

# The Genes of Isis

## Book One:

### Footprints of the Angels by Justin Newland

“It came to pass that the Source gave authority to Semjaza to rule over the Helios, the children of heaven.

With his cohorts, Semjaza descended to Earth where they sought out the children of men, to pass over to them the great advance, called the Surge.”

*From the Book of Enoch.*

#### **PART ONE: HELIOS**

##### **1. The Soul Bell**

Her fingers entwined with his, Irit sat on a bench overlooking the Southern Beaches and the broad ocean beyond. She smiled. Tarsus the Charm, who would have thought his heart was hers?

Panion thrust his staff in the air. “Welcome everyone to Tarsus’ rite of passage,” he announced, to which the crowd of guests responded with enthusiastic applause. Young for a High Priest, Panion was barely ten summers older than Irit. Flipping back his hood, he revealed an intense face, piercing green eyes and a jutting chin.

“Let music fill the air!” He cried. A solitary flute began the tune, high as the Sky Waters circulating above. Beckoned by the steady beat of the drum, a zither joined in, timid at first then headlong into a dance-filled rhythm.

Tarsus grabbed her by the hand and she turned to Ashetar, her best friend and said, “Come, don’t be shy, dance with us.”

“I can’t dance alone,” Ashetar blushed.

Reluctantly, she left Ashetar on the bench with her worries and thrust herself into the dance with Tarsus. Soon she was lost in a swirl of pirouettes. As the music reached the crescendo, the dancers crouched on their knees and launched themselves upwards, clutching at the sky. Landing on tip-toes, everyone clapped and laughed as the musicians struck up another tune

“It’s a Balaluska,” she cried. “My favourite!”

She and Tarsus danced on, he thrusting his hips, she twirling around him. Amidst the melee, she caught a glance of a lonely Ashetar.

“Wait!” She said to Tarsus.

Between gasps of breath, she whispered to Ashetar, “Come dance with us, don’t be grumpy.”

"I'm not grumpy!" Ashetar replied sulkily. A moment later, Ashetar chuckled to herself. "Oh dear, I am - aren't I? Does it show that much?"

"I'm afraid so. But only to me." Irit wanted her friend to admit the truth.

Ashetar grimaced. "I'm still fond of him. I'm worried Rebecca won't look after him as I would."

"I know," she replied. Ashetar was talking about Strode, who sat opposite her, black scarf over his eyes, hand-in-hand with Rebecca. A tragedy had befallen him: on the day of his troth to Rebecca, Strode had been blinded by Choma, his own sister, in an incident that had sparked an upheaval in Atlantean affairs.

Irit patted her friend's hand. "It's natural you'd be sad Strode chose Rebecca instead of you. Should Tarsus choose another, I'd be heart-broken." After so many days, she reckoned Ashetar should have overcome her disappointment. She couldn't be so blunt, so she said, "He wasn't meant for you. You'll find another."

Ashetar glanced at her sheepishly. "Do you think so?"

"I do," She replied. "We're young - a tad more than a score of summers. We're Atlanteans. We're made of the pale winds of the ocean, the white spray of the sea and the golden sand of the shores. It takes more than a sense of hurt pride and unrequited love to quell our spirit. Soon the Spring Festival of Mohengrin will be upon us and you and I are going to dance with the boys and tap our feet to the zither just like we've done every year."

Ashetar's face managed a thin smile.

"That's better," she said, chuckling her under the chin.

"You're right," Ashetar grinned. "Thank you."

The musicians crafted their tune to a rousing finale. Everyone sat down around the hewn-out steps of the natural amphitheatre.

"Tarsus," Panion said, inviting him with a flourish of his staff. "Now you may ask Elvinor of your future." This was a privilege every Atlantean enjoyed on their coming-of-age birthday: to ask one question of the Augur.

