

When We Were Gods
by Erin Wade

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CHAPTER 1

The Year of Our Lord 1692

Six-year-old Destiny Sinclair watched in horror as the crowd burned her dead mother at the stake. She knew it was just a matter of time before they turned their ignorance toward her and started screaming, “Burn the witch’s spawn.” She hid under a trapper’s pile of animal skins in the back of a rickety wooden wagon and willed the rain to fall and lightning to strike the heathens. They began wailing and grinding their teeth as shafts of fire fell from the heavens spearing the infidels causing them to burst into flames. She didn’t need to see them; she only needed to visualize them in her mind’s eye and move her hands directing her fury.

The storm subsided and the lighting ceased. The smell of burning flesh filled the air. Exhausted, Destiny fell asleep under the foul-smelling skins as the wagon creaked away from the carnage of Salem.

##

The Year of Our Lord 2026

“Dr. Sinclair to the emergency room. Dr. Sinclair to the emergency room,” the announcement repeatedly filled the hospital.

Destiny ran down the hallway and into the scrub area where she sanitized her hands and arms then slipped into sterile gloves.

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“Details,” she demanded as she entered the operating room.

“Four-car pileup on I-35E,” the nurse reported. “This woman is the most severely injured. Her left hand is hanging on by a strip of skin, and her back is broken. Her spleen is ruptured and must be removed.”

Destiny studied the woman’s X-rays. “You didn’t mention that she is slightly pregnant.”

“Holy crap,” the nurse exclaimed. “I missed that.”

“About six-weeks,” Destiny grunted. “We will do what we can. Remember, saving the mother is our main concern. I believe the baby is already dead.”

“This is one hell of a way to begin the week,” the nurse mumbled. “Mondays are almost as bad as Saturdays and hopped-up thugs with their Saturday night specials.”

##

Four hours later, Destiny peeled off her gloves and slowly walked to her office. She sat down at her desk and cried. She had to get control of her own emotions before she spoke with the woman’s family.

To her surprise her office door opened and a stunning brunette woman wearing a clerical collar entered the room. “Dr. Sinclair, may I pray for the patient you just operated on?” she asked.

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“Why not,” Destiny mumbled. “I’ve done all I can do. Honestly, prayer is her only hope.”

Destiny led the woman to the intensive care unit and gasped when she realized her patient was covered head to toe in a sheet. “Is she dead?”

“Yes ma’am,” a nurse replied. “She just stopped breathing. You need to call the time of death.”

“May I pray over her?” the vicar asked.

Destiny walked with her to the hospital bed.

“Please, stand on the other side of the bed and hold her hand,” the vicar instructed.

Numb to the soul, Destiny followed her orders and took the still warm hand of her dead patient.

The vicar removed the sheet from the woman’s face, took her motionless hand, and clasped Destiny’s free hand forming a circle of contact. She began whispering words Sinclair didn’t understand. The limp hand she was holding tightened around her fingers. “She’s alive,” Destiny gasped softly.

The vicar continued to whisper a strange language as the patient’s grip increased. She moved her legs and moaned softly.

“Her spinal cord was severed and vertebra crushed,” Destiny muttered. “She shouldn’t be able to move her legs.”

The patient’s eyes snapped open, and Destiny jumped back but held her hand tightly.

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The vicar said, “Amen,” then gently touched the woman’s face with her fingertips. “Rest my child.”

“Nurse, I need someone with this patient,” Destiny yelled as the vicar stepped back, and the nurses surrounded the patient, softly talking in disbelief.

Destiny examined the woman from head to toe. She was completely healed. She placed her stethoscope on the woman’s stomach and listened in disbelief to the heartbeat of the fetus that was dead when the woman entered the hospital.

She hurried to the waiting room to tell the family the woman was okay. “We will keep her overnight for observation and release her tomorrow,” she said.

The woman’s husband burst into tears. “Our baby? How is our baby?”

“The baby is fine.” Destiny looked around the room for the vicar. “Where did the vicar go?” she queried those around her.

“We haven’t seen a vicar,” the husband replied.

“A woman dressed in black wearing a clerical collar,” Destiny insisted.

“You are the first person to walk through that door in hours,” the husband declared.

##

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Destiny hurried to the hospital chapel. Surely a vicar would go there to pray after performing a miracle. “Yes, she had performed a miracle,” Destiny mumbled out loud.

