

The Primordial Record

#Chapter 1: The Mermaid - Read The Primordial Record

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Authors Note: Rowan Character Illustration.

Darkness....

A flash of light....

Pain!

So much pain....

Make it stop!

Make it stop, please... I will do anything.

Stop killing me!

Rowan woke in a giddy daze, his head felt as if it was placed on an anvil, and an over-enthusiastic blacksmith was going at it for the better part of an hour.

A burst of phantasmal pain brushed across his spine, memories of depravity and sickness choked his throat, and for a horrifying moment, he could not breathe, and then like a flash of lightning, the sensation passed and the memory faded.

He thought he heard the distant sound of music and laughter, and if he was not mistaken, the baying of horses. Weird, there was no way, horses were near his worksite or his home.

His body felt crushed, as if he was under ten stacks of weighted blankets, and he could not breathe properly, oddly he found it comforting for at least it brought a little distraction from his pounding head.

He had a history of migraines, so he found the pain a little familiar, nevertheless, this was up there for the most painful experiences he had in his life, and working as a miner from the ripe age of nine, he understood the pain—a considerable chunk of his life was filled with them.

Put 'em in the list, just put 'em in the list.

Rowan mentally cajoled himself. It was a little trick he learned growing up, he always had a great memory, and most time it was a comfort and yet, it kept his pains fresh. At the edge of his mind, ever ready to serve him a healthy dose of remembrance.

He called the list: My list of glass. Don't ask him why.

His eyes were still closed, and he attempted to open them to no avail.

He fidgeted and struggled to bring his hands up to his face. Hands that felt like pieces of dead logs. He struggled to lift them to his face, and in what felt like forever he succeeded.

"How much did I drink last night? Feels like I have been poisoned, and the bastard did not do a good enough job." He muttered to himself.

He had struck gold on his latest dig, well, literally it was a diamond. Even after all the illegal cuts and fees he had to pay to the corrupt foreman, he was still left with a nice lump of change, enough to sink into a river of booze and cheap women for months and to test how much damage he could do to his body, both physically and mentally before it quit on him.

He internally cheered himself for the minor milestone of lifting his hands to his face.

Bracing himself, he raised his fingers to claw at his closed orbs. Going by the sensation of touch, he found his face filled with muck that had dried out, he gently scrapped away at his face, paying close attention to his eyes, and wincing slightly when he pulled out lashes as he attempted to free his vision.

Did he fall into a mud-pit? There were such death traps around the abandoned mining area. In his drunken stupor, did he wander into those desolate areas? If he did, he was in trouble for he would hardly receive help here.

In what felt like forever, he was finally able to free his eye sockets.

"By the sweet cheeks of Ares, this headache is killing me." Rowan groaned aloud. His dry throat turning it into a long-drawn-out cough, he spat out some unknown sticky mass from his mouth and sucked in air that tasted of overripe fruits and subtle decay.

He found a burst of focus from deep within and pushed through, so he could observe the surroundings where he found himself.

He was sprawled on the floor, laid on his back, and so he attempted to move, and he could not, he observed that he was inside a room. It was dimly lit by candles on bronze stands that were in the shape of Mermaids.

The Mermaids sported three pairs of arms that were raised upward. Each of the hands was clasped together, and candles were placed between the locking digits.

His eyes caught three of the same stands, each holding three lit candles, he noted that the candles were black, and seemed to pour an excessive amount of smoke from the flames, yet this minor oddity caught his attention only for a while before it was drawn to the stands itself.

"wow, the details on these candle stands are exquisite." He was rendered speechless by the workmanship, the mermaids were made with an excruciating eye for details, and they almost seemed alive.

He swore he saw a statue blink, but it should just be a trick of shadows and the flickering flames, right?

"Yeah, I certainly drank too much. Where am I?"

Not seeing any present danger, but still holding a slight trace of uneasiness, he calmed down and distracted himself by tracing each scale on the Mermaids with his eyes, admiring the superb craftsmanship.

" Phew... this must cost a pretty penny." Rowan tried to run a number mentally and grimaced at another burst of pain. The light from the candle bounced back from the mermaid scales in a greenish-purple hue, that made him suspect it was made from gold, that same light poured across the room to his questing eyes and his chest locked up, and a burst of panic seized his throat.

