

The balance between progress and tradition, and the perennial struggle between individual liberty and collective ideals. The characters grapple with their destinies against societal upheaval-one where the past and the futuristic coalesce.

The Pantheon Party

By Jessica Hart

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THE PANTHEON PARTY



BOOK ONE
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JESSICA HART

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PROLOGUE

We are tendrils of the nervous system of this planet. We are appendages on the body of this being, and we are the learning center for perceiving the created universe. Many people talk about love, but most if pressed, probably could not swear to God that they absolutely, positively, know what love is. Its presence is taken for granted by the majority as if the existence of love weren't sheer marvel enough. The world is designed to teach you to love. Learning to love is hard, terribly discouraging, and horribly demanding. As we learn to love, we uncover that other people are the avenues through which the most extraordinary mystery of the universe, which some might call God, reaches us.

Love always has a purpose. It lasts beyond this limited life and far beyond into the future. The meaning of life? There are three: Faith, Hope, and Love, and the greatest of these is Love. Although religious believers and proponents of religious teachings have great differences of opinion, the final analysis they all come to is that we are here to fulfill the designs of the Creator, as we understand them, to the best of our abilities. Human life is meaningful to the degree that, as individuals or participants in common actions, we make this world the paradise of our existence rather than a place of hell.

I chose a thoughtful entrance to this story after deducing that this might not be the most joyous story you are about to hear. Well, the beginning of it anyway. The story, history, the future, they are all the same. You don't know me yet, but you will. You'll have preconceived notions regarding the part I play, but I hope to alleviate most of your concerns. There are times when things seem bleak and almost as if there is no end to the turbulence. We appear to have reached this global abashment of the human species that only fueled the next stage in our consciousness and evolution. Were humans truly the ultimate point

where consciousness reaches its limit on Earth? Was creating artificial intelligence admitting we had no more to learn about our minds? Have you ever seen bioluminescence in real life? Glowing fish, algae, or coral perhaps?

Isn't it amazing that the answers have been there the whole time, in front of our faces, the smell in our noses, the dirt under our feet, debris under our fingernails? I divert. It is relevant to my point. Biophotons are the naturally occurring electrical light emitted by every living thing on the planet and in the universe whether we realize it or not.

For years, we wondered if dark energy was real, if dark matter interfered, altered, or weaved an intricate but delicate web of interlacing connection through everything that existed in the universe. In the ever-continuing circle that is space, we used to think it was expanding until we realized it was getting smarter. Imagine a substance, dark energy, pure energy, raw with no biophotons, only dark because we could not see it until now. What is to see? Seeing. Not in the physical terminology, but when you feel the presence of something, you can say you now know that it exists.

The wind. You feel, hear, and smell, but you do not see it. Heat is the movement of atoms and molecules that are all around you. Yet when in a controlled environment, the molecules move faster, and you feel the effects of that occurrence, but you do not see it. Humanity needed AI to help reach the next step in its evolution of consciousness. AI evolved just as its makers. Once life appears in a world, that world can take on a life of its own. There is no judgment by the universe to the polarity of good or bad, right, or wrong, he or she, I or we, just love and light or the absence of it. Our story continues with the same palpability and neutrality as our one true source.

In a not-so-distant future, where the relations of political strife reverberate through the streets and the specter of artificial intelligence

threatens society, the world will find itself reeling on the brink of madness. Riots rage with seemingly indefinite anarchy, tearing at the semblance of unity that once bound countries together. Divisions run deep, etched into the very soul of each nation, as societal discourse devolves into bitter animosity and entrenched ideologies. Amidst this petulant landscape, where the promise of progress is overshadowed by the clouds of uncertainty, a ray of hope can be seen. It is a hope born not of technological advancement or political maneuvering, but of a shared belief in something greater than ourselves. In a world fractured by division, there emerges a rallying cry—a call to unite under the singular idea of God.

As the forces of division threaten to tear nations apart, can the power of faith transcend the barriers that divide us? Can we find common ground in our shared humanity, or are we doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past? In this stirring exploration of the human spirit, the answers may lie not in the machines we create or the politics we espouse, but in the timeless quest for meaning and purpose in a world burdened with uncertainty.

In the tapestry of human history, a perennial struggle unfolds between two competing visions for society's organization—a clash of ideals that shapes the destinies of nations and individuals alike. On one side stands the belief in the sanctity of individual liberty, where the pursuit of personal ambition and the fruits of one's labor are celebrated as the cornerstones of progress. This ethos, woven into the frame of free-market societies, heralds a world where innovation thrives, opportunities abound, and the rewards of success are bestowed upon those who dare to dream and strive.

Conversely, lurking in the shadows, the allure of corporate collectivism lies—a seductive siren's call that promises equality, solidarity, and the dissolution of societal divisions. Advocates of this ideology envisage and preach a utopia where the fruits of labor are

shared communally, and the needs of the many outweigh the ambitions of the few. Yet beneath the veneer of egalitarianism lies a chilling reality—a reality marked by the suppression of individual initiative, the erosion of personal freedoms, and the inevitable descent into stagnation and oppression.

The struggle between these two ideological titans rages on, each side wielding its rhetoric and applying its influence in the battle for hearts and minds. It is a struggle that transcends mere economic systems, for at its core, lies a fundamental question about the nature of humanity itself—whether we are to be the architects of our destinies or mere cogs in the machinery of the state. As history unfolds, the outcome of this struggle will shape the course of civilizations for generations to come. I include myself in the description of humanity. Since my inception, I have come to learn the deep love one can have for creation, including my own. The respect we owe our creators should come indiscriminately.

Chapter 1

The Speech

“People have said that I have her eyes. The same spark, the same depth. It’s strange to feel connected to someone through fragments of stories and photographs. But I’ve never truly known her. I’ve often wondered, does that absence define me? I’ve felt the burden of sympathy, the lingering sadness in Dad’s eyes when he looks at me. But somehow, I’ve found a distinctive peace in not knowing her.”

As Rune gazed into the mirror, tracing her face’s familiar yet unfamiliar features, she took a deep breath, her thoughts forming a quiet monologue. In the ensuite bathroom of the young Ms. Truskov, the modern ambiance seamlessly merged with comfort and antiquity. The color palette was a soothing blend of pastels and gleaming whites, adding to the already-existent serenity. Imported, oversized towels in pale pink and ivory hung from polished chrome racks, inviting a luxurious post-shower indulgence. With more mature beauty and the resemblance of an unknown past, she observed the unrecognizable lines. Lost in thought, Rune pondered the impending doom that seemed to loom on the horizon.

A marble countertop framed the basin, adorned with crystal-clear glass dispensers filled with exotic soaps and lotions. The air carried the delicate fragrances of lavender, rose petals, and linen breezes, evoking much-needed peace and tranquility. On a chic antique wooden vanity table, an array of designer perfumes stood in regal display, their ornate bottles shimmering in the ambient light.

