

## THE GOLDEN ORB: PRELUDE – VOL. 1

### CHAPTER ONE

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All that he witnesses are a seemingly infinite array of golden green roll-up metal doors stretching endlessly out before him. His heart pounds, and he feels a sweat begin to break at the bottom of his neck. The teenage boy marches forward past all the garage-like doors of the storage units within the air-conditioned building. Then, he stops before a single unit. 4551.

Kepler Alfonso pulls the storage unit key out of his pocket and places it into the lock hole. He twists the key and grabs the bottom of the closed roll-up door before he pushes it up. The door coils up like a snake onto the mechanism above him.

The massive storage unit is empty. Only the dark gray and silver-gray insides stare back at Kepler...

Except for a mysterious brown envelope package in the center of the storage unit. Kepler walks toward it. He should probably be walking toward it carefully but in his mind he is so wrapped up in figuring out what reason his grandfather could have possibly had in leaving him a whole storage unit with only a single small package inside.

He walks to it, picks it up, and rips the tab off. He grabs inside and finds a silver chain with two translucent light green cylindrical LEGO pieces attached to it. He holds it in his hand a moment and looks at it. Why would he wear this?

Next, he pulls out a small notebook with flowers at the front of it. A hastily bought notebook from Target no doubt. He flips through the horizontally lined pages only to find them empty. All empty except one.

In his grandfather's handwriting it reads: "Follow the stars. Therein lies the truth."

Kepler sits alone at his desk, typing away on his laptop. Before this he had gone been writing, practically scribbling, words on college-ruled paper. Names such as Adren, Duke, and Takonis among other settings can be seen. As he continues to write, he pops his books off the shelf - *Timmy*, *The Multiverse* and *Jackson's Stories: Part One*, *One Sunny Day* – to cross reference them and make sure that he was not messing with their canon. The writer continues to sift through his stories of every genre, horror, thriller, romance. He even references various screenplays complete with their solid brass fasteners and orange cover papers. Stories and worlds abound. He continues to type on his laptop.

"Whoa, those are a lot of screenplays."

Kepler nods and responds, enthralled by the story he is typing on his electronic device. "Yeah."

He takes a moment but then freezes still. He had been alone in the room – who has spoken? Kepler turns to his left side where he sees Chicken. The live stuffed animal chicken shines innocence, brilliance, and sweetness. Chicken sweetly looks up at Kepler and does a slight wave with his hand-wing.

He greets the human in a sing-song tone: “Hello!”

Kepler yells fearfully and backs up his wheeled chair slightly. Chicken lowers himself full of embarrassment.

“Sorry,” Chicken apologizes.

Kepler composes himself. “Chicken is that you?”

“Yes, it is,” Chicken replies.

“Wha-? How?” Kepler stumbles. Kepler leans forward where he now hovers over Chicken’s lower position. Chicken looks up.

“I don’t know,” Chicken shrugs.

“If only Alejandra and Ilsa were here to see this,” Kepler smiles.

He picks Chicken up from the room floor and places him on his desk. Chicken sits with his legs hung over the edge of the table. He gives the air a slight playful kick.

“Where are your sisters?” The Peluche asks.

“They’re at a volleyball game with my parents,” Kepler tells him.

“Why didn’t you go?”

“I don’t know,” Kepler said with a shrug.

“Hm, you are so antisocial,” Chicken notices.

“No, I’m not.”

“Yes, you are.”

“I’ve got friends. You know this.”

“I do. Memories of us playing together when you were just a boy are slowly coming back. And your sisters too...” Chicken thinks for a moment. He continues on a separate thought. “Abby and Nolan. I stood back up when you came home with the thing around your neck.”

Kepler nods. Sadness seeping in. “My grandfather left it to me.”

Chicken smiles. “Where is he?” he asks excitedly.

“He’s passed on.”

Kepler and Chicken bask in the day sun while laying on a neighborhood grass field. There might have even been a slight breeze. Birds call in the golden tree above them.

“See now this is living,” Chicken says.

“Yes, it is,” Kepler agrees. “I’m going to enjoy my time as a kid before I have the responsibilities of an adult.”

Kepler turns away from Chicken slightly and grabs a pair of different-sized sunglasses. He hands the smaller one to Chicken.

“Here. Protect your eyes,” Kepler tells him.

Chicken receives the sunglasses and puts them on, retreating back into his laying position. Kepler does the same.