

## **Book Sample-**

### **Book 1**

## **The Mountain Diva of Thebos**

### **‘PROLOGUE’**

**I**t was the year of Gorn, some four months into the everlight in a far distant past, and the mystical land of Thebos was in disarray. For over ten thousand years it had existed in peace and harmony, with the great mountain Diva presiding benevolently over his domain and the natural hierarchy of beings and their roles within the great plan, remaining in nature’s perfect balance. Life had been indeed bountiful. But then a dark happening cast a shadow over the glorious history of Thebos and an evil presence now threatened every inhabitant and their way of life.

A ground creature named Mangarna suddenly defied his ancestry and turned his back on his sacred birthright. Mangarna was a Terra-Theban, a ground custodian and protector. His kind presided over the realm of minerals, precious stones and metals. In the ‘Cave of Solitude’, high up inside the great Diva’s

mountain, lay the sacred 'Crystals of Ophiur'. The ancients placed these precious and powerful crystals in the cave many centuries before and they were the symbol of the Diva's power and the key to the distribution of the life force throughout the various realms.

Mangarna, in his lust for power, tricked the sylph guardians of the cave and stole the sacred crystals, escaping to the gully Tiba. There, with the power of the crystals and a book of the mystic arts taken from the chambers of Gob, the Terra-Theban king, Mangarna and his Ellok assistant Norbit have empowered themselves with magic, and devised a plot to overthrow the Diva himself.

Some months pass and Mangarna has slowly transformed himself into a powerful wizard, his followers continuing to increase in number. His evil plan is revealed as he begins to enslave the creatures of the gully, enlisting them to mine crystals and precious metals in order to build a diabolical weapon, a weapon that when completed, can control the very forces of life. Mangarna, with this weapon in his hands can then become ruler of Thebos and beyond. The power of nature itself will be at his command.

In the tiny Artec village of Iba the story unfolds...

## CHAPTER ONE 'THE ARTEC VILLAGE'

**T**he Artec's were a kind and gentle race. They lived and worked on the forest floor, tending trees, ferns, plants and flowers. They loved their work and rejoiced in the growth and propagation of their entrusted flora. Wherever their villages sprang up, everything thrived, their kind, delicate hands nursing and encouraging nature to perfection.

As creatures they were quite small and slender in stature, no more than three to four feet tall. They were similar to human form but with more pointed facial features and large soulful eyes. Their skin was pale and soft, their limbs long and slender and they were elegant creatures, graceful in their movement. During the everlight they wore little clothing, the males generally wore a simple loincloth, the females a wrap around cloth tied over one shoulder. The fabrics used, were woven from the fibres of

fallen plants and were dyed in a myriad of colours taken from minerals, plants and pollens of the forest.

The everlight lasted six full moon cycles and the sun's warmth made life free and easy during this wonderful period of growth. Some of the Artecs were full-winged with glorious translucent silvery wings, that when folded, almost touched the ground. Flight enabled them to tend the larger trees and plants and to assist with the seasonal pollination. However, most of them remained earthbound and worked tirelessly on their given assignments. Many of the older winged workers stayed on the ground, having been placed in positions of authority. They would oversee the work crews and hand out assignments as required. The hierarchy existed through both experience and service to their kind. No one dared to question authority, it was earned and respected as law.

This particular village was called 'Iba' and it lay at the forest's edge, near the base of the mountain and some distance from the feared gully. Some hundred or so souls resided there in peace and tranquillity. Life went on as usual, but since the theft of the sacred crystals, a dark fear loomed in the back of their minds and in their

hearts. The very fabric of life in Thebos had been tampered with and all of the creatures felt a blockage in the natural order. The great mountain Diva had for the first time become silent and an air of uncertainty hung like a dark cloud over the community.

Arlin made his way back from the creek with two wooden pails of water slung over one shoulder, attached with a piece of woven vine. He would have flown but he had previously lost more water than he'd delivered. For an Artec, Arlin was tall and muscular and even though he was full-winged, because of his stature, he was often enlisted to do heavy groundwork. This bothered him greatly, because he just loved to fly.

As he approached the hut, his mother emerged from the trees carrying a basket filled with freshly picked berries for their early meal. Nya, Arlin's mother, had been very beautiful in her youth. Her long raven-black, hair glistened in the sunlight and all the males of the village had once tried to court her. Elgan, Arlin's father, had won out in the end and their life together had been fulfilling. Now in her later life, Nya was still beautiful, but her hair was now a little grey and her figure not quite as trim as it once

was. She was kind and gentle and devoted to her family and was a gracious and fitting partner for an elder whose standing in the village was high indeed.

Arlin lifted the pails from his shoulder with a grunt and poured them one by one into a stone water trough that sat near the front step.

‘Come and eat, Arlin,’ said his mother softly, as she disappeared into the hut.

Arlin looked up at the sun, yawned and stretched out his wings to full span, then collapsed them back in a flutter. As he walked inside, Lil, his young sister was yelling and chasing their little brother, Jot, who’d just snatched her favourite flower doll.

‘Give it back, Jot!’ she squealed, ‘Mother?’

‘Stop that noise you children! Come to the table at once!’ growled Nya, fast losing patience.

The children quickly jumped to the table. ‘Ouch!’ cried Jot, lifting his bottom to remove the end of his right wing. Lil quickly gave him a jab in the ribs to keep him quiet. Arlin after washing his hands, pulled a stool over to the table, opened his wings just a little then sat down next to Jot, whose round cheeky face just peeked over the tabletop. Nya placed the berries, plates and cups onto the table but no one moved; their

hands remained off the table and placed obediently in their laps, waiting. Then, from behind the bedroom curtain emerged Elgan, their father.