

“And that is all I can tell you.”

The big, leather-bound book closed with an air of finality, as if to never again disturb the dust particles that resettled on the ancient, worn cover. Derwan’s voice, harsh and abrupt, carried all the weight of his rank and age, and, bending slightly forward, his whole position radiated an intense dislike of the situation.

The silence between the two dimly illuminated figures lengthened, permeating the ancient Hall of Priests and weaving intricate patterns of potential words and meanings through the thick stone columns and heavy torch holders. Not all the candles were still burning; some had melted into wax pools whilst others were about to extinguish, flickering wildly and releasing puffs of smoke into the blackness above. Then the stillness became heavy, and Derwan started to feel strained.

Nobody but the woman opposite him held the right or rank to ask for such a lengthy audience, nobody had ever dared to give him, the high priest, the position to wait patiently for a dismissal, and it was unheard of that anybody had ever dared to go back in time and request insight into the *Book of Justice*.