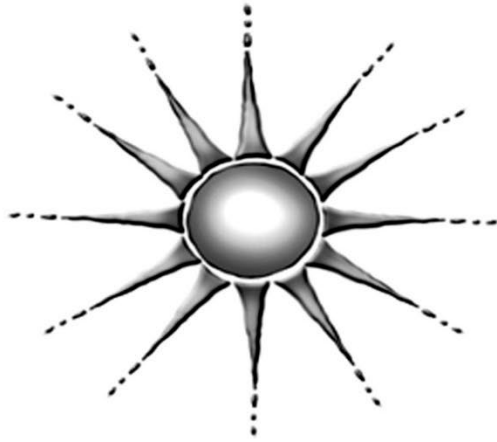


THE  
WATCHERS  
NIGHT OF LIGHT



DEIRDRA EDEN



# *Night of Light*

by

## **Deirdra Eden**

Book Seven of *The Watchers Series*

————— *For the Original Edition* —————

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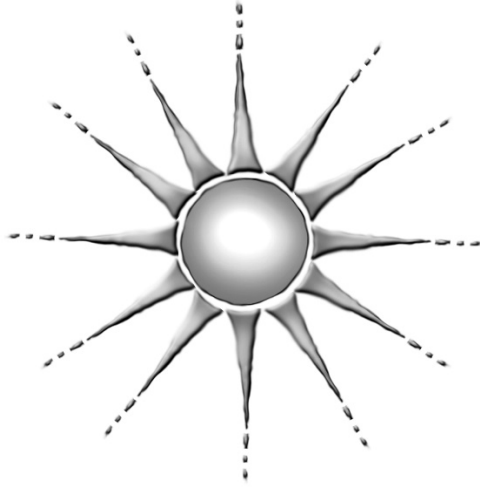
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# DEDICATION



To all the modern-day warriors  
who fight against the great evils.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE RETURN

“Move! Move! Move!”

Soldiers shouted as they advanced, surrounding me like a barricade. Their heavy Kevlar body armor rustled. Their rifles hit against the buckles of their gear. Their boots pounded against the ground.

I blinked my eyes, desperate to see, but I was blind. I forgot how dark Earth was, especially since I had just come from the Place of Luminaries, where there was always light and never a sunset. I fought to make my eyes adjust to the darkness. I stayed on guard and imagined all the modern dangers Azrael and I studied before our return to this battle against the Legion.

I imagined Starfire, our secret weapon, with which we could win the whole war and set everything right. Starfire had to be protected, which was why Azrael and Baby had returned to a port on the opposite side of the Earth, just as Zacaris had wanted.

I crouched low in a small circle of tall grass that swayed in the stormy night wind, making a sound louder than ocean waves. My fingers unclenched the hard mound of dirt where I had crash landed through the portal like a falling star. The ground still burned with embers and my body smoldered from the heat of reentry when I left the glory of Kolob light. I could just make out the star I had come from that was only a tiny pin prick of light in the Earth night sky.

I took in my first breath of air, but the taste was unfamiliar. It was like breathing poisonous fumes. Earth's gravity was so much heavier than I remembered, and I struggled to push myself up under the weight of the dark atmosphere.

Bright spotlights shone on me and at once the soldiers surrounded me. I took in their armor of black Kevlar, designed to stop bullets, their long dark rifles, and eyewear which gave them the power to see in the dark. Their bug eyes and heavy equipment made them look more like beasts than Watcher kin.

Instead of an embrace from my own people they gripped my arm and pulled me to my feet. My eyesight adjusted to the darkness enough to make out the shadows of figures on all sides of the clearing. On high alert, my kin held weapons to the ready, scanning the surrounding forest. I stayed alert and held onto the pommel of the flaming sword I had brought back to this battle.

“Move, move, move! Target secured!”

I knew they were talking about me, but this was not the welcome I had expected after not seeing my friends for hundreds of years. Some soldiers pointed their weapons outward, scanning for an attack. Some kept their hands physically on me, leading me forward. Their boots beat against the earth with the percussion of all their armor and gadgets as they escorted me past the standing stones and into the tree line.

“Stonehenge?” I murmured in disbelief and briefly turned back to take in the ruins.

“No,” a man with a familiar, thick Scottish accent said. “’Tis another stone circle. Stonehenge is watched every moment and not safe to travel through. They would expect you to return through the same portal you left through. Erebus and his Shadow Legion destroyed all the summoning altars ages ago in an attempt to prevent you and Azrael from coming back. But we kept this one hidden. A hint of yellow, from the golden wedge of Ophir, gleamed in his fist.