Elvinor planted her hands on her thighs to pull herself up. Her bones may creak, but her soul's eye peered farther into the future than anyone else's. Choma had taught her well. Not long ago, she was Choma's assistant. Not any more: now Elvinor was Augur, another result of the recent upheaval.

In a crisp voice, Elvinor asked, "What will you know of me?"

Tarsus puffed out his chest. "Tell me of one great thing I'll achieve."

"A wonderful question," Elvinor crowed. The breeze dropped and the seagulls ceased their raucous cries. All Irit could hear was the roar of the ocean waves breaking onto the beach.

"I see it before me," Elvinor said, waving her hand in front of her eyes. "You are to be a guard."

She adopted a specific posture; her left foot in front of the right and staff in her right hand, the tip touching the ground and the other end above her right shoulder.

“A guard you say?” Tarsus asked. “That’s curious because I want to be a sculptor.”

“You are that too,” Elvinor replied, her eyes glazing over. “In the future, I see you standing guard over this cathedral,” and she pointed to the great crystal structure along the headland.

“Why? It doesn’t need guarding,” Tarsus frowned. Before he could say another word, Irit pressed a finger to his lips. He needed reminding not to burden the Augur with too many questions.

“Thank you,” Tarsus said. “I shall think on your augury.”

The musicians struck up the tune to the birthday song, which everyone sang:

*“One and twenty,*

*Live full and plenty.*

*One and a score.*

*So much more.”*

For the last part of the ceremony, the guests arranged themselves into an aisle. Tarsus offered her his arm which she graciously accepted. Together, they strolled down the aisle, greeting and laughing with their guests. At the aisle end was Ashetar, frantically brushing away a bee. The poor girl had never been fond of yellow-and-blacks.

This was the moment Irit first heard the clarion call. Goose pimples stood up on her arm. The hackles rose on her neck. She stopped in her tracks.

“Did you hear that?” She asked, looking over both shoulders.

“Hear what?” Ashetar replied, distracted by the bee.

“It sounded like ... the chime of a bell.” She said.

“A bell?” Tarsus asked.

“It’s no ordinary bell,” she said. “There it is again. Listen with your soul, not your ears.”

“I hear it now,” Ashetar murmured, finally succeeding in shooing away the bee.

“And I. By the light of the stars,” Panion said - a sparkle of recognition in his eyes.

“What - is - it?” Ashetar asked.

“The deft chimes of the Soul Bell,” Panion added, his face full of undisguised glee.

“The very ones mentioned in the Surge Prophecies!” Abance said. He should know: he was the new Surge Priest.

“There’s the bell again – the third ring. You know what this means,” Panion said, turning around as if spun by some magical force. “I’ve prayed for this moment. Come, Elvinor, Abance: we three are the Rota. It is our duty and honour to gather our flock and give thanks.”

The three of them set off up the cliff path towards the Crystal Cathedral.

“Everyone, let’s join them,” Magril exclaimed.

“Father, we’ll follow you,” Irit replied, adjusting her skull cap.

The streets of the city of Samlios were thrumming with people. The Soul Bell had rung. Everyone had dropped whatever they were doing to heed its call. Heads erect and eyes gleaming, they followed the winding path up Spirit Mount to the cathedral. Its rock crystal panes glimmered in the mild glow of the mid morning sun. Up ahead outside the Matrimonial Chamber, the burgeoning crowd was in full voice.

She, Ashetar and Tarsus squeezed their way to the front. Panion stood on a podium and announced, "People! This is a glorious day for the Isle of Atlantis, for it will yield rich memories for many a year to come! The Soul Bell will have stirred the souls of our friends and companions around the world - in the Pyrenes, in Aegypt, in Pearl Land, in the Land of the Clouds, and the Land of the Yellow River."

*The Land of the Yellow River - it sounds so far away.* Her mind flew like a sparrow as she imagined the people in those remote places, gathering around their cathedral, their hearts bursting with aspiration.

