



Cordell stood watchfully upon the great balcony, which projected boldly from the highest of the many turrets adorning the Great White Castle. From his incredible vantage point, he could see the vast entirety of Pangea stretching out beneath and beyond him—from its grasslands to its mountains and then to its vast and lush rainforests; down through the rolling, barren deserts to the most southerly, mountainous reaches. It was a view that could not have been any more spectacular. It was a view that few would ever have the privilege to behold. And yet, he was ill at ease. His hands tightened upon the green stone within his left hand. Something fundamental had changed within him; he felt an unsettling pull into the lands of Pangea, this glorious world created by his great and powerful relative, Zeus. The Great White Castle, as it was known to his fellow gods, had become claustrophobic—too cramped with egos and power. He often wondered what it would be like to walk down the great staircase that led to the lands beneath him, and that yearning was never stronger than now. And why should he not? Had not his brother, Typhos, done that very thing not so long ago? Oh, it had angered Zeus greatly, and Typhos's name was rarely uttered in the great corridors of the Great Castle, but he had felt he had no choice.

He sighed and watched as, far below him, a flock of high-flying birds soared across the vast, twinkling lagoon.

"A fine day, Cordell," smiled his brother, Rigus, a solemn man with bright blue eyes filled with ice and judgement.

“That it is, brother,” smiled Cordell, his gaze still fixed upon the vast view in front of him. He had little interest in conversing with his younger brother; they were chalk and cheese. Had the gods been at war, Rigus would have been a front-line warrior.

“Come now, you spend too much of your time staring out into nowhere; it has been commented upon by many of us. I suspect even our father, Zeus, has seen it.”

“Brother,” smiled Cordell sympathetically, “how many times do I have to remind you that the mighty Zeus is not our father?”

Rigus bristled, and his eyes flashed with anger, momentarily darkening to the point of complete blackness, which shocked Cordell.

“Lord Zeus is the master and father of us all,” he growled. “You should remember that, brother.” He emphasised *brother* as if he were repulsed by the idea. Ever the constant disappointment to his own family, Cordell was different. And his difference was another reason why the White Castle felt so unwelcoming and alien to him—it always had done.

“You are a strange soul, Cordell. I am not the only one who thinks it—be in no doubt. That stone you clasp within your hand contains such great power, and yet you choose not to use it.”

“Brother, have I not told you many times? I have no wish to leave this place,” lied Cordell, not realising it was a lie until the words had left his lips.

Rigus studied his brother with disdain, his own jealousy and frustration clawing and seething within him. That rock, which his feckless brother held within his weak and feeble hands, had been a gift from Zeus. Rigus reflected bitterly on the telling conversation he had overheard two days before. He had been walking through the main courtyard, admiring the festoons of flowers cascading down its walls with some complacency. As he approached the great throne of Zeus, he noticed that the great lord was having a quiet and guarded conversation with his very own brother. Being the type who had no qualms about eavesdropping, Rigus positioned himself beneath one of the many white arches that lined the courtyard and listened intently to the exchange.