



# PARTIVAN

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AN OTHERWORLD  
FLASH STORY

*December 31, 2035, 5:29 pm  
Waukesha, WI*

**H**E SCANNED THE BLIZZARD AGAIN FOR ANY SIGN OF the Arcanodis Orateia. *How much farther do I have to walk?* he wondered, shoving through another knee-high drift. *Even I can only withstand this cold for so long.*

Finally, he spotted a gray hooded figure, faintly glowing through the snow. It was standing beside the front door of a house. A light was on beside the door. He saw a hand pull a curtain aside. A female face looked through the window for a moment, then the curtain fell again.

He pushed through one more drift and stepped onto the woman's front walk. It must have been cleared earlier, but the storm had already left several inches of snow on the path. Still, it was better than the sidewalk.

*They said this will be crucial to my plan. I don't see how. It won't even reach this far north.*

He looked for the Arcanodis Orateia again, but it was gone. There were no footprints in the snow other than his own. *Typical. Give a cryptic message and disappear. At least they pointed me in the right direction.*

He knocked on the door and waited. A few moments later, the door opened a crack. The woman peeked out.

He waited a few seconds to see if she would say anything. She didn't.

He forced a smile. "Hello. If it's not too much trouble, I need a place to spend the night. With this weather, I can't make it into town to find a hotel."

*Not like I bothered looking. Came straight here from the Causeway.*

He projected feelings to the woman: calm, happy, trusting. The tension left her, and she opened the door wider. *The "useless" gift wins again.*

"Of course," the woman said, speaking for the first time. "Come in. I could use some company."

"Thank you."

As he entered the house, he noticed the woman staring at his temple. *Do they really not have them here? How strange.*

The woman realized he'd caught her staring and resumed staring at his eyes instead. That was fine. He was used to people being intrigued—one eye black and the other pale gray was a rare combination.

"I was just about to have dinner," the woman said. "Would you like to join me?"

"Yes, thank you."

He followed her into a small kitchen with a table set for one. She bustled around, preparing another place setting. "I'm Joanna, by the way," she said, glancing over her shoulder as she dug through the cabinets. "Nice to meet you."

"Nice to meet you, too," he said. He didn't offer his name. Not yet.

"Go ahead and sit down," Joanna said, placing dishes on the table. "Help yourself to the food."

"Thank you," he said. *It's been a long time since I said that so often.*

"So," Joanna said, cutting her chicken. "Tell me about yourself. Anything interesting?" Her gaze went again to his temple, then, with visible effort, back to his face.

"Well, there's nothing to tell," he said. *Nothing you'd believe, anyway.*

He thought back to a book he had found on his journey here. Maybe that would keep her from asking about him. "How much do you know about the winter solstice?"

"Only that it's tonight," she said. "Why?"

"Ancient people had many stories about the solstice. They believed it was the turning point of the sun's journey. Every culture has myths about beings, monsters, and deities taking or being the sun. Some even call the solstice the Mother's Night."

"Really? Why?"

"The name refers to the myth of Freya and her son Baldur, but there are many other myths that involve parent and child, and many that don't."

He kept talking, telling her as many myths as he could remember. Freya and Baldur, Horus and Isis, Amaterasu, the Holly King and the Oak King, Csodaszarvas, Gong-Gong, Persephone and Demeter, Maui, Raven. It had still been early when he arrived, but the night grew late as he talked, both of them forgetting about dinner.

Finally, he ran out of stories. He was surprised to realize he'd enjoyed himself. *I rather like this woman.*

Joanna stood and picked up her plate. "Are you done?"

"Yes, thank you," he said, as she came around the table and picked up his empty plate. "It was very good."

Joanna smiled. "Thank you." She put the dishes in the sink. "Now, you said you need a place to sleep."

"Yes."

She wiped her hands on her pants. "Follow me."

Joanna led him down a hallway to an empty bedroom. "It's small, but you can stay here for the night."

"Thank you," he said. "This will do."

"You're welcome," she said, and continued down the hall.

He went in and closed the door. He sat on the bed, fully clothed, and lay down. *Now what?*

Moments later, he was asleep.

*He saw Joanna playing with a little boy. When the boy turned around, he saw the boy's eyes: one was dark, the other pale gray.*

*The same boy, older now, running on a track, far ahead of the others running with him.*

*The boy, older still, playing music on a stage, eyes closed.*

*The boy, younger again, seated at a table with three others. One was the exact image of Damien Caven.*

*That man, he thought, feeling a surge of anger.*

*He didn't recognize one of the others at the table, but the last person reminded him of someone.*

*Alexandra, he realized. This boy looks like Alexandra.*

*Then the four around the table disappeared, and the dream faded to black.*

He slowly sat up. The Arcanodis Orateia was standing next to the bed. A quick look at the clock beside the bed told him it was four thirty in the morning.

"Why are you here so early?" he asked. "What was that dream?"

"The same as the others you've been given."

He stared at his hands, turning his ring around his finger. "The future, then."

He grabbed a notepad and pen from the bedside table, tore off the top sheet of paper, and replaced the pad.

"I have to tell her something, but she won't understand. She's ignorant of Reau."

He thought for a moment, then wrote a couple lines.

*Thank you for your kindness.*

*He will be extraordinary.*

Then he paused. He had never told Joanna his name. *Should I even bother signing it?*

He thought for a few moments. *She'll know. Who else could it be from?*

He signed his name on the note.

*Zaivyer Partivan*

Then he looked up at the figure. "Will she really give me a son? How?"

"Your son has been chosen. He will save the world from a great danger."

"What danger?" *Is something going to delay my plan?*

"It will come from your homeland."

With that, the Arcanodis Orateia vanished again.

*Well, that was slightly more informative than usual.*

He stood up, set the paper on the bed. After a moment's hesitation, he took off his ring and left it with the note. *I got what I needed with it. This way, when the time comes, he'll know who he is. Who I am.*

With that, he slipped into the hallway and went back out into the storm.