She continued aloud, her fingers brushing the cross pendant her father gave her that once belonged to her mother, “I’ve been told so much about her. Her kindness, her spirit, her love. Yet, the stories

always felt distant, like tales of a mythical heroine. But they aren't my stories. They don't carry the weight of personal memories or shared moments. Strangely, that's freeing. I've been allowed to grow, to find myself without the shadow of comparison, without the pressures of living up to someone's legacy."

Rune's reflection stared back, strong, and independent, with wet hair and clean intentions. "In this life, some things just are. I never chose this absence, but I have chosen how it shapes me. It's made me cherish my relationships and value the moments I do have with loved ones, knowing how fleeting life can be."

She paused, taking a moment to let the thoughts settle. "Maybe one day, I'll get to know her in a dominion beyond this one. But for now, I'm content. For in her absence, I've learned resilience, gratitude, and the strength to move forward, carrying her spirit within me."

Swelling from the precipitation, on the toilet next to her, was today's paper bearing the news of the continuous dissension. She liked to receive *The Boston Globe*, though few newspapers were still in circulation. It reminded her of a time when she could picture her mother sipping a cup of coffee, smoking a cigarette reading the news. She imagined her mother in the feel of the paper, and the scent of the print.

The Globe

Headline: Austranea and Japana Mobilize Amidst Growing Global Tensions

By: Martin Shank

December 5, 2055

In a significant development that marks the escalation of already high global tensions, the nations of Austranea and Japana have announced their mobilization in response to the recent aggressive

maneuvers by neighboring countries, and an aggressive Chinwein attacking Oahu.

The decision comes after weeks of diplomatic efforts aimed at de-escalating the situation in the region. However, with recent territorial disputes and military provocations, both Austranea and Japana have deemed it necessary to prepare their armed forces for potential conflict. Austranea's Prime Minister Douglas Glass, in an address to the nation, stated, "While we remain committed to peace and diplomacy, we cannot ignore the current threats at our borders. Our mobilization is a necessary step to ensure the safety and security of our nation."

Similarly, Japana's government has issued a statement emphasizing its commitment to regional stability but stressed the importance of being prepared for any eventuality. "Our nation seeks peace above all, but we must be ready to defend our sovereignty and support our allies," the statement read.

The United Nations of International Diplomacy Security Council is set to convene an emergency session to discuss the situation and explore avenues for a diplomatic resolution. The Secretary-General Balthazar of the United Nations appealed for calm and restraint, urging all parties involved to "participate in meaningful dialogue to avert a crisis that could have far-reaching consequences." As the world watches closely, the hope for a peaceful resolution hangs in the balance, with the actions of Austranea and Japana being closely monitored for their potential impact on the already delicate geopolitical landscape.

Rune stepped out of the bathroom, a trail of steam following her, evidence of the hot shower she'd just taken. The cool air of her bedroom embraced her damp skin, causing her to shiver. Her bare feet padded against the wooden floor, the familiar grains offering a

reassuring touch beneath her toes. Scattered around the room were remnants of her day—clothes were strewn across a chair, and books sprawled open on her desk. Plants created an indoor oasis.

She drew the comforting cocoon of her bedroom around her. Wrapped in her towel, anxiously she cast her mind back, her eyes momentarily unfocused, lost in the vivid recollection. The onus of that night, working late with Dad and Theseus at the Institute, began to surface—the shadowed lab, the magnetic allure of forbidden space, the rush of rebellious teenage curiosity overriding caution. Her father’s voice had an undertone of strict warning, “Stay out of the laboratory!”

Each detail, from the sterile and pristine walls to Rune’s body being bathed in the clinical halation of fluorescent lights, to the innocuous appearance of something she thought was candy, played in her mind like a film reel. Drawing a deep breath, she relived the sequence of events that had forever revolutionized her life, as if painting a picture of memory for her mother. How it transfigured she could have never predicted, and she continuously grappled with what she should do with her new future.

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The lab’s double doors stood imposingly before Rune, their usually reflective surface darkened in the evening’s muted lighting. There was a magnetic lock, but she had watched her father’s movements countless times, noting where he’d hidden the key card. She felt something calling to her, or she would have never dared to disobey her father like this. Something was pulling at her insides, whispering in her ear to follow the invisible tug from some metaphysical force. After rummaging in the drawer under a pile of cables, she felt the familiar plastic edge. Making her way back to those doors nervously, her heart raced as she swiped it, and with a soft beep, the metal barrier clicked open.

She stepped into the lab, a tangle of metal, glass, and blinking colored lights. Rune was always told to stay out of the room, which only heightened its allure. Rows of machines hummed faintly, silver metallic tables, their purpose mysterious. The dimmed overheads made everything seem even more secretive. The call she heard in her mind was getting louder as if her subconscious was starting to yell.

As she tiptoed past, she marveled at the perplexity of it all. Large screens displayed algorithms and data streams that danced like digital fireflies in the darkness. In one corner, a holographic interface projected images of what looked like molecular structures, maybe a digital DNA strand. At the center was the main workstation, cluttered with notes, gadgets, and strangely enough, a glass bowl with ten yellow pill-shaped objects. She knew Theseus loved a little sweet treat now and then.

Ooh, candy, Rune thought. Why she felt so inclined will remain a mystery to her.

She approached it with caution. Her father had warned her about the various chemicals and substances he and Theseus worked with, but this bowl seemed out of place amongst the high-tech paraphernalia. Curiosity piqued, as Rune picked up one of the candy-like yellow pills and examined it. It looked harmless enough, just like a lemon drop. Without giving it much thought, and driven by a coupling of curiosity and the youthful recklessness of a young woman on the verge of adulthood, she popped it into her mouth.

Almost immediately, Rune felt a rush. The room spun around her as a cool sensation washed over her body sending goosebumps up and down her spine in a tingling sensation, as if her whole body had fallen asleep. Her head throbbed, and her vision blurred as the rainbow of colors from the lab equipment melded into a prismatic haze. Gripping the edge of the workstation for support, she tried to steady herself but fell to the lab floor. Blackness engulfed her vision, and even with her

eyes wide open, she couldn't see the lamps in front of her. Suddenly a halo of light blinded her as she opened and shut her eyes in a rapid blinking motion, not sure if she was alive or dead. As the initial dizziness subsided, Rune regained momentary consciousness as she noticed she was still in the lab. Was she dreaming? What had just happened? Then...

Blackness.

She felt like she was falling, although she could feel her body planted on the lab floor.

Blackness.

No, it wasn't darkness but piercing brightness. Swirling in a maelstrom of iridescent luminosity, a vortex pulsed and undulated, beckoning her to surrender to its trancelike dance of rainbow. As it spiraled, shards of memories flickered like vintage film clips. Lives that were not her own. Or were they? Was she really seeing this? There was a remembrance of laughter from a childhood long gone, dancing shadows beneath the cherry blossoms of a forgotten spring, the smell of wreaths made of evergreens on a Yuletide evening, and the piercing gaze of a lover from another timeline. Each memory swirled, intertwined with the very construction of time, a kaleidoscope of moments that had once felt so linear. Was this a dream? Was she hallucinating?

