

The Agency:

Reviving Resurrection

For those who refused to believe.

Special Thanks

J.W. Price

**Thank you for always believing and pushing me
to keep going.**

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18 years after

Loving Dasia

Chapter 1

WITH ONLY THE crunching of gravel beneath their feet echoing in the dead silence of the night, Marius trailed his Godfather, Chaos, into an abandoned warehouse in some godforsaken backwoods' town hours outside of Atlanta. His father was so not going to be happy about him missing his last three classes. Of course, Chaos had permission to sign him out should an emergency arise; and as usual, no one at St. Anacience ever questioned one of his father's so-called-friends.

The man hadn't said much on the drive down. He'd mumbled a couple of things, something about shit about to hit the fan. He answered a few phone calls, speaking to the people on the other end in a language Marius suspected was Russian. Aside from that, Chaos drove like a convict in a high-speed police chase down the highway, out the city limits, and through counties Marius had only heard about in his local history class.

He'd learned early on when his father had agreed to let him hang out with Chaos doing security work, sometimes it was best not to ask questions. Relying on verbal cues limited one's skills, and so he'd spent many hours studying body language and facial expressions. Like second nature, as they walked, his focus occasionally turned to their surroundings taking in the other abandoned buildings. At one point, Marius thought he caught a glimpse of shadows moving in some of the upper floors and on the roofs, but again he kept his observations to himself.

"I really shouldn't be bringing you here, but we need your help." Chaos swiped a security badge and entered the less run-down building allowing Marius to pass through before securing the door behind him. They stopped just beyond the first set of double doors, and Chaos turned. A worried expression masked his face. "Don't say anything to anyone while we're here unless you have clear instructions from me to do so. Do you understand me?"

"Yes. But what is this..."

“Stop!” Chaos caught himself. Taking a moment to calm down. A lot was at stake here. He stood close to Marius, so no one would overhear him, not that anyone was physically in the hallway; like eyes, hidden ears existed in all Agency buildings. He also strategically placed himself between Marius and the security camera to make sure no one read his lips or Marius’ expression. “I need you to understand me, Marius. This is serious. Under no circumstances are you to acknowledge or respond to anyone you see in this place. Regardless of what anyone says about us, you are a fly on the wall.”

With hands raised in surrender, Marius responded, “I got it.”

“Now is not the time to ask questions. You’ll get your answers when we walk through these doors. Keep your ears and eyes open. Take in everything you see and mentally file it away. You never know how some obscure detail may later be important.”

“Got it,” he said through a clenched jaw. “Don’t speak. Just observe.”

Chaos paused for a moment more in front of the double doors. Once he walked in with the eldest son of the Reaper, all bets were off. Any chance of them taking care of this situation without involving his father was out the door. He slipped two keycards out of his pocket and an extra set of keys.

“If anything goes wrong, get out. This card will open any door in the building, then deactivate the swipe pad behind you.” He handed the keycard and car keys to Marius. “Take the car, find your father and tell him ‘night has fallen.’”

“Night has fallen,” Marius repeated.

“He’ll know what it means.” Chaos released a heavy breath, his eye twitching in the process. “Now, let’s go check out the damage.” He swiped the remaining card and pushed the doors open.

The once silent hallway opened to the roar of people and machinery. The doors and walls had to be sound proof because it took Marius a few moments to adjust to the noise. When he did, he followed Chaos past offices and rooms filled with people dressed in everything from business suits to lab coats. He tried his best not to look like he was watching them, but he caught fleeting glances his way. Those he made eye contact with quickly returned to what they were doing but not before horror cross their faces.

Marius didn’t know how to take the reactions. He suspected it had more to do with his father than him. Still, he couldn’t help wondering if he’d ever be able live outside of his father’s shadow if he did join The Agency.

At the end of the hall, Chaos glanced over his shoulder. Marius gave him a nod of understanding before the man opened the next set of doors. The conversations continued as Chaos walked in, however, the moment Marius crossed the threshold a deathly silence engulfed the room. Marius tried his best not to let the scrutiny cause him to falter. He closed the door, and like a spider claiming its stoop, took up residence in the corner by the door. If he needed to bolt, he’d be out in two steps.

Chaos claimed the seat next to a gray-haired gentleman with years of stress etched into his facial features. Then, as if the son of the Reaper had never stepped into the room, all eyes turned

in the direction of the man at the head of the table and the meeting began.

