



# Rise, Celestialism

By Jenny Dee

I woke up to a new world. I actually didn't think I'd wake up after witnessing the meteor fragments headed straight for Earth. Was this how the dinosaurs felt when all they had ever known was vanquished? No, they couldn't have, for none survived the last celestial wrath.

And yet, here I remain. Shell-shocked. Alone, grieving my family who did not survive the impact. Injured, feeling the pain of the cuts and bruises sliced throughout my body. Homeless, digging out from the wreckage of what was once my beautiful house.

How I survived the rubble of my home collapsing all around me, I'll never understand. I should be dead like the rest. But I can walk. Miraculously, no bones are broken, and I am able to move. Should I be grateful that I am alive? I shudder and hold back the devastation that plagues my eyes as all I see around me is death, dismemberment, and destruction.

As I stepped out from the debris from which I'd been sheltered, I was stunned to find armed, uniformed guards patrolling the area. A few—only three—stragglers like myself had been rescued from the wreckage and were walking along the streets, seeking other survivors.

But all they found was me.

None of us knew what to do, so we allowed ourselves to be led by these decisive, in control service people. We boarded a bus, the only information provided to us being that survivors from across the country were being brought together to a centralized location to rebuild our lives.

We followed. I followed, not knowing what else I could do. I wasn't ready to absorb the catastrophe around me or allow the enormity of grief to swallow me. My loved ones were dead. My neighbors were dead. And with only three of us on that bus, it was clear the whole city—maybe even county—was dead. And so I obliged.

Trauma has a way of robbing you of your mental clarity, and you cling to whatever lifeline is tossed to you, hoping for that light that will lead you home.

But as I sat on that bus, hour after hour, the reality of what happened had started to sink in, and I questioned the expediency in which a rescue and revitalization plan was enacted—literally only ten hours after the meteoric catastrophe.

It was uncanny. As if these guards knew exactly what was happening and were ready for it. Down to the very last survivor. It was all so eerily efficient. The organization in which we were gathered. The way in which these fully-gassed buses were deployed all across the country. The fact that there was already a centralized location to take us all to.

What was their master plan? And when were they going to fill us in on it?

I held my tongue, uncertain about the rules when silence ruled. We were afforded one more slight piece of information: that upon hitting our ozone layer, the meteor shattered into thousands of smaller pieces with a trajectory that covered the entire planet. With mainstream communication systems down, there was no way of knowing what had happened overseas, but there was absolute certainty that the United States was obliterated, and there were very few of us left to gather.

The unknown was so much to take in.

We traveled for three days, finally reaching our destination in what was previously known as the state of Virginia. It made sense; if we were to rebuild, we'd need land where there were favorable conditions for agriculture, hunting, and water sources—and as some kind of luck would have it, the area wasn't completely destroyed. Here lied our hope.

But hope did not look promising. Technology was gone—no electricity, cell service, or even radio communications—outside of the systems the guards seemed to have in place. Food was limited to whatever pilfered canned goods we found in abandoned storefronts along the way. Now that the bus would no longer be our shelter, we were looking at dodgy building structures that could quite possibly collapse in an instant.

And yet, the guards and what appeared to be a leadership team, were waiting for us as buses from all over pulled in and waited for the signal to release their passengers.

We exited in an orderly fashion, given different colored wristbands based on our birthdays and then assembled by color. By zodiac sign.

Society as we knew it was completely restructured in an instant. As we were soon to learn from our “leaders”—the Twelve Stars—we were now placed into sub-societies that would perform tasks critical to our survival as a whole.

Twelve different groups were responsible for twelve different skills, and we were not to question this obscure plan or the reasoning behind our new societal structure: Celestialism.

The Twelve Stars were also aptly comprised of twelve individuals: one from each astrological sign, to ensure balance of power. There would not be one head of state, but rather a jury-like assembly of directors. These directors were then responsible for managing their groups and reporting back progress as we tried to figure out life post-catastrophe.

Tribe Aries was designated as our hunters, who were to seek out livestock and fish for the entire community. But they weren't merely animal killers for the sake of meat; they were to search far and wide to gather as many surviving animals as they could find—to corral them, care for them, breed them, and ensure their ongoing survival for our travel and sustainability needs.

Tribe Taurus was our builders, tasked with creating safe structures as community shelters. Essentially, they were to build what would become our homes, future stores, schools, and more as we needed—but first, refurbishing an existing structure soundly to become a community home for the 400 or so of us survivors was to be top priority.

Tribe Gemini took on the role of researching potential new technology and communication systems. What natural resources can we find to create electric-type lighting and fuel the few vehicles we had for transportation? How can we communicate amongst each other and recreate an information network? There were to create a clever way of interacting that would bring a semblance of communicative normalcy to our society.

