

# Days of Destiny

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*Raven, the other Titans and the Charmed Ones face a prophecy that leads them to work together to fight against a foe they unexpectedly end up having in common. A crossover story for Charmed and Teen Titans.*

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# 1 - Epilogue: Uncharted Territories

Chapter 1: Epilogue, Uncharted Territories

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All should have felt safe, secure---finished. The purpose of their destiny was over, the last thing that could alter the fate that all that was good for the worst, permanently, was vanquished for good.

But even with that fact, something felt off, not right.

Something still felt purely evil. Problem was: they couldn't for the life of them figure out what it was.

It would take the influence---and lives of unexpected others, to bring the troubling feeling to a reality.

And that was where this story begins.

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One life to lead---in one particular city by a bay---

Home. It's always a very nice thing to be able to take a break just after fighting a couple international threats. And a nice thing to have when a mind had been troubled for so long and finally was given a chance to gain some peace.

The return to a normal reality of sorts was something that one known as Raven had been seeking---longing for even---for so long, and to get it was almost bliss.

But although it started out peaceful, maybe even almost joyous, things would not remain that way, although the method of its change was unexpected. A lot of things would be realized, not only the change itself, but also a few things brought to light with it.

The obstacles, an uncharted reality they'd never expected, and some people of dark and light none of them fathomed on encountering.

Varying from the likes of demons, angels and witches...creatures of magic---dark and light.

Nothing would ever be the same...

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A month after the last big crisis---

A book in hand, and with music in the background; the sense of peace was in the air, and Raven was

happy with that.

But a lingering thought would chase that sense of peace away, leaving her mind overly restless.

The restlessness would just not go away. Frustrated, she set aside the book, trying to fathom the cause of her restless mind. The thought did not just linger, it took on a life of its own. The thought was not one of a pleasant sense; it was one of pure nightmares.

Fire all around, engulfing everything but the bed in which she resided, horrible visual effects reflected in the dancing flames---horrors and monsters of a nightmare brought to reality.

And a face---his face---one she had loathed since her creation, one she had hoped to never see again after his demise at her hand.

Yet slight reflections of that face---the glowing red eyes he had possessed, danced in the flames alongside the other monstrosities, staring menacingly, emanating all she had feared.

The vision of an almost reality that took on a nightmarish quality had occurred before, and like before, she became frightened. She didn't understand the meaning behind it; she just knew it brought her worst fear to light.

Bad memories, a possible return of the chaos that had almost destroyed her.... the concept of reliving it all was unsettling---and very frightening.

And all she could do was scream as the harsh reality of the visual nightmares danced around her in the dancing flames.

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It had taken a lot of searching. Paging through ancient texts and unrolling just as ancient scrolls in search of answers, proverbs, truths---prophesies.

The search for such began a while before, in search for an answer to altering a certain destiny.

But what was come upon was much more, and he knew it.

He was known as Kane, leading an uncertain destiny with a troubling past. He was known as one fighting for the good side---a whitelighter by trade, and by birthright---but all was not as it seemed.

But he never revealed that---the very idea of that side existing was abominable, to him and all he associated with.

And he never felt he would. The truth of it would not be very favorable, and keeping it hidden wasn't only favorable, it was necessary.

That had led to his search for anything on his past, and that would be how he uncovered an unknown prophecy

And how he'd play a major part in it.

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All should have been at rest. Christy was gone, the Triad permanently vanquished, Leo returned alive for good, and all the dreams they had long desired---love, family, a sense of fulfillment---had finally become a reality.

Yet something was up. There was sudden unrest in the Underworld, and rumors of the return of one of their enemies, the Source of all Evil, reached the world of good magic, causing unrest in the magical community.

Once again the sisters---known well as the Charmed Ones---found themselves being dragged into a possible chaos they had spent most of their adult lives fighting against.

One problem: the target of all the chaos wasn't completely them for once. But that didn't mean they wouldn't play a part in stopping it.

Because they would be needed, as well a few others they didn't know about yet.

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The loud noise caught their attention, as well as their concern.

"Isn't that, like the millionth time she's done this since we got back?" Beast Boy asked all his friends present in the common room. There was a video game halfway in progress, with some music playing in the background as an added effect.

"Sure does seem like it," Cyborg observed as he set down the control. "It seems like the only thing Rae's done since we got back."

"Is there a reason for it?" the changeling questioned as he got up. "Cuz she hasn't said a thing to me about why she does it."

"Something about fire and brimstone," the half robot shrugged. "She didn't tell me anything besides that."

"It's probably just stress," Beast Boy responded. "Should we check it out anyways?"

"Rob said to keep any eye on her," Cyborg replied as he made his way towards the kitchen for a snack. "You go on ahead and check in with her. I'll be here when you get back."

"Why aren't you coming?" the changeling questioned his friend.

"Because," Cyborg replied, grinning. "I need a snack, and her room still freaks me out."

“Whatever dude,” the changeling replied in a defeated tone.

“Have fun,” Cyborg called after him in a teasing tone as he made an exit.

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“Why do I keep seeing it?” Raven asked herself. “Why do I keep seeing a vision that seems so real, that it’s like it’s right out of my nightmares and has become a reality?”

The room had once again reverted to the darkness she was used to, and comfortable with. That didn’t mean that the unsettling feeling that the whole visual nightmare had brought on was gone.

Her nerves were on edge, and once again it took all that she could muster to keep her sanity.

She couldn’t afford to break down, yet it felt like something---or someone---was trying to force it.

That reality was your fate, an inner voice told her, a voice she didn’t recognize. And it could still be.

“My fate...” she trailed. “But... that fate---I changed that---it couldn’t...” There was a knock at the door.

“Rae, is everything okay in there? We heard you again, and Rob said to keep an eye on you every time you...” She heard Beast Boy’s voice from the other side of the door. “Can I come in?”

“You might as well,” she replied. “I need to talk about a few things anyways.” The door opened, revealing that the changeling was indeed on the other side.

“What do you need to talk about?” he entered the room cautiously. He looked around. “Ever thought of redecorating?”

“No,” she replied to his second question. “I like it this way.” She looked at him. “I need to talk about something that seems to reoccur. Visions, horrible---and very realistic---visions.”

“What is it that you keep seeing?” he asked, taking a seat beside her. “And is that why you keep screaming all the time?”

“I’m having reoccurring visions,” she replied. “ Or, at least that’s what I think it is.”

“What is it about?” he asked her. “These visions, I mean.”

“Fire,” she replied. “Flames dancing all around. The fate I once spent a lifetime fearing.”

“You do know that’s an irrational fear, right?” he asked her. “It’s been a while since you dealt with that fear, and you conquered it. I saw it--we all did. So why is it still bothering you?”

“I don’t know why it’s still bothering me,” she told him. “I know I shouldn’t, but for some reason it feels like somebody wants me to remember, and I keep reliving it.” She lowered her head and continued in a lower voice. “And it’s starting to get to me.”

“Do what you always do,” he told her. “Chant those words you always chant and do that concentration thing you always do. That usually works.”

“I can’t,” she told him. “It hasn’t seemed to work lately. Believe me, I’ve already tried.”

“What do you plan to do about it then?” he asked. “You can’t let it keep getting to you. It’s not good, you know.”

“I know,” she replied. “Maybe I shouldn’t have mentioned it.”

“But, if it’s bothering you---“

“Can you leave now?” she asked him. “I just need to be alone right now.”

“Yeah, but---why?” he asked a bit worriedly. “If this thing is really bugging you as much as you said it is---“

“Just go,” she cut him off. “I just need to be alone right now, and your presence is only making things worse.”

“Okay,” he replied a bit reluctantly. “If you need anything just holler. One of us will come running in a instant.”

He got up.

“I know,” she responded. “If the situation does become unmanageable, I’ll let one of you know.”

“Cool,” he replied. “Hope those bad vibes go away soon.” He closed the door behind him.

“Me too,” she murmured to herself when the door was fully closed.

“Me too.”

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“Something’s up,” Billie was reporting to Phoebe, fellow witch---and a former Charmed One. Or so they thought.

It was several months after one of the biggest deciding factors in the fight between good and evil. The triad was vanquished permanently, the biggest sacrifice Billie ever had to make---the very existence of her sister Christy---was made, and the purpose of their destiny was fulfilled tenfold.

Yet something just didn’t feel right, and that was why Billie had went to Phoebe Halliwell.

The sisters now led separate lives, raising families or getting ready to do so. They lived in separate homes, with Piper and Leo remaining at the Manor, the house where it had all began.

Small matters of the darker side of magic occurred on occasion, but nothing their destiny had been designed to solely conquer.

Yet something was up in the air of the magical variety, and it didn't seem like all that good of a thing.

"Reports have been suggesting major unrest in the underworld," Billie went on. "And it's not your typical feuding among the factions."

"What kind of unrest are we talking about?" Phoebe asked her. "It better not be something that requires the Charmed Ones, cuz that destiny is done with."

"I'm not really sure," Billie admitted. "But I'll keep my eyes and ears peeled for anything that's useful."

"Have you talked to Piper or Paige about this?" Phoebe asked, taking a sip of some hot tea she had in a mug. "Have they come upon info that may be useful?"

"I haven't actually talked to either of them about this," Billie replied with a sheepish grin. "Piper's been busy with family issues, and I can't really keep track of Paige."

"Sure is a good time for her and the hubby to do the 'orb around the world' thing," Phoebe said a bit sarcastically. "I hope she's around if anything does happen."

"Yeah," Billie agreed. "Her telekinetic orbing is good during certain tough spots."

"Try to keep me updated if you come across anything new," Phoebe told her. "If something's really up we need to keep tabs on it---if we really want to or not."

"Will do," Billie replied. "While I'm thinking about it I'm gonna go check things out, just to be sure." She got up to leave. "And I'm gonna head so I can check out any sources I come across."

"Good luck," Phoebe called to her as she left. "I just hope they were just rumors. We don't need to deal with the forces of evil again," she muttered to herself.

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The search had been a long one, a very long one. Centuries of magical variety history had been sifted---and paged---through, from more timely scriptures to eras' drawn vaulted scrolls.

He had spent a long time searching, trying to find some answers he desperately had been searching for. There were so many answers, but never the right answers.

Kane had been looking for one thing, but instead came upon something else.

Something he never expected.

The text had been ancient, eons ancient. The edges were well worn, the ink faded with age the thin paper deeply yellowed. Yet the writing was pristinely legible, and the message plain as day.

“A world of darkness will come to pass,” he read of the text aloud. “Only a triad of three representing all that is good working with the power of one other of another realm who acted as a gem for evil shall be of a strong enough force for stopping the arrival of eternal darkness.”

The text didn't make total sense, but one thing was certain---he was making it his mission to find out what it meant.

With the message that seemed to be portrayed in that ancient text he felt he had to.

To save what is good---as well as himself.



## 2 - Visions

### Chapter 2: Visions

It started to seem as though her dreams had been taken over by the ghastly nightmarish visions. The dancing flames of a fiery Hell of the dreadful nightmares gone wrong appeared to want to take over her life eternally, both night and day.

She awoke from it again, the very really imagery of it still fresh on her mind, even though the dream itself was indeed over.

Her breathing was labored, a cold sweat accompanying it, accumulating in droplets on her face. She really didn't want to go back into that state of slumber, but the exhaustion was too overwhelming to bear, and before she knew it, she was again fast asleep.

But instead of imagery of dancing flames, intense heat, and those glowing red eyes that had haunted her through most of her existence, another visual was set to play in her little dream world, and it was instead rather pleasant.

This new vision was a face, a face she was not familiar with, but didn't feel at all uncomfortable with its presence.

Surrounded in an aura of blue white light was the face of a boy—or rather—a man who held unforeseen youth to his essence. His eyes were blue, hair an earthy shade with just some hints of red in it.

The image was not at all a scary one, instead a rather gracious relief from the nightmares she'd experienced in recent weeks.

Instead of yet another episode of screaming in terror that night, as had been of the past, she remained asleep until the break of morning light.

Thus began the revelation unbeknownst to the one known as Raven at that time.

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Stalking, hiding in deep dark corners in the deepest shadows---these were tactics one known as Billie had grown well used to after rumors of demonic unrest had reached the surface world and the world of good magic.

She was hiding in a dark side cavern in the dark Underworld, listening in hopes of overhearing a conversation that might confirm these rumors, providing clues and evidence to the rumored unrest itself.

Not much had filtered through to her hearing—any talk of uprisings, unification under a new leader, or anything else even remotely useful to her.

Instead the usual droning of future targets and rivalries filled the air, making her think that the trip she made down there had been a waste.

Just as she was about to depart a few unexpected presences made themselves present, apparently caught up in a conversation among themselves.

“It’s an interesting thought that there’s someone who claims he’s to be the next Source by some form of chosen destiny,” one demon carried on, a big burly fellow with a hairless scalp and a touch of facial hair to his chin, forming a beard.

“I don’t think it’s all that possible, considering the Source was vanquished some years back,” another argued, a fellow of smaller stature than his fellow demon. “The guy’s probably just as nutty as the rest.”

“You’re probably right,” the first replied in agreement. A grin formed on his face. “Would you be up for some challenging fun?”

“What are you thinking?” the second asked.

“Playing lucky charms,” the first grinned viciously. “Followed with a witch hunt.”

“I’ll take you up on that offer,” the second one replied, sharing the same expression as his fellow demon.

Both shimmered, leaving Billie once again alone.

“This is an interesting turn of events,” she observed quietly. “One that is interesting enough to delve deeper into.” She looked around for a moment, listening for any possible intrusions. “But I’ll tell the sisters more about it what I heard first,” she continued aloud when she felt it was safe enough. “They have a right to know if something’s up, after all.”

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A bright new day in one city by a bay—

Several nights of dreaming of horrific visions that tried to force themselves into her unconscious while she slept were instead replaced with another.

The same vision—the face—forced out the horrors that so wanted to destroy her sanity, the nightmares of her worst fears being kept from destroying her as a whole as well.

That made each day from that point more pleasant, another day not filled with the horrors of before. The horrendous visions of dancing flames and all associated with them almost seemed to cease with this new presence in her mind.

The face was not one she recognized, but was one she wanted to know more about. For some reason the face brought her some peace, and she happily accepted that.

She found there were no more abrupt awakenings in the night, no more screaming in the night or during the day from what she saw, and she gladly accepted that as well.

—And so were her friends for that matter.

The days of torment of the mind of one known as Raven had come to an end, the troubles it had caused seeming to cease.

But the visions had only been the beginning, and the real trouble was yet to come.

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He played the part of an angel, and he did it well.

Although he played the part well; highly praised by those known as the Elders, had good associations with other whitelighters, and was respected by those who knew him; he held things from all those who knew him as the guardian angel often referred to as a whitelighter.

He was instead rather a fallen angel; his past wouldn't allow him to be the full pacifist he was supposedly thought of as being.

Angels were supposed to be purely good, but he wasn't completely.

Kane had a dark side, and he was very afraid to reveal it.

The ancient texts he had discovered had been shown to the Elders, and he was instructed by one to dig further for clues.

Artie, a fellow whitelighter and friend, helped Kane in his search for answers, as well as lending him a hand as a great source for useful magical information.

He was discussing the text with Artie, showing frustration while trying to understand the meaning of the texts itself.

"I don't get any of what's written in this thing," Kane put his face in his hands in frustration. "The triad that represents all that's good? 'Power of another realm that played the gem for evil'? Why do these things have to be so cryptic?"

"No clue man," Artie told him. "I'm just glad the scholars of today actually have a sense of humor. The one of the past were just so—droll, especially after the Charmed Ones thing. They changed a lot of views for the good, in my opinion. They sure did wake up those old fogies."

"Yeah," Kane replied, sighing.

"Is something up man?" Artie looked at his friend. "You've seemed a bit—I don't know, distant, even with the whole deal with this prophecy stuff that you've been working on lately—"

"I've been having dreams—and visions," Kane replied, cutting his train of spoken thought short. "About a girl."

"Oh—what girl?" Artie asked with immense curiosity. "You don't often daydream about anything—or anyone—that just happens to be feminine."

"I try not to," Kane protested. "With so many restrictions I wasn't ever really allowed to. Besides, I have too much on my mind, and too much to do, to even think about it."

"Who's the girl then?" Artie pressed. "A fellow whitelighter? Is she a charge maybe—or possibly a witch? Just waiting for the answer is killing me."

"Killing you?" Kane questioned incredulously. "You know that's not really possible."

"You take things too literally sometimes," Artie told him. "So—the answer...?"

"I don't know her," Kane admitted. "I've never met her, yet—wherever I go, she's on my mind."

"What does she look like?" Artie asked him "A beautiful fallen angel perhaps? With fair skin and hair the hue of honey?"

"That's your idea of a dream girl, not mine," Kane reminded him. "I really don't take to blonds like you do. Besides, she doesn't really fit that description all that much."

Oh?" Artie raised an eyebrow. "What does this 'dream girl' look like then?"

"Different," Kane replied. "Very pale, with hair a shade of amethyst that's shorter in length, and eyes of the same hue. Kind of exotic, come to think of it."

"Must be a girl you concocted from a wild imagination," Artie told his friend. "Because—as far as I know—girls with purple hair don't actually exist. At least, with it being a natural color anyways."

"Whatever you say," Kane conceded on the discussion. He then noted, "I just know I didn't make her up."

"Why's that?" Artie inquired curiously, leaning his head in his hands on the table before him.

"I don't have the imagination to make her up, that's why," Kane informed him. "And the image keeps forcing itself on my mind like it's supposed to be there or something."

"Maybe you should go seek council on this from a higher source," Artie suggested. "Maybe there's an Elder who can actually help you out or something." He grinned. "Maybe—if it's so bad that the visions of this girl keep you from doing your job, they might be able to erase the image of the mystery girl from your memory."

"I guess I could go talk to one of them for answers," Kane replied. "I just hope that it doesn't come to

the point where I'd have to have it erased from my memory.”

“Why’s that?” Artie continued to press for information. “Is she a looker, a bodacious babe? You did say she was exotic, after all.”

“Artie,” Kane looked to his friend a bit disapprovingly. “When I say exotic I don’t mean some girl from a centerfold with absurd beyond belief proportions, or anything purely sensual for that matter. She just has this unearthly air to her that I can’t really pinpoint.”

“Unearthly—in what way?” Artie asked

“ She just seems...I don’t know, a bit unreal,” Kane replied. “Like a girl that shouldn’t exist, and yet—she does, and I’m starting to not mind the visions of her all that much.”

“You definitely need to seek advice from the Elders,” Artie told him, smirking.

“And why would that be?” Kane looked at him particularly.

“Because,” Artie’s grin broadened. “I’ve known you forever, and for you to admit to enjoying daydreams of exotic girls it’s like you’re not you. And that a good reason to send you off to the Elders to get your head checked, if you get what I mean.”

“If you think I should, I’ll talk to them,” Kane told him. “Even if I am not all that fond of talking with them.”

“I hear you, man,” Artie told him. He made face. “I got to go.”

“For what?” Kane inquired.

“Charge is a calling,” Artie told him. “The way they’re calling it better be an emergency.” His expression soured. “If I don’t go check it out now, it’ll get to be too much for my nerves to handle.”

“Go then,” Kane said. “I’ll be back here eventually. Once I get through with my Elder chat, I’m coming back here for a while to relax.”

“See you later then,” Artie said just before he made his exit by orb.

“Yeah, see you later,” Kane muttered after Artie had departed, the blue-white orbs of light fading to nothingness. “After I get done with my chat I’m taking a long vacation.”

He took a seat in a recliner by a bay window overlooking the ocean just out past it. The setting sun in the far distant horizon shed it dying ray upon the waters, brilliant hues of gold, amber, and deep plum of the sunset itself reflecting in the waters as well.

The shoreline they were off of wasn’t too far from a port city. Just outside of it, to be exact. The ocean in view was the Pacific, the coastline in the vicinity of a stretch in the state of California with a city known worldwide for it’s great suspension bridge.

The suspension bridge being the great Golden Gate to be exact, in the world-renowned city that is known as San Francisco.

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“What have you come to ask?” an Elder he’d known as Danielle, asked him. “Have you managed to uncover the meaning in those scrolls you have discovered?” Kane took note of the air of authority that seemed to emanate from her, the honey blond hair giving extra to the effect. Although she appeared to be just of thirty, Kane knew too well that she wasn’t. She was the one who he felt most comfortable confiding in for various reasons, many unknown to anyone else.

“I haven’t found anything—well, anything that could be deemed useful anyways,” Kane replied. “I’ve kind of been occupied with some weird dream—or possibly visions—lately.”

“About a girl?” she asked him. “One that you find fascinating but do not recognize?” He looked at her with shock from what she had just said.

“Yes, but how...?” he stammered.

“Because, Kane,” Danielle began to reply. “She is set to be your next charge.”