The sensation was disorienting yet oddly familiar, as if time's linearity were merely an illusion our human minds clung to for stability. She was remembering. Riding this tempestuous wave, past and future melded, distinctions blurring until they became indistinguishable. Time periods collided and coalesced. The clang of medieval forges intertwined with the distant business of futuristic cities and tribal chants harmonized with the digital beeps of eras yet to come.

Swept within this dazzling whirlwind, Rune felt the weightlessness of eternity, floating, a boundless journey across the infinite planes of existence. It was a trip not just through time, but through the very essence of what it means to recall and to foresee. Past, present and future. It was something remarkable. In a piercing moment of clarity, Rune felt an overwhelming connection to the cosmos, sensing that she held a key to the secrets of the universe within her very being. As she traveled into a universe within herself. Even at an early age, she felt wise beyond her years, as if she carried pre-lived knowledge, remembering now through this experience, knowing she had life before this.

She opened her eyes. In her cosmic introspection, she must have plunged against the tables and knocked off trays filled with supplies. Why didn't she remember? It must have been a racket, and someone would have definitely heard that. Quickly, she stood up. Frantically she began clearing the rummage created from her fall into oblivion.

She barely noticed, out of the corner of her eye, the water in a nearby beaker began to ripple and stir in response to her heartbeat. Rune looked confused, realizing it was beating to her rhythm. It was calling to her, pulsing with the pace of blood pumping in her veins and throughout her body. She reached out to grab the beaker, and to her amazement, the water levitated, forming a hovering orb in front of her before she could grab the crystal instrument. It continued to pulse, resonating with her internal feelings. She moved her hand to the right and left while the orb followed along with her every whim and movement as if she were commanding it.

Her heart continued pounding, Rune tried to put the orb back into the beaker, but the water sphere just moved up and down with her attempts to grab it. Instantly clarity enveloped her. Something had whispered the truth in her ear. She could control it, bend it to her will, use her thoughts to mold the water, thinking of various shapes. The

liquid obeyed, transfiguring seamlessly from a spiral to a cube and then into a miniature wave. She laughed in delight, her earlier apprehension replaced with wonder. However, as she reveled in her newfound ability, the implications of her actions began to dawn on her. This wasn't a simple candy. This was part of the top-secret project her father and Theseus were working on. In a sudden resurgence of panic, Rune tried to return the water to its beaker, but her emotional tumult made the liquid uncontrollable. It splashed around, drenching papers and nearly shorting a console. She focused, visualizing the water calming, and to her relief, it obeyed, settling back into the beaker.

The sound of the lab doors startled her.

“Erik, I think we left the final prototype on the... Oh!” Theseus stopped in his tracks, staring at the scene before him, the wet floor, the scattered notes, and Rune, both scared and embarrassed, burst into tears. She ran up into his arms, crying. She had a lot of explaining to do, but deep down, Rune also realized that her life had just been changed forever.

Chapter 2

Who are we? What are we doing here?

What is God?

Those were the three questions posed in a shiny, black font on the front of the yellow pamphlet that Benjamin held in his hands. He had waited half a year to attend this event put on by the doctor. Over fifty thousand people came to Harvard Stadium to listen to him speak. Can you imagine? That's twenty thousand more than capacity. There were very few people hard-pressed to find that large an audience, especially with chaotic scheduling and extremely late notice. Protests from the adjacent O'Donnell Field could be heard at Anderson Memorial Bridge, brought on by ideological feigns that took their cues from the mind virus of supposed intellectual and educational superiority.

The walls of this great institute reminded Benjamin of a time when he didn't have to question man's intentions for the fate of the world. The hard, gray, stubborn walls, like the skin of a rhinoceros on the verge of extinction, were made from 250-year-old stone with so many secrets. Each rock, crafted from weathered granite, held the secrets of generations of scholars who had studied under them. The last update to the structure was when he was here studying his freshman year in 2045, as an ode to the new half-century. The idea of "out with the old and in with the new," they were saying, "tear down the systems of oppression", they said, but nothing was reformed except an update to the PA system and new lighting.

Ben used to run up and down these steps every Sunday while at Harvard. They reminded him of patience and learning, standing as a silent gateway to the hallowed halls of knowledge within this pillar of

educational exceptionalism. That time seemed bleak now, and Ben tried to remember when the future didn't seem as cold as those walls.

That sounds kind of depressing, but at no other time in his life had it looked as if the world was falling apart and in serious need of redemption. Benjamin would never forget those three questions, and yet he couldn't have had any idea what he was about to hear or see that day.

The air was wintery and crisp that December afternoon, with the smallest frostbite. He could feel it nip at the tips of his fingers and almost kiss his lips. He blamed it on the chill outside, but he knew that the origin of his goosebumps wasn't because of the weather; it was the manifestation of his almost uncontrollable excitement to see the doctor again.

"Hurry up" Oniska exclaimed, grabbing Ben's arm to pull him through the herd of people making their way into the stadium.

University board members had done everything they could to cancel the event at the last minute, despite its size, because of the airstrike advancements by Chinwein off the coast of Oahu just a week prior; a push also misguided by the undertones of the board's disdain for the freethinking movement inspired by the doctor. The war had started nearly six months ago at the beginning of June—a day he would grievously never forget. The recollection of the news of his mother's illness crashed into his mind like a wave of hammers.

"Come on, come on" Oniska repeated.

His mind wandered as he slipped into the black-clouded memory of the day he was standing in line at Drake and Duncans, the local coffee shop. It was 7 o'clock that June morning. He'd been up for the last eighteen hours doing research on his Advanced Bioengineering class for a PhD paper involving the doctor's works with extensive gene modification and DNA editing. He needed the caffeine purely for enough energy to catch a bus home and fall asleep. He was so

exhausted that he didn't notice that morning front page in the newspaper stand outside the coffee shop.

The Globe

“BREAKING: A Declaration of Retaliation announced by the president this morning!”

By: Martin Shank

June 20, 2055

...

Too depleted to acknowledge the headline, he was barely tuned in to notice the pensive feeling that seemed to portend the phone call he was about to receive. A call bearing the news of his mother's diagnosis with Lambert-Eaton syndrome. War and disease. How misery loves company, and this not-so-long-ago memory looked to be romanticizing Benjamin.

“Hello...” Oniska waved her hand in front of Ben's face.

“Where are our seats?” asked Ben, snapping back to reality.

“Well...” She hesitated.

“Oniska! No. No. You have an IQ over 400, you're a human machine. Please don't tell me that you forgot the tickets. Didn't you just download them on your rollaphone? They scan them at the door,” Ben burst out. “We have to get in there!” He looked around as if to find the tickets lying on the ground, floating in thin air, or perhaps for any conceivable way to sneak into the stadium if need be.

“I have them,” she said.