Tribe Cancer served as our community caretakers, supporting society as a whole to create a nurturing environment during this time of uncertainty. They acted in the former roles known as nurses for those requiring medical assistance,

therapists for those seeking mental health, nannies that helped care for the lost children who survived, and chefs who made meals for all.

Tribe Leo became activity planners that brought people together. They worked to establish different groups to appeal to different needs—solace, entertainment, learning. They were tasked with creating sports games to promote physical activity, talent shows for artistic expression, academic challenges for mental stimulation, and other means of engaging people as a community to keep spirits lifted.

Tribe Virgo was tasked with creating sustainable gardens, anything from tending the soil and sourcing and planting seeds to nurturing the crops to eventual harvesting and coordination of ingredient distribution to cooks and healers. They also served as project organizers for other groups when they needed direction on how to best execute the plans.

Tribe Libra became our fair gatherers. They were to source water and ensure its viability and seek out natural foods and herbs until we were able to grow our own, so that we could consume plants, create medicines, and otherwise create beauty within our environment. They also were tasked with establishing a system of checks and balances to ensure the workload among the groups remained equal, and they were counted on to render judgments as occasional disagreements surfaced.

Tribe Scorpio became our source of “law enforcement” to maintain order and obedience. While there was very little need for enforcement in those early days, they did assist in resolving inner-circle disputes, establishing disciplinary systems for those not pulling their weight, and ensuring the curfew was followed for the safety of all.

Tribe Sagittarius was responsible for creating an educational system for the few children that survived, serving as teachers. They also led special interest efforts, including: religion-based and non-denominational prayer groups; geographical exploration expeditions for locating new land, food and resources; and developing adult training and education opportunities to assist those within each sub-group to learn the necessary skills for success.

Tribe Capricorn had to build a brand-new economy system based on bartering, rather than money, since it had now become obsolete. Their objective was to create a system without economic hierarchy and with financial equality. Their structure would create the means from which each group could support each other, and no one group would be without all of the amenities that the others offered.

Tribe Aquarius was designated as the visionaries who supported leadership strategies, seeking ways to bring our past, present, and future together in a way that benefitted all. As natural resistors of this type of structured order, their job was to find ways for the sub-societies to fulfill their duties, while allowing each group to co-exist in harmony as we found new ways of collaborating, sharing resources, and innovating systems for future growth.

Tribe Pisces became our healers, helping us through physical and emotional traumas by creating and administering herbal medicines, using a blend of medical and metaphysical techniques for more serious conditions, and soothing high levels of stress with regular meditation practices.

We all had our roles to fill by day. By night, we were allowed to intermingle, yet our color bands remained strong to keep us identified by our tribe. It worked for a short while, everyone happy to do their part to restore order to a post-apocalyptic country.

But soon, our newfound Celestialism society was tested and the inter-group fighting began. Aries claimed they were the hardest workers because of the physical exertion of the hunting, and Virgos bit back that the daily toiling of the earth was more grueling. Scorpios and Libras disagreed on discipline tactics and fairness of punishment, while Cancers and Pisces argued about who was more mentally exhausted from helping all the sick.

And so the mini-battles raged, with even dissention beginning within our supposed strong Twelve Stars. It was soon decreed that we would no longer cross-interact unless necessary; we'd keep to our day jobs and stay within our sub-societies at night. We were served meals by these strict zodiac tribes. We participated in activities by tribe. We prayed by tribe. We were not even allowed

to procreate with anyone outside of our sign, and we could only do so 9 months before our birthday's time period, in an attempt to create purer versions of each energy going forward.

The only cross-tribe contact allowed was when healing was administered or we had to be instructed as a group on new rules, systems, or skills—and those were monitored by one of the Twelve Stars.

Our system was dysfunctional at best, but's it all we knew anymore. No more fraternization with other signs unless authorized. If a baby was wrongfully conceived or delivered early, that child was removed and placed in its proper tribe. We were no longer able to learn skills or lessons outside of our respective areas; destiny had already decided what our role was the day we were born.

Although led by Twelve Stars, Celestialism became a dictatorship, stripping us of rights we used to know and love. The discipline becoming increasingly stricter for outer circle violations. Days became monotonous, with no room for personal expression. Individualism and diversity were weakening, until all we became were our predictable personalities, and equality was replaced by a new kind of zodiac racism.

Sure, our tasks became perfected within each respected unit, but we were not a society; we were twelve very different societies forced to co-exist without interaction. Instead of protecting each other, crime escalated: theft instead of bartering; fights in the streets; cross-tribe rapes; and many other acts of hate.

It would go on like this for years.

Until one day, rebel leaders from all twelve tribes banded together to overturn the Twelve Stars, rising up in a revolution in the hopes of restoring our new world as the blended society we once knew—but now, with a deeper appreciation for why we must come together and honor each other's differences instead of using them to separate us.