them in her mind so that no prying demon, or angel to that matter, could access them.

She found herself drifting into her encrypted memories. It was a dangerous thing to do, although she was confident that the vault in her mind was hack proof. But then again, is anything really hack-proof?

Cristal was hovering in the air. Below her was Raffé and herself during the last few hours of her demon defense training.

It was a recurring memory. The hours before the unsuccessful exorcism of Aaron Doub.

When she visited her memories, just as she was now, she made sure to watch it like a third party witness. She reasoned to herself that if she were only observing from a distance, she'd never get lost in the memory itself. But now she let herself go and immersed herself into the moment. It was dangerous yes but at the same time thrilling.

Raffe grabbed her wrist. "Take this thing off."

"No way. I need this to protect me," she heard herself say as she twisted her arm away.

"The power from bracelet in erferes with my ability to help you during the exorcism."

She knew that was a load of bull but it wasn't worth arguing with an archangel over. "What should I do with it?"

"It does not matter. Just take it off your wrist." He folded his arms and tapped his finger impatiently.

“Yes, sir, your angel highness,” she said under her breath.

She reached over to pull the bracelet off, sliding it over the base of her hand. A vibration rippled from her chest and down her arm making the charms jingle.

“Well, what’s keeping you?” he growled.

She yanked the bracelet trying to ignore the vibrations pulsating down her arm.

Why won't this thing come off?

The pointed edges grabbed hold of her wrist.

You're not helping me at all you silly thing. She realized she was talking to a bracelet, something she'd been doing a lot lately.

A cold tingly sensation wrapped itself around her wrist. The bracelet shimmered for half a second and then disappeared. *Weird.* There was no time to question what had happened. She was wasting precious training time.

“Okay, ready to go,” she said, raising her arm to prove she had complied with his request.

He nodded. “Good. That wasn’t so difficult, was it?”

She was about to respond with a sarcastic comment when she felt the familiar sensation of the charms grazing her skin. *What the --?* The bracelet that she just saw “disappear” was resting in its usual spot just below her wrist.

“Something wrong?”

She met Raffe’s impatient glare.

“Wrong? Nope, nothing wrong,” she said trying to keep her eyes locked with his.

“Good. Let’s continue with training then.”

He gave her a satisfied nod and never mentioned the bracelet again.

Interestingly enough, no one else mentioned it again either.

Chapter 2 Cristal

Dr. Goldberg

Cristal had grown accustomed to the daily testing and psychiatric evaluation sessions with Dr. Goldberg. She found her to be a strange lady. She wore her hair in a bun that was tied so tightly that the skin on her face seemed to be pulled back behind her ears like a bad facelift.

Cristal's bracelet never picked up supernatural vibes when Goldberg was around so she ruled out demon possession. One less thing to worry about. Humans she could handle, demons and angels, not so much.

Dr. Goldberg entered the room with her tray of vials.

“You know the drill Patient 878. Remove your outer shirt,” she said avoiding eye contact.

Cristal yanked off the sweatshirt and hung it on the back of the chair. She stood tall in only a tank top and track pants. The muscles in her arms were honed and lean. The nightly workouts and physical training she did after lights out were paying off.

Her eyes flickered to the doorway where a female GN guard stood watch. No demon signals from her bracelet meant she had the advantage—two humans inside and a third one outside the door. She could take them down and escape. That is, if she wanted to.

The guard's eyebrows knitted together.

Cristal dropped her gaze into her lap. No matter what, if she ended up surviving Bezel's wrath, the mission from the Almighty Himself came above her own self interests. What the mission was exactly, she was not entirely sure. Her own instincts told her that she needed to infiltrate Global Nation and bring Bezel down.

If anyone had told her that this was her mission a year ago, she would've told them to get their head examined.

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Even with her headstrong convictions, she couldn't help but wonder what exactly was keeping her from escaping. If she did escape, she could probably blend in with the locals. But would she ever really blend in? Or maybe she could teleport back to New York and find Harry and Serena. Then again why bother? It's not like they tried looking for her.

Her thoughts swirled in her head settling onto the same rationale that kept her where she was. The Almighty had given her a mission and if it meant saving mankind from obliteration, then she was committed to sticking to the plan.

“Stop fidgeting or this will take much longer than it has to,” the doctor snapped, wrapping the blood pressure sleeve on her arm.

And so the testing began with a scribble in the notebook and then on to another test and more scribbling. Test, scribble, tes and scribble.

“So Dr. Goldberg, what's the diagnosis?”

The doctor's eyebrow shot up. Obviously she wasn't

impressed with Cristal's chattier side. "The physical testing will be over soon. You can ask your questions in the next half of the session."

"Anyone tell you how reassuring your bedside manner is, doc?"

The doctor pursed her lips and turned to the guard. "Bring in the chair."

The guard held the door open while the other guard pushed the chair into the room.

Dr. Goldberg walked over with brisk steps, one hand holding her notebook and a pen in the other. She plopped herself down into the chair, her dark marble eyes peeking over her thick black-framed glasses. She started with the same round of questions she had asked the day before.

"What is your name? Do you know how you got here?"

Cristal repeated in verbatim what Bezel had ordered her to say on the first day of her imprisonment. "I have no

recollection of who I am or how I arrived at GN.”

The doctor dropped her head; her glasses sliding down the steep slope of her nose. She scribbled a note and read out the next set of questions.

Cristal responded, her words sounding like a broken record. The doctor clucked her tongue on the roof of her mouth as her pen scribbled away.

Every day, it was the same thing. Same questions, same answers and a bunch of scribbling. She felt she was stuck in her own version of Bill Murray’s movie, Ground Hog Day. Every single day was almost identical to the last. If Bezel’s mental torture sessions weren’t going to kill her, it’d be the utter boredom with Dr. Goldberg that would.

Today Cristal was going to stop the cycle by doing some interrogation of her own.

“You speak English very well,” she said with a small smile. She tried to say it like it was a genuine compliment not as an observation.

The reply from Dr. Goldberg was a curt, “We must focus on you, not me.”