“Orion,” I said, almost as a question. With all his gear and most of his face covered I couldn’t be sure it was him.

“Aye,” Orion confirmed.

I could clearly see now that Orion and the rest of the soldiers were leading me to a large vehicle. I knew that this was our transportation. Before I could grope for a handle someone opened the door and pressed me inside.

“Stay low,” a voice instructed from the driver’s seat.

“Andromeda.” I recognized the driver. I could only see her eyes as she looked in the rear-view mirror at me.

Orion slid in beside me and shut the door. The dashboard of the vehicle lit up with instructions and information. It was fascinating to me, but inconsequential to the rest of the group. I took in my old friends, Orion, and Andromeda. They looked so different in their modern clothing. Orion’s perfectly pressed uniform glistened with a badge.

“I’ve never seen you clean shaven and with short hair,” I noted.

“Scotland Yard has dress codes you know,” Orion said. The flash of his white smile was the brightest thing I had seen this night.

Many of these modern terms I was not surprised by. Part of our preparation in returning to Earth was learning about some of the changes that had taken place since we had been gone.

“Did Azrael and Baby make it through their portal safely?” I asked.

“No word yet,” Andromeda said, as she gripped the steering wheel. The engine of our vehicle roared louder as we accelerated forward. The headlights illuminated the dirt road and bounced off the branches of trees and bushes.

The forest gave way to a clearing of swampland. A sea of lights in the distance glittered as bright as the Milky Way above us. Skyscrapers, as tall as mountains, and close together, dotted the city. As we headed toward the city I watched the speedometer go to 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, and then over 100 kpm.

Orion leaned toward his handheld radio and said, “Package secure.”

The next voice I heard on the radio was that of Zacaris’s, “Welcome back, Lady Auriella.”

“The underground sanctuary is only about twenty minutes away,” Andromeda said, and glanced back in the mirror at me. “We’ve got to get you up to speed because some crazy stuff has happened in the last few hundred years.”

“Ufta! That’s an understatement,” Orion said. “And things are accelerating toward Armageddon quickly.”

Armageddon was the final war. The pre-battles had already started. A sense of urgency struck me to meet with my troops, get caught up on war preparations, and learn what resources each side had available to them.

Red and blue lights appeared from the road ahead.

Andromeda's palm hit the steering wheel. "Not the sheriff again."

"What's happening?" I asked.

"I thought we blocked all tracking devices." Orion leaned forward between the two front seats. He pressed some digital buttons on the dashboard. "Everything is working fine."

"You know the sheriff doesn't need tracking devices," Andromeda murmured as if surrendering begrudgingly.

"I thought the police were on our side," I said. "They uphold the law."

"The law only works for those who obey laws, Aura," Orion said.

"But you are a police officer," I said to Orion, hoping that this meant we could easily pass this blockade and be on our way.

"You are soon going to learn that this war is more complicated than you remember," he replied. "Hurry, put these masks on and don't take them off." He handed me a light blue cloth with two loops on either end. Andromeda and Orion both put a mask over their face and fastened the loops over their ears.

It didn't look like a very good mask, thin and only covering the mouth and nose. I pushed my back against the seat and watched the road ahead while scanning for cues from Orion and Andromeda.

"Just let us do all the talking," Orion said. "No matter what the sheriff does or says don't say a word."

I put my mask on just as Orion and Andromeda had done. Orion scanned me and nodded an approval before noting the ethereal glow of the Sword of Neviah at my side. "Hand me your sword," he insisted at once. "We don't want them getting it."

"I'd like to see them try to take it from me." I reached for my blade.

"No, Aura," Orion warned. "Whatever happens don't run and don't fight. This isn't how things are done now."

I didn't understand, but I trusted Orion and unstrapped the sheathed weapon from my belt. He didn't allow me time to change my mind as he quickly grabbed it and secured it in a weapons rack above me. As he shut the compartment door the soft light of Kolob disappeared.

Andromeda slowed the vehicle just before reaching the police blockade and turned off our vehicle headlights. I watched intently through the wide front windshield as a figure, backlit from the headlights of the police cars, walked toward us with their hand on a gun at their hip.

Andromeda rolled down the window and Orion held out his badge.

"Official police business?" the sheriff asked in a stern, but feminine voice.

"An escort," Orion explained. "The paperwork was privately filled out and no one but the chief was supposed to have access to it." He said this last part like a warning.

"Well then, since it is not official police business, I'd like to see your license and registration please," the sheriff said, unyielding.

Andromeda opened a hidden box in the dashboard and fumbled through the papers inside while the sheriff shined her light in the back of the vehicle. I froze under the spotlight as if I was paralyzed from the sudden exposure to this hostile stranger.



