

# PROLOGUE:

JASON--  
WHERE ARE  
YOU GOING?

YOU KNOW THE ONLY REASON  
WE GOT OUT OF SCHOOL TODAY  
WAS SO WE COULD GO TO  
THE VILLAGE SQUARE.



I'M TIRED OF  
GOING TO THE  
SQUARE,  
ALEXANDER.

YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I  
DO THAT NOTHING'S  
EVER ACCOMPLISHED  
THERE.



YEAH, BUT  
THIS TIME IS  
DIFFERENT, JASON.

WHAT'S SO  
DIFFERENT  
ABOUT ANOTHER  
SPEECH?

PROBABLY JUST BRUTUS  
AGAIN-- LECTURING US ON  
PEACE AND HARMONY  
BETWEEN THE SPECIES.



SO WHAT'S  
SO BAD  
ABOUT THAT?

WE'RE FRIENDS,  
AREN'T WE...?

AND AS MY FRIEND  
YOU'RE GOING TO  
HUMOR ME...  
AREN'T YOU?



ALL RIGHT--  
I'LL GO WITH YOU, BUT  
I WANT YOU TO NOTICE  
I'M GRUMBLING ABOUT IT.

WELL, SWALLOW  
YOUR GRUMBLES,  
JASE--

--AND JUST TRY TO TELL ME  
IT WASN'T WORTH COMING  
HERE TO SEE--





# "THE LAWNGIVER"

## CHAPTER 1

WELCOME, CITIZENS OF PEACE.

I HAVE REQUESTED THIS CONGREGATION FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS-- ALL OF THEM *EQUALLY IMPORTANT*. FIRST I WISH TO THANK YOU FOR PLACING FAITH IN MY JUDGEMENT--

--AND FOR ADHERING TO MY DOCTRINES OF COEXISTENCE BETWEEN THE SPECIES.

SECONDLY, I WISH TO REAFFIRM MY *OWN* FAITH IN THOSE DOCTRINES...

WHY DIDN'T YOU *TELL* ME IT WAS THE LAWNGIVER?

IF YOU'D PAID ATTENTION IN *CLASS*...

...FOR IT IS ONLY BY FOLLOWING A ROAD OF *PEACE* THAT WE MAY AVOID ANOTHER *CATAclysm*.



SO LET US REMEMBER THAT *HATE* IS THE *POISON OF THE SOUL*-- AND LET US DRINK THE WINE OF *LOVE* INSTEAD.

FOR, JUST AS THE *QUALITY* OF A WINE CANNOT BE GOVERNED BY THE NATURE OF ITS *FLASK*--



-- SO TOO DO THE QUALITIES WITHIN *ALL* OF US REMAIN SEPARATE FROM OUR PHYSICAL *SHELLS*...

... MEANING THAT WE ARE ALL THE *SAME* --REGARDLESS OF OUR DIFFERING *APPEARANCES*.





NOW I MUST APPRISE YOU OF THE *FINAL* REASON FOR THIS GATHERING...

...A MATTER OF *GRAVE* IMPORTANCE WHICH I HAVE ALREADY NEGLECTED FAR TOO LONG.

UH-OH... HE SOUNDS SERIOUS, JASON...



I CANNOT REVEAL THE *NATURE* OF THIS MATTER... ONLY THAT IT REQUIRES MY *IMMEDIATE* ATTENTION.

AND SO I MUST LEAVE YOU FOR A TIME...

...A TIME WHOSE LENGTH I CANNOT ESTIMATE.

HE CAN'T LEAVE US--!



AND SINCE I CANNOT SAY WHEN I WILL RETURN, I HAVE DELEGATED THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF MY OFFICE TO ANOTHER.

PRESIDING OVER THE VILLAGE IN MY ABSENCE WILL BE BROTHER XAVIER.



XAVIER--?! THE MOST INEPT *BUMBLER* IN HIS WHOLE CABINET!

YOU SAID IT, JASE--

--XAVIER CAN'T EVEN MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THE *WEATHER*.



I AM CONFIDENT YOU WILL PLACE AS MUCH FAITH IN BROTHER XAVIER'S CAPABILITIES AS I HAVE...

...AND *OBEY* WHATEVER MANDATES HE FEELS NECESSARY TO *LEGISLATE*.



AND NOW I LEAVE YOU IN HIS CARE... AND IN *PEACE*.

FAREWELL.

ER... AHM... I SUPPOSE I SHOULD SAY A FEW WORDS ABOUT--

LET'S GET OUT OF HERE, JASE.



HEY-- THERE HE IS ALEX. WHERE COULD HE BE GOING--?

LET'S WAIT HERE A FEW MINUTES AND FOLLOW HIM...





I THINK WE WAITED TOO LONG, JASE-- HE'S OUT OF SIGHT ALREADY.

YEAH-- HE MUST BE IN SOME HURRY.

WONDER WHAT COULD BE SO IMPORTANT THAT HE'D LEAVE SO SUDDENLY...?



CAN YOU SEE HIM, JASON?

NOPE. HE'S GONE, ALL RIGHT... JUST AS MYSTERIOUSLY AS HIS REASONS FOR LEAVING.



