



# AT THE GARDEN



Unveiling the Secrets of  
Lében's Enchanted Realm

Melissa Allegories



Made possible with support from the Broward County Cultural Division. Melissa Allegories was awarded the Broward County Cultural Division's Artists Support Grant in September 2023, to move forward with her project, "At the Garden." Thus, serving humanity through human ingenuity with the storytelling arts.





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Lében's Enchanted Realm

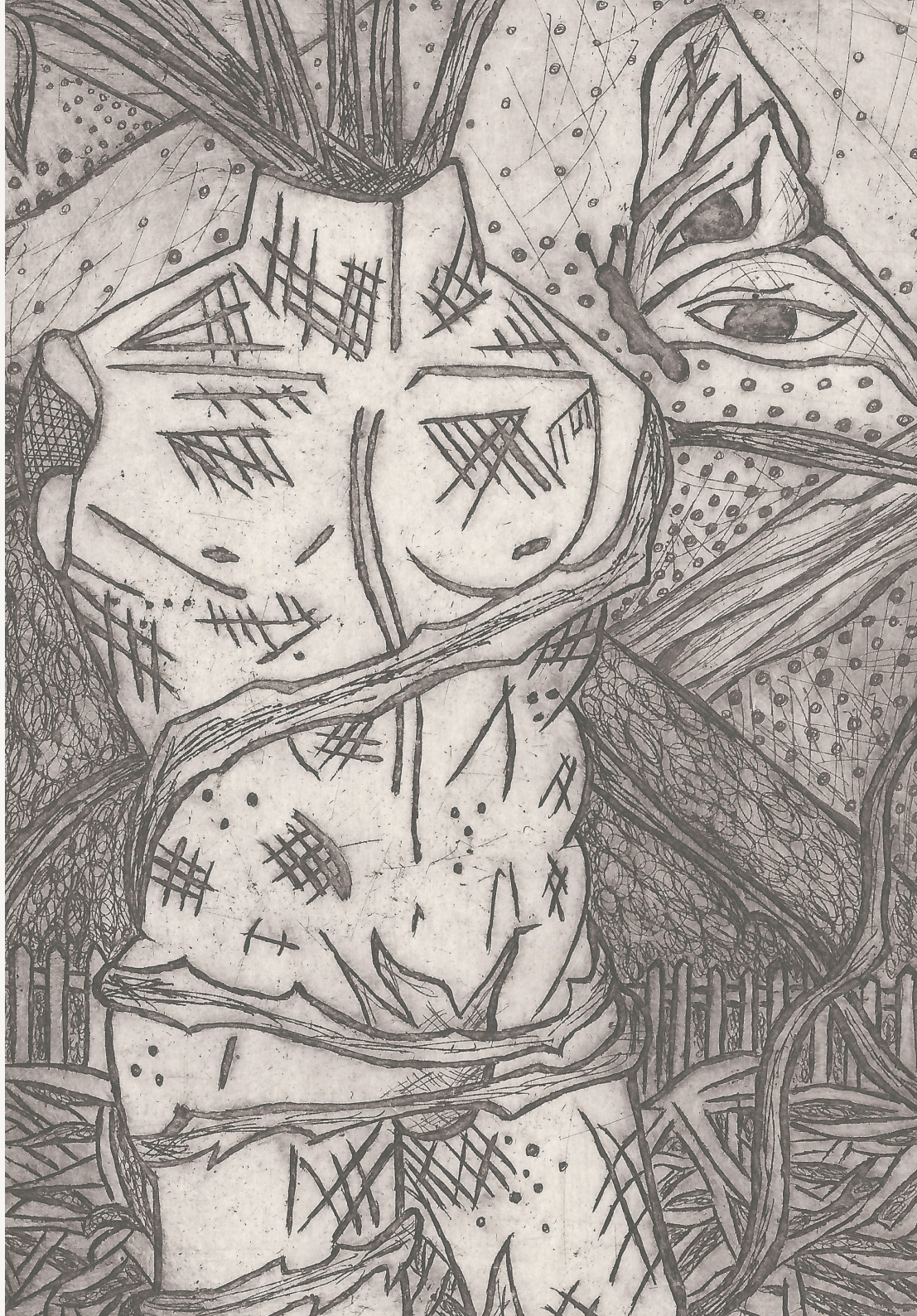
Melissa Allegories

## **Life Is What We Make It, so Let Us Make It WORTHWHILE**

Meet Melissa Allegories, a self-described artist-philosopher and visual writer. Her work, skillfully perceived through the senses, serves a utilitarian function, interconnecting secular, ethical, and logical principles within a fictitious world. Melissa's dedication to serving humanity radiates through her ingenious/original storytelling.