She pressed on. “Let me guess. You probably grew up in the US, maybe were even born there and now you’ve moved back to the Promised Land.”

The doctor’s nostrils flared and her pale skin flushed a lobster red. “Like I said. I ask the questions and you answer them. Understood?”

“Of course,” she replied. From her quick assessment Goldberg wasn’t being much of a foe.

“Let’s begin then.”

The doctor coughed into her hand and shifted in her seat.

And then it happened. The doctor went off script.

“Are you being held here against your will?”

Cristal’s jaw fell open. *Was this a test?* Other thoughts rushed through her mind. *Had Harry sent Doctor Goldberg to*

save her from Bezel's wrath?

“I am,” she blurted out despite her instincts warning against it.

Goldberg's eyes widened. “Oh, I see,” she said, the pen in her hand still poised in the air.

Cristal should have covered up her mistake but there was no going back. Instead she asked, “Can you help me?”

The doctor glanced down and shuffled the papers on the chart. Finally after an awkward silence, she cleared her throat. “I, um, will see what I can do.”

Cristal reached out and grabbed her arm. “*Will* you help me?”

The doctor stood up, yanking her arm away. “Yes, yes, of course. Like I said, I'll see what I can do. Best we end this now.”

Cristal glanced up at the clock on the wall. “But we still have fifteen minutes left.”

Dr. Goldberg mumbled something, then spun on her heel and rushed out the door.

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Chapter 3 Harry

Take a leap

Harry raced towards the ledge of the rooftop and at the last second skidded to a stop. He looked down the five stories of the newly renovated building to the empty alley below. Thanks to Lionheart, GN's new social housing development project had landed in his lap. Ten months later they had renovated two of the five buildings, which now housed 100 families.

He bent over to catch his breath.

“And this is why you don't skip training sessions,” a voice called out.

He glanced up and met Serena's cute smirk with her hands on her hips, gloating about the fact that she had made the leap onto the next rooftop without even blinking.

“Do you want me to come get you?” she asked, swallowing her giggles.

He deserved that.

“Okay, Mrs. Doubt. You’re not helping here.”

“Okay, darling,” she said in a singsong voice. “You can do it. You know I believe in you.”

That did it.

As Serena had trained him, he stepped back 40 feet and then sprinted towards the ledge at a steady pace. He leaped off the ledge and soared through the air letting the momentum carry him forward. He shot his chest out, looked up to the sky, and swung his arms back.

At the last second he shut his eyes and landed hard on the tarred surface, sprawling face first.

“How’s it going down there?”

He looked up to see Serena’s black Parkour running shoes.

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“I don’t want to hear it,” he said, pushing himself off the ground.

“Where’s your sense of humor? Are you okay?” Serena leaned over with an open hand.

He gave a sigh and grabbed her hand, pulling himself up.

“I’m sick of Lionheart’s broken promises. We should’ve been at GN Tel Aviv months ago.”

She wrapped her arms around him. “And that’s why...”

“And that’s why we’re going to get to Tel Aviv tonight.” He touched her cheek and placed his lips on hers, kissing her softly.

“You know how I couldn’t wait for this day. So let’s go,” she whispered in his ear.

He smiled. “Lead the way.”

She giggled. “What would you do without me?”

“I’d be nowhere without you,” he said but she already

turned and was sprinting to the opposite ledge.

“That’s my girl,” he said under his breath.

As GN high-ranking senior officials, it meant that they had high-level access to classified data—data that he previously had to hack to get at. He and Serena had spent months searching the databases looking for Cristal. When they couldn’t find her in the Israeli GN RFID database, they searched through the restricted patient files.

The files didn’t reveal the patient names, only their diagnostics— all were comatose which was no surprise.

GN had told the world that all nations were faced with a coma-induced viral outbreak. The real facts were they were covering up their classified soul separation program. It was a lie that the general public believed. GN operated the only media outlets left standing. The Internet was controlled by GN communications restricting American citizens from contacting anyone outside of the city they were in. If it weren’t for his own Truth Seeker intranet, he wouldn’t have been able to reach out to his other Truth Seekers around the world.

Unfortunately, none of the Truth Seekers in Israel had heard from Cristal since before the earthquake.

Then one day while searching the GN Tel Aviv patient database he came across a psychiatric assessment for one of the comatose patients. This was the anomaly he was looking for. Why would a comatose patient need psychiatric assessment?

Serena looked over his shoulder. “Are ya comin’?” she called out as she leaped onto the next building’s roof.

“Right behind you.”

Chapter 4 Cristal

Bezel

Cristal was still trying to collect her thoughts when the door swung open. Bezel entered, gliding into the empty chair that Dr. Goldberg had just left. Precisely ten minutes earlier, she had sensed his presence the moment he had stepped into the elevator from the top level of the building. The only way for her mind to deal with the overlapping imminent dangers was to focus on the current moment at hand.

Bezel had become quite adept at playing the role of Aaron Doub, the GN appointed president of Israel. From what she'd overheard between the guards, people either tolerated or accepted his eccentric behavior. The majority of people who lost everything after the earthquake needed a savior and Bezel,

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aka President Doub, seemed to fit the bill. He was working hard to rebuild the nation or at least that's what he wanted the populous to think.

He walked like a monarch with his back straight, his head held high and his crooked nose pointed upwards as if he'd just picked up the scent of something foul.

In contrast to his royal posture, his attire was more flamboyant. He wore his hair greased back and his tailored outfits were cut with the fashionable “before the earthquake” look—broad shoulders, cinched waist, pencil thin pants and high-end pointed leather shoes unlike everyone else who either were in army beige or grey track suits.

She recalled how Dr. Saeed had always cared about his appearance. Were all demons a bunch of divas?

“Let's forget the niceties and get to business,” Bezel said.

His dark energy was already snaking its way around her head scanning her thoughts and memories—prying it from her mind, or so he thought.

The mental probing would have been intolerable if Raffe had not trained her well.

Raffe's voice replayed back in her head.

