

Gods and Guardians  
**CHRONICLES**  
Book I

# The Reaping

by

Alana Wells

XIERE'S  
**DOMINION**  
PUBLISHING

Copyright © 2019 by Alana Wells

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise without written permission from the publisher. It is illegal to copy this book, post it to a website, or distribute it by any other means without permission.

Library of Congress Control Number: TXu 1-874-407

This novel is entirely a work of fiction. The names, characters and incidents portrayed in it are the work of the author's imagination. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events or localities is entirely coincidental.

Alana Wells asserts the moral right to be identified as the author of this work.

Alana Wells has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet Websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such Websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Designations used by companies to distinguish their products are often claimed as trademarks. All brand names and product names used in this book and on its cover are trade names, service marks, trademarks and registered trademarks of their respective owners. The publishers and the book are not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book. None of the companies referenced within the book have endorsed the book.

Editing by Kathryn Hastings  
Front cover art by Lindsay Hayes  
Back cover art Kathryn Hastings  
Graphic design by Brian Hill  
Typesetting by Natasha Combs

ISBN: 978-0-578-85416-8

Printed by Steuben Press

Second printing edition 2021

[www.xieresdominion.com](http://www.xieresdominion.com)

# Prologue

Nadia awoke with a start. She had been dreaming of the darkness again. Cold and evil things with glittery eyes lived in the shadows, lusting for her soul. She tried to change her dreams repeatedly but, she returned to a vast land of nothingness. Her screams echoed as they ripped her open and tore her apart. She watched as her soul was sucked from her flesh like a greedy aspirator.

Her life was different before ... before they came. She couldn't even remember the last time she had a good dream. She wanted to give into them ... it would have been easier. She would finally be free from their torment. Her strength was waning, but still, she resisted ... and with her resistance came pain.

Even worse was when she woke and saw their glittery eyes above her and their laughter ringing in her ears.

# The Dark Visitor

## Chapter One

Nadia was a different sort of child. She learned new things at an extraordinary rate. Within a year of being born, she could string together full sentences. She went from sitting up to walking, skipping the crawling stage altogether. She was easily frustrated, however. When she didn't learn something immediately, she would scream to high heaven. At the age of four she learned to read, but they weren't books for her age group. Nadia called Dr. Seuss books "baby books." Instead, she insisted on reading something more compelling and on a fifth-grade level.

Her parents knew she was gifted but couldn't afford to place her into a special program. They supplemented with constant trips to the library where Nadia scoured the place for interesting material. Some of the books she selected were over 700 pages long. She never asked anyone to explain the words she didn't understand, opting to look them up in a dictionary. School was dull because she aced all her tests without studying. Homework only took her minutes. Her parents, like most parents of a gifted child, envisioned her working for NASA or the White House.

Nadia and her family lived outside a small town called Ravens Wood in New Hampshire. As she aged, everyone told her she looked exactly like her mother. She had dark brown hair with hazel eyes. Her little face was oval-shaped, and her eyes crinkled when she laughed. Nadia had a slender build, but she was strong for her size, often getting into scraps with the neighborhood boys. Bashing one of them in the head with a metal bucket didn't help matters. He had called her a name she didn't like so she responded with action rather than words. Nadia often responded with action, and she was quick on her feet. Her father chastised her for the event, but Nadia knew he was secretly proud.

Their house was perched on top of a little hill surrounded by trees. It was painted green with brown shutters. Her parents told her they picked the house because it blended so well with the foliage. Their home was at the edge of a small forest which Nadia like to explore with her mother. The house was a two story, with an attic and a cellar. The upper floor had her bedroom next to her brother's, while the downstairs consisted of a kitchen, family room, and bedroom. There was also a den her father called his 'man cave.'

The staircase leading upstairs had an elaborate banister which Travis, her only sibling, slid down daily when he was supposed to be watching her after school. Nadia always wanted to slide too but Travis wouldn't allow it. He insisted it was too dangerous. She liked the danger and slid down it a few times when he wasn't looking anyway.

