

Cover Direction: The Forever Lost: The Twins of Destiny

The cover should feel like an epic mythic fantasy with a cinematic, emotional tone. It should communicate two souls, two worlds, and one shared destiny through composition, color, contrast, and symbolism.

It is not simply a character image or a landscape. The full design should suggest that the characters are caught between opposing forces — light and storm, hope and danger, separation and destiny.

A Note on the Reference Image: This document should be read alongside the accompanying cover concept image. The composition, character placement, and level of background detail shown in that image are intended to guide the final cover closely — not simply as loose inspiration. I welcome your own artistic style and hand in the execution, but the overall layout, symbolism, and richness of detail shown in the reference image are important to preserve.

Overall Composition

The cover is built around a strong vertical fantasy-book layout.

At the top, the title dominates the design in large, ornate gold lettering. The typography should feel ancient, elegant, and mythic, almost like engraved metal or illuminated manuscript lettering.

Below the title, the image opens into a dramatic fantasy landscape divided into two emotional worlds:

The left side is warm, golden, sunset-lit, hopeful, and expansive.

The right side is cold, blue, storm-dark, dangerous, and mysterious.

This split should not feel mechanical or artificial. It should blend naturally through sky, clouds, light, shadow, and atmosphere.

Central Symbolic Idea

The cover is about duality.

The two main characters stand back-to-back in the foreground, each facing away from the other. This suggests separation, destiny, tension, and emotional distance, while still showing that they are connected.

Emily, the girl, is on the warm, golden side.

Eric, the boy, is on the cold, storm-dark side.

They should feel like equals — neither one should visually dominate the other.

Foreground Characters

The two young protagonists are shown from roughly the waist or shoulders up, placed in the lower half of the cover.

Emily faces left, toward the sunset. Her hair and clothing catch warm golden light. Her expression should feel thoughtful, serious, and inward-looking, not overly posed.

Eric faces right, toward the storm. He is lit by cooler blue light, with a more shadowed and somber presence. His expression should feel reflective, burdened, and inwardly conflicted rather than action-oriented.

Their backs almost touch, creating emotional tension and visual symmetry.

Emily has long, dark brown hair and brown eyes. Eric has long, dark brown hair as well — not as long as Emily's, but not short — and brown eyes. Both wear hooded jackets, with the hoods down, not covering their heads. These are the clothes they were wearing on the camping trip before being drawn into the Immortal Realm, and they continue wearing them throughout the novel. The digital concept cover shows these details exactly as intended — please use it as the visual reference for hair length, color, and clothing.

Background Landscape

Behind them, a large castle rises in the middle distance. It should feel ancient, grand, and slightly unreachable — a place of destiny rather than simply a building.

The castle sits between the two worlds, visually connecting them.

Twin waterfalls flank the castle, one on each side, cascading down into the valley below. Like the twins themselves, they are two distinct forms answering to the same source — a quiet visual echo of duality built into the landscape itself.

The twin waterfalls should sit closer together, flanking the castle more tightly, and the castle itself should be positioned nearer the edge of the mountain ridge it rests on, rather than set back from it.

A river should also run through Eric's side of the landscape, mirroring the one already present on Emily's side. Though visually rendered as two separate rivers, one on each side, they are understood to be the same river, both leading to the castle. This reinforces the visual duality of the cover: twin waterfalls, twin rivers, one shared source and destination.

A subtle line suggesting a river may already be present in the concept art on Eric's side; this should be rendered clearly and unambiguously as a river in the final piece.

The left landscape has golden clouds, sunlight, distant mountains, birds, and a sense of beauty and possibility.

The right landscape has dark mountains, storm clouds, lightning, forests, and a sense of danger or trial.

Owl

The owl is a Barred Owl, with its distinct barred markings across the chest and wings. Please use this species specifically, rather than a generic or invented owl design.

The owl flies in the upper-right portion of the cover, above and behind Eric on the storm-dark side.

The owl should not feel like a guardian, guide, or protective presence. It is an evil, watchful force. Its placement should suggest that it is observing Eric specifically, shadowing him, or marking him from above.

The owl's expression and posture should feel predatory, intelligent, and unsettling rather than merely naturalistic. It should appear connected to the darker, colder side of the cover — associated with danger, manipulation, threat, or unseen influence.

The owl should feel intentional, not decorative. Its presence should make the viewer sense that Eric is being watched.

Symbolic Ornamentation

A glowing compass or celestial emblem appears near the lower center, between and slightly over the two characters. It functions as a symbol of fate, direction, destiny, and magical alignment.

Subtle circular runes, compass markings, or astrological designs can appear around the edges of the cover. These should be faint and atmospheric, not distracting.

Gold ornamental divider lines may be used around the title and subtitle to reinforce the mythic, old-world fantasy feeling.

Color Palette

The cover depends heavily on color contrast:

The left side should use gold, amber, bronze, and sunset orange.

The right side should use deep navy, black-blue, silver, and lightning blue.

The main title should use metallic gold.

The subtitle and author name should use pale silver-blue or another cool, elegant tone.

The two halves should feel emotionally different, but still part of one unified cover.

Mood

The desired mood is:

Epic, mythic, emotional, mysterious, cinematic, and destiny-driven.

It should not feel like a cheerful middle-grade adventure cover. It should feel mature, dramatic, and atmospheric — suitable for mythic fantasy for mature teen and adult readers.

Typography

At the very top of the cover, above the title, the tagline reads: "Two Souls. Two Worlds. One Destiny." It should appear in red, to contrast against the gold title beneath it.

The title should be the strongest graphic element.

"FOREVER LOST" should be large, elegant, and dramatic, with "THE" above it and "THE TWINS OF DESTINY" beneath it.

The subtitle should feel refined and spacious, not crowded.

Below the compass emblem and above the author's name, the words "A NOVEL" appear in small gold capital letters, flanked on either side by the same delicate ornamental divider marks used above the main title. This element is quiet and understated, it should not compete with the title, tagline, or author name for attention.

The author's name should sit at the bottom in a clean, elegant serif style, preferably pale blue or silver-white, so it balances the gold title without competing with it.

Key Instruction for the Illustrator

The cover should visually express two young souls divided by light and storm, connected by destiny, with Eric watched from above by an evil owl, while the castle and celestial symbols suggest a larger magical world.