

## The Lost Home

I've never seen the light like this, so bright and beautiful. I'm surrounded by a huge crystal shield and dragged deep down the sea. The world begins to fade out and darkness falls upon me.

I wake up in the centre of a huge square. My head hurts. I can only remember I was in my grandmother's attic looking for fun because of the boring family reunion conversation. Then I found a crystal bracelet beaming under piles of stuff. Out of curiosity, I put it on but it stuck on my wrist. Suddenly I was drawn by an unknown power out of the house and fell down the cliff into the sea beside the house. What's going on? My thoughts turn back to the place where I'm standing at. The bracelet is now glittering stronger than before. I try every way to remove it but fail. Stupid damned thing!

But something draws back my attention. This is a grand square with four pillars around it. It's a city, grand, ancient and deserted. But my eyes fix on marvelous sights I see. Although the ruins and pillars are covered with vines, the carving under them still stands out. I wonder around the square and touch the beautiful art. "Beautiful, isn't it?" a voice breaks the silence. I startle and stumble over. A laugh bursts out and ceases the suspense, it's a female. She's tall, elegant and pretty, wearing a sky blue gown. The woman is around 20, about the same age as mine. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to frighten you. Are you okay?" "Yeah... I thought so." I gather myself up while she's approaching. I notice that she has exactly the same bracelet as mine but in different carving. She continues the talk, "My name is Amira, new Queen of Aaron. I got the message that you've just arrived. So I came for help." "Wait! What!? Queen? But... you look..." I'm trying to find a word to describe her. "Too young for that?" She laughs again. "You have to get used to that, our people age very slowly. The fact is that tomorrow is my 1000<sup>th</sup> birthday! How lucky you are!" She finishes with a huge smile. But my thought can barely follow the information I've just got. "What the... I'm sorry. But you're joking, right? You know how it sounds ridiculous." "No. I'm serious. The reason why you're here is because you're chosen to save this city. You see, Aaron is dying." Still, I'm not convinced. "Wait. So where exactly is our location?" Amira explains patiently to me the brief history of Aaron. It was a floating city in the sky powered by crystal and it was once prosperous. But the power broke down with no signs five hundred years ago when she was a kid. Then to save the power, the city sank into the ocean and was protected by a crystal shield. People in Aaron gathered in the northern part of the city and strove to survive. The city could barely maintain the power. But it could not last any longer. Legend said that there will

be a son of Aaron returning and bringing back the new era.

“I’m sorry. Your Majesty. Please. I just want to go home. I don’t really care for the lovely stories you told. It’s not even my business.” I try to repress my anger but I think I fail. But she seems calm enough. “It’s the matter of yours.” “Alright, I don’t know why on earth did I get here, but I...” “You’re the son of Aaron.” The word comes from her mouth smoothly but it strikes my head. “What!?! You cannot just stop by and tell me ‘You’re the son of Aaron!’ like this! What does that mean? I don’t know what’s wrong with you... and this whole... bullshit! I’m leaving now.” She sighs and says, “You’re not going anywhere. Can’t you understand? You’re trapped here by the power itself and you’re now thousands of miles under the water.” Her face looks grievous but with firmness. She also mentions that her father died three days ago so she inherited the throne. I’m reluctant to stay in this dying city but I guess I have no choice. “I don’t even know your name.” She says in a delighted tone on the way back to the centre of the city. “Royce. And I guess I have to stay here for a while. So ...” “Royce, good name. And don’t worry. You will be taken care of by our people.” As we march through the market, the people stare at me in fears. “I feel like they’re scared of me... and also, I’m hungry now.” Amira replies with a laugh, “Because you’re a stranger and they also heard that the son of Aaron has returned. Plus, you can take whatever you want at the market.” “But... I don’t have money with me.” She looks at me like I’m a child. “It’s free. We share everything in common. Money and gold is worthless here.” “But then why do they still stay in their positions?” “That’s how our system works, Royce. Everyone takes care of his own duty so he can share the efforts. And that’s how we survive under the power break-down.”

