

## Ch:3 Within the Abyss

by ~ctuley

Within the Abyss--[The Argos Chronicles]--Title Pending

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It felt like falling. Jason got that empty, hanging feeling one gets in his stomach when riding a roller coaster. Except, in this case, there was no light at the end of the tunnel and all sense of direction was lost. He could not tell up from down. All around him was cold, black, nothingness. Jason began to wonder when this sensation would end. He felt as though he had been in free-fall for hours. But just when Jason was about to despair, he heard the voice.

"Jason Argos," said the voice. It sounded vaguely feminine, yet thunderous and booming all at once. Jason looked all around him but could not get a bearing as to the source of the voice. It had seemed to come suddenly out of nowhere and then everywhere all at once. Jason wondered if he should respond but decided better of it. After all, if this case was all about mistaken identity, he would not falsely incriminate himself by responding to the name that did not belong to him.

There was a long pause. Did the voice want me to say something? Jason thought. After many long moments of silence, Jason began to wonder if his panicked mind was starting to play tricks on him.

"JASON ARGOS!" boomed the voice. The thunderous sound made Jason feel that his brain was on fire and that his ears might explode. Clearly the voice demanded a response. Jason didn't think that he could handle another sound like that. But Jason would still not incriminate himself.

"That is not my name!" shouted Jason. There was another long pause. Jason waited with bated breath for a response to this. After what seemed like hours, a voice was heard once more. This time the voice was much less booming and drastically more effeminate.

"Our records indicate that you were born September 25th, 1986, you were born to your parents Jack and Dianna you broke your arm as a child, and

you have had a total of three serious love interests in your life. Do you deny any of this?" Jason thought for a moment about his number of girlfriends and deemed the statements accurate.

"No..." Jason said.

The voice continued. "If you wish, we could list even more of what our records indicate. We know your favorite foods, Preferred music, the number of hairs on your chest, your first sexual experience...."

"Enough!" shouted Jason.

"Mr. Argos," the voice cut in, "our records are never wrong. We know absolutely everything about you, so please just drop this act so we can get on with your sentencing." At the word 'sentencing' Jason became panicked.

"I am NOT Jason Argos!" Jason shouted. "I have no idea where I am or what I am doing here!" Jason was both panicked and furious at the inquisitions.

"That is simple." The voice responded. "You are here, Mr. Argos, because you foolishly stepped in the path of on-coming vehicle, and you are standing trial for your crime." Jason's eyes widened and his ears perked up at the last statement. Crime? Jason thought. He had never committed a crime in his life.

"What crime?" said Jason. "I have never committed any crime!"

At that moment, a radiant light burst into existence. Its rays were so intense that Jason was forced to shield his eyes. In between squints, he was able to make out a figure at the center of the luminous explosion. He could see no details, only the outline of a feminine figure.

"Your crime..." said the voice. The light slowly dimmed and Jason could now clearly make out the woman's shape. She was adorned in a golden flowing dress that whisked all around her as if she was somehow caught in a windstorm although, there was no air. He could not make out her facial features, however, as she wore a radiant helmet of gold. All he could see of her face was her eyes. They were an intense blue that

resembled fire at its most intense form. This must be the Judge Athene.

..."is murder." she said.

Jason was taken back immediately by this. He was sure that whoever these people were, whatever this place was...it was all wrong. He could never commit such a heinous crime, even if he wanted to, he didn't have the stomach for it. Jason tried to retort to this allegation, but he found himself unable to speak.

"Enough talk," said the woman. "This nonsense is wearing out my patience. We shall now commence your trial."

Jason felt his vocal cords loosen and the sinking sensation he had been feeling the entire time had instantly passed. Jason, being stunned by all the happenings looked around him and realized that his feet had found grounding. As he looked around, he saw a table with a mirror dividing it and a pillar of soft light surrounding it.

"Approach the table," said the woman.

Not wanting to test her patience any more, Jason did as he was told and walked towards the table. As he neared and saw what was on the table, he grew pale. It was a gun.

Jason had never fired a weapon before in his life. He was confused and scarred by its presence.

"This is your trial," said the woman. "What we have learned through time in dealing with criminals is that they will always commit their crime again. If you fail the test, you will prove once and for all that you are who we know you are and you will be sentenced to an eternal death of pain. Pass, and you may yet live. That is all."

And with that the woman was gone.

Jason now stood alone gazing at himself in the mirror. His reflection stared back at him. It was all too overwhelming and confusing for him. Bewildered

by everything, Jason hung his head and let out a long sigh.

"I just don't get it," sighed Jason.

Jason looked up and found that his reflection was now pointing the gun straight at him.

"Isn't it obvious?" his reflection said, "You're going to die here."

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