Marius tried his best to keep up with the ever-changing conversation. Some parts he clearly understood; others remained encrypted. He assumed the person sitting at the head of the table was the former director of The Agency. From his understanding, the current head had been this man's protégé and initially an ideal candidate to take over the position. However, in the last couple of months, some of the decisions coming down from the top alarmed the older agents. This led to calls for a secretly pre-established group to start a ghost internal investigation.

The group again started talking in code. Eventually Marius gave up trying to follow the conversation. Instead, he turned his attention to the individuals sitting at the table. The men and women varied in age though everyone appeared to be no younger than their thirties. He suspected these people were currently involved with or had been in The Agency during the time the former director had been in charge. In addition to the varied age range, the faces vastly differed. Ethnic backgrounds, body types, accents all varied contributing to a mesh of voices that made it difficult to concentrate.

Marius forced himself to inhale deeply as he worked to separate his growing anxiety from that of the people in the room. One downside to the Reaper family curse was being overwhelmed by the emotions of others. His father said Reapers were empaths and occasionally possessed the ability to harness the feelings of others to survive. They hadn't gotten to that lesson yet. One more thing to check with the old man.

"Marius will do it."

The mention of his name tore Marius from his musings. While he'd allowed his mind to wander, the conversation had changed directions. He bit his tongue - so to speak - as he focused on the back of Chaos' head. He wasn't trying to read the man's mind, though, presently, that ability may have offered a level of comfort; rather it was a place to focus while he willed his mind to decipher information.

Chaos continued addressing the group. "I'll make sure he's aware of what he needs to do. As of this moment, he's under my care. I take full responsibility for him."

"Then it's settled." The former director sounded tired and a bit annoyed. "We'll reconvene in the designated location in forty-eight hours."

Marius watched as the former director stood and walked towards him. When he reached the door, the man paused, looking Marius directly in the eyes. He didn't know what, but something inside recognized this man, forcing the Reaper to stir. The man gave a curt nod before exiting; the others followed close behind filing out into the hallway without another word.

When the room was empty, Marius spoke, "What..."

Chaos held up a hand and pointed to the door. "Not hear. Let's go."

Again, they walked through the building, but this time few people remained. Since the room they'd vacated had no windows, Marius didn't know how much time had passed. Based on their arrival time and the fact that the place was almost empty it had to have been a couple of hours.

They drove around for hours before stopping at Chaos' home. Once inside, their discussion

had been brief centering mostly on Marius' observations. Marius stood by as Chaos noted a few things before making calls to follow up on some obscure details. In the end, though, Chaos informed Marius he was to be the reason his father would at the very least hear them out. Chaos omitted the details, supposedly for Marius' safety, but his father needed provocation and what they planned would be just the right motivator. With no further discussion, they hopped back in the car.

"I still don't understand why I have to be a pawn." Marius shifted in his seat trying to find a comfortable spot. They'd once again been on the road for almost an hour, an hour with the unknown nagging at him.

This grand plan bothered Marius, and it wasn't just the playing pawn part. They'd sat in a room with six former and current "consultants" from The Agency for three hours hashing fact from fiction. Two of those hours alone resulted in tossing around implausible conspiracy theories that distracted them from the purpose of the meeting.

"Grimarius," Chaos huffed, "I thought we were past this. It's easiest this way. He'll be mad for a minute but will ultimately understand that the circumstances called for us to enact the plan in this manner." Chaos changed lanes to take the exit. They were only a few miles from the house now.

"Don't do that," Marius snapped at Chaos' condescending tone. "And that sounds like a fancy 'I'm the fall guy if this blows up.'" He crossed his arms pouting like an underaged teenager caught in the liqueur cabinet. The moment he noticed what he'd done he released the posture and stared out the window watching billboards as they continued down the street.

"It's not going blow up. Trust me. And you're not the fall guy. If anything, if this goes bad, he's going to come for me. G drew his line in the sand when he married your mom. Any further dealings with The Agency were over."

Marius pondered his Godfather's words. If his father felt so strongly about no longer dealing with The Agency, then he wondered how his father was going to react when he told him that he wanted to join.

"Tell me again why we're doing this? I mean, why do we have to involve him? Why can't we take care of this on our own?"

Chaos slammed on the brakes sending them both jerking forward. He swerved into a closed gas station and threw the vehicle in park. "Don't do this."

"Do what? You act like my father is the only person who can do this. All those people in the meeting plotting and planning and it all falls on my father's cooperation; cooperation that's not going to come easily; if at all. Seems to me everyone is banking on this. What happens if he flatly refuses?"

"He won't." The words came out short. Definitive.