Travis was 5 years older than Nadia and resembled their father. He was a tall, bulky blond with brown eyes. He hunched while he walked which earned him the nickname Ogre ... a name he thoroughly despised. Travis teased her constantly, making her scream at the top of her lungs. When he took things too far, she punched him as hard as her little fists could. One time she stabbed him in the leg with a pencil, which earned her a spanking from their father. Nadia loved her brother despite his incessant teasing and constant reminders that he was older and far wiser.

Travis was a baseball fanatic. He collected cards, which he kept in pristine condition in a large binder by his desk. He brought them out frequently to show Nadia. She pretended to be interested but had no idea who any of the players were. Travis knew everyone by heart and could easily recite their stats without looking. Nadia never understood the appeal of baseball or any other sport for that matter. It just wasn't interesting to her.

Nadia wasn't attached to material things except for one item her mother bought for her. It was a small, red, plastic dragon that could fit in the palm of her hand. Nadia spent hours examining it, turning it over and over. Its little wings jutted out from either side like it was going to launch into the air. Its mouth was open in a silent roar. She didn't know why she was so attached to a piece of plastic, but it was her favorite.

Her parents Robert and Sarah were high school sweethearts, marrying immediately after high school. Robert became a plumber and Sarah worked at the town's only daycare. They weren't rich by any means, but they made enough to pay the bills and keep the family happy. They only had one car which Sarah drove most of the time. The plumbing company allowed Robert to use their van for transportation. They were the typical middle-class, American family.

Her father was stern but fair with Nadia and her brother. While Nadia loved her father, she had a stronger connection with her mother. Sarah spent any extra time she had with Nadia even if she was exhausted from work. Evenings with her mother were Nadia's favorite time. The two of them would sit and talk while Sarah brushed Nadia's hair. On warm weekends, Sarah would wake Nadia early in the morning. They would creep silently out of the house and head into the woods. It was their special time. Sarah knew the names of every plant and taught her daughter medicinal uses of many of them. Nadia soaked up everything, like a sponge. Her mother made her feel extraordinary.

When Sarah was busy, Nadia would occupy her time playing in the attic. It was Nadia's favorite place in the house. A long set of narrow stairs on the second floor led to a pink door. The attic was huge, and it was filled with many 'treasures.' The solid wood floor led to two large round windows at either end of the room. Light bulbs hung on long wires from the rafters. It was bright and happy, unlike many attics she had seen in movies. It felt magical.

Her parents encouraged her to hang her drawings on the walls which gave her a private art gallery. Sarah bought her some plants, which she kept near the window to breathe life into her secret hideaway. She had a table, chairs, a desk and an old bean bag chair she loved to flop into. Nadia, having a vivid imagination held many tea parties in the attic with her stuffed animals. Once she even got Travis to attend, but he left before the party ended. Nadia suspected it was because she made him wear a frilly bonnet while serving her tea. She preferred the attic to her own room and later when the darkness came, it became her only sanctuary.

As bright and cheerful as the attic was, the cellar was the opposite. It smelled dank and musty. The walls and floor were made of stones and seemed to weep moisture. There were only two lights for the entire basement which cast shadows everywhere. The floor was made of broken concrete and dirt which made it even creepier. It had a low ceiling making it impossible to escape the cobwebs sinewy strands.

Nadia hated the cellar. She refused to go down there unless someone was with her. Once when she was seven, her brother thought it would be funny to lock her inside. Her screams caused the neighbors to come rushing over. Travis was punished for his stunt, but the incident gave her nightmares for a week. He apologized profusely and promised never to do it again. He seemed nicer to her afterwards even though he still refused to partake in her tea parties.

Nadia had a best friend who lived across the street. She was an African American girl named Tasha. She was thin as a rail and taller than Nadia. Tasha had a pile of brown curly hair and light brown eyes. They were inseparable during school, and after school, they spent hours chasing each other. Their favorite thing to do was annoy Travis by threatening to pour water over his baseball cards. Travis would lock himself in his room to protect his precious cards while screaming at them to go away.

During the summer, they slept over at each other's houses.

Nadia was happy ... until *it* came ... when darkness infected their lives. Her whole life changed when she turned ten. Shadows and whispers crept close to her as she was playing with her dolls. It told her things ... bad things. It made her feel hopeless and dead inside which was ironic since her name meant 'hope.' The assaults usually came at night. She would have horrific nightmares and often awoke screaming.