BUT I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY HE'D LEAVE NOW-- JUST WHEN TROUBLE'S STARTED BREWING.

AW, THERE YOU GO MAKING MOUNTAINS OUT'VE MOLE-HILLS AGAIN.



HEY-- DO YOU SUPPOSE THE LAWGIVER WENT DOWN THERE?

INTO THE FORBIDDEN ZONE? NOW WHY WOULD HE DO THAT--?

EVERYBODY KNOWS THERE'S NOTHING DOWN THERE BUT ASHES AND RUINS.

DON'T BE SO SURE ABOUT THAT. THERE ARE RUMORS OF MONSTERS LURKING DOWN THERE, YOU KNOW...



THAT'S EASY FOR YOU TO SAY. YOU HAVEN'T FELT THE TENSIONS GROWING...

YOU'RE A CHIMP.

AND PROUD OF IT...

...JUST AS YOU SHOULD BE PROUD TO BE A HUMAN.





... MONSTERS LEFT OVER FROM THE HOLOCAUST-- TO REMIND US OF WHAT COULD HAPPEN IF WE EVER START HATING EACH OTHER AGAIN.

IS THAT THE ONLY REASON YOU DON'T HATE ME, ALEX--?



--BECAUSE THE LAWGIVER SAYS A MONSTER WILL COME AND BITE YOUR HAIRY HEAD OFF?

HEY, BUDDY... YOU'D BETTER EASE THAT CHIP OFF YOUR SHOULDER BEFORE IT TAKES PERMANENT ROOT.

IS THAT THE ONLY REASON YOU TOLERATE ME?

I KNOW I CLOWN AROUND A LOT ABOUT YOU BEING HUMAN, BUT GIVE ME CREDIT FOR THE JOKE, HUH?



WELL SAID, ALEX... AND FORGET WHAT I SAID, OKAY?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT GETS INTO ME SOME-TIMES.

IT'S ALREADY FORGOTTEN, BUDDY.

YEAH, WELL... YOU'VE GOT YOUR HOME, AND MINE'S ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STREAM.

SEE YOU TOMORROW.



DON'T SEE WHY JASON'S SO UPTIGHT LATELY...



...WHEN THERE'S REALLY NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT AT--



OH NO!!!





MOTHER-- WHAT HAPPENED--?!

GORILLAS, ALEX... GORILLAS IN HOODS...



... THEY BURST IN AND BEAT YOUR FATHER...

... CALLED HIM A TRAITOR TO THE APE CAUSE... A HUMAN-LOVER...

BUT... BUT WHY--?!



I DON'T KNOW, ALEX-- THEY JUST KEPT SAYING THAT ALL HUMANS MUST BE SUBJUGATED... OR KILLED...

KILLED--?! I'VE GOT TO WARN JASON--

BUT FATHER...



I'LL STAY WITH HIM, ALEX-- THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO.

GO NOW-- GO AND WARN YOUR HUMAN FRIEND...

... BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.



JASON'S AWFUL LATE TONIGHT, BETH, AND I DIDN'T SEE HIM IN THE SQUARE THIS AFTERNOON...

HOW COULD YOU SEE ANYONE IN THAT CROWD? IT'S A WONDER WE EVEN SAW--



WAIT!

DO YOU HEAR THAT...?













A WOMAN WHO LOVES HER MAN THIS MUCH--

DAVID... OH, PLEASE, DAVID...



-- SHOULD FOLLOW HIM --

-- WHEREVER HE GOES.



LET'S GO -- THERE AREN'T ANY OTHERS HIDING IN HERE.

THEN OUR SOURCE MUST HAVE BEEN MIS-TAKEN WHEN HE SAID THESE TWO HAD A --



"-- SON."

PROBABLY TOO LATE FOR DINNER ALREADY...

...AND WITH NO SCHOOL TODAY, I DON'T EVEN HAVE AN EXCUSE FOR BEING 60--



IT CAN'T BE -- IT JUST CAN'T BE --!

IT'S NOT TRUE -- I KNOW IT'S NOT --



-- TRUE.



NUMB WITH BRUTAL SHOCK, JASON'S MIND FLOODS WITH A CRIMSON HAZE OF LIVID FURY...



THEY'RE DEAD.

AND, BERSERK, HE BOLTS FROM THE CRACKLING PYRE HE ONCE CALLED HOME...



THEY'RE DEAD-- AND THOSE BEASTS KILLED THEM!

BUT THEY WON'T GET AWAY WITH IT--

HE PLUNGES INTO THE FOREST'S MURKY SHADOWS, BENT ON RECKLESS PURSUIT OF THE SWIFTLY RECEDING SILHOUETTES...



I'LL CATCH THEM--! NO MATTER HOW FAR THEY RIDE--

AND THOUGH HE RUNS--



--I'LL CATCH THEM AND I'LL RIP THEM APART WITH MY OWN HANDS!

--AND RUNS UNTIL THE BLOOD POUNDS AT HIS BRAIN--



--HE ULTIMATELY FINDS THAT THE RIDERS HAVE OUTDISTANCED HIM...

GONE-- THE STINKING BEASTS ARE GONE...



... AND THAT HE CAN RUN NO MORE.

END CHAPTER ONE!