“Well, there ye be, girl.” Her voice cackled and fumed with the horrible, familiar stench.

“Here you are, Hazella,” Andromeda shoved the paperwork in her hands, but Hazella didn’t break eye contact with me.

“I’m going to have to do a weapons search of your vehicle,” Hazella said.

What did that mean? I intentionally avoided looking at the hidden compartment where Orion had secured the Sword of Neviah.

Orion got out of the car and slammed the door behind him. He approached Hazella, his bulky frame towering over her slender figure. “This is not protocol, nor do you have a warrant,” Orion protested. “I will call the chief on this.”

“I can have this whole vehicle searched before you explain yourself and then you will have to explain away all that I find on this escort mission,” Hazella said. “I’m bringing the girl in for questioning.”

“On what grounds?” Orion argued.

“She’s not under arrest,” Hazella said as if she was innocent and alarmed that Orion was arguing with her.

“She has an attorney representing her,” Orion warned.

“Ha!” Hazella tossed her head back in a mock laugh. “Well until your baboon lawyer shows up at the station I will hold her.... Unless she has her ID.”

ID? I wondered. I brought so little with me, and I had nothing modern.

“I will make this report very difficult for you,” Orion warned. “This isn’t the first time you have shown your bias against our people.”

“Watchers aren’t a protected class,” Hazella argued and batted her eyes in surprise that she was having to educate Orion. “In fact, you people aren’t even legally recognized.”

“Too many false arrests and you have already caused our precinct millions of dollars in lawsuits because of your unethical actions. This will end your career,” Orion roared.

“All I have to say is that she has no ID and looks like someone on our wanted list.” Hazella shrugged. “You know this isn’t going to look good for her.”

At this point I had no idea what either one of them was talking about and it was as if they were both speaking in a cryptic language. I just knew I had to get whatever an ID was quickly before Hazella arrested me. I didn’t understand why Orion, armed with a gun, didn’t just shoot Hazella. She was a Shadow Queen and one of the worst there was. Wasn’t it our mission to fight the Legion and rid the world of their evil?

Orion came back to the car and opened the door. “We need to go in,” he told me.

I didn’t understand what was happening. “Go in where?” I asked.

“To the station. It will be brief, just don’t say a word and don’t take your mask off.” Orion held out his hand for me to step from the vehicle. “Don’t fight and don’t run.”

Andromeda’s eyes went wide with fury. “This is just harassment.” She sounded more annoyed than afraid.

Orion kept his arm around me as we moved from our vehicle to Hazella’s. Hazella patted me down. I hated her cold, dead hands on me as if she was reminiscing about beating me as a child.

“Hands out,” she instructed with devious delight.

“Not necessary,” Orion said.

“My precaution,” Hazella demanded and pulled out a pair of chrome handcuffs that reflected the red and blue flashing lights.

Orion pulled out a matching pair from a pouch on the side of his belt and put the handcuffs on me himself.

Hazella pushed me toward the open back door of her cruiser.

Orion held up his hand on the top of the door frame just in time before my face hit the metal. My face smashed into the back of Orion’s palm, but Hazella kept shoving me inside.

“Careful,” Orion warned Hazella. “You wouldn’t want her to bleed.” He gave her a look that was lethal as if he was about to end this exercise and run a Scottish broadsword through her.

In that moment Hazella’s wild, hungry eyes reflected fear before she shook it away and straightened her shoulders. “Those days are over. We don’t need Watcher blood anymore.”

They closed the door behind me. Hazella got in the driver’s seat and Orion sat next to her in the passenger seat. They didn’t say a word to each other.

I hoped Azrael was having better luck than me in his return. Orion acted confident that my “representative” was going to rescue me from the dungeon. I knew exactly why I was being arrested and that was because somehow Hazella was given the power to arrest me. How did she find us? I’m sure the Watchers had been planning this operation for years and how to get me safely to the Sanctuary. Why did this fail so horribly?

I was unarmed and I had nothing to protect myself with, but my silence and my flimsy blue mask. This was ridiculous. I was done playing this game. I could break through the metal mesh between the front and back seat, kill the Shadow Queen with my bare hands, and then run with immortal speed to safety. Becoming a mother had changed me. I was more fearless and protective now. I don’t play games with evil.

Orion glanced back at me, his sure and comforting expression squelched my rage momentarily. I had to trust him and his plan. However, if anything felt like it was going to go wrong I was going to melt the handcuffs right off my wrists and spit fire.

We arrived at the police station and Orion, thankfully, was my escort, holding onto my arm he led me to a room with a table and several chairs. It didn’t look like a dungeon, but it felt like one. Remember, you are not under arrest, but you will be if you fight or run. You are only here for questioning. So, keep your mask on and don’t say anything until your lawyer gets here.”

