

# *THE PALADIN CODE*

BOOK I  
THE MONASTERY  
2<sup>ND</sup> EDITION

AN EPIC SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURE

Bradley C. Heer

FictionFun Publishing

# *THE PALADIN CODE • THE MONASTERY*

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# *THE PALADIN CODE • THE MONASTERY*

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*For Diana Heer  
Of McPherson, Kansas  
My mother, confidant, and best critic.*



*I couldn't have done it without you mom.  
Thank you for everything.*

*To Dad who has always had my back.  
To my editor Cathy whose assistance made this book complete.  
To my beta readers Dawn Heer & Karen Sims  
To family and friends who encouraged me through the years.*

*PROLOGUE*

PALADIA • KOFAR • LIBRIUM • SILVERIA •  
OPERARIA • NOVA • OMEGA

Silvia wasn't ready, but the computer was insistent.

"Ready?" asked LAD's familiar voice. Silvia stepped up to the panel as a holo pad appeared beside the three dimensional image of LAD. "The protocol has been prepared. All I need is your final authorization," intoned the machine in a matter of fact voice.

Silvia stepped up to the terminal to have a cold light inspect her. She trembled as she spoke the codes to LAD.

A soft blue light scanned Silvia's frame reading her biometric signature, studying her DNA. Her usually perfectly manicured up worn hair was now a disheveled tangle falling around her shoulders. It stirred gently in a breeze that was blowing through the small darkened room.

"PALADIA • KOFAR • LIBRIUM • SILVERIA • OPERARIA  
•NOVA • OMEGA"

The group of young faces huddled around her in the dim light. The distant rumble of explosions could be heard as the aftershocks shook underfoot. The smell of smoke and fear hung in the air like poison gas. It had all started so differently.

*CHAPTER I*

Silvia sat up in bed as the morning sunlight crept over the horizon to the east. She arose and crossed the cold stone floor of the castle. *“How could the floors be so cold in a tropical climate?”* she thought. As she walked out on the balcony high up among the towers of the ancient keep, warm sunlight bathed her. A gentle breeze blew across the jungle. It reached out and caressed her cheeks bringing the rich aromas of the tropical forest to her. The archivist of many years sighed at the aches of her body. She was not as limber in the mornings as she used to be. Or during the day for that matter. She looked out across the thick foliage that surrounded the ancient castle-turned-monastery. Mist rose around the nearby rugged mountains pink in the morning light, their jagged peaks marching off into the distance. Soon those peaks would be covered with the snows of winter. Along the lone eastward road lay verdant farmlands that made way to the coastal cities, with their resorts and comfortable living. Nearby, in the west lay the deep valley of the Maw. Two highland mountain chains surrounded the most remote and unexplored territory on the planet. Hints of snow dotted those peaks speaking of the coming winter. She had only been to the Maw once, long ago. Perhaps it was time to visit the friends she had made there.

It was then that Silvia felt it for the first time. A very distant unease, as if something very far away and very threatening was stirring. Silvia let her mind expand beyond herself, letting curiosity take her where it wanted. Her spirit extended out, exploring, traveling where her body could not go. She allowed her mind to follow the unpleasant feeling. It extended to the Maw. She followed it past the mountains, past the oceans, beyond the green planet of Veridian. It was a background noise among the usually quiet stars. Too far away, too distant to locate the source. She broke off her pursuit. Silvia looked up into Veridian’s blue-green sky. It’s too nice a day to have such unpleasant thoughts. Besides, today was the day she would start her sabbatical, long before the others arrived.

## *THE PALADIN CODE • THE MONASTERY*

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Turning for the door, Silvia used her Talent for a quick freshening up. Without pause she put on nondescript traveling clothes that anyone could be seen wearing in any spaceport in the Democratic Worlds. Silvia extended her hand palm open in a come-hither gesture. The silver pin inlaid with a bright turquoise stone sitting on the dressing table leaped through the air to land neatly in her hand. With a twirl and a flourish, her hair was pulled up and then held in place by the silver Giz, her only form of adornment. She donned a traveling cloak, a backpack, and a wide-brimmed hat. As Silvia headed for the door, she picked up her traveling staff. A pair of beaten up old sun goggles dangled from the top. Silvia swept out of the room, already late. Thinking back, she could not remember life without her gifts, before she had become a Paladin. Before she knew the touch of The Eternal. She smiled and strode down the hall, ready for another adventure.

