

# Prologue

. . . “It would never have worked out, you and me,” I say to Liria. She’s come to visit me in the domed city where the planetary prison is located. She stands on the free side of the force-field-controlled holding cell. Dressed to impress. She’s wearing a revealing and form-fitting pantsuit. There’s not a vacant spot on her face for more makeup. high-sheen recently styled hair and the smell of expensive perfume penetrates through the force field to scent the room. It’s obvious that she wants me to see she’s going out for a fun-filled night in the city.

“Keeping me locked up will not make me choose you over Rymirah.”

“If you think that’s why I’ve locked you up, then you aren’t as intelligent as I’ve come to believe.”

As she speaks, I sit up from my hard, narrow, wrinkled, and bent steel slab bed, spinning out of the rack and onto my feet.

“Did you ever consider why, out of the myriad of sensations and feelings we humans can experience in this sensual, vibration-driven existence, the Buddha defines love as the purest and most sacred emotion and hate as the most destructive? And Liria, if you don’t think that locking me up isn’t about that, then you’re not as smart as I know you are.”

Unmoved by my persistence, she runs her hands through her styled hair and then flips her head to spin it all onto her back.

“It’s been five days since I put you in jail, and I take it from your childish behavior that you aren’t ready to reveal the coordinates to Planet Four Hundred Forty-four. You’ll have noticed by now we’ve disabled your neurolink and HUD implants in this cold, tiny, isolated prison cell.

“Hayden, listen to me. You aren’t getting out of here until you cooperate.”

With that said, she leaves me in silent confinement.

There are a few key advantages to having a fiance who is the chief of Cyborg Security. One advantage is that she has access to the security system in this prison. With that access, she can allow my biomechanical systems and HUD to operate despite the protocols. And her’s too, of course . . .

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In book one of this series, we discovered how the Earth-based Gods of humanity lead civilizations to the edge of failure. Every system mankind has come to believe in had failed; financial, environmental, education, medical, religion, social, community, news, information, entertainment, and government -- all collapsed. The Gods of the universe then beckoned humans to discover and inhabit other worlds across the near galaxy. Now with everything on Earth destroyed, mankind looked to explore and discover new gods.

One mutant, biomechanical enhanced human race, Cyborgs, didn't give up on Earth-born philosophies. They developed a serum that removed anger from the human DNA. In Book two, the experiment for discovering Nirvana began on Planet 444. Where the eighth generation of a Buddhist civilization comes of age. A close group of friends bonding in age-old traditions discovered a newfound understanding of their heritage. While in book three, those now young adults face the realities of the struggle to survive on a dumb-planet. That is, a planet with limited technology. Including failing food supplies, and a neutron star emitting radiation. They further sacrifice their food crops by turning to marijuana to produce pharmaceuticals. They use its fibers to produce protective clothing.

When it seems all hope for Nirvana was lost, they turn to ancient traditions and a forbidden ritual to produce a child from the gods.

This child, Zosimos, is the inhabitant's only hope for transcendence to Nirvana.

Here, in book four, Zosimos matures at an inhuman rate. As he ages, he displays exceptional mental abilities, helping his people solve a range of technological and medical issues. By the time he reaches the age of six, he is ready to take the crown. Then, his Great Uncle contracted a deadly disease from radiation poisoning. Soon after, Zosimos is exposed to a plant strain with the side effect of reversing the DNA-altering serum. He feels anger for the first time. With that anger comes the realization that he is superior to those around him. In a fit of rage, he forces his people to submit to his tyrannical rule of mayhem and murders.

The promise of a cure for radiation poisoning leads Zosimos to Kelv, the sage. Still filled with rage, Zosimos forces Vallena, who is friends with the sage, to trap Kelv and obtain a DNA sample. He is hoping to learn why the sage has survived in the wasteland without radiation protection. However, Vallena discovers a way to reinstate the DNA-altering serum and cure Zosimos's rage. She tricks him into taking the cure.

The cure works, and Zosimos grows depressed and filled with remorse. He seeks advice from the sage. Through their lessons on love, truth, and alignment between mind and body, Zosimos becomes enlightened.

