

THE ERIC KADE JOURNEYS

heretic

written by

JASON GARRETT

02.14.2014

www.authorjasongarrett.com

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either the product of the creator's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to any actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

Copyright © 2014 by Jason Garrett

Heretic: The Eric Kade Journeys

Printed edition ISBN-13: 978-0-9897473-1-8

Digital edition ISBN-13: 978-0-9897473-2-5

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

This book was printed in the United States of America.

Dream Big Productions trade paperback edition: February 2014

Cover and publisher's logo design by Kelly O'Neill, The Artist of Life
Again imagery design by Stephen Arthur Schaffer of NorthChavis
Bishop's Island map design by Jason Garrett

For extra copies please visit:

<http://authorjasongarrett.com/bibliography>

TWO

11 October 2016

Mankind had never looked as small or as glorious as it did from the expanse of space. A fearful people, too preoccupied by their inevitable futures and haunted pasts, they often failed to see the peacefulness that awaited them should they only lift their eyes. Their fearfulness had ushered in countless ages of atrocities and heartaches they were never meant to endure. Even so, they had become a proud creation, not unlike another race – a forgotten lineage. Like them, mankind was destined to suffer a tremendous fall, one more devastating than had been seen on earth in all its days.

In what mankind's most educated had mistaken for an abandoned ocean of space, a myriad of fallen angels remained forever drowning since their expulsion from the kingdom. Their screams became the winds of a haunted universe, forever lending an indescribable eeriness. Throughout the ages the forgotten ones drifted, unable to salve the agony that gave them sustenance. Once

glorious, they were now forever damned to the realm of the elemental demons: souls too weak to be cast into Hell.

Enduring six millennia in this place of eternal darkness, creatures of perfect beauty failed to fly fast enough and became abandoned on a celestial battlefield. The only warmth known to them was that of lightning created by their raging souls. It was not true warmth, only a painful burst of energy that reminded them of a disgraced bid for superiority. There the heavens remained scarred by war from a time when every angel of the kingdom was drawn into battle and there they remained: adrift yet still alive.

The purity of fire had stolen away their language, but so near to the flame a new sound was born. As those who fought the fallen ones were drawn back to the kingdom, a once hallowed tune of heavenly hosts became anguished with weeping. The Creator's fallen children burned in His wrathful fire, where there was no mercy. Those who rebuked Jehovah suffered with the Deceiver, Lucifer, who had led them afool.

In the judgment of fire, their skins became ashen husks and cast their souls into the atmosphere as they erupted. Through the remains, the fallen ones tore and plummeted, sharing the misery of the loss of grace. Now a race that had known no concept of time suffered timelessly, adrift and unwanted by either army. Some had no bodies while others had become as misshapen and horrific as the soldiers of the Deceiver's army.

Nevermore would the eyes of an elemental behold the sight of jade fields or gates which shimmered beneath an ever-present

golden light. In their world, colors were so rich and vibrant that one could not look upon them without squinting. So glorious were they that one would prefer to go blind rather than to look away. Mankind had yet heard words spoken that could describe such majesty; not because those words did not exist but because their ears were too fragile to understand the language of angels.

A veil of stars thickened, to hide the location of the kingdom from those deemed unworthy of beholding even a glimpse its magnificence. In many ways, that veil was a symbol of mercy. Only the cruel would allow them to see a destination they would never again be allowed to reach. Instead, the fallen ones had only to blame the memories harbored within their twisted souls. They were the first to have had memory and the first to be taunted by it.

In the knowing world – where good and evil battled for the souls of mankind – it was whispered that the elementals had died within seconds of being cast from Heaven. They suffered no violence and committed no sacrifice; rather, they died out of longing for a home to which they could never return. Death, however, was an end never known to eternal beings. Through their sea all souls would pass, if only to feel the torture of pride and never again question their place in Heaven's court.

Through the heart of that sea, appearing like a falling star, a messenger sent from Heaven to reshape mankind's path soared without faltering, as graceful as it was mighty. Its light blazed through the darkness, making it a target for the forgotten ones. Spiraling through the universe, collecting the elementals as though

they were specks of dust, the path of the messenger became lit with a tail of fire. Since their fall, the elementals had awaited the chance to once again be warriors and sought now to bring down one of His chosen angels.