Massive stone walls loomed around Silvia. They were the color of the mountains that surrounded the Monastery; tawny brown streaked with reds, oranges, and the occasional flecks of gold. These structures had been the last part of the magnificent castle to be built for the Emperor in the final days of the Empire. A castle that his father had started. Work proceeded up to the last hours of the Empire. Massive walls faced the approach to the last refuge of the Emperors. They encircled the inner courts each surrounding the other forming several protective barriers. Three in all, they had done their job well since the castle walls had never been breached or conquered. Nestled in the inner walls sat the Imperial house. It was massive, but at the same time, welcoming. Its great spaces inspired awe, beckoning visitors forward into the inner sanctums of the great keep where the royal throne room had stood in all its glory. Beyond that lay many rooms and corridors that at one time had been the Imperial Palace. The Imperial Palace was now the core of the Paladin Monastery.

Back behind the palace was the Great Paladin Library. When it was first built, it had been the Imperial family chapel. A modest building, only three stories tall. Between The Library and the old Palace were the dorms, kitchens and living spaces of the Paladins. Below the central

## *THE PALADIN CODE • THE MONASTERY*

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library, the Paladins had used the secret passages that extended deep into the very roots of the mountains. There were so many secret passages and tunnels that had been built by the Emperors. Silvia had explored many of them but not all of them. The Paladins had been given the palace by the Democratic Worlds to use as their monastery. They had taken it and made it their own. The Imperial rooms had been converted to the purposes of the Paladins who watched over the new democracy and defended it. They had converted the chapel to The Library that kept all the information they had acquired from across the galaxy. A treasure trove of knowledge. Quickly outgrowing the chapel, The Library was extended downward. Great crystals stored information. Deeper still was the power plant that drew energy from the planet's core to power the compound. Silvia was the Chief Librarian, the archivist, and chronicler for the Paladins.

Silvia stepped lightly down a set of steps onto a landing. She turned right toward the wall and pushed. A small, unobtrusive door popped open that hid within the crevices of the stones. As she opened it outside air flowed past her cheeks. Quick as that she was outside, the stone door quietly closing behind her. Far below in the inner core of the Monastery stood The Library of the Paladins. For centuries it had been the repository of accumulated knowledge gathered from across the galaxy. Its records kept the knowledge of whole planets and systems. Their histories were written at length on the pages of The Library's books. Even now data streamed in from the far corners of the galaxy to be sifted through and evaluated. Information deemed worthy of keeping was cataloged and archived. The rest was just so much information to be purged.

In front of Silvia, a walkway stretched along a seam in the roof. It ran straight, then down steps, and around several corners like a stream of stone. It took a circuitous path downward to the Paladin Library. Sometimes covered, sometimes open to the air. Meandering through the roofs and the towers around it. But always true to its purpose which was to arrive at The Library. Silvia hopped up on the side rail of the small wall that ran along the walk. She stepped quickly and lightly so

## *THE PALADIN CODE • THE MONASTERY*

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close to the open air that plunged several hundred feet downward. Silvia looked wistfully at the winding path in need of a quicker route. Hmm, she hadn't taken "The Shortcut" in a long while. Well, it was a beautiful day. Why not? Silvia reached the end of the rail and hopped down onto the roof below. Or more precisely in the ridge of the guttering that defined the corner of the roof. She rode it down, a smile spreading across her face. Gravity took her down the roof and right into the air. Her robes billowed around her as she reveled in the free fall. Her fall was not a plummet but more of a glide with a bit of controlled finesse. With a gentle tilt of her body and a graceful turn of her hands, she swept around one of the spiraling towers, letting the air take her where it willed. Well, where Silvia willed. She called the air currents to her. They swept her along in a gentle dance that kept her aloft for her brief journey winding over roofs and around windows. Finally with a tuck and a roll she landed at a run upon the lawn at the back of The Library. Exultant she looked around to see if anyone had caught a glimpse of her escapade. No one was in sight.