The room was covered in sprays of red, a red that was unmistakable blood. Blood varied in every shade, splashed on every wall, and the floors were covered with mysterious bumps!

It took a moment for his mind to wrap around what it was seeing.

Rowan's pupils narrowed, and an unconscious cry of horror came from his mouth, it came out in a high-pitched squeal.

"No, this cannot be real. I am dreaming, snap out of it, Rowan, snap out of it!"

The floors were covered with dead bodies.

They had been brutally hacked apart, faces contorted in a nightmarish grimace that told of untold suffering before their passage from the mortal coil. Limbs were bent in nightmarish proportions, they had been twisted into that unnatural form.

With a strength that came from panic and madness, he tried to push himself up, disregarding the loud thrum of pain from his head, neck, and shoulders that felt as stiff

as cinder blocks, he managed to leverage his head upward and saw why he could not move.

He was buried under bodies!

Chapter 2: New Body

A raw and primal scream came from Rowan, as he attempted to push away from the bodies, ignoring the sickening sounds and the awful sucking sensations as he pulled himself from the bodies, fighting the bile that rose from his throat.

He looked around wildly, each rotation of his head bringing a new rush of horrifying new details. The room was large, clearly a master's room, and was tastefully furnished, art pieces were scattered around the room.

Two gigantic windows were covered with thick curtains, the windows, and the curtains appeared crafted with care, he saw gold trimmings on the curtains, and fanciful embodiments on the windows, and everything screamed wealth and a desire to spend said wealth.

There was a large brown door, inlaid with gold and mysterious markings with the same figure of the Mermaid with three arms, but this time the mermaid's arms pointed in various positions, in angles that did not seem to make any sense; he noticed that there was no blood stain on the door, which should be impossible because the entire walls, up to the ceiling was liberally coated with it.

Beside the door was a cabinet and a mini altar, with a large book on top, it was open, and the pages were black, it did not appear to contain any characters. The doors of the cabinet were opened and inside was a full-length mirror, with an elaborate design.

Why put such an expensive mirror inside a closed cabinet?

He mentally shook his head away from his musing, the thought process of whoever owns this place should be the last thing on his mind.

The reflection from the mirror drew him back into the horror that his wandering mind, for the moment, had chosen to forget.

He swept his gaze across the mirror and saw a stranger staring back at him, covered in dried blood, so thick only a few spots of pale skin flashed through eyes green as an ocean of emerald jewels, and hair plastered to his scalp.

He stared back in shock, for this was a child! He was a child!

Except he was mistaken about his three decades of memories and took the next logical step to madness and came to the grand conclusion that his life was what?

A simulation?

A random program in the matrix, or was there something more mysterious and mind-breaking, like him jumping bodies?

Reincarnation?

Transmigration? Was that even a word?

Was he in Hell?

Or was this something silly as someone playing a prank on him? But at such a level?

He was sure that God did not have that much leisure time, or did he?

How much leisure time does an omniscient being have? Every moment?

I am going crazy. Breathe Rowan. It could all be a lucid dream brought on by bad alcohol or overdosing on a particular white substance. Right?

Stop thinking and act! Look at yourself!

A wave of chills washed over him, and he noticed in the mirror that his mouth was wide open all this while, and he had been making a low keening noise like an injured animal. His appearance jolted him, and he pulled himself away from his reverie.

I need to leave this place.

That central thought was all it took to push him awake, panic raced along his veins like acid, and he crossed the floor filled with corpses, eyes focusing dead straight ahead. "Dead straight, he.." laughter burst from his throat.

"Get a grip, Rowan, you're going cuckoo." He stared at his reflection, his laughing face looking more like a tortured grimace, "not a good look for you." He whispered. Hearing his voice helped, although it still felt strange hearing a different childish voice when he spoke.

Have I gone mad? Shut up brain.

The door was his goal, whatever crazy thing that happened here, or the crazier individuals who did it, he would rather not be anywhere near this location when they returned and continued where they left off.

As he got closer to the door, the sound of a party filtered inside the room, he thought he had been mistaken before when he heard sounds of laughter and celebration, but, his ears worked fine, there was a celebration happening somewhere close. "What sort of

hellish game have I found myself in? Who can have any sort of celebration besides a place like this?"

