

INFINITY  
REAPER

ADAM SILVERA

SIMON & SCHUSTER

*But true rulers are not born. We are made.*

—MARIE LU,

*THE ROSE SOCIETY*

ONE  
**BRIGHT NIGHT**

**BRIGHTON**

I drink every last drop of Reaper's Blood while looking up at the Crowned Dreamer.

The elixir smells like burning bodies and tastes like iron and charcoal. The blood from the century phoenix, the golden-strand hydra, and the dead ghosts is heavy on my tongue like mud. My throat is burning and I'm this close to spitting out the rest, but I force myself to swallow it all because this Reaper's Blood is game changing. I wasn't lucky enough to be born with powers—to be born a celestial. But now that I've absorbed these creatures' abilities, the world will get to welcome me as their new champion—a one-of-a-kind, unkillable specter.

I drop the empty bottle and it rolls toward my brother, who has been stabbed. Emil is eyeing me like a stranger as I lick my

lips clean and dry them with the back of my hand. I'm about to help him up when I stumble, falling onto my knees. My vision becomes fuzzy. It's as if everyone in the church's garden is spinning slowly, then faster, faster, faster. My entire body feels like countless fingertips are grazing my skin. I suck in the sharpest breath of my life, like someone has been strangling me and finally lets go, and before I can full-on panic about whatever is happening, light surrounds me.

I'm glowing. I'm nowhere near as bright as the Crowned Dreamer above me, but I still feel like my own constellation—the Bright Brighton, the Bright King, whatever you want to call it. I have no idea if all specters experience this warm white glow when getting their powers. The only specters in my life I could ask are special cases who wouldn't remember—Emil, who was reborn with his phoenix powers, and Maribelle Lucero, who just discovered hours ago that she isn't a regular celestial. Her biological father was a specter—the very founder of the Spell Walkers—marking her as the first-known celestial-specter hybrid. But I'm a special case too. I feel it; I feel this change in me, even when the glowing stops.

Emil is stunned, but his expression turns back to pained. “Hel-help me,” he breathes. Blue blood from the dead phoenix, Gravesend, is wet and sticky on Emil's chest, but it's his own red blood spilling out his wound that needs attention. Luna Marnette, the supreme alchemist who created the Reaper's Blood I just drank, stabbed him with an infinity-ender blade. She must've gotten Emil so deep with that infinity-ender blade that he can't even tap into his phoenix powers to heal himself.

I cradle Emil's head. "I got you, bro."

I flinch as spellwork explodes across the Alpha Church of New Life's garden. The fighting hasn't stopped because my brother is dying. It's like the Blood Casters and their acolytes won't rest until every Spell Walker is dead. In the fray, I see my friends Prundenica Mendez; Wesley Young; and Iris Simone-Chambers, the leader of the Spell Walkers. Despite their innate powers, they're struggling to contain Stanton, a specter with the blood and the powers of a basilisk, and Dione, a specter with the speed of a hyrda and the extra arms to match.

Then I see Maribelle, our most powerful player, as she crouches beside Luna with absolute murder in her eyes. "You had my parents and boyfriend killed so you could live forever. Now I get to watch you bleed out."

Luna is fading in and out as she stares at the stars like they can still make her powerful. Not happening. Her silver hair is plastered to her sweaty forehead and she's pressing down on the hole I blasted through her stomach with my wand's spell. "You won't . . . you . . ." Luna tries to speak but keeps choking on her own words. It triggers a flashback of Dad gagging on his own blood. It's so vicious that I turn away, even though Luna deserves every ounce of pain.

Unlike Luna, I'll never have to fear death again thanks to the Reaper's Blood.

But my brother does.

"Maribelle! Maribelle, we have to get Emil to the hospital."

Then June appears out of nowhere—moon-white skin, dark silver hair, big empty eyes. She's a specter with ghost blood, the

only Blood Caster with those powers, we think. And she possessed Maribelle and made her kill Atlas Haas, the love of her life and one of my very favorite Spell Walkers. I keep calling Maribelle's name, but it's like her need for vengeance has me on mute. There's no stopping her as she scoops up the oblivion dagger, the one that's made of bone and can vanquish ghosts, and chases the young assassin around the garden.

Back home when I told Maribelle my plan to steal the Reaper's Blood away from Luna, she didn't question it. She wants Luna to die powerless, and I don't want to die at all; we're both coming out winners. Except it's all pointless for me if Emil doesn't live too. I have to get him out of here. I try lifting him, but it's a struggle; it's like he has rocks hidden in his power-proof vest. It's a shame that none of my new abilities is powerhouse strength, but I still manage to muscle up and get Emil on his feet, and he wraps his arm around my shoulders.

An acolyte runs at us with an ax, hopping over the hydra beheaded for the potion, his feet now slick with yellow blood. I'm counting on him slipping on the grass, but he stays upright. Emil can't protect us, but it's okay. I'm going to be his hero the way he's been mine the past month. I take a deep breath and extend my hand, visualizing phoenix fire blasting from my palm. The acolyte keeps pursuing us. I keep my hand ready, concentrating on how badly I want to take him out, and he's suddenly wrenched backward as if flicked away by some invisible hand.