The palace is a soaring tower standing at the centre of Aaron. Amira leads me in and calls her servant named Theron to attend my room. He’s a fatty middle age man with bald hair. “I’m going to do some daily routines and prepare for the celebration tomorrow. In the meantime, my servant will attend you. I’ll see you later.” She ends the conversation with a smile. I’m tired so I am eager to lie on the bed and take a good rest. The tower is a narrow building so it spirals up high. “What’s your name?” Theron breaks the ice with an unpleasant squeaky voice. “Um... Ro... Royce. I’m Royce. Nice meeting you.” Then we arrive at the door of my room, which is beautifully decorated. “Then why are you here?” He asks again coldly. “I’m sorry if I did offend you. But I am the one who is confused. So I don’t know why!” I’m irritated and before I open my mouth again, he says in slight excitement. “No. I mean. ‘How’ did you get into this city?” I explained the mysterious bracelet that dragged me into the city. I found that he does not wear one. Everyone in the city has one bracelet but why doesn’t he? But I keep this question inside. He’s turning my left hand up and

down to examine the bracelet carefully. “That’s it... that’s it!” He giggles with whispers. “I’m sorry? Can I go into my room now?” I draw my hand back slowly. “Of course, my honorable guest.” His face looks bizarre as he turns and walks downstairs. “That’s it, that’s it...” The whisper echoes between the stairs.

The next day is the celebration of Queen’s birthday. The square is crowded with people chatting with each others. I’m sitting in the main area with the royal guys. Then Amira, the new Queen gets on the stage with a green night gown. “My fellow Aaronians, thank you today for coming to this celebration under the will of Brent, our great God. I’m sure you’ll find this banquet fruitful and abundant due to our admiration of the natural. We are the peace-maker. The happiness that Brent falls upon us is the greatest gift...” The long opening makes me sleepy but something takes my attention immediately. Theron, the servant sneaks out the banquet and goes into darkness. I think he’s up to something bad, at least I think so. I leave the banquet and run behind him. I arrive at the square where I dropped in. I see no one but me. Suddenly I get hit from my back. I fell on the floor and see Theron standing there smiling with his twisted face. “I’ve waited this moment for too long since King Alden, Amira’s father.” “What do you want? You’re not a servant or slave, right?” “What do I want? Bring back the city to its right place and be the rightful king of course! Oh yes by the way, we don’t enslave people.” “Then who the hell are you?” He sniffs and says, “I’m Amira’s uncle, the rightful heir of the throne! But she enslaved me to stop me from getting the throne.” He presses my bracelet on to the centre plate of the square. Then the crystal glitters brighter and brighter. The whole city lights along the beautiful carving and it starts to shake. I can barely open my eyes with my hand stuck on the ground.

The city flies out of the water and goes straight into the sky. The shield closes after Aaron reaches a certain level. People cry out and run out of the banquet to see the magnificent sights. The wind blows in the city like it’s alive again. They cannot believe what they see. Ignoring my amazement, Theron continues, “This bracelet is the key to power the whole city. And it’s been lost for five hundred years. King Alden caused the break down and deliberately dropped the bracelet to the world you live. Of course Amira didn’t know at that time but she found out the truth before King’s death. She believes that the situation they are in right now is good for the people. That is, Aaronians’ self-dependent and striving for survive. But I know returning to the prosperity era again is the best choice for the people.” I return from astonishment. “But the Queen told me to save the city...” “If she didn’t say so, you wouldn’t even want to listen to her. I think she tries to keep you here forever.” “But... why me?” Theron says in relief. “You’re indeed the son of Aaron, the chosen one. You have the same gene as we have. You’re the lost child, like Aaron. You’re one of us, Royce. This

city is as alive as we are. When the right time comes, it knows how to do for the best. So it guided you here.” “‘Guide’ huh?” I make a mocking face. He tells me that he ran away to distract me so he can use the bracelet to power the city. I feel tricked but I don’t think that matters anymore.

Amira is now standing in the square and she looks pissed off. She stares at Theron and me. She finally admits her mistake on this so she makes apologies in front of the people. She and Theron also make an agreement that she can still be the Queen but she should make Theron her advisor. The Aaronians decide that they still love the way they are now so they don’t have to change for better. But now everything comes to life again and surely will bring hope to Aaron.

We are standing at the edge of the floating city. I know I’m merely a passenger. The great history of Aaron is still writing on its new pages. Looking down the world underneath, I’m not hurrying home, at least for now. I know where I’m from, what I am. At the first time, home seems so far yet so close because I know I belong to both worlds. The Aaron is glittering in silver. I see it with a smile on my face and feel the happiness inside my heart. Yes, I’m home.