

Chapter Two

Leaving Allorana to guard the door, with what was at stake; Shashanna knew her daughter would not let her down. Damn Arika! Even with her vision clouded, he should know that she wouldn't worry over anything less than the truth.

Shashanna took a moment to gaze at the interior of the temple after shutting the door firmly behind her. For being a simple people, their temples are complex. This one and the others like it spread throughout Mu. The inside of the temple is as wide as it is long is evident by the pyramid shape outside, but unlike that same pyramid shape, this room inside is one might think.

Other cultures, especially that of Atlantis are under the impression that because Lemurian's are simple, it means that they are unintelligent. More fool them. For being simple does not mean simple-minded. However, sometimes, letting them believe otherwise works to the Lemurian's advantage better.

No, in fact, in some ways, they are more intelligent than the Atlantean's, for all of their sciences.

Science. While it has its place, does not replace working *with* the magic of the world, and not against it.

Shaking her head, Shashanna returned her focus to the temple.

Staring around, she took great pleasure in seeing the stone walls and floors were still spotless and shiny from the earlier scrubbing she had given them. The statues and reliefs showing the gods in their different aspects, gleaming softly in the torch and candlelight.

Walking the length of the temple to the altar at the front, Shashanna knelt before it. There she began the process to open her to the gods.

Grasping the bowl on the altar's rear left corner, she examined it for any flaws. Seeing the paint still crisp and the bowl unmarred, she placed it in the center. Leaning to the right, she grasped the pitcher that held water that she had retrieved herself from the sacred spring. She poured the water into the bowl, humming quietly as she did so.

She replaced the pitcher and picked up the candle that was burning softly at the foot of Koeos, and lighted the twigs that waited in the firepit for just such a need. Concentrating on the god of intelligence and deep searching questions, she waited for the flame to grow and steady itself. When the fire was ready, she grasped the glass knife at her hip. Placing the sharp tip on her finger, she drew it across and watched the blood well from the cut. She flung her hand toward the flames and watched as her blood was absorbed by the fire. Placing the same hand in the bowl of water, she withdrew it and flung the beads of water into the fire as well.

Finally, she leaned as close to the flames as she could get without burning herself. C her eyes, she breathed his name into the flames. "Koeos." Repeating it two more times, she felt the world around her waver. When she next opened her eyes, she was in the ethereal realm with the god before her.

To her kneeling form, Koeos stood tall. The intelligence glimmering from his eyes, scrolls surrounded him.

"Daughter." He murmured, acknowledging her and her right to be there.

"Great Koeos, your daughter and the children of Lemuria need your wisdom and insight."

"Yes, I have heard." He sighed. "My brothers and sisters who rule Atlantis are up to mischief once more. Or rather, their children are, assuming it is the will of their gods. Unlike the *Chimu*, they do not focus on the spirituality and communication with the gods, and it leads to many mistakes in their lives."

"Yes, I have seen the end of their civilization from their misunderstanding. But, I have also seen our destruction as well. I know not what will bring it about, but I know it is to be."

"As the years pass, and the *Chimu* wanders further away from spirituality and oneness--as they, too, fall prey to the heaviness of Earth--they will bring about their own destruction. A destruction wrought by the very gods that once protected them."

"You."

Again he sighed. "Yes...Us. There will come a point that we will not be able to help anymore. Especially when we will have our own battle to fight."

"You know this? You know the future?"

"Not myself. I do not have foreknowledge. Just a very deep understanding of the nature of things. It is the nature of those with power to always seek more until there is nothing left but these choices, to defeat and destroy, or to *be* defeated and destroyed themselves. Even you may one day be tempted, daughter."

Shashanna bowed her head in understanding. "I pray to you and your brothers and sisters that I will remain true to my path."

"That is all we can ever do. Strive to be the beings we want, and stay true to the oneness of all." He glanced at a scroll before him. Picking it up, he looked at it for a moment before putting it back down. He looked back at the woman before him. Even though he acknowledged her in a manner that allowed her to stand, she still remained kneeling in the role of the supplicant. "But, come, daughter. You did not come to talk about this. What is it that you need?"

"It is close to what we have already discussed, Great Koeos, I have had a vision, but it was cloudy. I seek clarity."

"Why did you choose me and not one of the others?" He asked, curious about her choice.

"I chose you for your wisdom and insight into what is and not what might be."

"That could still fall under the description of an oracle." Koeos said mildly.

"Yes, it could, but I seek understanding, not further visions or confusion."

He chuckled. "Yes, those that are gifted with the ability to 'understand' can be frustrating at times, but one of intelligence can find the true message in the heart of the confusion."

"I realize this." She sighed, the frustration rolling off her. She lowered her head, and took a few deep breaths. She lifted her eyes once more to Koeos. He could tell she was trying to master her emotions to look with a pure mind. He nodded with approval. "I seek to know facts. Facts of now. Facts of what is. Not facts of what might be, no matter how certain. I seek understanding and insight."