She stepped past the flower beds to a small patio that led to the back doors of The Library. The door opened with a wave of her hand. She just had to slip in and gather a few more things before heading out and off world. Great wooden pillars and beams rose from the wooden floor spreading out to create a forest of branches that supported the roof high above her. Occasionally she passed a display case that held artifacts, many of which she had collected on her expeditions. The maroon carpet kept her footfalls quiet. Staying toward the back of The Library she used the wood carved spiral stairs to access the upper balcony where her office was. The stairway had been created from a single large tree. Its dark wood swirled upward, and intricately carved spindles, leaves, and flowers adorned its sturdy steps. The wood grains were dark and ran deep with rich browns that seem to glow with an inner light. The balcony at the top of the stairs was now a quiet place to sit and read or research. Tucked away at the back was the old door to her office. As she approached it, The Library scanned her and unlocked the door with a slight click.



## *THE PALADIN CODE • THE MONASTERY*

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Silvia slipped quietly into her office through the hidden door in the old choir loft. The door clicked behind her. She was standing in a little entry way. Along the walls were hooks to place coats, hats, and cloaks. She tossed her cloak and hat into the air. They sailed across the space to land neatly on one of the hooks. Sitting in one corner was a stand for umbrellas. In the other stood all kinds of walking sticks. Silvia slipped off her shoes and placed them along the wall of the entryway with several other pairs of boots and shoes. She slipped off her backpack and set it down beside the shoes. A throw rug she had collected from a village on Havatheth covered the floor. It was dyed with natural colors. The design was of the Havatheth greeting ceremony. She loved the fact that the small rug greeted her every time she entered her office.

Silvia walked into the main room. In front of her at the center of the room stood a long farm table. She had bartered for it from one of the lowland farms at an auction. In the center of the table was a rather large fishbowl. Four fancy tailed exotic fish swam in it. Their bright colors sparkled in the morning sun that was pouring through the glass windows on the other side of the room. She could see the mountains beyond the Monastery through those windows. Some of the glass was stained and caused color to splash into the room.

The table was covered with all manner of books and papers. There were also artifacts and fossils from her last expedition. This was where she did her research. There were several papers in various states of completion as she was researching artifacts and cultures.

The walls of the office were covered with shelves from top to bottom and all the way around the room. The only exceptions to this was the large fireplace to her left and behind her desk where a large painting of The Monastery hung. Among the shelves were also scattered plants, art, artifacts and a few living specimens. The little creatures greeted her with chirps and cheeps. They ran to and fro in their comfy homes; a few hopped out and scampered along the shelves to greet her. She gently rubbed the furry chin of the little Chilla that had leapt on her and now sat on her shoulder.

## *THE PALADIN CODE • THE MONASTERY*

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The shelves were filled with books of all sizes, shapes, and colors. Most of them were very old. Several were newer, written by her favorite writers. Those sat just behind her desk. She turned to her right to walk behind her desk and sat down in the well-worn chair. The little Chilla popped down onto the desk and scurried back to its home.

The desk was made from the trunk of a tree from the nearby jungle. Its wood was dark and rich with color. The rings and grains of the ancient wood swept and swirled across the surface. The desk was as filled with objects as the rest of her office was. Papers and drawings were scattered across its surface. Fossils collected on expeditions and petrified wood held the papers in place. There were a few books standing up, held in place by two bookends. She glanced at the spines of the books and wondered if she should take one for reading. There were some of her favorite authors. She glanced at the names briefly: Simons, Gaff, Deserious, Heer, Ooftangi. There was one very ancient small book that she picked up. It was an ancient tome that contained the teachings of the Eternal. It was simply titled *The Book*. She put it back.

Built into the desk was the latest technology. Silvia activated it. Holo projections turned on to show controls on her desk. The projections filled the room with information and data from the Paladin Library's main data flow. She skimmed the feeds briefly as The Library AI analyzed the data stream from across the galaxy.

"Olooshian Tea please," Silvia commanded. Behind her on a counter, a drink dispenser bubbled and hissed as warm honey colored tea streamed into a ceramic mug. Silvia rose from her chair and gestured for holo-screen to follow as she extended her hand to grasp the cup of tea that was floating towards her. She strolled absently across the room to the sitting area. The holo board following obediently along. A couple of comfortable chairs and a small table along with a couch where she had spent many an afternoon napping sat in front of a fireplace. The fire lit as she approached.