The nightmares weren't the worst part though. The worst part was opening her eyes and seeing the tall, shadow man standing at the end of her bed. She couldn't see his face except for his eyes ... eyes that glittered red. It never said anything, but on occasion, it would laugh at her. The sound of its gravelly voice sent chills down her spine. Nadia was so terrified she couldn't move. He always disappeared when her parents burst through the door. They continually dismissed her fears as bad dreams.

Her parents expressed their concern for her fears, but they couldn't fathom what was happening. They didn't know why ... and Nadia couldn't tell them. She tried to tell them once when she was 11, but it only made the situation worse. They whisked her to the doctor, worried there was something wrong with her brain. The doctor told her parents she was hallucinating and if the situation became worse, he would put her on medicine. Nadia knew there was nothing wrong with her. What she was seeing was real. She knew what was haunting her. It was a demon.

The first time she saw it, it flitted in and out of her sight. After a year of the cat and mouse game, it began appearing, showing more of itself. It terrified her because she didn't know what to do about it. She couldn't talk to anyone. Her father was an atheist and her mother simply believed in a 'higher power.' Her family wouldn't understand, and so she was alone. It never stayed for a long time, just long enough to make her worry.

Nadia learned to mask her fear from her parents, so they never knew how tormented she was inside.

After her incident with the doctor, Nadia decided to speak with the demon to find out what it wanted. No one else saw it, so she knew it wanted something from her. Nadia sensed when it was in the house even before it showed itself. She felt its dark energy. Nadia knew exactly where it stayed when it was visiting ... in the cellar. It took her a long time to develop enough courage to creep down there by herself.

She collected her nerves one crisp April day while her parents were still at work and Travis was playing outside. She grabbed a flashlight and inched downstairs. It was a little after her 12th birthday, and that made her feel a little braver. Each stair creaked in protest as she slipped further and further into its domain. Her flashlight seemed to dim as she stepped further into the abyss. It felt like a crypt, emanating with evil. Nadia sniffed the air. It smelled like mold and rotting meat. She didn't want to be here by herself but was determined to carry out her plan.

“I know you're down here. What do you want?” Nadia asked, her voice trembling.

Out of the furthest corner, she saw it approach. She directed her light in its direction and froze as her flashlight suddenly extinguished. The main light flickered, threatening to go out. She wanted to run. She wanted to scream. She wanted to be anywhere but here in the cellar ... with it.

“Ah, my sweet little Nadia,” it cooed in a raspy voice. “come to visit me in my home, have you? Do not worry my child. You will always be welcome here ... with me ... in the dark.”

Nadia didn't feel welcome. She felt afraid and a little insane for confronting it. It floated closer until it towered over her. She knew it was a male by his stature and voice. He was shrouded in darkness, but its red eyes glowed, crinkling in amusement.

“Wh ... What do you want?” She stammered.

“Do not be afraid, my child. I won’t hurt you. I am your friend.”

Inside, she knew he was lying.

“You are a demon,” she said flatly.

“Why yes, I am. Thank you very much for noticing,” he chuckled.

“What do you want!” she repeated more forcefully.

She felt her fear turn to anger. Nadia hated being afraid.

“Ahhhhh, yes. Become angry my child,” he almost seemed to sing. “I like your fear, but your anger is much tastier.”

Nadia didn’t know what to say. She knew he wouldn’t give her the answers she wanted, so she turned to leave.

“Do not leave me, my child,” it pleaded, suddenly changing its tone. “I am all alone in the dark.”

“I don’t care,” Nadia said, finding her courage. “you’re not welcome here. You need to leave!”

He began to laugh a kind of throaty chuckle, making the hair on the back of her neck rise. Shivers ran down her spine.

Nadia sprinted up the stairs and didn’t stop until she reached her bedroom. She slammed the door and clamped her hand over her mouth to stop herself from screaming.

“You didn’t think you could get away from me that easily, did you?” a raspy voice asked behind her.

Nadia screeched and spun around, backing away from him. Her small room made his stench unbearable. She could see his full form in the light. He was tall, almost reaching the ceiling. His body was black and mottled with grey streaks. He wore a

shadow cloak. The hood itself covered most of his head, but she could still see his eyes ... those horrible evil eyes.

