

## Chapter II

The wounded warrior looks at him. He touches Sekou's head. Then he touches his chest. His left shoulder and then his right shoulder are touched. "Armageddon."

"What are you doing?" asked Sekou.

"I am blessing you. I am preparing your body to receive the blessings of the God of Antioch."

"My body hurts," he yells.

Sekou grabbed his body. The pain is intense. The world is revealed by the

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glowing warrior without filters to him. Memories of ancient civilizations long since dead are transplanted into his cerebral cortex. Now he knows why the holy men he saw in his youth stared out into space.

He looks at the aged warrior. The warrior looks at him. "Thank you," said the old warrior as he dropped dead. Ancient muscles desiccate instantly revealing a blue skeleton. Wolves ran out of the forest towards the blue skeleton and Sekou. Fear races through Sekou. The blue skeleton suddenly stood up. A third eye opens on its forehead, revealing to Sekou that the old warrior has achieved enlightenment.

"Do not be afraid," the skeleton motioned. "I am not dead. My Master wants me to heal you."

The skeleton put his blue bony fingers onto Sekou's head. Words not heard for ten thousand years echoed through the forest. Sekou's body quickly heals itself.

"My journey has ended little man. Yours has just begun," said the blue skeleton. "I will now return to the Master."

"Master?" asked Sekou. "What is your God's name?"

"I do not know. He has no name," said the skeleton.

"Your god cannot match the power of Ahuramazda," exclaimed Sekou.

"Ahuramazda? WTF. Your Persian deity is no match for the God of Antioch." He looked at Sekou. "You are young. You still have time to learn."

"Do you know how to pray?" asked the blue skeleton.

"Absolutely!" Sekou asked, "Am I not a servant of Darius the King?"

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"Great Ahuramazda, the greatest of gods, he created Darius the King, he bestowed on him the kingdom..."

The blue skeleton interrupted Sekou, "Ahuramazda? OMG. You do not know how to pray. Let me teach you what I learned in Antioch."

"Please kneel," requested the blue skeleton.

Sekou kneeled. "I will show you how to pray. The prayer is simple.

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.

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Thy kingdom come.  
Thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass  
against us,  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen."

Sekou repeated the words and said  
"Amen." An invisible blue force field  
enveloped him. Ancient Aramaic  
sounds emanated from the hills. The  
sacred sounds of the universe. The

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sound waves embrace him. Strengthening him. He felt rejuvenated. His mind felt alert and his heart was cleansed of animosity to his fellow man.

"Rise. Rise Sekou, the Hunter," exclaimed the shiny blue skeleton. "Now you will battle evil throughout the Achaemenidian Empire."

Sekou asked, "How will I do any of these things? And with what army will I fight these men?"

"Oh. Yes. I am sorry. I forgot. You will need weapons," muttered the dead warrior's glowing blue bones. He snapped his bony fingers.

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Solid blue bands instantly appeared on Sekou's wrists. Each wristband had a star on it with unfamiliar symbols all over the stars. Sekou did not understand the meaning of any of the letters.

"I do not understand," said Sekou to the skeleton.

"Let me show you. Start at the top. Then go to the center. Go from left to right with your right hand. Then move your right hand back to the center of the star," said the warrior. "When demons appear, the blue wristbands will appear."



"Rise up, young hunter. Look toward Antioch and say the prayer I taught you. The God of Antioch will help you find meaning and inner peace. As He reveals your powers to you, you will have even more questions."

"But I have no questions," said Sekou.

"You will have them, hunter. You will," said the skeleton.

The blue skeleton touched Sekou on the forehead in the manner he told him to touch his wrist bands. Tremendous energy flowed from the dead warrior's blue bones into the frame of Sekou. The old warrior's tracking experiences and battle

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techniques became part of Sekou's memory. The blue skeleton's neuro-muscular patterns transferred into the RNA of Sekou's ribosomes. Through the biological process of translation, this genetic data flowed freely into his neurons, tendons and muscles.