"Listen, I need two maidens to help with what's to come," Panion said.

There followed a chorus of suggestions from the crowd until Strode shouted, "Chose Rebecca!"

"Don't be silly," Panion pointed out, "She's not a maiden."

Everyone laughed with Strode, who held up his palms in open admission of his error. Even though he couldn't see the growing bump under her smock, he'd known for two moons that Rebecca carried his child.

"Then Melissa and Zannah!" Galaxys called out.

"Your suggestion is duly noted," Panion replied stiffly.

Behind Irit, Magril muttered, "This'll be interesting. The new Green Elder's made a suggestion. Yet I doubt it'll be endorsed by our revered High Priest."

That had been another change in the recent upheaval: before Galaxys, Treoh had worn the cloak of the Green Elder, the most senior of the secular Council of Five Elders.

Tarsus called out, "Irit, choose Irit. And Ashetar!" To which the crowd yelled their unanimous approval.

Panion held up his hand with his customary air of authority. Everyone hushed to hear his final choice. "Step forward, Irit and Ashetar!"

Magril chimed with evident satisfaction, "Told you so!"

Breathless with excitement, she asked Panion, "What do you want us to do?"

Panion smiled. "Make ready a welcome. See the Frangipane trees near the Step Well? When our guests arrive, go and fill your knapsack with its windswept petals. Can you remember to do that?"

“Of course,” she replied.

Before she could ask about these unnamed guests, her father called out, “This Soul Bell is a herald of the Surge, isn’t it?”

“Abance is the Surge Priest.” Panion said. “He knows about it.”

“Not long ago, you were the Surge Priest and he your assistant,” Magril said, this time with bite. “How things change!”

It was true. Soon after Strode and Rebecca’s troth, Old Orkor, the previous High Priest, had died unexpectedly, precipitating the upheaval that ended with Panion replacing him.

Panion said softly but firmly, “Let Abance do his job.”

Abance cried, “This is the Surge Prophecy.” In a voice full of reverence, he said,

*‘Seek it not under stones*

*Seek it not in the sky,*

*For when the bell tones,*

*The Surge will be nigh.’”*

The crowd absorbed the words as if every syllable contained nectar from the Source. Magril broke the ensuing silence. “So has the Surge arrived?”

“Not yet, we’ve to wait for a sign,” Abance replied. “When it comes, it’ll be as obvious as the Sky Waters.”

That was the bald truth of it. Like a whisper in the wind, everyone had felt the bell chimes resound in the caverns of their soul. They’d come to the cathedral. All they had to do was wait for the portent.

While everyone knew of the teaching of the Surge, this was different. It was palpable. She could taste it. It crammed the air with power and vitality.

Abance puffed out his chest. “The Surge is greater than myth and more than magic. It is real. It is high. It is the imminent future of the human race. Long ago, those of the First Time - the Zep Tepi - brought the first Surge and from that walked the original children of men. The second Surge is the next step up the stairway of creation.”

The Zep Tepi were wondrous astral beings, mothers and fathers of all, as ethereal as star light and as profound as the abyss. High angelic entities, they were warriors of the universe and authors of evolution and their successors were nearby! The second Surge was to happen - during her lifetime. This was the stuff of dreams.

Magril spoke up again. “Tomorrow, who will we be? What will we become?”

“Profound questions!” Abance replied. “Alas, the Surge Prophecies are conspicuously silent on this matter so we don’t know what will unfold.”

“I have some ideas,” Panion said and everyone turned to hear his words. “Ponder these questions ... does a chrysalis *know* it’s going to become a butterfly? No, it doesn’t. Does a tadpole

*know* it's going to become a frog? No. So when humanity received the first Surge, did those who received it *know* they were going to end up like this - like us? No, they didn't. In the same way, once we receive the second Surge, we won't know on what paths evolution will guide us."

Irit heaved a sigh of wonder and Panion continued.