Zosimos, contemplating the solution to his planet's crisis, and questioning everything he thought he knew, turns to the conscious supercomputer his father hid in Vallena's home. But it is indifferent to human suffering and unwilling to interfere with frail humanity. But in order for this plan to succeed, he must convince the machine to help and the people must now trust the former tyrant Zosimos.

Centuries later, the Cyborgs return to monitor their experiment and to recover the hidden conscious supercomputer. Then they find the results of their well planned experiment to discover Nirvana produced something unbelievable.

Have the gods of the universe, like those Earth-bound gods known before them, failed the human race? After reading this final book of the series, you will awaken to a new perspective on happiness. There is joy in the struggles and contrast of life. Reading this book will expose you to the truth about Nirvana.

## Chapter One, Zosimos

**Story told in the present moment by King Zosimos.**

Memory stored on a neurolink is an odd experience. It's like having two conscious beings in my head. There's me and then there's all of my ancestor's thoughts and memories too. With a focused attention I can open a heads-up display in my visual field and with my eyes focused on the menu selections, I select memory. Then I select my father's memory and I can play back his thoughts. Right now I am playing back his memory of a time when he was taking tea to my mother on the terrace. I'll share this recall now.

Watching a five-year-old child construct a computer from eight-hundred-year-old spare parts removed from an old spacecraft should be a cause for alarm. When the child is yours, all you sense is pride and delight. My son the wunderkind, is called Zosimos. He is already taller than his mother and will be as tall as I am in another year. Maybe even taller. He calls me Mahá (pronounced Ma Hay), but I miss those days when he called me dad. My wife, Visákhá

(pronounced Vee Saw Ka), tells me I let my pride get in the way and that calling me by my name isn't disrespect; he's honoring me, she says.

Passing through the sliding-glass doorway from my palace living room out to the expansive terrace, I pause for a moment to observe as he sits on the toast-colored stone floor soldering components. I taste the honey-sweet taste from a fresh filled cup of hot poppy tea. Holding the smooth stoneware saucer in my hand, the smell of hot silver solder overpowers the musky steam from the tea. He's inherited my light almond complexion and his mother's tight curly and coal black hair. He's bent forward with his full attention given to every chipset and circuit board he soft solders into place. An old-school technique, but with our otherwise limited technology, it's near-genius. He knew instinctively how to do it.

Outside the open doors are clear skies as we are midway between the first and second daily rain storms, and this is our favorite time for sitting and enjoying nature. We listen to the hoarse-screeching cries of the cliff birds and the stiff wind rustling through the trees. It's otherwise, just like any ordinary day. I leave him there, turn and continue out the door to join my wife on the well-cushioned, high-backed Adirondack chairs.

"More times than not," I say to Visákhá, "I catch myself awestruck, watching him. Zosimos was never taught how to build a computer because I have no one in my kingdom with that talent. Our society doesn't have anyone skilled in design engineering or manufacturing engineering. For the first time since we arrived here - how long now? Over nine hundred years ago, a new computer is on the floor of our palace. Our son was born with more knowledge than folklore could have prepared me for."

*'He hates when I boast about him and when I dote. His self-confidence causes him to misinterpret my dotting for being overprotective.'*

"Be his father figure." She scolds while leaning out of her chair to poke my forehead with her forefinger. "He wants to be shown how to cope with his exceptional talents and intelligence in our society. He doesn't want you or anyone else treating him as if he is a phenomenon or an instrument for their amusement. Teach him how to get himself off centerstage and out of their spotlights. He wants to feel he's part of the community. He needs to learn that from you. I'm afraid for all of us if you can't guide him to be empathetic."

Settling back into the chair, I recall several instances of his exceptional problem-solving. Problems that our community has faced for centuries without hope for resolution, Zosimos has solved from the time he was three years old. Starting with the protective treatment of our face shields by melting ores and mixing the molten solution with vegetation from the sea. It was so

simple for him. Then there was the time he solved battery recharging, which used to take three days. He showed us how to use the satellite relays; now, it only requires four hours.

“Yesterday, while Zosimos and I were helping Vallena with the new medical project . . . you should have seen him Visákhá. Vallena explained the process for identifying marijuana plant strains and genomes. She started to show him how she cross-pollinates between strains to develop a new strain. The characteristics of one plant dominate, and producing the desired results can take three or four plant generations. Then you must inbreed the new strain to get production volumes higher and resilient, vigorous plants.

