

~ DEATH WAVE CHRONICLES ~

BOOK TWO

DRUID

Chapter One

Rhyllien opened her eyes. This time she was far more lucid during her trance and could easily recall the many visions. Some were reminiscent of her previous interment; other visions were newer — or she had simply forgotten them?

Her recovery this time was swift. As she slid off the crystal bed and started dressing, she replayed the visions in her mind. They were guides to what she had to do and an idea of how to do it. Like it or not — and she didn't — her unique connection to the natural environment made her the ideal candidate for the role of saviour.

“Saviour?” she muttered. “To save the world?” She pulled her boots on. “I just want to be a kid!” she yelled into the emptiness, voice echoing in the dark depths.

At the time of her disappearance thirty-five years before, indigenous tribesmen had stepped in to prevent her death. They'd used blowguns to take care of the strange interlopers who were about to kill the one with the spirit of their Collari, their Incan Queen.

Part of her mind rebelled. *Why didn't they save my father?*

The bed now pulsed the same orange as the diamond she'd placed in its niche. She felt the floor vibrating, not earthquake-like shaking, but a gentle, soothing vibration. Whatever she had done, something had changed.

This region was considered a high energy earth chakra because two prominent ley lines intersected here: the Plumed Serpent and the Rainbow Serpent. These two energy lines in particular crossed six of the seven earth chakras.

From her readings with Nala, this area was believed to be the second, or sacral, chakra, “where primal energy starts to *birth* itself, and that through this chakra the earth overcomes entropy”. Another myth stated this was the birthplace of all Inca culture; Inkarrí was king, the father and Collari was queen, the mother.

No vision or explanation as to why Giza, another designated chakra region, wasn't on either line, but was still a vital area.

The task given her was straight forward: go to each of these locations and repeat the process she completed here. Failing to complete the task — failure to activate *all* chakras — meant the imbalance would not be overcome. *Everyone* would die.

“Sure, easy.” She picked up her pack. “How the hell do I get there? No astral out-of-body-experience travel, I guess?”

The silence didn't answer. Rhyll collected the sun-disc which lay on the side of the bed. "What other doors can you unlock?"

More silence.

She pocketed the disc and took another stroll around the area, marvelling at the workmanship that had gone into the statues, considering these had been here for thousands of years, long before the Incans.

"If only Father could see this." Unbidden tears trailed down her cheeks. "All the years he worked for this very thing, and I'm the one to stick an alien metal disc into a rock wall."

She remembered her old tablet, and pulled it out and videoed a complete circuit, including the pulsating bed, then retraced her steps and took a photo of every statue and inscription she could find.

Further towards the back, she found a clear prism on a pedestal. It jogged yet another image from her myriad of visions. *And it was mentioned in her dad's notebook.*

She found her torch and shone a beam onto it. The light rays were refracted onto the near wall in a rainbow pattern.

Rhyll took photos of the prism from different angles, then slid the tablet carefully into the pack. Without fully understanding the reason — it was more an instinctive urge — she lifted the prism from the pedestal.

It was heavier than she first thought and she carefully examined it before wrapping it with the clothes in her pack. This one didn't look like it was diamond.

Part of her wanted to stay here and explore everything. After one last look around and making sure she left nothing behind, she strode purposefully up the large stairway leading to a solid wall. Here was another circular depression similar to the one at Hayu Marca. When she inserted the disc, she didn't fade out; the section of the wall became transparent. Beyond was an uneven, rocky path leading down to a dustbowl bathed in bright sunlight.

Stepping through the exit was like entering a wall of clear jelly — she felt a bit of resistance, and it was cool and damp. After emerging from the other side of the wall she checked herself; she was still dry and there was no residue clinging to her clothes.

Rhyll now recognised this area as the Chincana Labyrinth on the northern tip of the Isla del Sol, another ruin left to the elements. Behind her, the rough-hewn wall stood as solid as it had for a thousand years ago.

Now above ground, she could feel a change around her — a renewed vitality flowing across the land. Following the uneven path, she turned to the south at the first opportunity, ducking through a low, stone archway.

Three tourists lay on the ground. From their positioning it was obvious they had collapsed. As she moved closer, she had flashbacks of the mine and São Lucas. The death wave was here, and at every other chakra location!

Sadly, there was no point in caring for the two elderly males and one female. A cell phone lay on the ground by them, reminding her of her commlink. She immediately activated it and called Cataleya.

“Hey, Cat ... Can you hear me?” She waited eagerly, listening to the faint static and hiss. Checking the volume control, she spoke again. *Nothing*.

She reached for the tourists’ cell phone, noting the charge and the battery life — and the *no signal* icon. Not that it mattered: she couldn’t remember her mother’s number or anyone else’s. Sliding it into her pocket, she continued walking south.

Like much of the terrain she’d seen, the land was dry and rocky with sparse pockets of vegetation. During her trek she saw other bodies, some of them children.

That was the hardest. Coming across a body was traumatic enough, but a child! Part of her mind wondered why these children didn’t survive like those back in São Lucas. The moment her thoughts touched the subject, more of the visions came back to her; these people died prior to her arrival.

