

# Preface (I-III)

By Glake Micole Riuno

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# Section I: Orientation, Scene I:

## The Discovery

Autumn has always been my favorite season, here in Wudwurn. The fresh smell of the crisp leaves on the sidewalks & street corners, the cool early morning air that always creped through my window seals, and of course, the bright & vibrant colors of the leaves that greeted me from every tree, each morning I flicked open the blinds on my windows. It was a peaceful season here in Wudwurn, for most that is. For us young ones however, it meant going back to school and spending most of these perfect picture day's inside of a building for hours staring at a chalk board, or sheets of paper.

I was never for it, never will be. I was never the studious type but that had not mattered, for I was simply smart enough to get by in school. Not genius smart, to the event where I would never have to do any homework because I Aced every test, but more "lucky smart", the kind where you just happen to be "spot on" majority of the time. But despite my successfulness in the classroom, I still hated to be there, every moment. So with that said, my job here is not too tell you much about the happenings during those long hours in a classroom, but instead to tell you about the several hours spent out of school, that changed things forever.

Ever since I can remember, the colder seasons have always been my calling to enjoy the outside. I've always hated the heat; therefore, during summer days I often just stayed inside and relaxed alongside the company of my air-conditioned living room. My mother often urged me to get up and go out, sometimes even forced, but that never actually ended up changing my overall outlook on the season. But now, autumn had arrived, and nothing was going to stop me from finally being able to enjoy the beautiful outdoors, something I had longed to do since the beginning of summer. It was early October here in Wudwurn, and mid-afternoon on the first day of the season I decided to finally go out, and get some fresh air. I lived in a nice neighborhood, calm & peaceful, for the most part, and surrounded by trees that every autumn were bound to give you that colorful viewing fix you'd been dreaming off all Summer long. The actual housing area was entitled, "Wudwurn Woods", though; it wasn't as densely populated with trees, as you would imagine a place with "woods" in the title would be. But it definitely had its areas, and I was one to soon find that out.

I had just gotten out of school, right off the bus to be exact. I was still carrying quite heavy material in my backpack, books and such, so the exploring was much more strenuous than I originally intended it to be. I didn't go too far, just to one specific place that had caught my eye a few weeks earlier, on the way to school.

Our bus route was different this year, generally after picking me up from a certain corner, it would continue straight down the road, going on its way, traveling several more blocks down. But this year it changed, and for that I'm grateful. From the right of the corner I waited on every morning, lied a sort of cul-de-sac, which only a few houses reside on. Oddly enough, this cul-de-sac was now a required stop on my buses route this year, even though only one person waited at this stop. I could see why it was necessary, because the cul-de-sac was just far enough to be completely out of view of the bus stop, in which I waited at, along with a few others, to the point where you wouldn't even be able to tell if the bus was coming or not by viewing down the street; the cul-de-sac was also quite nicely completely out of view from my house, which the importance of that I will share with you later. But where I was going too, wasn't exactly the cul-de-sac, though it's entrance was in-fact on the cul-de-sac, right across from a strange empty house, which also lied on the small street. The entrance was quite small, to the point where I'm actually pretty shocked that I caught glimpse of it while riding in the bus, considering my vision is not exactly on par with average. I thought of it as a forest opening, even though, I hadn't actually went inside of the opening yet, to determine if it were an actual forest or not, but the opening, as well as the surroundings, from both sides were surrounded by trees. Not to mention the opening looked pretty dark, so I was absolutely positive beyond the opening lied nothing but trees as well.

I walked slowly down the street quietly, it wasn't until I caught glimpse of the forest opening, that a very eerie feeling begin to creep over me. I walked slowly up to the opening, clueless as to what I was going to find. I had no weapons of any sort on me, so if I were even by chance trespassing the home of a fox, wolf, coyote, or even a person, they'd pretty much be able to do anything they'd like with me, for as long as I could not fend them off with my own two hands at least, and well yeah, I guess the bag on my back as well. The entrance was dark, just as I expected, not pitch black dark, but dark enough to the point where the sun sure had a hard time making its way through the thick trees. Just as I began to continue forward in, I noticed I had to carefully make my way down a very steep hill, which surprisingly was right at the entrance. "Wow, this goes way down" I said to myself. It wasn't exactly fatally steep, but steep enough to the point where if you weren't careful, you'd definitely be rolling down, maybe even face first, instead of stumbling. Thankfully, there were small sturdy trees, bushes, and branches I could grasp too make the journey down a bit easier. It took about 2 minutes of careful footing until I finally made my way down to the bottom. "Thank God, flat land!" I mumbled to myself, as I began to continue deeper into the woods, which was more of what it was now, instead of a forest. As I continued to walk, I noticed there was a ton of flat ground from where I stood, and from where the land began to rise on both the far left and right sides. It was almost as if the entire area was dug out by some sort of giant machine, or stomped on by a giant shoe. It was peaceful down here, colorful leaves lie on the ground, and hung everywhere, and birds chirping happily could be heard from the above.