It was then that she noticed a hot plate of breakfast sitting on the little table in front of the fireplace. Maria had snuck in and delivered breakfast for Silvia. The cook had known that Silvia would not take the

## *THE PALADIN CODE • THE MONASTERY*

---

time to visit the kitchen to get something to eat. She pulled a chair up and sat down to have some breakfast. Moments later a holographic projection shimmered into view beside the chair.

“Finding anything interesting?” LAD the artificial asked.

Startled, Silvia jumped a little. “What have I told you about knocking before you come in?” Silvia stated sharply. A knocking sound resonated through the chamber three times. The projection looked very pleased with itself.

“Very funny. If you keep this up, I will have you reprogrammed.” threatened Silvia like she had a thousand times before. It was a hollow threat. She enjoyed bickering with The Library AI, LAD.

Silvia’s attention was drawn to one of the corners, where a small aviary sat. The brightly colored birds flew out of it to land on the table near the plate. They lined up politely waiting for crumbs from the pastries Silvia was eating. The birds were joined by other creatures from her menagerie who also waited patiently for their portions.

Silvia tapped the pastery causing crumbs and flakes to fall on the table which were quickly enjoyed by those gathered round. There was no bickering or fighting over the offering. They all knew there would be plenty shared by all. Silvia broke up the rest of the sweet roll and handed it out to her creatures.

Then she took up a fork and ate most of the eggs leaving a few for the bobump that sat waiting for her to finish. It loved Maria’s eggs. Silvia would have to bring back something special for the Paladin cook from her sabbatical she was about to take.

Silvia sat back taking in the ambiance of the office. This was her spot. The one place where she felt most at home. She was ever so grateful to The Eternal for giving it to her.

The AI’s holo shimmered and changed to a butler. “Is there anything else you require?” he said in a most obsequious voice.

“You are amusing. Is there anything of note or interest?” asked Silvia.

## *THE PALADIN CODE • THE MONASTERY*

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The butler, with silver tray in hand, straightened up, “The galaxy is very quiet today ma’am. Nothing of note.”

“Good, the perfect time for a getaway.” Silvia flicked her wrist, and the holo-board disappeared. “I expect you to see to things while I’m away.” The holo projections flickered again, and Silvia’s replica appeared.

“I shall attend to The Library just as you would. In case something does happen of note, where can you be contacted?”

“You can reach me through the usual coded channels. Please begin a level twelve diagnostic and a system-wide complete backup.” Silvia rose from the chair to extend both of her arms outward. The traveling cloak answered her beckoning and flew open to wrap around her. It fluffed up a few times as if settling into just the right place. Next came the hat and backpack, finally her walking staff descended into her grasp. She tapped it a couple of times, and an old book that was sitting on the desk also answered its summons. Silvia plucked it from the air and looked at the small worn tome with a smile. She tucked it into her robes.

“A system-wide backup? You do realize the time that will take. It’s not even the end of the Paladin cycle.” LAD protested.

“Yes, I know how long it will take. The end of the cycle will be upon us soon. So let’s do it now.” She turned to LAD and said, “Call if you need anything, now to catch my ride. I think I will have to take the back way.” With that said she faced the fireplace and walked directly into the flames.

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Far away on the other end of the Galaxy, the curator for the Park of the Emperors walked briskly across the grand plaza, where throngs of people had once gathered on their way to the Imperial Palace, or the Great Temple. Now the plaza was a sea of grass. The Great Temple was covered in trees and had not been entered in centuries. To the north, the jungle had reclaimed the Imperial Fleet’s naval yard, where once, on its vast flat expanse, great ships had arrived and departed. To the south, the

## *THE PALADIN CODE • THE MONASTERY*

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buildings of a bureaucracy too large to imagine lay in ruins. Only the Imperial Congress still stood. Its golden dome still sparkled brightly in the morning sun. This had once been a place of dreams and possibilities. Now it was filled with mysterious echoes of the past.