I didn’t sit but watched from a narrow glass window in the door. Hazella and Orion entered an open room with a sign by the door that read Chief Garcia. I caught a glimpse of the human’s face as Orion, a Watcher and Hazella, a Shadow Queen argued their points. The human listened to both of their sides with respect. He had the look of a man of war with both experience and strength that gave him wisdom, but he was still oblivious to the war he was caught in the middle of. If his eyes were open, he would have seen the good of Orion as a gentle heavenly guardian, and the darkness of Hazella, who was seeking to destroy humans.

The front doors of the building flew open as if the Prince of Wind himself was invading and a man in a dark suit holding a briefcase raced toward the chief’s office. As soon as he filled the

doorway the chief sat back in his chair. “Oh, no. Not you again. Let’s see what her lawyer has to say,” Garcia said to Hazella and Orion.

Hazella dropped her shoulders as if she had been defeated. She shrunk back against the wall. Orion had no reaction to the man in the perfectly pressed pinstriped suit.

“What are the charges?” the man asked. “Has she answered any questions?” The lawyer pressed in a confident and authoritative way that made even the chief sigh in annoyance.

The chief shook his head. “She is only here for questioning because she didn’t have an ID.”

My lawyer opened his briefcase and slammed a small card onto the desk. “Here is her ID.”

I stood on my tip toes and pressed my nose against the glass to try and see what an ID was and what was written on that card that was so important.

The chief picked up the small card and examined it until he was satisfied. “Why didn’t she have her ID with her?” the chief asked.

“Look at how she is dressed,” my lawyer stated as if it should have been obvious. “She looks like she is dressed to go to a renaissance festival. Besides, she’s only nineteen years old. Kids her age sometimes forget their ID.”

I looked down at my Earth clothes. They were the exact same ones I had worn when I left Earth hundreds of years ago. I was also startled by the fact that he was referring to me as a ‘kid,’ like a child. I was a married, adult woman who was centuries old. Perhaps in this world people who look my age are still considered children.

“If you have no further questions or charges then my client’s mother is here to pick her up,” my lawyer said.

“She has no mother,” Hazella interrupted. Hazella knew that my parents had been killed in a fire. She broke her character of the noble officer arresting an unruly teen to point this out.

“I beg to differ,” a smooth alto voice came from the lobby. I knew her the moment I saw her. The woman I was honored to call my mother.

“Eva,” I whispered into my mask. She was dressed in a classic long, lavender, wool coat with oversized buttons and a flower in her hat. The pointed heels of her shoes hit the ground like rhythmic drops of rain. She was so stunning that even the chief rose from his seat when she entered.

“I’m here for my daughter.” Eva pulled out a paper booklet and a pen. “I can write a check for her bail.”

“No ma’am,” the chief said politely. “She was not under arrest. Just here for questioning because she had no ID.”

Eva dropped her shoulders as if sighing in relief, but I knew her confidence and she was only placating the chief. “My daughter has never been in trouble with the law, and I will make sure she gets a purse and wallet, so she doesn’t forget her ID again.”

“We should get her fingerprints,” Hazella protested.

“My client declines,” my lawyer said. “She is not under arrest and at this point I am considering filing charges against this precinct for unlawful detainment and police harassment.”

The chief sat back down and glared at Hazella. She lifted her chin slightly as if she was proud, but I could see she was intentionally avoiding eye contact with everyone in the room.

My lawyer continued, “You know the police are under a spotlight right now and more public outrage is the last thing you want.”

“You are free to go.” The chief waved his hand to quickly end the conversation.

Orion, Mother Eva, and my attorney came to the room where I was waiting. Orion unlocked the door and Eva embraced me as tears glistened down her warm cheeks. I missed her so much and wished she had stayed with me in the Place of Luminaries to help raise my children, but I knew she was needed on Earth.

Right behind her was my lawyer. I didn’t recognize him until the pirate scoundrel lowered his mask and flashed me his mischievous smile.

“Amore, my love,” Alamar used the name I hated, but I was just grateful he was here.

I hugged him all the same, wrinkling his perfect suit.

“Let’s get you home,” he said and nodded toward the exit.

Orion opened the double doors to the building for us but stayed behind at the police station. It was morning now and I could finally see the sun. Though a haze covered the sunlight, I could still feel its warmth.

Everyone on the busy street, walking and driving, was wearing the same style mask.

“The mask issue is the least of our worries,” Alamar said. “This is just the prelude for what is about to happen. We must get you up to speed right away. You made it back just in time for Armageddon.”