

## CHAPTER ONE

### The Beginning

Richmond, Virginia was alive with the hustle and bustle of a regular noontime Monday when a brilliant flash and a deafening explosion erupted in the sky. A shockwave radiating out from the center of the blast knocked planes from the air, shattered windows, and had the whole city screaming with the voices of a hundred thousand car alarms.

A massive Golden Sphere almost five kilometers in circumference had appeared at the center of the explosion. It sat burning in the sky with a deafening roar as flames the size of skyscrapers rose up on all sides, licking the heavens. Several small golden balls circled the top like a crown, each also engulfed in flames.

The Golden Sphere let out a trumpet blast so loud it acted as a second shockwave, shattering more windows and knocking people to the ground for miles in all directions. The sound of the trumpet was not only heard in the city, but around the world

as every radio, every television, every mobile device on the planet, began blaring the same ear piercing sound. After a few seconds, it stopped, and a voice said, "Come!"

People watching on their television or mobile device were shown an external view from one of the golden balls crowning the Golden Sphere. A White Orb, with a burning golden ball circling the top like a crown, emerged from the body of the Golden Sphere. Lightning erupted from the bottom of the White Orb and lashed out with deadly rage against the ground. People touched by the arcing strands of power simply lit up and vanished in a puff of smoke, while buildings and cars exploded, sending debris in every direction. The White Orb pulsed brightly seven times, then headed off to the south, streamers of lightning reaching down to the ground like the legs of a giant spider, scorching and killing everything beneath it as it moved.

Panic and terror filled the streets as people in the path of the White Orb fled for their lives with reckless abandon. Cars and trucks were jammed up on every street due to the chaos created by the attack, so people were leaving their vehicles and running down the road on foot. The haunting screams of thousands of men, women, and children, facing their last moments, was replaced by an equally haunting silence in the destructive wake of the White Orb.

The trumpet blasted a second time and a distinctly different voice said, "Come!" A glowing Red Orb emerged from the

massive Golden Sphere, it too wearing a smaller golden ball as a crown. Fire enveloped the Red Orb, and red lightning lashed out against the ground below. It pulsed from a deep, dark crimson, to a bright, painful white as it shot off to the north, the Earth rippling and shaking beneath it as it moved.

Buildings toppled and roads crumbled from the powerful gravitational forces being exerted by the Red Orb. Cars, people, and debris were lifted off the ground and slammed back down, pummeled with great force against the Earth. Panic preceded the Red Orb, waves of pain and screams rippled beneath it, and the silence of death trailed in its wake.

Government databases worldwide were hacked and classified information began pouring out all over the internet. Specifically, governmental spying among allied nations. At the same time, social media databases and the personal, sensitive, and secret information about people all over the world was exposed for everyone to see.

The trumpet blasted again. Again, a different voice said, "Come!" Another orb appeared, but this one was black, engulfed in eerie purple flames. The ground shook and rumbled beneath the Black Orb as it moved off to the east towards the shoreline. Rivers and streams east of Richmond surged and overflowed as they felt the pull of the gravitational effects of the Black Orb. As it grew closer to the Atlantic coast, it pulled huge, tsunami-like waves onto the shore. Ships and boats docked along

the rivers and coasts were tossed against each other or pulled completely onto land by the rush of water flowing into the streets. Like everywhere else around the city, traffic east of Richmond was clogged due to the shock of the attack, but as people tried to flee on foot they were overcome by the waves created by the black orb.

Corporate secrets began spilling out onto the internet. Evidence proving corporations had intentionally harmed people, withheld cures to diseases so they could profit from the treatments, stole money from retirement funds, and bribed government officials, streamed into the public consciousness.

The trumpet blasted a fourth time and a pale green orb wearing a smaller golden ball as a crown emerged from the Golden Sphere. It pulsed brightly several times, then with a loud 'boom' it shot off to the west. Behind the Pale Orb flowed a cloud of sickness and disease which slowly fell to the Earth, killing people and animals within a few seconds of contact.

It started with the birds. As birds fell from the sky by the thousands, people who stopped to wonder would also succumb. Schools, hospitals, churches, people walking down the streets, entire communities, fell dead to the ground.

High above the Golden Sphere, three new stars appeared bright in the noontime sky. Several deafening 'CRACKS' pierced the heavens and dozens of blue balls of energy, arcing and angry, shot out from these new specks of light and raced down

towards the Golden Sphere. They penetrated the shimmering surface of the sphere like a string of electric pearls falling into a placid lake, then, an instant later, a loud rumble emerged.

The Drake, Magellan, and Cousteau began to glow, then lit up with fire as they broke through the Earth's upper atmosphere and dove upon the attacking enemy vessel. On the bridge of the Drake, the crew held onto their consoles as the turbulence grew and the ship shook. Captain Keenen yelled, "All ships fire again!"

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