Entering earth's atmosphere, the cluster of angels both majestic and fallen streaked through the night sky and burned through layer after layer of clouds. Thunder and lightning raged, still the elementals clung to the messenger with all their might. Producing high winds, they continued spiraling as they careened faster toward the surface of the planet. The tail of a funnel cloud formed in their wake and began drawing water from the Pacific as lightning flashed in the night sky and a burst of sound shattered the night.

Fishing boats and yachts tumbled in the waves, bumping and crashing into one another like clumsy fawns learning to stand. The wooden planks of a boat dock caught fire as the messenger touched down, snapping the tow lines that kept the vessels tethered. Too weak to hold on, the withered husks of the forgotten ones were cast aside and fell into the tide. Their ashes were forever swept away by nature and a bare foot stepped confidently across the scalded planks of a ferry dock, extinguished by rain.

The messenger, known in the kingdom as Esimesena, made no effort to brush away the remnants of the elementals. As clouds concealed her path, their rain reduced the husks to dust and scattered them on the wind. Having the appearance of woman, without stitch and, despite looking human, Esimesena displayed

nothing to suggest an ability to reproduce or care for young. There was no navel on her abdomen, no signs of having been born.

Her skin shimmered like the purest of metals beneath the evening's light, her body itself a warrior's armor; but not without flaw. Upon her wrists, the winds had cut into her flesh. On the backs of her hands, tracks of scars dug in, like those of fingers clawing for rescue. On her shoulders were the scars of teardrops, boiling at the time they had splashed against her skin. Her irises, as rich as copper, retained the light of fire and caused her to never again know tears of her own.

It had fallen upon Esimesena to drive the betrayers – her brothers and her sisters – far from their Creator's throne. That did not mean the fight was easy. She, too, had memories. She had tried to save those she loved, to pull them from the sea of fire before she was recalled to the Kingdom. Such love made her the perfect volunteer to walk amongst man.

With every step on earth, a wave of energy rippled like the sea, rolling bits of rock and debris from her path. In every footprint, new grass took root and flowers bloomed, despite the autumnal landscape. Bending at the waist, she cupped her hands and blew into them for several seconds before standing and clapping her hands together one time. Her breath became a gust powerful enough to drive a ship across the ocean and her copper eyes watched as the streetlights flickered in response.

Beneath her feet the earth revolved faster, never disrupting the stillness that emanated from her presence. Man's measure of time

and space were nothing to the heavenly hosts who moved among them, rarely seen and seldom heard. The being, who stood seven feet tall, had only taken a few steps to reach her destination: a churchyard within sight of the ferry docks of a small island. A shimmer of light within her flickered against polished stone and the epitaph of a beloved spirit caught the shadows to become visible in the night:

**THE EARTHLY SHRINE OF OUR BELOVED
OLEZIA KACZANEK, GUARDIAN AND SAINT**

The visage of the saint, whose beatification was as new as her shrine, appeared to Esimesena in the lingering fog where her spirit kept vigil over the grounds. The language of the messenger was indecipherable to the human ear and unspeakably by the human tongue. The most elegant of instruments could not replicate the sound and the saint's vaporous form rippled under the power of Esimesena's true voice. The only earthly name revealed in her message was *Quadrhys*, a Goidelic predecessor of *Kadarius*, reduced in modern times to the monosyllabic *Kade*.

Bowing in obedience, the spirit of the Saint of Bishop's Island again dispersed, causing temperatures to fall several degrees. The task was simple and now a plan that would not be understood in one man's lifetime had been set in motion. Esimesena's bare feet effortlessly left the surface of the earth as she pierced the night sky. A smile broke her countenance and, with a single wave of her arms,

Esimesena soared out of sight. Beneath her, thick clouds tinged by silver and red hues settled over the island and rain began to fall on the church once led by Eric Kade.

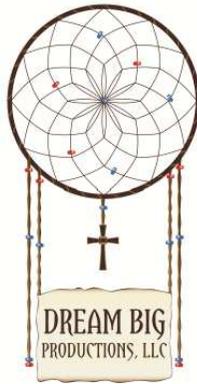
HERETIC

The Eric Kade Journeys

free preview

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JASON GARRETT is the author of six novels, including The Tales of Bishop's Island series, and the 2013 National Indie Excellence Award-winning novel *Troubled Souls*. The Eric Kade Journeys trilogy includes the previously released novels *Homecoming* and *The Winter War*.



© 2014 Dream Big Productions, LLC