

The Columbians

Prologue: The Final Calling

Ever since the beginnings of civilization, receding peace flowed in the worlds of Olde Earth. Almost everyone had to farm, build, and get together in tranquility. As much as how sustained a utopia was at those generations, disturbance struck the nation of Columbia. Vanishing crops, climates of intense graveness, and enigmatic phenomena thrived in strange and unsettling colonies. Suddenly, in the town of Bellvu, word of mouth got passed around in bashfulness.

"Help! Dark times are afoot! People have perished in the swamps!" yelled a poor elder.

"This must be the time," replied a wise person. "The time to choose."

"What must you choose, Ancestor?" asked a voice.

"I'll call the chosen ones, ones who must serve this world well."

"Do you know who they are?"

"Not yet, but time will tell perfectly, in which heroes will rise again," the Ancestor foretold. Behind his back, a crowd of vegetable gatherers began to be mountain men, several mistresses took roles of archers, and, without a doubt, children were submitted as chosen.

Chapter One: Rosco

Several days after the pitch of concern, other towns of one hundred, two hundred villagers continued to heartily ignore the peculiarities from afar. One boy did take the news as a guidance, his name was Rosco. During his twelfth year, he harnessed strange temptations of anger. Outbursts upon outbursts seized his early childhood to this day. Townspeople of Rosco's agrarian hometown of Hicagoh had confused thoughts about Rosco's behavior. He was considered chosen to the passed messages on foot to the Ancestor, by far. Rosco said farewell to his parents and rode with his early mustang, Humphrey. The swiftness inside Rosco's ecstatic mind enticed him to head for Columbia's capital in a heartbeat. Town memories passed through him, like the time he played in the fountain, or when he had dashed further than his acquaintances; those were the good moments. The horizons in the grasslands showed an unstitched future. How he will take the sacrifice was his new greatest moment. Maybe his mother will be comforting him at the end, after his life ends. Or her life ends.

Chapter Two: Their Ancestor

Hours later, Humphrey stopped at the grand town sign of Distric. Windy as it felt, trees were arrayed, connecting several small homes between it. Several diverse residents wandered each small lane, and in their sight, a tall chapel towered in amusement.

This is very populous, he thought. Rosco solely adjusted his clothes to match the busy and dynamic culture.

“New in town?” marched a tall woman.

“I would like to visit our Ancestor, for he has chosen me in the west.”

A long silence occurred between Rosco and the woman. “Apologies to intrude, the path to our Ancestor is straight ahead. He might accept you.”

Why did she say “might”? Did she meet the Ancestor herself or something? There was more questions than answers about their Ancestor.

“So, you might be the national Ancestor,” Rosco greeted.

“And you name is Rosco M. Tortman,” the Ancestor replied back.

A hazy mist surrounded the room with a scent of timely incense. Weird artifacts behind him were placed historically. Just after he spotted a series of chambers, the Ancestor glanced at him intentionally. It was just him and the Ancestor, in the same table. Alone.

“It looks like you are one of the chosen ones,” explained the Ancestor. “Do you have any qualities that makes *you* different?”

Rosco thought for a mere thirty seconds and thought this was a trick question.

“I’m just like the others, right?”

“Very funny. Your parents tracked you since birth. The fierceness and brute strength gives you the qualities of a warrior.”

“What’s a warrior, Ancestor?” Rosco asked.

“According to tall tales, a warrior happens to be a different kind of person who conquers all.” answered the Ancestor.

Rosco still didn’t understand the meanings of “conquering” or “tall tales”.

“I’m asking you and other people from faraway lands to search in the four corners of the earth for a capsule, rumored to save us all.”

The Ancestor reached out in the dark shelves to hand out an object carved from steel.

“This is what has been called a sword. Learn to master it with your heart and forever be united.”

Rosco studied the weapon, horrified as it once was. He stood there, confused and mystified by its purity. The Ancestor calmly left the table to better darkness. Rosco picked up the steel sword in terror and somberly left the room.

With such a short interview, Rosco prepared to scuttle off with Humphrey from Distric. He would have to locate another wandering chosen one within the Columbian vicinity, and ask for serious guidance with his power...

Chapter Three: The Columbians

Just beyond the steeple, it stood a short blonde girl holding a stringed device while cutting wood with her pocket knife. Rosco crept up next to the girl to observe her further actions.

In an instant, she turned her head to Rosco in shock.

“Who might you be?” bellowed the girl.

“Uhh... my name is Rosco, and you?”

“Berth.” Noticing the subtleness between them, she began to ask about Rosco’s familiar actions: “Have you been chosen by our Ancestor?”

“Yep. You too?”