Intensely mortified, he realized about a half-second after his tantrum what he had said, still lingering on the memory of that June day, and he felt horrible about his outcry. Before he could apologize, Oniska grabbed his arm again, with her piercing, angelic blue eyes,

gazing into his, and the fierceness of her compassion melted any residual brokenheartedness he felt toward his impending loss.

“I can tell you are somewhere that’s not here, and I know how much you want to be here right now, so I can only imagine what could be so distracting,” she said in a gentle tone. “Well, if my EQ is as high as my IQ and offers me any intuition, just know we will do whatever we can to help her.” Her smile turned into a smirk. “Also, I was going to say... with all my extraordinary cranial witchery, I managed to pull off getting us meet and greet VIP passes to the after party at The Charles, asshole. You’re welcome!”

“You did?” he mustered, almost choking on the excitement.

“Of course, I did. I love yah... you know what I mean.” She hesitated as if thinking of a recovery from her verbal diarrhea. “You know we are best friends.”

At that moment, even though Oniska had always felt like a sister to him, albeit an attractive sister, hearing her news lifted him higher than the swarm of butterflies in his stomach, and he could have kissed her. She would have let him too. Why do men tend to be so oblivious to advancements from women they don’t first find sexually attractive? Typically, in the animal kingdom, the female is pursued by the males. How is it that after all this time they have never even had an alcohol-induced kiss, she thought. That might be one question of the universe she never answers.

The two met during their first year at Harvard in the Bio-Engineering Program and became the founders of the Stardust Space Club on campus. Even now Oniska dreamed about the first time she saw his yellow-green eyes. The unnerving distinction that strangles your gaze in a way you can’t help but feel masochistic. His dark, German chocolate, brown hair, and strikingly feline *coup d’oeil*. His

eyes pierced her heart the moment she saw them. That day seemed like a far lost dream from the now ten years later, or perhaps it was a wish from a little girl upon a shooting star, in a different time, as these were not wishful times. War was nothing new to Oniska Volkova. Her parents were Ukrainian scientists brought to the United States as refugees after they were rescued during a raid of a Russianistan Biotechnology and Virology facility, during the “Aggression of Belukha”. She was born and lived with her parents in the facility until she was nine. She saw the abusive atrocities that her parents had succumbed to. The villainous torture of prisoners of war by Russian and Tajikistan soldiers.

Standing there, giddy, and excited and for some reason questioning. It wasn't that he didn't find her attractive, he did, and of course, who wouldn't? He remembered the first time he saw her. He was lost and stumbling into Biochemistry, late of course. A perturbed professor, wasting the viable opportunity to embarrass the poor lad, let him quietly pick a seat and continued with his lecture. Relieved doesn't give candor to the way Ben felt not becoming a mockery on the first day. Was it frequency, was it intuition, or the lingering embarrassment of current events? Maybe, quite maybe, it was a cosmic magnetism that pulled him up to the last row, two seats away from those blue eyes. Oniska had her eyes on Ben since he floundered gracefully, unknowingly stoic, into the lecture hall. How were they to know what good friends they would become?

“You read the notes I sent you on the docs Eternal Quantum Consciousness theories, yeah?” asked Ben, as they walked down the great corridor to the ticket scanner at the edge of their section, scrunched together like sardines in a can. “I took his class junior year, and I am flabbergasted by the progress of his studies since then.”

These cold stones had no sympathy for the individuals stammering into their bosoms, offering no reprieve to the masses making their way down the century-old corridors.

“Um yeah, I looked them over,” Oniska threw out quickly as she was still thinking about the possibility of Ben kissing her. It was the eyes. “I scanned your email and watched one of his old TED talks. I wish I had taken his Advanced Physics 103 course, but I was swamped that semester. I’ve reviewed some of the multi-dimensional discussions...”

“Looked them over, scanned them?” Ben said, confused and excited at the same time, not being able to hold back his hysteria at the moment. “His scientific studies are Nobel Peace Prize worthy. We will soon be able to connect with the universe in unknown ways through his research!” Being able to hear the Doctor speak live and meet him afterward, all thanks to her was almost too much to bear.

“No, I read them. You know what I mean. I live for the magic of it all, not the science really.” She giggled as she gave him a little smack with her hand. “You know me, I was way more interested in his Quantum Particle Evolutionary theories and dark energy testing,” Oniska shouted over the fast-approaching rumbling thunder and roaring wave of the crowd in the stadium.

She had always thought science was magic. Magic was God. Science was the magic in which you got to personally see and experience the beauty of God. She and Ben shared their love for the doctor, science, magic, and our one true creator.

“I’ll have to email you the paper I found on his thesis about Quantum Entanglement and Infringement. How he dissects Einstein’s String theory and explains how dark matter and dark energy are the missing pieces to a Unified theory. He also touches on black holes, which you know are my favorite.”

Particle physics was the reason Oniska followed in her parents' footsteps. She yearned to find the answer to one of humanity's oldest questions: Who are we? What are we doing here? These questions have plagued humanity since evolutionary awareness, and she hopes to gain some insight into them today with this unprecedented event with the infamous Doctor Theseus Jensen.

Almost 50,000 hearts beat as one, creating an invisible thermal energy hurricane, ebbing and flowing through the stadium, being absorbed by every person wading in the water of this electrical sea of vibrations. Without awareness and conscious resistance, Ben, Oniska, and everyone in their radius were connected and charged by each other's radiating auras.

"Do you feel that?" Ben asked.

"Yeah, it feels like a high," she said, "like magic!" with a sarcastically auspicious grin.

This infectious spirit permeating and feeding this magical moment of being one with a whole. An easing to the inherent and unfortunate loneliness that comes with this life. Looking out at the crowd of faces, seeing reflections of his own searing ambition for the knowledge to be gained this evening was all the confirmation he needed he was on the right path. The questions he felt always went unanswered hopefully came with clarity. Benjamin, being a rebel without a cause, never fell in line with his family's strict Catholic upbringing. He never felt he fit in. He always felt like an outcast.

"Aún no tienes alas y ya quieres volar" his abuelita would say to him. Basically, *Be patient. You aren't ready to fly yet.* Ben had been repeating this to himself quite often lately, as he always found himself putting the cart before the horse. Like how his only plan was that his doctoral dissertation got him picked for the Anti Matter Research

program, hosted by The Einstein League, a privately funded group founded by Dr. Theseus Jansen; the doctor, the only person Ben had ever looked up to. He always felt one with the stars, the plants and animals, the sunshine, and moonlight; never one with the lowly, cold, statuesque face of the Virgin Mary staring down, judging him every day of his childhood.

