

The Scroll of Deuel

Charlene Lassig

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DEDICATION

To my husband, Kurt for your many years of love and devotion, and my sons, Aaron and Donovan, for your love and patience, while I remained glued to the computer these last 15 months. I am truly blessed to have you as my family. I love you guys.

And to my father, Charles Bishop, for your words of encouragement to follow my dreams when I gave up on them. I love you Dad.

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And now these three remain:

Faith, hope and love.

But the greatest of these is love.

-1 Corinthians 1:13

PREFACE

The night seems so dark, the day brings no light. I miss my concerts in the park; my life just is not right....Time moves too slowly, I am frozen in place. I cannot stand being so lonely; I just want to see your face. Are you watching over me? I am glancing at each star for you. Where in the heavens can you be; send them to take me too. This pain in my chest is my breaking heart; I just want to feel your touch. It will never mend while we are apart; I long for you so much.

1.
ONE LIFE, ONE LOVE

Tori's voice sounded unstable as she called out for her husband. "Nolan, can you please make your own breakfast? I don't feel well this morning." Before she finished her sentence, Nolan rushed to her side.

His expression distorted from the fear he could not hide. "What's wrong?" he asked hesitantly as he reached his hand upward to touch her forehead. The drops of sweat beading across her brow streamed down her face, troubling him.

She pulled her head away from his touch. "I'm just tired, honey. My back is a little stiff."

His eyes scrutinized her hunched figure. "You were fine earlier. What happened?" Tori followed them as they moved from her face toward her large belly. "Did you try to lift something heavy?"

"No, honey, I was putting the laundry away."

His voice cracked. "Are you nauseated or dizzy?"

She grimaced from another muscle spasm. "No, I just have a stiff back. That is—"

The doctor in Nolan took charge, trying to assess her vitals. He grabbed her wrist and attempted to take her

pulse. Tori moved her arm away, though not soon enough, and her sweaty skin made contact with Nolan's uneasy grip.

Her pale expression turned to a crooked smile. "Stop that," she teased. "I'm—fine. All I need is a little rest," she reassured him as she grabbed her side in rhythm with another pain.

Nolan's concern continued to grow as he examined her face. Her flushed cheeks against her pale skin tone magnified her feeble appearance. He counted to himself the seconds between her contractions. Seconds that should hold no other meaning except the amount of the time to pass before life explodes into existence. Observing her symptoms, Nolan informed Tori with too much excitement in his voice, "I don't think we have time for rest, dear—I think we're having a baby!"

With that announcement, Tori's back pain increased. The sensation made her gasp as a ragged breath whistled past her lips. Tori leaned forward to reach out and brace her hands on the dresser. Nolan's face went white. Reaching for her, he took a hold of her back to steady her cool body. His warm touch sent a chill through her body and she shivered. She felt his fingers slide across her increasingly clammy skin. Her respirations deepened as her lips trembled.

Tori tried to hide from Nolan that the muscle spasms kept her from straightening up. "It's nothing, love, I'm fine."

Nolan saw through her charade, and she knew it. She changed her tone of voice to bring him some reassurance. "I'm fine—don't worry. Everything is—all right."

This did not comfort him as he witnessed more contractions ripple through her abdomen. They traveled to her back so strongly, she almost collapsed. Her mind

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became confused and lost in the strong commands of her overwhelmed body.

Nolan's face tightened, making his concern for her health clear. "Not quite—it's time!" his voice rattled as he spoke. "We need to go to the hospital now. We're not waiting around here any longer!"

Anxiously he grabbed her sweater, which lay draped over the back of the chair. Nolan held it out for Tori to put her arms into the sleeves. Her actions were slow as her mind warred to sort through the pain and comply with her needs. Nolan wrapped his arm around her waist, supporting her left arm in his hand. The love Tori found so familiar flowed from his grip. He assisted her through the door, balancing Tori's tiny frame against his.

She found the walk a bit difficult as her legs turned to sponge. The dull backache she first experienced grew stronger with every minute. The baby responded to the forceful spasms by jerking within the amniotic fluid meant to keep her safe. When the baby moved, the sensation of the sharp pokes seemed stronger, escalating the muscle spasms and triggering more discomfort. Tori inhaled deeply, and then held her breath.

"Don't hold your breath!" Nolan scolded, squeezing her closer into his body. "Remember to breathe through the contractions, honey. It will make it easier ... I promise."