Marilyn hurried across the grass. She was expecting a distinguished delegation from The Assembly. They were vacationing on Marin, the long-ago capital of the Galactic Empire. She was the archaeologist in charge of the ruins of that once glorious capital. She loved the ruins of the ancient capital, loved her preservation, loved her exploration duties. What she did not enjoy was the burden of giving tours to off-planet dignitaries. There they were, loitering on the steps of the Imperial Congress.

Marilyn welcomed them with a warm smile. A genteel man with graying hair stepped forward. “Hello, I am a representative of the Assembly, August Steel. This is my niece, Mia,” stated August. Mia simply nodded and looked away bored. Steel pointed to a young man standing next to his daughter. “This is our security, Conner. And my assistant, Prim.” A woman whose hair was wrapped up in a tight bun stepped forward. She extended her hand in greeting.

“It is a real pleasure to meet you. I’ve read several of your scholarly works on the Imperial Capital.”

“Thank you,” Marilyn replied as she shook the assistant's hand.

“Well, shall we begin? Right, this way.” Marilyn led them up the steps and past the large brass doors that sat propped open. She walked through the forest of columns in the great vestibule to enter the large round chamber of the old Assembly beyond. The archeologist walked past large statues of Paladins that seemed to be guarding the entrance to the Assembly.

A great dome spread over their heads. A large swirling pattern, that was the symbol of the long-dead empire, decorated the roof. A bird stirred from its perch on a seat to swoop upwards through a crack in part of the dome that had fallen. The bowl of the room lay below them with row upon row of chairs and desks in various states of decay. On

## *THE PALADIN CODE • THE MONASTERY*

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the far side stood a raised podium. Just above everything was the empty throne.

“Please stay here.” Marilyn walked down the stairs to the floor of the Congress. She whispered, “This is where the Assembly of the Galactic Empire met. With over 456 systems represented, the Galactic Empire spanned the length of the galaxy.” The acoustics were so good that they heard every word Marilyn said. She beckoned them down the marble stairs. It truly was impressive. Row upon row of seats surrounded the group. Towering above them stood the speaker’s podium, where the President of the Congress and any speaker would address the gathered representatives. The great seal of the Emperors stood out in relief on the thirty-foot-high dais. “Representative, would you like to stand and speak from the well of the speaker?” The politician followed as Marilyn took the stairs around and up to the speaker’s podium. At the back of the dais sat the grand imperial throne.

“I thought all symbols of the old empire had been removed.”

“We are a historic district. Here we seek to preserve that which has been left behind. All in the hopes that the mistakes of the past might not be repeated.”

“When I return to Jardor I will sponsor legislation to have the last of it destroyed,” He said pointing to the gilded seal of the Emperors and the throne upon which they sat.

“As you see fit,” said Marilyn. She thought of all the work that had been done to preserve the history of the people of the galaxy so that they could remember and perhaps not make the same mistakes. Marilyn sighed to herself. She turned and ascended the stairs beside the dais. Steel seemed to relax as he took the steps up to the podium. He looked out over the empty seats and puffed up immediately, launching into his last address to the Assembly.

*“The peacock takes flight,”* thought Marilyn.

Steel let his sonorous voice fill the chamber with his words of wisdom. He was a gifted orator which had been one of the many talents that had propelled him into being one of the leading politicians of the

## *THE PALADIN CODE • THE MONASTERY*

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galaxy. “Gentle Beings, gathered representatives, I come before you today after reflecting on the many years of peace and prosperity that our representative democracy has brought us. We no longer need the trappings of our warring past. Let us put aside the violence of that bygone era to embrace a new and prosperous future without violence. So I propose that we dispense with our association of the Paladins and their violent theology. Let us leave it in the past. Let us leave any association with them. Strip them of funding, power, and authority. For a better and more prosperous galaxy.” The Paladin statues that surrounded the old Imperial thrones seemed to scowl in displeasure at the representative’s words.

As the last echoes of his voice resounded through the broken chamber something dark and evil deep below them heard those words. It uncurled itself from its long slumber. Stirred to life again by words of hate and contempt. It was time for it to make an appearance once more in the galaxy.