“Yeah. He was asking me and other people to-”

Rosco immediately finished the following sentence. “From faraway lands to search in the four corners of the blah blah blah capsule.”

“Exactly. You should pack up and prepare for our quest.”

Rosco shifted to Berth. “I have what I need; water bottle, a compass, a flute, and 200 frozen chicken nuggets.”

“Wow, nice set up!” Berth suddenly replied. “Anyways, a bit later, we should search around this town for more wandering Chosens. I’ll meet you at the District fountain tomorrow.” Berth trod back to her home, holding her chunk of wood.

Beside the town fountain, Rosco had stayed there all night and ignored the diving birds and the giggling townsfolk. Berth carried a wooden handbag to attend to Rosco.

“Rosco, I’m ready and really feeling it!” Berth lied.

“I’ve been waiting to ask you, what did you possess by our Ancestor?”

“Oh,” Berth twisted her plaid blouse. “This is called a bow and arrow. I can use them for kebabing wood.

“I’m not sure it works that way.”

The two teens rode together, passing between tallish buildings. In two hours, they rounded up eleven chosen ones in the outskirts of Distric.

Waves of chatting about their peculiar journey from several youngsters were being passed. One short pale boy with auburn hair named Erb was curiously asking countless inquiries too complex for anyone to answer regarding their quest. Suddenly, Berth knocked a tree down to silence everyone.

“Let’s get this over with. State your name, hometown, and ‘device’ out loud. Got it?” everyone nodded to Berth’s demand. “Berth Kollins from Distric, with a bow and arrow.

“Okay then. My name is Nat Neil and I come from Karlston with a Halberd.”

“The name’s Mally. Hometown’s Yusten, weapon boomerang.”

“I’m Britt Ryan Castello of the old town of Postin, with an equipped morning star.”

“If you are wondering, my name is Erb Blankmatt from Alay, and I have what is truthfully a lance.”

“Sall Smith, Bilingse, staff.”

“Everyone. This is Wymar Williams, chosen from the far area of Mami holding a javelin.”

“Paxford Heder of Distric, with... a bat.”

“My name is Shelly from Concor. In my hand there’s a grappling hook.”

“I happen to be Guru Thompson, all the way from Orthland. I was given a musket thing.”

“Okay, I am Dia, raised from Innipeg, with an *evil* spell book.”

Rosco knew it was about time to say his name after the several listings of others.

“Rosco Tortman. I came from Hicagoh and own a sword.”

A seemingly brief silence passed until the last chosen one spoke. “Z, just Z, born in the hidden Nuoleans with fist gloves.

After the introductions, all of them went back to their socializing once more.

Chapter Four: Ambush of the Planelands

Thirteen figures merged out of the hills and applied their superior artifacts. As warm as the skies were, the so-called planelands rot from the ground up.

Nat, as tall as he was, sought about three miles of less than well-vegetated grass. The group had decided about going to the exact place of the incident about one week ago. And they were really confident...

The endless amounts of walking on foot or horse had to stop. As a result, Dia had to act fast.

"My feet are cramping! Let's take a *long* break!" Dia lied. Soon after, everyone laid down.

"Are you sure they're cramping?" Erb asked as he bashed Dia's feet.

Actually, it could be a muscle spasm, or a charlie horse, or a contraction." Britt pedantically informed.

"Who cares, guys! Let's find the flopping capsule already!" Sall shouted.

"It could have been worse," Shelly muttered. "Much worse."

"You could've done that any better," Mally spoke out.

Hours later, it happened to be twilight. Just behind Rosco, a dark wolf pummeled on him. In an instant, the others raised their defenses. Nat rushed to the animal. His feet controlled balance as he swang his axe. The wolf dodged soon after the "THUD!" It sprang high on the body of Paxford. Cries erupted on him. No need of the

bat. He struggled to break free of the embracement. Behind the wolf, Dia roasted the surfaces.

“Everyone, attack the other Deuclaws!” Rosco hollered.

Erb’s horse realized that the swarm of Deuclaws had trampled aside. Shelly and Berth swiftly intimidated and stabbed them. Clashing a grunts struck Wymar. The teen retorted with a slam to the leg. Wymar helped Paxford. As Paxford fled, Z and Britt tossed the injured beasts. Britt smacked each of their torsos. After the torturing, Rosco silently envisioned a scene.

Bulky, armored men were shoved by the forces of nature. Whimpers followed after. Thousands of surrounding structures were perished. Petrified “warriors” sunk into the earth, never to be seen again.

The enigmatic moment had diminished within Rosco’s mindscape. What was left to see were fleshed-out monsters. The Deuclaws were soon executed. Probably extinct, Rosco thought.