As I continued to make my way down the trail, one thing came to mind. Where were the animals? I didn't spot a single deer, nor squirrel, fox, raccoon, wolf, coyote, bear, you name it. Only the birds, which I hadn't even actually now that I think of it, only heard, not saw. After roughly two more minutes of steady walking, I came across a large fallen tree, quite huge, and it lay right in the way, disabling me from being able to continue down the open pathway. This tree covered the entire wide span of ground in which I discussed earlier, the only way I'd be able to get pass it, would be either to climb over it, or travel back up the steep hills on either side. Instead, I decided to climb over it. Which now that I think of it, was a stupid idea; considering the weight that I was also carrying on my back. It was a tough climb up, and a rough jump back down on the other side. But it wasn't until I landed, did I finally realize this adventure was

over. As I slowly walked forward, I began to hear the noise of something softly gliding across what sounded like street pavement in the distance. Once I walked even swifter forward, I noticed it was the end of the line for me, or so I thought at the time. The entire trail led to nothing but another street, another cul-de-sac, to be exact. I looked to both my far left and right and also noticed on top of the steep hills on both sides, lay houses, very nice ones at that, so I began to worry. "Damn, I'm probably on their property" I thought to myself. It was at that time I decided I no longer wanted to be on that side of the tree, for if someone were to spot a kid, wearing a backpack, on their property, I could only assume they'd think I were up to no good. So that was that, I quickly hopped up on the fallen tree, and climbed my way back over. Once I landed on the other side, a gentle breeze blew through the entire woods, and not too far ahead of me a group of fresh fallen, vibrant leaves, dancing in the wind. It was at this time that I decided I wasn't exactly ready to leave the area quite yet. So I made myself comfortable on the ground, while leaning against the large fallen tree, unzipped my backpack, and began working on my assigned homework for the night.

Now, you're probably thinking, "Why exactly does it matter that you traveled into some mysterious woods, only to find nothing but a fallen tree?" And trust me you, I wouldn't blame you for thinking that at all, but that small journey wasn't even the introductory to those woods after all that happened the following day.

The next morning I woke wide awake, more awake than usual, I always hated getting up early, but today was different because of the fact that I had managed to get my homework done quite early the previous day in the woods, whereas usually, I'd find myself up considerably late at night working carelessly to finish it all. I looked forward to some early social interaction that morning on the bus, so as soon as I was picked up at my stop, I got on board and plopped down in a seat next to my friend Amy. "Hellooooo Towaille!" she greeted in a cheerful, yet dragging on tone, which made me assume she was pretty wide awake as well that morning. "Hey, how's your morning going?" I asked perk-fully. "I'm pretty tired, stayed up pretty late doing this stupid science research assignment with pennies and soda, it was pretty enjoyable until I spilled-" She cut off mid-sentence, just as the bus came to a screeching, jerking, halt. Luckily I had my legs up on the seat so they acted as support; so my body wouldn't go sliding off the seat. At first I assumed someone probably pulled out from their driveway, right in front of the bus, (which usually you should never do unless you're some professional driver), until I peered out from over my seat to get a glance out the front window, as well as the left side windows on the bus, since I was sitting on the right side. We were on the cul-de-sac, right by the woods, and outside of the bus, stood probably close to twenty deer, all cluelessly wandering, and grazing on grass. Once the other kids on the bus took sight of the animals, they all stood up, and vision of all the deer became pretty hard to see from just sitting down, peering over the side of my seat. Much like the other I soon stood up as well, and since I was above the average height, unlike a lot of the kids on the bus, I could fully see what was going on. The bus driver honked lightly not to be too noisy, but loud enough to give the deer fright, and to have them clear off of the road. They didn't budge much, but once he jerked the bus forward a bit, they began to clear out pretty rapidly. I had never seen that many deer at once in my life, I soon began to wonder if perhaps, there was some sort of main nest nearby, but my wondering was soon put to a cease, as I watched them all, every last one, quickly dart down into the entrance of the woods, the same entrance in which I traveled into the day prior. "I went down into those woods yesterday, and I didn't spot a single deer, where did they all come from?" I asked looking towards Amy. "They were probably at the wrong place at the wrong time maybe, that's probably why they even went down there," she said glancing out her window. I thought to

myself, it made sense, but there were literally no other sort of entry-way to any other sort of woods for blocks down the road, I highly doubted all of those deer wandered the open roads that early in the morning only to reach those one woods. After all, there were roughly twenty of them.