The chapel was empty. Destiny inhaled deeply controlling the anguish that was rising in her. She had to find the woman. She had to know her. She was a healer. Perhaps, she was like Destiny, endowed with magic.

##

Later that night, after showering and drinking a glass of wine, Destiny went over her brief encounter with the healer. She had lived in many countries over many centuries, wandering alone. Occasionally she had used her gifts, but she had never interfered with death. She had never pulled someone back from the other side. She could control the four elements: earth, wind, fire, and water, but she had no control over life and death. That wasn't entirely true, she could kill, but she couldn't bring someone back from the dead. That was a gift reserved for the pure of heart and Destiny was definitely not pure. “What game is the gods playing with me now,” she muttered into the darkness.

Destiny vowed to make it her mission to find the beautiful dark-haired vicar. Surely she was affiliated with some church in the area, but Destiny didn't even know her name and she had never seen her at the hospital before.

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CHAPTER 2

Sacred Heart Hospital Director Doctor Whitney Langley reread the report left for her by the head nurse of the night shift then raised her gray eyes to stare at the woman. “You are positive the patient was dead?” she asked Helen Roper.

“Swear to God,” Helen declared raising her right hand. “Ask the other’s who assisted with the operation. When Dr. Sinclair finished the surgery the patient’s vitals were fading fast. We were putting her on life support when her heart stopped beating. We couldn’t revive her. Also, her hand was severed from her wrist and Dr. Sinclair had sutured it back on, but it never moved.

“After the surgery, Dr. Sinclair went to her office then returned to check on the patient who was already dead. I asked her to call the time of death. Instead, she began praying for the patient. The woman was completely healed. She didn’t have a scratch on her.”

“Would you ask Dr. Sinclair to come visit me when she comes in today?” Whitney requested.

Helen nodded then left the room. She hoped Destiny had a good answer to how her patient was now in perfect condition and had already checked out of the hospital.

##

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“Who is responsible for staffing the hospital chapel?” Destiny asked the woman at the hospital information desk.

“Chaplain Daniel Criss,” the woman replied. “He is in his office now. Suite 110 just past the chapel.”

Destiny followed the long hallway that led to suite 110 and knocked on the door.

“Come in,” a deep male voice invited.

“I am Dr. Destiny Sinclair,” Destiny introduced herself.

Chaplain Criss rose from his chair and shook her hand. “You are the talk of the hospital today,” he said as he motioned for her to sit down. “I understand you worked a miracle last night.”

“I believe someone on your staff worked the miracle,” Destiny replied. “I’m trying to locate her.”

“Her?” Criss scowled.

“Yes, a priest or a vicar. A beautiful brunette wearing a clerical collar and a black suit.”

“I have no women on my staff,” Criss admitted. “Only men volunteering from the various churches in the community.”

Destiny shook her head. “I did everything I could for the patient, but she died. A tall, slender, dark-haired woman approached me asking to pray over my patient who was already dead. We held hands and she prayed in a language I didn’t understand. The patient opened her eyes, and she was completely healed.”

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“It is my understanding that you alone healed the woman,” Criss replied. “The nurse said you were the only one praying for the patient when she revived. No one saw anyone else with you.”

Destiny closed her eyes. “I don’t do miracles,” she said slowly. “I have no idea how the patient was completely healed. I just know I didn’t do it. Is it possible the woman was filling in for someone?”

“I will ask,” Criss said, “but I know all the clergy in this town, and I promise you there are no beautiful female priests or vicars.”

“Thank you for your help,” Destiny said standing. “One more thing, are miracles normal happenings in this hospital?”

Chaplain Criss smiled. “I’d like to think so, but truth be told, I’ve never witnessed an honest to God miracle. I was hoping you would be able to enlighten me.”

Destiny shrugged and smiled. “Not today, Chaplain.”

##

“Dr. Langley wants to see you,” Helen Roper informed Destiny. “Just FYI, she grilled me about the patient you raised from the dead last night.”

Destiny scowled, “I didn’t raise anyone from the dead. That is insane.”

“She still wants to talk to you.” Helen insisted.

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“If anyone needs me, I’ll be in her office,” Destiny mumbled, punching the elevator button. As the car creaked its way to the first floor of the hospital, Destiny tried to conjure a story that would explain her dead patient’s miraculous recovery.