Don't let the devil in. Fill your mind with happy memories or create fake ones. Build a world inside your head to drown out the real memories, especially the memories that could jeopardize the welfare of those who are connected to you.

"Now, you know I hate to do this to you," Bezel said in a matter of fact way, squeezing his fingers into a fist

She bit her lip as the sharp blistering pain ripped through her chest.

She wanted to summon her powers to blast him back to the hole he crawled out of but would she even have a chance to stand up to Bezel?

"You can't seem to stop for someone who hates doing this," she said through clenched teeth.

He relaxed his hand, easing the pain in her chest. "You

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cannot fathom the number of souls I have tormented over the expanse of time in the place humans call Hell. I am exhausted by the role I have had to play. All I want is to enjoy the wonders of humanity. Do you not think I am incapable of torturing you physically until you beg me to take your soul?”

He spoke in a low hypnotic tone and yet she sensed the tiredness in his voice.

“I believe you,” she said.

Cristal’s gaze panned away from the plastered white wall, past the stainless steel toilet and sink in the corner to the mat on the cold tile floor. Lights out was in five minutes. How she wished that he would leave.

She could see glimpses of Yaffa the human vessel he was using if she tried hard enough to see through his façade. Sometimes he would forget and let his guard down, his appearance morphing into Yaffa’s just like what was happening now.

He raised his hand turning his palm to her.

In the center was a black tattoo of a hexagram with an eye in the top triangle took shape, the symbol printed on the back of US dollar bills. She had read somewhere that it was called the Eye of Providence and was associated with the Illuminati, a secret society that conspirators believed to control world affairs. What was the symbol doing on his hand?

Bezel spoke in a soft but commanding tone. “Look into the eye and see for yourself.”

Mesmerized by the intricate detail in the tattoo, she was spellbound by the rays of light emanating from the eye. *Did it blink?*

“Stop,” she tried to say. Something was crawling up the back of her neck. She wanted to swat it away but her arms hung like weights by her side.

“You need to see for yourself what the Almighty will not show you.”

The eye widened just then and a burst of flames erupted from the center of the pentagram forming a ball of fire that

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grew to the size of a beach ball and continued expanding at a rapid pace.

In a few seconds, the entire room was engulfed in flames. She was standing in a burning inferno physically immune to the fiery blaze.

Just like her, Bezel was unaffected by the fire. He sat motionless, the flames swirling around him as his appearance transformed back and forth from Aaron Doub to special agent Yaffa.

Cristal tried to grasp what the fire show was all about when a vision appeared before her.

In the vision, there was an ocean filled with fire. Swimming between the flames were thousands of men and women with their hands reaching up. Their bodies were translucent like a collection of blackened ashes rushing upwards and then falling back into the inferno.

The sound of the shrieks and screams from their open mouths sent waves of nausea from her gut to her throat. Air,

she needed air.

Why couldn't she turn away from watching these horrifying images?

She realized then that what she was witnessing were human souls desperately trying to climb out of the sea of fire.

Suddenly above them came a black cloud that hovered a few feet from the outstretched hands. The cloud began to scatter into separate black shapes that flew without wings. These entities resembled burning coal and were more animal-like than human swarming above them like vultures.

She realized then that these were demons. She watched as they swarmed above the souls, offering their hands and then lashing at them with their talon like fingers.

Dear God, I can't take this anymore. She whispered the special words for teleportation, "Bo nelech" (which meant 'Let's go' in Hebrew) just as she had done the night of the exorcism. And just like that night, the words did not take her away.

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Had Bezel's power weakened her supernatural abilities?
Or was God testing her?

“That's enough,” Bezel finally said. He dropped his hand, breaking the spell.

In an instant, the fire that had filled the room disappeared, taking the abhorrent images of Hell with it.

Her heart was beating a mile a minute and all she wanted to do was retreat from all of the insanity. She knew that wasn't an option, so she forced herself to remain calm.

Breathe, Cristal, breathe, she could hear her father say. His voice soothed her like it always did every night. She wished she could let him know that she could hear him. But doing this would reveal his location in Limbo. And she couldn't bear to imagine what would happen if Bezel found out

She took a deep breath. “If that was meant to threaten me, then you've succeeded,” she said with a false bravado in her tone.

He gave her a tired smile and stood up. “I don’t need to threaten you or anyone. As I’ve told you before, I’m here on Earth to learn about humanity. I want to understand mankind and what makes you who you are. The Almighty always favored humans over his angels. I am curious as to what makes your kind more special; I want to know why you are so unique. I do care about you Cristal Hernandez.”

She swallowed the bitterness in the back of her throat. “You have a funny way of showing it,” she said.

He raised an eyebrow, surprised by her response but then quickly resumed his cool demeanor.

“That’s it for today. I am off to perform presidential things.” He chuckled as if inviting her to chuckle with him.

Seriously, was he trying to be funny?

“Can I ask you something?” she asked.

His lip curled into a small smile. “Of course. Ask.”

“If you want to learn about being human, maybe you can

cut all this interrogation torture stuff and just talk to me. You know, like a regular person.”

Bezel’s fingers closed into a fist.

She held her breath knowing that she physically couldn’t take another hour of torture.

The cold expression on his face was replaced with a smirk. “I like that suggestion. Yes, you know this torture bit is getting to be so redundant. From now on then, we talk one human to another.”

“Then it’s a deal,” she said.

“Ah yes,” he said, “Making deals is my specialty.”

“Uh, hmm okay.” She gulped.

He nodded and walked over to the door, stopping to glance back at her.

“I forgot to tell you...”

She nodded.

“You may encounter some visions in your dreams. It is the side effect humans experience when seeing the Sea of Eternal Damnation.”

Her stomach churned but she fought to remain calm.
“Yeah, thanks for the heads up.”

He raised an eyebrow and lifted his chin up. “Heads up?”

She tried hard not to roll her eyes. “Just a saying, Mr. Doub. It means ‘thanks for letting me know’.”

“Ah yes. You’re proving to be very resourceful. By the way, I’m having a TV installed in here. Call it a thank you gift.”