The bus eventually continued on its way, but my mind, from then, during the school day, all the way until the end of the school day, drifted in and out, thinking about the deer from earlier that ran into the woods. I wondered if they'd maybe still possibly be there; it was unlikely however, considering more than seven hours had passed since that encounter, but somehow, I still remain convinced that I were to discover some sort of nest, or remains of a nest later that afternoon after school. Unlike the prior day, I made a stop at home to unload my heavy backpack. I figured any loud noises would scare any living creature away, and since the materials in my bag were both quite heavy, and noisy, as I noticed the day prior, it was in my best interest to leave everything behind. "Where are you headed too Towaile?" my dad asked on the way out. "Just headed outside for a short walk, probably down to the park, and maybe the gas station to get some snacks", I lied right through my teeth. I hurried out the door, and quickly walked towards the cul-de-sac, where the entrance was. It was right at that moment upon my arrival at the entrance, did I feel a bit uncomfortable considering I didn't have a weapon on me once again. Unlike yesterday, this time was a bit worse, considering the fact that if I were to come across a deer nest, I'd more than likely be seen to them as a threat. But it was too late; besides, I thought to myself, that if I were to go back, and grab a knife, club, pole, or something, my dad would think it to be a little fishy. So I gathered up my courage, and began carefully making my way down the steep entrance once again. As I made my way halfway down, I heard several very loud chirps not too far from behind me. It startled me to the point where I ducked quickly and lost footing, I began sliding down the steep entrance uncontrollably, panicking to grab hold of any branch or tree near me, eventually, I caught balance by putting my hands on the ground, they were a little scuffed up due to the quick impact, but nothing even a tad severe. During the entire stumbling session, I managed to look up and notice the loud chirping that came from behind me was in fact a cluster of extremely bright green, vibrant birds, which flew further into the woods. I found it strange that they would be flying so close to the ground instead of making their way in from above, and not only that, but also the fact that these were very vibrant, bright, green birds, in which I've never seen before in Wudwurn, let alone in my entire life. I walked more cautiously down the trail this time around, looking from both sides, carefully, in case I were to perhaps miss glance of any signs of animal life, or nests around. It was so still, for probably the next 3 minutes; no wind, no birds chirping, nothing, my hopes of finding any sort of deer, or even a nest had quickly vanished once I spotted the fallen tree once again. I leaned up against it and sighed, disappointed to not find anything out of the ordinary after the encounter with all the deer outside the bus earlier that morning. I climbed to the top of the fallen tree and lay on my back, staring up at the tree-covered sky, and just thought to myself. It was an awesome feeling to discover a place so peaceful and quiet, and I quickly considered it all my own. But as I soon learned, that was all too soon. Several minutes had passed as I daydreamed, just staring up into the above. But suddenly, out of my amazement, several more bright green birds darted out from the direction of the entrance to the woods, swooping low past me, further into woods. I sat up, and looked towards the direction of the end of the woods where the other cul-de-sac lies; I squinted my eyes, but did not see it from that distance. I thought maybe the nest these birds were perhaps headed too, were in fact in that direction, so I hopped down from the top of the fallen tree, and made my way.

As I continued to walk further down the trail, a very odd feeling began to come over me, a feeling as if I were being watched, the trees began to stir up, as a quick breeze blew through the entire woods, I looked

all around me only to find nothing. The breeze landed a feeling on my skin, so eerie, I immediately gained Goosebumps, but during this entire time, while all these thoughts and fears were stirring through my head, I had not realized how much further I had actually been walking. The trail began to go on and on, and I swore to myself I should have reached the end by now, where all the houses lie on top of the hills, as well as the cul-de-sac, which actually was the end of the line, as far as the woods were concerned. But none of it came to sight at all. I immediately thought I had to have taken a wrong turn, unknowingly, or perhaps carelessly entered the woods through a different entrance, but that wasn't it. Despite all the thoughts stirring in my head at that moment, I continued down the trail, which went further, and further down. The entire wide open ground, began to bend into more of a hill, and, and the terrain on both of the steeper hills that lie on both my far right and left sides, began to fill with large trees, all covered with bright orange, red, and yellow leaves. I started to continue down the path slowly. I turned for a second just to see how far I've gone, it seemed to have been several minutes since I hopped down from the fallen tree, and it was also nowhere to be in sight. But it was at that moment, that it all began to happen. I took only a few steps more, until I heard a loud sharp snapping noise from one of the trees on my far right. It was loud enough to give me a pretty good startle, so just by natural reaction I quickly darted forward, but that only lasted maybe five steps total until I heard a sturdy voice yell "Take one more step, and this arrow goes right through your heart!" My heart stopped for a few seconds, and so did my body, it remained frozen. I threw up my hands quickly in surrender. I immediately assumed it I was trespassing on another neighbor's property, and I was absolutely done for this time around. But as I glanced up, hands still in the air, my eyes fixed upon a group of men, lined in array from tree branch to tree branch, holding in-ready-position, giant bows & arrows assembled to shoot at any second. I slowly turned around to my left side, hands still in the air, and noticed from the trees above, even more men standing in array on various tree branches holding Bows and Arrows as well, ready to fire at any second. "You have no right to be wandering down here!" the same man yelled from a tree branch on the far right, "State your business right away!" "I was just exploring, I swear! I had no idea I was on your property!" "I was just trying to reach the cul-de-sac at the end of the woods and-" "cul-de-sac?" "There is no cul-de-sac here! Lies! Lies! LIES!" The man shouted, as he was quick cut my explanation short. "I beg of you, I wouldn't lie, I was here yesterday and I swear to you, a cul-de-sac marked the end of these woods!" I shouted at the man, I was getting desperate, and those bow and arrows looked awfully dangerous, all of various shapes, sizes and color, they all looked of such great complexity, I could only imagine at that moment the immense pain it would cause me once that arrow reached my skin. The man in the tree glanced towards his fellow, yet smaller comrades, they all nodded at him. He quickly turned his head towards me once again straightening out his back, and sharpening his focus with this bow. I was almost for certain, at that moment, it was over for me. "We cannot allow even possible threats on our land!" The man exclaimed as he rose his bow and arrow, "therefore." "Now hang on just a moment general!" Shouted a softer voice from somewhere nearby within the woods. I kept my hands up in the air, yet while glancing in all directions, until I noticed a woman in a bright orange dress, with long golden silky hair, and bronze skin, peering out from behind one of the nearby trees. "Milady!?" The tall man in the tree gasped, who in which, I now knew was in fact, some sort of general. The lady calmly raised one hand, and softly demanded "Lower your arrows boy's" And they did just exactly that, I at first didn't even have to look, because I heard the loud sounds of clicking, and shifting on their weapons, all in unison, from both directions. This lady, whoever she was, was obviously of a much higher rank compared to all these men.

