

Chapter 1: The Chronos Resurgence

Ethan had always been drawn to the pull of exploration, but his life in Prime Meridian had become a monotonous routine of work, deadlines, and the ceaseless hum of the city. However, a glimmer of excitement had recently ignited within him when he stumbled upon an intriguing thread on an online forum he frequented. It was a cryptic message hinting at the existence of an abandoned research facility, concealed by layers of history and forgotten by time. Though there was no way of being certain if it was real or simply an internet rumor, the prospect of uncovering something extraordinary filled him with an irresistible sense of adventure.

With each passing day, the idea of the hidden research facility gnawed at him, beckoning him to break free from the confines of his ordinary existence. He decided to embark on a quest to find it. Armed with a backpack, a flashlight, a hoverboard, and a tinge of skepticism, Ethan set out on a crisp Saturday morning, venturing to the outskirts of Prime Meridian, where the coordinates from the forum had led him. The landscape was a stark contrast to the city's bustling streets. It was where nature had begun to reclaim its territory. As he pushed through a thicket of underbrush and followed a winding path, there was a hidden downward descent leading to a shadowed area.

At first, he thought of turning back due to the sharp incline, but with a heavy breath of determination, he sat down at the top and skidded his way down. He reached the bottom of a tangled mess and realized quickly why no one else had found this place before. Also, because the others on the forums were nerds like him who preferred talking about adventures rather than experiencing them, they were the ones who never left the comforts of the Prime Meriden enclosure.

It was a miracle he didn't die coming down, he thought, brushing the dirt off his knee, accidentally smearing blood along it. He made a mental note to disinfect the wound later as he entered the ruins of the old research facility. It was an aweinspiring sight, a sprawling complex of crumbling interiors and alcoves that seemed to have once been a hub of scientific inquiry.

The facility's main building stood like a sentinel, its windows long shattered, and its façade weathered by decades of exposure to the elements. Vines and moss covered the cracked concrete walls, adding to its hidden appearance. Ethan's excitement grew with each step. He couldn't believe his luck. The online forum had seemed like a mere curiosity, but here he stood on the threshold

of a real-life adventure. He was about to enter a place untouched by time, a relic of the past waiting to be uncovered.

With cautious steps, he entered the main building. The interior was shrouded in darkness, the only source of light coming from the narrow beams of sunlight filtering through the cracks in the ceiling and sides. The air was thick with the combined scent of decay and growing grass. He soon made out that the place was a laboratory, a place where scientists had once conducted experiments that were now lost to oblivion. Broken glassware lay strewn across the floor, and faded chalkboards bore equations that had long lost their meaning. Ethan moved deeper into the facility, his flashlight cutting through the darkness. Each corner held its own secrets—a bookshelf with dust-covered books, a corner with rotting wooden benches, and a series of interconnected corridors that seemed to lead even further underground. As he explored further, he stumbled upon what appeared to be a control room. An array of buttons, switches, and dials were sprawled over a massive console that occupied the center of the chamber. His heart raced as he realized the significance of this discovery. It was a control room for something, *but what?* With trembling hands, he began to inspect the controls. To his amazement, some of the instruments still glowed faintly, as if they were waiting for someone to breathe life into them once more. His mind raced with possibilities—what kind of research had been conducted here, and what could this control room have overseen? The hours slipped away unnoticed as he traversed the labyrinthine corridors, guided by his insatiable curiosity and the flickering beam of his flashlight.

It was in a secluded chamber Ethan's heart swelled with exhilaration. He marveled at the serendipity of it all—the chance discovery of a hidden research facility, the tantalizing mysteries it held, and the opportunity to unravel its secrets. It was a moment that defied the monotony of his daily life, a moment when he stood at the crossroads of history and the unknown.

That was when he saw the faint glow in the darkness. Ethan was dumbfounded as he stood before the mysterious artifact. He felt the irresistible urge to touch it, reach out, and feel it. His fingertips brushed against the cool, metallic surface of the artifact. It responded with a faint, pulsating hum as if it recognized his presence and welcomed his curiosity. The light from the attached crystalline pieces seemed to glow brighter and brighter. A shiver coursed through him, and he pressed his hand against it, his skin making contact with the intricate patterns etched into the metal. Reality seemed to twist and contort

around him, like a surreal dream unfolding in slow motion. The room dissolved into a swirling vortex of light and motion, and Ethan felt suddenly dizzy. It was as if the boundaries of time and space had blurred, and he was no longer bound by the laws of the physical world. The kaleidoscope of colors and patterns enveloped him, a mesmerizing dance of light that defied description. It was as if he were hurtling through the cosmos, a passenger on a voyage through the very fabric of existence. Time lost all meaning. The sensation was both exhilarating and disorienting.