Words become a concoction of emotive and figurative language, fused with imagination. Melissa conjures worlds of poetic beauty and evocative wonder. Through her visual writings, the ethereal and the tangible collide, illustrating the delicate dance between emotion and reason. The boundaries of reality blur, allowing the heart's deepest secrets to find their voice.

**LOVE (WITH TRUTH & CLARITY)  
HOPE (FOR THE GREATER GOOD)  
BELIEVE (IN OUR CAPABILITY)**



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# CHAPTER ONE



# THE IRIS FAMILY:

*Wings of Adversity*



# Chapter I

The sun sank below the horizon, casting Lében into an unending, frigid night. The leaves, once vibrant and alive, surrendered to the inevitable, withering and falling as the trees entered a deep dormancy. The wintry solstice posed the unheavenly threat of starvation. To outlive the requiem (mass of the dead), sacrifices were made among the domesticated precursors. Their fresh meat, preserved for months to come, became a lifeline in the unforgiving seasons. Even the golden eagles hunt sheep. Wool, both a commodity and a natural armor, shielded the golden eagles, ensuring survival through the biting cold of winter and the scorching heat of summer.

Their aging weathered shed bent under the relentless assault of strong, gusty winds. The roof had partially collapsed, just as Ashe, the expectant mother, found herself in the relentless grip of labor. She clung desperately to her sweet Bay, her screams echoing through the storm.

Meanwhile, young Kobus, who was just four years old at the time, clung to his father's other arm in sheer panic. Gladiolus, Bay's father, stood by, his stoic demeanor—a portrayal of calm anticipation—as they awaited the breaking of water.

Soon after, in a rush, Gladiolus soared through the turbulent winds in search of a new shelter. Miles away, shivering in the cold, he reached for his glaive with his right hand, clutching the 5-foot wooden pole with its 18-inch single-edged blade like a cane. With a limp in his step, he made his way toward the pale green double doors of a two-story rustic tree house.

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*"Let me in,"* Gladiolus pleaded in an exhausted voice, his words growing more urgent as he shivered in the cold, wiggling the doorknob. Suddenly, he realized it was open, though the door let out a high-pitched creak.

He entered the house, dragging his feet and shaking uncontrollably. Every inch of his attire was woven from wool. Carefully, he leaned his glaive against the fireplace and began to unwind his thick wool coat. Hidden beneath it was a baby. An audible gasp of relief escaped his lips as he checked to ensure she was safe and still breathing. *"Magnolia!"* he called out, the weight of worry lifting from his shoulders.

Gladiolus removed his long wool coat and folded it into a makeshift nest. Gently, he secured Magnolia within it. He felt lucky to have stumbled upon an abandoned tree house in the winter solstice. His clothing was torn, his wings battered, and frozen shut, but his determination remained unshaken.

When the sun finally rose above the maria, casting the cold seas in a hue reminiscent of wine, all the ice melted from Gladiolus' wings. The rebirth of the sun marked the beginning of lengthening days to come and held the promise of the young eaglet's survival.

A time for healing: Bay and the young eaglet Kobus clung to Ashe, providing immediate care during her postpartum period. The recovery spanned several weeks for both Gladiolus and Ashe before they were reunited at their newfound home.

## THE IRIS FAMILY: WINGS OF ADVERSITY

### SUMMARY

The Iris family confronts adversity, navigating the harsh environment of Lében and finding solace in their familial bonds. Ashe, enduring labor during a winter storm, leads the family to a new-found home, highlighting the strength and resilience required for survival. The nomadic Iris family later seeks refuge in the Garden, a tropical paradise with a rich eco-system.



### PERSONAL GROWTH AND RESILIENCE



# CHAPTER TWO

ROOTS OF  
SANCTUARY:

*A Golden Eagle's Odyssey*





## Chapter I I

The Iris family has always been nomadic, their lives marked by perpetual movement and adaptation. They sought refuge on the skirts of caves spanning 5,600 to 6,200 miles (about 9977.93 km) in a straight line from Lake Baikal to the Yucatan Peninsula. This choice was made in the wake of the tragic burning of the Electric Forest, a place once teeming with life and wonder, populated by the noble and fortitude lion-hybrids. The vibrant and fantastical Electric Forest is illuminated by dandelions, a bioluminescent light source, and bioluminescent sea creatures, fireflies, and stars at night, near the Coral Sea.

Within the caves, free-spoken hybrid blindfish species make their homes, living without fear or favor, and they govern the courts of justice above Lake Baikal. The caves once offered them shelter from the relentless elements of Lében, and in their cool, dark recesses, the family found a temporary sanctuary.