“Who do you think you are, running away like that?” Erb shifted.

“This... is too much for me!” Paxford shrieked.

“Go on, you wouldn’t handle the truth, phony!” Erb pointed out.

Paxford, the liar, ran far away towards the nothingness. Just in front of the duodectet, shined the small village of Innipeg. According to Dia, she remembered a certain combat barrack; it was to *die* for.

Chapter Five: Rainfall

Rosco spat and regained strength with Humphrey. So far, the eleven other peers were replenished with the one and only, Sall's staff. For Sall, it took about one hour to restore a bruise and one entire day to restore a major injury. She can't restore her patience. For the half of the whole walking, the pattern was like this: walk, attack, chat, break, staff. Rinse and repeat.

The extrinsic climate wasn't hot at this time, it was the time of the monsoons. Wymar courageously resisted the raindrops in a flash, although Sall, Rosco and Erb were irritated.

"You know what's true?" Mally rose in her voice. "When it rains, it pours!"

"Mally, rain doesn't actually pour, it drops." Britt corrected.

"Okay, I'm sick of all this chatter!" Rosco erupted.

"It's pissing us off!" ranted Berth. She had the same stupid ideologies of Rosco. Berth fumbled with her bag to protect herself from the wetness. Almost immediately, she heard someone speak in a low tone.

"I've got it!" Guru held up a stick and some outstretched rubber. "This can really help us!"

"What is it and what does it do?" asked Erb in curiosity.

"How funny. We really *know* what it is," Dia sarcastically sighed.

"Stop! I think Guru boy has something," Nat replied. Everyone around him put two and two together and...

“Nat’s right!” Berth proclaimed. “The rubber can harness the raindrops to move away. Got any more?”

“Wait a second. How bout’ I can make a big device for all of us to walk in,” Guru explained.

Z, behind Sall, stared at Guru and began to speak after all of the past silence. “I’ll just walk with the rain.”

“I’m going with Guru for this one task,” Shelly squeaked.

Soon after the talk, everyone except Wymar and Z were under the ginormous cover of the gadget.

Just a few steps away led to the tall Flats: a plateau in which its cracks point to doom and distress. Not for Rosco. Rosco bolted with Humphrey and established a running long hop between the two land masses. Erb and his horse followed after him. Then Sall. And then Shelly, Nat, and Britt.

Once everyone was cloud hopping on the cold, rocky surfaces, it was a race to the finish. Shelly frantically practiced her agile strategy while Mally toyed with her sling. Dia’s mourning was drowned out by the loud shouts of joy around her. Eventually, the team ran no further than two miles. ...But half of the team had unfortunately split up due to the festiveness. Britt was the first one to react.

“I believe we’re one mile apart from the other Chosens!” directed Britt.

“Let’s ditch them completely!”

“To my thinking, we should probably locate them, Sall.”

“It’s no use! Let’s ru-

“It’s someone!” yelled Rosco.

The five teens turned around to meet a person of a different kind.

Chapter Six: Order of the Tribe

Suddenly, a group of strange, peculiar people rose from the top of a mountainside. Each man wore clothing out of creatures, to unrecognizable to speculate. One tall aged man stepped in front of all of the others. He spoke in a different tone unlike no other person in Columbia. He held an accent.

“Who are you fellows?” one of them questioned.

Britt automatically responded. “We’re Britt, Erb, Dia, Sall, Rosco, and Berth. We’re chosen by our Columbian ancestor of Distric.”

“I am Sage and we are the Eternal Tribe, separate from your people. Ancient minds bred us to explore the farthest reaches of Olde Earth.

“Do you know where a capsule is?” quickly insisted Sall.

“Oh no. May it be protected by the race of the Shrewd. It is of a major dominant species almost of evolved evil incarnate form.”

“Well, do you know what they sort of look like?” commented a contemplated Berth.

“They resemble a bluish, slouched gargoye,” spoke another member.

“If any of you slay their kind, may yourself be called a hero,” the wise speaker stated. “Since not anyone interfered with them for centuries.”

“Could you guide us there?” Rosco impatiently begged. Ten seconds passed.

“Sure,” a stout one affirmed. “Should call me Scout.”

Subsequently, Scout led the six Chosens to a place called Rush Pass.

“That was so short,” Dia yawned.

“Could you stop being so weary?” Rosco replied angrily. Alas, life’s a beach. He twisted his neck. “Berth, just stop wood carving.”

On the other side, Scout knew about the newfound attitude. As angry as the muttering was at that point, Scout remained unperturbed.

At the center of the mountains, there was a tiny opening protruding the landscape. How strange. Sall quietly escaped like a snake. The teenagers spotted a small hut with a figure inside. It was Sage.