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Silvia stepped through the holographic fire unlocking the stone door at the back of the hearth that led to a darkened corridor. The Monastery was a maze of rooms and corridors, but behind them was another maze of corridors, the old service passageways. When it was a palace, servants were not to be seen. So hidden hallways, rooms, and stairways were built to service the nobility. Silvia proceeded down the roughly hewn corridor to the gleaming steel doors of a lift that opened at her approach. “Codex level three,” she commanded. With a swish, the lift was off heading deep below the Monastery. The lift descended the rock walls swiftly speeding by the large vertical windows. Soon the view opened up into a vast chamber. This was the true treasure of the Paladins and the true library. Enormous crystals grew from the ceiling and floor of the vast chamber. A latticework of pillars and catwalks supported and gave access to the great crystalline structures. There were five levels to the structure. Mid-level was where a few of the crystal pillars met. But most of this level was open to the cooling breezes of the atmospheric system that kept the climate of the chamber

## *THE PALADIN CODE • THE MONASTERY*

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at the perfect temperature and humidity for optimum crystal growth. In the distance, other lifts could be seen giving access to the other levels of The Library. The lift stopped and declared its arrival with a chime, “Codex level three.” The doors parted with a swish. Silvia stepped into a small airlock. The doors closed behind her and then the atmosphere of the chamber filled the airlock. She stepped through the ocular door and onto the floor of a high catwalk. Around her grew a forest of crystals. They were of all colors and shapes. In this area a blue-green to green hue dimly glowed, indicating the storage of information regarding the various flora and fauna of the known universe. Bots buzzed all around tending the growing crystal structure which was composed of layers upon layers of crystal.

As information flowed into The Library from across the galaxy, it was analyzed and categorized. A great deal of data was just discarded. The temporary information was kept in The Library and then sent to various departments within the Monastery via reports. The more permanent information was sent down to the primary storage area for permanent storage in the crystal vaults. Bots moved about, creating the layers that composed the crystals. As each layer was formed another coding bot buzzed by and etched information on the crystals surface to be followed by another bot that was laying another layer of crystal to be coded on.

Silvia found herself in awe once more at the crystal forest that surrounded her. She made her way swiftly along the catwalk passing through several intersections. Silvia skirted around the central section of the forest that was denser and where the central diamond-shaped power plant was. Usually, she would stop in to check the status in the control center on her way to a walk in the jungle, but today she was in a hurry. Soon, Silvia found herself at the edge of the crystal forest and beyond the immense chamber. The catwalk ended and she took a stone corridor. She came to a panel that slid aside at her command, and she entered a small room. It was like a little mud room that contained cloaks and supplies for exploring the jungle beyond. Passing quickly through the room Silvia gestured, causing a door to open letting the



## *THE PALADIN CODE • THE MONASTERY*

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outside light spill in. With a quick step, she was outside and disappeared into the dense green foliage.

*APPENDIX*

*THE PALADINS CODE*

Love The Eternal with all you are

Love others as much as you love The Eternal

All life is precious treat it as such

Make every day a hallowed one

Tell the truth always

Don't take what is not yours

Honor those whom The Eternal has brought into your life

## *CHARACTERS*

### *Major Characters*

#### **Silvia “Of the Forest” • 76 (Standard Cycles)**

Chief Librarian of the Paladins. A woman who loves books and loves The Paladin Library. She has led an adventurous life for a librarian. On various sabbaticals through the years she has explored countless planets and discovered many cultures. Now nearing retirement she finds herself in charge of a group of young people. Silvia must protect and guide these summer students through yet-to-be discovered danger.

#### **Elizabeth “The Eternal is my oath” • 16 (Standard Cycles)**

Elizabeth is fourth of eight siblings in a large family farm. Everyone helps out to get the work done. She is kind and compassionate jumping in where needed to get work done. She has aspirations to become a vet and work with animals. Elizabeth is very aware of her surroundings, watching over the group. Her kind and considerate heart keeps the group balanced.

#### **Mia “Bitter, of the sea” • 17 (Standard Cycles)**

Mia is a real galactic princess. She catches every boy’s attention. She comes from a very wealthy family who helped to establish The Paladins. Her parents died in a terrible tragedy when she was young. Her uncle took over and now runs everything. She is bright, but haughty. Because she has been spoiled she is very selfish and thoughtless. She knows all about design and fashion, the latest trends, and finest things in life amongst the wealthy. No one would have ever thought that she would be a help in the group’s survival, least of all herself.