Tori tried to force a smile. Labor seemed more difficult than she had thought. She had hoped to labor at home until the last possible minute.

"I am too early," Tori voiced, fearful enough for the both of them as her labored pants slurred her words. "I have a few—more weeks. I'm scared, Nolan." Her eyes began to tear with anxiety. Her planning and preparation looked terrific on paper, except this baby had an *urgent*

reason to be born. *Too quickly* for Nolan's own peace of mind.

His lips curved, enhancing the lines in his jaw. "You'll be just fine," Nolan said in an attempt to comfort Tori. His raspy voice sounded flat through his tensed jaw. "Are you sure you didn't hurt yourself, or stand up too fast?"

She panted harder as he led her down the porch steps to the garage. "No, I told you—before!"

"Easy, honey, calm yourself. Take a deep breath and let it out nice and slow," Nolan instructed, sliding his hand from her waist upward to caress her back and shoulders. He did not want her to see his fears. He had delivered many babies, none in this much of a *hurry* to make its appearance.

Tori's discomfort worried Nolan. The possibility of complications frightened him. Tori's symptoms came on too fast, and the excruciating pain confirmed his suspicions of placenta abruption—the detachment of the placenta from the uterine wall. In his previous encounters, he knew that usually first time mothers have a few false alarms and frequent backaches, with no reason for concern. Tori was definitely going to deliver inside their compact if Nolan did not hurry.

He contemplated calling an ambulance, and then changed his mind as he timed her last contraction. He feared it would take too long for the ambulance to arrive. Making her comfortable in the front seat of their car, he placed a pillow between her back and the seat.

Analyzing her needs, he returned to the house for her suitcase, moving so swiftly he almost lost his balance. Nolan could not grab the luggage fast enough to soothe his racing mind. Almost tripping on the edge of the driveway, he caught himself against the bumper of his car. Opening the door, he tossed in the suitcase and jumped into the

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driver's seat. He smiled at Tori and tried to regain his composure. He started the engine, then backed out of the long driveway and headed for the hospital.

"Everything will be fine, I promise you, Tori."

Nolan drove cautiously because of the rain. The construction routed along Highway 50 caused them to detour north along Highway 75, and then veer off onto Highway K, heading east. He wanted to speed because of the congestion slowing his route, though he chose not to. It took great restraint for him to keep a slow pace when Tori seemed so uncomfortable. His empathy for his laboring wife overwhelmed him as he looked at her fragile disposition. Nolan had now become the nervous father he silently laughed about with the other doctors.

Tenderly, he took her trembling hand into his. Her pulse beat strong, pounding against his palm. The beads of sweat bounced off her skin in sync with her pounding heart.

"How are you doing?" Nolan asked, wanting to be of more comfort for her.

She tried to smile as her stare fixed sternly on the road ahead of them. The sweat stung, blurring her vision. "I'm fine."

"We'll be there soon," he said, caressing her hand to reassure her. Nolan's attempts to put her at ease failed. Their quiet concerns matched one another, hidden in the patter of the falling rain.

Tori winced as an intense contraction pulsed throughout her lower abdomen. "I can't do this!" she gasped loudly.

He forced a smile to lessen his strained expression, but it did not fool Tori. "You're doing fine. Trust me."

Tori licked her dry lips. "Then why are you so worried?"

“I’m not. I just don’t like seeing you in pain.”

Tori grimaced again. “I thought you said this is normal.”

His shoulders flinched. “I will admit that you’re more distressed than I had hoped.”

She inhaled quickly in response to another contraction. “What does that mean?”

“I only meant that I’ve delivered many babies, but I never fully appreciated the intensity of labor, until you. I had hoped those other women were weak.”

“Do you think I’m weak?” she asked, more surprised than angered.

“No way.” He tightened his squeeze around her hand, his forced smile displayed again for her benefit. “You are a trooper. This confirms my thoughts.”

Sighing, she winced again. “What—thoughts are those, Nolan?” This time, the pain radiated stronger down her legs. The sensation felt as if there were tiny needles pricking her legs. Changing her position did not alleviate her symptoms.

He continued speaking, conscious of every move she made while pretending to look at the road ahead.

“I thought we would have five children. You can do it, you know. Labor only gets easier. Maybe we’ll have eight children, all boys. You know ... twelve is a nice, round number,” he added to sound humorous.

Tori did not have strength enough to laugh at his joke. “Sure,” she managed. “You’ll do anything to get your own football team.”

