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The Daughters of the Nemesis Crystal

Talanoa's Story



"Hello and welcome to *Crystal Town*. It's lovely to see so many new visitors.

My name is Talanoa and this is my wolf companion Arka.

In a few minutes, I'll take you to see the *Nemesis Crystal* and then give you a tour of our dragon and wolf training camps.

But first, I'd like to give you a little background history.

So please gather around and I'll tell you a story of how our world came to be...

Many years ago, I was called Taylor – and I lived in one of the massive cities, back before they became deserted ruins.

I had no wings or magical powers. I was just an ordinary 15-year-old girl.

The world was very different then. There were always problems of some sort, but the world was generally a safe place – until the Darkness came.

We still don't know where the Darkness came from. It just suddenly appeared and then spread across the world like wildfire.

We had seen many viruses before - but nothing like this. This virus didn't kill people. It transformed them into hideous, evil monsters that we called "*Dark Ones*".

Thousands of people were transformed, rising into millions as the infection spread.

Entire cities were lost to the Darkness.

But my family was lucky. Like many others, we found we were immune to the infection.

Then the Dark Ones started killing those who were immune. So my parents, my sister and I fled the city, along with thousands of others.

The military back then were powerful. They had weapons that could fire hundreds of things called "bullets", which were like miniature rocks made of metal that traveled so fast, you couldn't see them move.

They also had exploding devices called bombs – along with armoured vehicles and even flying machines.

Like most of the refugees, my family took shelter in one of the military compounds.

Of course, the Dark Ones attacked the compounds - wave upon wave of them.

The Dark Ones were hard to kill. They could often survive multiple bullet strikes and even small explosions.

But the strength of the weapons prevailed and very few of the compounds fell.

After a while, the military decided to re-take the cities and eliminate the Dark Ones.

The military leaders had delayed until then, hoping that a cure would be found.

But there had been no progress and we were still losing people to the virus, so we couldn't keep waiting.

The military campaign was really effective. The soldiers moved from area to area, wiping out Dark Ones – cleansing city after city.

For a while, we thought we'd won. People even started to move back to the cities.

The cities were ruined of course - wrecked by Dark Ones and by bullets and bombs. But we could rebuild and get our lives back.

Then the second wave of the virus came.

In the first wave, the transformation took days - even weeks in some cases.

In the second wave, a person's mind could be gone within hours and their body transformed in a day.

Even many of those immune to the first wave fell victim to the second.

Soldiers became infected and butchered their comrades with the same weapons that had so successfully defeated the first wave of Dark Ones.

The military compounds fell like dominoes and those of us who were left fled to hide in forests and woodlands.

Life was a harsh. There was little food - and Dark Ones roaming everywhere.

I lost my little sister Zara first and then both my parents. I lost count of how many times I nearly perished.

I had pretty much given up hope, just living day to day.

I stayed up the trees most of the time. The Dark ones were strong and powerful - but they were also clumsy and didn't like climbing trees.

I found that if I kept myself covered with mud, they couldn't smell me.

I lived on some of the old world food that I managed to scavenge - and whatever I could find in the woods.

I started out with dozens of other people, all sheltering together.

But in the end, I was all alone. I don't think any of the others made it.

I have no idea how long I lived like this.

But then one day, I saw it. A bright light streaking through the sky, followed by a deafening noise like a massive explosion in the distance.

This was no storm. It was a bright clear day. I could see a trail etched into the sky.

Something had crashed - something big.

At first, I thought it might be one of the old flying machines. But there had been none flying for a long time - and in any case, it seemed too big.

I had to find out what it was - to see it for myself. I knew it was risky, but I felt like something was calling to me.

I was scared when I set off. I could tell it was a long way away and I would have to leave the safety of the forest to travel over open land.

There were many abandoned vehicles around, but I knew better than to try and use one. Few still had any fuel and they made way too much noise.

The Dark Ones were too stupid to use vehicles, but they were smart enough to stop them. I had seen dozens of vehicles smashed and their occupants ripped to shreds.

So I traveled on foot. After a few hours walking, I met Alana – another girl around my age, who was also drawn towards the site of whatever had crashed.

If you saw Alana today, you'd see a strong, confident lady of great power. But back then, she was a timid and nervous girl covered in mud - just like me.

We became friends on the spot. It was so good to have someone to talk to, after being so alone.