She approached me slowly, "Where do you come from my dear?" she asked me in a gentle tone. "I..I'm from Wudwurn, I live right up the street," I answered honestly, pointing towards the entrance of the woods, even though it was nowhere near in-sight. The men in the trees snickered as I answered, the lady quickly looked up at the general with a more serious look on her face, and the entire army put a cease to their snickering almost immediately. "Milady, why follow us here? We were simply searching food for the big feast and came across this trespassing peasant on the way here, he could be a great threat you!" "Hush Lance!" The lady demanded, "The birds just so happen to inform me of his arrival, but unfortunately not soon enough for me to be able to beat you all here". "The birds!" I thought to myself. I could only imagine she held some sort of gift to speak to animals, and just so happened to speak to the same bright green birds that startled me earlier, as well as flew past me as I was resting on the fallen tree. The woman turned to me once again and put her hand on my shoulder, "Since you are on our property, we are able to do what we'd like with you, until you return back to your world." My eyes widened in shock, "My...world?" I questioned quietly, tilting my head towards her. The woman smiled calmly, while staring at me square in the eyes. This bothered me, for she knew things I did not know at that very moment, and I was sure that close to an hour had passed since I had been gone. I hadn't exactly given a specific time frame as to when I'd be back, but generally walks to get snacks had only taken me close to half an hour at most. The woman looked up at the general, Lance, who now stood quietly in the tree. "We shall take him to my sister, Clarity! She will then decide what we shall do with him!" the woman explained. All the men in the trees made a giant leap down, and landed on both sides of us. Ten of them made their way behind us, and ten in front. I then realized they were doing nothing only but escorting me to the destination the woman had desired to go, keeping an eye on my every move. I couldn't have made a run for it, not without being severely injured, so I made my way along with them, as we all continued to follow the path, as the ground took and even steeper turn, deeper into the woods.

## "Preface" Section I: Orientation,

# Scene II: Intro to BlueEarth

We all walked down this spiraling path for maybe a few more minutes until a small town came into view. The dirt path I followed earlier, and had been following at the time of the confrontation with the men with arrows, eventually turned into smooth cobblestone road, decorated with gas-lit lampposts on each the sides of the path. Not all of them were lit, but that only made me realize how quickly sundown was approaching. "If I were to perhaps be held hostage here, my family would flip!" I thought to myself. Despite my worries, I didn't make a fuss, for I did not want to cause any more danger to myself, than of what I had already put myself in. As I followed deeper into the town, I noticed more and more houses, these in which, were actually on flat land, owners peered out from the windows, and the ones outside looked at me curiously and bowed as the woman in the orange dress came more into their view. "What in the world is going on here?" I thought to myself as I witnessed the villagers bowing before her. I was now pretty certain that she was of some high status or importance, which just made me even more uncomfortable.

After spending several minutes gazing around, I hadn't noticed that the "caving in" of the path vanished, and we were on flat land once again. I also noticed the town was not as small as I first pictured it to be, compared to the distance we were walking from before making the entrance. Extremely tall trees towered around the area we were currently in, but the cobblestone path continued on and on, until a large building came into view. It was extremely large and circular, at the top; a golden dome could be seen. At first I was for sure it had to be some sort sports stadium, but then I reminded myself, that I was apparently in a different world, it would be nothing but foolish to assume the same kind of activity, from my world, happened here in this different world.

After noticing the dome, I was for sure this is where they were taking me, it looked to elegant, fancy, and majestic, to be some sort of place where they would take harmful beings. With that in mind, a sort of calmness came over me. But it wasn't until the woman in the orange dress spoke to me again, after arriving at the entrance of the circular building, did I begin feeling nervous yet again. "We are here, the home of my sister Clarity, and the Sanctuary to us all!" The woman announced as she smiled at me then turned towards Lance, "Please escort him directly to Clarity, and do not leave him alone unless given order too, understood?" Lance nodded and walked to the entrance; I followed as expected and kept close behind him. He slowly opened the door, and to my amazement lie a large, fancy, dining hall, almost as if Balls, or even weddings, of some high stature where held here on a daily basis. Men in Suits, and Woman in dresses immediately stopped their socializing as I came into their view. "An outsider!" I heard a few of them hiss as I walked by. At that moment, Lance grabbed my arm and quickly rushed me through the crowd of people as it began to thicken, it was hard to see the remainder of the building, but once a clearing in the crowd began to open up, I caught vision of an extremely large staircase, which we were headed for, and two very large doors behind it. Two guards in full armor stood by these doors, so I automatically assumed that whatever was happening behind them, had to be of some great importance. We began heading up the long staircase, it spiraled, twisted, turned, and curved, you name it! Once we reached the top, a large white door stood in view. This was when Lance stopped, let go of my arms, and turned towards me, "She's just through those doors" he said quietly, "She has the power and authority to determine your fate, more so than I do, one wrong move, and it's over for you." All I could do was nod, I