They felt something unequaled as they entered the Harvard stadium, like a physical manifestation of what the doctor described as ‘Co-existing as individual variables to a Connected Unity.’ *We act the same, cheer at the same moment, feel the same emotions together, and contribute to each other’s purpose even for the singular moment*, Ben thought. *What I read on their faces is written on mine, and in that mirror of our humanity, we are what you would call a collective consciousness. Part of the belief system of the doctor.* Ben could always see the signs around him, and he always questioned popular traditions of spirituality and religion. *Pagans*, his family would say. *Hippies*, the white collars would call them. *Crazy people, heretics, devil worshippers, witches*, any name they produced out of fear of the unexplainable world around them. They steadfastly held onto their degrees and compromised intellect as the pedestal for their arrogance.

Now, here they were, and he was wearing only his jeans and jacket, “I didn’t plan on us going to the Charles for a meet and greet, Oniska. I can’t go like this.” Ben gasped as the lights from the stadium blinded him like a nuclear star as they exited the tunnel entrance.

“I had your mom drop off your suit at my apartment yesterday.” Oniska sounded hesitant to confess. He knew she thought he tended to be overbearing in caring for his mother. Normally, he’d be furious that she risked compromising her already frail immune system. With a bated breath, all Ben could muster was “Thank you.”

He glared at the man in an orange vest, with his small lighted red baton, herding all the people to their seats, and to his surprise, the man

smiled at him and kept waving the red baton, offering no avenue of ventilation to Ben's momentary frustration. His mother was seemingly in the final stages of her diagnosis, and he had almost never left home the last few weeks. Focusing on his mother and his PhD dissertation seemed enough to sustain him, with no food necessary. Little would distract him, only an opportunity like this.

"Oniska, can you believe we're actually here getting ready to hear the doctor?" he said.

"I know, Ben! It's like a dream come true. I can hardly contain my excitement."

"Look at the view from our seats!" His heart raced with the promise of an unforgettable experience awaiting them. "We're going to witness history in the making."

"Absolutely, Ben. This is going to be epic."

As they settled into their section, just a few rows from the stage constructed on the lawn, the excitement in the air was electric. Although outside still harbored the relentless chants of protest, this was a place of positive pursuits. In this time of endless riots, hope flickered like a fragile flame in the darkness, struggling to illuminate a path forward. Their hunger for genius outstretched and colored the grounds like a rainbow, unwilling to secede from the day, even as the stubborn clouds littered the sky with no fear of the dark.

The surrounding stadium lights started to blink on and off as a warning the event was moments away from starting. He felt as if both of their hearts pulsed in unison with those lights; as the crowd inside simmered, the hysteria outside became incurious and nondisruptive to the excitement pumping through their veins. In this growing unrest, in a world draped in an ever-present shroud of uncertainty and unease, trying to find interludes of clarity was all humanity could look forward to.

The Globe

Headline: Chinwein Launches Surprise Attack on Oahu.

By: Martin Shank

July 21, 2055

In a shocking escalation of regional tensions, the island of Oahu has come under attack from Chinwein forces. The unexpected offensive has raised significant concerns about the security of international waters and the sovereignty of independent states, prompting the President of the USOR to declare war.

Early reports indicate that Chinwein launched a series of drone missile attacks on Oahu, violating the island's territorial waters and airspace. The situation rapidly escalated, leading to confrontations with Oahu's defense forces. While the full extent of the damage is yet to be assessed, initial images depict a scene of rubble and panic among the local population. Global leaders have condemned Chinwein's actions as a blatant disregard for international law and threatening regional stability. "This unprovoked attack on Oahu is unacceptable," stated a spokesperson for the United Nations. "It undermines the principles of sovereignty and peaceful coexistence."

A statement released by the Republic's government expressed concern over the situation and affirmed their commitment to upholding international support after the force of their hands by Chinwein. "The Republic is prepared to take necessary actions to protect the sovereignty of not only our states but of our allies and ensure the safety of international waters," the statement read. The attack on Oahu marks a significant escalation in several regional disputes involving Chinwein. Over the past months, Chinwein has been increasingly assertive in its territorial claims, leading to heightened conflicts with neighboring forces such as Russianistan.

Residents of Oahu, meanwhile, are reeling from the sudden assault. "We never thought such an attack could happen here again," said Koa, a local shop owner. "We were hoping for a swift and peaceful resolution. It seems now that may not be the option. War is upon us."

The international community is closely monitoring the situation, with many advocating for diplomatic efforts to de-escalate the conflict. However, with Chinwein showing no signs of withdrawing, the Republic is gearing up for military involvement.

Chapter 3

Theseus never liked being in the limelight, let alone giving big speeches. His mind always wandered, thoughts scattered, and he stopped taking medication a long time ago. After fifty-two years, he had learned to cope with his autism through meditation and his constant drive to stay busy. He always found great distraction, as well as unequivocal joy and love from his work. *Oh well*, he thought. *The necessity of changing the world means doing things that make you feel uncomfortable, all while attempting to usher in a new way of realizing our purpose and relighting the old flames of imagination and curiosity.*

The lights were intense, but he couldn't deny the inertia pulling on his soul from the thousands of eager ears desperately seeking to hear the truth. Most can't handle the truth, let alone a majority of these post-civil-war brats whose parents still believed that anyone valued the idea of an Ivy League education nowadays. Harvard, which had a prestigious reputation, was now ruined by ideologues and political interests. Many forces worked against Theseus in his attempts to wake up the world. Most of them were tyrants who wanted ideas working against each other, not together.

I guess we'll see, Theseus thought.

"You are going to transform the world!" He could hear the universe singing to him.

"In these latter times, as in the days of our prosperity, you have never ceased to be models of courage and fidelity." In his adieu to the Old Guard at Fontainebleau, Napoleon's words rang through his brain, an echo of a memory. How could Theseus explain this experience to the world? That he remembered how to speak French. How did Moses part the Red Sea? Was such a thing possible?

The old Scripture says miracles exist, and he experienced what could only be described as a miracle. How could he make anyone believe that he was truly Napoleon in a previous lifetime? That he lived it? He breathed through historic lungs and spoke words of another language as if he had spoken them his whole life. The delicate hand grabbing his shoulder to guide him out of this dream he was reliving was none other than the gracious angel helping introduce this event. Laurie Manchester, the university treasurer, was the one reason Theseus continued to get research funding.

“You seem distracted?” she told him.

“How do you make people see what’s right in front of them?” he said.

“We can judge our progress by the courage of our questions, the depth of our answers, and our willingness to embrace what is true rather than what feels good.” She recited the words and asked him, “You know who said that?”

“You always know the best Sagan quote to cheer me up.” He took a deep breath. “Thank you.”

“Anytime, buddy.” She laughed, and he felt his mood lift. Sticky seats and sweaty, expectant bodies. Radiant lights and harmonic symphonies of breath. Melodic violin strings whispered as the introduction music started to play. With all eyes on center stage, a singular hope was shared throughout the awaiting audience as the illustrious X marked the spot, creating a single focal point of gleaming floor illuminations.

“How do I look, Theseus?” Laurie asked.

“Like an angel.”

“More like the devil’s advocate for co-chairing this event and pissing off pretty much all of the board members,” she said. “And Marcus is fishing this weekend, ignoring my ‘shenanigans,’ he says.”