It was her presence alone in São Lucas that was instrumental in saving those natives and children! *She* was somehow emitting energy ... or the crystals were; if anyone within her sphere of influence resonated with her — attuned to the earth as she was — they survived the death wave.

After twenty minutes of walking, Rhyll found herself on a low, grassy hill overlooking the beautiful and pristine waters of the lake. The small herd of llamas were a welcome sight. Like before, animals, birds and insects were the only living thing she encountered. In the distance she saw the mainland, closer to the south and dwindling with the distance to the north. Somewhere directly west of her was Hayu Marca and the mysterious entrance.

Below her a trail led to a cove with a wharf and several boats. As she approached, a sleek rental boat with *Copacabana* on its hull caught her eye. With no one alive on the island to return it, she slipped the mooring lines and boarded. The moment she stepped off the land, it was as if a fog lifted from her mind. Suffering a momentary bout of dizziness, she sat down heavily while waiting for the world to stop spinning.

A water bottle rested in a holder on the dashboard, and she realised how thirsty she had become. Even though the water must be over a week old, she didn’t hesitate to drink enough to quench her thirst.

It took only a moment to familiarise herself with the controls before starting the boat like she did with the other speedboat. Again, she activated her comm and called Cataleya.

“Hey, Cat ... Can you hear me?” She hoped being on the water and further away from the land would make a difference. After a few seconds, she tried again.

“Rhyllien? Holy shit. Where are you?”

The boat trip to the marina at Copacabana took just over half an hour. As she approached the pier, she saw many people enjoying the sun and fresh air.

She wondered at that. *Why had the death wave not reached here yet? Did water slow it down or stop it?* Nothing from her vision gave her an answer one way or the other.

A wide road hugged the coast, with many cafés and hotels along the beachfront. Mooring the boat along one of the jetties, she strolled down the esplanade to a café that wasn't overcrowded. Rhyll ordered a snack and coffee to await her friends after using the commlink to update her location.

As she sat enjoying the sun and the comforting sound of people laughing, her attention was drawn to the jetty where she'd moored the hire boat. Several people had gathered near it, pointing towards the road and roughly in her direction.

Even short red hair here will stand out. It was only a matter of time before someone from the jetty found her. No doubt they were wondering who brought the hire boat back without checking in at the office.

“Rhyll? We're almost there.” She heard on the comm.

“Better meet me around the corner on Calle Rigoberto Paredes. See you soon.” Rhyllien gulped the last of her coffee and took her snack with her, leaving some loose change on the plate.

It had only been a few hours between her disappearance and catching up with her friends, but it was a joyous occasion just the same. After the many hugs of relief, people passing-by were showing their curiosity.

“I'm glad you all got out okay. Did those men give you any trouble?” Rhyll asked.

“Hardly, but they did provide us with a car.” Cataleya laughed.

“Nice of them to have a people-mover, though nine passengers is still a bit of a squeeze.”

“I don't think this is what they had in mind. But enough of that; how the hell did you get here?” Dan asked. “You know you disappeared in a flash of light?”

Aware of the interest the group was causing, Rhyll thought it prudent they depart. “Best to explain in the car. My arrival here has caused some attention already.” With all the packs

secured on the roof racks, they piled into the car. Benigno and Felipe sat in the front seats, with Marco, Dan and Jose sharing the back bench seat and all the girls crammed in the stowage area in the rear.

Rhyll told them about flying to the city under the Isla del Sol, the crystal bed and the wonders of the cavern. She passed her tablet around so they could see the video and pictures for themselves. Then she told them of all the deaths on the island and what she'd put together from her visions.

Rhyll turned to Nala. "It must be this earth chakra we read about. I felt a change as soon as I left the ground. Water has some affect, but not sure if it's good or bad."

"Is it because of the presence of the crystals that no children died around São Lucas, yet they perished on the island?" Dan questioned.

"I can only guess. The news tells us people are dying in all the chakra locations, but these same high energy areas amplify the crystal's power or whatever it is that enables others to survive. I need to get to all these other high energy areas around the world as soon as possible and place each crystal there. This now all fits in with what those visions have been telling me. The longer it takes, the more people will die. It's only when the energy of these crystals is present that those like us survive."

Rhyll looked outside at the passing terrain. They were heading southeast on Ruta Nacional 2 following a ridgeline between two coves. Coming into view was a bridge spanning the Strait of Tiquina. "Have you heard anything from my mother or from Manaus?"

"Nothing further than what we already know," Cataleya said. "We're going to a military base in La Paz. They'll have more information, and we should report in as well. We have about two hours to go before we get there."

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"We have new orders." Cataleya returned and sat at the end of the table, showing her colleagues the notification. "Back to Manaus pronto to help there."

They were sitting around a trestle table in the soldier's mess, a large cafeteria on the base a few kilometres from the airport. Over the distant noise of jets and pods they could hear troops marching, or conducting other exercises.

"Anything else?" Rhyll asked eagerly.