"Says who? You said it yourself; he doesn't want anything to do with The Agency. Why would this time be different?"

Chaos rubbed the spot between his eyes as he stared out into the night and Marius got the inclination that they'd only given him bits and pieces of what was going on. He suspected the

situation leaked beyond the confinements of the internal workings of The Agency. For a moment, he wondered if there was other intelligence they'd received? Maybe they were trying to verify the validity of the information. He got how the whole Agency thing worked. Things weren't always how they appeared. On a high level, Marius tried to understand how the fate of hundreds, possibly thousands, lay in the hands of his father. Could that be why he had only been privy to specific information related to the potential threat of the decisions that the current head of The Agency posed?

"Look," Chaos faced nearly the spitting image of his best friend. Marius favored G all the way down to those hauntingly grey eyes. He did have Dasia's round face, but that was the only non-Gautreaux physical trait Marius inherited. "We still have some information to confirm before we say for sure the full spectrum of the threat. We don't want to cause an uproar before we've implemented the plan. This needs to follow our protocol."

He knew it. Always the pawn in someone else's game. "Protocol? Now you want to talk about protocol? What kind of organization has protocols that approve forcefully eliminating members? Sounds to me like a group of people who don't like what they see, so they're planning a mutiny."

"Mutiny? Mutiny? Boy, this ain't no damn pirate ship!" So much for maintaining his cool. Marius was pushing and needed reeling in before this fell apart. "If this continues, we're all as good as dead. You best remember you're still an outsider. The Agency has access to technology you couldn't come up with in your wildest dreams. With Agency knowledge held under corrupt leadership the world is as good as dead."

"My bad," Marius relented.

"Yeah. Stick to the plan and let the rest of us worry about the risks."

Chaos again pulled out onto the now empty road.

Marius caught the next words before they spilled from his mouth. If he was serious about becoming an agent patience topped his to-do list. In this day of instant gratification, most newly recruited agents had this drive to know everything from the start and then act on it. He was no different. His father had spoken of the endless hours field agents spent sitting, watching, and waiting.

Marius had a slight advantage in this area only because his father allowed him to do security details. When it came to the critical missions, he was going to have to learn to sit it out and work within the established limits until, at the very least, he'd proven himself.

They came to a stop in front of the Guatreux home security gates. "If I'm busted for late curfew, I'm throwing you under the bus," Marius said.

Chaos entered the code and drove up the winding driveway rounding the main house and stopping in front of the path leading to the front door of the guest house. "You don't have to worry about that. I called hours ago to let them know you were going on a run with me. And you're not that late."

The time on his phone said otherwise. "I guess."

"Once I pull out of here, I'll be out of communication for a couple of days. The agent assigned

to you will make contact sometime tomorrow.”

“Who is it?”

“I’m not at liberty to say,” Chaos blurted attempting to mask the fact the powers that be chose to omit the contact’s name. “When they contact you, regardless of the request, comply. Follow directions even if it is something you normally wouldn’t do. From this moment forward, your every move, every decision is a determining factor to make or break your acceptance into The Agency. Got it?”

As Marius exited the vehicle, he took note of the displeasure Chaos failed to hide in his quick response. “Got it.”

“See you in a few days.”

Marius watched Chaos speed away before glancing at his little piece of paradise. He’d moved into the guest house on the back side of the property on his seventeenth birthday after begging and pleading with his mother. She’d eventually worn his father down on the idea. So far, the living arrangements had worked out well.

He stood outside for a moment looking up into the night sky. A smile inched across his lips as he thought about the nights he and his father spent out here looking at the stars. G always said learning the night sky had saved him many times when he’d been caught out in some remote location with no technology. Constellations guided travelers for centuries providing locations and directions if one understood star placement, hemispheres, and directional navigation. That was sometimes better than any electronic device prone to satellite miscommunication, electromagnetic field disruption or the ever-present dead battery syndrome.

Marius found it amusing he still remembered the lesson. Too much time had passed since they’d done anything like that. That was his fault though. He’d thought he’d outgrown hanging with his dad, but since moving out of the main house and watching as his father spent those precious moments with his siblings, Marius wondered if he was maybe trying to grow up too fast.

Tired, and tired of pondering, he entered the house. Tomorrow was another day, and he had school in the morning. Humpday was over, but he had a test first thing in the morning and a long day of listening to boring teachers lecturing on boring topics. After the excitement of the meeting and the long drive, Maris wasn’t sure he’d be able to sleep, but was ready to give it a try.