was in so much shock, and I didn't think I could even make a move even if I wanted to. Lance held open the white door for me as I slowly approached it. It was dark inside, lit only by dim chandeliers and candles, it took me awhile to actually process what I was viewing, but after only a few seconds I came to realize, a queen lived in here. For not too far in the distance, sat a woman on a golden throne wearing a long white dress and robe, as we entered she sat up in full attendance and spoke "Good Afternoon Wander's!" Lance immediately proceeded to get down on one knee, I tried to follow quickly, but she yelled, "You do not know who I am! Therefore, you shall not kneel."

I looked down in embarrassment until Lance elbowed me in the arm, I quickly raised my head towards the woman once again. "Outsider, please come closer!" she demanded. I knew that second she was talking to me, so I proceeded walking closer to the throne, simply waiting for her to tell me to stop, but she didn't. I walked closer and closer, before I knew it, I was face to face to with her. She looked me in the eyes for a good several seconds, I stood back at her in return. It wasn't until we heard Lance rustling in the background that we immediately ceased the gazing session. I knew he was fumbling around with his arrow; ready draw his weapon out at me at any given moment. The woman stood up from her throne and pointed at Lance, "Please leave us two alone for the time being, for I will let you know when you may return to the room." Lance nodded, kneeled once again, and then quickly made his way out of the room. I knew he was just outside the door, for it would have been foolish to let an outsider like me into their hometown, for this I was soon to find out.

"Where do you come from my dear?" The woman asked gazing at me curiously. "I am from Wudwurn." I replied calmly, "It would be foolish of me now, to say it's not too far from here, as I've now been informed I'm apparently in some kind of different world now." My hometown lies on the very same ground as the entrance to this world," I continued calmly. "So then! State your business here!" The woman yelled demanding. I cringed for I knew I had begun to make her upset, though I wasn't sure how. I sighed before continuing, "I was simply exploring the woods that lie a few blocks away from my house earlier today, I came across a large fallen tree, and rested on it for a short period of time, until a flock of green birds startled me." "Once I looked in the direction of where they were headed I noticed the woods continued on a path, unlike yesterday." I continued. The woman tilted her head curiously, which I assumed was the "O.K." for me to continue onward. "Yesterday, when I journeyed into the woods shortly beyond the large fallen tree, the end of the woods was marked by nothing but a cul-de-sac on the other side of some trees, nothing more, it was only until today that I realized either I didn't take the same path as yesterday, somehow, or...I unknowingly walked into some sort of portal." I explained further hoping she'd buy my story, even though I knew it was the truth. She looked at me with a curious look once again and said, "Perhaps you did...both?" She began to walk further into the sanctuary and stood in-front of a very large painting of a beautiful tree. "This is BlueEarth my dear, the entrance to a whole different world; our world connects with yours in various ways, though, while many are able to exit this world into your world, very few are actually able to enter. No ordinary being is able to simply, enter our world, because for the most part, many humans, like you, have never intended to find the entrance to our world. This town, BlueEarth, is home to the goddesses of seasons, for both the season of life, summer, and the season of death, fall." I stood in disbelief as she continued on. "My name is Clarity, I am the goddess summer, and the woman who escorted you here into BlueEarth, was my sister, Autumn, the goddess of fall. I personally apologize for any misunderstandings that may have happened at the entrance to BlueEarth." "They almost killed me, your greatness, I am sorry to have caused so much trouble." I stated with my head pointing towards the ground again. Clarity put her hand on my shoulder, "It is not your

fault my dear, you see, you are the first outsider to journey into this world in fourteen years!" She explained. "Fourteen years? But, how? Why?" I asked frantically, full of questions. But to my disappointment, I wasn't going to get many answers at this moment. "Fourteen years ago, in fact within a few days, fourteen years ago exactly, a great catastrophe happened here, which has scarred everyone since. I must not go into this now, for this is not the proper time. But you...you-"Clarity gave me an odd look as I knew she was trying to get at my name. "Towaile" I answered, "Towaile!" she repeated said smiling, "You should be proud of yourself for discovering this world, for you have now been given the gift that many others do not have, and you shall embrace it!" She exclaimed in a quite cheery voice.

"Lance!" Clarity yelled as she clapped her hands, "We must give our new citizen a proper introduction to the town of BlueEarth, to make up for this quite rude misunderstanding" Lance rushed into the Sanctuary, as Clarity grabbed my hand and began to lead me towards the doorway.