However, they eventually grounded themselves in the Garden, a hidden paradise nestled in the heart of Lében, shortly after the birth of Magnolia on the Winter Solstice. There, they found a place to put down roots, seek solace, and build a life beyond the constant struggles of their nomadic existence. It was not long before Magnolia's sister, Lily Iris, joined their family.

Unlike the harsh Winter Solstice, life in the Garden is more temperate and consistent. Gentle trade winds, ample sunshine, and regular rainfall create a place where the land and sea harmoniously coexist in a tropical paradise of abundance and natural beauty. The emerald-green islands are enveloped by clear waters brimming with vibrant

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marine life and colorful coral reefs, where all forms of life flourish year-round.

Mangroves fringe the islands with their intricate root systems, serving as nurseries for juvenile fish and shelter for various coastal creatures. Houses are perched amidst the sprawling Banyan trees, their labyrinthine canopy of gnarled branches and aerial roots forming a breathtaking metropolis among the treetops. With grace and agility, the golden eagle hybrids navigate this ethereal city in the heavens, where homes are connected by bridges and walkways. The air is alive with laughter, whispers of secrets, and the sweet melodies of songbirds that find refuge amidst the branches.

While Kobus spends the night out with his father Bay, and Ashe, needing much rest, is fast asleep, Grandpa Gladiolus stays up with his grand eaglets, Magnolia, and Lily, to read them a bedtime story titled: "The Story of the Star Child."

Over 14 billion years ago, there was nothing.

*"Nothing, Papa!?"* Magnolia interjected.

Well, there is always something. There was energy, but it was not visible until it was illuminated. Before Lében ever existed, there was only darkness. Even in the darkness, you will find hope.

A boundlessly hot, tiny fireball appeared. Out of pure energy came mass.

Mass and energy became interchangeable.

Every time matter becomes annihilated, it is converted into energy.

Our cosmos converted pure energy into particles of matter.

## ROOTS OF SANCTUARY: A GOLDEN EAGLE'S ODYSSEY

Hope was born 13 billion years ago! The Aether was foggy; the haze trapped the light in the void. Clouds of gas particles filled space, so when the fog lifted, this blinding speck of light came out of it.

The first star was born! That is hope.

In the cosmos, our harmonic system, there's order in chaos. There are cracks in the universe; we call them, Galaxies.

For every tiny crack in the fabric of our universe, a galaxy forms; every galaxy holds a hundred million stars! And no matter what happens, there will always be one less anti-particle in each volume.

Hope will always be the remaining element and the reason for our physical existence.

Before the story concluded, Lily was already fast asleep, her dreams taking her to distant places. Divergent, Magnolia remained the only eaglet in the family who had not yet grown her wings, an unusual and striking occurrence. While most eaglets sprout their wings within their first two years, Magnolia had already reached the age of ten.

Yet, Magnolia was not simply different in her physical development; she possessed a quiet demeanor that hid a vivid imagination. She viewed life as a continual journey of trial and error, a path where she often raised countless questions, seeking self-actualization. Her growth, like a bamboo tree shooting up through enlightenment, had been deliberate and unhurried, as she nurtured the seeds of wisdom deep within herself.

In this subtle moment, she strolled gracefully toward the window flanked by two inviting yellow wooden doors that stood slightly ajar and adorned with elegantly stylized, curvy yellow metal bars. Gently

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resting her hand on the protective barrier, she gazed up at the stars that filled the night sky. In a soft, heartfelt whisper, she uttered a single word, *“Hope.”*

A solitary tear traced a path down Gladiolus' face as he embraced his grand eaglet, understanding the profound depth of her soul. With a voice filled with love and assurance, he responded, *“Yes, dear.”*



# ROOTS OF SANCTUARY: A GOLDEN EAGLE'S ODYSSEY

## SUMMARY

**A**she, in labor, embodies the idea that effective help for others starts with self-care. The family's mutual care during postpartum reflects the importance of cultivating psychologically safe environments. Life blossoms, and bedtime stories unveil the cosmic tale of hope, setting the stage for a unique journey of growth, wisdom, and the pursuit of the greater good.



## SELF-CARE AND INNER STRENGTH



# CHAPTER THREE

A  
KINGDOM'S  
FALL:

ScarCity Saga

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## Chapter III

When Lében appeared from the void, an infinite number of species evolved. However, as time went on, the population was dominated primarily by hybrids: lion-hybrids (within the Electric Forest), eagle-hybrids (at the Garden), blindfish-hybrids (inside the caves), and squid-hybrids (in the deep sea). So, you want to know what happened with the Electric Forest?

