

*Children of Divinity*  
*The Book of Elles*

Elles,

I know everything, about you, Cassandra, Amadeus, Peltheus, Archimedes, Persephone, Hera, Maji, Sutarumo, all of the Divines and the Earthen deities. I know about Caleb and his children.

Kanti and I also met the Keepers...

Abyss Walker Keaj introduced me to my father.

You were right about him, and you were right about me. I'm a disgrace to the man he was. He explained Shaik-La and Aemon, and their eternal strife. Then, he showed me a vision of what lies ahead: Earthen Man's future.

The girl I love will become one of Kaleyphir's. Their union will lead the Milky way to ruin. As the Cloak Bearer, I am not allowed to interfere with microscale matters, at least not directly. Kanti and I agree that providing you with more details will be an abuse of my power. I cannot tell you to do anything; however, I can request a favor.

After some lengthy debate, I was able to give you temporary freedom. Kal's Fates will be visible to you. Please, do what you can... for man's sake, for her sake, and for my own.

Thank you,

**Emerj, The Last Cloak Bearer**

P.S. Thank you for everything you've already done. I understand if you decide to enjoy your freedom.

And, Elles, you're the only one on Earth who will remember Kanti, the collapse and me. I love you. Thank you.

## Chapter 1: The End

Elles places Emery's letter down. She leans back on her couch and exhales a thick white smoke. Purple haze dances into her silky hair. "C'est la vie<sup>1</sup>," she says to herself. Her elation rises and colors intensify. The constant ringing in her ears hasn't ceased since the recent reformation of existence. Bubbles in the ceiling morph into dinosaurs and primitive cavemen dancing to "The Circle of Life." What will become of le garçon<sup>2</sup>, mon cher amie<sup>3</sup>, Emery? The cloak is a dastardly, cursed object. Why had the divines chosen such a young boy to suffer such a cruel fate?

She rereads Emery's letter. "I will never forget you, mon ami<sup>4</sup>, my young lover." Elles slumps over, sobbing uncontrollably. Too high to walk, she collapses several feet from her sofa and curls into the fetal position. Pain bounces off the walls; Elles' wails echo throughout the massive apartment. She stumbles to her feet, slowly mourning her newfound freedom. What did Emery give up emancipating me from the game? She fills the tub with steaming comfort and reaches for a well-crafted, antique razor; the only remnant of her days as a human. Elles wriggles out of her clothes in a trance. She flicks her radio on and climbs into the porcelain tub. Debussy's *Clair de Lune*<sup>5</sup> plays as she presses the blade into her vein. The Eau pourpre<sup>6</sup> lulls her to sleep.

"Je suis immortel<sup>7</sup>," Elles scoffs, wading to clear bathwater around her petite, busty frame. She dresses herself and shakes her depression. In her usual fashion, Elles saunters into a pair of leggings, light skirt, tube-top, boots and a cardigan; black, purple and pink, of course. She takes the elevator down to the atrium.

"On a date, Ms. Strandon?" Lars the doorman asks curiously. "You look ravishing. Very Gothic, but classy."

"So formal. I told you, my first name's fine, Lars." Elles giggles. "Yes, I am," she responds in perfect English. "I'm meeting an old flame- like, a really old flame."

"Old flames extinguish, Alice," Lars<sup>8</sup> says, winking. "Have a good night, Ms. Strandon."

Elles blows him a kiss. "So cute! Never get old, Lars!"

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<sup>1</sup> C'est la vie: That's life

<sup>2</sup> Le garçon: the boy

<sup>3</sup> Mon cher amie: my dear friend

<sup>4</sup> Mon ami: My friend

<sup>5</sup> Clair de Lune (Light of the Moon) is the 3<sup>rd</sup> movement of French composer Claude Debussy's 15-year piece, "Suite Bergamasque." Here's a link to a YouTube video of the track: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-LXl4y6D-QI>

<sup>6</sup> Eau pourpre : Crimson water

<sup>7</sup> Je suis immortel: I am immortal

<sup>8</sup> Nothing suspicious here. Just Lars talking about old flames. Maybe you should meet him by the lake, only at <http://beaunoirmedia.com/>

Lars smiles. “Already am. You just can’t tell,” he says, winking again. Lars is the epitome of a mischievous ginger: he’s goofy, lanky and young. Maybe nineteen or twenty. Perhaps twenty-one.

She plays her role well, gleefully making her way to the street as Alice. She hails a cab. Before she decides what to do, Elles needs to see Kal one last time. “Midtown,” she says to the driver. It feels different, just observing humans wandering aimlessly for a bite, some drinks or other mortal activities. For the first time in her adult life, she’ll finally be able to enjoy herself like they do.

“No address?” The cabbie asks, casually looking at Elles through the rearview.

“42<sup>nd</sup> and Broadway,” she says with a smile. “I’d prefer not to type it in.”

“You got it,” he responds. “Tourist?” He asks. The cabbie takes a sip of coffee. “It’s none of my business, but you must be from ‘ere if you aren’t using an Uber.”