Approaching the hill along Highway K, he knew that they were halfway to the hospital. Nolan touched the brakes to slow his descent for the stop sign. A wave of fear washed over him when the brakes did not respond. The pedal hit the floor, making a hissing sound. Nolan’s heart

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jumped. He knew how congested the traffic along Highway 45 would be this time of day. Pumping them again, he tried to stop, but his efforts yielded no results. The car's speed increased, cruising down the hill at forty-miles per hour. Tori realized they were accelerating toward the intersection. She barely found the words to shout.

Bracing her hands on the dash, she screamed. "Stop!"

Tension filled Nolan's voice. "I'm trying—honey, the brakes won't work!"

He continued pumping them harder. At the bottom of the slope, two cars waited at the stop sign. The taillights of those vehicles shouted for him to stop. Having no other choice, Nolan swerved left into the opposite lane around them to avoid a collision. The wheels screeched on the wet pavement as the vehicle skidded sideways toward the ditch. Nolan lost control of their car as it spun in a complete circle. He turned the wheel to correct the swerve, but he found no relief. This maneuver did not help the situation. Nolan couldn't do anything to gain control of the car and stop.

His knuckles turned white from holding the steering wheel so tightly. The molded notches of the wheel pressed deep into Nolan's palms. He screamed, desperate for his soul mate's safety.

"Hang on, Tori!" Nolan sighed under his breath, knowing his own fate. "Oh—no!"

Their automobile flew into the intersection, running the stop sign. Suddenly from the north, an eighteen-wheeler crashed into the driver's side of their compact. Covering his face with his arms, Nolan tried to shield himself from the impact.

He screamed, "Oh my God!"

The truck's brakes lodged around the drums as a horrific shriek rang out. The semi's massive weight

pulverized the frame of the car, pushing it in toward Nolan. The semi driver's body bounced forward while his hands flung with the force of gravity, smashing down hard against the dash of the truck. The impact of the collision resembled the sound of bombs detonating. The truck driver's attempts to stop his rig were hindered by the rain and timing.

The driver scarcely had enough time to process the look on Nolan's face as glass and metal pierced Nolan's head. He watched the force of the impact jolt Nolan's body forward and to the side. The seconds seemed to blend into hours as the scene unfolded. Regret and disbelief spat at the driver. He could not do anything to change the situation; it was not his fault. His last thought in life ended in terror.

Nolan felt no pain, for he was graciously spared this sensation. He died instantly. His spine snapped in two as his vertebrates jostled in an accordion motion, stealing his precious life. The impact forced their car to swerve around in a circle, hitting a stopped car near the corner of the intersection. Their car flipped over the hood of the idling vehicle, squashing its frame. The steel belted tires exploded under the immense weight. The velocity jettied their car into the air and then sent it tumbling along the cement as if it were a child's toy. The bumper flew off, slamming into a telephone pole. Yielding to the violent force, the pole broke in half and crashed onto a stopped station wagon at the opposite northern corner. With a thunderous crash, the car came to rest in a small field.

Mud and dirt flung high into the air, pelting a jogger who escaped injury from the ejected bumper. The earth shook and fissures spider-webbed along the ground where the car slammed into the mud. The semi-trailer truck continued to coast forward along the highway, shoving

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more telephone poles out of its way. The truck came to a halt in a ditch, six hundred feet from their overturned car with flames spewing wildly from the cab.

Sharp dagger-shaped splinters of glass lodged into Tori's face and neck, digging deeply into her left shoulder. A large section of the dashboard dislodged from the car's frame and lay across her lap, pinning her inside the car. The weight of the dash restricted her movements, restraining her delicate legs against the seat. Her head burned in excruciating pain from the large gash on her forehead. Blood dripped from her wound, matting her hair and soaking her ivory-colored blouse.

The blocked intersection made traffic in all directions come to a halt. This did not bother the spectators, they needed a reason to stay and gawk. Even the jogger stood seemingly paralyzed, forgetting the danger he faced. The horrid scene mesmerized each person who watched, helpless to assist and powerless to leave. Steam rose high into the air as the rain spat against the hot metal, swirling in and out of the rubble as it intertwined with the smoke from the burning tanker.