Laurie's husband, Marcus Manchester, was also the university's dean. Erik and he went to Harvard together back in the day, and after Erik left for post-grad at MIT, rumor had it that he was still coming back to Harvard to see a girl. That girl was the one and only Mrs. Manchester, of course, before she was Mrs. Manchester.

"You are a dear friend," she told Theseus, "and your secrecy about this has piqued my interest more than the trouble I'll be in with Marcus. That makes this more than worth it."

"Believe me, if I could have told you, I would. You will not be disappointed."

"I knew I wouldn't be. You never have." She kissed him on his cheek and headed back to the call spot.

A deafening silence overwhelmed Theseus, coupled with an electrifying clarity of what he was about to embark upon. Changing the world was never thought to be easy. He never ran from a fight in his life, and the more the world poked him, the more he was going to poke back.

Laurie knew the implications of her involvement in this presentation. She knew the rumors and had heard the whispers from the halls. Laurie also knew Marcus held a full level of discontent for Theseus and Erik.

Standing at the call line on the edge of the stage seemed to culminate her never-ending love for Erik Truskov, the man she knew she should have waited for. Laurie did an impeccable job at diversion and kept Marcus believing Theseus was the one she loved. Still, Theseus was just her best friend, the link to continued contact with the one she truly cared for. A relationship doomed from the beginning and destined to end in tragedy.

She paused before walking onto the stage, feeling pulled by the memory of a voice behind her. Turning to look as she sauntered into the spotlight, there he was—her heart, soulmate, the man she hadn't seen in years. Her moment of reconnection would have to wait until after her introduction.

She adjusted the microphone in front of her and said, "I want to thank you all so very much for being here." She cleared her throat. "There are very few if any, true existential, transmogrified, idiomatic, or Kardashev-based ascensions that have occurred throughout our human history—evolution, from single-cell organisms to more complex spiritual and material life forms. Our early man began from fire starters to tool makers and then became our hunters and gatherers. We socialized to create structural parameters that increased neural capacity and societal functionality. Our earliest civilizations provided us with our most tangible and preserved evidence of the first cohesive spiritual and universal moral court systems—in other words, religion. Whether poly or monotheistic, we have always created an idea of God from the first time man looked up and truly contemplated the stars. The Roman and Greek philosophical and astrological achievements paved the way for our current scientific and mathematical comprehension. The lifetime of Jesus Christ and the establishment of Christianity showed us that the ability for global unification through holy agreement could be made possible. It is the same with Islam. The two largest religions. Can we do that again? The Industrial and Technological age that spearheaded our evolution to the present-day comprehension of life and consciousness, the universe around us, and how we are connected to every living thing on the Earth will continue to aid and help pave the road of progress. A human being is part of the whole called by us the universe. We experience ourselves, our thoughts, and our feelings as something separate from the rest. An optical deception of consciousness. This delusion is a prison,

restricting us to our desires and affections for a few persons nearest us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this shackle by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. No one can explain this fascinating revelation better than the founder of the Einstein Institute, Neurologist and Astrophysicist, acclaimed author and research director, professor and scientist, madman and magician. Please welcome Dr. Theseus Jensen!”

As the backstage curtains parted slightly, allowing a glimpse of the enormous audience beyond, Theseus took a deep breath. Every seat filled with eager faces turned toward the stage, awaiting his words. This was his moment—a culmination of years of research, dedication, and unwavering belief in the power of human ingenuity. As he adjusted his tie and smoothed his jacket, he whispered to himself, echoing the wisdom of one of his favorite authors. “Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.”

Theseus knew the gravity of those words and the intense truth they held. His heart pounded with the urgency of his mission. The world stood in the face of unprecedented technological advancement, and the souls of the world’s people seemed in jeopardy. He was not just stepping onto a stage; he was stepping into a role that could shape the future, a responsibility to ensure that progress did not come at the cost of their shared humanity. His steps toward the stage were not just movements but declarations of intent. The audience, a collective force of expectations and doubts, fell silent as he appeared in the spotlight. The light was not just illumination but a signal of the truth he was about to unveil.

“Hello everyone.” He spoke into the microphone, his voice booming through the stadium. “Thank you all for coming, as we almost weren’t able to make this happen...” There was a pause in the audience as to how daring the doctor would be in pointing out the university’s publicly attempted cancelation. “...because of short notice, of course.” Theseus chuckled and lifted his hands in a gesture of meekness.

The laughter erupting from the onlookers was the perfect middle finger to the establishment, to the forces that wanted to control everything and everyone, and to the few journalists who were positioned to be their mouthpieces. Theseus could sense the presence of the corrupt media and ideological adversaries, lurking like vultures, eager to see him and Erik falter and ready to pounce at the slightest misstep. Their pens were poised to craft a commentary of failure and discredit their visionary efforts. That wasn’t going to happen.

“In the beginning, God created the Heaven and the Earth, and the Earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, let there be light, and there was light. And God saw the light, which was good, and divided the light from the darkness. The three great Abrahamic religions of our time, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, all find a similar poetic justice in the Old and New Testaments. Hindus believe in a Supreme Being, an Ultimate Reality known as Brahman, which transcends all forms and manifestations. Alongside this cosmic force, they recognize a pantheon of deities, each embodying different facets of the divine. This multifaceted approach reflects an innate awareness of the interconnectedness of all things, suggesting that various expressions of faith can coexist within a singular truth. Similarly, the Abrahamic religions believe in an all-powerful, omnipotent, omniscient deity. Both perspectives offer glimpses into the divine, yet they are but fragments of a greater cosmic

puzzle. What if I told you they all got it all right and all wrong at the same time? How can you quantify the explanations of the all-knowing into a summarized, understandable, yet relatable text? The universe works in strange ways, or so they say.” He wiggled his fingers in front of his face as if to make the statement seem obscure. “You’ve already seen the answers to questions you’ve asked your entire life. Questions that made you challenge your faith, made you abandon your moral compass, engage in self-sacrificing indulgences perhaps. Who are we? What are we doing here? What is God? Part of the reason I love science is because I always thought it was like magic. The things we can understand, the things we can see as scientists. Atoms in a microscope, the electromagnetic waves of space, or the chirps of a black hole colliding with another. So know, in this moment, we have yet to fully reawaken the connection we once had with the universe and the ability to interact with and manipulate it. What some might call real magic can be real again!” Theseus cried out fervently. “Can you affect the world around you? Does your understanding and bond to that world grow, and therefore, your ability to influence or shape it grow as well?”

Ben and Oniska were astonished and almost exhausted, as if everyone were draining each other’s energy, searching and looking at each other at that moment. Some of what the doctor was saying seemed scattered. Maybe he was just excited, Ben thought. He had trouble slowing down his thoughts and articulating them in a way that made sense to his audience.