We traveled together, mostly at night, climbing trees to sleep during the day. We had little food or water, but we shared what we had.

We saw a few Dark Ones in the distance, but somehow we managed to avoid them.

After a few days, we were very tired and hungry. We considered giving up, but something kept drawing us onwards. This strange compulsion kept growing stronger and stronger.

On the final day of our journey, as it was approaching dawn, we thought about taking cover. But we didn't. Somehow we knew it was safe. As the sun rose, we just kept going.

We saw a few Dark Ones in the distance. Each time they ran towards us, they clutched their hands over their ears and ran away screaming. Something was keeping them away from this area.

And then at last, we saw it. At first, it looked like a distortion in the air. As we got closer, we realised it was a huge clear crystal spire - at least thirty times the height of a person.

The area around the crystal had been flattened with lots of smashed rocks and broken trees. Near the crystal, there were loads of strange objects that looked like large eggs.

There was a big crowd of people, in a circle around the crystal. No one went right up to the crystal. It seemed like something was keeping them away.

We saw a group of girls standing to one side, so we joined them. All the girls were around our age - and all had been drawn here, just like Alana and I.

It wasn't long after we arrived that the crystal first spoke. It was like a voice in our heads. To me, the voice was like that of my old headmistress - but others heard different voices. We all heard the same words though...

"I am the Nemesis Crystal. I am here to help you defeat the Darkness and restore your world. Come to me my Daughters and receive your gifts."

All the people heard the voice - but our group of girls knew the message was meant for us.

The Crystal was calling us to it. We walked towards the Crystal and the crowd parted to let us through.

I touched the Crystal and screamed in agony. My back was on fire, like I had been stabbed on both sides. I collapsed and blacked out.

When I came to, I found that the crowd had carried all of us all away from the Crystal. We were lying together in a row, with some older women fussing over us.

We all had two large protruding lumps at the top of our backs.

The lumps grew quickly. By the end of the day, it was clear they were shaped like little tiny wings.

The tops of our ears also started to stretch, becoming more pointed at the top.

We also felt different - like some sort of energy coursing through our bodies.

Within a few days, our magic started to manifest and we started to realise what we had become.

Other people were both afraid of us and hopeful of what we might bring.

More girls arrived over the next few days - and soon there were lots of Daughters.

Some of us chose to change our names to reflect the change - and so I became Talanoa and my friend Alana became Alanis.

Only teenage girls were able to touch the Crystal and be transformed. Even to this day, we still don't know why - but the Crystal has never transformed anyone else.

As the weeks went by, our wings grew and our magical powers grew alongside them.

At first, we thought we would be able to fly. But after many often-comical attempts, we realised our wings were organs of magic, not flight. Somehow the style, colour and shape of our wings seems to match our powers and personality. Some Daughters have since managed to fly - but it's more magical levitation rather than true winged flight.

We gathered up all those strange eggs, assuming they must be important. But we didn't know what they were, until they suddenly started hatching.

Baby dragons are so cute. They were all different colours, but we quickly realised there were two different types. Some had long thin heads and some had much wider heads. It was only later, as they grew up, that we realised they were ice and fire dragons.

There were also some strange snake-like creatures with dragon heads, which we called "dragon serpents".

We soon realised we were meant to raise and train the dragons. They followed us around everywhere. The ice dragons were very affectionate creatures, who liked to snuggle and stay close to us. The fire dragons were more independent and boisterous - but we soon learned to control them.

Over the next few months, word spread and more and more people came to the safe zone around the Crystal.

Many more girls were transformed and eventually there were hundreds of Daughters.

After a few months of trying, we discovered how to communicate with the Crystal. The Crystal gave us instructions on how to use our magic in many different ways.

We learned that the Crystal had been on Earth before - many thousands of years ago, in another time of darkness. The Crystal had brought magic and dragons to the world, for a period lasting many centuries. Those touched by the Crystal were known as "*fairies*" or "*elves*".

Over time, humankind had thrived and multiplied – and began to reject magic. So the Crystal departed from the Earth. Magic faded and the dragons died out, leaving no traces other than a few ancient myths.

But the Crystal sensed the return of darkness to our world - and so it returned to us once more, bringing back its dragons and endowing a new generation of humankind with wings and magical powers.

As our magical powers developed over the weeks and months, it became clear that we all had different strengths and abilities.