Koeos nodded as he stood. Walking over to Shashanna, he took her by the hand and lifted her to her feet. Retaining hold on her, he walked her into the main room of his library. "All knowledge is attainable. All knowledge exists for all to use, if they know the means to access it." He waved his free hand around, indicating the vastness of the room. "Knowledge is static, yet it is ever-changing. Within the confines of this room, all is known, even what is not yet written. That takes special care to access. However, what is written about what is to come, and what has passed is available to all, you, more than others, can access this at any time."

He looked at her. "Things need not be unclear or confusing. When it is, further knowledge is needed. What you seek has not yet come to pass, but it is written. I do now know

what the particular problem you are worrying about is, but I will teach you to access this universal knowledge to help you better. However, remember our earlier conversation; the seeking of power is a dangerous one. Always tempting you from what you know to be true, oneness, to that of subjugation of others, even in the name of protecting them. Even the pursuit of knowledge can make that swing happen. It is also dangerous to fall into eternally seeking the definitive answer. There *is* no definitive answer. There is only what we perceive that is to be the answer.

Shashanna listened to all Koeos said, while staring around her in wonder.

"What is the particular answer you seek?"

She turned to look at the god before her. "The vision I saw had been of a fleet of ships full of armed warriors seeking someone in our village."

Koeos turned his thoughtful eyes to gaze around his library. Moving to a table set in the center of the room--one Shashanna had not noticed until this moment--he placed his hands on the slightly glowing surface. Speaking aloud his desire for information specific to her vision, a scroll appeared before him.

Looking down at it, Koeos' brow furled into wrinkles. He straightened and the scroll disappeared.

Shashanna waited as patiently as she could, but she couldn't seem to stop herself from shifting from foot to foot as she waited for him to address her. Finally, after what seemed ages, he finally turned back to her. Holding out his hand to her, she walked over and took it. He guided her out of the library and through his temple to his outer garden and led her to a pool of water, made dark from fungi, algae and plants. Occasionally, a flash of light was seen as a fish darted past. The whole time he led her, he was silent, causing Shashanna to bite her tongue to keep from saying anything.

Koeos sat her on a bench next to the pond, as he took a seat next to her.

"Daughter," he sighed. "I had no idea that this was occurring, that my brothers and sisters wouldn't even be aware of this."

"Aware of what?" Shashanna asked anxiously.

"Their children, the Atlantean's, are ever-increasingly jealous of the *Chimu's* powers. Not just all the Lemurian's, but of yours in particular."

"So this is aimed at me?"

He looked at Shashanna and saw that the priestess was growing more anxious. "Yes...and, at the same time, no." Frowning, she tried to figure out what he meant precisely. She is told she is the gods' strongest priestess, and at times, even that was not enough to understand these beings. "Daughter, come, look into this pool."

Koeos chuckled. "Shashanna, not everything is magic, at least, not in that sense. Everything around you is magic, even the mundane." He indicated the water. "Here you see fish and other water-life living in the murkiness of the water. The water is cloudy, showing only glimpses of the world outside the pool. The fish are content with that. They are happy, for the most part, but the fish are not the only life-forms in there. The algae are also a living life-form. And it ever increasingly takes over the pond, threatening to overtake the world that the fish live in, threatening their very existence. Yet, there are yet other life-forms in there. There are snails, among others, that devour that very alga. It is their sustenance. Their life. So they keep control of the algae, at the same time helping the fish. The snails make it so that the glimpses of the world outside of the pond are there for the fish, yet at times, the snails are woefully inadequate in their

job, causing the balance of living in harmony with all the life-forms in the pool to become threatened.

"The fish are the humans. The snails are the priests and priestesses. The algae are the mysteries and magic. Among the humans are people who can see beyond the fog of the mystical, and can show others beyond that as well. However, there you have those that are jealous of that harmony." He waved his hand as a bird that had been rooting in the grass nearby took to the air. S a fish near the surface of the water, it dived and clasped that lone fish in its talons. F away, with the fish struggling desperately, yet futilely, in its grip.

"Like that bird, there are those that prey on the humans. It can come from above, like that bird, or from below..." He indicated the water, where a predator fish edged its way from beneath rocks at the bottom of the pond. "Or even from those that you trust, or live in supposed harmony with." He pointed to a few fish that were feeding off one of their own. Tearing scales and flesh from it as it twitched, too weak to get away.

"But...what does it mean? I see what you show me, I hear what you tell me...but what does it mean?"

"Remember how I told you that there are those that are jealous of you?" Shashanna nodded. "They are planning on taking something from you. Just like that bird plucked that fish out of its home, somebody from Atlantis is planning on plucking something you care for from you and your village."

"Allorana!" Shashanna gasped, suddenly feeling weak. Koeos nodded, g that she had finally grasped the knowledge that he had been trying to show her. "I must get back." Shashanna struggled to her feet.

Koeos stayed on the bench, not attempting to rise. "You must be prepared to fight this with everything you have. She is a key..." He suddenly cocked his head, jumping to his feet, he said, all but growling it. "Go, hurry. It has begun."

Shashanna paled. Claspng her hands by her heart, she nodded and bowed at the waist. Koeos touched her head and she vanished, back into her world and from that of the gods.