The driver lay dead inside the cab, as his injuries were too severe to allow his life to continue. The impact of hitting the car crushed his sternum when the semi's engine jolted back into the truck's cab. His fractured ribs punctured his right lung as the steering wheel molded around his unresponsive body, fitting tightly as though it belonged there. He died gulping for air. Grace alone spared the Georgian trucker from seeing the horrific expression on Tori's face.

Almost conscious, Tori called for her husband in a panic. "Nolan—Nolan—help me ... please, Nolan!"

Her tiny hands shook from the adrenaline, making it difficult to reach her hands to her face to wipe away the

blood and dirt that obstructed her vision. Frantic, she looked for Nolan as she struggled to catch her breath. Her chest vibrated as she cried uncontrollably. A glance through her blurred vision almost stopped her heart. Dread raced down her spine, leaving its chilly imprint. The position of Nolan's contorted torso told her that he was dead.

Horrified, she stared at Nolan's limp body. His eyes were frozen open and fixed upon her. The passionate stare she loved so well was snuffed out. Tori saw no tenderness in his face. The compassionate smile, molded by many years of love, was ... gone.

The compact's roof caved in around Nolan and held him against the portion of the dash still attached to the metal frame. His mangled right arm flopped across the piece of vinyl molding that held Tori. Nolan's blood flowed with gravity, dripping down onto her lap. Tori found it too strenuous to absorb the moment. Everything she had, everything she knew, was slipping away.

Clinching her fist, she screamed. "Oh God, no. Please God ... this can't be happening! Nolan, wake up—Nolan!" Gasping for air, she strained to breathe. Her words slurred as she began to suffocate in her own blood. "Nolan ... Nolan, please wake up, Nolan!" Tugging on his arm, she grimaced as a searing pain traveled from her shoulder to her fingers. Tori knew he had no pulse, but she continued to plead. "Nolan—Nolan, please help me!"

Disorientated and confused, Tori tried to escape, ignoring her confines. The warped steel moaned as it settled from the collision. Her blood flowed from her wounds, pooling and mixing with Nolan's blood on the floor. She fought for a way out as the heat of the flames grew closer. Struggling harder, her fear intensified. She had to get free to save her baby and herself. Tori fumbled with

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the handle to open the door. Debris from the impact jammed the door in place.

Frantically, she screamed. "Help me, someone help me—please!"

Her flood of tears did little to wash the caked blood from her face. The salty water stung the wounds from the glass slivers that marred her face as they streamed down her cheeks. Tori could not see the tanker, but the rubber from the tires choked her as they melted from the heat of the burning tanker. Her terrified screams mocked her fate from outside her prison. Those who stood weary on the street could not deafen her cries, for each sob haunted the ears of those that stood there.

The jogger approached her car and stuck his hand through the broken window. Tori hardly saw his roughly lined face through the smoke. The man reached in for her, as if to help by removing her makeshift restraints. His narrow eyes were dark and his face fixed into a haunting grin. All of a sudden, a searing pain scorched through her womb with fiery claws. Her body lurched forward from her seat. Tori screamed again as her baby thrashed within her womb.

Somehow, the chunk of the dash pinning Tori's legs flew upward with her body's motion. The man jumped backward. His grin became an expression of torment as his face contorted, disfiguring his features. He let out a squeal of his own, which echoed in Tori's ears. Her body weakened as the man reached in once more. He appeared to be determined to help her. Again, her baby wrestled within her abdomen and the man jumped away from her. The stranger convulsed in agony as he searched for relief. In a frenzy, he waved his arms in a punching motion, jabbing his fist into the air. Tori closed her eyes in pain and when she opened them, he was gone.

Her unborn baby's life became distressed from the accident, and Tori began to hemorrhage. Strong muscle spasms continued to incapacitate her body as the unborn baby fought her own war to survive. Tori heard the shouts of those who tried to rescue her from the wreckage. Their efforts were almost in vain. Her breathing became more difficult as her lungs enlarged with blood. Her internal injuries demanded her life, and she would obey their request—Tori had given up. Today she had lost the only man she ever loved, and her child would perish alongside him. Her consciousness failed, and she began to drift to another time and place. She entered a dream surrounded by love. From within, she heard the whisper of her unborn child.

Be strong, we will be safe. The tiny voice pleaded with her to hold on. The child almost commanded her to endure, to battle the force's power.

Tori answered, almost too weak to speak. "I'll try."