With that comment, he pulled the door open and walked out.

She let out a long sigh. The demon signal from her bracelet was fading away.

Her knees wobbled as she got up from the chair. She braced her body against the wall, pressing her face against the

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cold cement. She needed to get to her safe place. It felt like eons since she had been there —when she last saw Kerim.

Dear God, I know I shouldn't abuse this but please allow me to go there.

The familiar warm light embraced her and she closed her eyes as she drifted for a moment. She welcomed the peace and serenity that surrounded her. She could hear music but it was more beautiful than any music she had ever heard on earth.

“I’m here,” a familiar voice said.

Her eyes flickered open.

Kerim stood before her, his eyes shining a silvery blue grey. He was there and yet he wasn't; his body shimmering in and out of translucency.

Tears welled up in her eyes as the pain and anguish shook her body.

“I don't know if I can do this any more.”

“You must stay strong, Cristal,” he said.

How she missed hearing him say her name. But there wasn't time to be sentimental. She needed information.

“Where exactly are we? Is this heaven?”

“We are on the outskirts of Heaven,” he told her, “where each angel has their own place to heal before returning to battle.”

“But I'm not an angel.”

“The Almighty made an exception.”

“Exception?”

He nodded, his grey eyes piercing hers. “You are the exception.”

Why didn't that comfort her?

“Is this our safe place?”

He said in a quiet voice, “No, only yours.”

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A cloud of disappointment fell over her. She could hear his thoughts and she was sure he could hear hers. He wanted to be her guardian angel but it wasn't going to be. And before she could tell him she didn't want him to be anything but her man, he was gone leaving her alone. Again.

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Chapter 5 Cristal

News

The TV was installed as promised and Cristal left it running throughout the day. Most of the programming was local news filled with footage of President Doub and his entourage. Sometimes there would be back-to-back full feature Hollywood style movies starring former big actors. The movie storylines were laced with subtle GN propaganda messaging. Despite this, it was better than staring at the blank wall.

She had awakened in the early hours of the morning plagued by insomnia. At least she could entertain herself by watching TV. After an hour or so of repeat news programming, a feature film finally came on. It was called Israel Impassible and it starred Tom Cruise as the President of Israel. He resembled nothing like the real President but she had to admit

his Hebrew was fairly good.

Just as she was beginning to enjoy the movie, GN guards entered the room.

The one with the baby face, dark wiry hair and a short wide build was called Noa. The taller one with an awkward looking face, which seemed to be always twisted in a scowl was called Simcha, which in Hebrew meant joy.

The daily routine was consistent. The guards brought her meal at eight o'clock in the morning, standing inside the room while she ate. They would chatter to each other in Hebrew assuming she couldn't understand.

At noon, the guards would return with the lunch meal. After that, they'd escort her to the showers. It was during these walks, she would glance through the windows on the doors of the other patients' rooms. They lay peacefully as if napping. As the months passed, a new set of patients would replace the old ones. She shuddered to think what might have happened to the ones that were taken away.

Next stop would be the courtyard where she was allowed to walk around in the open air for ten minutes. If it weren't for the chain-linked fence above, she may have enjoyed seeing the sky, still darkened red with orange streaks. She treasured these few moments outside. Breathing fresh air and feeling the breeze on her face were things she'd never appreciated as much as she did now.

One day when the guards escorted her to the showers, she heard Noa drop Harry's name.

She took her chances and asked in broken Hebrew, "What is the news on Harry Doubt? Is he coming to GN Tel Aviv?"

Noa's eyes lighted up. "You speak Hebrew?"

Cristal nodded her head. "A little."

"He got married at GN New York."

She swallowed hard. "Married?"

"Yes! Oh and the bride is so cute too. What's her name, Simcha?"

“Selena,” the older guard said.

“Serena?” Cristal corrected her and stopped herself.

“Ah yeah. Serena. That's her name. Did the doctor tell you?”

She nodded, hoping that they'd drop the topic.

Since that day, the guards chatted openly, talking about various interesting and not so interesting things—President Doub's latest speeches, gossip about the horrible food in the canteen, the way some of the GN higher ups would complain about their weekly reports and other work related grief. Sometimes they talked about local news like the chip implant program, which was a requirement for all citizens. They showed her the scars on their hands where their chip had been inserted.

“You will get one too,” Simcha said. “All the patients on this floor will get one once the GN Staff have gotten theirs.”

“What is the chip's purpose?” she asked.

Noa answered with a bright smile. “It’s to help ration out the food and supplies and health care for everyone. It’s a good thing. It means no one will go without food, shelter and medical support.”

Simcha snorted. “It is just a way for GN to track everyone. They know where we go all the time. If I go to bathroom, they know I am in bathroom.”

Simcha’s rough manner of speaking probably meant that Hebrew wasn’t her first language. Not knowing from where she was originally made it difficult to read her.

And today, the anniversary of her incarceration, things began much the same way as the previous days.

The guard Simcha handed her a steel tray carrying a bowl of desert beige lumpy mush, a vague semblance of hummus. Wedged on the corner of the bowl was a triangular piece of pita bread, dry and cracked—the usual grub.

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Simcha turned to Noa and said, “Can’t wait for tomorrow.”

Noa smiled. “It will be nice to take time off in Eilat.”

Simcha smiled but it came out as a sneer. “Yeah, they say that David is going to cover for both of us tomorrow.”

“Would be nice if David was coming to Eilat with us,” Noa said with a wink.

Simcha snorted. “Hah, he’s just a boy.”

Noa turned to her and winked. “Don’t listen to her. David is not a boy. He’s a brave strong man. She just has a big crush on him.”

Simcha scowled. “Hmpf! Crazy talk.”

Cristal dipped the pita bread into the bowl, listening intently about the mysterious new guard.

They continued throwing insults at each other. She half listened, soaking the bread into the hummus.

Simcha lowered her voice, glancing at her sideways before saying, “He is big troublemaker. When patient 454 went missing, David was questioned.”

Noa shook her head. “We all were questioned.”

“Not the same. He was interrogated by the General himself.” She rubbed her nose on her sleeve.