“It has just occurred to me I never answered your question. How very rude of me.” he confessed, redirecting his tone once again. “you wish to know what I want, don’t you?”

Nadia’s words escaped her. She nodded her head slowly.

He grasped her face with its long fingers and pulled her to him, locking her eyes with his. His touch repulsed her. She felt a piercing chill course through her body.

“I want you, Nadia,” he said, his putrid breath coating her face “I know what you are capable of, dearie and it is great indeed. I have seen your power. My master has a great, let’s say, interest in you. Therefore, he sent me to convince you to join his cause.”

Nadia reacted instinctively. Without realizing what she was doing, she summoned energy and shoved him across the room. He spilled backward onto the floor.

“I will *never* join you!” she shouted, feeling a little like Luke Skywalker.

“Oh, I think I might be able to change your mind,” he chuckled softly. “I will give you a year to think about it and mull things over. I will leave ... for now but I will be back, and I will bring my friends.”

“GO!” she shouted, stomping her foot.

“Very well, but before I leave, let me give you a little reminder of our conversation. I would hate to think you would forget about me in a year.”

He reached out and grasped her arm, tightly wrapping his long fingers. She tried summoning her energy, but a sharp pain raced through her body, making it impossible to concentrate. She

struggled but couldn't break free from its grasp. Nadia squealed in pain, as fire coursed through her body. He released her after a few moments. She slumped to the ground, her arm pulsing in agony. His handprint was burned into her arm.

“Goodbye, sweet Nadia. I look forward to seeing you in a year.”

He disappeared, his laughter hanging in the air. Travis burst through the door after he heard her screams.

“What's wrong?” he asked, concerned.

She held her arm out to him.

“Yea? It's an arm. Why are you screaming?”

“My *arm!* Look at it!” she shouted.

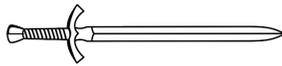
“What about it?”

Nadia looked at him with disbelief. He couldn't see it. Once again, the feeling of isolation blanketed her.

“Nothing,” she mumbled. “I thought I saw a spider.”

“You're a dork!” Travis laughed, closing her door.

He left her alone ... with her thoughts.



The next year flew in a blur. She tried to put the demon out of her thoughts, but she couldn't. The mark on her arm never faded, but no one else could see it. As the months progressed, she felt the need to do something ... anything to fight it. She insisted her parents take her to the library every weekend. She read every book she found about demons although, there weren't many. She found a better selection when they went to Manchester to see a baseball game during their summer vacation.

After the game her parents told Nadia she could go anywhere she wanted within reason. Most girls her age would want to go to the mall, but Nadia wasn't like most girls. The only place she wanted to go was the bookstore. Her choice made Travis happy because he knew he could buy more baseball cards. Nadia felt like she walked into the promise land when she arrived at the metaphysical section in Barnes and Noble. She could have stayed for days pouring over the books, but her parents insisted they leave after an hour. When her time was up, she met them at the front counter with fifteen books overflowing in her arms. Her parents looked surprised.

“I said you could buy *one* book, Nadia,” Sarah huffed.

“I need these books Mom,” Nadia protested.

“What are these anyway?” her father asked, taking the books from her arms.

He was shocked when he perused through her selection. He was used to her abnormal tastes, but he didn't expect every book to be about demons.

“Nadia! All of these books are about demons,” he clucked, disapprovingly.

“I know,” she said quietly.

She didn't know how to explain it to them. She didn't know how to make them understand.

“These books aren't meant for you. I don't want you reading this dark stuff,” her father scowled.

“But I *need* these books Dad!” she protested, her voice rising.

“Why? Why do you need books about demons?” her mother asked, concerned.

Nadia didn't know what to say. She wanted to tell them their lives would be changed forever unless she knew how to fight

against the darkness. If she told them, her parents would take her back to the doctor, who would only put her on pills. She felt helpless and knew she had to lie.

“Cuz I find it interesting. Can I get some horror movies too?”

Her parents looked at each other and shook their heads. They found her new interest disturbing.

“Fine,” her mother finally agreed, “you can have one book, and we have to approve of it.”

“What kind of horror movie?” her father asked.

“Can I have the Exorcist?”

“Absolutely *not!*” her father grunted. “pick your book so we can get out of here.”