“W-what??” He stammered again, this time in an exclamatory fashion. “Charge? Why would I have dream-like visions of a charge? Also, The girl doesn’t seem real, so how would—“

“She is real,” she told him. “I am not sure of the reason why you dreamt of this charge in particular, or if there is a purpose behind it. I do know that you have dreamt of her and that she’s been assigned to you. It does appear that she will need you, by which remains uncertain at this time.”

“Who is she then, and what do I need to know about her?” he asked. “I don’t want to pop in—unannounced—only to scare her witless.”

“She is a most unusual case,” Danielle started telling him. “She is not really what we usually associate as being a witch, as witch might not be what she truly is.”

“If not a witch exactly, what then?” he asked her. “Another half whitelighter like Paige was? Whitelighter to be that’s lost her way perhaps?”

“To be precise, she did not originate from here,” Danielle said.

“Huh?? What do you mean she didn’t originate here??” Kane exclaimed. “Do you mean to tell me she’s a displaced spirit/being that just recently became rooted in this reality, or perhaps she’s a demon?”

“Again, neither,” she restated her first reply. “ She is of another realm, brought here by unknown circumstances. Her past is not fully known, but it is known that it is meant to be you who were set to protect and guide her through an undetermined danger to her.”

“Does she even know about magic—witches, whitelighters, Elders—all that good stuff?” he asked.

“That remains uncertain,” she told him. “We do, however, know that she displays several gifts—powers, of such being: telekinesis, levitation, teleportation, premonition.”

“Who is she?” he asked. “And where can she be found?”

“Her name is Raven,” Danielle told him. “From what our sources have found, she is located in a coastal city of California known as Jump City. Be careful what you say to her at first, since we have as of yet not determined the extent of her knowledge of our kind.”

“Interesting,” he said. “That’s not far from where I reside.”

“One more thing I feel I should mention,” Danielle said to him. “There have been reports—rumors for the most part—that there has been some unrest in the Underworld recently, hints of which are suggesting the rising of a new Source. Nothing has been confirmed completely yet, but be on watch for anything that could give substance to these rumors.”

“Who provided the most credible info?” he asked her.

“Billie, the young witch who has had many associations with the Charmed Ones gave us what she has overheard while spying out the Underworld, this which she overheard from a conversation between two demons,” Danielle told him. “She then reported it back to us, and we made note to inform all others of what she discovered. If any are to find something of use, they are to report it back to us one way or another. We want to keep on top of it, no matter the size.”

“I’ll keep that in mind,” he said. Just as he was about to leave—“Uh, one more thing.”

“Yes, Kane?”

“When should I make contact—make my first appearance to this girl, Raven?” he asked her.

“There is no hurry, but don’t wait too long. You will eventually have to meet her for destiny’s sake.”

“Destiny??” He exclaimed. “What destiny?”

“One you will figure out in time,” her reply was cryptic, her warm smile a bit mysterious.

“Is there something you’re not telling me?” He looked at her peculiarly.

“You should probably go check with your charges,” it appeared she was avoiding his question. “You probably have a charge waiting for you.”

“Yeah,” he said, deciding not to push further for answers she wasn’t going to give him. “I’ll get going. But before I check in with any charges, I’m taking a short sabbatical.”

“What do you mean with sabbatical?” Danielle asked him.

“A short break, a breather,” he told her. “And maybe some time set aside for only studying that old set of scrolls some more.”

“Good luck,” she said. “We—I hope that you are successful in finding the answers hidden in those texts.”

“Yeah, me too,” he replied, sighing. “I’m heading now. If I find anything, I’ll report back with it.”

“Farewell then, for now,” Danielle said to him.

“Bye Danielle,” he replied, orbiting out in an aura of blue-white orbs of light.

After he had left she sighed, letting a thought run through her mind, and then she too went on with her tasks.

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Although the dreams that had been a pleasant release from the torrent of nightmares of the previous week were nice to say the least, questions about those very dream visions had started to present themselves on her consciousness.

For one, who was the attractive boy-man she kept seeing in those dream visions? Two, what was the significance behind it?

Also—how could she even talk to her friends about the dreams without getting peculiar looks and comments in return?

After all, she was not really known for having any dreams that were even border lining erotic fantasies. Twisted, dark dreams, yes, but daydreaming about cute guys...they’d think she had lost it for sure.

“Any news on disturbances in the city?” she overheard Cyborg say while she half concentrated on her book while sitting on the sectional in the common room. “Like what Slade’s been up to lately?”

“Not much for in the city,” Robin replied. “The city has been rather peaceful. On the topic of Slade though—“

“Yeah man?” Cyborg said.

“I got reports that some unusual activity that has been mostly associated with Slade has been happening outside the city.”

“What kind of activity?” Cyborg asked.

“Very unusual ones,” Robin replied. “A lot of which could be linked to the supernatural.”



“He got those powers again?” Cyborg smacked his forehead. “I really don’t want to deal with Slade supercharged like that again.”

“He didn’t get them back,” Robin assured the half robot. “At least—not the ones he had when he was first resurrected.”

“What supernatural-powers thing are we talking about then?” Cyborg asked.

“The details are still sketchy,” Robin replied. “But from what I’ve been able to piece together it sounds like he’s picked up some very dark powers, and he’s working on something big. What that something is though, I don’t know. I don’t even know where to start to look for the answers.”

“Sounds like the usual Slade,” Cyborg replied. “I’ll keep an eye out for any leaks on what he’s up to, and I’ll notify Bee as well so she can keep a lookout for him in case she comes upon anything. After all, what Slade’s up to affects us all.”

“I’m going to get to researching the matter,” Robin said. “Report to Bumblebee when you can, as well as to others this might concern.”

“I’ll get right on that,” Cyborg said, heading towards the computer console to do just that. Robin left the room to work on his own tasks.

Raven was about to speak up on the issue when Beast Boy decided to enter the room, apparently looking for her.

“Hey Rae?” Beast Boy spoke to her. “You’ve got a visitor asking to see you in the hallway.”

“Who is it?” Raven asked. “I’m not expecting anyone, and I can’t think of anyone it could be.”

“I don’t know this guy,” Beast Boy replied. “He says his name is Kane. Do you know him?”

“No, that name’s not familiar to me,” Raven said.

“Do you want me to show him in, or show him the way out?” Beast Boy asked her.

“I might as well see what this Kane wants,” Raven said, putting her book aside and getting up on her feet. “I don’t need people thinking I’m rude by not answering house calls.”

“I’ll go get him then,” Beast Boy said, leaving the room for a time. He returned minutes later with someone following behind him.

She gasped as the visitor came into view.

It can’t be, Raven thought, eyes wide with apparent shock and disbelief. How—She couldn’t help but stare.

It was him—the guy from her dream visions, but that couldn’t be possible. Yet he was there, and the

reality was too overwhelming

Everything went black. She collapsed, crumpling to the floor as she fell into unconsciousness.

## 3 - Real?

### Chapter 3: Real?

The girl had expressed a lot of shock before she had passed out and crumpled to the floor. Kane was surprised by her expressed shock, an expression that seemed to say she had recognized him somehow and it had led to her collapse.

The green boy that had shown him in had rushed to the fallen girl's side. He just stood there, staring down at her.

The girl who'd collapsed was indeed the one from his visions. It took him a moment to grasp the reality of it.

"Is she okay?" Kane asked the green one now kneeling beside the unconscious girl.

"I think she'll be fine," the green one replied. "Even though why she's out cold in the first place is beyond me."

The girl groaned lightly, moving slightly. She shifted her head a bit, blinking her eyes rapidly as she came to. When fully open, shimmering amethyst eyes emerged, staring for a short moment upward.

"What happened?" she coughed lightly, after which she made an effort to get up.

"You collapsed," the green one told her. "I came into the room, and you just—passed out."

"I could've sworn, when I saw you enter—" she stopped, staring at Kane with disbelief.

"How...who—why??"

"Huh?" the green one was obviously confused.

"The guy you brought in—"

"Yeah, what about him?" the green one said.

She looked at the newcomer, obviously bewildered just looking at him.

"How is it possible?" she exclaimed, wide-eyed. "How can he be here—even be real??"

"You know this guy?" the green one asked her. "You're acting like you know him, and are shocked to see him."

"I've never met him," she admitted, her gaze aimed downward.

“Then why—“

“I keep dreaming about him, dreams that almost are like a premonition. I just thought that the stress those nightmares I was having created them,” she said, interrupting the green one. “I never thought he could be actually real...” She paused, looking at Kane. “Who are you?”

“Wait,” the green one said. “You’ve dreamt about this guy? That’s really something new for you Rae.”

“Yeah.” She put her hand to the side of her head. “In every dream, he’s there, with a blue-white aura surrounding him.” She took a deep breath and released it. “That’s why it—you,” she pointed to Kane. “Didn’t seem like it was possible for you to be real.”

Blue-white aura, Kane thought to himself. Orbing, how could she know—

“I’m real,” he said aloud. “Very real.”

“Who are you then?” she asked him. What have you come for—and why?”

“I am known as Kane, “ he told her. “And I came to see you.”

“Why though?” she asked.

What can I tell her? Kane thought to himself. With how she reacted to my entrance, would she be able to handle—

“I came partially because of those dreams,” Kane told her aloud.

“How would you—?”

“Because I’ve been having similar dreams myself,” Kane replied, cutting her short. “About you. I was told by a—um...mentor that you really do exist, and where I’d be able to find you.”

“You—“ she stammered. “But—why?”

“That’s why I came,” Kane replied. “To seek out the answer to that myself.”

“I feel kind of silly,” she said. “I don’t tend to faint for just anything, much less strangers.“ She looked up at them a bit sheepishly.

“Do you need a hand getting up?” Kane offered his hand. She just looked at him for a moment, and then decided to take his hand that had been offered without a word. Slowly he helped her to her feet.

When she fully stood he finally got a good look at the girl. It was like the dream had become a reality, and she was living proof to that.

She’s just like I envisioned—

“You’ve—dreamt of me?” she looked confused, it was very apparent in her eyes. The green one stood on the sidelines, apparently just as—if not more—confused as the girl herself.

He looked at her.

How can I tell her about this? He thought to himself. Would she even understand what that blue-white aura means?

“Um—can I ask you a question?” Kane asked her.

“I guess,” she replied. “What question?”

“What do you know about magic?” he asked. “The extent of what you know about its existence on this planet—and in general?”

She looked at him peculiarly for a moment.

“I practically live—and breathe—magic,” she replied. “My whole being—is magic, the good, and—“ she hesitated before finishing. “—The bad.”

“What do you mean by bad?” he asked her.

“Did you come here just to have a full blown discussion on magic?” she asked. “Because if that’s what—“

“You mentioned something about strange nightmares,” Kane cut her off. “What kind of nightmares exactly?”

“Fire and brimstone,” she replied softly. “Recollections of what I fear most.”

Fear? He thought to himself. Have I heard that one before? Where have I heard that before—“Is there a chance I could discuss a few things alone with you?”

“What are you?” she asked him.

“I kind of think of myself as a fallen angel,” he told her, smirking. “For you, maybe a guardian angel.”

“What—“

“Raven,” he said. She widened her eyes. It was just eerie to hear a stranger say her name—“I’m—your guardian angel.” Enough said.

What Kane had just said was overwhelming, making her feel a bit faint. For the second time in that short period since he had arrived, she fell into unconsciousness, falling to the floor and into the darkness once more.

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“Rae? Rae?? Raven??”

Voices; she heard them call her name, even though everything remained in darkness. Eventually the darkness departed, and she took notice of two guys leaning over her. There was concern in their eyes as they called her name.

She blinked rapidly a few times, trying to adjust to the light once again.

“What—“ Raven groaned lightly. “Did I just black out again?”

“What happened?” Beast Boy asked her worriedly. “That’s the second you’ve done that this afternoon. Are you gonna be okay?”

“I’ll be fine,” Raven told him. “I just need to relax and take some time to compose myself.”

“Whatever you say,” the changeling replied. “Sit, relax, and talk—with him.”

He pointed out the newcomer, whom she had just realized was still there.

“Where are the others—Robin, Starfire, Cyborg?” Raven asked.

“Out,” Beast Boy said. “Tracking down anything they can on Slade. Something supernatural has been attached to him in one way or another, and they went to check it out.”

“Great,” Raven muttered. “Just—great.”

“Any clue on the kind of supernatural activity it is that your friends are checking out?” Kane spoke up.

“Something really creepy,” Beast Boy replied. He looked at Kane peculiarly. “Would you know something about that kind of thing?”

“I’m researching a bit on that,” Kane replied. “I come from a certain society that tends to keep tabs on that sort of thing.”

“You said something about being an angel,” Raven said. “A fallen angel, or how you put it—guardian angel. What—does that mean?”

“I’ll get to that,” Kane replied. “But I’d rather discuss it in private.”

“Why?”

“There are things I want to discuss that I don’t want heard by others at this time,” Kane replied.

“Why don’t you take Mr. Angel here to your room and discuss stuff there?” Beast Boy suggested to her.

“Why, are you trying to get rid of me?” Raven asked, glaring at him slightly.

“No,” Beast Boy replied grinning. “Rob told me to do some research, while he and the other two are out. Besides,” he grinned viciously. “You don’t want to keep him waiting, do you?”

“I guess not,” Raven mumbled.

“Maybe this guy will be the first to not be totally creeped out by your bedroom arrangement, “ the changeling added. “Maybe he can talk you into redecorating.” Raven glared at him, and there was a note of confusion from Kane in his expression from what the changeling had said.

“Nobody could make me do that,” Raven shot back.

“I’ve gotta get to work,” Beast Boy said. “You go entertain him, or something.”

“Whatever,” Raven said, then turning her attention to her guest, Kane. “Come, this way.”

She began to lead him away from the common room. Hesitantly he followed.

“I wonder what that guy meant by the guardian angel thing,” Beast Boy wondered aloud after the two had left. He shrugged. “Whatever he meant, I’ll have to ask about it later. Right now I’ve got my own stuff to do, and I don’t need Rob ragging on me for wasting my time when there’s something up.” He took a deep breath, let it out, and then got to work.

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“He said he’d be here when I got back—“

Artie looked around the premises of the place he resided in, only to find it dark, silent, and kind of empty.

He had spoken to his friend last just the night before. An emergency with one of his charges had kept him busy all night, so he was certain Kane would be back from his visit to the Elders when he finally returned.

But, when Artie did return, he returned to an empty house, one that apparently hadn’t been occupied for several hours at least.

“Where could he be?” he wondered to himself aloud.

“I wonder if one of them will know?” A thought occurred to him. “I bet Danielle will know where he is, since she’s the one he’d most likely confide in with his problems of all of the Elders there are. Might be good to check in with her about him, and get any scoop of recent news while I’m at it.”

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“What do you mean there’s some strange magical disturbance just outside the city?”

As promised, Billie kept the sisters updated with whatever news she came upon dealing with magic itself. She had recently come upon some unusual information, and since Phoebe was occupied and Paige at an unknown location, she turned to Piper to deliver the news to.

“Something supernaturally related is going on just outside the city to the south,” Billie told her. “A few sources I’ve talked to say that some very dark forces are operating just south of us, so I went to check it out, and I came upon something I wasn’t suspecting.”

“Like what?” Piper asked. Please don’t say anything demonic—

“Well…” Billie trailed for a moment. “I’m not exactly sure, but I think it might be…demonic.”

She just had to say it? Piper thought to herself. “What exactly was going on?” she asked aloud.

“It appears demons are operating under a new leader,” Billie replied. “Something about it being under a new Source.”

“Source?” Piper exclaimed. “That’s not possible!! We vanquished him permanently. We personally made sure of that.”

“Maybe it wasn’t as permanent as you thought,” Billie said.

“Or maybe it’s someone just claiming to be him,” Piper said. “An imposter just trying to stir up trouble in the Underworld.”

“Either way, I’m keeping my eyes on this situation,” Billie told her.

“What exactly did this troublemaker look like?” Piper asked her.

“I didn’t get the best view of him,” Billie told her. “All I managed to get was the fact that he was dressed up in some form of modern armor, with one eye being the only thing of him visible.”

Piper was caught up in thought for a moment.

“Doesn’t sound familiar to me,” Piper said when her train of thought was done. “I’ll ask Leo about it, and I want you to keep an eye out, just in case.”

“I’ll do that,” Billie replied. “I’m going to report this to the Elders as well.”

“You do that then,” Piper told her. “You’re a better candidate for that, since I still have issues with them.”

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“Hey, Danielle?”

Artie had spent quite some time searching for that particular Elder, finally finding her after an exhaustive



search.

“Where’s Kane?” Artie asked once he’d gotten her attention. “He wasn’t there when I got back to the house—“

“He is on a quest,” Danielle informed him. “We have just been informed of some unusual supernatural activity in the area.”

“What kind of supernatural activities?” he asked her.

“What appears to be demonic activity,” she replied. “We were informed by the witch Billie of this news.”

“And Kane?” he asked.

“Tending to his new charge,” she replied. “Who is not far of a distance from the origins of the disturbances.”

“Tell me about these disturbance—and the location of Kane’s new charge,” Artie asked her.

“Yes, I will get to that,” Danielle told him. “First, his location.” She took a deep breath. “Kane and his new charge can be located in a tower by a bay, in a city known as Jump City.”

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“Can you tell me why you’re here—and who you are?”

The girl had led him through a labyrinth of hallways towards a drab non-descript door that was labeled with her name: Raven, engraved on it in bold plain letters.

He hesitated in answering her questions, not sure what to say due to the lack of knowledge on her background on the knowledge of the whole of the magical community. He didn’t want to scare her with the concepts of reality he had grown up living with if she didn’t know about them already.

“Do you believe in angels, a higher authority that represent those—and magic in general? Or maybe the possibility of dark forces like demons being real?” he asked her as they came to stand before her bedroom door.

“Magic—like, in terms, Hocus Pocus, Abracadabra, and carnival tricks, or the type associated with witchcraft—spells, potions, special abilities—powers?” she asked.

He looked at her, surprised that she had used such terminology to describe her second observation.

“The second,” he managed to reply.

“You mentioned demons—“ she trailed. “”Yes, I believe in them. I sort of have to.”

“Why would that be?”

“I wouldn’t exactly exist if I didn’t,” she murmured. She averted her eyes, as if she felt some shame with what she’d just said.

“You have demonic origins?” He asked, looking at her in a bit of shock.

“Yes,” she replied softly. She opened the door to her room. “Come, this is it.”

He looked into the room—darkness. She entered the darkness, and he followed at a distance.

He stood in the darkness, the blackness filling his vision for a time. And then—there was illumination.

There was quite an interesting sight to go along with it.

Books lined one wall from floor to ceiling walls a deep hue, an arrangement of candles here and there, what possibly could be identified as items of Wicca origin, and some gothic pieces of decor were displayed in different locations around the room. It was obvious the girl took an interest in literature and the practice of witchcraft to some form.

“I see you like books and Wicca sort of magic,” he observed aloud to her. “You aren’t, by chance—a witch—are you?”

She looked at him, a little confused by what he’d just said.

“Witch?” confusion was evident in her voice. “I don’t think of myself in that particular manner, but—“

“I didn’t mean it in an offensive form or sense,” he said. “It’s just, with the decor—the candles, books, etc.—it reminded me of people I’ve associated with that practice the craft and refer to themselves as witches. I just assumed that...well—maybe you are one because of that.”

“Maybe I am,” she said. “Tell me—what exactly do you mean by angels and a higher authority?”

“When I—“ he began, but never got to finish. Even with the candlelight, the room still seemed fairly dark.

For an instant, however, the darkness was lightened with an eerie blue-white incandescence, a figure becoming substantial in the middle of the orbs of light formation.

As the figure became fully substantial, he took notice of it being his good friend Artie.

For the third time since his arrival, the girl from his dreams collapsed to the floor, consciousness fading yet again.

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“Does this girl tend to do this a lot?”

Voices. Raven distinctly heard two voices; one familiar, one not. Although she was coming to, the

darkness still remained.

“Well, she’s done this twice already since I arrived.”

“Third time’s the charm, as they tend to say.” Laughter followed for a moment or two. “No pun intended of course.”

“I’m not quite sure what she knows about our kind and all, as I was just getting to that when you showed up.”

“So, this is your dream girl? You’re right about her being kind of different. Not what I was thinking though. Exotic, but not in the way I’d have envisioned anyways.”

“Yes, this is the one, the dream girl, as you put it. I was actually surprised that she even exists, and that she’s been appointed as my new charge. Not as surprised as she was with how she reacted to my presence earlier. She blacked out at the sight of me.”

“Why’d she do that, Kane? You’re not all that scary, in this form anyways.”

“It turns out—this girl has been having dreams about me as well, and I guess she thought they were just a product of her imagination or something. She sure did express a lot of shock and horror before she passed out.”