Before the Garden, before the Iris family sought refuge on the skirts of caves, Grandpa Gladiolus lived next door to his best friend, Leo, one of the most respected, noble, and fortitude lion-hybrids in the kingdom. The kingdom, a rural area, was once a haven of life and wonder. Illuminated by dandelions, a bioluminescent light source, and bioluminescent sea creatures. Fireflies illuminated the night, and stars adorned the sky, creating a mesmerizing spectacle near the radiant Coral Sea.

Leo only had one child, Lena de León, with the most notable and fearless lioness, Forteza León. Leo fell in love with Forteza's green hazel eyes, golden blonde hair, light tan skin, and wide facial features, but most importantly, her fortitude and commitment. Lében, at this time, was considered a utopia, but all of that changed when bad ideas encapsulated the minds of many, and the wisdom of the ancients was lost due to short-lived gratifications which became the new trend.

The Electric Forest, the once thriving and vibrant paradise, was engulfed in flames. Shrouded in smoke, the Electric Forest crumbled into a realm of ashes and despair. The Electric Forest was populated by a small number of lion-hybrids (with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants). The Iris family, with their golden eagle lineage, found

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themselves amid the wreckage and stood as a rare exception amid the tragedy that befell the kingdom. Gladiolus, alongside many, fled the scene, but not everyone made it out alive and has not seen Leo ever since.

Amidst the destruction of the Electric Forest, a tale of malevolence unfolded. Centipede, a figure with a twisted history and a heart consumed by darkness, stood as the orchestrator of this devastating act. Centipede's lineage is traced down to the Chilopod family which lived on the banks of the Electric Forest.

Ignorance Chilopod, Centipede's father, was driven by his survival instinct and resorted to cannibalism; thus, instinctually ate his entire family without thought or consideration. He lived in solitude with his son Centipede Chilopod, but Centipede grew up with fear and one day he killed Ignorance in his sleep.

Centipede, unlike his father, showed indications of conscious awareness. He wanted a family and longed to experience autonomy and a sense of belongingness. He became defensive and violent, resulting in distorted power to fulfill these desires. In a malevolent display, Centipede unleashed destruction upon the forest.

Wickedness became the norm, and those who clung to empathy vowed to pass down their wisdom in hopes of reestablishing what was once lost. Seeking refuge from the oppressive rule of Centipede Man, they carved out an underground sanctuary beneath ScarCity, also known as Caged-City. This clandestine refuge lay hidden, nestled below the very streets where tyranny reigned. Caged-City is found 500 miles distant from the damaged Electric Forest. It takes approximately 33 days (about 1 month) to reach Caged-City from the Electric Forest on foot and about 10 days (about 1 and a half weeks) on horseback, traversing a long, slender terrain or natural bridge/pathway that is

# A KINGDOM'S FALL: SCARCITY SAGA

resilient against the roaring waves.



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## A KINGDOM'S FALL: SCARCITY SAGA

### SUMMARY

The once-thriving Electric Forest succumbs to flames orchestrated by Centipede, a figure consumed by darkness. The narrative explores the consequences of ignorance and distorted power dynamics, loss of wisdom, and the quest for truth and justice, portraying the struggle for survival in a corrupt world. Leo, a lion-hybrid, survives the destruction and later finds himself in ScarCity, a city marked by emotional scars and a malevolent ruler.



### QUESTIONING AND REFLECTION



# CHAPTER FOUR

SHATTERED  
UTOPIA:

A Saga Unveiled





## Chapter IV

Deep in the heart of the city, the lion-hybrid, Leo, stood. *“Where am I? What is this?”* he questioned. He was standing in the middle of gray streets in the pitch-black night sky, where blaring television screens thundered white noise. *“Ouch!”* he uttered. His ears were ringing. Whooshing, hissing, static noise struck him with bittersweet memories of his family in the forest.

Leo recalled the word *“Papa...”* echoing in his ears. His sweet cub, Lena de León, whispered it once again, *“Papa...”*, just before he saw her vanish into the wildfire. Leo the León originated from a small community of lions living in the rural expanse known as the Electric Forest. However, he now stands as one of the rarest species in a diverse city marked by emotional scars.

In a burst of emotion, he vehemently cried, *“No!”* and was consumed by red fury. Tears ran down his blue face, and the white noise from the TV screens caused him to have an excruciating headache.

*“BOING!”* The clock at the peak of the city center tower wallops at midnight, or the zero-point field: the deepest, darkest, and gloomiest quantum of Fermi’s wicked white gaslight. Leo the León was bent down on his knees with his fingers pushed into the sides of his forehead, right before he collapsed.