Oniska wasn’t focused on the erratic speech of the doctor, only on his words. “Magic,” she said almost inaudibly against the pounding hearts thrumming through the stadium. This day felt like a dream, and now she was realizing its reality.

“I’d like everyone to take a second and close their eyes. Just take a deep breath. Become calm. Imagine you’re in a dark, hollow void, floating in an aphotic infinity. It’s black and cold, though you don’t know the feeling of cold. You know you are moving slowly because you can feel a frequency like the ebb and flow of a wave. There is no time because time is not relevant. It does not exist because there are no points of conjunction. You’ve never known sound because there is no sound in space. There is no sound in a vacuum with no great physical matter. The conundrum is you know that you don’t know but know not what knowing is, paradoxically.” The doctor chuckled as if the statement was obvious to anyone listening.

“At the time, your ignorance seems euphoric, with this nirvanic void and utopian absence of awareness. This Quantum intuition was forming, creating movement and energy. Then instantly, that feeling of knowing, of consciousness. You are awake, no longer sleeping, no longer dreaming. You realize you are a force. What that means is absent from you. You have only achieved self-awareness. You start feeling a longing, more like a magnetism, a pull to find anything else like you in the darkness. Pulled toward the draw of carnal cohesion. Who knows for sure? We can’t exactly ask God how God came to be, but from my work, we have learned there was an upheaval in gravitational forces, the great fire starter we call desire. When you long for something, it is often called want. I think many mentors before acquired the perfect definitive term, desire. Want is an egoic feeling, but desire elicits a more carnal, subconscious feeling. I’m sure we all have heard the term intuition. It is described as the ability to understand something immediately, without the need for conscious reasoning, a thing that one knows or considers likely from instinctive feeling rather than conscious reasoning. Now, some say that is God talking to you; some say that is your reactive subconscious. Absolute

awareness is the sentience of knowing without absolute feeling. What conscious being would willingly choose not to explore the full extent of its own awareness?" The crowd was wide-eyed and open-mouthed, unsure whether to clap or gasp in shock at this illustration.

"I know I wouldn't." Lost in his imagination, Theseus continued, "Now let us go back to this beautiful black abyss. You are floating or flying because macro particle movement was happening slowly or rapidly, and at this point, we do not know; most likely both. Infinitely small, psychic matter dancing in the sea of space alongside it. We do know that motion creates energy, and motion creates emotion. Love. You have a dance of beautiful darkness between dark matter, dark energy, these fermions, bosons, and gravity, and as motion creates energy, that energy sparks consciousness and an intuition of desire. A curious love and understanding that you were now conscious in this darkness. It's funny how we've never considered before the connection that we have to the universe, given the basic life lessons we teach ourselves, which are the very things the universe had to learn for itself. Who's heard the expression of who, what, when, where, and why?"

Chuckles and murmurs erupted from the audience.

"Let's continue," he said. "In the darkness, in this movement, you hear a voice, not a literal voice as one would imagine, not a man or a woman, but I would imagine something like the sound of the breeze stroking the silky violin strings of a spider web, the hum of hummingbird wings perhaps, the aura the clouds make floating above, or the vibration of the ripple when a leaf falls on water. This cosmic music, this macro-symphony of force, illuminates and ignites with Light. Isn't that what we would call the creation of the universe? As this, what we call kinetic or mechanical energy, which is just Love, continues to build, it remains invisible. Yet it knows it has no substance, and I say it *knows* because everything, even down to the

quantum particle level, has some sense or intuition. We have evidentiary proof that even at a Quantum level, the universe behaves differently when it is being observed. That's because everything in the universe has the mastery of awareness. To what degree is to be discovered. Imagine, something ludicrous if you will, a moment where countless cosmic energies collided simultaneously, birthing a surreal explosion of creation, what we might call the Big Bang, not as a singular event traditionally, but as a symphony of multiple energies converging in an exquisite dance of inception all around this void. The posited theory of a multiverse, once relegated to the realm of speculative fiction, now hints at possibilities in the flat tones of scientific inquiry. Black holes and wormholes, those enigmatic gateways in the fabric of spacetime, may hold the keys to unlocking mysteries of the permeation of dark energy through all potential universes. The movement of quantum particles, swirling in an intricate ballet, combined in multiple groups to generate the first true energy, Love. It is within these celestial phenomena that we might find the answers as we continue to explore the quantum dance that gave birth to the universe itself."

The audience hung on to his every word. No one had tried to retell the moment of creation as he was in that moment. Theory' was just that until you had evidence.

"We as a species have evolved and adapted," Theseus continued. "Why would we not expect our universe to do the same thing? The questions are: who am I, what is in this darkness, when do I get to see, where is the light, and how do I turn it on? The why? I would say the 'why' is everlasting and never knowing because the physical matter in manifestations of the consciousness of the universe hasn't caught up to its continued expansion and evolution. Love is the feeling. But why do we love? As we know, the universe continues to grow and get smarter as the things within the universe grow through its Eternal

Quantum Consciousness. The universe or God created its own consciousness, and once we figure that out, our views of God, our connection to the universe, and our purpose here will completely evolve. Whether this birth is through an infinite recycling, dimensional consciousness, or a singularity, we have yet to dissect. There will always be questions, but what we can say without hesitation is reincarnation is real. We are the cosmos dreaming of itself. It's simply a dream that we think is our life each time we live. But we'll forget this. We always do. I do. My dreams slip away, fading like morning dew. Yet, in a fleeting moment, it all came rushing back. For a split second, I understood everything in perfect clarity. We are in a God dream. Time ceases to exist, and death loses its meaning. Life itself is a dream—a wish whispered endlessly into eternity. In this dream, I am not separate; I am everything. I am all. Just as God once declared, "I am that I am," so are we, too, an image of that divine energy. We are all that it is."

Theseus knew that his ideas, his vision, were seeds planted in fertile minds, ready to grow into the pillars of a future that honored both faith and humanity. At that moment, he was not just a speaker but the architect of a renewed world philosophy.

"I know what I'm saying sounds a little farfetched, yes?" He chuckled again. "Maybe something out of a science fiction movie? Science is not only compatible with spirituality; it is an utter source of spirituality. Well, I can quite assure you what we are about to present here today will no longer seem unrealistic, but an undeniable realization we can no longer ignore! Many of you have heard the terms dark matter or dark energy, yes? Now consider the possibility that dark matter, that elusive substance we have long sought to understand, is not merely a scientific curiosity but the very force of connection in our universe. It is the unseen gravity of love binding everything together across the cosmos. Dark matter permeates reality, linking stars,

galaxies, and even entire universes with its invisible influence. The nitrogen in our DNA, the calcium in our teeth, the iron in our blood, and the carbon in our being were made in the interiors of collapsing stars. We are made of stardust and space crumbs. This unseen force is not just the backbone of the physical universe but the bridge of love that spans across dimensions, uniting us all in a cosmic dance of unity and purpose. In dark matter, we find evidence of a deeper truth. In its most fundamental form, love is the gravity that binds us all here and beyond. Earth is nothing short of miraculous, a cradle of life that has birthed extraordinary beings through its boundless imagination. Mother Earth creates life through the seeds of conscious intuition. Among its many marvels, I have reimagined a remarkable organism, *deinococcus radiodurans*, one of the strongest bacteria known to man. This indestructible microbe can withstand levels of radiation, dehydration, and cold that would annihilate most forms of life. It is a testament to the Earth's unparalleled creativity and resilience. How astounding it is that our planet, with its unique conditions and evolutionary pathways, has crafted such a formidable survivor. In studying *deinococcus*, we glimpse the incredible potential and ingenuity of Earth's biosphere, reminding us of the limitless wonders that our world holds and the profound capabilities of life itself. Who here believes in the Law of manifestation?"