Nadia put the books on the floor in a secluded corner and tried to pick the best one. In the distance, she could hear Travis complaining about wanting to leave. She ignored him and read the description of each book once again. After twenty minutes she picked a book about fighting demons. Her father rolled his eyes and paid for it. She held it tightly, hoping the book would give her the answers she so desperately needed.

During the ride back, she began reading it. Nadia felt somewhat disappointed. The author spoke a lot about God and praying to angels for help. There wasn't anything in it about defending yourself against demons. It was more based upon faith which was something she didn't really know anything about. Nadia believed in God but didn't feel any kind of connection with him. She decided to ask her parents to take her to church on a Sunday. Maybe a priest could give her the answers she needed.

When they got home, Travis immediately ran upstairs to file his new baseball cards in their proper place. Nadia went into the attic and thumbed through the rest of her book. It was

basically useless. She knew the author had never encountered a demon and was just spouting recycled garbage. Nadia wished she had a good source of information. A thought crept into her head. Her father had a laptop in the den, and he allowed her to occasionally play games. Her favorite game was The Sims, but she hadn't played it in over six months. She felt like kicking herself for not remembering it earlier. She glanced down at her arm, scratching it absentmindedly. Nadia felt like it had marked her but for what ... she didn't know.

The next day she got up as soon as her parents left for work. She knew her brother wouldn't slither out of bed for at least three more hours. He was paid as her babysitter during the summer, but she didn't need him. She could fend for herself. She got on the computer and typed 'demons.' Nadia was amazed at the endless selection of demon information on the internet. Hours flew by like seconds. Before long, she heard her brother moving around upstairs. She quickly shut down the computer and went into the living room to turn on the TV.

Nadia kept the same routine for the rest of the summer and well into the school year. Any chance she had, she was on the computer. She had a special notebook she kept under her dresser which held her notes. There were lots of websites about demons but not as much information about actually fighting against them. Many websites she found were faith-based. Nadia wondered if that's why the demon came to her ... because she had no faith. At night, Nadia got down on her knees and prayed for help. She didn't know if anyone heard her, but she desperately hoped so.

Towards the end of the year, she asked her parents to drop her off at a church. Nadia wanted to talk to the priest ... alone. Her father was immediately skeptical about her request. It took a lot of persuading, but he finally agreed to allow her to see one at the Holy Trinity Catholic Church. She didn't understand his reluctance though.

“We will walk you in, but we’ll be waiting for you in the entrance,” Sarah informed her.

“OK,” Nadia agreed

“I still don’t understand why you want to do this,” her father said, exasperated.

“Robert, just let her.” Sarah pleaded. “It’s something she wants to do.”

She briefly listened to her parents arguing behind her.

“I thought we agreed to raise our kids to be free thinkers and not believe in this superstitious nonsense!” her father barked.

“Oh my god, Rob! Just let her do it. If we don’t, she will continue to bug us about it. Let her just get it out of her system. You know she has always been different. She wants to learn. What’s the harm in her talking to a priest?” Her mother asked, defending Nadia.

Nadia increased her pace, till their voices dimmed to heated murmurs. She hurried before her father changed his mind. The priest was waiting for her in his office. He was short, squat, and partially bald. He had a ruddy complexion as if he had just finished running. He smiled and beckoned to her.

“Yes, my child. What can I do for you today?” he asked kindly.

Nadia sat across from him wearing her most serious expression. She didn’t like being referred to as ‘my child.’ It reminded her too much of the demon.

“I need to know about demons,” Nadia stated.

“What do you wish to know?” he asked, cocking his head to the side.

“How does a person fight one?”

“Through the power of prayer and faith in God, but I’m sure you have nothing to worry about my child.”

Nadia expected his canned response. After all, no one really came out and said there was another way to fight against demons.

“There has to be another way,” she insisted.

“But there isn’t. That is the only way to fight demons. Now, why on earth are you troubled by this?” He asked.

“Because I had one in my house and he’s coming back in less than a year. I have to figure out how to get rid of him ... it ... whatever,” she blurted.

“I see. And how do you know he’s coming back?”

“He told me he would be back and make my life miserable. He wanted me to join him. I won’t! I won’t join him,” Nadia swore.

“I see. You spoke with this entity?” he probed.