She always dreaded her exchanges with the hospital director. Dr. Langley seemed to be on a crusade to uncover some deep, dark secret from her past. It was true that Destiny had secrets that would make one’s heart stop beating and she had incinerated her fair share of evil beings over the centuries, but only those who were a threat to others. Most of all Dr. Langley was obsessed with Destiny’s youthful appearance.

Although she was an eternal being, she had stopped aging at thirty years old. Something that had forced her to change occupations or locations every twenty years. She loved practicing medicine but had to reinvent her qualifications and prove herself each twenty years to jive with her appearance of a young woman. Those who knew her often teased her about being wise beyond her years. Even Destiny had lost track of the centuries she had walked the earth, but her innocent wide-eyed appearance belied her wisdom and knowledge.

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CHAPTER 3

“Dr. Sinclair, welcome.” Whitney Langley smiled at the gorgeous blonde doctor as she entered her office.

“Helen Roper said you wanted to see me,” Destiny greeted her boss.

“Please sit down,” Whitney instructed. “I wanted to know what happened in your operating theater last night.”

“I stitched together a pregnant woman that had been mangled in an automobile accident.”

“How badly was she injured?” Langley pressed.

“Her injuries were life-threatening,” Destiny replied.

“I understand she died.” Langley blurted.

“I don’t think so.” Destiny chose her words carefully. “I released her this morning.”

Langley scrutinized her young doctor for several minutes. Something that normally made other doctors squirm uncomfortably in their chair, but Destiny seemed unaware that she was being closely examined.

“You are extremely confident and composed for one so young,” Langley noted.

“I’m confident in my surgical skills,” Destiny replied, “but I do not resurrect patients from the dead. That is absurd.”

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“More than one person observed you praying for your patient.”

“I did pray for her. I pray for all my patients,” Destiny insisted. “No surgeon would enter the operating room without asking for assistance from the gods.

“I believe any fairytale suggesting that I have devine powers would cause extreme scrutiny of the hospital and the mental stability of its employees.”

Langley shook her head in agreement. “Consider this matter closed,” she declared, “and congratulations on an excellent job. I am curious though, you said, ‘gods.’ Do you believe in more than one God?”

“Over ten-thousand gods are worshipped around the world by various people. I am willing to accept help from all of them.”

Langley laughed. “I agree, there is no harm in covering all your bases. Have a good day Dr. Sinclair.”

“I have nothing scheduled today,” Destiny informed her superior. “May I take the day off?”

“I think that is an excellent idea,” Whitney agreed. “Take off the rest of the week. I’ll have another doctor cover your emergency room shifts. Hopefully, this will blow over by Monday.”

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CHAPTER 4

Destiny sipped her coffee in the Java Stop and perused her laptop for female clergy in Dallas, Texas. When she found a woman's name, she visited the church's website to see photos of the pastor. Although there were several churches led by women ministers, none of them resembled the breath-taking brunette that had resurrected her dead patient.

"I'll tell you mine if you'll tell me yours," Java Stop owner Mindy Spencer joined her friend at the table in the corner.

"Tell you what?" Destiny scowled.

"What is bothering you. Did you lose a patient or something?"

"Nothing that uncomplicated," Destiny replied.

"You have been making faces at your laptop screen for the past two hours," Mindy pointed out. "Although I do enjoy the many expressions on your lovely face, it does bother me that I haven't seen a smile."

"I'm trying to find a woman."

"Aren't we all," Mindy teased.

Destiny laughed. "She's a member of the clergy. I met her at the hospital, but I didn't get her name."

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“Oh, sweet thing, don’t waste your time on a woman of the clothe. She will only break your heart. You will always play second fiddle to her God.”

“Do I detect the voice of experience in your advice?” Destiny asked.

“Maybe. But seriously don’t get mixed up with a female preacher. They’re complicated.”

“I only want to ask her a question. I don’t want to date her.” Destiny explained.

“What does she look like?”

“Tall, about 5’9” with a glorious mane of long dark hair that touched her shoulders. The most striking thing about her was her piercing Caribbean blue eyes. They were so bright I couldn’t stop looking into them. They were almost hypnotic. She was incredibly beautiful.”

Mindy made the sign of the cross with her index fingers. “Stay away,” she warned. “It sounds as if you are already smitten with her.”

Destiny made a face at her best friend and shook her head. “I’m not smitten with anyone. I need to ask her some questions about a patient. That’s all.”

