

# Chapter One

Lewis held firm to the twisted, leafy vine, swinging down and across the glowing waters, and landing securely on one of the many massive roots bulging out of the unmoving waters. She glanced up at the suspended walkway from where she started—barely visible between the covering of leaves in the dimness of the early morning—then took off in a sprint, hopping from root to root over the streams of water that ran under the Amharclann.

The glowing waters that surrounded and ran under the city had not yet risen to light the day. *Perfect timing*, she thought. She stopped, looking from side to side for just the right spot. She grinned, knowing exactly where to go.

It would be her last morning of waking early to catch the mist and swinging under the trees for... she really didn't know how long, but she wanted to remember every detail. Not that remembering would be a problem. Seeing the details was a part of her Potential. She shimmied around a large tree trunk and glanced up into the canopy of leaves once again. She knew where she was. Her treehouse dwelling was directly above. This was the spot. The spot where she had first held the light of the mist in the palm of her hand. She inhaled the scents of the morning: the wetness of the damp foliage and the drenched roots pushing deeper into the water where the Glawter-Glob lived. She laughed at the childish fear of her imagination, and then pushed aside the memory to think on what was true.

Lewis closed her eyes, inhaling and then exhaling to regain her focus. The fragrances of the Potentials wafted down from the dwellings and Houses of Trade and training above

her—lavender and cedar wood, black roses, citrus, berries, and other unique florals beautifully combining into a glorious aromatic concoction. She would miss mornings like this.

Lewis opened her eyes to peek across the waters—calm, unmoving, the transporters far on the other side most likely preparing for their daily travels from the Docks to the piers of the Amharclann. She studied the water, its subtle glow, waiting for it to separate and rise into tiny particles—particles that she could see... and hold.

It wasn't so long ago it seemed she would never be able to hold the mist in her hand. She lifted her leg from the ground, bending her knee back and forth. The tiny wound directly below her kneecap had healed, the result of an incident she wanted to forget but one her author said was essential to her Story. She sighed, thankful the pain was gone. If it was not written in her Story, forever unread by the citizens of the Amharclann, the only reminder would be the tiny scar hidden by her gauzy, ivory-colored training attire.

Her mentor, Kellen, had told her catching the mist wasn't necessary anymore. She had chosen to accept the light provided by the Creator of All Things. It was a gift that fueled her Potential. She couldn't give it back. However, Kellen didn't say she couldn't try to catch it anymore. He actually said it never hurt to remember what it was like, that first moment she held the speck of mist in her hand.

*Shadow Seer.*

It was what Maewyn her author had called her, before she was even assigned to be her author. Back when, if Lewis was being honest, she thought Maewyn was a little short of memory and a lot full of lunacy.

It had been over a year since the Teller and his shadows found their way into the Amharclann. And a bit over a year since she realized she wasn't the person she thought she was. Her Story would not call her Shamar, a protector walking the treetops, protecting the city against the destruction of the ravaging Inimicus still roaming the caverns of the under-lands. Everything had changed. She had changed. Now, she knew her true Potential, to see the unseen. She had an author, and she was about to have the most unique Story ever written. She could hardly believe the opportunity that awaited her.

Her papa had always encouraged her to be patient, to wait on the Creator of All Things to write her Story. His wisdom had irritated her then, but now she realized how right he was. If she had pursued training with the protectors in the Tops, she might not be taking the most unexpected trip of her life. Just one more sleep and she'd say goodbye to the Amharclann. A brief irritation invaded her musing. Her parents had agreed she could go on one condition: Remi escort her there.

She didn't need a babysitter. She could take care of herself. After all, she had defeated the Teller! She could see his whispering shadows if they came lurking about. Her Potential would protect her. But what if the one from the other garden who invited her, Elder Bednegraine, decided Remi's Potential was better than Lewis's, more useful? What if Elder Bednegraine decided Remi should go instead? What would happen to her Story?

"Stop!" Lewis called out into the dim morning. Those thoughts were not true. The woman from the under-land garden known as the Conclusus had invited her to go because of her Potential. Lewis was leaving in the morning. And tonight, all the citizens of the Amharclann would celebrate!

Lewis closed her eyes and extended her right arm, the one bearing the permanent mark of the seers. She flared her fingers and exhaled. “Rest in the Creator of All Things and wait patiently for him,” she reminded herself. She thought about the words, His words. She thought about all that He had given her—her family, her friends, her Potential.

She sensed the mist lifting from the waters, the subtle glowing haze hovering and bringing the beginning of light to another day. She waited, patiently, clearing her mind of untruths, dwelling on what was honorable, pure, right, and lovely. Lovely... her mother. Honorable... her father. Right... usually Remi. She smiled, feeling the presence of the Creator of All Things smiling with her.

She could sense the moisture grazing the back of her hand, seeping between the soft parts of her fingers. One more second... She clenched her hand and exhaled once again. “Got you!”

She opened her hand to see the tiny speck of light resting in her palm. She touched it, studied it—something so present in the lives of the citizens. But only she and Kellen could see it. To everyone else the mist was just a dim blanket of light, not a million particles fighting their way to the cavern ceiling far above them.

She wished she could keep the speck, tuck it into the waist of her training pants and take it with her, but the mist didn’t work that way. Besides, the woman from the Conclusus mentioned that they had glowing waters too—except it wasn’t like the waters in the Amharclann. The light came from something she called *steam*. It was beyond Lewis’s imagination, but Remi seemed to know exactly what the woman was talking about. Lewis’s insides tingled. She could hardly stand the excitement. But seeing the steam-filled city was not

what excited her most. It was what would follow in the place in the deepest depth of the Earth—a chance to live in the Mines among the Inimicus.