"The second Surge *will* awaken dormant abilities," he said, "and transform us into people unrecognisable to how we are today. It is the beginning of the great metamorphosis. The new evolved human race starts here with us!"

As everyone cheered and threw their skulls caps in the air, she grinned and gave Tarsus a hug. This was wondrous stuff and she was in the midst of it.

## **2. The Horns of the Moon**

People talked amongst themselves, speculating about the Surge, the imagined exploits of the Zep Tepi and the metamorphosis to come. In a state of fevered anticipation, Irit waited in the lee of the cathedral, singing, chanting and musing on the mysteries of life. Slowly the aquamarine sky darkened and the emerald green ball of the sun slid below the horizon, hiding them in long shadows.

The crescent horns of the Moon appeared in the sky, the evening star nestling beside it. She pulled her shawl across her shoulders. A cool draught of air blew across her face. Was that the herald of the arrival of the Zep Tepi, those invisible giants of creation? It did, because Panion pointed his staff at a hill to the west of the city and shouted,

"Everyone. To Out Hill!"

On the crown of Out Hill sat two proud oaks. Above them, a flock of swallows were swooping in and out of the spiral air currents. Animals and especially birds were finely attuned to the currents and tides in the astral realms, so this was a sure sign that something was happening in those unseen. She switched her vision to look out of the corners of her eyes - 'through her whites' - that way she could 'see' into the mysterious astral realms.

What she 'saw' took her breath away. Long tendrils of transparent milk-white astral force rose out of the crown of the hill like wisps of morning mist. Hazy to begin with, as her vision adjusted and the tentacles thickened, she watched with fascination as they formed into two huge translucent cones of astral force, anchored on the trees.

*What ... are ... they?*

"They are the shining ones," Panion announced, as several hundred people followed him down Spirit Mount, their eyes transfixed by the two astral entities. When they reached the Step Well, Ashetar reminded her to pick the Frangipane trees, otherwise she would have forgotten completely. Her hands were trembling as she filled her knapsack with their silken flowers before she and Ashetar rejoined the tail of the procession as it climbed Out Hill.

On the peak, everyone sat in a large huddle around the two oaks. The night was dark except for the faded light shed by the horns of the Moon and the light of the glow-lamps, which burned conspicuously brighter in the powerful astral presence of the shinings. As well as the light, the shinings ones brought with them another gift - this cold. By the time she arrived at the front of the huddle, the tips of her nose and ears and the ends of her fingers were freezing!

A stone's throw from the cortex of the shining ones, Panion beckoned to her and Ashetar.

"Did you bring the petals?" He asked.

"We did." She said, opening the leaves of her knapsack.

"Good. Both of you step forward and sprinkle them before the angels."

"Yes, Panion," she replied, obediently.

*Angels, they are angels. By the light of the stars, there are angels on the Isle of Atlantis for a second time. And here I am, welcoming them to my city.*

The awe of the occasion held her tight by the throat as she and Ashetar stumbled up the Hill. Their breath as misty as a winter's morn, they stopped by the shimmering cortex of the shinings. Pulling out a handful, Irit threw the petals high into the night air. Floating to the ground, they soon acquired a frosty skin. The ice crystals glistened on the petals, ice blue in the verdite night.

When they finished, Panion called them back to where Elvinor wrapped them in blankets.

Panion stepped forward and spoke to the angels in a strong clear voice, "I am Panion, High Priest of the Isle of Atlantis. These are five-leafed petals from the Frangipane flower, symbols of our human kind, for we are people of the five." So saying, he held up his hand and spread out his five fingers.

"Angels of light," he added, "tell us who you are."

She wondered how the angels would understand what Panion had said. Humans had one foot in the mundane and one in the astral realms; physically, they lived in the mundane, while their spirits and souls lived in the astral. Whereas the angels had no skin, no eyes and no face, at least none she'd seen through her whites - so she supposed they solely inhabited the astral. So could they hear or speak?