“So...what exactly is she? I see candles, some very ancient texts, and some rather freaky decor—“

“She didn’t exactly attach the term witch to herself when I asked her about it. Oh, and get this—she did mention something rather fascinating.”

“Oh—like what?”

“She mentioned she has demonic origins. She doesn’t seem all that demonic though. Different, yes; gothic, possibly; someone who probably practices Wicca forms of magic—she admitted to that, and it’s obvious just by looking around, but demonic—“

“What exactly do you plan to tell her when she comes to? ‘You’ve been dreaming about me, I’ve been dreaming about you, so you must know of some of the workings of this world outside the norm’, or possibly ‘Guess what, I’m a guardian angel sent to protect and guide you by some folks known as Elders! You’re my charge, and I’m your whitelighter!’ If she had issues with my orbing in, who’s to say she could handle the knowledge of the great magical community?”

“Well, if her origins are what she said they are, she’s got to know something.”

Finally, the darkness lifted, and she was able to use her sense of sight instead of just her hearing.

She groaned lightly, taking the chance to look around as she fully came to. Two forms loomed in the darkness, not far from where she lay. She could hardly make them out clearly.

“What’s going on?” Raven demanded in a soft tone. “What happened—who—what...are you??”

“Well...as I said before, guardian angel,” Kane replied. “You fainted when my friend Artie here orbbed in.”

“Orb?” Raven exclaimed in confusion.

“It’s a way used to get from one place to another without the hassle of physically traveling there,” Kane told her. “It’s the method guardian angels—also referred to as whitelighters—use to get to places in cases of emergency. In a way it’s kind of like teleportation. It’s called orbing because of the blue-white orbs of light that announce the arrival of a whitelighter or Elder.”

“Teleportation, blue-white light...” Raven became thoughtful for a moment. “I’m gifted with the ability of teleporting, and in my dream you were surrounded in an aura of blue-white light, like you just mentioned. Before I didn’t quite exactly know what that meant. But then, I didn’t even think you were real, and to have you actually show up, claiming to be a guardian angel—or whitelighter as you also put it—when I least expected...that’s a lot for me to take in.”

“What kind of past do you have?” the one calling himself Artie asked her. “What are you capable of—or, just in general—who are you?”

“My name, for starters, is Raven,” Raven told him. “I have special abilities—powers—which I won’t get into at this moment, and I am part of a team made up of teens known as the Teen Titans.”

“Uh...like—gods?” Artie asked. “Teen demigods? That’s a fascinating concept, but the thought of gods that could easily be converted to the dark side after what happened with the Titans—”

“Gods?” Raven looked at him peculiarly. “We have special powers, and are different from other people because of them, but we’re nowhere near being gods. We’re just teens using our special gifts to try to save the world and protect innocent people from evildoers.”

“Sounds kind of like the Charmed Ones, in a way,” Artie said.

“Charmed who—Charmed Ones?” Raven asked.

“A triad of sister witches that was destined as being the most powerful force of good to take on all forms of evil,” Artie explained. “They were our saviors when it came to vanquishing the greatest threats like the Source, the Triad, or any other that came along.”

“Witch, eh?” Raven looked at Kane. “You asked if I associated with them or the craft, and then the whole questioning and talk on guardian angels—you being my guardian angel—are whitelighters supposed to be mentors or something for witches in general? Is that why you’re here?”

“First off—yeah, whitelighters serve as mentors and guardians for their witch charges,” Kane told her. “But charges aren’t always witches. Sometimes whitelighters to-be get misguided and need help to get back on the right path. In general though, whitelighters play an important role in guiding and protecting magic for the greater good. Elders make up the hierarchy of it all, acting as the big bosses.”

“Yes, and the sisters make up that triad for good,” Artie added helpfully.

Triad for good? Kane thought to himself. “Artie,” he said aloud to his friend. “Remember those scrolls I found and was researching?”

“Kind of, why do you ask?”

“Something you just said sounded just like one of the entries in that set of texts. Those prophecies,” Kane told him.

“Do you think you could recite them for me?” Artie grinned goofily. “I don’t remember what was in that thing, or what it was that I just recited.”

“Let me see if I can recite it word for word,” Kane thought for a moment. “I think it goes something like this: ‘A world of darkness will come to pass. Only a triad of three representing all that is good working with the power of one other of another realm who acted as a gem for evil shall be of a strong enough force for stopping the arrival of eternal darkness.’”

“What part of that did I recite again?” Artie asked his friend.

“The part about the triad that represents all that’s good,” Kane told him. “I think that part of the passage is describing the Charmed Ones.”

“And—“

“And—I think it’s saying their destiny hasn’t been fulfilled after all,” Kane told him. “There’s still one battle left for them.”

“What then does the gem for evil mean?” Artie asked his friend.

“I think I might know.”

It took the two whitelighters a moment to realize just who’d spoken.

It was the girl—Raven.

“What makes you think you know the answer?” Artie asked her.

“I know, because I know who the gem was.”

“Who might that be?” both whitelighters asked in unison.

“Unfortunately—me.” Raven replied simply.

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“Hey, BB.”

The screen of the computer console came alive with the image of the half robot displayed on it. The web browser the changeling had been viewing to that point was blocked by it. The interruption took him by surprise, almost startling him enough to jump.

“Did I scare ya?” Cyborg asked, grinning broadly on the large display.

“No,” Beast Boy replied a bit defensively. “I was just absorbed in some research and you took me by surprise. That’s all.”

“Ah. What’re you checking out?”

“Just some website,” Beast Boy replied blandly. “Any particular reason why you contacted me?”

“We came upon some info, and we thought it’d be nice to report it back to ya,” Cyborg replied.

“What’d the three of you find?” Beast Boy asked.

“There’s some disturbances outside the city we’ve uncovered,” Cyborg replied. “Actually—Star made the big discovery.”

“What’d she find?”

“Well—she was flying cover over a wooded area just north of the city,” Cyborg told him. “She came upon the disturbances we’ve been hearing about while she was up there.”

“And—“

“What she reported back didn’t make sense to her in the least. One thing’s for certain though,” Cyborg said.

“What?”

“It’s confirmed Slade is back, and he’s got quite the abnormal following,” Cyborg replied.

“Abnormal—how?”

“Kind of freaky,” Cyborg told him. “Kind of hard to explain, I guess.” He paused momentarily. “Hey is Rae around? She might want to hear about this—if she is.”

“Yeah, she is, and she’s got a visitor,” Beast Boy replied.

“Visitor, eh?” Cyborg mused. “Well, let her know the news when you can. She needs to know, especially since our favorite arch nemesis is involved.”

“Yeah, I’ll tell her in a few,” Beast Boy replied. “I just need to finish something up first.”

“Oh? Like what?”

“Just some project I’m working on,” Beast Boy replied. “Nothing big.”

“Well, gotta go,” Cyborg said. “Gotta keep tabs on Slade’s movements.”

“Good luck,” Beast Boy replied. The connection was cut not long after. “Now, I just have to upload these images to the server---“

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“What do you mean you’re the gem?” Artie asked incredulously.

“My father was the evil,” Raven explained. “And I was the gem—the portal to loosing him from his imprisonment. My sole existence was just for that purpose, nothing more. I managed to conquer that fate to rewrite my own destiny.”

“I guess that goes with what the prophecy states,” Kane said. “The pieces don’t quite fit, like—what’s supposed to be the evil that could bring in eternal darkness? The Triad is now nonexistent, and so are every other potential threats that could cause chaos on that level.”

“There have been some strange reports of eerie activity just outside this city—“ a knock on the door cut Artie short.

“Hey Rae, is there a chance I could talk to you about something?”

“Who’s that?” Artie asked.

“Just Beast Boy,” Raven told him.

“The green one who showed me in?” Kane asked her.

“Yes.”

“Hey, can I come in?” the changeling asked again a bit impatiently.

“Come in,” Raven replied. The door opened not long after that.

“Hey, where’d he come from?” the changeling asked questioningly as he entered the room. He pointed to Artie to indicate whom he meant.

“I’ll get to that in a moment,” Raven told him. “First though—what did you come up here to tell me?”

“I’ve got some news I thought you’d want to know,” Beast Boy replied. “Rob and the other two have confirmed some of the rumors we’ve been getting bits and pieces of lately.” His expression became grim. “Looks like Slade’s up to no good again, and he’s got new cronies in his company.”

"What kind of company?" Raven asked him.

"Freakish supernatural kind of company," Beast Boy replied. "It appears he's the leader of this strange and sordid bunch. Sightings were just north of the city."

"Who's Slade?" Artie asked Beast Boy curiously. "What does he look like?"

"An old arch nemesis that just doesn't know how to stay dead," Raven told him. "Dies once, only to be resurrected in a vile way for a foul task."

"Kind of reminds me of Balthazar—AKA Cole," Artie said. "It took them forever to rid of him permanently—"

"Who?" Beast Boy looked at him in confusion.

"Just someone who was a half breed—part demon, part human—that just didn't want to stay dead," Kane explained. "He was once Phoebe's—a Charmed One's—big love interest, but it turned out to be ill fated, and after many attempts—three, I believe—they finally finished the job permanently."

"Half demon—Charmed One?? Who are you people??" more confusion on the changeling's face.

"I'll get to that," Artie told him. "First though—Slade?"

"He's a madman dressed head to toe in armor with only his one eye visible," Beast Boy told him. "Why the sudden interest in the guy??"

"Danielle mentioned a witch named Billie had reported seeing a man fitting that description leading a gathering—" Artie pondered aloud. "The activity you've picked up in reports is just outside the city, to the north—right?"

"Yeah—why?" Beast Boy said.

"I think I know what this arch nemesis of yours has been up to," Artie replied. "It appears he's gathering the whole of the demonic community to work under him as he claims to be the next Source. The Source—of all Evil."



## 4 - Trouble on the Horizon

Chapter 4: Trouble on the Horizon.

Trying to come to terms with what they'd just earned was proving to be difficult for the two—Raven and Beast Boy. What Artie had just told them wasn't sitting well. It wasn't all that new a concept to learn an archenemy was making another effort to do a world domination thing, but working with those methods and operating towards those particular goals—

Slade was already a fairly evil opponent, but for him to take on the label of the Source of all Evil—it just seemed a bit too farfetched, even for him.

Kane and Artie had a lot to consider and take in as well. Identifying the nameless threat was big news, and so was having a few more pieces to the prophetic puzzle. The Elders—and the rest of the magical community, should probably be informed immediately.

Most important: the Charmed Ones had to be informed of their involvement in the prophecy, for their sake—as well as others.

But their involvement in it remained a mystery and Kane—with help from an unexpected source—the girl, Raven—would have to be the ones to uncover the missing pieces to that prophetic puzzle.

Raven partially knew her role, but Kane had yet to learn his.

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“What of all this can we inform Robin on? Of all of us—besides me anyways—he's had the most negative influence from the torment, motives, and actions of Slade,” Raven spoke.

The small group had been led out of the more private confines of Raven's room towards the more public common room.

“I'm still adjusting to the thought of Slade wanting to be the vilest dude on the planet,” Beast Boy pointed out. “Especially the one of him having badder powers than before, and then the concept of witches, demons, guardian angels, and the strange world I didn't even dream to believe in—“

“Well, it'd be smart if you kept that knowledge to yourself for now,” Kane told him. “Your friends should probably know, but it would be best if the rest of the city didn't know.”

“Why?” Beast Boy questioned. “We get our share of magical baddies who are beyond weird, and the city's gotten used to it all.”

“I don't think they could handle this sort of magic,” Kane replied. “Magic of this form has been exposed before, and it wasn't pretty. It took a lot to clean up the mess, and to keep it all from falling

apart.”

“I guess that makes sense,” Beast Boy said, not bothering to push the issue further.

“So...what are you exactly, and what’s up with the green skin and pointy ears?” Artie asked him.

“I’m a changeling—a shape-shifter,” Beast Boy replied.

“Shape-shifter—of human forms?” Artie asked.

“No, animal,” Beast Boy replied, grinning. “Any animal form—real, mythological, and alien.”

“What about the green thing and the ears?” Artie asked again.

“Don’t push it,” Beast Boy warned. “So...how do we go on telling the other three about Slade’s antics, as well as how to rid of him permanently?”

“You go fill in your friends,” Kane told him. “I’m sure they’d love to know this archenemy is up to something out of the ordinary.”

“I’ll get right to it,” Beast Boy said. “Uh...are you guys sticking around for a while?”

“I’m thinking about taking the chance to research some things at a certain library,” Kane said.

“Library?” Raven turned her gaze to him. “What is this certain library?”

“The one at magic school,” Kane told her. “It’s the best source for info on magic around.” He looked directly into her gaze, continuing. “I seem to recall your room looked somewhat like a mini library, would you care to come and check it out?”

“Magic library, eh?” Beast Boy spoke up. “Any creepy horror novels or twisted fairytales among the selection, because that’s what Rae tends to like.”

“I’m not sure,” Kane replied. He looked to the Raven. “Well so—you want to go?”

“Y-yes,” Raven stammered in reply. “It might be nice to check out a selection that’s not totally made up of overly cheerful writings and romance trash. One thing though,” she paused briefly. “How exactly do we get there?”

“For me, it’s just an orb away,” Kane replied, smiling. “For you—the same, if you’ll allow it, that is.”

“How—I can’t orb or whatever,” Raven replied.

“I can do that for you,” Kane replied. “That is—if you take my hand.”

“Okay—“

“Kane, you want me to tell Danielle about the new developments?” Artie asked Kane.

“Yeah,” Kane replied. “Since I can’t do it, you’d be the best candidate. She knows I can trust you with anything.”

“Yeah, she does,” Artie replied. “Besides her, I’m the only one who really knows you.” He looked at Raven and continued. “And maybe one day you’ll also get to know him—even his unknown side.” He returned his gaze to Kane. “Anyways, I’m going to head, See you later.” He disappeared in a blue-white aura.

“What unknown side is he talking about?” Raven asked Kane.

“Oh, my dark side,” Kane replied smiling mysteriously. “Ready to head now?”

“You have a dark side? I didn’t think angels had a dark side,” Raven said.

“They can.” Kane replied. “So—“

“Yes, I’m ready,” Raven told him. “How exactly does orbing work?”

“Just take my hand, and I’ll do the rest,” Kane instructed her.

“Huh?” Raven gave him an odd look.

“Take my hand,” Kane repeated. “And don’t ask anymore questions.”

Instead of arguing or asking further questions, she did as he had instructed and took his hand.

“I hope you don’t get sick easily,” Kane told her.

“Not usually—why?”

“Some don’t take to orbing all that well, and I thought I’d give you a warning, just in case,” Kane replied, grinning.

“Well...I’m ready whenever.”

“Okay, cool.” For some strange reason her hand clasped in his gave off unusually odd warmth. Not the warmth associated with heat, but rather a strange sensation he couldn’t quite grasp the meaning of. After a moment of that running through his thoughts, he got to doing just what he’d intended to do. The process of orbing came into action; a shroud of bright white orbs of lights—just the same as those upon Artie’s departure earlier—enveloped the two almost completely. Throughout the transition of going from one locale to another, he found she was in awe.

Eventually the shroud of orbs dissipated, revealing to them their new destination. To him—it was the familiar confines of the magic school’s library, to her—a strange new place.

Raven obviously wasn't in a state of panic with how she took in the surroundings.

A student was shelving books, but not in a conventional manner. It was obvious the girl was commanding them as they practically leaped from her hands and onto the shelves.

"Telekinesis?" Raven looked at him, surprised. "There are some here capable of telekinesis?"

"Yeah, practically anything that is considered magical—levitation, empathy, telepathy, shape-shifting—if it's considered a possible form of good magic, it can be found here. This is a major hub for the teaching and practice of all of good magic," Kane told her.

"Can I...?" Raven indicated her interest in exploring the grounds with a gesture made with one hand.

"Be my guest," Kane told her. "I've got a few people I have to talk to, so I won't be gone too long." He left her to take on the quest of finding one in particular he wished to speak with at the school in particular.

He had stepped several feet from the bookshelf the girl was now poring over, when he was approached by someone.

"Who's she?" that particular someone came to ask of him. He turned to take notice of this certain somebody, a professor who was waiting for an answer.

"She's one of my charges," Kane told her. "She likes to read, and I thought I'd give her the chance to see the selection here." His tone became serious. "Do you, by chance, know where I could find Leo?"

"Yes, he's around somewhere," the professor replied. "Any particular reason why you're searching him out?"

"Yeah," Kane replied. "There is. I need to speak with him on a matter that concerns him, his wife—and the Charmed Ones."

"Okay," she replied simply. She felt the need to push for further information, but let it drop. Instead, she led the way. "Follow me," she said with a note of resignation, and led the way to where Leo was.

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

"Danielle!!"

He had been searching for fifteen minutes, with no success in finding this particular Elder.

Finally, he had some success. He found her in the company of another Elder.

"Hey Danielle, could I speak to you?" Artie asked as he approached the two Elders. Danielle took note of his presence, breaking her previous conversation with the blond Elder in her company.

Danielle took a moment to study his face, noting the urgency held wordlessly in his expression.

“Is something wrong?” Danielle asked with a note of concern.

“I’ve learned a few new factors I thought I should inform you about,” Artie replied. “All Elders for that matter.”

“What is it Artie?”

“We managed to discover the identity of this new threat,” Artie told her. “The one operating just outside the city of San Francisco.” After a momentary pause, he continued. “Who is that girl that’s Kane’s charge anyways? She’s not the usual charge you see, and she knows stuff about magic, but was apparently oblivious of whitelighters and Elders at the same time. It just seems...I don’t know—odd.”

“He is destined to guide her, but I cannot say more on how or why. As for the identity of this figure at the center of the disturbance—“ Danielle trailed momentarily. “What has managed to be uncovered on that?”

“Some nut claiming to be the Source of all Evil, that’s what,” Artie replied. “One that Kane’s charge recognizes, as well as has dealt with. He’s an arch foe of hers and her friends. Strangest thing—the guy’s been to the underworld—and has been resurrected. The charge—the girl Raven—mentioned his name being Slade. Oh—and Kane managed to piece a bit of that prophecy he’s been working on together.”

“Kane managed to piece together a bit from those scrolls?” Danielle asked, obviously surprised. “What did he find?”

“He found that part of the prophecy describes the involvement of the Charmed Ones in it, a major one at that,” Artie replied. “ And it turns out Kane’s new charge is involved in it somehow too.” After a moment, he realized something, and stared at Danielle in the shock of the realization. “You knew this girl played a part in this prophecy, didn’t you? Is that why you set her up with him to begin with?”

“Partially,” Danielle replied. “There are other reasons why she became his charge.”

“Oh? What?” Artie asked.

“I am not at liberty to disclose that at this time,” she replied. “Kane must find the answer on his own, without help from you hinting it—or from anyone else for that matter.”

“Maybe I should inform the others of this new development,” the other Elder spoke up. She had remained silent up to that point. “As well as the Charmed Ones. They need to be informed of this, especially if there is a role in it for them to play.”

“I would appreciate that Sandra—as well as the rest of the Elders, and the Charmed Ones, of course,” Danielle told the other Elder.

“I will go and fill them in then,” Sandra said. She then orbed out, leaving Artie and Danielle alone.

“Keep an eye on Kane, Artie,” Danielle told him “He will be needing you, especially since you know him better than anyone. If ever his dark side comes into play, or if he has to reveal it, he will need your help in the process.”

“I’ll do that, Dani,” Artie replied, calling her by a pet name only known between the two of them. He smiled. “If the time comes for it to happen, I’ll be there for him. I know his secrets, and I’m not so easily swayed to reveal his dark past.”

“Where is Kane now?” Danielle asked.

“At magic school with that charge of his,” Artie replied. “They went in search of more answers to that prophecy.”

“That is good,” Danielle replied, smiling. “Perhaps you should join him in the research, and make sure everything is okay with him. This would be a terrible time for him to slip up.”

“Yeah, yeah,” Artie said offhandedly. “I’ll make sure he doesn’t slip in front of the girl—or anyone else for that matter. Magic school would be the worst place for it to happen.” Slight pause. “It sure wouldn’t be regarded highly for him to slip, considering it’s not highly appreciated of one in our line of work.” He grinned. “You know him best, and you know he won’t let that happen.”

“Thank you,” Danielle replied, smiling warmly. “Oh—there is one more thing.”

“What?”

“Keep watch over his charge Raven as well,” Danielle told him. “Her protection is as important as the need of it for Kane. Both of their lives highly depend on it.”

“Okay...” Artie trailed. “Is this another one of those things I’ll only get a cryptic answer for—the reason for protecting the girl, I mean?”

“Be well, Artie,” Danielle said, giving no further reply to his questioning by removing her presence in the maneuver of orbiting out.

He stood alone in silence for a while, eventually growing tired of the sense of being in solitude, and then he too orbited out.