Sage must have snuck past the group, Rosco thought. Sneaking or not, it shocked him. Rosco faced Sage as he opened his mouth.

“You fools, tedious you might think, but nobility you still lose,” a shaking Sage laughed.

“We’re never fools, we’re always jerks!” Britt called.

“You still need to lower your correcting habits...” directed Sage. “...and you, blonde lady. Your cleverness piques us.”

Berth reddened quick. “Like you’ve known *now!*”

Erb faced Sage like he was crazy. “What’s going on?”

The wrinkled person stepped out of the cabin. “You, Erb, have so much to learn. And with so much time.”

Confused and disoriented, Rosco, Dia, Britt, Berth, Sall, and Erb entered the shack holding more curiosity than ever.

Chapter Seven: Eternal Fire

Inside the small house, pots and pans were scattered on the tables. Blue faded walls were ripped on all sides. The holes shining on the ceiling didn't help the ominousness. A small couch was wide enough to comfort the Chosens. Immediately the man called Sage sat in the bed.

"I'm glad you would like to hear about a story."

Rosco tilted his face in concern. "What, huh? A story?"

"It began like this: eons ago, there was this lonely woman. She was given a bright torch made of everlasting fire. The giver of the torch, wiselike, explained that the torch has to be of *one* use, or it would burn out. The flabbergasted woman had two general options: use the torch for burning animals, or for light. She ambiguously used the flames for light. The torch giver knew she took the simple way, for there was always another way to eat. Years hence, the same giver did the same thing to a young man. The man chose combat in the torch's use, for there was change. But the path of the torch which was not chosen, was the one of balancing both war and peace."

"Great story!" Dia snarled in sarcasm.

"You see, you need to maintain your specialties here. After a year, you will learn the untold way. The torch."

Chapter Eight: Incidental Pathways

For weeks, the other Chosens wandered past the mountains and wildlands. A flowing river stopped them on their path.

“We just can’t wait here! This river is taunting us!” blasted Wymar. The other group could’ve been behind them in a long shot, when in reality they were far behind. Wymar came to his senses and began to think. He thought of Nat’s anticipation, Guru’s brilliance, and Shelly’s tactile manner. Mally and Z wouldn’t help at all. He gazed at Guru as he began to determine how deep the water was.

“Everyone! I just want you to know that I have a plan!” Guru grinned.

His hand was away from the river and into his bag. Guru grabbed out a coiled pieces of silver, known as springs. This time Nat could see with the arrangement that it was a bit bigger than his last contraption. Nat wobbled and tilted in vertigo when he started to see Guru’s struggle. Nat realized how Guru had been helping them since the start. Now it was his turn to find new ways. He sprinted to find tall, long sticks all over the landscape. Sap from most of the trees were sticky enough for attachment. Nat started to work continuously for his prime goal.

Shelly, the frantic fanatic of the team, dug certain trails within her already bare hands. She had once asked for Z’s gloves, but her equipment were quite different. Minutes later, she had noticeably constructed a miniature lake. Her hands ached. Shelly hoped that the forceful currents would drag the water towards the lake. Soon enough, her plan was far from impossible.

Mally worked with her own material. Not just her already comedic material, but real strategies. It was hard for her jokery to not interrupt her. How ironic. Her teen legs couldn't catch up with her arms. It took a little more time to view *all* of her surroundings when she finally saw it. A raft. Mally came close to Wymar to spread the news.

"There's a raft and I laughed!"

"You got to be kidding me, with your humor and all," Wymar turned.

"It's actually there!" Nat responded. His driftwood was in place.

"Shucks! Guess it's time to carry on," Guru remarked.

The Chosens were aboard a nice and stiff wooden raft. It was most definitely slower than a white winger. Winds from the distant south came across the raft and hovered beneath the steady rudders.

Z was alert to recognize the reminiscence of the silent waters. It controlled the minds of the only safe sound there was. Z ducked to notice something was beneath the river. A Krock. It was Z's turn to help. She grabbed her gloves out of her black hair and, strangely enough, whacked the Krock. The group applauded for her in the same direction. She was glad to find out her amazing talents of foreseeing.

During the evening, Nat spotted the rumored area. The same area from where the trouble began. This place was Hall's Pit. Wymar reached into the damp leaves to view the wrecked huts, circled in a manner of manipulation. There was absolutely no sign of Rosco, or any other chosen whatsoever. No. He didn't want to stop here. It was the time to continue. To find success. As much as Rosco at those times, Wymar

believed in him the most. All incidents set aside, it is the moment to find the truth once and for all.

TO BE CONTINUED IN...

THE DRAQINS