

# Chapter 1

Greco sat on the end of the dock that served as the boat slip for the new Omega Group's headquarters, his feet dangling above the water. The sun had begun to rise over the ocean and he could just make out the outline of Amelia Island off to the north. The orange and yellow hues that blanketed Nassau Sound at this time of day were breathtaking, but Greco barely noticed.

His thoughts were elsewhere.

In the three months since the Omega Group—and Mirissa in particular—succeeded in ending Daedric's plans for world domination, Greco found himself spiraling into a deep depression. Although no one had ever considered him a people person, his need to withdraw even from those he now considered friends was taking over his life.

Every day he was expected to train with Mirissa, and every evening he went home feeling even more disconnected. A good night's sleep was a thing of the past as his guilt kept him tossing and turning throughout the night.

*How long can I keep up this charade?*

For over a year he'd been Mirissa's guardian—teaching her, molding her, helping her fulfill her destiny. He'd done a good job, too. Mirissa was strong and getting more powerful every day.

When he first met her, on her eighteenth birthday, Mirissa was a happy-go-lucky teenager getting ready for her prom. Only a year later, she was a formidable Amazon

warrior with powers that no other Amazon throughout history possessed. And she'd succeeded in taking down a demi-god.

One thing he'd never understood was why he'd been assigned as Mirissa's guardian in the first place. Myrine, the former queen of the Amazons during the period when Artemis imbued them with their unnatural powers, had given Greco that particular duty. Although two thousand years had passed since the time of her reign, Myrine still played a vital role in shaping and training the Amazon tribe. Not in this dimension, of course, but in another where the island of Tritonia still existed. All Amazons visited this island and Myrine when they first donned their rings, and whenever they needed guidance. They could simply will their consciousness there.

Greco travelled there many times and was the only man to do so. He was, much to his mother's chagrin, the first male born to an Amazon in history.

A shiver went through Greco's body. Not from the chill of the early morning breeze, but from the thought of his mother.

She was the reason he was in this predicament. Why couldn't she have just accepted him for who, and what, he was? After all, it wasn't as though he had any control over his chromosomes.

The earliest memory Greco had of his mother was of her locking him in a closet to ensure her "guests" didn't see him. At the time, being only five years old, he'd had no idea that this was unusual behavior. "*They can't know about you,*" his mother would say. That was why there weren't any pictures of him displayed in their house, and his bedroom was decorated as a guest room.

He wasn't hidden away from everyone, though. His father wouldn't allow that. Only his mother's special friends weren't allowed to know about him. The friends who—unknown to him at the time—were Amazons.

A splash beneath his feet brought Greco back from his trip down memory lane. Myrick, the Omega Group's resident Merman, reached his hand up to the dock and gracefully pulled himself out of the water.

"You out here again, lad?" Myrick stood behind him, wearing neon green swim trunks, toweling off. Ever since the new headquarters was built on the water, he would swim to the office, staying far enough under the surface to ensure that no fisherman or pleasure boaters would catch a glimpse of him. He kept a supply of clothing and towels in the dock house.

"Just finished my run. Taking a breather before heading in."

The look in the Scotsman's eyes told Greco he knew something was bothering him, but he was kind enough not to pry. "I'll be ready in a minute. We can walk together."

When Myrick emerged from the dock house, he was wearing loose-fitting blue jeans and a white button-down shirt. His now dry gills had molded themselves back into his neck, and the webbing between his fingers and toes was fully receded, leaving no trace of their existence. "So, any idea what's on the agenda for this morning's meeting?" Myrick asked.

"Nope. Maybe they finally found Daedric."

"A bit of good news would be a nice change." Myrick laughed.

Myrine Colson, named after the Amazon Queen from two thousand years ago, was the current queen and also the leader of the Omega Group. She'd set their weekly meeting for first thing that morning. Everyone, including Mirissa, would be there.

When they reached the back entrance to the headquarters, Myrick stopped and turned serious for the first time since Greco had known him. "Look, I don't know what's going on with you, but whatever it is, you need to deal with it. What you've been doing the last few months isn't working."

Greco stared at him and gave him a quick nod.

"For God sakes, boy. If you want to ask the lass out, just do it and put us all out of our misery!" Myrick's moment of seriousness was over.

## Chapter 2

Myrine patiently waited for her team to get settled. Phoenix, still on assignment in Africa, was the only Omega Group member not attending today's meeting. The rest of the team waited in the conference room, with coffee or tea in hand, for her to begin. Carter and Han, sitting together as always, were laughing about something that happened over the weekend, while Ken Hodges and Jackie Barns, the only humans on the team, listened in. Myrine's husband, Steve, and daughter, Mirissa, sat next to each other whispering conspiratorially. Myrick, Beck, Asteria and Orano were all glued to the screens of their smart phones, most likely checking emails or, in Asteria's case, playing Candy Crush or some other mind-numbing game.