"The Major congratulates us on our success so far. He has also managed to get your mother back to São Paulo in a GHO pod."

“How long before you guys have to leave?” Dan asked, screwing his face up at the horrible coffee taste.

“We’re on the 2200 hour pod out of here,” Cataleya replied.

“Tonight?” Dan’s mouth drooped.

“Obviously keen to get their best people back,” Ileana said.

“Can we do dinner? Buy you guys a drink for all you did?”

“As long as you’re buying,” Rhyll said to Dan. “I’ve spent my pocket money.”

“I think I can chip-in,” Nala said.

“Maybe a couple of drinks at the bar.” Cataleya checked her watch. “It’s almost 1630 and we’ve all still got a debrief at 1700.”

“Even us?” Dan asked.

Cat nodded. “They’ll know as much as the Major did, so no need to keep secrets.” She hopped off the table, wrinkling her nose. “Eu cheiro mal. If I smell and look as bad as you guys, I’m hitting the showers and finding a fresh uniform.”

Grabbing their packs, they made their way to the ablutions block.

Dan was following the girls when he heard the guys chuckling and joking behind him.

“Good luck in the *banheiro feminino*,” Benigno said.

Looking around, Dan realised he’d passed the *banheiro masculino* and sheepishly, he pivoted and followed the guys.

It was a sombre evening at the military bar. Marcos and Jose had been seconded shortly after their debrief to join a flight to Lima. The remaining group of seven gathered in a dimly lit corner, regaling each other with information about their brief but eventful couple of days.

Dan bought a round of drinks for everyone, including a juice for Rhyll.

Before she forgot, Rhyll asked them to put their phone numbers in the cell phone she’d found, explaining to them where she got it. She also asked if Nala remembered her mother’s number.

“Easily, chica. I’ve been using it for the last ten years. I think you should get a new SIM card, though. It could be awkward if a friend of the previous owner calls.”

“Wait. Come with me.” Cataleya motioned to Rhyll. To one side of the bar area was a SIM and phone vending machine. She selected one and paid for it. “As you know, troops tend to come and go all the time. Sometimes we forget, damage, or lose phones in the field. These are cheap and nasty but come in handy until you can get to a store and purchase a quality phone.”

“You’re wonderful. Thank you.”

“You’ll need to charge it before we can put our numbers in, or before you can activate the new SIM.” Cataleya swapped the new phone for the old one and dumped it in the recycle bin.

Rhyll ripped the new cell out of its pack, and held onto it as they walked back to join the others. By the time they returned to the table there was enough of a charge for them all to punch in their numbers.

“Holy shit, how the hell did you do that?” Cataleya asked as she entered her number.

“I’m full of energy.” Rhyll shrugged. “It’s how I started the boats, too.”

“A handy trick.”

After a few rounds of drinks and vividly recounted adventures, they exited the bar. A service car was already waiting for them. They said their farewells with hugs and promises to keep in touch.

“Speaking of keeping in touch, I better call Mum.” Rhyll spent a few minutes on the phone before rejoining Nala and Dan.

“What are our plans?” Nala asked.

“Mum’s going to transfer some credits into your account until she can organise one of my own. She’s also booking accommodation at the airport hotel under my name.”

“Great,” Nala said.

“Do we wait for a taxi?” Dan looked at the empty street.

“I can drive.” She waved the car keys at him.

“Lucky us.” Dan turned to Rhyll. “How’s your mother?”

They started walking to the car park, where Cataleya had parked the car.

“She’s mending well. Still tender, but in high-spirits otherwise. I told her about the sun-disc working, and the underground city below the lake. I’ll need your help in getting the vid and pictures to her. I think my tablet is way out of date for anything other than taking pictures.”

“Sure. We can get you a new one, something from this century, perhaps,” Dan suggested.

Nala unlocked the Merc. “Where are we off to?”

“Onkel Motel, Aeroporto El Alto,” Rhyll said, hopping in the back and letting Dan ride shotgun.

By the time they arrived at the motel, her mother had organised three rooms.

Rhyll said goodnight to the both of them. “It’s been a long day. There’s a lot for me to take in and digest. See you guys in the morning.” She gave them a quick hug. “And hey,” she

said as she was about to turn away. “Thanks for being here. I know it’s not something any of us ever expected.” Rhyll left before they could reply.

Later that night before she fell asleep, Imogen called again.

“Hi honey. I hope the rooms are comfortable enough.”

“I’m so tired I could sleep on the footpath.”

“I won’t keep you up, just a couple of things. For the moment I’ve transferred funds to Nala’s account, which should be available by morning. I’ll set-up an account in your name, then you can be independent if the need arises. Last thing, you’ve some very expensive and unique artefacts that won’t normally get through customs. As Nala is still an employee of the University, I’m going to get official Customs Clearance waivers signed by the university Chancellor and his brother, who has some influence in government circles. We’ll need all the help we can get. They will be in Nala’s name so she’ll need to carry these items in a secured case and also have the certificate on her at all times. Love you, and I’ll talk again in the morning with flight details. Goodnight.”

“Goodnight, Mum, love you too.”

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