

The Days of Lamech

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Part I

Escape

*What has been will be again.
What has been done will be done again.
There is nothing new under the sun.*

King Solomon

Semjaza's ever-present rage reached a new fervor as he looked out over the expanse of Matusalé City from his Observation Platform.

He hated people!

The city stretched out before him; beautiful buildings made of carved marble, adorned with elaborate hanging gardens and ornate metalwork of silver and brass. The dome of the primary observatory pressed against the darkening western sky, while small lights could be seen from within the central library chambers where late-working attendants busily tidied the memory and meditation rooms for the next day's clientele.

From the east he could feel the energies of the coastal pyramid emanating, and beyond that, the endless ocean which was already dark enough to reflect some of the brighter stars overhead.

He hated people!

All of this belonged to him! Belonged to him and his companions! Not just Matusalé City, but all of the cities throughout this world. And the world's resources! The minerals, the precious stones, the silver, the gold!

Gold.

*What a pure element! Somehow, it was symbolic of all that should have been theirs. It should have all been theirs! The entire planet—in fact all of creation rightfully belonged to them! For **their** use! For **their** glory!*

He hated people!

It had been the greatest betrayal of all time. Only his kind knew how to use and appreciate such amazing resources! Only his kind had the knowledge and wisdom to properly understand the true opportunities that this universe offered. Yet, what should have been theirs was now in the hands of these ignorant, feeble fools who somehow felt they were gods in a world to which they had contributed nothing! Imbeciles!

He hated people!

Semjaza shook as a new wave of fury coursed through his entire being. His kind would find a way to make these people pay! A way to somehow undo this eternal injustice. And if successful, a way to hurt, damage, or perhaps even overthrow the One who had betrayed them! The One whose promises were never to be trusted again! It was worth everything—even their own destruction—to accomplish this vengeance.

He hated people....

Chapter 1: Abduction

“The irony of what brought about the end of the Family Wars was the realization that the abhorrent dehumanization inherent in those wars would be replaced by a surreptitious scheme to redefine humanity itself.”
Amoela the Historian, *The First Two Thousand Years, Vol. II*

Gaw-Boluen looked down at her pretty green shoes with the platinum clasps, secretly delighted at how well they matched her sash. Glancing back up at the mirror, she saw her dark emerald eyes (which also matched her sash!) peer back at her briefly before she lowered the silk-chiffon veil over them. She adjusted her dark auburn hair, making sure it flowed properly over her shoulders, peered down again at her shoes through the veil, and finally looked away, satisfied.

She had just turned thirteen, and she was among a select few who would soon be attendants to Semyaz officers, nobles, and perhaps even ambassadors. She and her classmates had been in training for several years, and she was preparing for the upcoming Passage Ceremony which was only minutes away.

To say she was excited would have been an understatement—she had dreamt of this day for as long as she could remember. Gaw had been brought here to the Haermon Mountains just before her second birthday, and she could remember very little of her life before then. This place had been her home, her family, and (as she had spent her short lifetime discovering) her destiny.

She knew very little of the Semyaz—only that they had been very instrumental in ending the Family Wars of the past century; and now offered peace-keeping, instruction, and stability throughout the world for those cities which desired their help. They had headquartered here in the Haermon Mountains more than two hundred years earlier, and it was from here that their message of hope and tolerance had spread to the cities and brought an end to the senseless devastation which had been destroying untold thousands of lives.

She also knew that the Semyaz had wisdom and understanding far beyond that of the other peoples of the world. She had heard tales of vast research facilities in the mountain caverns beyond her school where their superior knowledge was being applied for the betterment of society and the improvement of humanity.

She had been told that the Haermon Mountains were the tallest in the world, some towering more than a thousand cubits above sea-level. A few offered sheer cliffs that plunged directly into the adjacent ocean; and in fact, this structure, where she had lived and studied the last eleven years of her life, was a large school and dormitory complex carved from the inland directly into the back of such a cliff.

The passage chamber which she would soon be entering had a large window that peered from the face of this cliff out onto the ocean, and she couldn't wait to meet her sisters who would soon be joining her there. They had gazed out of that clear crystal

window often, watching the surf crash on the boulders below—and sometimes straining to try and see the face of the cliff as it extended far above. On a few occasions they had seen rare glimpses of the floating forests which roamed the world’s oceans—some as large as the biggest islands. It was fascinating to watch the crowns of the tree-tops mimic the gentle waves that traveled beneath them.

The door to her quarters opened and her counselor, Rin-Kendril, entered the room. She was a tall, strong woman with piercing blue eyes that bore down on anyone who misbehaved—or hadn’t studied sufficiently. But Gaw had soon learned that those same eyes could soothe and support when needed.

Rin-Kendril smiled, causing her eyes to dance slightly.

“I’m so proud of you, Gaw,” she said warmly, looking down at the shimmering white robe that her charge was wearing. The green sash rested across the girl’s right shoulder and came to a point near her left thigh where it was fastened with a miniature dragon fashioned from platinum with wings made of gold crystal.