## 5 - Magic—Happens

### Chapter 5: Magic—Happens

Books—everywhere, almost to the point where it was overwhelming.

And not one useless book among them—good, so good.

Raven was leafing through one she'd found on an upper shelf, using her given abilities to turn each page. The pages were rather yellowed, more so than any she'd encountered while in the earthly realm.

The contents contained in those texts were uniquely different from others she'd encountered elsewhere. She'd never seen the like of those in any library or bookstore she'd ever been to.

"Fascinating," she said to herself in a rather low voice, as she continued to read. "A material worth investing time in."

Students and professors alike shuffled around in the background, going on with their own business. She ignored them for the most part as she read the books of the most unusual magical library.

"Are you new?" she didn't at first take note of the fact that someone was trying to get her attention. Startled by the fact when she did notice, she looked up to see whom exactly it was that was trying to get her attention.

The one who had spoken, she noticed, was a young blond girl, most likely not even just out of her teens. It was possible the blond was of the same age as she.

"Are you new here?" the blond woman appeared to be sick of intently waiting for the answer to her first questioning, and repeated it for better results.

Raven looked at the blond, finally finding the nerve to answer.

"Kind of," Raven said. "I'm not a student here anyways."

"I noticed you had the book levitating in front of you, and I came to wondering—are you a telekinetic?" the blond asked.

"Yes," Raven said, shock evident in her voice as she replied.

"That's cool, I'm one too," the blond smiled. "It's a cool power. Not the best in my case, but I wouldn't exactly give it up." She continued after a moment's hesitation. "You wouldn't find it weird if I inquired for your name, would you? I like to learn the names of people I meet here."

"No, I wouldn't. Since I'm a stranger here, and you're obviously well rooted here—" Raven started to

reply. "I go by Raven."

"Interesting name," the blond commented. "Well since I know yours, you have the right to know mine." She smiled. "I'm Billie. Uh...is this your first time in this place?"

"Yeah," Raven replied. "This is. Libraries like this are hard to come by where I'm from."

"Where are you from?" Billie asked.

"Somewhere off the western coastline, in a city called Jump City."

"Cool, sunny Cali," Billie observed with a smile. "'San Francisco's my home. So—how'd you manage to get here?"

"A whitelighter named Kane brought me here," Raven replied. "He called the process orb'ing."

"Any particular reason?" Billie asked.

"Kane mentioned a prophecy, and had hopes of researching it further here. He said it was a good place to do that," Raven said.

"Where's he now?" Billie asked.

"Somewhere. Not sure where exactly. He said he had someone to visit, and he'd be right back," Raven told her.

"What prophecy are you researching?" Billie asked curiously.

"Something with good and evil eternal darkness, and the involvement of a triad representing all that's good," Raven replied. "Kane referred to the triad as being that of ones known as the Charmed Ones."

"Charmed Ones??" Billie exclaimed. She caught Raven a bit of guard. "'You're saying there's a prophecy involving—the sisters?? Is that really possible—again?"

"Something peculiar about that particular concept?" Raven asked. "The Charmed Ones involvement—mean?"

"It's just that—" Billie paused momentarily. "Their destiny—they were told—was fulfilled after the last major conflict. They were told their fighting days were over. The very idea that that was a lie, and that they have to fight a foe that remains nameless and unfamiliar—"

"The foe isn't unfamiliar—at least, not to me he isn't. His identity won't be a problem for them to try to uncover. Also, it was stated in the prophecy that they wouldn't be alone in the fight," Raven told her.

"Do you know something about this threat then?" Billie asked.

"I know him on a rather personal level. I've dealt with him countless times in the past, and fought him



just as many times.” After pausing for a time, Raven continued in a tone lower than before. “The level in which I’ve had to deal with him is one that I never wished I’d ever had to.”

“Who is he then, and what does he look like exactly?” Billie asked.

“He’s called Slade—or at least that’s the name he’s given himself,” Raven replied. “His appearance is one that’s easy to recognize; full body armor with just one eye exposed.”

“So that’s who that guy is,” Billie observed mostly to herself. “The supposed troublemaker—“

“You’ve—seen him??” Raven’s eyes widened a bit in shock.

“Yup, I’ve been keeping tabs on that guy,” Billie replied. “There have been reports of the Source’s return, and the Elders have been saying to keep them informed on any trouble there might be on that level in particular.”

“So, you know the sisters—the Charmed Ones?” Raven asked.

“Yeah, I know them rather personally,” Billie replied, smiling ironically. “When I was having sibling issues, they were there to help me destroy her—my sister.”

“Sibling rivalry?” Raven questioned.

“Nah, it just turned out she was pure evil.” Silence ensued afterwards.

“Do you think you introduce me to the Charmed Ones?” Raven asked hesitantly, breaking the silence.

“Yeah, I can do that,” Billie replied. “Are you a big fan of them or something?”

“Actually—no, it’s not that. It’s more a matter of necessity,” Raven replied. “The prophecy I mentioned makes note of that.”

“I can see if Leo’s here,” Billie told her.

“Leo—“

“Leo—whose Piper’s husband—one of the Charmed Ones,” Billie informed her. “He’d be the best to talk to in regards to the sister themselves.”

“Can you find Leo for me then?” Raven asked. “If—in order to talk to them, I have to go through him, he’d be a great place to start.”

“Okay,” Billie replied a bit uncertain. She wasn’t sure what to make of this girl, but she didn’t let the uncertainty overrule her better judgment. “Just follow my lead, since I know this place like the back of my hand.” She grinned, and led the way.

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Leo had been working on some routine work when Kane was finally led to where the former Elder was by his unnamed guide.

“Leo, is there a chance your attention could be given to something briefly?” the professor guiding Kane asked when she had caught his attention.

“I’m here to help,” Leo replied. “What can I help you with?”

“It’s not me that needs anything,” the professor admitted. “This whitelighter here—Kane—does.” She made a motion with her hand to indicate whom she meant. “He asked to speak with you, and I led him here.”

“I know of a few things I thought were vital for you and the sisters to know about,” Kane spoke up. “It might actually be of interest to the whole of the magical community, actually.”

“What have you picked up, and how does it involve the sisters?” Leo asked. The professor took that moment to make a silent exit.

“A lot, actually,” Kane told him. “I’m sure most have heard something about threats just outside the city limits of San Francisco—and that they might be from a supposed return of the Source.”

Yes, I’ve heard of those,” Leo said. “You’re also right, the magical community has as well.” He took a moment of silence. “Has there been any substantial proof to those rumors at all?”

“Actually, that’s why I came to speak to you,” Kane replied. “The threats and rumors are very real, very true. Most of what’s been going on matches up with a prophecy I’ve been researching, and there is some indication of the sisters being involved in it as well.”

“What exactly does it speak of, and what role do the sisters have to play in it?” Leo asked. “I’m just asking, because what concerns them also concerns me. I know that they—as well as myself—don’t want to deal with anything as unpredictable as the last major predicament.”

“The prophecy states that the three of them—with one other—will be the ones who will keep from having an eternal darkness set in. The darkness will be brought on by the return of the Source. A charge of mine helped to identify him,” Kane said, pausing briefly. “She told me she has fought him, defeated him, among other things on several occasions. Plus, she told me he’s been resurrected.”

“Can your charge come here to speak of what she knows?” Leo asked. “Anything she could know that would help?”

“I can get her, since she’s around here somewhere,” Kane replied. “Problem is—where? She’s kind of taken a fancy to the extensive reading material selection of the library, seeing as this is her first visit here, she could’ve wandered—“

”Just go look for her. I’ll still be here when you get back,” Leo told him.

“Leo, are you by chance busy at all?” A voice from the other side of the closed door spoke.

“Sort of, what do you need?” Leo replied.

“Someone’s here for you.”

“Who is it?” Leo asked.

“Billie and another girl. Do you want me to show them in?”

“Yes, show them in,” Leo said. To Kane, “Why don’t you go in search of your charge while I talk to Billie?”

“No need,” Billie said as she entered, obviously overhearing what Leo had just said. “Your charge is right here.” After Billie’s entrance, another girl entered hesitantly.

Her entrance was quiet, cautious. Showing curiosity as she looked around, she eventually rested her eyes on Kane.

“Would you be Kane’s charge?” Leo asked the girl.

“Yeah, even though the concept is still new to me,” she replied.

“Are you still rather new to all of this—magic, that is?” Leo asked her. “I know how that can be with how the sisters were when they came upon the knowledge for the first time.”

“I’m not exactly new to it,” she replied. “I was kind of born into it. It’s just the whitelighter, magic school thing that’s rather new to me.”

“Can I inquire about your name, and what you know of this threat that this whitelighter told me about that you know something on?” Leo asked her.

“Raven,” she replied. “This threat—the one everyone has been claiming to be the Source, is called Slade, and he’s a calculative, cunning—evil—individual.”

“Kane told me he was once resurrected. What can you tell me on how that is?” Leo asked.

“Yes, he was resurrected, at my own father’s doing,” Raven replied in a low tone. “I would rather not say where my so-called father is from, was purely evil in bringing him back, acting as a messenger for the arrival of a supposed destiny I’d spent all my life running from and trying avoid. I was supposed to bring on the end of the world.” It was evident there was emotion she was trying to suppress, but no manner could keep it from being expressed in her eyes. “I was only to be used for his certain purpose, and the man was the one to rudely bring it to reality. It’s only like him to make a deal with a demon, he’ll do whatever is possible to get a second chance to live—and ruin my life in the process. I wish he’d have stayed dead, or stayed permanently removed from my existence after our last encounter with him.”

“You have a demonic father??” Billie exclaimed in surprise. “Is that even possible?”

“Balthazar is a great example of that being a possibility,” Leo told her. “It’s not a highly advised option to use, as some cases do have adverse affects.”

“I guess we’re all allowed our dark side,” Billie said. “For some, it’s engrained. Others—they let it get their better judgment.” She expressed hints of remorse and guilt in her grim expression.

“That dark side can affect anyone. The line between good and evil is so indistinct it can hardly be seen most of the time. The best can go for the worst, and the worst can end up being the ones that surprise us all,” Leo said, smiling sadly. “I’ve seen both turns too many times to count.”

“The best thing is to have hope—have faith,” Kane spoke up. “Let yourself be the judge, and not anyone else. Life is only what you make of it.” He found that Raven was staring at him. “Words I live by,” he said in reply, shrugging. “They keep me going, especially with the life I’ve lived.”

“Is there a particular method that’s best to use on this Slade character?” Leo asked her. “I need to know so the sisters will know what their up against. Anything you could tell us might be of use.”

“Can you give me more on this Source?” Raven asked. “Like his capabilities? Anything you could tell me on that could be useful.” Pausing for a moment, something came to mind. “Is this Source capable of bringing on nightmares and realistic visions based on deeply embedded fears—bringing them to life?”

There was some obvious concern on the other three’s faces from what she’d just said.

“What makes you ask that?” Kane asked after a moment of dead silence, breaking it. Up to that point the girl’s gaze had been aimed directly at Leo, coming to aim her gaze towards him instead of the former Elder. There was obvious fright in her eyes when she looked at him.

“I’ve been having nightmarish dreams and visions based on that,” Raven said. “Pretty much for the last few months. They’re horrid to see, and I see them even when I’m awake.” Tears welled in her eyes.

“What are the nightmares of?” Kane asked with concern.

“A fear of a hellish variety,” Raven replied. “One that represented the horrors that best fit my father. Fire, dancing flames, evil dancing in with them—it always overwhelms me. I always awake screaming if it’s just a dream, and the visions when I’m awake do the same. I don’t do fear, but this has frightened even me. Being as my powers are emotionally based, the offset of this can lead to some nasty consequences as an after-affect.”

“Emotionally based powers are fairly common,” Leo said. “The sisters powers are very much controlled by emotion. Piper tends to blow things up when overly angered, and unfortunately I’ve been the victim of it a couple times.”

“What happens when your emotions get out of whack?” Billie asked.

“Let’s just say the surrounding take on a life of their own,” Raven replied. “Could there be any way that

these nightmares are connected to magic in some way, or am I going mad?”

“I believe these waking nightmares you’re talking about probably have a connection to magic in some way,” Leo said. “Matter of fact, that sounds eerily familiar, like I’ve dealt with it on some occasion, or have known of someone else that has.”

“Sounds kind of demonic to me,” Kane noted. “Subconscious torture of that level sounds vaguely familiar, like the workings of a darker being practicing the darker side of magic. Problem is, though,” Kane took a moment to scratch the side of his head, and then continued. “I can’t think of who the culprit is.”

“So—it’s not the Source that’s causing me torment?” Raven asked him.

“It could be,” Kane told her. “But it’s not his usual method of operation. It sounds like someone else’s doing.”

“Should I ask the sisters about this—see what they know about fear-filled nightmares?” Billie asked.

“Since I have things to tend to, so I can’t bring up the matter with them myself, it might be nice for you to bring it up with them—as well as introduce this whitelighter and his charge to them as well,” Leo replied. While turning his gaze towards Kane, “After you introduce yourselves, have your charge here fill them in on what they possibly will need to know. Piper likes to be informed; she hates unpleasant surprises.”

“Will do,” Kane replied, smiling. “Want to make the trip short by just orbiting there?” He asked Billie.

“Sounds good,” Billie said.

“We’d better head then,” Kane said. Looking to Raven, “Ready to meet the Charmed Ones?”

“Y-yes,” Raven replied. “At least—I think.”

“Let’s get going then,” Kane said. “We have a task to work on.”

## 6 - Confrontations

### Chapter 6: Confrontations

The three had been observing the activities just outside the city, with Starfire doing most of the visual observations from above. As she did the observations, she reported what she saw and heard back to them, in hopes that they could decode the oddities of what she was seeing and hearing.

“What do you see now Star?” Cyborg asked the alien girl through his built in communication feed.

“There is a congregation of very bizarre beings that Slade has brought together,” Starfire reported back. “There appears to be some signs of these being containing strange abilities. Several trees have fallen to destruction from an array of blue electric energy balls that they appear to have produced at will.”

“Anything else?” Cyborg asked her.

“Hey, you guys, I’ve got some news to report to you,” Beast Boy cut the feed of the alien girl’s short before she could reply to Cyborg’s question.

“What’s up, BB?” Cyborg asked him.

“Got some new info on our old friend Slade,” Beast Boy replied. “Rae’s strange visitor filled us in on a bit of it.”

“What did you learn, and who’s the strange visitor?” Robin asked him.

“Some dude claiming to be her guardian angel,” Beast Boy said, shrugging. “I didn’t get what he was talking about exactly, but I did get the info he and his friend did provide.” He hesitated before continuing, using that time to take a deep breath. “We knew Slade was one evil dude, but the guy—Kane said that our nastiest foe is claiming to be the Source of all Evil.”

“WHAT??!!!”

“He’s supposedly teamed up with demons, and is acting as their leader—at least that’s what Kane said anyways,” Beast Boy said, continuing. “There’s some prophecy he’s come across that states that Slade has another chance at world domination, and his method this time is much darker then any time before. He said something about witches being involved in taking him out.”

“Witches?” Cyborg exclaimed. “You gotta be kidding me.”

“I wish I were,” Beast Boy replied, totally lacking any of his usual humor in his reply. “Anyways, the angel dude took Rae with him to research it further.”

“What exactly did the Kane mean by demons?” Starfire asked him. Obviously she had overheard all of

the conversation.

“He didn’t really say, why?” Beast Boy asked her.

“I am not completely familiar with the Earth terminology of demons, but what I see below fits well with the description I have come to know,” Starfire replied.

“Have you seen Slade in that crowd yet?” Cyborg asked her.

“Not yet,” Starfire replied. “All that I’ve perceived below me are the horrendous actions of those being referred to as demons. There appears to be no organization to the grouping below. It is as if they are not yet aware of what is going on just of yet.” She observed the surroundings below her before continuing. Her eyes widened. “He is here!” she cried. “He has seen me, I must—“ the visual connection was cut, and after they heard a scream, the audible connection was cut as well.

“Star!!” came the cry of the boy wonder; the same form of distress evident on his face though the visual connection.

“What happened?” Beast Boy exclaimed.

“I’m not quite sure,” Cyborg said. “I just know the connection’s been cut. Something apparently happened to Star—something bad.”

“I’m going to go investigate, see if Star’s okay,” Robin said.

“Go look for her Rob. And BB?” Cyborg said.

“Yeah?”

“Try to contact Raven, tell her about what happened with Star,” Cyborg told him. “Who knows—she could be next.”

“I’ll do that—and Rob? Good luck finding Star.”

“Thanks,” Robin said before cutting his connection.

“I’ve got my own investigating to do, so I’m gonna cut this short,” Cyborg said. “Go get in contact with Rae and fill her in.”

“Will do, Cy,” Beast Boy replied before the connection was severed.

“Sure hope she brought that thing with her to the mondo-bizarro library so I can get through to her,” he said aloud, mostly to himself. “What weirdness will be next? There’s already been the strange guardian angel dudes, and then there was there was the whole thing about the baddest archenemy wanting to be the evilest as well.” He sighed deeply. “What has this world come to??”

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She had been in darkness for quite some time. She had been completely disconnected from all her senses—sight, hearing, touch, smell—separated from her conscious mind after she'd slipped into darkness. The last thing she remembered before the darkness had consumed her completely was extreme pain as she had made contact with the Earth after falling from above.

The first thing she was able to sense was the loose-packed dirt underneath her. What followed was a sharp pain that ran throughout her body. After she managed to open her eyes, she winced a few times in reaction to the pain itself.

"I don't think I have ever seen a flying girl before," a voice remarked, a voice she didn't recognize. "Do you think she might be one of the rare instances of a witch that's capable of flying?"

"The only witch I've known of able to fly was Phoebe, and that was a temporary thing," another voice said. "Plus, this one's dressed a bit odd, not like any witch I've ever known of."

"Was there a reason why she was to be shot down?" the first asked the other.

"He said she was spying, and therefore needed to be taken out."

"Who is it that you speak of?" the wounded alien girl demanded, her voice a bit raspy. She managed to get full focus on her surroundings, taking notice of the two conversing about her.

"I see our flying girl has awoken," the first remarked. He was a rugged fellow, hair in disarray and his garments speaking that he wasn't of any high status or class in society.

"Do you mean girl—or witch?" the other remarked with a wicked grin. The second was more muscularly built and clean-shaven.

"Witch!" Starfire exclaimed, wincing in pain as a result. "I am no such thing!! I am of Tamaran, known as Starfire."

"Tamaran?" the first looked to his fellow in confusion. "Do you know what in hell that is?"

"I have no clue," the other replied, shrugging.

"I happen to know," a third voice, not of the other two, spoke. She looked up to see who it was that was that had spoke, gasping in surprise and horror at the recognition.

"I see the titans have found interest in my little gathering," the same one spoke. "I will take any measures possible to prevent it from going further."

"Slade," Starfire hissed, voice filled with loathing and her eyes glowing neon green as a result. "What are you up to now?? Why could you not just remain disconnected from us, without another concoction of a scheme to take on world domination?? Why—after what you did to Raven, Robin, and the rest of the city—did you even decide to come back??"



“I’m not at liberty to say,” Slade replied. “I’ve learned from the past that revealing my plots only leads to them being foiled, and I am putting every effort into preventing that this time.”

“We will stop you,” Starfire’s voice was filled with more rage than she’d ever used before. It was reaching the point where she was about to loose some starbolts on him.

“You won’t be able to. You’ll be too full of fear to even think up the concept.”

“You do not scare me!!” Starfire shouted back to him. “None of the antics of the past of yours has scared me in the least. Nothing you could do could make me most fearful.” Another wave of intense pain made her wince yet again.

“Not of me, maybe, but I am sure you wouldn’t want to encounter your deepest, darkest fear.” Another stood next to the vile one she’d come to know well as Slade, a figure resembling that of a man garbed all in black. Silver hair shafts came from his scalp with a few inches of length, and a face that spoke of years to it, but she could determine no actual age.

The one beside Slade held up his hand, palm up to his view. He looked into it, appearing to see some form of vision contained in it. Starfire all the while looked to him in confusion.

“Ah,” the man spoke. “You’re afraid to lose one, a particular one you love—get hurt, even—die.” Although his grin was mysterious, it was evidently vicious. “See him die—right in front of you.” Dead silence followed for a moment. “I have come upon fears more satisfying to watch, but this one shall be satisfying at least.”

“What—“ she stopped when she noticed something in the distance. “Robin?” she squinted to get a better vision of what she was seeing. “Robin!!” she cried out in relief. She made an effort to get up, to go to him, but she found the pain was too intense to get up. She watched where the boy wonder stood, pretty much in dismay, hoping he’d take notice of where she was. Instead, she was taking in a vision she’d hoped she’d never see.

He was being attacked, killed even, and she couldn’t do a thing to save him. All she could do was scream.