Many, like my friend Alanis, bonded with the dragons – and become known as "*Dragon Mistresses*".

Some of the Daughters developed the skills of warriors and were called "*Warrior Elves*". There were few bullets and bombs left - and no way to make more. So the warriors fashioned simpler things like bows and arrows, bladed staffs and spears - and then used their magic to turn them into formidable weapons.

Some of the Daughters were the complete opposite of warriors, with a peaceful nature, developing bonds with trees, plants and woodland creatures. These Daughters became known as "*Woodland Elves*". They used their magic to create special small crystals that made everything grow. New areas of forest could be cleansed and seeded with little effort - and whole fields of crops could be grown in weeks instead of months.

Some of the Daughters learned to bond with birds. Ravens were best - easy enough to control and intelligent enough to be useful. These Daughters became known as "*Raven Mistresses*". They could use *Raven Vision* to see through the eyes of their ravens, even at long distances. Soon we had whole flocks of ravens watching out for Dark Ones.

The Dark Ones stayed well away from the safe zone around the Crystal - but thousands gathered in the surrounding areas.

Food soon became scarce, especially with the growing needs of our young dragons.

We needed a way to protect ourselves outside the safe zone - and our dragons were nowhere near ready.

At first, we tried dogs. My family had two dogs when I was growing up, so I volunteered to help. But we soon realised that dogs were not strong enough against Dark Ones - even with magical assistance.

We heard about a group of wild wolves from some of the arriving refugees. No one knew where the wolves had come from - but we assumed they must have escaped from somewhere.

I went to find the wolves and see if we could use them. Several Warrior Elves and a few armed men accompanied me for protection - but it was my job to get the wolves.

It was scary at first. These were vicious, feral creatures that did not like us approaching their den. But I extended my now fully formed wings and after a little while, the wolves fell under the control of my magic.

We led the wolves back to the Crystal and carried the cubs. Within days, I was leading our first wolf pack patrol.

As time went on, we found and bred more wolves - and more Daughters became "*Wolf Mistresses*".

The wolves fought alongside the Warrior Elves, while the Raven Mistresses used their Raven Vision to give us eyes in the sky. Slowly but surely, we cleared out the Dark Ones from all the areas around the Crystal.

The big change came as the dragons matured.

Dragons grow fast. It takes 5 years to reach full size and strength. But a one year old fire dragon can already fly and project a lethal stream of liquid fire.

Ice dragons are less dangerous but still deadly. Our ice dragons are trained to shoot quick bursts of ice, precisely targeted at the head of a Dark One. An ice dragon is a much better guard for a Daughter, able to shoot up to a hundred ice bolts before needing to recharge its store - and with no danger of accidentally scorching its mistress!

But there is no doubt that it was the fire dragons that really made the big difference. As more and more fire dragons joined the conflict, the Dark Ones fell back again and again.

Of course the Dark Ones fought back. There were endless counter-attacks and we lost some dragons and even a few Daughters. But ultimately the dragon fire was too much and the large hordes of Dark Ones scattered and disappeared.

We've cleared most of the land now.

You may have seen Daughters traveling around, sowing the land with magic crystals to help the land heal and become more productive.

But there are still many small groups of Dark Ones hiding, snatching travelers and raiding villages on the outskirts.

The virus seems to have disappeared, but we can never be certain. So our Raven Mistresses use their ravens to keep watch throughout the land for any signs of new infection.

We'll keep raising our dragons, wolves and ravens, to protect the land and keep everyone safe.

To celebrate the changes we've brought, we call this new age "*Nemesis Now*", in honour of the Crystal that saved us all.

So now you've heard my story. I hope it's given you some insight into what it means to be a Daughter of the Nemesis Crystal.

I can see there are a few teenage girls among you, so I'd like to make a special plea to ask you to consider joining us.

You may approach the Crystal at any time.

I cannot guarantee you will be accepted. Only the Crystal decides who is allowed to touch its surface and be transformed.

But if you are accepted, you'll discover magic and find a new fulfilling life as one of the Daughters.

Please think about it. Our world needs you.

So now if you'll all please follow me, we'll start your tour..."

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Fraener – a fearsome adult fire dragon

At the base of the figurine are clusters of the magic crystals that the Daughters sow in the ground to aid recovery and encourage new growth

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