“Ah?” Noa raised her brow.

“Better not talk in front of 878.” Simcha looked over at her, raising chin.

Cristal looked down mopped up the last of the hummus with the scrap of pita.

“Eh, what’s the big deal? She’s harmless. Right, 878?” Noa called out.

She raised her eyes from her plate. “Hm? What’s up?”

Simcha gave her a wary eye, reached out and grabbed the tray. “You are done now.”

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“Uh, okay,” she said. What was with Simcha’s sudden change in mood?

Noa looked just as surprised but she kept her usual busy tongue silent.

Simcha nodded her head and walked out the door with Noa following steps behind.

Cristal was beginning to believe that David would prove to be useful to her. She wasn’t entirely confident on how exactly. But time would tell.

Chapter 6 Harry

Forbidden

Darkness was falling fast and theurfew was looming

“Keep up with me. Kerim’s going to be onto us soon,”
Serena said, taking longer strides.

“He never said we couldn’t cross over,” he said, trying not
to gasp for air as he picked up his pace.

She glanced over her shoulder. “He literally used the
words ‘I forbid you to go where both worlds cross.’”

“That’s just *angel talk*. What’s he going to do? Kill me?”
It was meant to be a joke but he felt his insides shudder.

“I don’t want to think about it. You finally got the guts to

do this. No time for regrets.”

They continued running in silence until they arrived at the border.

A large sign at the end of the road read, “Do not enter. Danger. GN authorized security only.”

Serena slowed down to a walk. “We’re being watched.”

“We’re almost there.”

Those who refused to get RF chip implants hid in the abandoned buildings that remained amidst the destruction and devastation beyond the border.

Kerim and his guards patrolled the area outside the Rebuild Zone every night. Anyone out past curfew was hauled away to GN for rehabilitation.

Serena scanned the area and nodded to him with the all clear sign.

They walked past the border, observing what was around

them. They were steps away from Gabriel's apartment, the portal where both worlds crossed.

Emotions and memories flooded his mind. The supernatural forces surrounded them. His bracelet didn't have to warn him. He could feel their presence waiting to swallow them up whole.

A soulful wail broke the silence.

Serena's expression grew dark. "We should've gone back to save her," she said.

"Serena," he said, reaching out to touch her shoulder.

"We waited too long," she said before stepping into the mountain of crumbled bricks.

"We had to be cautious. We would've..."

"... endangered Cristal's life. Yes, I heard it all before."

He knew she was right.

She stepped into the debris and her body dissolved into the

portal. He picked up his pace and followed after her.

The dank smell of old carpet hit his nose as he stepped into the shadows of the lobby. Serena had sprinted ahead, swinging the stairwell door open.

She turned and raised her eyebrows. “Come on.”

“I’m two steps behind you.”

She smirked and stepped aside to let him by.

He reached out to hold the door. “Ladies first.”

“Whatever,” she said. She pulled out a flashlight, flicked it on and darted up the stairs. The light cast long shadows on the stairwell walls.

They raced up to the third floor, their steps echoing around them.

Serena reached the landing and opened the door.

“If you say, *Ladies First* again, you’re going to get it,” she said with a tiny grin.

He never could read her despite being married for a year.

“Is that a promise?” he said brushing past her.

“Don’t push it.”

They continued down the hallway. The crackle of the incandescent light bulbs, the orange carpet and the textured wallpaper were exactly as he remembered.

He felt a wave of energy brush past him.

“Serena, hold up.”

She turned towards him, her eyebrows raised. She lifted her arm, the orange glow from her bracelet catching his eye.

Vibrations rippled around his own wrist.

Serena gave him the signal to pick up the pace.

He raced up to her noting that the vibrations were getting

stronger. The walls of the hallway were compressing and decompressing. They had to get to the safe zone inside Gabriel’s apartment fast.

Serena rushed to the door, scanning it for its weak spot. She lifted her right leg and kicked the area just below the doorknob with the sole of her foot. The door gave in slightly. She gave it two more sharp kicks before it gave way. She waved for him to follow and ran inside.

A high-pitched sound filled the air followed by the sound of wings flapping.

A deep voice bellowed. “I command you to stop!”

Nothing was going to stop him. With that thought set in his mind, he stepped inside.

Chapter 7 Harry

Crossing over

Everything looked the same as it did the day they crossed over. And yet everything was different. Something else was in the room with them. He couldn't see what it was but he sensed it. The lights flickered and the edges of the walls bent inwards and outwards as if the room was breathing.

Serena stood in the middle of the room, her eyes fixated on the ceiling.

“What is it?” he asked.

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Her mouth was open but not a sound came out.

“Serena?”

He stepped towards her.

“Do not come any closer,” she said in a voice that wasn’t hers.

The tips of his fingers tingled and his joints throbbed. Whatever it was, he could not let it sense his fear.

“Leave Serena’s body now. I command you in the name of the Almighty God, our Father,” he said in a firm voice. Ten months of spiritual warfare training had better pay off.

Serena’s head tipped to the side and turned to him with a glassy eyed stare

“That may work for someone of less significance but you’re going to have to try harder.” The voice that came from her mouth reverberated around the room.

This was the place where both spiritual and the human

worlds crossed. Demons or angels wouldn't dare hurt them here.

“Or so you think.”

Whatever was inside Serena cracked a sick smile.

“Don't pretend to know what I'm thinking,” he said, keeping his voice steady. Demons would say or do anything to manipulate the situation.

“You dare speak to me like this?” the demon said in a monotone voice.

His heart raced in his chest while his mind tried to think of a smart comeback

“Yes, I dare” was all he could manage to say. Serena always had been better with the verbal attacks.

The demon raised her arm outward, bending it at the elbow at an abnormal angle.

“Kneel down and submit yourself to me or else I shall

break your wife’s arm.”

His stomach twisted into a knot. *Can’t let this thing figure out my weakness.*

“Why would you think that would make me kneel down to you? If you must know, our marriage is a sham. It’s all a show for GN,” he said.