She didn't have to wait long for an answer because a distant voice echoed through the chambers of her soul.

"I ... am ... Sem-ja-za."

Everyone in the crowd wore the same dewy-eyed expression. They'd heard the same words simultaneously. From the other shining came the words,

"I ... am ... Az-az-el."

*Angels have spoken. We know their names. There's a precious union between us. I'll never forget this moment.*

She was speechless, unlike Panion. "Where do you come from?" He asked.

Looking through her whites, she watched as a round astral ball about the size of her fist emerged from the first shining and another come from the second. The two cloud-like balls floated in front of Panion and began to change shape. The balls grew a rod that became a proboscis and six more protrusions on the side of their bodies - which became legs. From the top of their bodies emerged two pairs of gossamer-thin wings. When they developed yellow and black stripes and she heard a buzzing sound in her soul, she recognised them.

Honey bees - astral honey bees!

She'd heard that the astral realm was a palace of variety but she'd never seen anything like that.

What did it mean?

Thankfully, Panion had an inkling. "The Prophecies tells that the Surge originates from the faraway astral realms of the green planet behind the sun's corona. So these shinings are *sun-folk!*"

A shudder of awe rippled through the crowd.

His voice cracking with emotion, Panion went on, "They've appeared before us with the astral cloak of a honey bee! Because they bring light and illuminate the truth, they shall be called the Helios!"

Looking through her whites, she followed the flight of the bumble bees that sprinkled them all with a golden astral trail. Irit was enchanted, as the bees weaved in and out above them, lighting the night with the cascade of gold dust.

Panion wanted to know, "What is your purpose on earth?"

Out of the shinings emerged two more astral balls which began to shape-shift. They grew larger and changed to resemble humans - who both struck a regal pose. The 'King' carried a silver sceptre and wore a necklace of state. On the head of the 'Queen' rested a glittering crown. The astral bees buzzed around the royal couple and dowsed them with golden astral droplets, which made the woman's belly grow large with child.

No sooner had this enactment begun than it finished and the King and Queen were absorbed back into the shinings, merging like two banks of mist.

Her mind brimmed with questions. *What does this precocious magic portend? Are we destined to be Kings and Queens? And what does the Queen's pregnancy mean?*

"This is a deep message," Panion said, holding from to his staff. "See how the golden astral rain from the bees impregnated - or pollinated - the Queen. From the Zep Tepi, we received the grace of the first Surge. Today the Helios make us 'pregnant' - for we shall all wear the raiment of the second Surge. Submit to the angels, as the Queen did to the bees, and the future is ours!"

She pressed her hands together and grinned, barely contain her joy. The Helios *were* carriers of the second Surge.

Where had the bees gone? They weren't anywhere in the astral, so she changed her vision

back to look through her pupils. There they were! On the ground by Panion's feet - rounded with stripes of yellow and black, the size of an apple. Something was definitely odd about them: they appeared ... mundane, physical.

How was that possible? It must have been the subtle curtain - a strange ubiquitous gap or opening that separated the astral from the mundane realms, allowing interchange between the two. She supposed the astral bees had squeezed through one, because they were physical replicas now.

The shinings shrank back into the earth, leaving the two oak trees glistening with hoar frost. Panion roused the crowd to sing the chorus to her favourite song:

*'Samlios city, we live in her lee,*

*She is our ocean home.*

*We are made of air and sea,*

*And her mighty loam'*

The singing had a divine air to it which eased everyone back from the cold, intoxicating trance the Helios had visited upon them. Shaking feet and hands got the blue blood coursing in their veins.

"Everyone, off to your beds," Panion announced to murmurs of general approval. "Rest, sleep, and let the shining light of the Helios into your soul where it will work its magic upon you. Tomorrow we awake Kings and Queens of opportunity. Gather at the Temple at dawn and let us witness what marvels the Surge has wrought amongst us."