# Section I: Orientation, Scene

## III: BlueEarth History

All three of us quickly made our way out of the Sanctuary. I had no choice but to move quickly, for Clarity had a tight grip on my hand. We walked towards the top of the staircase, the same staircase Lance & I rushed up earlier, to meet with Clarity in the Sanctuary. I looked at Clarity oddly as she loosened the tight grip on my hand & gazed at the crowd socializing and wandering below. It wasn't long until everyone below caught view of the Goddess of Summer, gazing at them from above. Suddenly they all came to a silence, giving Clarity full attention. "Attention citizens of BlueEarth!" Clarity exclaimed raising her voice to quite high lengths, "Today I would like to make a very important announcement! "This young man here, by the name of *Towaile*, is a boy from the outside world, the world known as *Earth!*" My eyes widened the moment I heard her say, earth, and how ironic it was to me for her to be describing me, as from the "outside" world. Eventually it all made sense. Since technically, I was intruding their world, and I was coming from a world different than there's. But was I really the outsider? Or were they? My thinking was cut short the moment Clarity continued on with her, introductory announcement of me. "I am proud to announce, that for the first time in Fourteen years! Today, we are joined by a new citizen of BlueEarth!" Clarity raised my hand in the air as the crowd of people below began to cheer and clap. It was odd to me, for only not to long ago these people were staring me down so strangely, they could've sworn me to be an alien, but then again, that's probably exactly what they were thinking. I was an outsider. An alien would just be an under-statement.

Clarity looked at me and smiled, I was flustered but nonetheless I bowed first to her, and then to the crowd. I turned towards Clarity once again and thanked her for introducing me to the rest of the Citizens. She looked towards Lance, and at that moment, I knew my time inside this great hall was over. "Lance?" Clarity questioned with a sudden wondering in her voice. "Yes, my elegance?" Lance replied as he began to kneel on one knee. "Please watch over the Chamber while I familiarize Towaile with BlueEarth." Clarity requested. "Yes, my eminence" Lance agreed. Clarity smiled, and then seized my hand once again. We quickly made our way down the staircase, and the crowd began to part as we made our way too the exit.

The moment we left the Chamber and stepped out outside, a chilling, yet loving breeze blew over the entire town. Now, unlike the winds that blow within my world, this one was different, perhaps it was just the moment it happened, or perhaps maybe, It was because I was standing with one of the most elegant beings that had probably ever walked foot on this land, while even at this moment, I still remained unsure;

but this breeze was unlike any I've ever felt before, and the moment it blew across the town I knew it wouldn't be long until I would fall captive to BlueEarth's charms. Clarity stared down at me once again and smiled lightly, "The town greets you" she said softly to me. I just smiled back, for, I was a bit to flustered to come up with anything decent to say in return. We made our way off the front entrance to the Chamber, and began following a path down to what seemed to be the middle of the town. I gazed all around my surroundings, in awe of the view and architecture that was being bestowed upon my eyes. As we continued to walk, I couldn't help but fix my eyes on what looked to be a giant maple tree in the distance. The tree stood dead center within a grassy plaza, surrounded by statues of some sort, for we were still quite far away for me to make any sort of assumption as to whom the statues may be of, or what. "I see you have caught glimpse of the Habituat Tree." Clarity said staring at it herself straight ahead. "Habituat?" I asked, hoping for an explanation regarding the name. Clarity nodded "Yes, Habituat." She answered. "You see, this tree is no ordinary Maple Tree. This tree has stood over this land ever since the Dawn of BlueEarth, planted by our ancient ancestors. The tree represents time here, changing time, and new life, despite it being quite old." Clarity further explained. We made our way closer to the tree, and finally reached the Plaza. It wasn't until then, that I realized we were standing in the dead center of BlueEarth, right at that moment.

I quickly gazed around me and caught view of the statues once again, gazing up at them. There were many, both around the tree, and more further in the distance within the center of the town. The ones that lie within the plaza were of both men and woman, standing proudly, all with differently shaped bow & arrows on their back. "Who are these people?" I asked turning towards Clarity. "Ah, these are statues of the many great archers of this town, the guardians of BlueEarth" she explained while gazing up at the statues herself. "Many of these men and women within these statues, you may see around the town, some perhaps you may have very well have seen already, some of which have either passed on, or have left this town to forge a new life for themselves." She turned towards me once again "Now allow me to teach you a bit about the town. Yes it is indeed a small town, however the activities, and happenings that happen both within and outside of the town can be quite large. As you can see, the great Habituat marks the middle of the town, once you've reached this plaza, in case you are ever lost, it should not be hard for you to find your desired destination as long as you know which direction it lies in." Clarity turned towards the west, which was the direction of the town we were in from the plaza to get there. "Now you see, the western side of town contains basically two major locations that you personally should know of, firstly and most importantly, the exit of your world, or, entrance to our world, lays just beyond the woods past the Chamber. Simply follow the cobblestone road from here to the Chamber, to the woods to get home, simple as that." Clarity then turned towards the South, "Now in this direction lies the **Witches Woods**, as well as your main facility to buy weapons, armor, and really anything self-protection related." "But, what's with the Witches part?" I asked curiously, but at the same time with trembling fear inside. A concerned look fell over Clarity's face, "The **Witches Woods**, is where very wicked woman of this land conduct dangerous and dark ceremonies, which occasionally get out of hand. They aren't exactly evil, however they aren't quite on the friendly side either, they have a very care-free attitude; and while they are rarely seen during the day however, any-time after sunset you can often expect them to be roaming the woods, and even sometimes the town." After hearing sunset, I quickly gazed up at the sky and noticed it was in-fact coming very close to nightfall, and I still had not have made it home yet. I felt anxious to get going, yet, I held it back, and let Clarity continue her explanation of the town. "Now if you turn to the east, you will see that this dirt path leads to another batch of woods, these woods have been known for