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The house was very ordinary, in a very ordinary neighborhood on a very ordinary street. The house had charm, Three generations to be exact. Windows framed in white, stained glass panels just above an ivory white door.

The house was known well as the Halliwell Manor, the home of three sisters—the Charmed Ones.

Piper was the only of the three to still reside there, making it to be her own family’s home. The other two had moved out to live separate destinies.

The house might have appeared very ordinary from the exterior, but the interior was anything but.

While Kane gave his charge a tour of the outer grounds of the manor, Billie waited on the porch for when they would be done. She knew Piper was home, since her car was in the driveway.

“It appears so ordinary from the outside, but the more of it I see—“ Raven spoke. “The more I get the sense that it’s not all that ordinary.”

“Three generations grew up here. Three generations of good magic,” Kane told her. “Plus, there have been many demons—powerful and otherwise—vanquished on these very grounds. A lot of evil has died here.”

“Are you two ready—or what??” Billie called impatiently from the porch.

“Are you?” Kane asked his charge quietly. She complied with a simple “yes.” In response to Billie, “Yeah, we’re ready!”

Billie knocked while the other two made it to where she was on the porch landing. After several long moments someone finally answered.

“Oh—hey Billie, what brings you around?” the greeter at the opening of the door said.

“Leo told me to stop by and tell you he’d be around sometime later, Piper.” Billie replied.

“Is that all?” Piper asked.

“Uh—no, there’s actually something else,” Billie said. “Actually, introducing somebody else.”

“Who?” Piper asked curiously.

“Once you let me in, I’ll introduce them,” Billie said.

“Come in. Just be quiet, I just put Chris down for his nap,” Piper said, opening the door and showing Billie—and her visitors—in.

Billie entered, heading the same way Piper was. Kane followed, with Raven trailing behind him. Raven was in partial awe as she took in the surroundings.

The furniture looked like relics of the past—very antiques. A faint stench of singed fabric hung slightly in the air, just able to be sensed slightly. The origins of that singed scent was unknown—but apparently was rather ancient.

Scorch marks made it evident of where the origins were.

“So—who are your friends?” Piper asked Billie after making herself comfortable on a couch in a well-lit room that appeared to be the Manor’s living room.

“Uh—Kane, a whitelighter I met at magic school,” Billie replied.

“As a—date?” Piper asked. “If that’s it, whose she?” She pointed out the girl trailing behind.

“No, no—not a date,” Billie replied. She laughed a bit nervously. “I met him at magic school under different circumstances. I brought him here because he says he needs to speak with you. The girl is his charge. Said her name’s Raven.”

“Raven—like, the bird?” Piper inquired.

“Yeah,” Raven replied, an awkward silence following. “So—you’re a Charmed One? Are you really able to “blow things up”?”

“Yeah, you might say that,” Piper replied. “Although the days of it’s being useful have come to a close. I can blow up things—as you put it, and I also freeze things—temporal stasis. Like this,” Finding a piece of glassware nearby she found no more use for, she tossed it into the air, made a motion with her hands, catching the glassware, suspended in midair. With another motion of her hands the glassware shattered, pieces flying every which way. The shards froze as well. “See what I mean?” She pointed out after the demonstration.

“Does it stay like that permanently, the frozen state of that—I mean?” Raven asked her.

“The effect wears off eventually, or I can make it do so on my own,” Piper replied. “So—what can you...do? Are you a witch, a future whitelighter—what I’m getting at is, what makes you his charge?”

“To tell you the truth, I really don’t know,” Raven admitted. “Kane never really got around to telling me that. I just know he was in several of my dreams lately, and then he shows up, telling me he’s been having dreams of me as well, and then mentioned a prophecy he’s been working on. He explained what he’d found out to me, and I helped with filling in some of the vital pieces. We were actually surprised by the pieces we managed to put together. Well—mostly he was surprised.” She put her full attention to Piper. “The prophecy mentions a triad of good magic beings that will have to face against a force of pure darkness that could become eternal if not stopped. We came to the conclusion that the triad would be—” she hesitated to finish, but did. “The Charmed Ones, meaning you—and your sisters.”

“What???” Piper exclaimed. “That can’t be?! That can’t be?? We were told that the days of fighting were done—finished!! How can that be??”

“I guess nobody’s chanced upon this particular prophecy in centuries,” Kane said. “I actually came upon it by accident. The Elders didn’t even know about it, and all they know is what I’ve told them of it.”

“Good comes, only to have the bad come in and ruin it,” Piper remarked. “It appears to be just the story of my life.”

“Any way to get in touch with your sisters on this?” Billie asked her.

“What exactly is this darkness the prophecy states we’ll have to deal with anyways?” Piper asked Kane.

“A reincarnate of the Source,” Kane replied.

“With an old enemy of mine playing the role of this incarnate of Evil,” Raven added. “One known as Slade.”

“Who exactly is Sla—“ Piper was interrupted mid sentence. “What was that?”

What Piper was questioning was a peculiar ringing. Raven took notice of it too, and knew immediately what it was.

She took out the culprit—her communicator, and opened it after a moment’s hesitation.

“What?” her tone was a bit irritable when she opened the device.

“Hey Rae.” Beast Boy was on the other end, his voice sounding rather grim. “I’ve been trying to get a hold of you. Something’s up.”

”What?” Raven wasn’t irritable with her reply, but instead concerned.

“Something happened to Star. We lost contact halfway through a conversation. There was a scream from her end before we lost total contact,” Beast Boy informed her. She took note of the near panic in his voice. “We think something’s happened, something bad.”

“Where was she before the connection was lost?” Raven asked him. “Any way to tell who it was that took her down?”

”She was just above the woods outside the city, not far from where Slade was reported to have been seen,” Beast Boy replied.

“How are the other two taking it, and have they found any trace of her?” Raven asked him.

“Rob’s out searching right now,” Beast Boy replied. “The way she screamed, she sounded so frightened—and in so much pain—“

“Keep me updated. I’ve got a few things of my own to deal with,” Raven replied.

“Sure will, Rae,” Beast Boy said. The connection feed ended and she closed the device. After the fact, she took notice of three others listening in on the conversation as well.

“What was that about?” Piper asked.

“A friend just contacted me to fill me in on some things,” Raven replied.

“Was that the green one? Is something wrong?” Kane asked her.

“One of my friends disappeared while they were investigating Slade’s movement,” Raven replied.

“While she was doing that, they just lost—contact. They heard a scream, and then—nothing.”

“Slade’s the one you said is claiming to be the next Source—right?” Piper asked.

““Yeah,” Raven replied. “What exactly can the Source do? Is he—it—able to make nightmares and realistic visions recreations of one’s deepest fears?”

“That can’t be, that can’t be—“ Piper muttered mostly to herself.

“It can’t be—what?” Billie asked.

“Are those things possibilities of what the Source is capable of?” Raven asked curiously.

“Not the Source, exactly,” Piper replied. “He could do it, but it’s not exactly his style. It sounds more like the workings of another demon—“

“Demons that bring to life nightmares??” Billie exclaimed incredulously.

“Not nightmares exactly,” Piper said. “More like your deepest, darkest fears.” She showed disgust on her face as she continued. “Like Barbas—the demon of fear.”

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Kane had rushed her off to another room without any warning, making her exasperated by that very fact. She was so startled by his move she was speechless for several long moments.

“What did you do that for???” Raven said in a rather startled tone when Kane was done leading her out of the room they’d previously been in with Piper and Billie.

“It’s what Piper was saying—about Barbas,” Kane replied.

“What about him?” Raven asked.

“What do you know of true fears—real fears?” Kane asked her.

“I know it well, I’ve dealt with it, and I’ve even conquered it,” Raven told him. “My father was one of my biggest fears, and I managed to conquer and destroy him—and that fear. Why?”

“Well...my father was also my biggest fear,” Kane said. “Was—and still is. What makes up half of who I am—he fully was—and it’s a battle to keep my self from ending up going down the wrong path.”

“What do you have to battle with? You are a guardian angel after all,” Raven said. “Right?”

“I’m only partially a guardian angel—a whitelighter,” Kane told her. His voice was low, his expression grim. “When it comes to my true origins, nobody really knows about them. Nobody would ever accept the truth, or me if they knew. I don’t tend to tell people because of that.”

“Okay,” Raven said simply. “Okay.”

“Maybe I could tell you about it since both you and I are on the same field when it concerns pasts in that respect,” Kane said. “Like you, my father was also demonic—a demon, so to say. For me to encounter the demon of fear...it might bring out that dark side of mine, and it might be good for you to know in advance just incase.” His smile that followed was ironic, matched up with the shocked expression spreading across her face. “I just need to know if you’ll keep it between us. Is that something I can ask you to promise me you’ll do?”

He had taken her hands in his just before he’d spoken the words, and he took note that hers were trembling. She remained silent for several long moments.

“I-I promise,” Raven murmured. “I promise. I know how it is to have to keep secrets on that level.” Her gaze went upwards towards his. “So—was Artie referring to that when he as referring to you having a dark side? That no others knew about?”

“Yeah.”

“He knows then?” Raven asked.

“Yeah. Just him and my mother—the whitelighter,” Kane replied

“Is your mother...still alive?” Raven asked.

“Yeah, she is still very much alive.” Still holding her hands in his, he made an unconscious gesture and squeezed them lightly. She obviously took notice of it.

“Why did you just do that?” Raven asked him, wide eyed and in a bit of shock. He was taken by surprise a bit with her reaction.

“What?”

“You—just squeezed my hand, and I was wondering...why?” Raven said.

“I’m not sure actually,” Kane admitted. “I guess—in a way, it was kind of—reassuring.” He looked at her, a bit abashed. “It felt comforting somehow, almost—right. If I offended you in some way, or it was unacceptable—“

“It’s not that—unacceptable, I mean. It just—took me off guard, that’s all,” Raven replied.

“Okay, that’s good—I guess,” Kane said, with an awkward silence following. “So...this secret of mine—it doesn’t frighten you...does it?”

“It takes a lot just to frighten me,” Raven gave him a half smile. “What exactly about this demon of fear that Piper mentioned worries you the most?”

“I’m afraid that if I have to come face to face with him, the fears about my past will come back to haunt me in the worst way, and all I’ve tried to keep secret will be revealed to everyone,” Kane said. “And I couldn’t take having to deal with that. When you deal with Barbos, you also deal with those fears buried deep beneath, in the worst possible way. They almost seem real—too real.”

“I guess that would be a good reason to be afraid of dealing with him,” Raven said. “I know what it’s like to have others see a side of you they never expected, I had to deal with that myself—on a level I wish I’d never had to.”

“How’d they take to coming to that realization?” Kane asked her. “It doesn’t sound like it’d be pretty.”

“Surprisingly—even to me—my friends stood by me, never faltering in trying to aid—save—me.” Raven told him. “Even with my destiny unfolding before their eyes—they were still there, supporting me—even through the worst.”

“You’re lucky your friends were so accepting—and supportive,” Kane said. “Where I’m from—it’s not only intolerable, it’s pretty much breaking the rules. If they knew—I’d never really be accepted. “ He smiled faintly. “I’m glad though that you can tolerate it, accept it—and even know what it’s like. It’ll make working with you all that more easy.”

“Yeah,” Raven replied simply.

“What are your friends like anyways?” Kane asked. “I only chanced on meeting one of them—the guy with the pointy ears and green skin.”

“Well, in total, there are five in the group—me included,” Raven said. “The other four—Robin, the group leader, Starfire—the resident alien girl with some very odd tastes in food, Cyborg—half man, half robot, thus why he’s called Cyborg, and Beast Boy—he’s that one you just mentioned with the green skin. He was the one who informed me that Starfire has gone missing. He also said Slade might be the cause of her disappearance. From what Piper was saying about Barbos, and if there’s a possibility that he’s working with Slade—” She trailed momentarily, caught in a string of thought she’d rather not be in. “If that true, and Star’s out there, with this demon of fear playing upon her fears...she might be brave, but I don’t think even she could stand against fighting her deepest fear, especially if I am right about what it might be.”

“Um...what’s her deepest fear?” Kane asked her.

“To see Robin die right before her,” Raven replied. “And she couldn’t do anything to prevent it.”

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“Where have you two been?” Piper asked as Kane and his charge reentered the room.

“I just needed a moment to speak to her alone,” Kane said, indicating that he meant Raven. “That’s all.”

“Well, while you two were gone, we got to doing some talking of our own,” Piper said. “I phoned

Phoebe and filled her in on the details.”

“What did she say?” Raven asked.

“She said she’d be right over,” Piper replied. “Now if I could only find that other sister of mine—find out where she disappeared off to. If I manage that, I’ll fill Paige in too.”

“Hopefully that’s possible,” Billie said. “Getting in touch with Paige, I mean. I haven’t heard from her in a while, and I’m starting to wonder why that is.”

“She’ll show up—eventually. She usually does when we least expect her to,” Piper said.

“So...what are your friends like, and what is it all that you do?” Billie asked Raven.

“We save people, keep threats we encounter at bay and then rid of them when we can,” Raven replied. “To accomplish this, we have abilities to aid us, each with several unique to that particular team member. In short, we fight evil in order to protect the innocent people from falling victim to their evil plots.”

“Sounds similar to our old job description,” Piper said. “So—what is your unique ability? It’s only fair to know—since I already showed you mine.”

“Well...mainly telekinesis, levitation, teleportation, the ability to form dark energy to use to my disposal,” Raven replied. “Among other things.”

“Sounds interesting,” Piper said.

The sound of the front door opening and slamming shut suddenly echoed through the interior of the manor, followed by footsteps.

“Piper!” a voice that apparently announced the identity of the one who’d just entered called out from the doorway entry. “I came to hear more about what you called about earlier, and I brought Coop with—uh, hi?”

“Hey Phoebe,” Billie greeted.

“These two are the ones I told you about on the phone,” Piper said to her sister. “The whitelighter, Kane, and his charge, Raven.”

“Is that your natural hair color, or did you dye it?” Phoebe asked curiously of Kane’s charge.

“Natural. I don’t do dye jobs, and I don’t muss with it much either,” Raven replied.

“I didn’t think that was a color that could be natural,” Phoebe said. “So—can you fill me in?””

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“Just one more page to figure out the HTML tags to and then upload to the server...” Beast Boy was muttering to himself.

Even though there were many tasks he had to do at that time, using it to spice up and create his online empire was not among them.

His attention was absorbed in that online empire, and not of investigating Starfire’s whereabouts, or even what the hell the Source really was. Instead, he was updating his website. A segment about one of his favorite pastimes, a particular video game, was being added at that time.

A small portion of his screen display had data devoted to the research he was supposed to be doing, although it was almost neglected at that time. From time to time, during breaks he took from his website, he checked out further info on that almost neglected data.

Somehow—by some miracle—he managed to stumble upon a page full of encryption, and—by an even bigger miracle—he managed to get through to view what lay beneath it. Maybe it wasn’t that big of a miracle—after all, he was the one to uncover a certain team mate’s birthday in the files when it was obvious she didn’t want that info found.

The page he’d uncovered validated what the two whitelighters had been talking about earlier.

The content on the site Beast Boy himself found peculiar: topics on witches, whitelighters, demons, warlocks, darklighters, and a various array of other magical oddities. It was sort of fascinating; evil beings capable of throwing fire balls, mortal enemies of the guardian angels that wielded bows and arrows as their weapon of choice, and beings that could create one’s worst nightmares.

“And I thought Trigon’s utopia was bad,” he muttered to himself. His mutterings had been a result of reading a passage on purgatory and hell. He went back to the main menu and scrolled downward.

“What did they say that evil dude’s name was—that’s it,” He stopped scrolling, running the cursor over the link he wanted, and then clicked it. “History of the Source of all Evil,” he read aloud. Most of the screen was filled with a dark background with ivory text contrasting against it. Much of the page was made up of one image—beside the text, that is. He waited while the image took its time to fully load.

The image was a bit blurry, but contained enough detail to make him cringe at the sight of it.

“And I thought Raven could get rather creepy,” he shuddered. “That’s too frightening to even be her at her worst.” He averted his eyes from it, instead looking at other parts of the page instead.

The text description didn’t fare any better on his opinion of the Source of all Evil. It definitely didn’t bring his hopes up any.

“Slade’s sure up to some serious evil—“ his train of thought was cut abruptly. “What the—“ It was a scream—Starfire’s scream.

“Star, Star!!” he tried to make a connection with her, to no avail, just more screaming. “Star? What’s gong on?? Star!!”

“No!! No, NO!!!” she screamed.

Suddenly—silence. The connection had once again gone dead.

“Hey Rob, Cy!!” he tried desperately to make contact with his two friends.

“What’s up, BB?” Cyborg was the first to make a reply, sounding rather irritable.

“I just had a connection with Star.”

“You managed to get in contact with her?? Is she okay?? Where is she??” Robin added himself to the connection just then.

“Not anymore,” Beast Boy replied grimly. “I just lost it. All I got was her screaming “no!” over and over, and I never got a real reply. Believe me, I tried.”

“Did ya manage to pick up her location before the connection went dead?” Cyborg asked him.

“No, the connection was too short,” Beast Boy replied.

“I’m going to keep searching, she’s got to be out there somewhere,” Robin said.

“I was doing some research on those guys and stuff that Rae’s guest—guardian angel dude was talking about. I think I hit the mother lode,” Beast Boy said. “This Source dude makes Raven in a bad mood look like cuddly puppies. He’s one scary dude.”

“You might wanna tell Rae about that, and the brief connection with Star as well,” Cyborg said.

“Yeah, I’m going to do that,” Beast Boy replied. “Besides, there’s nothing else for me to do anyways.”

“Oh?” Cyborg said. “Why’s that?”

Beast Boy grinned sheepishly.

“The server that hosts my website just crashed.”

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“A—cupid?” Raven purely was confused at the fact of what Coop had turned out to be.

“Yeah, I’m a cupid—one of those beings that’s known for bringing two people together down the right path towards true love,” Coop replied. “My last pairing was rather unusual to say the least. They were definitely quite a challenge. Some harsh realities would finally come to them while they were in the land of the Rising Sun—Japan—and they finally found out how they truly felt for one another. Their feelings for each other had been there for quite some time, and they finally allowed it to be brought to light. In all my time of being a cupid, they would have to be my most peculiar case to date. The girl of the two was

bizarre—even by magical standards.”

“Japan—bizarre girl??” “Raven exclaimed, giving it a moment to sink in. “Who exactly was this couple you guided down the right path anyways?”

“I can’t remember what his name was, but I think the girl’s name was Star something,” Coop replied.

“Star—as in—Starfire?” Raven exclaimed.

“Yeah, how did you—“ Coop said.

“Starfire is one of my friends,” Raven replied. “So, if Starfire was the girl, the guy must’ve been Robin. You—set them up?” She looked at Coop oddly.

“I said I was a cupid. That’s part of the job description,” Coop replied, shrugging.

“Have either of you heard from Paige lately?” Piper asked her sister and Coop.

“She said something about checking in with a charge outside the city—Some last minute thing the Elders told her to check in with I guess,” Phoebe replied.

“I wonder why she forgot to mention that to me,” Piper muttered to herself. “We can probably make due without her for now. She’s bound to show up when she is needed.”

“So—where do we begin?” Phoebe asked.

No chance was given to answer Phoebe’s question, as another sound alerted their attention instead.

“What the—“ Phoebe blurted.

“It’s her walkie-talkie thing,” Piper told her sister, indicating that she meant Raven.

“It’s called a communicator,” Raven informed her. She irritably took out the device and opened it. “What is it now?”

“I wanted to fill you in on something,” Beast Boy replied.

“Like—“

“I had a brief connection with Star. She was screaming “no!” repeatedly before it went silent from her end again. From the tone she used—it sounded like she was terrified,” Beast Boy replied.

“Did you manage to find out where she is?” Raven asked him.

“Nah, the connection was cut too soon,” Beast Boy replied. “I did manage to come upon some info on that Source dude the angel dude mentioned. The dude is really creepy. Actually, Slade fits the role fairly well.”

“Is there anything I’m supposed to do?” Raven asked him.

“If you get the chance, look for Star. Otherwise, I can’t think of anything,” Beast Boy said.

“Any chance you know why Star was screaming?” Raven asked.

“Nope, not a clue,” Beast Boy said. “All I know was she kept screaming “no!” over and over in pure terror.”

“Did it sound like it her screams were done in fear?” Piper spoke up.

“Yeah,” Beast Boy replied. “Who are—is—she?”

“I could say the same for you,” Piper said.

“I’ll tell you later, there are more pressing issues at hand right now,” Raven told him.

“Screaming in fear—“ Phoebe said thoughtfully. “Sounds like Barbas at work to me. It looks like your friend got her first encounter with the demon of fear. I thought we got rid of him—“

“Demon of what??” Beast Boy exclaimed.

“Fear,” Kane said. “He brings your worst fears to reality, and uses them against you.”