“Born and raised.” Elles pulls her phone out, hoping to disengage without being rude. Confrontation has never been her strong suit. She pretends to text and the cabbie turns the radio up:

*Announcer: “Next on NPR, a couple lost their son to suicide in 2015. We’ll discuss how bullying led young Gavin Leheir to take his life, and how his tragic struggle highlighted our indifference to homosexuality and mental illness. If the name Leheir sounds familiar, it should. The CEO, and executive producer, at Beau Noir Media<sup>10</sup> Studios and his wife—”*

*Guest 1: “Hi, I’m Ash Leheir.”*

*Guest 2: “And, I’m Courtney Leheir.”*

*Announcer continues: “...will join me, Ira Glass<sup>11</sup>, for an open discussion on how they coped with grief. We’ll talk about how a small book from Dominican novelist, Mark Figueroa<sup>12</sup>, turned their lives, their community, and Gavin’s school system into a place of acceptance, not just tolerance. We’ll also touch on their feelings on the lack of political support they received from the previous administration, and how their friends in Hollywood, and in Washington, banded together to make sure President Pence was impeached for his role in perpetuating his impeached predecessor’s agenda. Interesting times. Two presidents, two impeachments, and the couple who spearheaded the movement that reformed democracy in our nation, as a result of their tragic loss. Coming up at 9 pm. Only on NPR. See you there.”*

Elles holds back her tears, ignoring the radio. Even without Emery’s request, she needs to make time to see them. She can give him that much. Fifty years without a Fate will fly by, at least in comparison to her 500 years of life as a divine’s child. She remembers her twenty-two years as a human; she was pure, naïve, and poor. This time, 522 years later, she would make sure she would want for nothing. From 2021 through 2071, she would be like a dove soaring through the unknown; free to

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<sup>9</sup> NPR is the National Public Radio Station: <http://www.npr.org/>

<sup>10</sup> Just making sure you’re paying attention.

<sup>11</sup> Ira Glass is a host and a producer of *This American Life* on NPR: <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/contributors/ira-glass>

<sup>12</sup> Mark Figueroa is the creator, writer, illustrator, programmer, and marketer of this fine piece of work and all other BNRM content.

meander about the greatest city on Earth, or finally experience the rest of the world on her terms. It's not like she's bound to anything. She sighs, concerned. But what exactly is it that Kal will do?

Elles stares at the bridge in the distance. Pretty, scantily clad girls and shirtless boys crowd busy intersections when she crosses into Manhattan. These summer nights take her back to the renaissance. All these people... Will Kal's actions lead to another collapse? Will she have to witness the theft of each and every human soul again? What about the government in the shadows, that Aldguin often talked about? Would Kal's irresponsibility land all of the *children* on their radar? "You can just let me off here," Elles says.

"No problem, missy. That'll be thirty-four dollars even. You take care of yourself, ya hear," the old cabbie responds.

She smiles and hands him two twenties. "Thank you. Keep it." Elles walks onto the sidewalk. Her thin cardigan waves in the breeze. She scrolls through Snapchat. Elles double taps on a picture of her friend with a new pet. These humans and their trinkets. Her alias keeps her anonymous, but what about the rest of the people Elles knows? The massive information they transmit doesn't just get erased. Where will this society be in fifty years? If the American public hadn't fought corruption and fascism so intently, the nation would be under a dictator's rule right now. She stops at a pizzeria.

Meanwhile, in Central Park, Kalcyphir closes his eyes. Distorted smiles linger in a distant memory. He asks the sky an inaudible question while reclining on a bench, stretching his arms over its back. Silhouettes eerily reach across the moon, coveting its ominous radiance. Like the fools who don the cloak, Kalcyphir exists to play the game of fate. Unlike the bearers of the cloak, the players of fate belong to their masters: the ancient gods who selected them.

For Kalcyphir, these are Caleb's times, Caleb's night and Caleb's will. In these moments, *Kalcyphir is one of Caleb's many sons*<sup>13</sup>.

Grass sways in the breeze. Leaves rustle from the trees' fingertips. Kalcyphir cradles his paper bag like a child, waiting for this fate to walk past him. Waiting for her. How is he going to do it this time? What would happen if GGA<sup>14</sup> catches him? A lab in an underground bunker? He can't hide forever, especially after Aldguin. Is this part of Caleb's plan? —Those thoughts become irrelevant. How long is this segment supposed to last anyway? I really hate couples. Kalcyphir sighs.

Discerning his prey's ignorant footsteps from the evening's whispers, he tries to shrug away the rage filling his hollow core. "They just don't get it," Kalcyphir mutters to himself, disgusted.

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<sup>13</sup> Abigail who?

<sup>14</sup> The GGA is the Global Government Alliance. They work behind the scenes to ensure global peace and prosperity. Erin and Aldguin have more details.

“Those damn spongy meat-sacks...finding meaning from the outside, they only placate the emptiness, uncertainty and despair of being human. They deserve to have the comfortable ignorance ripped from their palms.”

Tonight, he will tear the façade from her gentle fingers. It is *his* will. To the prey, Kal’s just another face. A stranger. On forums, blogs and conspiracy theories, Kal is *The Stranger*.

Kalcyphir takes a deep breath, “I am the stranger... I can do this. I can do this.” He closes his eyes and pounds his chest. “I can do this—I WILL DO THIS!”