Gaw looked down respectfully as she shuffled slightly to mask her embarrassment. Praise came seldom, but when it did, it was sincere. Eventually she looked up with a question.

“Are my sisters ready?” she asked with more impatience than she had intended. “Will I be joining them soon?”

There was the slightest delay before Rin-Kendril answered.

“Absolutely,” she said quickly, making up for the pause. “If you are ready, we can leave now.”

Gaw’s face broke into a huge smile.

“Oh, I’m ready,” she announced, beaming. She made one final adjustment in the mirror, placed her spun-platinum bracelet (from which her colorful agate memory rings dangled) on her forearm, and headed towards Rin-Kendril’s outstretched hand.

They exited her room as the thin stone door slid silently shut, and proceeded down the hallway towards the passage chamber.

These were the same dark polished granite hallways she had walked these past eleven years, but somehow they shone a little brighter as she drew near her Passage Ceremony. Reflected light from the glowing overhead lamps caught her shoe buckles and sparkled back onto the walls, creating a constantly shifting mosaic of light-specks which resembled random constellations that accompanied her as she walked.

The corridor turned to the right several paces in front of them, but even before they reached the corner, Gaw could see the illumination from the *Light of the Creator* emanating from around the bend. They slowed slightly, and as they turned, they could now see the source of the light, coming from a large alcove carved into the left side of the hallway.

The *Light of the Creator* was actually a light sculpture—a monument to the Creator, in honor of the wisdom and care which he bestowed upon humanity. The knowledge which the Semyaz utilized came from him, and all hopes of human improvement—and perhaps someday immortality—depended upon how successfully the Semyaz applied his imparted wisdom.

They slowed and stopped, bowing slightly before the light. At first glance it appeared to be nothing more than a brilliantly lit column of swirling white fog which

stretched from floor to ceiling, covering a space about two cubits in diameter. But as they stared into the luminescent interior, a vague form began to appear from within.

Iridescent green and purple lines materialized near the top of the column, forming symmetrical curves which slowly coalesced into gleaming wings. Soon a large head emerged above the wings which sparkled and radiated its own light from beautiful shining eyes that were both inviting and intimidating. As the wings undulated ever so slightly, a lean, tapering body appeared beneath them until (when the mirage was complete) a fully formed tail could be seen descending from the torso, coiling slightly before arriving at a point just above the floor.

Gaw was overwhelmed as always with a sense of both admiration and fear, and she glanced up sideways at her councilor—but Rin-Kendril was oblivious, her eyes focused, unblinking, into the light. When Gaw looked back at the column, there was only the swirling cloud of brightness, and no amount of staring could cause the apparition to re-emerge.

A few rows of petroglyphs were carved into the wall to the right of the column of light, and Gaw read them reverently as she always did.

*The Creator of Light
Emerged from on high
Restorer of Man
The Divine to draw nigh.*

She looked down at her five memory rings, carefully matching the appropriate colors with the correct item of her catechism.

The first ring was a brilliant, shimmering white circle which symbolized eternal light. Light—which had always existed—was constant and unchanging, and from which the Creator himself had emerged. A pitch-black ring was next, followed by a shining blue-green agate. Together they represented the cosmos formed by the Creator and the beautiful world of water and life which he had placed in it. The fourth ring was a polished rich brown which represented the simple people who had first inhabited the earth, while the fifth ring was a mixture of the first and last. A spiral of white and brown (*Light merging with Humanity*) was woven throughout this final stone. This reminded her (and all those who served the Light) of the time when the Creator had come upon those simple people and remade them in his own image. This fifth memory ring was simply named Transcendence.

Light. Cosmos. Earth. Humanity. Transcendence. These five principles outlined everything that humanity needed to realize its full sense of history, self, and destiny. Meditating on these provided purpose and actualized the deepest needs and desires of a servant—if done with urgency and sincerity.

Rin-Kendril blinked suddenly, shook her head, and looked down at her hand which was still clasping Gaw's. Gaw was surprised to see something that seemed to resemble sorrow in Rin-Kindril's face, but it vanished as their eyes met. Gaw pulled slightly to encourage her counselor to resume their walk, and they continued towards her Passage Ceremony.

Gaw had never seen an actual Semyaz. She *had* met those who served them directly: ambassadors, artisans, inventors, and others who supported the Semyaz and their mission. It was these to whom she would soon be privileged to be an Attendant.

They passed through the archway into the ceremony chamber, and Gaw looked around quickly for any sign of her sisters who would be graduating with her. She saw none, and turned quickly to Rin-Kindril.

“Are they coming?” she asked, concern creeping into her voice.

The look on her counselor’s face startled her. It was a strange mixture of pride and regret. Had Gaw been more mature, she would have also discerned a carefully concealed panic.