Nadia knew he didn’t believe her. She could tell by his tone.

“Yea! And he’s coming back!” Nadia shrieked, trying to make him understand.

“Calm down my child. I’m sure you have nothing to worry about,” he uttered, trying to placate her.

“Do you at least have holy water or a crucifix that you can give me?” she asked, frantically.

The priest shook his head in bewilderment. He reached back and took a large, wooden crucifix off the wall, handing it to her. It was a gift from a friend in Italy. He didn’t believe her tale, but he wanted to make her feel better. She needed the crucifix more than he did.

“Here,” he said. “you can have mine. I can’t give you any holy water though.”

“Th ... thank you,” she stammered, grateful for his generosity.

“Maybe you should come to church on Sunday. It might make you feel better.”

“No. That’s not a good idea,” she said, firmly.

“Why not?”

“My parents ... my father wouldn’t allow it. I have to go,” she said, clutching his gift to her chest.

“That is unfortunate. You’re always welcome to come back and see me if you need to.”

She thanked him once again and raced to her parents. Her father wasn’t thrilled when he saw the crucifix but didn’t feel like pressing the issue. Nadia hung it next to her bed, so she could easily reach it if needed. Before she went to sleep that night, she plucked it off the wall and examined it. It should have put her mind at ease, but it didn’t. It felt as foreign to her as French. She thought about everything she learned so far about demons.

They were liars, but she knew that already. They liked to twist words and use them against a person. When he had been around her, she felt hopeless and alone. Without hope, Nadia felt defenseless. It was hard to fight against something like that especially when she didn’t know how. She remembered when the demon had touched her. It felt so cold and ... burning. She shuddered, recalling the terrible sensation.

“What did it mean when it said I had power?” she wondered silently.

Nadia remembered pushing the demon away, but she didn’t know how it happened.

“Why does his master want me?” she asked aloud to a silent room.

She fell asleep not knowing the answer.



“NADIA! Get down here!”

Her father’s voice startled her from her slumber. Sunlight was streaming through the curtains. She rubbed her eyes and blinked, wondering if she had been dreaming.

“NADIA!” her father screamed again.

She raced downstairs in her PJ’s. They stood as a united front by the computer. Her father’s eyes turned into slits and her mom looked bewildered. She was busted.

“What’s this?” Her father asked, pointing to the screen.

“What?” Nadia asked, sheepishly.

“Nadia don’t play games with me! How long have you been using my computer?” he demanded.

“I dunno,” she mumbled.

“Well, I can tell by a history search it’s been at least a month,” he said, pointing to the screen.

Nadia felt stupid. She forgot to erase the history.

“Six months. I’ve been using your computer for six months,” Nadia blurted.

“Look at these sites!” he yelled. “every one of them is about demons ... summoning demons, killing demons, avoiding demons! Here’s a site about everything you wanted to know about demons but were afraid to ask. What the heck are you doing, Nadia?”

“I just wanted to ...,” she began before her dad erupted.

“NO! No more! I’m putting a password on the computer and you are grounded from using it. There will be no more talk about demons or priests or anything supernatural. Do I make myself clear!”

“But ...,”

“NO MORE! You are done with this demon stuff!” her father bellowed.

Nadia turned and ran up to her room, tears springing from her eyes. She didn’t know what to do. Her parents were hindering her ability to fight. As she stormed around her room, she felt more helpless than ever. She didn’t have nearly enough information to fight them, and now she was restricted from learning more. Fear enveloped her.

The rest of the year went by too quickly for Nadia. She couldn’t even enjoy Christmas because she knew April was right around the corner. She managed to do some research on Tasha’s computer and at the library, but she still couldn’t find anything useful. She began praying regularly at night. As much as she prayed, however, it didn’t feel right. It was almost as if she knew he couldn’t help her. She didn’t know what else to do.

On the anniversary of the demon’s departure, Nadia didn’t sleep a wink. She stayed up all night waiting for it, but it never made an appearance. In the morning, she went into the cellar, but it wasn’t there either. After a week, Nadia felt relief wash over her. After a month she started to forget about it. Normality returned to her life. Her parents commented that she had found her smile again. For the first time in a long time, she slept without fear ... until a familiar voice woke her from her slumber.

“Hello my sweet Nadia.”