The sound from the party oddly seemed to scare Rowan more than the room he found himself in, the occasional broustous laughter making him jolt as he picked his way across the room filled with the dead.

He found himself shuddering and coming to a stop, eyes clouded with confusion, and for a while, he stood and listened, and he began properly to filter the sounds he was hearing.

At first, it sounded alien and unintelligible to him, but as he listened more closely, the language seemed to merge in his consciousness and the puzzle clicked, just as a rush of images and sensations rushed through his head.

Rowan bent down in pain and squeezed his skull. He recognizes this alien language, it was the ancient Medan language, spoken only by members of the royalty of the Bramian Court and the Justice Council, it was deemed among the first languages of men given by the God King to those who shall rule.

He had a flash of recollection, of a solemn occasion in a red hall, where the priests anointed the head of each Noble child with Shining Abrosia, with this, their tongues were open, and they could speak Medan without going mad.

With that knowledge came a rush of memories, that were disjointed and chaotic, and he nearly buckled to the floor in pain, but now he knew his name, it was..., for a bizarre reason, he had a chilling sensation that he must not speak his name, he must not acknowledge his real identity at this place.

When the wave of pain passed, he pushed himself to the door, regardless of what came next, he was a man of action.

"Let me cut myself some slack, right? Because now, it seems to be that I am a child of action", he spoke wryly, his brain struggling to keep his sanity intact, in any way it could. He finally left the press of bodies and stepped towards the door, glancing sideways at the altar.

He hesitated before he touched the doorknob, his hand just hovering above it.

Pointedly ignoring the embodiment of the mermaid, which he would have sworn was looking at him.

His breathing increased a notch and with minor effort, he twisted the door knob to the side to unlock the door.

He opened it by a Crack and winced as the sounds exploded in intensity, the door must have impressive soundproofing

Chapter 3: Macaber Will

He dithered by the doorway, before pushing his way across into a passageway dimly lit by a hanging chandelier, the fluorescent bulbs throbbed slowly like a beating heart, this was most likely Noble's house.

Electricity was a relative innovation by the temple of the Iron God, and only royalty and the luxuriously rich could afford it.

Edging himself close to the wall, he walked down the passage, he soon came across other doors but when he slowly tried them, they were shut.

A chill breeze blew towards him, and feeling the bite in his nether region, pushed his awareness to the fact that he was buck naked.

Oddly enough, he didn't care that much. Funny how waking up from a drinking binge in the body of a child, inside a slaughterhouse, changes your priorities, "escape first, clothes later", Rowan whispered, walking on tiptoes to the end of the passage, by now he could see railings ahead, he assumed that meant he was on an upper floor.

By now the voices were less intelligible, and he could barely make out the words, he crept forward, ears straining as he picked certain lengthy sentences from the din of the party that should be below him.

He could identify three voices, and a spark of familiarity made him focus on a particular voice, and he intensely listened.

"The production cost of manufacturing ammunition has tripled over the last quarter, calling in question the viability of equipping the army with these so-called firearms". The first regal voice spoke, and his heart ached at the familiarity of that voice.

He heard a nervous chuckle, "Surely, the gains should outweigh the cost, that Barbarians from the north, do not lack bodies, and we cannot match them in martial prowess, we must produce more elite units to counter their numbers."

A voice like the last gasp of a dying man replied, making Rowan's toes curl, and he felt a deep-seated disgust, and an urge to pierce his ears, this voice made him feel as if a thousand insects were crawling over him.

A different deeper voice harrumph "It is always you calling into question, the bravery of my men, and the strength of the army, we have not fallen yet"

That disgusting voice chuckled and Rowan almost hurled, "General, you jest... surviving does not mean victory, it is foolish to assume that we are not losing, even if it is taking years to come"

"No..... it is you who plays the fool, so many resources and wealth funneled into the red temple and your experiments with so little returns"

"Knowledge is priceless... General, and what we gained from the experiments would push the Order to the forefront in our specialized military fields"

"Humph..... where have I heard those excuses before?... right, countless times, does that progress also include that damned debacle above!"

Rowan's ears perked up, were they talking about what happened in that room? And why do the voices seem so familiar to him?