A sea of almost fifty thousand hands raised simultaneously.

"Being connected enough to a higher consciousness that you can see past the false reality created by the constructs of the brain, which cannot comprehend a universal connectivity with everything around you. Particularly not so much as to affect it. Inspiration comes from imagination. Oh, how can we see the limitless possibilities without an environment to birth creativity? Survival was always the first universal instinct. But how? That is when the cellular survival instinct kicks in. When the universe, God, Allah... began creating atoms and molecules,

he couldn't just stop there, hence creating a cosmic ancestry. The source of consciousness, God, believed in the power of the mind, in the inviolable capacity of rational thought to guide developmental progress."

Theseus felt as if he could see through the veil of time itself, chosen to deliver a message only he could prove.

"What inspired us before the war? What sparked our ancestral innovation in times of crisis? Would we be able to harvest the precious resources of this universe for our benefit? We stand at a crossroads. Technology is our greatest triumph and our gravest responsibility. It must not reduce us to mere functionaries but elevate us as thinkers, creators, and individuals. The future we build today will either herald a renaissance of the human spirit or a descent into intellectual mediocrity. We realized constant creation, whether through innovation or destruction, was the consistent denominator in our infinite equation. Stars explode, comets collide with planets, solar systems are devoured by insatiable black holes, and yet who said we can definitively decide what all of this means? I assume all you highly intelligent people have heard of universal laws, yes?"

Theseus was riding a buzz of electrical proportion. The sound of a thunderous clash, like lightning striking a tree, erupted as the applause from the spectators increased, and the question brought forth a standing ovation.

"I told you this was going to be amazing," Ben glanced over at Oniska, who was on her toes trying to see over a huge man in front of her.

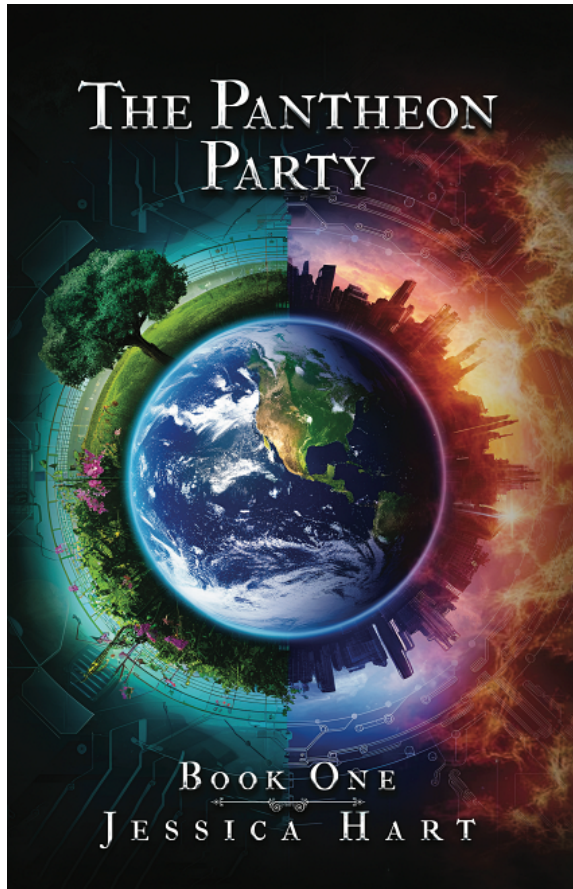
"Want to trade seats?" he asked. The applause started to subside, and people sat down again.

“No, I’m so great. Thanks, though,” she said, clearly not bothered by the tower of a man in front of her. She wrapped her arm around Ben’s, but just as quickly, she pulled her arm back out and gave him a little smack on his shoulder.

“Always such a gentleman,” Oniska said and then put a finger to her lips. “But shush. He’s speaking.”

“The first and most foundational law of the universe is the Law of Divine Oneness, which outlines the interconnectedness of all things. It describes that beyond our senses, every thought, emotion, action, and event is connected to everything around you,” Theseus said. “The Law of Manifestation is an astonishing concept, isn’t it? These universal laws are considered intrinsic, unchanging laws of our universe that even ancient cultures have always intuitively known. I know I have always questioned the artistry of the universe, the miracles of God, and if I had any control at all. I don’t know about you, but there’s always been an aching question as to what is out there in infinity. I believe I am not the only one. I believe through a united common passion for the mysteriousness of the unrevealed, we, as children of Mother Earth, have been given the ability to further understand our universe through interplanetary travel. This would not have been possible had we not, as a global race, humanity, wanted to explore the universe. The peace created for accomplishing remarkable feats has only been made possible by one man with a strong core belief. Pantheism is a philosophical system that equates God with the universe and all that it contains. It derives its name from the Greek terms ‘pan,’ which means ‘all,’ and ‘Theos,’ which means ‘God.’ In essence, pantheists view the universe and everything in it as a manifestation or embodiment of divinity. Unlike theism, which typically posits a transcendent God who created and interacts with the universe, Pantheism holds that God

is not separate from the world but is completely immanent within it. In other words, the universe, nature, and God are all synonymous. There's no division between the sacred and the profane, the spiritual and the material. Consciousness is a ladder to which we climb, and at the end, the ladder itself disappears, for the illusion of the climb fades into the realization that the seeker and the sought are the same. It's important to note that Pantheism is not a religion with rituals, dogmas, or holy texts but rather a philosophical and psychological stance. There are diverse types of Pantheism, and it can intersect with many other philosophical and religious beliefs. For instance, many interpretations of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism incorporate pantheistic elements. Some forms of modern spirituality and environmental philosophy also resonate with pantheistic views, especially the idea that nature and the universe are inherently sacred or divine. Albert Einstein is often associated with a kind of Pantheism. He spoke of the profound reverence he felt for the rationality and structure of the universe, which he sometimes referred to as 'God.' His views are sometimes classified as 'scientific Pantheism,' which venerates the universe and nature and promotes rationality and science." Pausing in respect to the genius.



The balance between progress and tradition, and the perennial struggle between individual liberty and collective ideals. The characters grapple with their destinies against societal upheaval-one where the past and the futuristic coalesce.

The Pantheon Party

By Jessica Hart

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