“Zosimos pulls the notepad from her hands and marched her into the back room of her lab. I followed them, wondering what he was up to. He told her, ‘You’re a good scientist, Vallena, but your methods are slow and wonky. Let me introduce you to my friend Tathagata.’

“He called to Tathagata and the conscious machine’s hologram appeared, hovering a few centimeters above the floor and less than a meter tall. It takes on the appearance of a young boy. Perhaps nine or ten years of age. Tathagata said, ‘Hello, Zosimos. How can I help you today?’

“Visákhá, your son commanded the supercomputer as if he and it were old friends. The hologram grew to full size, and Zosimos stood face to face with it, explaining the plants and the bio needs for the pharmaceutical desired. Tathagata asked several questions about the disease and its symptoms of the disease. The two of them paced back and forth across the room. They debated and posed a few ideas, and then Tathagata said, ‘You could graft these three strains to produce the single strain you need and have a strong enough cream to relieve and start the healing process in a single harvest.’

“Zosimos motioned for Vallena to come closer. As she stood beside him, he said, ‘Tathagata, show Vallena how to perform the grafting.’ The conscious supercomputer showed her a holograph illustration for precise grafting of the three strains to produce a single new strain for the cure. We would have had to wait two years to get the medication, but now we can have it available in five months. Maybe sooner.”

The memory recall I am sharing is interrupted and I have to stop father’s thoughts.

“Grafting? What the hell is grafting?” Habin, interrupted.

“What the fuck is the matter with you, shithead?” I scowled after him. “I was just getting to the best part of Mahá’s memory. Or should I say, my father’s memory?” I laugh sarcastically and

punch Habin square across the upper cheek below his left eye. My fist striking his face rang out like a large cliff bird's wings slapping against the air as it took flight. Habin's outcry was louder still than the blow to his fat face.

"Damn you, Zosimos!" he screamed as he fell over from his cross-legged position on the drum pillow in front of me. "It's just a question, man. I don't know what grafting is. And where did this conscious supercomputer come from? You have never mentioned this before. What's going on around here?"

"Shut up!" I tell him. I stand and walk across the palace's living room. When I reach the wall of windows, I stare out across the well-cushioned chairs where father and mother used to sit on the deck. In the distance is a spectacular view of the outdoor amphitheater. It stands like a national monument on the far side of what once was the palace gardens. Mahá uprooted the gardens years ago and planted crops in its place to help fight off the famines. I look at the cliff birds circling above the cliffs of the theater, ready to hide in its shadows as the neutron star, Kelly, approaches the beginning of another series of X-ray-emitting quakes.

Glancing in the other direction, I can see Terrence in a cart approaching the palace as he travels up Commerce Road. Looking back inside the room where Habin sits on the floor, still rubbing his now swollen eye. He's a strong and menacing-looking teenager. At fifteen years of age, he is eager to rebel against society, as most juveniles are. His large hands and enormous feet were odd enough for the kids in school to poke fun at. Combined with a pudgy face and chubby torso, he struggled as a bully. He's mentally simple, incapable of experiencing anger, and easy to outwit. But one day, when he hit someone at school for laughing at him, nobody ever laughed at him again.

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"You might want to dry your eyes," I say. "Terrence is on his way up the stairs and you wouldn't want him to see you crying."

"I'm not crying, you fucker." Habin says.

A moment later, Terrence bursts through the doors and enters the gathering room. A few steps into the entrance, He stands there looking back and forth at Habin and me. Terrence is seventeen years old, well over two meters tall, with arms and legs so full of muscles you never get used to his menacing size or feel comfortable when you're next to him. He's dark black except for his right ear and right hand, which are pink as a salmon steak. His voice is soft and has

a higher pitch than anybody would expect from a guy his size. His emerald green eyes are as much of a shock to see as his voice is to hear.

“What have you guys been doing in here?” he chuckles sarcastically. “You look like you’re ready to cry, Habin. Did Zosimos turn down your sexual advances again?” He burst out laughing and sounds like a crow with hiccups.

Habin stands tall and starts toward Terrence. “I’ll make you cry and I’ll make you my little bitch,” he shouts.