“Rae would have fun with that dude,” Beast Boy muttered to himself. “Anything I should inform Rob or Cy on this dude?”

“Make sure they’re ready to face their worst fears,” Phoebe noted helpfully. “Barbas feeds off of others fears if they let them get to them.”

“Will do,” Beast Boy said. To Raven, before he cut the connection, “Take care of yourself Rae. Don’t get yourself hurt—or killed.”

“I won’t,” Raven replied, after which she put away the device.

“Rob, Star—Cy?” Phoebe said.

“The names of my friends—Star, Starfire—Rob, Robin—Cy, Cyborg,” Raven told her.

“The two I matched—are in trouble?” Coop said.

“Starfire is at least,” Raven replied. “I’m not sure if Robin is just yet.”

“Besides this whole prophetic thing we’ve got to deal with, it looks like innocents are needing to be saved,” Phoebe said. She looked to Kane. “Hey—you’re a whitelighter. Is there any chance you could track down Paige for us so we can talk to her?”

“I’m not so sure I could do it, I’m not that great at tracking other whitelighters,” Kane admitted. “But a friend of mine might be able to.”

“Who would that be?” Piper asked him.

“Another whitelighter,” Kane replied. “A friend of mine—Artie.”

## 7 - Luck of the Draw

### Chapter 7: Luck of the Draw

Oblivious to the fact that her sisters were searching for her, Paige Matthews was doing what she had been assigned to do: keep tabs on her newly assigned charge.

Her charge wasn't local to San Francisco—the city her sisters wished she'd be in at that time—but in another California coastline city altogether.

She had been assigned to her new charge a few weeks earlier, in the city of Jump City. The girl was a new witch, just coming into her powers and her destiny. Seeing as she was new to the craft, Paige was wary on introducing herself as being her guide just yet, in order to prevent scaring the girl to death. While she waited for the right time, she kept watch from a distance, making no effort to seem conspicuous—or like she was following her charge.

Paige was on a park bench across the way, and her charge was working a shop just across the street. Paige had a newspaper in hand, and she pretending to read it.

She heard some soft weeping coming from somewhere not far from the park bench where she was stationed temporarily. Startled by it, she looked around to try to discover its source.

The weeping was coming from another park bench just across the way—from a girl that was sitting on it. With the source now identified—Paige took that as the opportunity to pay closer attention to the full identity of that weeping soul.

She was a teenage girl, probably a high school student, with honey-blond hair flowing past her shoulders. She appeared to be dressed in a school uniform, a very non-descript one at that. She had her head bowed slightly, her blond hair flowing around her face. She had her face buried in her hands.

Paige approached the bench where the girl sat, trying not to make it too obvious that she was listening in on the girl. The girl mumbled a few things as she wept and sobbed, Paige catching a few strings of what she said.

“I don't want to go back to being that,” the girl said between sobs. “It took too much out of me last time. I almost died, and others almost did too. It took so much just to leave it behind—get control---but if I get dragged back in...”

“Having abusive issues?” Paige spoke up. “Is someone trying to hurt you?” Her voice was filled with concern; she was obviously not aware of all the girl had been mumbling about.

The girl was severely startled by the fact that someone had been eavesdropping in on her one-person conversation, as well as surprised that someone had cared to ask. It was almost as if the girl never expected anyone to care enough to even ask if something was wrong.

“You overheard me?” the girl questioned. “And you came over to confront me on it??”

“Hey, I was on that bench over there and I saw you crying. I got all concerned about it, came to see what was up, and overheard the last bit of what you were mumbling,” Paige replied. “So—is someone trying to hurt you?”

“I doubt you can help me,” the girl murmured.

“You’d be surprised what I can do,” Paige said to her.

The girl looked at her, examining her with serious blue eyes.

“You don’t by chance work with the titans—do you?” the girl asked her.

“The who?” Paige said.

“You know, the teen titans, the save the world types that reside right here in the city,” the girl told her. “Wait—you don’t know who they are?”

“Not really,” Paige admitted. “What do they do exactly?”

“Save people,” the girl replied, shrugging. “Would you really want to help me? Are you really concerned?”

“Yeah, I do actually,” Paige replied. “Cause helping’s my kind of thing too. I like to help others—all kinds of others.” She paused momentarily. “So—what’s your trouble?”

“Remember how I mentioned the teen titans?” the girl asked her. “Well, it sort of involves them.”

“Hey, I just thought you said that they—“ Paige began to say.

“Yeah, they do help people, and they’re not the ones causing me trouble—directly anyways. The one who is causing the trouble is linked to them—and the past, and that past hurts to even bring up,” the girl spoke softly. “There are things I’ve done that I’m not proud of, and I was hoping those were left in the past. That certain somebody wants to bring back those bad memories—and make me relive them. That’s why I was suspicious of why you even seemed to care about my crying on this bench in the first place.”

“Anything that can be done?” Paige asked.

“Hm...maybe you can get in contact with the titans, since I really don’t want to,” the girl replied. “You see my story is this—I had these powers, powers that were too strong even for me to control. I asked someone to help me—which was a big mistake. He made me turn on those that had been the closest to friends I’d ever had, and it almost destroyed them in the process—and me at the same time. That someone died, and I was freed—but imprisoned. I got out of that later, and tried to put it all in my past, trying to never again use or possess the power that had almost destroyed me. I was able to move the earth, something that was fun at first, but something I never want to possess again.” She fell silent for a

time, continuing when she felt she could. “Well, that someone is back—and is trying to force me back into that life—and forcing me to use the powers I’ve been trying to avoid since. To keep myself from being completely connected to that past, I feared to ask the titans for their help in this, but maybe you can fill them in for me.”

“Where exactly do I find these titans? Can you tell me more about them—like names?” Paige asked. “And—what is your name? Any chance you could fill me in on who this someone is—what he’s called, what he looks like?”

“They’re located in a T-shaped tower by the bay,” the girl replied. “The titans consist of five teens—Robin the leader—and the rest: Cyborg, Starfire, Raven, and Beast Boy. That someone is Slade. And my name—Terra.” Paige thought the girl had finished, but it turned out she hadn’t. “Oh, and can you keep me under low profile—not let them know where they can find me? If I had to ever come face to face with all of them again, those bad memories would become a reality for sure. Promise me you’ll keep me from getting involved with this fight of theirs with Slade?”

“Yeah, I can do that,” Paige responded.

“By the way—who or what are you?” the girl, Terra, asked.

“I’m what they call a whitelighter slash witch,” Paige said. “A supernatural do-gooder whose part guardian angel.” She smiled at that thought.

“Well, you must be my guardian angel then,” Terra responded, a smile brightening her darkened face ever so slightly.

“Yeah, I guess I am,” Paige said. “I’m going to look into what you told me. Where can I find you if you need me—or vice versa?”

“Around,” Terra replied. “And now—a little more about Slade—”

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After his visit with Danielle Artie had taken the chance to just chill and relax. He had headed back to his dwelling—the house by the sea—and spent some quality time enjoying the silence.

Seeing as it was a common practice that whitelighters and Elders used meditation to keep harmony over their being, Artie was at that time in particular practicing that very rite of peace of mind. In the middle of the state he sensed the fact that someone was beckoning him.

Seeing no reason to continue, he ended the session to see what it was he was being summoned for in the first place.

Upon descent of the orbiting process, he came to realize where it was from that he was being summoned.

“Is this—the Halliwell Manor?” he exclaimed as he took in the surroundings.



“Yeah, it is,” he turned to take note that his friend, Kane, had been the one who spoke, as well as the one who’d summoned for him. “The prophetic dilemma brought me here.”

“What were you calling me for?” Artie asked him.

“I was hoping you could, um...” Kane started to reply.

“Uh, you’re not going to ask me to play matchmaker between the two of you—right? Cause I’m not really all that great with that kind of stuff—even as a favor from an old friend,” Artie said.

“Huh?” Kane exchanged a look with his charge, taking note that she was just as confused on that matter as he was. “No—no, it’s not what I was going to ask. What I meant to ask was if you could track down Paige—one of the Charmed Ones—for me? You’re better with that than I am.”

“Oh really?” Artie teased slightly. “Yeah, I can track her down.” He gazed his friend directly in the eye. “Are you sure you don’t want me to—the two of you—?”

“Yes, I’m sure,” Kane answered.

“Okay, I’ll go find this missing Charmed One for you,” Artie replied, orbiting out afterwards.

“What exactly did Artie mean about the whole matchmaking thing?” Raven curiously asked Kane.

“He didn’t mean anything, Artie’s just playing around,” Kane replied with a nervous laugh. “He’s always been quite the joker.”

“So—you think the idea of us—matchmaking—is a joke—something to just laugh at?” Raven replied, sounding a bit hurt.

“No, I don’t think it’s a laughing matter. I’m not saying that. It’s just—“ Kane found himself making direct eye contact with her. “I’m in no way trying to insult you—or make you mad. It’s just—“ he paused, looking her straight in the eye, noticing the luminous amethyst glimmering in her big eyes gazing back at him. He also took note of the pale shade her skin was, so pale—taking note as well that she stood just mere feet from where he was. She watched him as well, every movement studied by her sheer curiosity. “I’ve just had so much on my mind lately, and the thought just never—“

She had advanced ever so slightly, bringing her closer, closer—

He’d been in a slight fog to that time, bringing him back to reality to realize the advancements she’d been making up to that point. He countered the advancements; she too took note of her actions and backed away to prevent its further occurrence.

“I don’t know why I did that—I’m not sure what I was thinking,” Raven murmured. “I don’t do that normally, nor did I ever think I’d ever—“

“I know what you mean,” Kane replied. “Same thing applies to me.”

“What do you mean—?” Raven began to question

“It was strictly forbidden for me to have a non professional relationship at any time—a whitelighter rule. No romance allowed between a whitelighter and their charge,” Kane told her. “Along with the restrictions I’ve had to make with how my past is set up, I didn’t dare commit to anyone for that particular reason. That hidden part of who I am prevents a lot of interaction on that level.”

“So—is it still strictly forbidden?” Raven asked.

“They’ve been more lenient about it over the last few years,” Kane replied.

“Is it still in effect for you?” Raven asked.

“Kind of—yeah,” Kane replied. “Since I never had to deal with one on one relationships of that kind, I never had to deal with the issue, or its consequences. None of it—relationships, romance—love.”

“With the destiny I had, I never thought I’d need it either,” Raven said. “I’ve never been really close like that with anyone—not even my friends.”

“I have to wonder—do we still have to avoid it, even now?” Kane asked her.

“What is so important that it had to get another whitelighter involved just to track me down?” another voice exclaimed. The voice belonged to a woman, who made an entrance at that point, taking notice of the two there. “Who are you?” she asked them.

“A whitelighter, Kane,” Kane replied. “And my charge—Raven.”

“Why does that name sound familiar—“ the woman trailed. “Are you the whitelighter that’s been trying to get in contact with me?”

“Yes—and no,” Kane said. He turned his attention towards the girl who was his charge. “Raven, this is the third of the sisters, Paige.”

“I would be the one whose been trying to contact you,” Artie interrupted, only being noticed as present at the point where he spoke up. Kane noticed the grin on his friend’s face.

“I didn’t see you orb in. How long have you been standing here, watching?” Kane asked his friend, giving him a peculiar look.

“Long enough,” Artie replied, grinning broader.

“Why didn’t I take notice of you being here then?” Kane questioned further.

“I didn’t feel like interrupting that little precious moment that was occurring when I got here,” Artie replied. “I didn’t want to prevent her—and you—from kissing—“

“We were not going to—“ Kane began to protest.

“Can someone fill me in please?” Paige spoke up. “Seeing as the Manor is more my territory than anyone else’s here, I at least need to know what’s going on here.”

“There’s been some new developments Paige,” Phoebe began saying as she entered the room where they be at that moment. “Looks like trouble’s knocking on our door again.”

“So—you know what the deal is then?” Paige asked her sister.

“Yeah, we’ve been filled in,” Phoebe said.

“Where exactly have you been lately?” Piper asked Paige.

“Checking in on a last minute assigned charge,” Paige replied. “The Elders assigned me to a witch just coming to her powers, and was informed to keep an eye on her 24/7 for the last few weeks.”

“Where is this new charge located?” Piper asked. “I’ve been wondering where you’ve been, and you haven’t been around town lately.”

“She’s in a town to the south of San Francisco—Jump City, I think it’s called,” Paige said.

“That’s where I’m from,” Raven spoke up. “Whose your charge there?”

“Hey—you’re from Jump City?” Paige exclaimed. “I knew your name sounded familiar—“ She paused for a moment. “You wouldn’t by chance be part of a team there called the teen titans—would you?”

“Yeah,” Raven replied. “But—how would you—“

“I met up with a girl while I was in that city, saying something about this guy called Slade trying to terrorize her and needing to get in contact with the titans,” Paige replied. “I think the girl said her name was Terra.”

“So Beast Boy was right when he said Terra was back...” Raven found herself trailing. “What exactly did she say when you ran into her?”

“She said this Slade character wants to manipulate the powers she had that he had control over some time ago for his own purposes, and she’s trying to avoid it to avoid the bad past she said connected with him and the titans—you I guess. From what I picked up, that past wasn’t pretty, and she highly regretted it,” Paige said. “Who is this Slade character anyway, and what’s he up to? I’d like to help this girl from having to live another hell from the guy if I can help it. Helping people’s what I do, after all.”

“Well, sis, you’ll be happy to know that we’re going to be dealing with the guy—even if you hadn’t run into that girl along the way that needed help,” Piper said. “Turns out this Slade character is trouble, and that’s why that whitelighter—“ She looked at Artie, apparently not remembering what his name was.

“Artie,” he reminded her.

“Artie was trying to track you down. He apparently is a new threat we have to worry about.” Piper finished.

“We? I thought we were out of the demon fighting business as the Charmed Ones,” Paige pointed out. “What kind of threat exactly?”

“The Source kind of threat,” Phoebe said. “Apparently—this Slade’s contending for the throne—to be the Source of all Evil.”

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Raven had strayed from the group formed of witches and whitelighters, taking the chance to wander around the interior of the Manor. She meandered down a hallway, up a flight of stairs that apparently led to the upper most level—the attic.

Like most any ordinary attic, the space appeared to be a storage space—a space filled with past memories collecting dust.

In the middle of the room stood a bookstand, a book resting upon it. The cover was of a forest—maybe emerald—green. Out of curiosity, she went to investigate it further.

Embellished on the cover of the worn book were three words, Book of Shadows.

“Different,” she muttered to herself.

She went to open the book, check out its contents. In the process of opening the book, she felt a slight static sensation in her hands, and then—nothing. She was startled at first, but she shrugged it off and continued to turn the cover to reveal the contents.

She paged through the yellowed pages, leafing past one monstrosity to another. She didn’t really recognize most of the monstrosities contained in those pages.

“Taken to the book of Shadows, I see,” she was startled that a voice had cut the silence she’d been in up to that point. She took note that the voice belonged to Kane. “I see that the book likes you.”

“Why would a book would choose to like me or not?” Raven asked him. “It is just a book, after all—right?”

“The Book of Shadows isn’t your everyday ordinary book,” Kane replied, leaning against the frame of the doorway. He was smiling. “It’s kind of picky about its readers. Only those who don’t have evil intentions can even get near it. It has to trust the ones using it, so usually only those who have a good soul even get near it. If you had bad intentions the book would’ve leapt off the stand it’s on.”

“I might have dark origins, but I only intend to do good,” Raven replied, smiling slightly. “Uh—what’s a wendigo?”

“Something—a creature that’s a lot like a werewolf, that—just read the entry. If you’d like, there’s an

entry about the Source in there somewhere if you want to check it out—learn a bit more on him,” Kane told her. “For future reference, at least.”

Raven leafed through the book to the passage in particular that Kane had mentioned.

“Great, like Slade really needs to add this to his evil resume,” Raven muttered bitterly as she read the passage. “So—the sisters have dealt with the Source, I take it.”

“Yeah, more times than anyone else has on a one on one basis anyways,” Kane replied. “Once as his original self, once as a reincarnate that took over Cole, and a third time when someone else tried to resurrect him entirely. All three times the Source was vanquished.”

“Three times?” Raven looked at him, surprised. “They should be pretty good at vanquishing him by now.”

“The Cole incarnate one was probably the hardest—considering how he was the love of Phoebe’s life at the time,” Kane replied. “The second time took more out of them than any other time.”

“Cole was the half demon one, right? Balthazar?” Raven said.

“Yup.”

“And he and Phoebe were in love?” Raven exclaimed.

“Yup.”

“Even when he was the Source?” Raven exclaimed.

“Yup,” Kane again confirmed.

“That’s a lovely thought,” Raven muttered sarcastically. “How did she even deal with being married to The Source of all Evil anyways?”

“She handled it very carefully,” Kane replied with an ironic smile.

“So—“

“Weren’t you going to contact that green boy or something?” Kane interrupted her.

“Uh—maybe in a bit, but first—“ Raven turned her gaze to him. “—What time is it?”

“I don’t carry a watch, and there weren’t any digital clocks here that I have seen,” Kane replied. “And the only thing that does tell time is a grandfather clock downstairs—and I’m not sure how accurate it is. It read about nine o’ clock last time I checked.”

“Nine PM?” Raven exclaimed.

“That’s what I figure,” Kane replied.

“Well, if it really is that late, maybe we should ask someone downstairs for the correct time. If it’s really that late, it might be time to call it quits for now and start up in the morning,” Raven said.

“That might be a good idea,” Kane replied. “Let’s go ask.”

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“Yeah, I wanted to help the girl, but I didn’t intend for it to end up being the Charmed Ones kind of help,” Paige spoke bitterly.

“Well, sweetie, things happen for a reason,” Phoebe said to her. “Maybe it was destined for you to run into that girl—Terra—so that it could get you involved. Whether we like it or not, sometimes destiny isn’t always as direct as we think. Maybe ours wasn’t that clear after all.”

“Yeah, well—if having been assigned to that charge was just a way for me to meet that girl and get involved—I still don’t like it,” Paige replied. “Maybe now that I know why I was told to watch that charge I can take a break from it and check in with Henry.”

“Anyone know what time it is?” it was the voice of the whitelighter—Kane—that spoke up, with all those present taking notice of his presence there.

“It’s nine-thirty,” Paige confirmed. She took a moment to get a really good look at the whitelighter’s charge. “Hey, can I ask you something?”

“What?” Raven said in reply.

“Uh—what are you exactly?” Paige asked with a sheepish grin. “You don’t look like any type of magical being I’ve ever encountered, and...well—“

“I’m—different,” Raven replied. “Just...different. That really all I can say to describe myself.”

“Well, with your hair being purple like it is, I was—“ Paige began to say.

“Zip it Paige,” Piper cut off her sister in mid sentence. “Action now, questions later. She can reveal her personal info at another time. Right now there are other things to worry about.”

“It’s really nine-thirty?” Raven exclaimed, as if in some way to confirm it.

“Yeah,” Paige replied, checking her watch again. “Actually—it’s just turned to nine thirty two. “ She stifled a yawn. “Too late to check into this head-case Source wannabe-archenemy of yours right now. I haven’t had a good night’s sleep, and besides, I need to check in with Henry.”

“Hate to say it, but—I have to agree,” Piper said. “Even though hate is kind of a strong word to use in this case, since I’m not too thrilled with this re-emerging destiny thing and all.”

“Call it a night?” Phoebe suggested.

“Yeah,” Piper said. “Leo should be back soon, and I intend to make the best of his arrival when he gets here.”

“Did you want to head back to that tower home of yours—back to your friends, that is?” Kane asked his charge. “If it’s getting late, and unless you wanted to go elsewhere, I can take you back—“

“Elsewhere?” Raven replied. “Where else exactly?”

“Me—well, we—Artie and me, that is, have a place outside the city you’re welcome to crash at, if you don’t feel like heading back—“ Kane told her, hesitating on the final note for just a moment. “To that tower—your friends.”

“I’d have asked if you wanted to stay the night here,” Piper said to Raven. “If your whitelighter doesn’t insist on you going elsewhere, or back home. Whatever you want to do.”

“Maybe...” Raven trailed a moment. “Maybe...it might be nice to stay elsewhere for once. Are you really sure you’d want to keep me up for a night—at you place, that is?”

“I’ll leave that up to you,” Kane replied. “I won’t force any decisions on you. The sun tends to set at this time, and the view of it is spectacular at this time of year. We’d have to go in the next few minutes in order to catch it before it goes down completely.”

“Hey—you want to have me check in with those friends of yours for you?” Artie asked Raven. “I’ve got nothing better to do, and I’d be happy to fill them in and the like for you if you want. I can also inform them on where you’re at and how you’re doing, if you want as well.”

“Okay,” Raven replied. “Yeah, sure.”

“I’m gonna go catch some shuteye,” Paige spoke up. “See you in the morning—or whatever.”

“Tell Henry I said hi!” Phoebe told her.