*“Welcome to the gray days!”* Nurse Nancy greeted Leo as he gradually opened his medium-brown eyes. *“No one is stupid enough to go outside during the gray days. All sources of energy are turned off during the long winter nights. Everyone knows we must gather at the city’s integration temple, which is heated by geothermal energy, opposed to nuclear reactors. Despite this, nuclear reactors are the city’s primary source of energy for*

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*electricity, heating, and industrial purposes,” she giggled.*

His eyes were burning red wars of mercy! The hospital’s fluorescent lighting fixtures are as faint in its luminosity as degenerate dwarf stars. The inferno is not red-hot burning fire; in fact, the inferno is white-cold cooling ice during winter nights. With his bloodshot coffee-brown eyes, he took hold of the delicate nurse Nancy’s gentle hands and pleaded, *“Please get me out of here, Nancy. Please...”*

*“Oh, do not be silly! I am not sure what happened to you because I could not find your tracker, but before you know it, I will have you back up and running with the masses,”* she said, her tone filled with compassion. Leo could hear the screams of others through the walls. One elderly man yelled, *“Aaah! It was not me. I swear!”*

*“Hang on tight,”* the nurse Nancy whispered in a sweet, soft-spoken voice. *“We are short-staffed today, so they will need my help. I will be right back.”* As soon as the nurse left his room, Leo quickly ate the rest of his green coffee beans and mustered up the fortitude to push the small but heavy platform bed against the hospital’s inward door.

He leaped out of the first floor’s window into a pile of yellowish-tinted snow. It was cold, but nothing compared to the zero-point field, or when the eight nuclear power plants – two at each side of the city (north, south, east, and west) – are turned off. Leo tread carefully through the gray shades of shadows in the platinum city; he walked within the bleakest alleys and sauntered behind the filthiest buildings.

What is believed to be all-embracing digital screens and far-reaching conventional billboards of objective coverage, or roots of truth, surrounded ScarCity, a caged-city or zoo, with Centipede Man’s grotesque orange of trickery and black of witchery face saying, *“Mark*

## SHATTERED UTOPIA: A SAGA UNVEILED

*my words, thou who serve, lives!"* Besides, posters were plastered onto ScarCity's walls repeatedly illustrating Centipede Man's three slogans:

**Life is a SCAR CITY. Life is BEGRIME. Life is ORDER.**

Resisting the brainwashing propaganda, Leo grabbed a pedestrian who turned out to be the most obedient fermion, then pulled him into a smoky alleyway. He changed the city's three slogans to describe life:

**Life is a TREE. Life is GOLD. Life is LOVE.**

*"Are you experiencing delirium?"* he asked, then continued to say, *"It has been all over the news! Anyone who is suspected of having a fever and/or believed to be mentally confused should be reported to the Bob-bots at once to prevent any possibility of the virus from spreading."* The gentleman pulled out an old rusty gray tin walkie-talkie from his pocket and tried to send a signal but was not getting a good connection in the narrow passageway between the two buildings which reeked of cigarette stench. Leo panicked but reacted quickly when he saw the golden sign posted behind the man's raven black hat of ill-omen which read:

**EARLY BIRDS' HAPPY HOUR FROM 11 AM TO NOON**

Leo justified his behavior by pointing upward and said, *"No need to worry! I do not have the virus. I just came from the Early Bird Happy Hour special."*

*"That explains!"* The pitch-black raven grinned from ear-to-ear, then introduced himself. *"My name is Sentinel! I am stationed to guard the powerhouse today while the other workers continuously load and deliver our leaders' goods."* The Sentinel tilted his head from side-to-side and blinked twice, then went on to ask, *"Where were you stationed today?"* Without hesitation, Leo quickly replied, *"Well, I am one of those workers loading and delivering goods to the powerhouse today."*

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*“Well, we better go then,”* he continued to smile, *“I’m pretty sure they’ve already started without us!”* Leo pretended to fit in and followed Sentinel to the powerhouse. Before they could be assigned to a higher level of prestige and work elsewhere in the city, the workers were given directions to complete a five-day task. A couple of days after working into the system, Leo planned to overthrow the hierarchical social structure by trying to kill the trickery orange and witchery black centipede man of malice. Blacken with ingrained dirt and oil, collected from the connected land-rig, Leo hid in the shadows of the immense drilling barge and crept into Centipede’s office. The air felt moist, and the room looked dingy.