“As you wish.”

He watched in horror as Serena’s arm flung back and snapped at the elbow.

His gut tightened despite his efforts to remain aloof.

“In the name of God, reveal yourself,” he called out.

Demons preferred to hide behind their human vessels’ identity, their anonymity giving them power over their spiritual rivals. His training had taught him that they could not refuse identifying themselves if called to do so in the name of the Lord God.

This better work. Serena's life was riding on this theory working.

He tried to not watch her poor body contorting like a puppet, bending forward and backwards. Her life was in his hands and he had to take control of the situation.

He repeated in a loud voice. "In the name of the Lord our God, reveal yourself."

White froth began seeping out of her mouth followed by the sound of metal scraping metal.

"I am called Soraya," the demon cried out.

The room shuddered around them but he remained resolute.

Raising his hand, he pointed at the thing that hijacked his wife's body. "I command you Soraya to leave the human immediately, in the name of the Lord our God, the One, the Only, the Almighty."

Serena's eyeballs rolled back, showing only the whites.

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Her mouth fell open and the thing inside her erupted from her lips like green sewage. It spewed into the air and morphed into the shape of an animal, a cross between a bobcat and a wolf.

He watched Serena's body crumple to the floor. Every inch of him wanted to run to her. But it wasn't over yet.

“So what are you planning to do now?” she asked. The words from whatever it was gnashed together in his head.

He had to distract that thing so he could get Serena to safety.

“We don't have a problem with you,” he said.

Serena struggled to stand, her injured arm hung to the side. He stepped forward, grabbed her by the waist and helped her to her feet.

The dark shadow stepped aside. “You're right,” it said. “I have no issue with you. In fact, we have been waiting for you.”

Serena leaned towards him. “There's more of these creeps?”

Her voice was low, her breathing short and ragged.

“Ah, that’s not very nice,” Soraya said, “especially since you came here uninvited.”

Several dark shapes stepped out from the walls around them.

Serena tried to step forward but he held her close to him. He focused his attention on Soraya.

“Like I said, we have no issue with you or your friends. Let us pass.”

The demon spirits floated towards them.

Harry raised his hand, his palm facing outward. The energy inside him radiated from his core and out his limbs in waves. “I said, we don’t have an issue with you. Unless you want us to.”

Soraya raised her hand, a signal for the others to stand down.

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“Mr. Doubt, do you think your weak threats scare me?”
she asked.

Serena struggled to free herself from his grip.

“Probably not. But then again, demons are not known to be very intelligent,” she called out.

The dark shadow opened its mouth baring fangs like daggers.

“This girl has no fear. She’s either very courageous or suicidal,” Soraya said.

Serena threw her a glare and moved forward.

“Stand down ” he whispered, grabbing her arm.

She mumbled, “Roger that.”

The creature Soraya slid closer, its mouth widening into a leery smile. “Like I said, we’ve been waiting for you. We both want something. Let’s see if we can make this work for both of us.”

Chapter 8 Harry

Absurd

The plan started out simple enough. All they had to do was enter Gabriel's place and tap the ground to teleport over to Megiddo just as they had done when they had arrived a year ago.

Instead, here they were standing in his dead friend's apartment negotiating with a demon to let them pass through.

"Okay, you've got my attention," he said.

The demon creature stood on its hind legs and morphed into the shape of a woman.

"We want to help you send Bezel back to where he

belongs,” Soraya said.

He lifted his chin. “And who said I want to do that?”

She gave them a smile, licking her vampire fangs. “Your friend, the one you search for, let Bezel loose on Earth. Send him back and your friend will be free.”

“You make it sound so simple,” he said.

She floated closer to him, her hips swaying left and right.

Serena leaped in front blocking her with her good arm. “Don’t come any closer!” she cried.

The demon shadows flew towards her in a swarm. She waved her arm to fend them back. “Get away from me!”

“Leave her alone!” he yelled.

Energy pulsed through his veins itching to release itself from his control. Keep calm. No need to start a war just yet.

The flock of demons swirled around Serena, slashing at her with their claws. She stood solidly on the ground. Her good

arm blocked the strikes to her upper body while she used her kicks to deflect the strikes to her lower body. He could see an orange glow begin to radiate around her. Kerim had taught them how to control and unleash their supernatural powers. These demons didn't know what they were up against.

“Harry, shoot them!” she cried.

The energy surged through him. All he had to do was call it.

Serena turned to him. “What the hell is taking you so long?”

A demon's claw swiped her cheek, leaving a bloody welt in its place. She whipped around and slammed the palm of her hand into its face, releasing a torrent of wild energy the size of a mini atomic explosion.

The demon howled as the atoms tore through its body.

This didn't stop Serena from waving her hand in arcs, the orange light slicing through the demons surrounding her. They

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flew in irregular circles above her, flapping their wings like a murder of crows. It was an opera of chaos with the maestro methodically blasting the demons one by one.

Realizing she was on a losing streak, Soraya raised her arm.

“Enough!” she said.

The flapping sound of demon wings was replaced with a sudden silence.

The demons that managed to survive the ordeal sulked away into the shadows of the room.

Serena stood in a front stance with her left leg bent and the other leg straight, her hips and shoulders facing forward. She searched his eyes for a sign, anything to give her a reason to start blasting.

“Stand down,” he said.

She gave a quick nod and relaxed her stance.

Soraya walked to the couch and sat down, opening her hand to him as if inviting him to sit beside her.

“Excuse my associates’ horrible manners,” she said. “They haven’t been in the company of humans for a long time. Please let’s start over.”

Every single passing minute was becoming more absurd.

Serena watched him carefully

He said, “We’re fine where we are. Tell us what you have in mind.”

The demon sat back, crossing her legs. “So it’s going to be like that, is it?”

He clenched his fist. “Don’t test my patience.”

She flashed them a mouth full of incisors. “Patience is what you mortals know nothing about.”

“As I said, let me know what exactly you have in mind or else we’ll be on our way.” He raised his hand, feeling the

weight of the energy radiating from the fingertips.