She drifted far away from the scene of the accident, further and further into a glorious dream. Joyfully in her mind's shelter, she walked along the beach with Nolan. The rain dusted them with a soft mist as the ocean breeze blew, emitting a pleasant saltwater scent. The sun had been invigorating, engulfing them with warm rays as it held back the rain clouds' fury. Locking Tori into his embrace, Nolan held her, whispering his love for her. Nolan's tenderness soothed her fear as he reassured her he would never leave her. He promised Tori that she would have the strength to go on.

I am here, Tori. Everything will be fine. I love you. Be strong ... you can do this.

Hours seemed to pass as the love projected from their eyes, caressing one another with their devotion. Then

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Nolan disappeared from her side, his angelic image faded from her presence. Just then, Tori saw the most beautiful rainbow God had ever created. The colors danced across the brilliant heavens and illuminated the sun, announcing God's promise to her that everything would be fine.

The floral breeze caught her attention, stealing her thoughts from the painted sky. Tori now focused on a beautiful child, which she held in her arms. Enchanted by her grace, she admired the dainty baby girl with soft, elegant golden curls. Her bright blue eyes fixed on the woman who held her. The child smiled, and now Nolan's face looked back at her. The baby emulated the compassion that guided Nolan. Tori knew in the dream she could continue without him. He would give her the strength she needed. His love would forever remain in her heart. Tori could raise this child, enduring his absence, providing enough love for the both of them. She sensed then the crucial need to fight and the desire to survive. Mentally, she had the will to press on, except her human body begged her to surrender.

Thick smoke and fumes hovered oddly over the crash site, blocking out the sun, as the haze obscured visibility and made it impossible for the bystanders to aid Tori. Overwhelmed with fear and shock, most spectators just stood there fixed in their current spots. The sounds of the fire engines did not alleviate the tension in the hearts of everyone at the scene. Broken glass and metal projected throughout the air from the tiny explosions as new combustible materials ignited. The semi-trailer truck carried flammable liquids, which crept on the edge of exploding. The aftermath of the damage would be incomprehensible, killing everyone in the area.

Arriving at the crash site, firefighters approached the horrific scene in awe, the adrenaline rushing through their bodies urging them to use each skill taught to them.

“Get the hoses laid!” the fire chief yelled as the firefighters scattered throughout the scene with precision. As some firefighters laid lines to pump the foam to cool the tanker, others moved about the scene, searching for survivors among the scattered carnage. The field hindered their attempts to reach Tori’s car as their boots sunk into the mud, lodging deeply into the earth’s crust.

Ducking low, the firefighter yelled, assessing the tanker. “Stay clear, the tanker is too engulfed. It’s going to blow!”

“Cool the tanker before it blows! Get the jaws and open the door!” The chief instructed his crew as he hurried to Tori’s deformed vehicle, treading the clumpy mud. At first, he feared that Tori had perished alongside her husband.

The paramedic’s expression hardened. “The driver’s gone,” he informed the chief, despair thick on his face. The intense heat and poisonous gases robbed the oxygen of precious nutrients, and made the thought of survival unthinkable. Just then, a soft moan echoed beyond the thud of the raindrops splashing across his helmet. Her voice brought new hope to this awful day.

He shouted, anxious and horrified as he held her wrist in his ungloved hand. “Hurry. I’ve got a pulse—she’s alive ... she’s alive!”

Two more firefighters ran to assist, carrying the Jaws of Life and a blanket.

“Cover her face and hold her arms,” one firefighter said as he cranked on the Jaws of Life.

“You’ll be okay,” the firefighter told her while trying to convince himself. Doubt weighed heavy in his mind.

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Tori tried to respond, but her body refused. She did nothing but lay there immersed in the chaos around her. Bloodcurdling sounds gnawed at the witnesses as the Jaws of Life separated the scraps of metal. The firefighters worked to free the prisoners from the mangled rubble. The extinguished flames no longer roared in an attempt to consume the occupants. The only survivor was now freed of her entanglement, freed from her steel casing.

Tori lay unconscious in an ambulance, her body ignoring the attempts of the paramedics to revive her. The soft encouraging voice of the baby muted. The love of her husband disregarded.

“Get me some vitals!” one paramedic instructed, taking charge of the scene, with urgency thick in his voice. “Hurry, hand me some more gauze,” he demanded of another while holding pressure to the wound on Tori’s neck. He watched, sickened as the gash on her forehead still squirted blood.

