

Prologue

Olaf watched Richard and AAL disappear from the hilltop in front of Richard's parents' home, and then he faded from view. A moment later, he reappeared in the woods, far from the house.

He walked along a well-worn path until he came upon a fallen tree. With a long sigh, he took a seat on it and contemplated Richard's future.

The one he had been waiting for had finally been born on this backwater planet. But it would take many years to see if Richard would agree to do for this universe what Olaf had done for the previous one.

Richard was a fifteen-year-old who knew nothing about the greater Milky Way beyond what any Earther knew. *And that is not much*, the older gentleman thought.

Olaf looked at the six-foot jagged stump; the tree had broken off years ago.

The image of a beautiful, dark-skinned woman appeared, wearing only a thin black negligee. This was followed by an image of Richard strolling down the path. The woman walked up to Richard and then around him several times. Richard's eyes went wide as her negligee disappeared on her last time around.

To Olaf's horror, the woman seduced the fifteen-year-old, and he impregnated her with a son. Even worse, Richard had no memory of doing so.

This will cause problems, Olaf thought. For now, though, he would leave those problems for the future.

Richard had been kidnapped and taken to the moon. There, AAL, an artificial life form, told him he was heir to a vast kingdom that spanned the Milky Way. His great-grandfather, King Dolloff, and his family had been murdered by his power-hungry brother, Julian. All had been killed, except for the prince's fiancé, who had been taken to the family's prison planet, Earth.

What Julian did not know was that she was pregnant with Prince Rainier's child. Even though the line had ended in the kingdom, it had continued on this backwater planet.

Julian could not have children, and after he was assassinated for killing his family, this left no heir to the throne. This also left no one to protect the kingdom when the great nemesis returned in a thousand years.

Over the centuries, the nonhuman sectors, outnumbering the human sectors, grew discontent with how the Privy Council treated them. Their one hope was that the Searchers would find the lost members of the royal family.

Now that Richard's existence has been revealed, he needs to protect himself from the powers mounting against him—and in a way that others are unable to do, Olaf thought.

With the help of others, AAL evolved Richard to a point where he could produce a shield to protect himself from the universe's energy.

However, Richard unexpectedly forced more abilities from AAL than expected. Before AAL could dampen his powers, Richard traveled by accident to Earth. To further complicate matters, he brought his mate, the fox-like Amber, along with him.

As Olaf left the woods, he looked up at the darkening sky. *Many challenges lie ahead of Richard in this kingdom—and many others beyond.*