Her lips parted and a snake-like tongue slid out. “I know you are aware of what’s going on in the inner circle of the White House.”

A lump began to form in his throat. “Not sure what you mean,” he said softly.

“Do you think the group of humans you’ve been training could do all their subversive deeds under Lionheart’s nose without my help?”

“Is that all you have?” he said.

“Fine,” she said, crossing her arms. “The recent outbreak of Cholera and Ebola wasn’t an Act of God, so to speak.”

He fell silent.

She continued. “Tell me who kidnapped President Roshenbaum.”

“What?”

“Don’t pretend that you don’t know that your people are behind this.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“My sources have video evidence of the Vice President’s role in the unleashing of the man-made disasters and releasing of deadly diseases to specific target populations in America.”

Her words echoed what evidence that he and Kerim had uncovered in the last few days. He glanced over at Serena who, to someone who didn’t know her well, appeared unmoved by the conversation. But he knew the wheels inside her head were spinning.

Soraya placed her hands over her knee. “Roshenbaum had the wool pulled over his eyes by his lovely wife and his best friend, the Vice President. But you thought he was behind this so you had him kidnapped.”

“Like I said. I have no idea about any kidnapping. I will say though, we did uncover the VP’s role in the disasters and man-made devastations and are in negotiations with others to

bring him and his network down. I am aware that we are also working with demon forces to achieve this goal.”

“So you had no part in Roshenbaum’s kidnapping? Are you implying that rogue human conspiracy are trying to get their revenge? Seems rather a thin explanation when the top two GN spokespersons are trying to escape this continent via supernatural means.”

“...or opportunistic rogue demons are staging a coup,”
Serena said under her breath.

Soraya flashed her a deadly glare.

Harry had to steer everyone back to the objective at hand.

“As I’ve said and will continue to say, we have nothing to do with the kidnapping of the President. But I am aware that he is one of yours. I also am aware that he wants to preserve the human race for his and your own self-interests. Whoever is behind his disappearance will be revealed soon enough since you and your associates will see to that, I’m sure.” He took a step towards her. “Now, my colleague and I have a bigger

mission at hand which all of us will benefit from if we complete it.”

She watched him carefully. “You think you can bring President Doub down?”

He gave her a smile. “If anyone could do it, it would be me. I’m his son after all.”

“No,” she said with her eyes cast down. “You don’t know what you’re up against. President Doub is as much as your father as I am your mother. You’re going to have to do better than that.”

He heaved a sigh. “How about this? Since you can’t travel over to where he is, we are the only chance you have to send Bezel back to where he came from.”

She pursed her lips for a moment and then flashed him a smile. “Fine. You cross over to Tel Aviv and meet our human ally on the other side. He has access to the friend you seek. He can help you get her out of Bezel’s prison.”

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“How do I know your ally is not going to stab us in the back?”

“My word isn’t good enough?” she asked. Her toe bounced up and down with impatience.

“Not enough.”

She gave a short sigh and raised her hand, pointing her finger in Serena’s direction.

A streak of light shot out from her fingertip and hit Serena on her broken arm.

Harry felt the waves of furious energy rushing to his open hand. “Soraya, I warned you!”

Just as he was about to unleash his fury, he felt a hand on his elbow.

“Hold up. She fixed my arm.” Serena raised it up as proof.

He turned back to the demon.

She crossed her arms. “Is that enough of a good will

gesture?” she asked.

He shrugged. “Sure. Works for me.”

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Chapter 9 Cristal

Time is now

She stared up into the darkness wondering if this was going to be another sleepless night.

“Be careful, Cristal.”

Kerim?

She sat up and peered into the darkness. A shimmer of light manifested in front of her.

“It’s not safe. Repeat a prayer to block out anyone listening in just as Raffe taught you.”

Yes. Got it.

“Dear God, Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change and courage to change the things I can and wisdom to know the difference.” She repeated the prayer under her breath as she focused on Kerim’s words.

“A new guard will be here when the sun rises. He will provide you with details of your mission. Okay?”

She nodded her head.

“Remember that the Almighty is with you.”

She reached out towards the light. “And you?”

The tips of her fingers tingled as the light wrapped itself around them. She could feel Kerim’s presence inside the light.

“I am always with you. Now I must go.”

She closed her hands into a fist. The light between her fingers melted into the darkness.

She felt herself sinking. She tried to open her eyes but realized they were already open. The darkness was filled with

shadows approaching her from all sides. She screamed but no sound left her lips. She tried to run but her legs remained still. The more she tried, the deeper she sank. A part of her was shaking with fear. The other part was relieved that soon it would all end.

“Get that thought out of your head.”

Her eyes snapped open.

Kerim?

She sat up, her heart thumping in her chest. It was another nightmare, the fifth one this week. She brushed the dried tracks of tears from her cheek and brought her knees to her chest.

Since the day she had asked Dr. Goldberg for help, the doctor visits ended. In fact, Bezel’s visits had ended about the same time.

Closing her eyes could mean slipping into another nightmare. There had to be something more productive she

could do.

She put her hand over her other wrist, brushing her fingers against the charms. Many nights she had been tempted to use its power to communicate and travel. She had managed to push the temptation aside but in the last few weeks, her resolve was waning.

“Do you even work anymore?” she asked the bracelet.

The charms began vibrating as if to answer her.

A warm sensation washed over her and for the first time in months, she felt herself relax.

“Of course you do. What a silly thing for me to ask,” she said with a small grin.

The globe charm started to spin. Whirring around and around, the tiny breeze it was creating tickled her skin. It was luring her to touch it. All she had to do was pick any place in the world and it would take her there—any place that she wanted to be.

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Suddenly, the sound of young girls' laughter and the familiar smell of bread baking filled the air. She closed her eyes allowing the memories flood her mind. The feeling of peace and warmth surrounded her and she welcomed it. It had been so long since she felt so safe.

“Tell her to stop!” a muffled voice cried out.

She shook her head. “No, please don't,” she heard herself moan.

“I command you to stop at once ” a deep voice said.