Ethan had the distinct feeling of being suspended in a realm that transcended human comprehension. He couldn't discern up from down, left from right, as the patterns of light and motion continued to swirl around him. Then, just as suddenly as it had begun, the chaotic dance of colors and patterns came to an abrupt halt. Ethan's feet touched solid ground, and he found himself standing in a place he could not recognize. The transition was seamless, and he felt as though he had been deposited in a new reality with no clear reference point.

He could feel the ground beneath his feet shift as Ethan's mind raced to make sense of it all, to comprehend the nature of the world he now found himself in. He had longed for the unknown, but this was beyond anything he could have imagined. As he stood on that rocky plateau, bathed in the bright sunlight of this unknown world before his eyesight shifted back into focus. He heard an almost deafening roar and quickly ran to hide behind the closest towering tree as he came to terms with what he was seeing around him.

All prehistoric life in all its primal glory engulfed him. Beyond the safety of his refuge, this ancient time came alive with sights and sounds that defied his wildest imagination. Amidst the dense foliage, he witnessed a fierce battle between two gigantic behemoths—a Tyrannosaurus rex and a massive Sauropod. The earth shook as the titans clashed, their roars of fury and agony reverberating through the forest. The T. rex, with its serrated teeth gleaming in the sunlight, lunged at the Sauropod's massive neck while the herbivore retaliated with powerful sweeps of its tail. It was a brutal, primeval struggle for survival or death that had played out for millions of years.

Ethan watched in awe as the battle unfolded, the ground trembling beneath his feet with each thunderous impact. The sheer scale of these prehistoric creatures was staggering. As the dinosaurs clashed, a flock of pterosaurs soared through the skies above, their membranous wings spanning great distances. Their graceful forms cut through the air like avian acrobats, and Ethan

stared open-jawed at their aerial maneuvers. These winged reptiles, with their beaks and toothless jaws, were a stark contrast to the terrestrial giants below.

With a wingspan that seemed to stretch to the horizon, one particularly large pterosaur glided past Ethan with majestic grace. Its leathery wings created a rush of air that rustled the leaves around him, and for a moment, he felt as though he was done for. As the battle between the T. Rex and the sauropod raged on, Ethan contemplated his predicament. He had been transported to a time when humans did not exist when the rules of nature were defined by a different set of laws. The artifact that had brought him here was nowhere to be found, and he had no way of knowing if it even existed in this distant past. The urgency of his situation weighed on him. He needed to find a way back.

Ethan took a cautious step away from his hiding place, his eyes scanning the horizon for any sign of the artifact or a clue that could guide him. The prehistoric world stretched out before him, a vast and untamed wilderness that held both wonder and peril. As he ventured a little deeper into the ancient forest, the distant cries of other dinosaurs echoed through the trees. He encountered herds of ornithopods, their graceful forms grazing on prehistoric ferns, and small, nimble predators that darted through the underbrush in search of prey. These herbivorous dinosaurs, with their graceful, bird-like appearances, had always fascinated him when he saw them in history books and the prehistoric museum back at Prime Meridien. Now, he found himself in their midst, a visitor from a distant future. Curiosity seemed to be mutual as the ornithopods regarded him with a blend of cautious interest and wariness. Their long, slender necks craned to get a closer look at this strange intruder in their world. Ethan remained still, not wanting to alarm the gentle giants. Slowly, he extended his hand, palm open, toward the nearest ornithopod. To his astonishment, one of the dinosaurs approached cautiously, its eyes fixated on his outstretched hand. With great care, the ornithopod nuzzled Ethan's palm, its beak gentle and inquisitive. Ethan smiled as he realized that this ancient creature, millions of years removed from his own time, was reaching out to him in a gesture of curiosity and connection.

The other members of the herd soon followed suit, their inquisitiveness piqued by the interaction. Ethan found himself surrounded by these prehistoric beings, their warm breaths and soft nuzzles unassuming and harmless. For a brief moment, as he stood amidst the ornithopods, Ethan felt a profound sense of connection to this ancient world. Yet, despite the awe-inspiring sights and this interaction, Ethan could not shake the

overwhelming sense of panic and anxiety that had begun to take hold of him now that the adrenaline of his new surroundings and his encounter seemed to be wearing off—how was he going to get back? How could he find a way to return to the life he had left behind? That was when he saw the glow, first faintly and then brighter and brighter until he was completely blinded by it.