He frowned deeply, for the past few moments, memories had been clashing inside his head, and they finally seemed to have sublimated. A wave of unprompted sadness came over him. And he felt a numbing pain, and at that moment a will that existed alongside him that he was vaguely aware of, seemed to give up and fade away, and a message like the last wisp of a dying flame whispered "I am sorry, father, I failed you"

There were many gaps in his memories, and many details that were hidden behind layers of fog, but he could piece together some bits and pieces, but he was missing years of memories.

He was Rowan Carter, and his body name was Rowan Kuranos, he was the illegitimate son of the third prince, who was seventh in line to the throne, it would also appear that what linked them was not only their similar names but also their fate. From the few details his jumbled mind could recall, their fate, was one of loss and sorrow.

Rowan Kuranos was born sickly, he was conceived by a concubine of the third prince, she was doted on by her lord prince because of her beauty, even though Rowan fell short of the prince's favor – for the prince demanded offsprings of robust health and spirit, he usually ignored him but did not treat him badly. Rowan was given all the comfort of a prince. Nevertheless, Rowan wanted to find favor with his father and let him acknowledge his presence.

He dedicated himself to learning and perfecting sorcery. His memories skipped and with a force of will he summoned up more of his life.

Disaster struck when his mother rapidly fell into disfavor when it was discovered she worshiped a demon, she was imprisoned in the golden tower where she was to be tortured for the rest of her mortal life.

"This voice..... the first regal voice he heard should be the father of this body I found myself" Rowan mused, but he wondered why he was now in the body of a child, Rowan Kuranos, by this year should be twenty-five.

A macabre will seemed to take control over his motor functions, and he moved toward the railing, heart thumping he looked down at an expansive room, three men who radiated an aura of power stood facing each other, their combined presence drew his eyes and everything else below him faded from view, and he was enraptured by their presence.

He recognized two of them at a glance, the third was hidden under a hooded robe, and the first was General Augustus, a brawny man who should have been in his late seventies but had the body of a physically buff man at his prime, his graying hair were like silvery spikes and his eyes appeared to be made of solid gold.

Chapter 4: The Puppet and The Puppeteer

The second figure was chubby and looked like a man who enjoyed his meals far too much, he had a perpetual smile on his face, that made him seem carefree, but he had a regal presence both in his demeanor and voice, which painted a confusing image for Rowan, he was like a pig that had the presence of a lion. This was the third prince.

His eyes unconsciously misted over, and he felt like crying, "What is wrong with me?" Rowan struggled to push the uncomfortable emotions aside, and he barely succeeded, his eyes drifted to the rest of the audience, they were the normal aristocratic ensemble, men in three-piece suits, with canes that had become popular recently, it must still be all the rage because most of them were still holding them even while dancing, the ladies were in long flowing dresses that were primarily white with a dash of gold.

A gloved hand rested on his shoulder,

"Interesting, what do we have here?"

His heart sank to his stomach, and he was frozen in place, he could not move because the hand on his shoulder sent waves of icy chill through his body, Rowan's breathing was short and forceful, and each breath brought out plumes of cold air, he was about to be frozen to death!

"What do you have there, Boris?"

"A little chick, General. A little chick who survived his crushed shell!"

"Humph.... It appears your little experiment bore fruit".

A sudden feeling of heat, and Rowan felt that he had been stripped down and meticulously scrutinized, every cell of his body was dissected and cataloged, the General voice continued, "although it's a little rotten and lacks any essence".

"Rowan...dear boy, you survived, you made it", the joyous voice of the third prince resounded in the now silent hall.

"Not for long" Rowan gasped.

"You brute, Unhand my son"

The hand tightened on Rowan's shoulders until he nearly screamed in pain, then mercifully let go. Sweet relief came after, as Rowan hurriedly backed away from the figure that loomed behind him.

"Come to me, son"

Rowan's father's voice was a siren call, as he hurried down the stairs, nearly tripping in his haste, the open arms of his father welcomed him; he ran into his embrace, and for that moment everything was bliss.



At that moment, in the room Rowan was in, the Black Book on the altar shivered, the pages began to turn, but they turned slowly, page by page until it got to the sixth page, it slowed down further and seemed to struggle against an unknown barrier, but it eventually opened and rested on the seventh page.

The page was blank, and dark as an unfathomable abyss, eventually, the picture of a face began to emerge from the page, it was of Rowan, but he was grown up, his eyes burned with pale flames, and words formed below the image, a language so ancient that it had left all living memory.