She tried to fight off whatever was trying to interrupt her short moment of bliss. A blast of light filled her head sending energy throughout her body in waves of scorching agony.

“Resist,” she said to herself, pushing back with her own power.

“She's losing it,” a familiar voice said. Her thoughts felt foggy as if something was erasing them.

What would happen if she didn't wake up?

“Leave me alone,” she said aloud.

A commotion was happening around her but she didn't know if it was all in her head.

“We can't wait any longer. Today is the day,” a male voice said.

She didn't understand what it meant. But she did recognize who said it.

“Gabriel,” she whispered. Her eyes snapped open.

TO BE CONTINUED.

***** KEEP BELOW FOR LATER*****

“Seems simple enough.”

“Problem is the general is being sent in to question her.”

“Okay, so what’s the big deal?”

“The general is also known as Abu Walid.”

“Abu Walid?”

“To GN he is General Assaf.”

He continued, “Since Kerim fell from grace, he’s been working with the demons.”

She looked away. “

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List of Characters

Harry Doubt – 24 year old former child prodigy; Operations Manager for Global Nation by day; by night he is trying to find out why his mother and other parents of child prodigies were kidnapped by Global Nation in the Middle East. He is the programmer who designed and created “Truth Seekers”, a popular online virtual reality game with over a million players. Changed his last name from “Doub” to “Doubt” after his father passed away stating that he was never really a father to him anyway; has dual Israeli and American citizenship.

Cristal Hernandez – 24 year old former child prodigy, graduated from Global Nation University with Harry Doubt at 19 years with a PhD in Computer Science, not religious but had a Catholic upbringing; book smart but doubts herself; just realized she has special powers and is learning to control them; fell in love with Kerim before finding out he was an angel; learned that God had sent Archangel Rafael to destroy her because her powers could open the portals to the spiritual worlds, Limbo, Purgatory, Heaven and Hell.

Serena Keensky – athletic, teaches self-defense at Global Nation, has a black belt in several forms of martial arts including Krav Maga; is an avid

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Truth Seeker gamer; lived in many places around the world, the last being in the Philippines where her father is the ambassador for Russia; is a no-nonsense person.

Gabriel Windam – top player of the Truth Seekers online virtual reality game; loves the 70's era; loyal to Harry; was killed by accident trying to protect Kerim; doesn't realize he's dead.

Kerim Ilgaz – was hired to provide Security to GN by Harry; served in the Turkish army for four years prior to that; was revealed that he was a guardian angel; has feelings for Cristal; reported to Raffe (aka Archangel Rafael) until he fell.

Raffe (aka Archangel Rafael) – when in human form is an abrasive, tough Israeli; in angelic form is a formidable power; has a strange sense of humor; was on a mission to destroy Cristal.

Aaron Doub – Harry's father, famous GN Physicist who died right before he was able to prove the theory of time travel; was never close to his son; loved his wife Bina but always put his work ahead of his family; has Israeli and American citizenship.

Bina Schwartz – Harry's mother; Israeli wife and mother; denied her spirituality until she was kidnapped by GN demon scientists for the soul separation experiments; her soul escaped to Limbo with the soul of Carlos Hernandez, Cristal's father.

Saeed Nariman – GN Physicist and assistant to Aaron Doub; sold his soul to a demon; had been Bina and Harry’s confidante and friend.

Shelley Lionheart – president of Global Nation University and charitable organization with headquarters around the world.

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Doubt Book 1: Plot Summary

Former child prodigies, Harry Doubt and Cristal Hernandez both earned their PhD's and went to work together for Global Nation University. Harry, a young and brilliant programmer is the son of a famous quantum physicist (Aaron) who died during an after-work dinner party. His father's theories about time travel were controversial. Aaron's business partner, Dr. Saeed, was also a famous experimental scientist. His mother, Bina, disappeared while volunteering on a peacekeeping mission in Palestine.

Harry developed *Truth Seekers*, an online virtual reality game. He began hiring all the best programmers and game players he could find. They all had a mission to find out what was behind the scenes of certain mysterious events. And with the development of the story we learn that some members of this team have some special abilities that are not completely natural.

Cristal is capable of producing earthquakes, although she is afraid of her powers and is not sure how they work or how to control them. During an emotional event, she caused a major earthquake, which simultaneously hit many different cities in the world.

Kerim, hired as security by Harry and who later becomes Cristal's boyfriend, is capable of reading her mind. However, things are not as they appear.

The Truth Seekers find some portals that they believe to be entrances for wormholes for time travelling. They go to Israel to research one of those portals. But not everyone in Harry's team, such as Serena and Gabriel, know what is going on and what his motivations to plan his missions are. It turns out he wants to look for his father and mother. Mystery and intrigue cause turbulence in the relationship among the members of Harry's team. And during a persecution from the Israeli Secret Service to capture Kerim, Gabriel is shot and killed.

Harry, Cristal and Serena soon find out that Kerim had been posing as a human but really was a secret agent of God.

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His memories as an angel had been temporarily suppressed when he had accepted the mission explaining why Kerim, believing that he was human, had fallen in love with Cristal going against God's rule where *angels and humans are not allowed to be physically involved with each other*. Becoming completely human meant that Kerim could complete his mission on Earth undetected by GN demons. His mission from God was to infiltrate GN and prevent Cristal from opening the portals to the Spiritual worlds no matter what it took.

Dr. Saeed reveals that he is possessed by a demon and tries to overcome Cristal so that he can enter the portal. Raffae, a strange friend of Kerim, reveals he is the Archangel Rafael sent by God to destroy Cristal if Kerim can't stop her from opening the portals.

When Cristal's powers are unleashed in Akko, Israel, the site of what they thought was a wormhole; her powers inadvertently rip open a portal to Limbo. Harry steps into the portal, promising her that he will find her father and his mother and bring them back to Earth.

Archangel Rafael orders Kerim to kill Cristal. Kerim defies the orders and brings her to safety. Before Kerim flies into the heavens, he commands Walid, a resident of Megiddo, to protect Cristal. Megiddo is also known as Armageddon.

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