reports of infamous cases of talking animals and other creatures being encountered.” My eyes shot wide open. Did you just say, talking animals?!” Clarity chuckled softly, “That’s right, it’s no surprise to me that some people here are able to hear the animals speak directly to them, for I am able to speak to them, and it is truly a gift I am very happy to have, but other people are fearful of obtaining this gift. But enough of that, on the other side of the (Talking Animal Forest) if you will, lies a beautiful large open plain that I am more than familiar with, following a giant lake that leads to-“ Clarity continued to turn North which was straight ahead of us, past the great Habituat, “Ales & the Kispin Mountain!” Clarity announced. I could see far in the distance, miles and miles away, a large giant mountain covered with snow. “Where, and what is Ales?” I asked, still gazing at the giant mountain far in the distance. “Ales is a much larger town, that lies on the other side of the Kispin Mountain, my other two sisters live in both of these locations.” Clarity explained, smiling at me once again. “You have more sisters?” I asked in awe, “Yes I do, Crystal, and Rose, both of them in which are goddesses themselves. Crystal, Goddess of Winter, lives in a palace on the peak of the mountain, and my other sister, who in which is the youngest, Rose, lives in a Chamber similar to mine within the center of Ales.” “So there were more goddesses”, I thought to myself, it was quite amazing to hear how all of these locations were in a fact connected to each other in one way or another, well every location except for the *Witches Woods*, which I was already quite frightened to hear about. It was not long afterwards that I decided to take another glimpse at the great Habituat once again. The beauty of this tree was like none others, tall, elegant, with branches spiraling in different directions, covered with bright red, yellow, and orange leaves. The town felt so pure, yet at the same time, I felt some un-easy feeling coming from Clarity as she gazed up at the tree herself. It was at that moment I decided I would try and get an explanation out of her regarding the catastrophe she briefly mentioned earlier.

“So, Clarity, what exactly happened fourteen years ago, what was this catastrophe you speak of?” I asked in a very patient tone. She turned for me for just a few seconds, and then continued to gaze back at the giant tree, and then, began to speak. “My memory remains quite blurred of this situation to be honest, I do know however, when it happened, strange beings from some outside world, perhaps yours, perhaps another, invaded the town, seeking to take it over. They wanted to live in a world that was hidden from others, that was hard to find, with new resources, and new wonders. There was so much fire, so much fighting, many people believe that the people were of Ales blood, planned an invasion to siege the town. And many others, mainly people from Ales, believe it was our people from BlueEarth, who turned their back on both towns and tried to take them both over for themselves, killing many in the process.” Clarity then tilted her head towards the ground, “After that war ended, many people simply disappeared, the bodies were never found, my mother and father were one of those people.” I gripped Clarity’s hand, in an effort to comfort her, I wasn’t for sure if I was over-stepping my boundaries, “I’m extremely sorry to hear that Clarity” I said softly. “Unfortunately these sort of things occur my dear”, Clarity said gazing at the tree once again. “But even though time here remains frozen, ever since that dreadful night, the citizens of BlueEarth still stand strong, and as one!” she exclaimed proudly. I wasn’t exactly sure what she meant by time being “frozen”, and I wasn’t about to ask. It had quickly grown darker outside, and I knew at that moment I had to be getting back. “Clarity, I’m sorry to interrupt but, it’s almost nightfall, and I promised my father I’d be home thirty minutes from the time I had left, it’s been over three hours, and it’s beginning to get late, I’m afraid he might be looking for me by now.” Clarity’s eyes shot open widely, “Why did you not inform me of this?! Quickly! Make your way westward towards the Chamber, remember, follow the cobblestone path, from here, past the chamber, into the woods, and you should find

yourself back into your world without much difficulty.” Clarity raised her hand in the air, as a slight breeze began to pick up, suddenly a bright green bird made its way out of the branches of the great Habituat, and landed on her shoulder. “She will guide you home.” Clarity said as she smiled at me. The bird quickly took off, and began darting westward towards the Chamber, without even thinking I dashed after it eyes locked on the bird. I lifted my hand in the air, and shouted, “I shall return tomorrow! Thank you for everything!” I then, found myself smiling, and darted even faster after the bird, as I made my way out of BlueEarth.

## Section II: To Rise From the

# Pines, Scene I: Of Archers

The little green bird that Clarity called upon to escort me home, successfully guided me back to the entrance of the woods. I darted up the spiraling and twisting path, only to be surprised to see the fallen tree once again. I hopped over it without hesitation, for I knew if I had not quickly arrived back at home soon, my father would probably start to worry.

Upon my arrival back home, I noticed my father was busy outside mowing the backyard lawn, while my mother, was still out and about it seemed. My mother generally worked late, and usually, would not leave the office until about sunset, so luckily, I was safe. I quickly made my way upstairs to my room to avoid being caught coming back home so late. It felt weird sneaking around for once. I was, for the most part, a pretty honest young teenager; I told the truth almost all the time. But after discovering BlueEarth, everything changed. I often would find myself bending the rules, and sneaking out just to visit the town. Now, these things I will touch on more in a moment, and you will soon come to understand how exactly I managed to pull off such sly, and sneaky behavior.