From behind the old, dusty window drapes which scratched his skin, Leo saw Centipede Man speaking with Captain Fermi. Centipede’s voice corrodes like copper terror, from high-to-low, *“GET GET Ooout.”* With his blue shoes of loyalty, Captain Fermi left. *“He should be filled with glee to leave so soon,”* Leo thought, *“perhaps, he’s eating human waste!”* Centipede’s office at the Powerhouse Oil Company reeked of decomposing fecal matter. Centipede Man clenched his fist and cracked his knuckles, *“Bam! Bam!”*

He smashed a long, juicy earthworm which was as fat as a cow. It tried to slither out of Centipede Man’s salad bowl of mixed living plant tissues, roots, and seeds. Centipede Man lifted and squeezed the worm over his dish. Leo mumbled with his eyes wide open, *“The worm is golden relish. I am starving... Simultaneously, I am disgusted and delighted.”*

Leo looked down at his clock and counted 60 seconds being still before the crude oil bomb he left beneath Centipede’s office in the chamber explodes and kills everyone on the platform including him. Then quickly only 50 seconds remained, but the next 45 seconds felt

## SHATTERED UTOPIA: A SAGA UNVEILED

the longest. Centipede's voice and body sputtered as he cautiously dragged his feet towards the window. "Ha-ha, ha-ha ha..." With a deep and evil laugh, he yanked on the old dusty window drapes and grabbed Leo by his neck. He slightly picked him off the ground and intensely spoke to him, while spitting in his face with his breath as foul as death:

*"You thought you were a clever lion boy! Captain Fermi found that piece of junk long before you knew it. It is nothing compared to what he can do on an atomic level. And Nurse Nancy slipped a tracker in you long before you knew it. Also, there's video surveillance... You are nothing but a street cat!*

*Thanks to you, your bomb is now flying through the sky and heading into the secret Garden (found in the heart of Leben) on the freedom train with just a few stupid patients from the very same hospital you found yourself at. Oh, and another thing... I am sorry about what I did to your family. Ha-ha! No, I am not... Anyone who decides to stand in my way will die! But you... You are just a waste of my time."*

Centipede Man tossed Leo out the window. In the last 5 seconds, he tried to catch his breath and swim to shore. He wanted to live to fight for truth and justice; he wanted to live to create a world that would aim towards the greater good, but he wanted to die because the bomb he designed and detonated is killing innocent people.

By the time he reached the glowing blue shore water, he saw his wife's green hazel eyes, golden blonde hair, light tan skin, and wide facial features. For sure, he thought he was hallucinating this time. Behind her stood a great cathedral which pierced the sunset sky. The lioness whispered, "*The cathedral disappears when the blind man can no longer see the minimalism in architecture.*"

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*“Who’s the blind man?”* Leo inquired.

*“I’m so glad I’ve found you; Centipede doesn’t know everything,”* she declared. *“They are dying because of me... I tried, but I could not kill him. Now they are dying! It is my fault...”* Leo cried. *“I am sorry Leo, but you will have to get a grip if we are going to survive this. It is not your fault... This might hurt a little.”* She slit the backside of his ear.

*“Ouch! Are you a mad woman!?”* Leo exclaimed.

*“Just a little,”* she smiled, *“It is the tracker. Toss it back into the river as far as you can. There are others just like us living underground. Come with me, and we will patch you back up there.”*

*“Our baby... Lena,”* he said in an inquisitive manner.

*“She made it, but she's recovering,”* Forteza said.



# SHATTERED UTOPIA: A SAGA UNVEILED

## SUMMARY

The story unfolds in a city where truth is manipulated, and Leo battles against a malevolent force. Leo's resistance to brainwashing reflects the call to foster innovative thinking and navigate life's challenges. The destruction of the Electric Forest and the rise of ScarCity portray the consequences of distorted power dynamics and the choices made by individuals like Centipede.



SELF-REFLECTION, SOCIETY, AND HUMAN BEHAVIOR

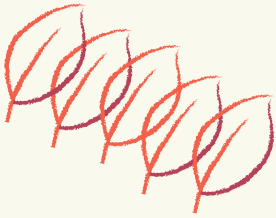


# CHAPTER FIVE



GARDEN  
REVELATIONS:

Love's Awakening and  
Freedom's Echo



GARDEN REVELATIONS:  
LOVE'S AWAKENING AND FREEDOM'S ECHO

## Chapter V

Grandpa Gladiolus gathered his family at the backyard harbor.

*"Grandpa Gladiolus, what made you bring all of us to the backyard harbor today?"* Magnolia, now a young adult, anxiously inquired as she waited to leave the house.

Magnolia had grown into a confident and inquisitive young adult, her once contemplative nature now combined with the wisdom of experience. Her curiosity, once centered on the mysteries of the universe, had expanded to include a profound interest in human relationships. Still without wings, although two tiny impressions of wings magically appeared on her shoulder blades one morning after a vivid dream.