“Will do,” Paige replied, orbiting out afterwards.

“I’m gonna go check in on the boys,” Piper said. “What about you, Phoebe? What’re you up to now?”

“Get some shut eye, like Paige. I’ve gotta go to work tomorrow, and I need to relax and sleep so I can function,” Phoebe said.

“Take Coop, get some rest, and I’ll see you tomorrow,” Piper said to her.

“Will do,” Phoebe said as she and her cupid headed towards the exit.

Billie had been rather quiet to that point, only finally being acknowledged as the group dispersed.

“I guess I’ve got schoolwork and some studying to do,” Billie said. “I’m going to go do just that. I need to study anyways. There’s a test coming up that I can’t blow off.”

“You go study then,” Piper told her. “And if you get the chance, research this threat further when you can.”

“Will do,” Billie said, and she too left the premises.

That left Piper alone with the whitelighter and his charge, which wasn’t a long lasting thing in itself, as the two of them left not long after Billie departed.

Kane had asked if she was ready, and she replied with a simple “yes”. In the aura of blue and white in the process coming to be known as orbing, they departed of the Halliwell Manor to a sunset in a yet undetermined destination.

At least—for Raven it was undetermined. Kane knew exactly where he was heading.



## 8 - Home By The Seas

### Chapter 8: A Home By The Sea

“This place sure looks different from the outside,” Artie observed to himself as he stood on the outer premises of the great T-shaped tower before him. He had hesitated to knock, or make any efforts to have his presence to the inhabitants of the tower occupying it at that time.

He had decided against just orbiting in on the inside of the building, he was partially concerned he'd get the same results out of the tower's occupants that he'd gotten from Raven earlier that day. Instead he stood at the main entrance and knocked on its main door.

He was taken aback by the technology he saw just at that entryway, seeing with how he was completely technologically illiterate; he hadn't really chosen to learn the operating systems of the latest and greatest technologies. He could orb where he needed to be, so what use did he have for technological tools?

He took his time before finally wrapping on the great door, a tinny metallic echo followed in its repetitive progression afterward.

“Sure hope that was loud enough to get someone in there's attention,” he mumbled to himself as he waited.

What felt like eons seemed to pass before anyone from the interior made an attempt to answer the door.

He half expected the one who'd answer the door would be that green one he'd met before, but was surprised to find that it wasn't.

A half mechanical marvel instead would be the one to show up to answer it.

He was half mechanical, half biological, from what Artie could perceive.

“Who are you?” the half mechanical man asked as he answered the door and took notice of the tower's visitor.

“Hey, that's one of those orby dudes that was here earlier!” the green one Artie had expected to answer came running up beside the one who actually had. “Uh—what was your name again? I'm not sure I ever caught it.”

“Artie,” he replied simply.

“Uh...where's Rae, and that other orby dude that was here earlier?” the green one inquired.

"You mean Kane?" Artie asked. He got a nod in reply. "She crashed at our residence for the night. They went to check out the spectacular sunset view a little while ago."

"That's different of Rae—"

"Uh, are we going to stand here all night to converse, or are you gonna let me in?" Artie asked.

"Uh—come in," the half mechanical man made a gesture to show Artie in, and Artie followed suit.

"Uh—do guardian angels ever play video games?" the green one inquired as they headed upwards in the elevator.

"Video games—those simulations that are controlled by a device on a TV screen, is that what you mean?" Artie asked him.

"Yeah."

"Nah. I'm kind of technologically illiterate," Artie replied with a goofy grin.

"Technology illiterate—you're ancient, dude," the green one said.

"Give or take a century or two," Artie replied.

"Century??"

The two looked at Artie in shock, obviously taken aback quite a bit by the century bit.

"A—couple centuries?" the half robot stammered.

"Yup," Artie confirmed.

A ding was made to indicate the elevator had reached its destined floor, with the door signaling towards that fact with their opening.

The floor plan was revealed before them as the doors opened, with the rooms beyond being fairly well lit. The view from beyond---seen through transparent panes of a glass-like material spoke of the city beyond being in its evening hours, the city alight in artificial light contrasting with the darkened night sky.

"Don't you have other people that occupy this tower?" Artie asked the two who'd shown him in. "I could've sworn there were others mentioned somewhere along the line—"

"Yeah, two others—besides us two, and Rae—who you've obviously met," the green one informed him. "Star's missing in action, and Rob went out search for her."

"What was your name again?" Artie curiously asked the green one. He glanced over at the mechanic-human hybrid. "And—how about yours as well? I never caught it, and calling you a half robot in reference doesn't sit well with me for some reason."

“Beast Boy,” the green one replied.

“Garfield,” the half robot added teasingly. He got a disapproving look in response. “Hey—that is your real name,” he pointed out, adding. “And by the way, so I make it clear that it’s not mine, I’m Cyborg.”

“Interesting,” Artie mused to himself. “Have either of you managed to uncover anything in the past several hours or so by chance?”

“Well, we had a brief connection with Star, which gave us some visuals on her location,” Cyborg reported. “She had been grounded, Slade was in her company along with some unfamiliar onlookers. One of them stepped forward, waving his hand in front of his face, said a few things, and then Star started screaming. We lost contact completely not long afterward.”

“Can you describe this guy for me?” Artie asked. “The one waving his hand in front of his face—that is?”

“Dressed all in black, hair completely a silver shade, looked middle-aged—why, do you know him?” Beast Boy looked to Artie peculiarly.

“Yeah. That would describe the demon of fear to a T,” Artie replied.

“Demon—of fear?” both stammered in unison.

“Yup. He brings fears to life to feed off them,” Artie replied. “The results can sometimes be fatal.”

“Fatal?” Beast Boy exclaimed. “You mean—fears can kill you??”

“Not directly. That would usually be the result of seeing the fear, and doing something to avoid it that ends in death as a result separately,” Artie told him.

“I think Rae mentioned the dude in my connection with her earlier,” Beast Boy said. “Some lady that was with her described the dude—I think your guardian angel friend also said something about him. I’m still wondering who all those folks are—since Rae never did get around to explaining.”

“I think your friend Raven has had her own experiences with Barbas—aside from what’s already been pointed out,” Artie said. “She said something about having horrific nightmare visions that fit what Barbas is known best for. Apparently he was playing off her fears for some reason.”

“There was this period where she was constantly screaming—something about nightmares coming to life and all that. I managed to get it out of her that it was involving her evil dad, visions of nightmares of the reality he once threatened her with,” Beast Boy pointed out. “I thought she made them up—that they were just a part of her imagination. The whole ordeal with her father was traumatizing for her, that’s for sure.”

“Are ya saying that Star was screaming because this Mr. Fear made her see what she fears most?” Cyborg exclaimed.

“Probably,” Artie shrugged. Noticing that Cyborg’s eye went wide, he added, “What?”

“Rob’s out there, looking for her,” Cyborg replied. “And Star’s worst fear could become a reality because of that.”

“What fear might that be?” Artie inquired.

“She’s in love with our boy Rob, and we’ve gotta keep him alive because of that,” Cyborg replied. “Cuz if we let it happen, she’ll really live out the fear of losing him—right in front of her, with no way to stop it.”

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With the sun having cast its last amber rays of light hours ago, shrinking into the distant horizon, the two had since retreated into the residence atop a cliff by the sea for shelter for the night.

Kane had disappeared, mentioning he’d be in the kitchen. Meanwhile, Raven had found a book in the study aside from the living space to keep her busy, taking to a nearby chair to pour over the contents of the novel in hand.

She hadn’t really noticed Kane’s absence until a nearby grandfather clock chimed the marking of the hour being just before midnight. Realizing the hour was late—she looked up from her book to stifle a yawn.

“Where—“ she began to question aloud the whitelighter’s whereabouts, but found there was no need to finish—he showed up to provide the answer for her, without words.

“What are you reading?” Kane curiously asked as he found a seat in a chair across the room and took to it.

“Just something I found on the bookshelf,” Raven replied. “Where have you been?”

“Out,” Kane replied simply. A moment of silence followed, and then he continued. “Remember that talk we had at the manor—the one about my dark side, I mean?”

“Yeah, I remember,” Raven replied. “What about it?”

“Well—that dark side has some unwanted consequences,” Raven replied. “Some ill-fitted after affects.”

“Why would it have—“ Raven began to question.

“Well, my good side—the whitelighter in me—gives me the angelic side of my nature—orbing, etc; and my dark side...night time plays on the dark side of my origins—my nature, including things associated with that half. By day, it’s easy to play the guardian angel role well, but when darkness sets in...the facade is very hard to keep. Darkness of night brings about outbursts that are sometimes out my control.”

“What kind of outbursts?” Raven questioned.

“Whatever powers my father had,” Kane replied. “My mother said he was an upper level demon, but never informed me on which it was. The blood ties I share with him also tie me to the powers he had. Energy balls, some really nasty ones I really don’t feel like mentioning—they play a part in my life that really makes it hard to get close to too many people. It’s hard to even be romantic when you have to fear the most romantic of times being destroyed by it—that being the nighttime.” He fell silent for a moment. “I was absent from your presence because—I didn’t feel it would be right to endanger you while I was in that state.”

“Um—where exactly are my sleeping arrangements set up to be at?” Raven asked him awkwardly. “I’m getting tired, and it is getting late—“

“The spare room in the back—I set it up for you,” Kane replied. “Do you intend to sleep in what you’re in, or do you want something else? Because if you needed something—I have something I found that might work—if you want, that is.”

“Huh?” Raven looked at him, momentarily perplexed, as she then looked down at what she was wearing, then back up to him again. “I usually just wear what I’m in now, but if...since you are offering—“ She paused momentarily, hesitating before continuing. “What exactly is it that you have to offer?”

“A white robe—it belonged to my mother,” Kane replied. “I’ve had it around for ages, and since she isn’t a large woman—she’s actually fairly petite—I figured it would fit you fine—probably perfectly for that matter.”

“Since it isn’t a loud obnoxious color—and you think it’d fit perfectly—“ Raven was caught up in thought for a moment. “I guess...I’ll accept the offer.” She smiled slightly, awkwardly. “Now—do you think you could show me to my room for the night?”

“Yeah,” Kane said simply, showing her the way to where her sleeping arrangements were located.

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Kane led Raven to the room he’d mentioned, leaving her alone so that he could call it a night for himself and headed to bed.

She found the garment in question resting on the bed in the room, taking note that he hadn’t been wrong about the length of white fabric. She slipped into it, finding it wasn’t unflattering at all. She stashed her other garment in a place for safekeeping, out of the way and in a place she’d remember come morning.

She found that the room she was in to be hued in fairly neutral tones. The walls were an ivory shade, painted with a semi-gloss paint. The carpeting was a mixed blend of neutral blues and grays, the surrounding furniture appearing to be fairly ordinary.

On a bedside table made of a rich antiqued wood right next to the bed—possibly made from mahogany, stood a carved statue of what appeared to be that of a gargoyle possibly from marble. It stood just about

a foot and a half in height, the rich swirls of dark and lighter grays blending in equal brilliance—which was a trademark of the stone it was crafted from. It appeared ancient as well; possibly crafted by the hands of somebody from decades ago—or even centuries.

She found it odd for some reason, but paid it little mind otherwise. She stifled a yawn, realizing just how tired she was, giving her no reason to dwell on the gargoyle's existence any further.

She was fairly exhausted; she just didn't realize how much until she'd gotten under the covers and readied herself for slumber. It was practically automatic from that point.

She fell asleep—and began to dream.

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She thought she had woken up—that it was morning, the break of day—but it was not. There was no such bright light marking that it was daytime, no daytime sounds of birds chirping or anything else to announce the arrival of morn—nothing.

Just a blur, her vision blurred almost to the point of incomprehension.

What she sensed around her felt very real, but at the same time—not so. It was actually more surreal than real.

There wasn't much to make of her surroundings; all she managed to see around was caught in a haze that she felt almost blind in. What she did see was just a haze of peachy amber all around her.

Where she felt her vision had betrayed her, other senses surprising didn't follow suit.

For one, although she couldn't see, she could sense that she was lying on her back; something that didn't seem too off to her. She apparently had just woken up—after all.

It wasn't that fact that would seem out of the ordinary to her, but rather the strange sense of warmth and cold existing at the same time. The warmth was apparently provided by an ambiance of candles just outside her visual perception, but the chill—it remained unexplained.

She had to investigate the oddity for herself, but not from relying on her sight. She had to rely on other senses to retrieve any answer she could.

She traced down towards her neckline with delicate fingers, in hopes of discovering some form of fabric to speak of. She found there was a lack of it.

She furthered her search, only finding that her fingers ran over her own skin.

That explains the chill, she thought.

She came to the grim conclusion on her situation at that moment, after her search had been deemed thoroughly complete. Her vision lost a fraction of its haze, and she was able to confirm what she

suspected visually.

Thankfully, she sensed she was alone, something she was rather grateful given her present situation.

She shivered. The exposure left her feeling chilled, and she went in search of something that would alleviate that. All she came across that was even remotely substantial was a filmy sheer piece of fabric. Although it didn't leave much to the imagination, it provided adequate cover that was obviously better than nothing.

It has to be a dream, she thought to herself. The surroundings seemed odd—candlelight ambiance, slight essence of incense, and linen fabric sheets beneath her—almost more the product of an erotic fantasy rather than what she usually dreamt about.

“Why am I—“ she spoke aloud, her voice sounding echo-like, more like the substance from a dream state than anything real..

“Sh, you don't have to question anything anymore,” she got a response she was not all expecting, from a presence she didn't even suspect was there. “It got past that point a while ago. No need to worry; everything's good, like it's meant to be.”

The voice was vaguely familiar, yet she just couldn't pinpoint from exactly where—

“What do you mean—?”

She felt a shift from the surface she was on, but she couldn't pinpoint the source. She knew she expressed having been startled as a result, but she hoped she didn't show more than that.

She felt a hand run through her hair, brushing hair behind her ears gently.

“I know it took me a while to realize where I was destined; but I am no longer lost, I know my path now. I don't fight it anymore.” A few moments of silence, and then the voice continued. “I can finally show how I feel, and not have to hold anything back. I can finally say ‘I love you’ without worrying over the consequences that could happen afterward as a result.”

She reached outwards to try to confirm the identity of the one in her company, with no luck. All she managed to grasp was air.

“I love you,” the voice spoke again, soft and tender. “And I know I always will.”

She felt something touch her leg, bringing on some strange sensation. The unidentifiable contact she felt was just above the knee, mere centimeters from the sheer fabric she had managed to find as cover. Its locale was towards the inner section of the leg.

Slowly, she felt it move upward, upward—

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It had been a late night for Kane. It had taken him some time just to get to sleep—hours after he'd left his charge alone for the night.

When he did manage his sleep was fitful, mostly because of thoughts conflicting his mind, not allowing him to sleep soundly.

He had forgotten to mention to his charge the full truth on just who his father was; he was afraid to disclose that truth to her just yet.

He had told her his mother was a whitelighter, his father an upper level demon—that much was true—he just left out which upper level demon it just happened to be.

He always had nightmares; he didn't make any efforts to escape them. The demon his father happened to be was what brought them on, he was the type of demon who was of a true enough evil just a single thought of him could bring on nightmares.

He couldn't go about easily telling her just who exactly his father was; at that very moment one of her greatest enemies was an incarnate of that very same creation, and it wouldn't exactly be easy to inform her that what her arch nemesis had become was one in the same as his father—the Source of all Evil.

He knew he'd eventually have to tell her; after all, she had a right to know.

He managed to get to sleep yet again, caught up in a dream world that was a far cry from reality. The dream was peaceful, unlike the others, and his charge—the girl, Raven—was in it.

She was in a flowing white dress, a cloak of the same ivory white flowing behind her in a gentle breeze. The rays of the sun gave her an aura that was about the same as the blue white lights of the orbing process.

Or was that just an effect of the sun—

She looked to him suddenly, her expression peaceful and the words she spoke that followed coming from her with ease.

“Thank you,” she said, her following smile being soft and pleasant. She continued, “It means so much that I could rely on you through all those hard times we faced. It helped me understand so much.”

He wasn't sure he should question what she meant with what she said. She might think it odd that he was clueless to what she was talking about, and he didn't want to ruin the moment of serenity emanating from the girl. He'd picked up—sensed even—that she normally would never have a serene air to her, but he found her pleasant atmosphere to be relaxing to say the least, and didn't want to blow that.

She continued with the same soft smile still expressed on her face.

“It's all good now,” she spoke. “And will be from now on.”



He took notice that a faint halo was starting to form around her, a half ring of animated blue-white light orbs forming. The bright-lighted orb halo intensified the longer he looked at her. He couldn't comprehend the meaning, and she gave no reason on her own why they were around her in the first place—

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Kane awoke, the dream still fresh as the sleep departed company in his mind as his head was cleared of it. Daybreak was marked with sunlight filtering in through the shades over his window.

The girl had had a halo, he remembered; it seemed oddly familiar to him for some reason, but what—

“It doesn't matter,” he muttered to himself. “It was just a dream, and dreams hardly ever make sense.”

Deciding it was just an odd product of a weirdly hectic day; he shrugged it off and got up.

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It was hard for Raven to shake off the dream she'd had that previous night, even well into the waking hours. She couldn't quite grasp what it meant, or who else was in it. She didn't understand why she'd even dreamt it to begin with.

Erotic—it just wasn't her type of thing.

She didn't know what to say about it; all she could do was shrug it off as just a pointless fantasy of a flustered mind, or instead take it to be some kind of distorted, fragmented bit of a premonition?

Could it really be a piece of the future—?

She had nobody to discuss it with; Kane might find it weird that she consoled with him on a dream she'd had that was erotic in nature when it was harder to just take in the fact he'd lightly gripped her hands briefly the previous day in that unconscious gesture of reassurance that she'd ended up questioning him about. She figured whitelighters weren't there for that kind of guidance.

The sunlight had brightened up the room that was hours ago darkened with night. She eventually got herself up off the bed, and went to explore some before the day could take her in its grasp again and occupy her to its full extent outside her own needs of that moment.

She needed to see if Kane was up, and that's just what she did.

## 9 - Envisioned Fears

### Chapter 9: Envisioned Fears

The sun had set three times while she'd been out in the vast forestry she'd labeled as the middle of nowhere. Three days—three days that had just come and gone.

Starfire had spent most of the first day screaming as she'd watching in horror what she'd thought was real—the death of her beloved. She had screamed so hard and long her voice had grown hoarse by the first sunset, and the struggle she'd made to react with no results had left her completely exhausted. By morn of the second day she'd acquired several deep scratches from her struggles, and not enough strength to allow her to even attempt to leave the spot where she lay. She couldn't cry out with her voice being beyond hoarse as it was.

Even with the Tamaranian resilience and strength of her people contained within her, she was still susceptible to being almost beaten.

Starfire eventually realized that it all had just an illusion—that none of what she'd seen had really happened—but by that time she didn't have the energy to react even. Being fooled so easily by the madman and his odd new apprentice angered her, but she could do nothing about it.

The other man—the one with the silver hair—he'd played on her fears, she'd realized. She was starting to think that maybe he was capable of monstrous acts like that, but how she didn't quite yet comprehend. The wave of his hand, what he'd said—all indications to his being responsible—at least in part—for the horrid vision she'd seen, and the fear it had left her paralyzed with.

Fear must be a specialty of his, she thought to herself. That must be the reasoning as to why Slade would have him as his aide—

She couldn't think too much; exhaustion was weakening her, and the pain took away some of the concentration she did have could devote to thought.

She hoped soon that somebody would come her way by chance and help her get back to where she needed to be. She was hoping that the one of her friends she had earlier feared dead would be the one to save her, and prove that he was very much alive.

She hoped he'd come for her—and find her—very soon—

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The last few days for the separate parties brought together by an odd connection was filled with research and waiting. Not much was learned on the extent of what Slade was really planning, beyond the basics anyways. Tidbits here and there, some old scrolls with cryptic texts unearthed that hadn't seen the light of day in centuries with a few more pieces to fill in the puzzle even more, but not enough

to make it complete.

Starfire hadn't been spotted yet, and nothing had been heard from the boy wonder either who was out searching for her. For their friends, and the new company they were now associating with in the dawning of the new uprising, the wait was starting to weigh them down.

Paige and Billie—together and separately—infiltrated the demonic faction underground when they could, Paige using her glamouring abilities to her advantage, and Billie her special power of projection.

Cyborg got in contact with Titans East, in hopes of getting a favor out of them to help out. Bumblebee, using her own method—as unique and just as viable as the others—gained access to the above ground activity while remaining unnoticed at a size most would not look for.

All three of them were successful in getting in and out without being noticed or caught, but they were unsuccessful in learning anything really substantial. None of the three had even spotted Slade or his apprenticing Demon of Fear.

None of the three caught word on the whereabouts of the two missing titans, and without there being any success in there searches, the waiting game was getting to be frustrating—for all involved.