"Ascend the throne of grace, eternal mercy of all seasons".

The book folded on itself and vanished.



Rowan tightened his grip on his father, he could not help himself and started bawling his eyes out, he found solace from all the madness of the past few moments.

Nevertheless, he felt horrified, as if he was being ???????????? to cry, as far as he knew, the previous owner of this body was no longer present, his soul was gone and his memories broken, why was he feeling such emotion for a man he barely knew?

He was a grown man who had endured many tribulations in life, and he could not remember the last time he cried, was it because he was in the body of a child? And any child's instinct was to seek safety from an adult, especially if that adult was a parent.

But you see, he was an adult in a child's body, and he refused to believe that he could not control his emotions, and that lack of control horrified him, he wished that this awful moment should pass.

All of a sudden, he suddenly felt a space open in his heart in which a Black Book appeared, he jerked a little and continued crying, but a startling transformation had happened to him.

At that slight moment when he jerked in his father's arm, the world felt like it went still, and his mind became startlingly clear, he had what he could only describe as a euphoric sense of control, his body became a puppet and strings were attached to his consciousness.

Time was slowly coming back to normal speed, and it took little effort of will to let his body continue the laments to his father, his sixth sense was tingling like an over-tightened guitar string about to snap.

This world he found himself in was dangerous, and power that exists in fantasy could be found here, including the darkest kinds.

Rowan was fascinated that his new state drew away his fears, and he achieved a startling clarity of mind.

"Was this what it felt like to be a Buddha? To achieve enlightenment? What is happening to me?"

This state made Rowan realize that this emotion of happiness, and the sense of safety that he was feeling was being forced on him!

His body remembered this man, and no memories of him contained any love for him, his father was a distant figure to him, regal and untouchable, after the third prince knew he had a bad constitution he never even spoke to him.

Except for his mother, handmaiden, and the few friends he had, he was isolated from the rest of his family. Rowan, the young prince had learned how to live without a father, and he would have never run to him for solace.

From his vantage point, he could feel an almost palpable source of control oozing from the body of the third prince, his next action confirmed his suspicions.

"There.... there, father is here, hush now my dear boy", the prince pushed his sobbing body away from him and smiled warmly at him. Rowan's new perceptiveness detected a

slight crinkling of his eyes and there was a flash of deep disgust before it was covered, it would have been easy to miss, and he felt a chill.

The third prince played a long game, and covered all his bases, for Rowan knew that he could as well be a helpless fly snared in a spider's web; the spider was singing a lullaby to him before he was devoured.

The wariness in his heart grew further, this man was dangerous, he could not let him know he had control of his senses, for he instinctively knew he was dangling on a precipice, and every movement made must be done with the utmost care, or everything was lost.

He controlled his body and looked at his father with love and dependence.

The third prince caressed his hair and said, "I will be taking you home soon, but I need to know if you succeeded. Did you get the recognition of the singularity?"

Rowan was genuinely confused, what was a singularity? Did it concern this book inside his heart that brought this new ability to control his body beyond reasoning?

Rowan sniffled and replied, "I do not understand, Father... I have no memories of what happened or why I am here..... what is happening father, why are there so many dead bodies above, and why am I now a child?... Help me, Father, I am so scared."

Fresh tears rolled down Rowan's face, whilst he looked deeply at his father and observed the rest of the trio that were raptly observing him, he discovered something about his new state, that he had a 360-panoramic vision of his surroundings, this new viewpoint drew his attention to the rest of the hall.

All the singers and dancers, the merry laughter and whispered conversations, were all a facade, he looked around him, and all he saw were corpses. Corpses dressed in prim clothes and polished shoes, all looking at him, with dead intensity.

Chapter 5: The Paths of Dominion

Rowan's consciousness was suddenly drawn back into his body, the book in his heart closed and faded away, but he was excited that this strange new detachment of his mind remained, though in a more limited manner, at that moment, pain filled his body, he heard a panicked cry from the third prince, and as his awareness fell into oblivion he silently cursed at his deceptive father.

His enlightened spirit had seen traces of a pale glow that struck his head from the eyes of the Third prince, knocking him out.



I had a long dream.

