

DARK THERMOPYLAE

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“Her power grows, Skylar, can you not feel it?”

“She is not who you think she is.” It was my voice answering Ares, but I saw the two of us as though I was outside my body.

Low-burning torches around the room illuminated a shining floor and black marble walls and I knew where I was; Ares’ palace at Olympos.

I had been there only once before, ten winters ago. Before Ava was born. Before we learnt that I was not the Chosen One as Ares had believed. As I had believed.

“We both know that is not the truth. She may only be almost nine winters old but her power grows. I feel it through every part of my being. It is even hotter and sweeter than what I felt when *your* power began to emerge. It is almost time,” Ares grinned.

“She is too young. You said it yourself; she is not even nine winters old yet. It is too soon.”

“No. We shall see each other again before long,” he laughed. A blinding light flashed and I turned my head, the echo of Ares’ laugh remaining long after he disappeared.