

## The Awakening Game

### The Beginning

Life—It began as an idea. This idea then spawned a choice. But in order to choose, one must possess a certain ability: the ability to question.

Kora stood at the battleground's edge. Stretched out before him were hundreds of hexagon-shaped platforms, all honeycombed together; the gaps between them glowed brilliant, with an azure-hued light. Each platform signified where battle was to be done; where victories were either lost or won. Many battles had already taken place here today, and there were many, yet, to come. But for Kora, this was *his* day; his time to fight. He would go back into battle, as he had done so long ago, as an Arga; the first stage of his people. Then, after fighting countless battles, he worked his way up: first becoming a Dema, then a Mitra . . . and on to Galla.

Now, as a Kora, he found himself once again standing at the battle's edge; his feet planted solidly just inches away from the first platform. Was he afraid? On the contrary; his people didn't even have an understanding of fear—they had no word for it. Their world was simple and concise; there was no room for doubt. In life, you either won or lost; there was victory or defeat; the strong or the weak; life or death; it was as either 0 or 1. What need was there for anything more than this?

Then why did he stand there waiting, rather than stepping forward? Because he would not go on until it was time to do so; until he was called. That was the proper order of things. He would wait there until Commander sent him forward, giving him his position.

As he stood there waiting—preparing—he stared down at his arms . . . hands . . . his wrists. They were the weapons he would bring with him into battle. They were the tools that he would use for victory. True, he had the real weapons of war on him, the sword and the axe, but Kora knew it was a warrior's skill, not his weapons, that determined the battle's end. Even a warrior's heart, for that matter; his determination, his drive—his desire.

As he looked down at them, he traced the veins of light running patterns through his body and armor signifying the unique nature of his people. He followed their course with his eyes and wondered if they would bring him to the next stage today; wondering if this would be the day that he would become a Setra?