Later on that night, I found myself in deep thought, day dreaming about BlueEarth, still in a deep void of awe, and shock; from what I had experienced earlier that day. "The first new citizen in fourteen years!" I thought to myself. It was a nice feeling, but at the same time an eerie feeling came over me the further I began to think about it. For I still had not fully understood that ins and outs of the great catastrophe that happened fourteen years ago, the same catastrophe that brought upon great security and protection over the town. I thought too myself, if I were going to be a citizen of the town, why not become a protector as well? I thought of the statues of the Archers, and the actual Archers themselves, protectors of the land; all dressed in complex elegant gear, carrying bows & arrows of great architect, and danger. I was so young let alone vulnerable. I highly doubted Clarity would allow me to join the ranks of such highly skilled and trained bowmen and women. But despite my insecurities, I thought about the strange assurance, and comfort I felt as the breeze blew gently over the land as I exited the Sanctuary earlier that day along with Clarity. The land their birthed something new inside of me, gifted me with a light that I had yet to find out I had.

From my deep thinking, I eventually drifted off into a deep sleep, and that single sleep, was all I needed, to ignite the ember that I was gifted earlier that day. I dreamed off a fiery storm, taking place within thick woods, darkened lines darted across the night sky, some glowing dimly, of various colors. A scream could be heard in the distance, along with sharp popping sounds, almost like gunshots. But then, suddenly, it all stopped. It was silent, for what felt like two whole minutes. As time slowly passed within the dream, the silence grew thicker, almost as if it began to have a sort of weight attached to it. Despite it being silent, my ears began to ache violently as the silence grew thicker, I could feel my ears popping from deep within my sleep, my head closing in on all angles of my cranium, the pain grew immense, before I suddenly jolted upwards, finally awakening.

The sun shined brightly through my windows that morning, it was cold, and after sitting up, I noticed all of my blankets had fallen off my bed. "Strange" I thought to myself. I had not noticed moving at all throughout the nightmare I had, despite being in great pain. I sluggishly shifted my body to look at my alarm clock, "7:30am" it read. I darted out the bed in shock, for I had to be at the bus stop in twenty minutes, and I haven't even begun to get ready. I quickly washed up and got dressed before darting out the door. I avoided eating simply because I never had been the type of person that ate in the morning despite having a pretty large appetite most of the time.

The bus was quick to come. Exhausted, I made my way on board and took a seat. It wasn't until the driver picked up the kid who lived on the cul-de-sac street near the entrance to the woods, did I start to think about BlueEarth again. The dream from last night played, blurring through my mind. I soon was quick to remember visualizing being lost within thickened woods, surrounded by fire. My heart began to jump as I lay sluggishly in the seat on the bus as I remembered Clarity describing the catastrophe that took place 14 years ago. "She specifically said, "There was so much fire." I thought to myself. Perhaps I had dreamed about the catastrophe, but I wasn't quite sure. However, at that moment, there were a few things that were certain to me now. The first being that the dream struck deep, there was no doubt about it, and the second thing being that I was almost certain I wanted to give a shot at becoming a protector of BlueEarth. As I stated earlier, I was never the type of person to contain "genius smarts", I was more...lucky smart. And while I knew luck was not going to cut it to become a proper protector of BlueEarth, I knew that my ambition would somehow carry me through. Throughout the rest of the bus ride, I planned how I would go about delaying my arrival home later that day, in order to meet with Clarity in the Sanctuary. That is, in the event that the entrance would present itself to me.

The entire school day went by slow, as usual. It seemed as my anxiousness grew deeper to make my way back to BlueEarth, the more slowly the school day would go by. On my way back home, I got off the bus a few stops earlier and made my way into the woods from a different direction. See, there was only one proper entrance, however, the actual woods expanded out a good 3 blocks or so, which meant I could get in. The only way being however, is by cutting through some strangers backyard. Normally, I wouldn't have taken the risk, but in order to keep myself hidden from my father, who had possibly been watching out the front door, waiting for me to get on the bus. It wouldn't be hard at all for him to see me darting towards the cul-de-sac road that lead to the main entrance since it was so close to our house.

The side entrance to the woods I took was much more difficult to navigate through than I had originally thought. Bushes and branches, vines and plants, stuck so tightly together it quickly became extremely difficult to maneuver down the steep side slope. I carefully made my way down slowly, and eventually spotted the fallen tree. Without hesitation, I climbed over it, my heart beating quickly. Upon making my way down, I spotted nothing but a long path in the distance, and I quickly broke out a big smile. I began to dart quickly down the path, as it slowly began to twist, turn, and spiral once again. I began to make my way down the path much more slowly once the cobblestone road came into view. It was my first time making my way into BlueEarth alone, and I felt proud about it.

Once the gas lit lampposts began to pop up, I knew I was close to the Sanctuary, I passed by many small houses, almost like huts, woman and children roamed around outside. The woman hanging clothes, and quilts, up on their clotheslines, and children playing in the afternoon sun. As I came into their view they stared at me curiously, as I walked further down the path, I noticed a mother not too far ahead of me

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