

Chapter 1: The Falling Star

Under the haunting glow of a full moon, the blacksmith watched as a streak of fire tore across the night sky, its brilliance carving a path through the darkness. The air seemed to hold its breath, and for a fleeting moment, the world stood still. Then came the sound—a deep, resonant thrum that seemed to echo from the heavens themselves, followed by a distant impact that rattled the ground beneath his feet.

Compelled by an unshakable curiosity, the blacksmith grabbed a lantern and set out into the night. The cool night air was thick with the scent of charred earth as he trudged across the uneven terrain, his boots sinking into the damp soil. The faint glow of his lantern flickered against the shadows of twisted trees and jagged rocks, guiding him toward the source of the disturbance.

Eventually, he found it—a shallow crater carved into the earth, its edges still smoldering. The ground was scorched black, and tendrils of smoke curled upward, carrying the metallic tang of something unearthly. At the center of the crater lay a rock, unlike anything he had ever seen. It shimmered faintly, its surface pulsing with a deep crimson light that seemed to throb in time with his own heartbeat. The blacksmith stood frozen, mesmerized by the sight, until the heat radiating from the crater snapped him back to reality.

He hurried back to his modest home, retrieving a pair of sturdy iron tongs and a bucket. Returning to the crater, he approached with caution, the heat warming his face as he leaned closer. With a steady hand, he reached into the depression, the tongs clinking softly against the stone as he lifted it free. The rock was warm, almost alive in its heat, and he quickly placed it into the bucket before retreating from the smoldering site.

Back in his workshop, the blacksmith set the rock on his workbench, its pulsating glow casting eerie, shifting shadows across the room. The air felt charged, humming faintly with an energy that seemed to seep into his very bones. He hesitated, his calloused hands hovering over the stone, before finally daring to touch it. It was unlike anything he had ever held—dense yet deceptively light, as though it defied the very laws of nature. The surface was smooth but etched with intricate patterns that shimmered faintly, as if alive with their own inner light.

The crimson glow intensified as he rotated the rock, revealing patches of soft white light that flickered like dying embers beneath its surface. Each pulse of light seemed to breathe life into the patterns, which shifted and swirled like smoke trapped within the stone. It was both mesmerizing and unnerving, a tangible enigma that defied explanation. The blacksmith felt a

shiver run down his spine as he studied the rock, its paradoxical nature challenging everything he thought he knew.

“This,” he muttered, his voice barely above a whisper, “is no ordinary stone.”

As the glow bathed his workshop in its otherworldly light, the blacksmith’s mind raced with possibilities. This was a gift, a material unlike any other—a fragment of the heavens themselves. His gaze drifted to the tools hanging on the walls, their edges glinting faintly in the crimson light. An idea began to take shape, clear and undeniable.

“This,” he said, his voice stronger now, “will make a legendary axe.”