DEADWORLD PROLOGUE

Eleven years earlier

Phoenicia and Caradog had arrived too late, but knew other enemy soldiers would arrive soon. She stood by her daughter's side, her tears now dried, the new born baby safe in her arms. The bedroom looked like a mini battle scene. Several dead beings were strewn around; soldiers from both sides.

There was a shimmer in the room and Rool appeared. Taking in the scene, and seeing Saffir in the bed, he dropped to his knees by the side of her. With tenderness, he touched the cheek of the woman he loved. His other hand held hers. Only a trusted few were aware of their relationship, kept secret from when they had first met. 'I'm sorry,' he whispered. 'I should have been here.'

The Opposition knew of Saffir's pregnancy and had scoured the land searching for her. Allowed to live, her baby could fulfil the prophesy.

Hearing his voice, Saffir opened her eyes and touched her husband's cheek, a weak smile on her face. 'You must leave him now.' She gasped for breath. 'Your son needs you.' Her eyes closed.

Baby in arms, Phoenicia stood nearby, and whispered to Rool, 'You know I must take her, to the Light. There isn't much time.'

Rool knew what had to be done. He kissed Saffir's cheek, stood, and took the baby from Phoenicia, cradling it close to him.

Phoenicia knew now was the time for clear thinking. She said, 'You must leave our lands for good. Until Zander is defeated, the child will never be safe.' Both looked at the infant who had fallen asleep, oblivious of the turmoil around. 'And you must leave now. Zander will send beings again to finish the task.'

'I will take him,' Rool said.

'Where will you go?'

'There is only one land I can go.'

'The Earthworld?'

Rool nodded. 'Somewhere Saffir and I discovered long ago, to be alone. A beautiful land where mountains run down to the blue sea.'

'Saffir spoke of this place but I have never been.'

'It is unknown to many of the earth beings.' Gazing at his child, Rool remembered how he and Saffir had talked of disappearing when the baby was born.

'Perhaps, when it is safe, I will visit you,' Phoenicia said.

Rool looked up from the baby he was holding. Torn emotions ripped through him; agony at the death of his true love, mixed with joy at the birth of his son. Now it would be only him and his son who disappeared.

‘You will be safe there,’ Phoenicia continued. ‘Caradog will come with you, at least until you are settled.’

Caradog, her trusted confidant, stepped forward. ‘The location must be kept secret until it is time,’ Phoenicia said to him. ‘When it is safe, I will send Grimly to join you.’

The three looked upward.

‘They are coming,’ Rool said.

Phoenicia grabbed his arm. ‘You must go, Caradog, too.’ She saw the hesitation in Caradog’s behaviour. ‘It’s an order. I shall deal with them,’ she said, standing firm.

Rool looked to her, undecided.

‘Go!’ she said.

Caradog beckoned to Rool that they should go. Baby in arms, he shimmered and disappeared, quickly followed by Caradog.

Seconds later, flashes of light lit up the room. Two beings appeared, taking in the scene. They approached the bed. Phoenicia came out from behind a large screen and, as they turned to face her, she raised her hands and a deadly stream of light cut them both down.

She picked up her daughter and vanished from the room.