One person was still missing.

A moment later, Greco entered the conference room, freshly showered after his usual morning run, with his wet hair hanging in his eyes. He took a seat at the opposite end of the table from Myrine, a scowl on his face. She noticed that it was as far away from Mirissa as possible.

*That scowl is about to get worse,* Myrine thought.

"Alright everyone, let's start with some good news." The expectant look on her team's faces told her what they were thinking, so she quickly continued. "No. We haven't found Daedric yet. We did hear from Grainger, though. He and Meghan are doing well and they're expecting their first child." Myrine paused as a few cheers erupted. "He said

if it's a girl, they're going to name her Mirissa. And if it's a boy, Steve. Although he wanted me to tell you, Steve, that there would be no Teletubby paraphernalia in the house." Her husband's old SEAL nickname never failed to irk him and she enjoyed watching him squirm whenever it was used.

"On to business. Carter, I need you to go to Arizona." She tossed a manila folder in front of him. "There've been several unusual occurrences in and around the Grand Canyon. Strange auras emanating from it, visitors losing large chunks of time, and a dramatic uptick in violent crime in the surrounding area. Take Han and Jackie with you. The name and contact info of one of the canyon's trail guides is in the file. She's been documenting all of the activity and will get you started."

An unexpected look of resignation passed over Carter's face, but he, Han, and Jackie began looking over the file, so Myrine ignored it and moved on. "Beck, you, Orano and Myrick are in charge of the new recruits. Their training starts now."

In the weeks following their defeat of Daedric and the preternaturals he hired to help him, Myrine had been on a mission to grow her team. The Omega Group's roster currently held ten preternaturals from seven different tribes, but that was no longer enough. The increase in the sheer number of cases they were assigned by CIA Director Finley, and the time required to deal with each one, left her only one option. Bring in more agents.

Myrine had spent the last month travelling the world with her husband, meeting with the leaders of various preternatural groups. In the end, she'd succeeded in recruiting three new team members.

“Alright everyone, let’s get to work. Greco? Hang back for a minute.” As the rest of her team started filing out of the room, Myrine stopped her daughter. “Mirissa, I need you and Asteria to wait for me in my office. I’ll be there shortly.” With a nod, both Amazons headed that way.

When the room was empty, Myrine closed the door and motioned for Greco to take a seat next to her.

“Something’s happened, Greco. It’s your mother. She disappeared several days ago.”

Greco stared blankly at her. “That’s it? She’s probably just on a bender. Nothing to worry about. She’ll turn up like always.”

When Greco tried to stand up to leave, Myrine put a hand on his shoulder to keep him seated. “I don’t think that’s the case this time. Gayle hasn’t had a drink in almost a year. She’s been doing really well. Three days ago, your dad came home to find her gone. Her car, purse, and cell phone were all still there. He called me this morning.”

Greco waited for a moment before speaking. “If my dad thought something was wrong, why wait three days to call you?”

“Honestly? He thought, at first, the same thing you did—that she’d relapsed and would come home on her own. But as time went on and he didn’t hear from her, he did some checking around. He couldn’t find any evidence that she’d started drinking again. Quite the opposite, in fact.” Myrine continued, “I visited Tritonia this morning to see if anyone had heard from her and I got some disturbing news.”

Greco’s eyes narrowed. “What news?”

“A few of the other visiting warriors reported seeing an apparition two days ago. An Amazon that didn’t fully materialize on the island. They said she looked strained and was only able to say two words before she disappeared completely. She said ‘help me’”.

Greco’s voice was even as he asked, “And they think it was my mother?”

“The warriors that saw her apparition never met your mother. But the description they gave fits Gayle perfectly. Add that to the fact that she’s gone missing, and I think it’s a pretty safe bet.”

Greco stared into space for a beat before speaking. “I’ll check in with my dad and see if I can find out anything. I’ll keep you posted.”

“I’m sending Mirissa and Asteria with you to help,” Myrine said.

“No!” Greco’s brows furrowed, and his voice lowered. “I can handle this myself. Like I said, she’s probably off somewhere with a bottle.”

“Greco, I know you’ve had more than your fair share of problems with your mother, but I don’t care about your personal opinion on this. I am the Amazon queen, and a member of my tribe is missing. Until I’m given evidence proving otherwise, I’m going to treat this case like any other threat. Take a moment if you need to get your head straight, then meet me in my office. Is that understood?”

Greco nodded as he left the room.

Myrine gathered up her files and started toward her office. She wasn’t sure if she was doing the right thing sending Mirissa with Greco. She’d seen the way her daughter looked at him and, with his history, things were bound to get ugly.