“If anyone matching that description orders coffee, I will do my best to get her name and phone number,” Mindy promised. “Have you tried checking with the churches?”

“That is what I’ve been doing, but no luck.”

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“Everything is clean and ready for the morning shift,” Mindy’s employee, Lou informed her. “I’m heading home. Don’t stay too late. Things get nasty around here after dark. She waved and pulled the door closed behind her.

“It isn’t quite closing time,” Mindy noted. “You are my only customer. No one orders coffee after 7:00 p.m. Do you want to grab dinner at that new Mexican restaurant down the street?”

“I’d love to.”

Mindy called Destiny’s attention to three thuggish-looking characters loitering outside her coffee shop. “I think I’ll lock the door and close a few minutes early,” she said. “They look like they are up to no good.”

Before Mindy could reach the door, the men burst into the establishment. One of them brandished a pistol. He pointed it at Mindy. “Open the cash register,” he commanded “and no one gets hurt.”

Destiny stood and moved toward the men. It concerned her that they didn’t wear masks or try to hide their identity. That usually meant they didn’t intend to leave behind any witnesses that might identify them.

“You should leave,” Destiny warned them.

“You going to make us, sweet cheeks,” the gunman smirked. “We might take you and your friend into the back room and have some fun.”

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“Don’t say I didn’t give you a chance to run,” Destiny whispered to him as a strong wind blew open the door to the shop. It circled the thugs and blew them into the center of the busy street where a city bus ran over them before it could stop.

“Holy hell, what was that?” Mindy squeaked as Destiny closed the door and locked it.

“One of our famous Texas wind gusts,” Destiny replied. “Let’s go out the back door. It looks like a major traffic jam out front.”

“That gust of wind saved our lives,” Mindy jabbered as they hurried to the Mexican restaurant. “You know they would have killed us. They weren’t even trying to hide their identity. That bus must have smeared them all over the pavement.”

“Could we talk about something else?” Destiny suggested.

“I’m surprised you didn’t try to run out there and save them,” Mindy continued to rattle on. “You being a doctor and all.”

“It will be hours before they get them from under that bus and I have no desire to save criminals.”

By the time they reached the restaurant, news cameras were on the scene filming the accident. “They came from nowhere,” the bus driver declared. “They ran right in front of me. It was like a mass suicide.”

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Police began arriving on the scene and blocked off the street clearing it of traffic so the bus could back up exposing what was left of the thugs.

“One of them has a gun,” an officer called out. “They’re all dead.”

“May we be seated away from the television?” Destiny asked. “We don’t really want to see that gory news coverage while we dine.”

They ordered Margaritas and began talking after the server walked away. “If I were you, I wouldn’t mention the gust of wind,” Destiny advised. “Folks will think you are crazy. I can’t explain it and I’m certain you can’t either. It is best if no one knows the wind blew them out of your coffee shop.”

“I was just thinking the same thing,” Mindy agreed. “It was freaky.”

Destiny nodded and sipped her Margarita.

##

“That was the best Mexican food I’ve eaten in a long time,” Mindy commented as they paid their checks and finished their drinks. “It’s late. Do you want to spend the night at my place tonight?”

“No, I need to get home. Venus gets psychotic when I am away from home too long.”

“Venus knows how to jerk your strings.” Mindy laughed. “She is one smart cat.”

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“She is one of the smartest animals I’ve ever encountered,” Destiny admitted. “She is an excellent judge of character and she adores you.”

“The feeling is mutual,” Mindy said. “She is a sweetheart. Still, I worry about you walking home alone. Please take a cab.”

“My apartment is just six blocks away,” Destiny reminded her. “We can walk together to your apartment then I can walk the additional three blocks alone. I’ll be okay.”

Mindy shrugged and followed her friend out the door. “I wonder if they have cleared the traffic jam in front of my coffee shop,” she worried as they strolled down the brightly lighted street.

“It’s been a couple of hours. I would think so.”

“So, you have the week off from the hospital,” Mindy changed the subject. “What will you do?”

“Some research on medical questions that I have,” Destiny answered. “Just when I think I know it all, something exciting and interesting pops up.”

Mindy giggled, “Like a beautiful blue-eyed brunette?”

“Here we are,” Destiny stopped in front of the doors that led into the lobby of Mindy’s apartment building. “I’ll see you in the morning for coffee.”

Mindy nodded as the building doorman opened the door for her.

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