

BOOK FOUR



AT THE HEIGHT OF THE COLD WAR, THE SOVIET UNION -- DETERMINED TO WIN THE SPACE RACE AT ANY COST -- GREEN LIT A DANGEROUSLY ADVANCED MISSION, SENDING SEVERAL COSMONAUTS TO THE EDGE OF THE GALAXY. DEEP IN SPACE, THEY ENCOUNTERED SOMETHING UNKNOWN AND WERE IMBUED WITH GOD-LIKE POWERS OVER TIME AND SPACE. THEY RETURNED TO EARTH TO FIND THAT DECADES HAD PASSED, AND THE SOVIET UNION HAD COLLAPSED.

YEARS LATER, TWO OF THE COSMONAUTS — ABRAM AND MYSHKA — LIVE A QUIET LIFE WITH THEIR NEWBORN SON IN A REMOTE REGION OF RUSSIA. BUT WHEN STRANGE BEINGS FROM ACROSS THE GALAXY KIDNAP THEIR CHILD, THE COUPLE MUST TRAVEL TO THE EDGE OF THE UNIVERSE TO SAVE HIM. WHEN THEY ARRIVE IN THE UNKNOWN, THEY DISCOVER THE CHILD IS PART OF AN ANCIENT PROPHECY, AND THE VERY BALANCE OF THE ALIEN WORLD IS AT STAKE...

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PLEASE... WE WERE ASKED TO HOLD THE CHILD UNTIL THE CEREMONY COULD BE COMPLETED.

WE ARE NEUTRAL IN THIS FIGHT.



WE SIMPLY WANT WHAT IS BEST FOR ALL. THE CHILD SERVES A PURPOSE. IT MUST BE TAKEN TO THE PLATFORM AND PLACED IN THE PORTAL OR OUR ENTIRE REALITY WILL FALL APART!



STOP!

WHO?!

DAVID CAMP...?



DON'T YOU SEE?



THEY HAD GOTTEN TO ME. FOR THE FIRST TIME, DAVID CAMP TEMPTED ME TO USE VIOLENCE.

TO DESTROY.

DON'T YOU SEE WHAT THIS CHILD MEANS? I CAN SEE IT ALL!

IF WE BRING HIM BACK TO EARTH?! IT OPENS UP POSSIBILITIES BEYOND YOUR UNDERSTANDING!



EVEN NOW THE THOUGHT OF THAT MOMENT TERRIFIES ME.

CAMP? HOW DID YOU GET HERE?!



IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR YOU, MYSHKA.



REACHING OUT TO ME. SHOWING ME THE TRUTH ABOUT US. OUR CHILD. REMINDING ME WHO I AM.



ENOUGH!

I WOULD HAVE TAKEN A LIFE IN THAT MOMENT. BUT INSTEAD, WITH ONE MAGIC TOUCH--YOU GAVE ME BACK MYSELF.



WHERE ARE WE? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?



WE ARE TALKING, DAVID. WORDS. THIS IS WHAT WE BUILD OUR REALITY WITH. IDEAS. ISN'T THIS WHAT YOU JOURNEYED FROM EARTH FOR?

I'M TRYING TO SHOW YOU THAT WE HAVE COMPLETE CONTROL OF OUR LIVES IF WE WANT IT. LACK OF IMAGINATION IS ALL THAT LIMITS US.



MY EYES ARE OPENED! YOU WANT TO KEEP THIS ALL TO YOURSELF! ALL OF THIS POWER! THESE "IDEAS!"

MY SNIPER FIRED THE SHOT THAT OPENED A GATEWAY FOR ME. THE OBSERVER WAS AN UNFORTUNATE CASUALTY.

BUT I OPENED THE DOOR SO WE COULD ALL COME IN. YOU CAN'T STOP US. INFINITE KNOWLEDGE! POWER!

YOU TOOK A LIFE. THAT IS NOT WHAT THIS PLACE IS ABOUT. THE UNKNOWN IS ABOUT BALANCE. IDEAS. IMAGINATION.

I KNOW THIS. YOU DON'T THINK I KNOW? I SEE THE PATTERNS! WHEN YOU CAME BACK TO EARTH YOU TOUCHED US ALL. WE ALL HAVE SOME OF WHAT YOU BROUGHT BACK.

LISTEN TO ME, DAVID. THIS WAS ALWAYS HERE. ALWAYS AVAILABLE.

WHEN YOU TOOK THAT LIFE TO GAIN ACCESS TO THIS PLACE... YOU ENDED A LIFE THAT COULD HAVE IMAGINED COUNTLESS WORLDS. MANUFACTURE MILLIONS OF IDEAS.



BUT TELL ME HOW DID YOU GET HERE? YOU GOT HERE WITH VIOLENCE.

ONE LIFE. EVERY LIFE ECHOES FOR GENERATIONS.

WHERE I USED TO SEE PATTERNS IN ROCKS... TO CLIMB? I NOW SEE THOSE PATTERNS IN THE UNIVERSE.

THE OBSERVER? HIS LIFE? IT WAS A STEPPING STONE FOR ME. ONE IN A SERIES.

THE CHILD IS NOT A STEP FOR YOU. NONE OF US ARE. IT IS NOT MY PLACE. BUT I WILL LET MYSHKA GIVE YOU A GIFT. I AM SURE SHE WANTS TO HELP YOU ACHIEVE YOUR ULTIMATE PURPOSE.



AND MY PURPOSE? IT IS TO CLIMB! I AM SUPPOSED TO BE HERE. AND I AM SUPPOSED TO GO FURTHER.

I SEE THE ENTIRE PATTERN LAID OUT. THE CHILD, MYSHKA... ALL OF YOU ARE ARRANGED WITH PURPOSE AND I SEE IT ALL! YOU ARE ALL ROCKS... STEPS FOR ME TO--

WHO ARE YOU TO DECIDE MY ULTIMATE PURPOSE?!

ME...?



WHA!?!

I AM A FATHER.



ABRAM!



UNGH...



I AM A HUSBAND.



I AM A MAN.



I AM AN IDEA.