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She might have in the past said that it was best not to worry about people—friends, etc.—as they would come and go, but Raven didn't live by that philosophy anymore. She was starting to wonder where in hell her two missing teammates were, and even she was bothered by their absence.

She hadn't been back to the tower since that day she'd left it with the whitelighter calling himself Kane; instead she'd taken shelter at his place the past few days. Artie had been in and out, off doing his own part in what was going on, among other things.

Kane had been there the whole she had been, not leaving the premises without her being in his company. Because of her friends' absence—she had decided it was best to stay close to Kane—that being her reason for why she didn't return home to the tower.

The past few days she was given the chance to get to know the supposed guardian angel better—and the world in which he'd existed in for centuries. He filled her in little by little in the Elder-witch-magic lifestyle he knew well, and gave her even more opportunities to explore the confines of Magic School to her own heart's content. She still found the place to be awe inspiring, even after a few trips.

The Charmed sisters had been to the school a few times while the whitelighter and his charge had been present, giving them opportunities to discuss what they could. Raven presented anything her friends came across, and Piper—with Leo often present—reported anything she, her sisters, or Billie learned. Info was gathered, evaluated, and then given consideration to see if anything could be pieced together from it.

It had been five days since she'd been first introduced to the new lifestyle, and she'd learned more about Kane, the sisters, all they were involved with in general, and what she discovered in the books at

magic school then she had about the whereabouts of two of her friends or of the intentions of one of her worst enemies—next to her own father anyways. It was especially starting to bother Raven because of the lack in that one area.

At that time in particular it was about midday, and she was just sitting in a chair in the living room of the place of the two whitelighters she was in the company of, just quietly thinking to herself. It was the first time she'd just taken the chance to think and only think; her mind had been fairly busy over the past three days and nights, and any other times she did have her mind at rest, it was either to rest for the night, or a quick chance for meditating. She didn't tend to ponder over things in either state, so taking the opportunity to think was something kept totally separate.

She didn't know where Kane or Artie were exactly; Artie had been gone for hours on some mission, and Kane was just—around. He didn't bother her; he didn't want to bug her apparently.

He's a good guy, she thought to herself. I know he's supposed to be the guardian angel, and there's the whitelighter/charge entrust in and consoling thing where he's supposed to be there to give advice, to listen, or whatever—but even with that it's still so easy for me to just be able to talk to him and tell him stuff like I never was able to with anyone else. He's more like a friend than just an advisor or guide—

She sighed for a moment, looking across the room from her at a piece of artwork on the wall, not really paying attention to the detail of the painting itself.

These dreams I've been having though, she continued to think, I don't think I could even get up the nerve to mention them to him. I couldn't even talk to my friends about them—

She'd had follow-ups to the dream of the first night the past following nights that came after. The one that immediately followed the first had been the same, the next after that a different version of the first two. Something romantic, but she still couldn't make out the details of the other in the dreams she was dreaming about. She was starting to consider the dreams as premonitions though, because even though she couldn't identify the dream guy, she knew it was the same one in every dream, and she got the odd sense she knew him somehow—

“What are you caught up in thought with?” she was taken out of her thoughts at that point, instead taking the moment to investigate who'd spoken to her instead. Kane stood not far from her, watching her intently for a response.

“Nothing,” Raven replied. “Um...what have you been up to?”

“Thinking,” Kane said. “Like you—I guess. I got bored, and came looking for you. Up to something for lunch outdoors?”

“Like—?”

“There's deli meat and sub rolls if you want sandwiches, and a fresh batch of some berries that just came from the garden if you want them. There's also veggies and chips inside,” Kane replied. “We can take it out to the table on the porch and eat, maybe chat—if you're up to it.”

“Sandwiches sound fine,” Raven said. “And a chat does too. Maybe we can chat about things other than magic, the sisters, the crisis, and my friends for once.”

“What did you have in mind to talk about?” Kane asked her.

“Maybe divulge in a conversation just about the two of us,” Raven replied. “Our lives—likes, dislikes—just a chat about who I am—and who you are.”

“A get to know you better chat?” Kane said. “Is that what you mean?”

“Pretty much—yes,” Raven replied.

“Okay—sounds good,” Kane said. “I’ll go get lunch ready, and I’ll join you out on the patio in fifteen.”

“Don’t you want my help?” Raven asked.

“I want to surprise you,” Kane replied, smiling.

“Okay—I’ll just go and wait then,” Raven said.

“I’ll be with you shortly,” Kane replied. “Don’t worry.”

“I won’t,” Raven replied.

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When Kane said he’d surprise her, Raven didn’t quite grasp the extent of what he meant by surprise. When he came out to join her, she was pleasantly amazed with what he presented to her as a surprise.

He’d only been in preparing lunch for fifteen minutes, but he came out with a few dishes that were obviously in preparation longer.

“I thought you said there was deli meat and chips,” Raven said. “That isn’t exactly deli meat and chips.”

“It’s not,” Kane replied, setting down one dish with fresh cooked broccoli down on the table. He set another, a plate of grilled seasoned chicken, on the table next to the first, the aroma it produced making her suddenly hungrier than she remembered being. “I kind of made up this—lunch—on a whim.” He stopped, and then added. “Or just magically. I didn’t think sandwiches were the best choice anyways, so I whipped this up—magically—especially for you.”

The aroma was enticing, that much Raven could truly admit to. She had been expecting cold cuts and chips, not a fully cooked meal—

“Magic,” Raven said. “It does smell good—“ She stopped herself from digging in impolitely. He took a seat in a chair not far from her. She looked to him directly after he was seated. “It is okay to serve myself right now—right?”

“Yeah—dig in,” Kane told her. “That’s what I made it for.”

She grabbed a plate from the selection he’d brought out, putting the desired selections of chicken and veggies onto it.

“You said you wanted to talk personal,” Kane said as she continued to prepare her dish before eating. “Where do you want to start?”

“Um—“ Raven put the serving forks down for a moment, caught in thought. “Simple questions to begin with I guess. Like—what’s your favorite color, music, food, things to do—things like that.”

“Well, to answer for the starters—let’s see...” Kane thought to himself for a moment. “Midnight blue, originally blues but more recently taken to grunge, angel food cake—for things to do: watch the sun set, read, travel, and occasionally write.” He shrugged. “I’ve been around a good while, and I’ve picked up a knack for writing literature of different forms.”

“What is your most prevalent style of literature?” Raven asked.

“Poetry,” Kane replied, again shrugging. “I came from an era of poets.”

“I’ll have to read what you’ve done some time,” Raven said. “So, more depth—how old are you, and where did you grow up?”

“You answer the introductory questions first,” Kane said. “And then I’ll get to those.”

“Um...” Raven took a bite of the chicken before she made her reply, continuing when she had swallowed it. “Okay, my answers—blue, grunge/metal/alternative, chocolate—for things to do—read, meditate, travel—that sort of thing.”

“Any particular reason why you’ve taken to meditation?” Kane asked.

“It’s kind of mandatory for me,” Raven replied. “I do enjoy it, but it’s out of necessity more than pleasure. In order to keep control of my emotions I have to meditate, and with my powers being emotionally based, if one thing so much as slips up...”

“Bad things happen,” Kane finished for her. “Am I correct?”

“Yes,” Raven said. “If I lose control of my emotions...I could lose control of myself, and—that can be very dangerous.”

“Well...in a way I can relate. Meditation is a fairly normal ritual for whitelighters, since it helps keep peace of mind, which—in this field—is kind a given,” Kane said. “Well, getting back to my answers for your second set of inquiries; five or six centuries, and in what is now known today as the United Kingdom—England or whatever. I didn’t tend to keep track exactly.”

“Five—centuries?” Raven stammered. “You don’t look it.”

“Whitelighters are ageless,” Kane replied. “As long as they don’t clip their wings to become human, they remain the same age in appearance.”

“Does your demonic half play a part in that too?” Raven asked.

“They both do,” Kane said. “How old are you, by chance?”

“Eighteen,” Raven responded. “Just as of recent, may I add. I have just reached the dawning of adulthood.” She smiled slightly. “A fraction of time compared to you though.”

“Fascinating,” Kane replied. He had a bite of the veggies, and then spoke. “When I was having those dreams about you—before I knew you existed, that is—I kind of found you to be—fascinating—and exotic. Artie criticized me on them when I first told him.”

“Really?” Raven said. “I said that I had been having dreams about you—right?”

“Yeah, you fainted because of them,” Kane said. “What I meant was—you fainted because you—like me—thought they were just dreams, and the shock of finding out they weren’t overwhelmed you enough to make you black out.”

“Well—“ Raven hesitated momentarily. “I kind of found them to be pleasant myself, and that you were—attractive. I didn’t really have anyone to discuss mine with, like you did with Artie. My friends probably would think I was whacked; I don’t have dreams that are girly like that—or so they think.” She stopped, but then exclaimed, “You thought I was exotic?”

“Not in the blond bimbo way,” Kane assured her. “Artie thought that’s what I meant when I told him. You just seem so—unearthly—and that’s where I got the term exotic coined with you. You are not like any girl I’ve come across in my existence, and you almost had me spellbound to a point when I was researching those scrolls and I didn’t know who you are. I couldn’t help thinking about you for some reason.”

“I was starting to question the significance of those dreams just before you came into the picture as a reality,” Raven said. “I was starting to wonder why—and who—and if you were real. I was too embarrassed to mention them to anyone to discuss it, and having a cute guy in place of the nightmarish dreams I’d been having before was rather refreshing for me—“ She tinted a bit of rouge on her face at that moment. “Cute boy dreams are not my thing.”

“Hell, exotic cute girl dreams are not my thing either,” Kane told her. “Even though I had Artie to tell, I still got teased because of it being out of the norm of my character.”

“That didn’t keep us from having them,” Raven replied. “I’ve been wondering—?“ In mid sentence she was interrupted, caught by surprise when she heard a ringing noise. “What—?“ she exclaimed at first, startled by its sudden interference.

“It’s your communication device,” Kane informed her. “Looks like one of your friends wants to check in with you or something.”

“I wonder who it is?” Raven said. “I haven’t heard anything new from BB or Cy in a while—“ She reached for the device, fumbling a bit clumsily with it until she got it securely grasped in her hands. She opened it, and—much to her surprise—it wasn’t the changeling or the half robot.

“Robin,” Raven said, in pure shock.



## 10 - Surprise—Whitelighter!

### Chapter 10: Surprise—Whitelighter!

He had been out in the middle of the wilderness for quite some time—the middle of nowhere. Robin was a greatly educated with survival tactics; it had never been an issue where he was concerned. He could go for days without civilization to rely on completely if he had to.

His goal was to find Starfire anyways, and he wasn't just about to give in and give up.

The terrain was treacherous; he was getting sick of overgrowth and weeds blocking his way. Even though he knew he had been fairly close to where the supernatural activity was concentrated, he hadn't seen any sign of any of it in the days he'd been out there in search of the Starfire. The only signs of life he'd seen were the ones of natural wildlife usually found the depths of the woods—deer, bears, rabbits, etc.

He stopped by a spring to rest, as well as get a drink. He was close to dehydration, and the water ran clear enough for him.

There was a large rock near the babbling brook that he came to rest on for a time; he was out of place in the middle of the natural world around him, he'd come to realize—a sore thumb in a world totally the opposite of what he was used to.

He had been resting for a time when there was a disturbance. Not one of sound, for he heard not a thing—no rustling, no footsteps. The disturbance was visual—a bright shroud of light orbs that had no place of origin or sense of real purpose at first.

He found it odd for an illumination of bright orbs of light to exist that close to the forest floor; the canopy made of tree leaves and branches filtered the light coming through too much for it to even be natural. He realized it couldn't have been natural a few moments after it first occurred.

A being formed in the light shroud—a form of a woman.

She was dark haired—brown nearing almost black, with some length past the shoulders, grey blue eyes, skin toned a shade that spoke enough to say she wasn't fair skinned—taking a bit away from the theory that she was a specter. She was garbed in fairly ordinary wear—a spaghetti strapped tank top in black, simple khaki Capri pants, and a simple chain with a pendant dangling from it.

She apparently was looking for someone, and apparently that someone was—him.

He didn't recognize her; to him she was a total stranger. He could've seen a similar face in the crowd many times over the years, but not that exact one. Even with his lack of recognition in her, she somehow recognized him.

“Are you out looking for me?” he called out to her, just to be sure he was the one she was out looking for. She didn’t flinch, but rather replied calmly to his inquiry.

“Actually—yeah,” she replied as she approached. “I was told to come looking for you—and another.”

“What other?” he asked. “Who else are you looking for?”

“A girl,” she replied. “Who I’ve already found. I just needed to find you for her, and here you are.”

“A girl?” he asked. Suddenly he was anxious to press her for information. “Can you give me info on this girl? I’ve been looking for someone in particular, and if that someone is the same girl—“

“A brunette, tall, a bit odd—and eerily cheerful,” the woman replied. “Eerily like someone I’ve dealt with before—“

“Starfire,” he said, with some relief. “Where is she? Is she okay?”

“She’s out there,” the woman said. “I didn’t bother to relocate her until I found you first. She seems fairly insistent on you being found for her. She apparently needs you. I guess being out here for several days on end can make anyone desperate for some kind of people contact. I sure would be.”

“Can you take me to her?” he asked, getting up. “How far of a hike is it?”

“Don’t bother with hiking.” She replied. “I sure did a while ago when I got a more convenient mode to replace it.”

“What—“

“Let’s just say it’s a nice version of a little thing called teleportation,” she said, cutting him off. “The white shroud is part of the process. Marks how I come and go. It’s kind of neat.”

“I’ve had some experience with teleportation before,” he said. “How does your mode work?”

“Grab hands, think where you want to go, and—ta-da! You’re there,” she replied. “Its that simple.”

“Okay,” he said. “Just grab your hand?”

“Yup.”

“Hey, can I ask you something?” he said.

“Yeah,” she replied. “Shoot.”

“Who are you, and how is it that you knew where to find me, and why did you come for me in the first place?” he asked.

“I’m a whitelighter,” she responded. “I was informed to look for you and your friend for some

reason—something with a prophecy, and the involvement of a few people I happen to know.” She paused for a moment, adding afterward, “Oh, and you can just call me Prue.”

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Starfire was very weak—and fairly dehydrated. She’d calculated that she was into day five of her entrapment in the wilderness while being all alone and injured—and weakened. She didn’t dare waste what strength she had left on attempts to cry out for help when she didn’t have it to waste on the remotest inkling of an opportunity for a rescue that came along. She had to reserve it for the one she could validate as being pure and true.

The fall from the strike made on her in the air had left her with a sprained ankle, which she didn’t realize until late into day two. It kept her from moving about even more than weakness or possible fear she still held for whatever was out there.

She was losing hope that she’d ever be found, and it faded even more where it concerned the one she’d hoped would be her rescuer. She was starting to fear that maybe the illusion—or what she thought was an illusion—might not have been one at all. She was starting to really dread that being the reality.

The dread and worry for the one she loved kept earthbound—that, and the weakness and fatigue that plagued her.

The sun stood midway through its descent high in the sky, marking it at being somewhere around early noon. The day was warm—the boastings of a perfected summer day nonetheless. The combination of the summer day’s heat and the lack of hydration were starting to play with her mind, making the line between delirium and rationality a very thin and indistinct thread.

She saw in the near distance a shimmering array of light orbs—white and blue—disrupting the space that was not marred with it before—or maybe she was seeing things—maybe the lights weren’t even there, real—

The lights didn’t fade, nor did they portray themselves as being just a delusion. They existed for moments longer than she would’ve expected, eventually dissipating. In their place—instead of the nothingness she was expecting—stood the form of a woman. A woman she didn’t recognize, but one she was relieved to see nonetheless.

Again thinking it was still just a figment, she gave it time to confirm its reality before reacting. Moments—long moments—passed, and the form of a woman still remained.

She was dark haired, medium skin toned, and a relief to see for the extremely fatigued Starfire. She didn’t question just how the woman came to be—she was just grateful she was there.

“Hello, friend!!!” Starfire cried out with the last reserve of strength she could muster for it. “Please! I am in need of assistance!”

“Hey—are you the one whose been stranded out here by chance?” the woman called back. “The girl who was shot down from the sky about five days back, and has been MIA since then?”

“Yes,” Starfire replied. “I was shot down just about that many days ago.”

“I’ve been looking for you,” the woman replied. “I was told to put you on my case load to go in search of. I’m glad I found you without too much trouble.”

“Who—may I ask—would you be?” Starfire asked. “I am not familiar too much with beings that form in an aura of bright blue-white lights, and it would be satisfactory to imply a name to my rescuer as well.”

“I’m Prue—a whitelighter,” the woman responded. “The whole blue-white aura is a whitelighter thing.”

“The beings also referred to as guardian angels?” Starfire asked. This obviously caught the one there—Prue—by surprise.

“You’ve heard of them?” Prue exclaimed. “For someone who had to inquire about what it was, you sure know what it represents.”

“A friend of mine has been associated with one—a whitelighter, and my knowledge is mainly from that,” Starfire spoke. “I am weak. Could you be of some assistance?”

“Probably,” Prue replied. “I didn’t come out here to find you—and just leave you.”

“I am afraid I cannot move, as my ankle is throbbing with much pain—too much to withstand walking upon,” Starfire said. “I cannot truly move.”

“Got ya covered there,” Prue replied. “The ankle—I can fix that, no prob.”

“Really?” Starfire’s eyes brightened. “How—“

“Whitelighters are gifted with the ability to heal,” Prue told her. “Most things anyways. A sprained ankle is as easy as pie for me when it comes to healing.”

Starfire was grateful at the concept, hoping that the one named Prue was really capable of what she stated she was able to do. Prue approached her, only making slight crunching noises as she walked upon dried pine needles and peat moss. As she got close, she knelt down on her knees beside her, palms hovering just inches from the ankle left in pain for the past five days. At first Starfire watched incredulously at the effort, still in question of the possibility of it being real, but as the pain started to subside and the swelling lessened to nothing, she started to let the disbelief slide away completely. She was left in awe and complete wonder as an after result.

To test that it was a reality, she got up on her feet to test the ankle that had left her in pain for five days straight. She felt none of the pain she thought she would, and she beamed at that fact.

“Thank you!” the grateful Starfire hugged her savior, maybe a bit too tightly for that matter. Prue was apparently left gasping for air because of the constricting grip the Starfire unintentionally had on her. Realizing her error, after she acknowledged the gasping sounds the woman was making, she hastily loosed her grip, hoping terribly that she hadn’t harmed the guardian angel.

"I am sorry," Starfire responded as Prue regained regular breathing patterns. "I am just grateful, and I got a bit—carried away."

"Yeah, okay," Prue responded.

"Have you—by chance—come upon any others out here on the reaches of this wilderness?" Starfire asked her.

"I was actually sent to search for two people—you being one of them," Prue said. "You have a friend involved in a prophecy that also seems to involve some people I'm close to, and the connection I guess meant that I was especially sent to find you because of it, among other things. She's been wondering your locations, and I guess with this prophecy you two were in need of being recovered. I've found you—now all I've gotta do is locate the guy."

"Who is this friend of which you speak of with this involvement of the prophecy?" Starfire inquired.

"Another whitelighter's charge named Raven, I believe that's it," Prue responded, getting back up on her feet and standing straight. She dusted herself off afterwards.

"You're in search of another—" Starfire got caught up in thought for a moment. She came to realize whom Prue was referring to. Her eyes grew wide and desperate. "You must find him! I have been strong in fear he has met up with the worst of fates, and the fear has been eating at me these past few days. It would bring me much relief if you could recover him in full health. I cannot accept what the fear has instilled in me until I have full proof of a grim prospect." Her eyes became pleading. "Please—you must. You must find him."

"I will," Prue assured her. "I don't give up until it's the only possibility. It's not my philosophy to."

Starfire let out a sigh of relief.

"How do you intend to?" Starfire inquire curiously.

"I can track him," The woman—Prue responded. "Get his signature, pinpoint his location, and then go find him. A bit of help from you—and I'll be set." Prue asked Starfire a few questions, received some answers, and then put the answers to use. "Do you want to go with—to get him, that is?"

"As much as I anticipate it—"Starfire paused momentarily. "It would be of much greater joy if you could bring him back here for me rather than have me go to him. It would be more pleasing to see the relief on his face as he comes to me."

"You're going to stay put then?" Prue asked her. "You want to stay right here—and wait?"

"Yes," Starfire confirmed.

"Okay," Prue said. "I'll be back shortly then. And whatever you do, don't get lost again. Wait right here." She disappeared much like she had come, the orbs of white and blue announcing her departure

much like they had her arrival.

Prue was gone, and Starfire was left. She was left to wait—and anticipate.

—The reunion she was so much anticipating that she didn't realize she wanted it so much.