Sekou's muscles grew massively. His quadriceps got larger. The sinews between his arm muscles separated. His latissimus dorsi became more pronounced and serrated. A blue glow appeared around him. He was an awesome sight to behold.

"Rise Sekou," the skeleton motioned.

"Tara!"

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A ferocious white wolf, nearly the length of a horse ran out of the forest. She came and kneeled before Sekou, the hunter.

"Tara will be your companion. She will guide you. She will be your friend in the darkest of nights. When the stars are dark in the sky, she will guide you through the night," explained the dead warrior's skeleton. The she wolf let out a blood curdling bark.

"Sekou. Tara. You both now walk a path that no hunters before you have traversed among the Achaemenidians. You will be the sworn enemy of Mithra

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and his infinite demons," bellowed the dead warrior's skeleton.

Seeing Sekou's confusion, the old skeleton decided to explain to him who Mithra is. "Mithra reins in the night. The Dark Lord searches for the souls of children who will threaten him in the future. He can smell their genotype. All the dark recesses of Persepolis are home to him. You will battle the dark forces that Mithra controls. You will stand up against Rome. You will battle the dragons of the East. You will protect the progeny of Darius the King and his vassals, " said the blue bony cyclops.

Sekou asked, "How will I find

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Mithra?"

The skeleton answered, "Wherever there are abandoned children, you will find the Dark Lord. His minions will be on the lookout for male children with a certain genotype. Throughout history, this genotype is only created when the radiation from the North Star hits the unborn fetus within the thirteenth week of its gestation.

This is the genotype Herod was looking for. This was the genotype that Ramses was looking for. This is the genotype that must never be given any credential or knowledge. No wealth will be accorded to this genotype."

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"Why are you telling me this?"

"Sekou, you have this genotype!"

"Why boys? Why not girls," asked the hunter.

"I do not know. One day, you will meet me again. Maybe then I will know the answer," said the bewildered blue skeleton.

"This specific genotype is common among the disappeared. One day you will learn about chromosomes. Each of the children who get kidnapped in Persepolis has a similar chromosomal

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pattern.

"Families rise, Sekou. Envy ensues. Families fall. Mithra feeds off this rise and decay in all civilizations. He feeds off the love that parents have for their children. He takes advantage of their uncertainty. Uncertainty leads to fear. Fear of the unknown is what Mithra preys on.

"When you approach Persepolis, you will see that children are stolen from homes. No one knows why. The constabulary does not know why. The king does not know why. The parents will be bereft. Soon they will get paranoid and neurosis will ensue. Then they will blame God.

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"Mithra destroyed Carthage. He will soon destroy Rome. He will destroy the East as well. But here, along the Arabian peninsula, we must be wary of his growing power. Many are attracted by his promise of immortality. Many will lose their souls chasing that delusion. The only immortality any human can have is faith in the God of Antioch.

"Trust your king. Trust your laws. They will help you when you think all is lost. This is a civilization after all. When Mithra appears, the blue wristbands will reappear. My bow and axe..." The skeleton corrected himself. "Excuse me, your bow and

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axe will also appear. Your weapons can only be used against the Dark Lord. With respect to the fools and criminally minded, you will have to use your wits. Leave them to their folly. Do not engage them. Your mission is to protect this land from Mithra.

"The Achaemenidians built a capable administration. Others have improved it. Let them do what they are paid to do. As for human corruption, not even the God of Antioch can prevent that.

"Sekou, I am tired. It is time for me to leave you. Tara will be your companion. Goodbye Sekou, The Hunter," said the blue skeleton. He turned towards Antioch.

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The blue skeleton's voice whispered into the sunlight. "Ashes to ashes. Dust to dust." His remaining eye closes. His blue bones slowly disintegrate into the wind. A blue iridescent glow rises among the myriad colors of the morning sunrise, racing towards the heavens.

Light.