#### **Timothy “To honor The Eternal” • 14 (Standard Cycles)**

He is a technical and scientific wizard. He loves knowledge which he got from his parents who are both scientific nerds. His mind is always pondering the next puzzle, finding the next question to ask. Tim is comfortable around computers but awkward with people. He is most comfortable with AIs. He is a bit clumsy

# *THE PALADIN CODE • THE MONASTERY*

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because his body is changing on him so fast he can't keep up. His awkward looks are rapidly changing into a handsome self assured young man.

## **Conner “To be heard” • 22 (Standard Cycles)**

Conner is Mia's security guard. He is the oldest of the summer students. He is retired from the police force due to injuries from a battle with pirates. Conner is courageous, and very skilled in self defense. He wrestles with the ghosts from his past experience in battle. He has the heart of a warrior willing to do whatever it takes to defend those he cares for.

## **Scrap “Beloved” Ari “The Eternal's Lion” • 17 (Standard Cycles)**

Scrap is a teenager with dreams of becoming a Paladin. His past is a mystery. He was orphaned at a young age and lived on the streets of Veridian. On the streets he learned to watch and wait. He is a born leader in the rough. He is a very handsome young man. He is reserved and quiet. Scrap was taken in by the Paladins and wants to one day become one.

## **LAD “Library Attendant ”**

The AI of the Paladin Library and personally admitted friend to Silvia. He holds the secrets that will destroy the Paladins but also save them in the end. The enemy relentlessly hunts for the knowledge that he holds. But he is unaware of what that knowledge is. He is a brain with an ever changing holo persona.

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## ***The Paladins***

**The Keeper** • Leader of the Paladins for the last 100 years.

**Mrs. Westmoreland** • House Keeper of the Paladins.

**Mr. Westmoreland** • Grounds Keeper of the Paladins.

**Maria** • Cook for the Paladins

**Dr. Magnolia** • Physician of the Paladins.

**Striker** • Security Chief of the Paladins.

**Cathy & Joe Stemper** • Good friends of the Westmorelands.

**Anne, John & David Destin** • A young Paladin couple and their toddler.

**Minerva Babington** • Older Paladin with a bigotry for non-Paladins.

**Brandon** • Acolyte of the Paladins. A young bully who hates Scrap.

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## *The Enemy*

**Salusasecunda** • An ancient evil that wishes to reconquer the galaxy.

**Dr. Keith** • The chief servant of Salusasecunda.

**Domo** • Dr. Keith's major domo and primary assistant.

**Sting** • Dr. Keith's AI pet and spy.

**General Riss** • The primary military leader of the Skree.

**The Skree** • A race that is descended from Therapods. They served Salusasecunda in the Galactic Civil war. They are enemies of the Paladins.

**The Grays** • A race of small creatures enslaved by the Skree.

**The Scavs** • A race of wolf like sentient animals who serve the Skree.

**The Mercs** • A race of mercenaries who have a war culture.

**The Lava Dragons** • Creatures that are enslaved by the Skree.

**The Swarm** • Creatures enslaved by the Skree as weapons.

**The Berzerkers** • Creatures enslaved by the Skree as weapons.

**Usher** • A bad Paladin.

**Augustus Steel** • Mia's uncle. Up and coming galactic politician.

**Miz Primm** • Representative Steel's assistant.

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## *Others*

**Hunter** • A bounty hunter whose specialty is finding things.

**Castor & Pollux** • Hunter's tracking beasts.

**Clarissa Haught** • A very successful galactic fashion designer

**Samantha** • Clarissa's assistant and right hand.

**Sam** • A fishing guide to Hunter.

**Granny Good** • An old trader who has been around the galaxy more than once. She specializes in items that are difficult to acquire.

**Auntie Mae** • The owner of a tavern and inn in Shamble Town. She has the best breakfast in town.

**Marilyn** • Curator of the Park of the Empire.

# *THE PALADIN CODE • THE MONASTERY*

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**Joe** • The handy man for the Park of the Empire.

**Eric & Amy Doland** • Orchard farmers just below the Monastery.



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