### **3. The Angelophany**

Irit found her friend and followed everyone back to the city.

Abruptly, she stopped mid-stride. "The replica bees! I must fetch them!"

"No wait," Ashetar protested. "We're the last to leave the hill and it's dark. Can't we come back in the morning?"

The replica bees were a precious and unique token of the bond she felt with the Helios. "They're talismans," she pointed out. "They've emerged through the subtle curtain; condensed into the mundane out of the living astral fire.

"I'm cold and exhausted and look," Ashetar stubbed her toe on the frosty path, "the way is treacherous."

She was adamant. "I'll only take a moment to find them."

Ashetar shrugged her shoulders. "I don't like bees."

"Oh, I know you don't. These are unique though, we can't just leave them there." She had to convince her.

"I don't want to touch them," Ashetar was clear about that.

“You won’t have to, I’ll handle them. Please.”

“Oh, all right.” Ashetar said, finally relenting.

Hand-in-hand they trudged up the hill, slipping and sliding on the path.

She knew where to look. Once she found the Frangipane petals, the bees wouldn’t be far away. Reaching the area in front of the oaks, she moved the glow-lamp back and forth, peering down at the sparkling earth.

“There are the petals, so the bees ... are here!” She picked one up. It was coated in a viscous film some of which transferred to her hand. At that moment, she thought she heard a voice call in the distance. “Did you hear that?”

“No. What?” Ashetar asked.

“Someone spoke,” she replied, lifting the glow-lamp. There was no-one there. She fell to admiring the bee’s smooth gossamer-like wings with its fine veins of blue and gold. “My! They’re beautiful. I’m going to call them Apis!”

Ashetar turned up her nose. “Can we go home now?”

“Yes, of course we can,” she said, pouching them in her knapsack.

Below her, she could identify the rump of the crowd from the glow-lamps bobbing along in an extended train. Ashetar walked ahead of her through a short cut into Beech Wood.

“Wait for me,” she called but Ashetar disappeared round a bend in the path.

Irit made haste to catch her then slipped and landed ignominiously on her back-side. She got up and dusted herself down. The knapsack had fallen off her shoulder, and the flap was open! She checked inside it. Empty! Both the Apis had rolled out. She’d lost them already!

“Ashetar,” Irit shouted. “Wait. Come back.” She scrambled around on all fours searching for the Apis.

There was no wind. She felt cocooned by the nightly spring chorus of crickets. Farther away, the ocean waves thundered onto the Southern Beaches. The downy smell of the Jacaranda trees wafted over her. An owl screeched as it flew overhead. A twig broke behind her. She heard breathing - someone was approaching. As she spun round, a hand weighed heavy on her shoulder.

“Argh,” she groaned. “I nearly died of fright. Don’t creep up on me like that.”

“Sorry. I heard you call,” Ashetar replied. “What happened? Are you all right?”

“Yes, but it’s the Apis,” she was craven. “They fell onto the ground. Help me find them.”

“It would help if we could see what we were doing,” Ashetar grumbled. “The glow-lamp’s flickering - put some astral force into the crystal.”

Irit shaped her hands into a cone and mentally fired astral force through her fingers into it, until the glow-lamp shone like a sun.

“That’s better,” Ashetar said.

“Here’s one,” she cried, exultant.

“And here’s the other,” Ashetar said, picking it up and handing it to her. “Argh! It’s coated in some gooey substance,” Ashetar cried, shaking her hand and wiping it on her knapsack. “And what’s that distant voice? Wait. The Apis - it’s just spoken to my soul!”

“Spoken ... to ... you? What did it say?”

*“I am Azazel. You are mine. Your spawn are mine.”*

“Oh. No!” She had a knot in her stomach. “This one just spoke to me again.”

“What did yours say?”

*“I am Semjaza. You are mine. Your spawn are mine.”*

Irit swallowed hard. What did that mean?