“Chibusa!” I shout over the top of them and their posturing. They are not trying to intimidate each other as much as they are trying to impress me. They worship me because I’m a genius and I have paranormal powers. Together, we are three outcasts on this planet. I let them hang around because I’m beginning to love being worshiped. These two guys are like the lyrics to a song no one will ever hear. They are perfect for what I need.

“Get over here Terrence, and have a pillow. You too, Habin. Sit your ass back down and chill. Everything is boin.”

Once they’ve both settled onto a cushion, I continue telling them, “I was sitting here with Habin, sharing memories from my father using my neurolink and memory chips. As I was getting to a good part of the memory record, the dipshit interrupted me. So, I slugged him in the eye.

“If you want to keep acting like a tough guy, trying to make Habin feel worse, I could slug you in the eye too. Game on?”

“No man, boin. Chibusa, Habin. Man, you know I’m messing with you.” Then he looks at me pitiful as a newborn child, “I still think it’s a jerk-off that I can’t get a neurolink,” Terrence whined in a more high-pitched tone than his usual.

Habin threw a quick look at me, and I mouthed a no to him. We aren’t going to laugh at that whine. At least not right now. “You know you’re too old for the surgery and the adaptation. Let it go, man. It’s not personal. It’s physics and biology,” I tell him.

“Besides, you came in at the right time. I was showing, Habin, how Vallena was fucking up the new medicine crop production. Neither she nor my dad had a clue how to use that conscious supercomputer hidden inside her home. But the part, even my dad didn’t see, was what I found

on her tablet. I was standing there in her back room with her notes and lab results in my hand. Tathagata was explaining and showing her how to graft the plants, and Mahá was glued to the display. While they weren't watching me, I was thumbing through her logs and discovered a mistake she had tried to cover up. But she accidentally left a page of notes.

“It was a year ago that she had developed a potent new strain of silverback. She named it, triple threat. The high came on strong; after three pulls, your mind had tripled its everyday thinking and problem-solving power. But it also had a dark side effect. Her words, not mine. Apparently, if you smoke this stuff and take the fourth draw on the pipe, the DNA-altering Cyborg serum that removed anger from our genes is temporarily replaced.

“Darker still, if you hit the pipe once or twice a day following that, you can experience anger at will. Do you understand how valuable that is?” I look at Habin and then at Terrence, but the look in their intense stare tells me they have no idea what it means.

“How was it that you had to . . . you know?” Terrence asks me.

“What do you mean? How I ended up with Mahá's neurolink on my twelfth birthday?

“Maybe he doesn't want to talk about that. Did you ever consider that?” Habin says to Terrence.

“Nah. It's alright, Habin. I'll tell you guys. Besides, it is crucial you two dumbshits know the story. So shut the fuck up and don't interrupt me this time.

“Back when I was six years old Mahá made me King when he persuaded Chief Justice, Merliana, and the rest of the judges to ordain me. Once I was ordained, he and Visákhá went back to their house on the edge of the mountain, and I took over this palace and the kingdom.

“Everything was going along just fine. I was fixing the carts when they couldn't recharge to plow fields and harvest crops. I showed Visákhá how to fix her light filtering to increase crop production, and I showed Danip how to blend better fertilizer to enrich the soils. But five years later, the previous King, the King before, Mahá, took over, well, he died.

“Wow, Visákhá was a wreck. The dead King was her uncle. She and her family spent a dozen years watching his dementia worsen, and we all saw his health dwindle away. Waiting for him to die was slower than bleeding someone to death one drop of blood at a time. When he died, they were grieving and relieved at the same time.



“Then, one day, she was sitting on the side of my mattress when I was going to bed. She says, "You will be getting the neurolink and memory chips from my uncle. You are at an eligible age and I have arranged for you to be chosen. Don't be worried." She told me. "It's a simple operation. You'll be back home within a week."

“That was bullshit, I told her.” I take a hard look at Habin and Terrence. They're looking back at me and listening like a couple of teenagers at the cinema watching a sci-fi flick back in the twenty-first century on Earth. When I turn back to the view from my palace window, the cliff birds are diving down from the sky and into their nests on the side of the cliffs. Kelly has begun another cycle of extreme X-ray emissions.

*'I'm stuck here with these two half-wits for seven hours now. None of us dare to go outside.'*