That dream lingered in the recesses of Magnolia's mind like a cryptic puzzle, waiting to be unraveled. In the dream, the world seemed to shift and contort, bending to the whims of an unseen force. Magnolia found herself running through the garden of her subconscious, chased by shadows of fear. As she sprinted, an inexplicable duality unfolded before her eyes — a reflection of herself running away in fear while another version of herself attempted to slow and calm her down.

The scene became surreal as a bridge materialized, connecting the two versions of her existence. Yet, the bridge crumbled under the weight of uncertainty, and both selves plunged into the depths below. In the water, she felt a part of herself was lost forever, while the other ascended like a phoenix, soaring into the sky.

The dream left Magnolia with a haunting sense of revelation; a feeling that hinted at the eventual unveiling of truths yet unknown. She swore no one branded her and insisted that the marking on her

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shoulder blade appeared after the dream. In reality, she even met a guy named Phlox, and hopes that, in time, truth will inevitably prevail.

*“Some guy at the bar the other day talked about why two houses we now occupy were abandoned,”* Grandpa Gladiolus replied. He revealed that it had to do with the abandonment of two houses they now occupied, a story linked to the forest fire that happened many years ago. *“Why?”* Magnolia inquisitively asked.

*“I’m sure we all want to know now, Dad,”* Bay added. Ashe and Kobus nodded in agreement, while Lily just rolled her eyes. Magnolia snickered, and Lily said, *“Okay. Just tell us already.”* As everyone settled down, Gladiolus began recounting the tale. *“Well, neither Lily nor Magnolia was born at the time. And Kobus was just a bud, much too young to remember.”*

*“This is related to the forest fire?”* Ashe injected.

*“Something like that,”* Gladiolus said.

*“Forest fire?”* Kobus asked in bewilderment.

Everyone listened intently, hanging on to every word Grandpa Gladiolus spoke as he continued:

*“The Electric Forest was once the Iris family home, a thriving lion-hybrid community lit with bioluminescent dandelions. The Coral Sea was filled with bioluminescent sea creatures, fireflies illuminated the night, and stars adorned the sky, until it fell victim to a devastating forest fire. Numerous members of our community and our lion companions perished. At the heart of this devastating act was Centipede Chilopod, the successor of Ignorance, and a malevolent figure consumed by darkness.”*

GARDEN REVELATIONS:  
LOVE'S AWAKENING AND FREEDOM'S ECHO

*After Centipede Man wreaked havoc upon the Electric Forest, he built and took rein over a city called Caged-City, also known as ScarCity, due to the imbalance and scarcity it imposes on the land and working hybrids. I am afraid to think about what may have happened to my best friend, Leo, and his wife and daughter, Forteza León, and Lena de León. I have not seen them since the Electric Forest tragedy. The man at the bar told me that a train, so-called The Freedom Train, a potential threat, departed from the Caged-City and headed toward the Garden not too long after the burning of the Electric Forest.*

*Just so you are aware, the Garden holds the big cities on land in Leben, with populations of 50,000 or more golden eagle hybrids. To protect themselves, the residents of the Garden were ordered to activate transparent force fields around their homes. The train collided with a few force fields, causing minimal damage before being repelled above Tiktaalik Harbor. In a dramatic turn of events, the train exploded in the sky and sank to the harbor's bottom. The echoes of freedom's cries reverberated after the explosion of the Freedom Train through the winds of Tiktaalik Harbor. The explosion claimed the lives of everyone aboard, but fortunately, no lives were lost in the Garden.*

*While the force field impact led to minor damage to the two homes in which we currently reside, the force fields were promptly restored. However, the trauma of the incident lingered, prompting some eagles to abandon these two homes which we now call home, and the train can be found somewhere below this harbor in fragments.”*

Magnolia expressed her sorrow over the tragic events and asked permission to head to the hill, where Phlox would meet her later. *“Well, this is tragic! Can I head to the hill now to relax? Phlox said he will meet me there in about an hour, but I would like to get there before he does. I promise I will go diving with you one day, Grandpa,”* Magnolia said with

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compassion.

*“Yes, go, Maggie,” Bay responded and added, “You can all go too; I’ll stay here with your Grandpa Gladiolus for a bit longer.”*

*“Okay, Lily. Let us go back home. I will answer your questions if you have any,” Ashe said. “No questions. But let us go!” Lily said cheerfully.*

*“Are you coming, Kob?” Ashe asked.*

*“Nah. I’d like to stay here with the men of the family a bit longer,” Kobus said confidently. Ashe winked and nodded her head as she walked away.*

As soon as everyone left, Kobus expressed his newfound excitement about his origins in the Electric Forest and his desire to find Leo, *“I did not know I was born in an Electric Forest filled with lion-hybrids. We need to find Leo.”*

