



## *Prologue*

**M**Y NAME IS **CONNOR AVEL HAWK** and I was born into a clan of Spirians, though I have never really felt like one. You see ... thousands of years ago when the Angels decided to mate with the Fae, the Spirian race was born. They are like humans, except they vibrate with the frequency of Angels and harbor the gifts of the Fae. Humans, of course, cannot tell us apart from their kind, which enables us to live among them in harmony.

Our adversaries, the Shadows, are the fallen in this world—well, most of them, anyway. There are a few born of the Shadow clans who carry a moral thread and demonstrate integrity.

## Aeneas

As with all aspects of life, however, with every good stems an equal evil—a battle Spirians and humans alike have waged since the beginning of time.

I, on the other hand, am unlike any Spirian known to this world. My mother, Elle, was human until she was touched by an Archangel. This enabled her to reunite with her mate, Avel, from a past life. By that point, she had reincarnated as a human in the late twentieth century and he had become an Angel. One night together and I became the miracle son—a reincarnation of the unborn child who died when my mother took her own life shortly after Avel's death in the Spartan wars. Avel's reunion with Elle was short, and like all things in life, it came to an end. When I was six, my mother united with a Spirian male named, Drew Hawk, which explains why I have three names while most Spirians have only two—another thing that makes me different.

Yes, physically, I am a Spirian, born unto this life by the sheer mercy of the Holy Father. I was told I had a purpose to fulfill and that my life would be important. I started showing promise at the young age of fifteen, when I

learned how to change one substance into another: lead into gold, glass into diamonds, that sort of thing. This gift makes me an alchemist like my grandfather Hermes Trismegistus, the father of alchemy. Yes, it is odd having family who died several hundred years ago. It made growing up quite interesting, I assure you.

But that family connection may also explain why I find trouble wherever I go—well, that and the fact that I'm frustrated by being so different and misunderstood. Our leader, Khalen, who also happens to be my best friend, Gabrihen's father, never seems to know what to do with me. I'm in my twenties now, and filled with a quest to find my father's magical sword, Aeneas. Hermes forged the sword for his beloved son to wield in the Spartan wars. Through magic, it had been honed to obey Avel's commands with fatal accuracy—not that my father needed it, for he was an excellent warrior. Now, Aeneas is a commodity among those who crave the power to rule and conquer their enemies. I, on the other hand, only wish to invoke Aeneas' power to connect with my father. You see, only he understands my gift of alchemy, and he alone can further my skills.

## Aeneas

I've spent the last seven years tracking down the sword. Now it is time to make it my own, and connect with the father I never knew.



# Chapter 1

- C o n n o r -

**S**OUTHERN CALIFORNIA REMINDED ME OF a fantastical metropolis where humans had turned a desert into an oasis. We Spirians preferred peace and ample space while humans tended to cluster in cities. Looking out at the cars sitting bumper-to-bumper outside the antiquities shop in Glendale made me appreciate Gabrihen's gift to transport us all the more, even if it did leave me nauseous. Dematerializing flesh and bones into tiny particles and then materializing them again at another location was hard on any physical body, Spirian or no. As far as anyone knew, the gift was reserved only for wizards.

"What's the plan?" Gabrihen asked. He was

## Aeneas

not completely on board with this venture, but being my closest friend, he had agreed to spend our spring break helping me find Aeneas—a magical sword that once belonged to my deceased father.

“We go in and offer to purchase Aeneas.” I had made a good sum of money over the years competing in mixed-martial arts competitions, so I felt confident I had enough to pay for the valuable weapon.

Gabrihen shook his head and followed me through the door. “Nothin’ is ever that simple with ye, my friend.” His Scottish brogue had thickened over the winter in Uig, where he trained under the old wizard, Tetris.

I was an alchemist, the first of my kind, which meant no other Spirian truly understood me. This fact was proven when our leader, Khalen, sent me to a university for metaphysical studies because he had no one in our clan who could train me. Learning about metaphysics for someone who mastered alchemy at the age of fifteen was boring—elementary at best. What I needed was my

father. He was imperative to furthering my knowledge. One problem remained—he died before I was born. I needed Aeneas to connect with him.

Crash!

Gabrihen and I jumped back as a small table tumbled down the stairs, followed by shouts and grunts.

“Upstairs,” I said, leaping over the table and taking the steps two at a time.

“Great,” Gabrihen muttered. “I knew this wouldn’t be easy.”

Two people were fighting: a petite female and a tall lanky male. My eyes cartooned when I saw the female wield Aeneas like a hunk of scrap wood. Bang, spark, scrape, and another bang as she slammed it into a cast-iron sink.

I leapt into the fray, my only thought being saving my father’s sword from certain destruction. Gripping the blade, I yelled as the sprite pulled it from my grasp. The razor-sharp steel sliced my palm. She followed up with an impressive back fist to my temple.

## Aeneas

“A little help,” I called to Gabrihen, who watched with far too much amusement.

The damn place was so littered with junk that I stumbled with every step. When I was able to gain balance again, I leapt toward the sword-wielding female, knocking Aeneas from her careless grip. It fell with a clang to the wooden floor, bouncing a few times before landing among the rubble.

Mr. Lanky Man, wide-eyed and panting, grabbed the sword as if it were crafted of delicate glass and dashed out of the room using a rear exit. The press of his clothes and his pompous hairstyle, with too much gel, led me to believe he was the store’s proprietor. Paying more attention to him than the woman I tackled was a mistake. She twisted out of my grip and landed a solid blow to my jaw while her feet connected with my ribs. She then did a backflip out of my reach and followed the furtive proprietor out the door.

Gabrihen started clapping ... slow and methodical. “Well done. That was splendid. The lass was what, almost a foot shorter than



you and weighed maybe ninety pounds, yeah?”

“She was nimble.”

“I think she out-skilled ye.”

I kicked the rubble at my feet. A metal bowl and broken porcelain scattered away, slamming into fallen desks and shelves. “This was supposed to be easy, damn it.”

“She was a Spirian.” Unlike humans, Spirians had the luminescent energy of Angels, and their eyes glowed with shards of ethereal colors. Humans could not detect these subtleties, which enabled us to live among them without notice. For that reason, we were forbidden to use our gifts in their presence lest we wipe their memories afterward—a gift reserved for leaders and those with high status within the clans.

“Yeah ... I noticed. Can you trace her?” The ability to follow a person’s energy was another wizard gift—lucky bastard.

Gabrihen stared at me in silence before answering. “Aye, but to what end? It was the human who took the sword.”

## Aeneas

“She may know where to find the bloody thing.”

“Are you sure it’s the sword you’re after and not the fiery lass?”

“Psh,” I hissed. “She’s not my type. I prefer tall blondes with nothing on their mind but pleasing me. Not some short Thai sprite with an attitude.”

“She seemed to like you well enough.”

I rubbed my jaw and peered at my battered face through a broken mirror. “I look forward to returning her affection.”

“What do you suppose she was doing tanglin’ with a human male?”

It was uncommon for Spirians to deal with humans on more than a casual level, and even more uncommon for an unmated female to be out on her own. Whoever she was, her clan was not from this area. “I don’t know, but I intend to find out.”