Rin-Kindril spoke quickly and determinedly, her face bending down to soothe.

“Gaw, you have been selected for a very special purpose,” she said, striving desperately to appeal to Gaw’s sense of duty, while at the same time begging forgiveness for having lied to her earlier.

“You and your sisters have all been groomed to attend those who serve the Semyaz. But,” she paused to get her emotions under control, “*you* have been selected for a much higher calling.” But were her emotions those of elation or trepidation?

“You are not to become an Attendant of those who serve the Semyaz,” she said quickly with finality, as if hurrying through a rehearsed statement. She closed her eyes and spoke with forced excitement.

“*You* have been specially chosen to be the consort of an actual Semyaz!”

Her eyes opened and then she said the strangest thing that Gaw had ever heard.

“Always remember that I have loved you.”

With that, Rin-Kendril suddenly spun around and exited the chamber, closing the heavy wooden door behind her, leaving Gaw standing alone; stunned and wondering what was going to happen next.

Gaw did not know whether to be excited or alarmed. She was also taken aback by her counselor’s declaration of love. Rin-Kindril had never spoken like that before. Gaw moved towards the door and tugged on it, only to find it fastened securely. Then, with no other plan, she moved towards the center of the chamber fighting back tears—and the fear of the unknown—to await whatever was in store for her.

Suddenly a movement in the domed ceiling caught her eye, and she watched as a section began to slide away, revealing a large space behind it. A cloud of dark-green smoke began to unfurl from the opening, descending slowly into the chamber.

Panic gripped Gaw as fears about her counselor’s behavior began to clash in her mind. Why had she seemed so confused? Why had she lied?

The thick smoke uncoiled and began to move directly towards her.

A thunderous explosion at the far end of the chamber forced Gaw to drop to the ground, grasping her ears in pain. A huge crack had suddenly appeared under the crystal window from which smoke and the smell of burning cloth emerged. The crack widened, and suddenly several ropes flew into the room, the ends of which blossomed into small anchors that gripped the wall below the window.

Another huge explosion—as the window buckled outward slowly until it collapsed into shards that (mostly) flew out into the open air and the ocean below. But some of the pieces were pulverized into tiny crystals that hovered for a few seconds in the

air before blowing back into the room and cascading down on Gaw, creating dozens of tiny cuts in her skin and clothing.

There was now a gaping hole that extended all the way to the floor where the beautiful crystal window had once been, and Gaw could feel the stiff breeze of the ocean winds blowing into the chamber.

She glanced up and saw the green cloud retreating in the face of the incoming gust of air. Filled with never-before-experienced confusion, she sat motionless on the chamber floor, petrified with indecision.

Suddenly a collection of ropes flew into the chamber through the opening, coalesced into a large net which covered the room and descended down around her. The net began to constrict across the floor, and as she struggled to get out from under it, she found it was covered with a sticky substance that only entangled her further.

Her beautiful gown! And her shoes! She shuddered at her irrational and vain concerns—mental screams which had come unbidden to her mind.

The edge of the net approached her, catching her feet and arms, and rolling her up into a sticky matted ball. The bottom of the net constricted underneath her, enveloping her completely, and then began to drag her slowly toward the edge of the opening—beyond which was the sheer cliff face that descended into the rocky waters far below.

All vain thoughts disappeared as she realized she was being pulled through the opening, and she scratched and clawed with all of her might, trying desperately to cling to anything she could reach through the netting. But there was only polished granite—and even the stickiness of her hands could not slow the relentless pull towards the cliff edge.

A man's gruff voice shouted from beyond the opening.

"Tell Lamech we only got one!"

"What do you mean?" another voice responded. "We were told this would be an entire class! Where are the others?"

"Don't know," said the first voice. "We only take what we can get."

With that, the net containing Gaw slid over the edge, and she felt the gut-wrenching rush of free fall. The side of the cliff which she and her sisters had often tried to view from the widow was now rushing past her as she descended quickly towards the rocks below.

Her descent ended abruptly as the rope to which the net was connected suddenly grew taut. She looked up and saw two giant winged creatures with what looked like a large box or container fastened between them. The other end of the rope from which she was swinging was attached to this container.

Two heads emerged from the container, and she realized these must have been the source of the voices she had just heard. They grabbed hold of the rope and began to haul her in slowly towards them. One of them shouted a command—apparently to the two creatures—for they immediately turned from the cliff and began to fly, lurching at unbelievable speed out over the expanse of the ocean below, spinning and jerking Gaw in every direction as she was slowly reeled up and into the container.

Eventually she was hauled over the edge and rolled unceremoniously into the center of the cabin.

Through her netting, she could see the cliff get smaller and smaller as they flew out over the unknown ocean below. She watched as the only home she had ever known quickly disappeared over the horizon.

As she tore her eyes away, she looked around and saw a third man with a large dimpled jaw standing over her. He said something softly before turning away.

“Even one is still worth it all.”