“There are no fetal tones,” the other paramedic shouted. The child’s heartbeat was almost nonexistent. He repositioned the stethoscope on Tori’s abdomen to search for another heartbeat. “I’ve got nothing!” He nodded his head in disbelief. “I’ll start the IV,” he said, spiking the clear bag he took from his jump kit. Just then, the pit of his stomach snarled. “She’s not breathing—open her airway!” At that moment, the monitor buzzed, warning the paramedics that Tori’s heart had failed. “Start CPR.”

Could hope claim victory over this gloomy morning? The firefighters had begun evacuating Nolan and the charred remains of the truck driver. The grueling task took a long time, as each body required extensive skill to free. Any attempts to revive them seemed futile. They suffered from too many injuries, their lives long since faded as their souls entered Heaven.

When the ambulance arrived at the hospital, the Emergency Room staff was stunned. The ghastly sight of Tori's body gouged a hole in their hearts. The staff at the hospital knew Nolan and Tori well. They both sat on the hospital board as advocates for those without health insurance. Death is always hardest to accept when you lose one of your own. Their sadness crippled them. Many mourn the loss of Dr. Nolan Stone this day.

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Commanding the wind, he blew along with its current. This required no effort, no magical powers, only his will for it to be so. It was his daily routine to pass by this way. To watch the humans carry on in their trivial activities. Josiah heard their concerns, felt their fears, and hated their greed. Nothing good could come of this world. All the earthy beings hoped for were for themselves. They lived and worked to fulfill their human desires at any cost. Humans were masters at creating wars, feeding into violence, and ignoring the helpless. As he saw it, humans had no regard for the lives the Guardians tried so diligently to protect. Josiah believed in his mind that there were no souls worthy enough to grasp the true meaning of life, no soul, until this day. The day humanity as he knew it would change forever.

He heard her cry, which was so sweet, so innocent. Not one which was selfish and demanding, but one containing purity. One who encompassed all the beauty of her world. This sound sang to him like the tenderness of a lullaby. He had to get closer, he had to see what commanded his attention. Nothing in this world had ever called out to Josiah like this. The lullaby's force seemed too powerful, taunting his nature and his being. He was like a

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god, and now this song held him powerless in this moment.

Through the window, Josiah saw the song, the melody that hummed from within the room. There in a hospital bassinet lay a golden-haired child, just a few moments old. She cried only to announce her arrival, not to draw those away from her dying mother. This child could not be so selfish. She only wanted her mother to hear the joy of what her tireless efforts to fight brought forth.

In the blink of an eye, Josiah had seen all of her mother's joy and her sorrow. Josiah saw the horrid accident relived in her mind. His essence cried out in anguish, an emotion Guardians were not acquainted with. This should not affect him so strongly. Humans were destined to be born and to die. What course they followed in between birth and death is what mattered to a Guardian. Their concerns were only for those chosen as *Esprit de corps*, entities that are born to bring good into the world and alter lives, for the better of humanity. The fact that any other human existed was not their priority.

Josiah sensed something different about the woman who lay dying. He felt her desire to survive, to hold her child, and to watch her grow. Her mother's love magnified, shouting for significance, for recognition from Josiah. He felt an unusual bond to this child, a yearning to be close to her. This consumed him, robbing him of his faculties, and changing his priorities. His will to resist was gone, stolen from him by an immeasurable force.

Undetectable by the human eye, he leaned into the bassinet. His energy reached forward like a soft caress and held this child. Something burned within him. A power he had never felt, a desire he had never known, swarmed over him. Josiah had to have this thing he held in his grasp. He had to know she was safe and happy. He had to provide for

this child, to love this child beyond any human comprehension. Josiah knew it then; he would never have the capacity to leave this tiny human girl, the one now encased delicately in his godlike hands. The need for this child's safety deemed greater than the risk.

Josiah had to leave this child with more than a picture or someone's account of her mother's life. He would risk everything to make this child happy. His gift to her, a gift fit for a queen ... the life of her mother. Josiah knew that this child should not be an orphan from such a tragedy. There had to be some goodness left in this day. He understood the carefully designed rules, that he should never have claimed victory over death for Tori. Born a human, she had fulfilled her purpose in this world. She should pass, only being a memory to those who knew her.

Knowing what needed to happen, he waved his right hand in a fluid motion. His essence coaxed the air to flow over the mother's body. The gentle breeze brought with it life, healing powers never witnessed before in this world. The frail human body responded to the miracle. The mother would live; she would care for this child.