A great skull rested in a lake of blood. On the skull a mighty palace was built, a palace that now lay in ruin, my sight zipped into the palace where a man sat on a throne of ice, and before he was an army of a thousand angels, and he said to them:

"Take the light from my eyes, so you can see"

With a sound that shattered the skies, wings of gold unfurled and the army of angels looked at me and smiled.....

I heard a whisper

"I thought I was a man, but I am nothing but char and cinders "

And I fell into a black abyss. And below laid a great white wolf, "come to me." said the wolf.

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"Young master, wake up!"

Rowan pushed himself from the depth of dreams, his consciousness felt lethargic, yet as his mind ascended to the light of wakefulness, he pushed himself to be alert and discerning. He was not in Kansas anymore. If he did not adapt, he would perish.

The voice that entered his ears was like the twittering of a bird, he felt a soft shake and he grudgingly opened his eyes. His mouth felt dry as a desert,

"water"

"A moment," a warm hand lifted his head, and he felt the edge of a cup pressed against his lips, "Here you go, young master. Drink slowly."

After quenching his hellish thirst, he looked at the speaker and recognized her, she was a young lady who could be in her twenties, she wore a black palace attire, with gold buttons, a silver-rimmed glass was perched on her dainty nose, and her black eyes were filled with care and concern. She was his sworn protector, she was picked to serve him until he passed, and would never betray him, even in the throes of torture and death.

"Maeve" Her name came to him without any thought, "Where am I?" Rowan whispered.

"Young master you are home, you were brought back two days ago, thanks be to the Holy Mother, you are now awake."

"Two days?... Maeve, why do you still recognize me? My body has changed!" Rowan's pubescent voice was filled with confusion and loss.

Maeve smiled at him, "Young master, I grew up with you as a boy. I have bathed, clothed, and fed you, I know every scar and birthmark on your body, I know your voice and your scent, it is my sworn duty to serve you forever, even blindfolded I would still know you, and on the day you die, I shall follow you to the underworld to serve you."

Rowan looked deeply at her, musing internally that her young master was gone, "Help me up, I want to walk."

"Okay, young master, but you need to eat first"

At the mention of food, Rowan placed his hand on his stomach, "Indeed, I am starving"

She smiled in amusement when she saw the familiar gesture Rowan used when he was famished, she hurriedly assembled the dishes that were still hot by his bedside, seemingly pulling them out of thin air.

Rowan assigned that strangeness to his still blurry mind, Maeve hovered over him like a mother hen as he ate, encouraging him to eat more, her smile growing gradually as he ate an astonishing amount.

Rowan nearly swallowed his tongue, the food was that good, Maeve served the meal in courses with baked oyster as the appetizer, the main course was roasted beef accompanied by a savory vegetable he could not identify, and delectable pasta was served alongside it, the desert was plum pudding with a fruit that tasted like tangerine but looked like an apple, the wine that he drank was cold, and its flavor was earthy and deep, it burned his throat on the way down, and he gasped in amazement, he tried to keep the bearing of a prince as he feasted but suspected that he failed.

Rowan saw the pleased look on her face, the previous Rowan was a picky eater, and frequently skipped meals unless he was coerced, he mostly used tonics and potions to keep his vitality. Indeed, all fingers were not created equal, Rowan sighed.

He shook his head at the mystery of life, before he transmigrated he was an orphan, dropped at the gate of the orphanage as a babe, he had a massive appetite, and he was always hungry, the sisters at the convent did their best to provide for him and the other kids, but it was not nearly enough.

"In this life, at least I won't be a hungry ghost."

Rowan thought to himself as he patted his stomach, he was once again stuck by the dissonance of seeing his young hand, he should be ten years old now.

"I am afraid that the God of death must be fed up with me, not only did I transmigrate, I also became younger." He had a base sense of satisfaction as he looked at himself.

"Young master, it appears that not only did you not just get younger, you finally cured your ailing physique", She beamed and with a wave of her hand she made the empty dishes disappear from the bedside table.

He arched an eyebrow at that supernatural display, Maeve excitedly said, "Oh... Yes, young master, you can now step on the paths of Dominion, the dangers of Transformation would be drastically reduced."

Rowan frowned, "Dominion? Transformation? What does that mean, Maeve? My memories are blurry."