*“We can’t do that, son,” Bay said in a calm tone. Grandpa smiled.*

Bay and Grandpa Gladiolus explained the impracticality of such a quest, emphasizing their commitment to the life they had built in the Garden. Bay continued with concern, *“We have a life here to attend now, free from the nomadic life we have lived after the occurrence. Take care of your sisters, son.”*

*“Aw, okay,” Kobus uttered in disappointment. They lay on the shore, gazing at the horizon. Meanwhile, Magnolia reached the top of the hill.*

It felt as though years of old thorns were piercing Magnolia’s ears, drowning out the sweet whispers of the land. Finally, she felt mindful and analytically receptive, a sense of peace washing over her. *“Life can be filled with so much noise. It fills and scatters my brain. When the noise*

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*stops, things do not go pitch black; your eyes open,” she whispered.*

Sometimes, Magnolia needs to listen to the gentle whispers in the wind—the sweet breeze of the land singing rhythms of peace, singing rhythms to set her free.

Amidst the golden eagle hybrids, she observed the bonds of lifelong partnerships built on trust, support, and the sharing of life's joys and burdens. It had always fascinated and secretly stirred longing in Magnolia. Waiting for Phlox, she sat uphill, dreaming. Meanwhile, her heart screamed, beating like an ocean of emotions, steaming... She forever longed for something more.

Surrounded by pink petals, Magnolia Iris slowly lay down on the warm green grass, reminiscing next to a magnolia tree as delicate flowers floated down onto her. Bygone fading static emotions froze in a cloud of mist. The hill, like a secret garden, was a place of solace and love's blossoming. *“Dreamers dream at the garden; yet it is where everything grows with love,”* she thought to herself.

Phlox reached the top of the garden, blushing at how beautiful Magnolia looked. Her voluminous brown curls danced gently in the wind, and her mahogany brown eyes fixed an intense gaze upon him. She stood surrounded by the very flowers she was named after.

The moment she quickly noticed his fair skin and silky, short wavy medium-blown cotton hair, she fell head over heels. Magnolia felt hypnotized by his blue hazel golden eagle eyes, which indiscriminately held love for everyone. Through her dilated pupils, his smile was the brightest hope in the darkest hours. Their eyes met, and her thoughts meandered through the labyrinth of human emotions, exploring the paths of desire, affection, and the ever-elusive balance of temperance.

## MELISSA ALLEGORIES

At the garden, they would learn to embrace pain, burn it as fuel for their journey to come, and create a legacy of love—by turning inwards, being present, and pivoting in and out of their shadow-selves to find balance within and without. They would learn that short-term pleasures would seldom win and how to live with intent to create a life worth living.





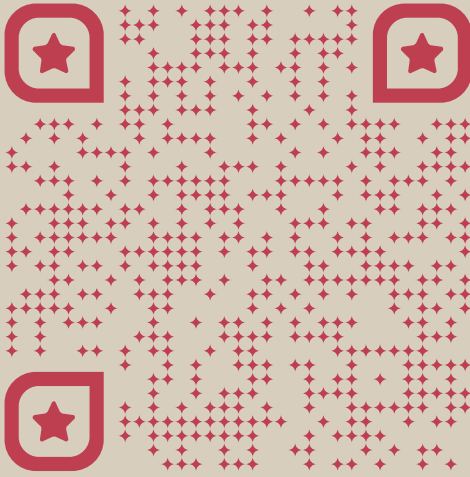
GARDEN REVELATIONS:  
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SUMMARY

Magnolia, now a young adult, grapples with a cryptic dream that marks her shoulders with wings and explores the complexities of love and relationships among golden eagle hybrids. The family gathers as Grandpa Gladiolus reveals the tragic past of the Electric Forest, connecting abandoned homes, the Freedom Train, and the Garden's resilience. Leo's journey from the Electric Forest to Scar-City and Forteza's message about the disappearing cathedral when the blind man cannot see hints at the exploration of the ego, inclusiveness, connectedness, and inter- in the narrative.



EGO, INCLUSIVENESS, AND COLLECTIVE HARMONY



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# AS WITHIN, SO WITHOUT

A captivating narrative inviting readers to explore the depths of Lében. In the intricate world of Lében, the Iris family weaves a tale of resilience, survival, and the pursuit of a better world. Navigating through an unforgiving winter storm, facing malevolent forces, and finding sanctuary in the Garden, their journey is set against cosmic tales and profound questions. From the destruction of the Electric Forest to the scars of ScarCity, the family's odyssey explores themes of the ego, inclusiveness, and the interconnectedness of life.

**Discover life's dance in the magical gardens of  
Lében, a world where hope flickers even in the  
darkest corners.**