

Novel



LUMINOUS DESTINY

M A L I K A M I R A H M E D

Chapter 1: Destiny Awakens

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Elara Grace maneuvered cautiously through the dusty halls of the abandoned warehouse, her journalist's instincts on high alert. Strange energy readings had led her to this desolate place on the outskirts of Elysium, and she intended to discover their source.

Rounding a corner, Elara spotted an eerie blue glow up ahead. She stepped into a large, empty room and gasped. In the center sat a small, perfectly smooth orb radiating an otherworldly luminance. Mesmerized, Elara approached and reached out her hand.

At her touch, the orb flared brilliantly, bathing the area in celestial waves. Elara cried out as a surge of immense power coursed through her veins. She fell to her knees, trembling, as the energy rewrote her DNA. Suddenly, Elara sensed her body changing on a molecular level. When the transformation ceased, she stood on shaking legs with no understanding of what had just happened.

Elara stared at her hands, awestruck yet afraid. "What am I?" she whispered into the blazing blue shadows. Elara froze, hearing slow footsteps approaching from the darkness. Three hooded figures emerged and glided toward her, reaching out translucent claws. She shuddered at the creatures' piercing yellow eyes and wraithlike features.

With a scream of panic, Elara threw her hands forward and

bright light burst from her fingertips. The blast slammed into her attackers, knocking them back with inhuman shrieks.

Looking down in disbelief, Elara saw strands of glimmering energy trailing from her outstretched palms.

The shadows swiped at her once more with renewed fervor. Memories of past traumas flashed before Elara's eyes, fueling her desperate will to survive. She gathered her celestial might and released a nova of blinding radiance. The bursts struck true, banishing the hostile presences from the warehouse in an exodus of dissipating soul-essence.

Elara stood alone, panting, shock gripping her mind and soul. How...what am I? she thought numbly, staring at her glowing hands.. , Elara walked dazedly through the neon illuminated streets towards her apartment. Her mind raced with questions as her hands still glowed faintly. Back in her quiet room, Elara paced relentlessly.

Flashes of a burning building appeared before her. Two figures dragged her small form from the wreckage as screams rent the air. A younger Elara looked on helplessly.

What's happening to me? She wondered. Try as she might, sleep evaded her swirling thoughts. Dreams from that tragic night when she lost everything returned to haunt her restless mind.

In her dream, Elara reached for her parents through the smoke and searing heat. But they were gone. All that remained was the tangled grief that still gripped her heart after all these years.

Elara sat with her head in hands as reality and memory blurred together. Dawn's light did little to dispel the shadows lurking within. More than ever, she burned for answers to the puzzle of her mysterious destiny., , Jax let himself into Elara's apartment, finding her drained at the window. "Rough night?" he asked gently.

Elara sighed. "You could say that. I found something... strange happened at the warehouse." She recounted her discovery of the orb and the attacks, deliberately omitting details about her powers.

Jax's eyes widened. "Astounding! But why the long face?"

Elara shivered, hugging herself. "When I touched it, something inside me awoke. I can do incredible things now, Jax, but I don't understand why. Or what it means." Her voice dropped to a whisper. "After losing Mom and Dad, I barely kept going. Why was I gifted this when others suffer?"

Jax took her hand. "You've a gift, Elara, yet bear burdens no one should. But powers or none, you light up any room with your passion for truth and justice. Have faith that you were given this role for a reason."

Elara sighed. "I wish I shared your optimism. All I feel is lost." She met his gaze, eyes pleading. "What if I'm not worthy?"

"You are," Jax said firmly. "I've yet to see you fail helping others."