How did I do that? Is this a ghost blood power?

I realize it wasn't me when Prudencia appears at our side with her eyes glowing like skipping stars. The eyes that look like

doorways into different corners of the universe are how you can identify anyone as a celestial, but that's only if the celestial activates their powers around you. Prudencia has only ever shown us her beautiful brown eyes since we met her in high school, and now here she is saving our backs and fighting this war with us. Her forehead is split open, and her glistening celestial blood is running down the side of her face.

"What happened? Who hurt you?" I ask.

Prudencia waves the question away as she observes Emil's wound. "We have to get him medical attention."

It was only hours ago when Prudencia and I last saw each other at Nova, the elementary school for celestials that was being used as a haven. Iris was forbidding me from going on any more missions, and even though Prudencia told me to stop risking my life, to stay with my family, to stay with her, I followed Maribelle like a true hero.

From the ground, Luna groans.

"Whoa," Prudencia says. "So we stopped her?"

She must've missed everything while fighting for her life. My grand entrance, blasting Luna with the last spell in my wand, saving Emil, and drinking the Reaper's Blood. Even the glowing. Those moments were historic, and she missed them; I should've set up a camera to upload everything online later for everyone to see.

"I took her down," I say, pointing at the steel wand on the ground.

She doesn't call me a hero or tell me I did a great job.

Iris shouts as she barrels through acolytes like a quarterback,

laying out six before she reaches us. There's blood setting into her dyed-green buzz cut and even more across her knuckles. She clearly bested every idiot who thought they could take on one of the city's strongest celestials. "Enforcers are storming in," she says, panting. "I counted a dozen, but more will be on the way. Time to retreat."

Enforcers file through the church's garden door, protected in their sea-green armor as they aim their wands at every single one of us—celestials, specters, the human acolytes who want to become more—and bombard us with spellwork of all colors. Now would be a spectacular time for my ghostly abilities to kick in so I can phase through the solid wall behind us, maybe even teleport us over, but when all I feel is some painful nausea and dizziness, I drop with Emil to the ground and spells fly over our heads. Iris leaps forward and shields us, her arms crossed over her chest; her dark brown skin is resistant to this spellwork. Prudencia uses her power to sweep other spells away, but she's careful not to fire them back at the enforcers.

This past January, a terrorist attack known as the Blackout was blamed on the last four original Spell Walkers, but we all know now that the Blood Casters were actually responsible. Except the enforcers have never gotten that memo—they've been tasked with eliminating the new wave of Spell Walkers, even though it's not their fault. Unlike the Spell Walkers, the Blood Casters don't save innocent lives. Something is off as to why the enforcers don't work harder to take them down and lock them up.

Wesley dashes to us, skidding to a halt. His height and curvy build remind me of one of my favorite childhood wrestlers,

except that guy doesn't have Wesley's brown man bun. But the wrestler was definitely sporting bruises above his eye and cut lips like Wes does now. "Heads up, friends, we are very cornered right about now," he says.

"Didn't notice," Iris says as she smacks a lightning spell away.

There are puddles of blue, yellow, gray, and red blood all across the garden. I wasn't here when the massacre first started, but it's still disturbing to see the hydra head facing skyward with its tongue hanging out of its massive mouth, and the dead blue phoenix lying on its side.

Sharp movements catch my attention, and Dione lunges into the squad of enforcers. Using her six arms, she chops one in the throat, snaps the neck of another, punches one between his eyes, and snatches the wands of two and blasts them dead.

This garden is becoming a graveyard.

"Prudencia, cover me," Iris says as she runs to the gate, wrenches apart the spiked poles like they're made of clay, and begins punching away at the brick wall behind it. "Wes, get Maribelle!"

I turn to find Maribelle slashing at the air with the oblivion dagger, constantly missing June as she teleports all around. Wesley dashes over, and immediately has to take a step back before he can get stabbed. He's trying to drag Maribelle away, but she's not having it, so he grabs her by the legs, lifts her onto his shoulder, and runs back to us.

"Put me down!" Maribelle shouts, trying to break out of his grip like a phoenix locked in a cage.

"We're not leaving you behind," Wesley says.

Maribelle hammers Wesley in the back with the dagger's bone handle until he releases her. She scans around as June suddenly rises out of the ground and places her hands on Luna, protecting her leader. Maribelle hurls the dagger, and it flips through the air as quick as a blink, but June and Luna have faded faster into the night.

“She got away—they both got away!”

A spell narrowly misses her, and Maribelle turns to assess the danger. More enforcers trying to kill her. It's clear she's fed up when one eye glows like a sailing comet and the other burns like an eclipse. Dark yellow flames burst into life from her fists to her elbows, and she casts the fire toward the enforcers. She's quick with a fire-arrow to the cauldron when Stanton, the basilisk specter, makes a move for the remaining elixir; all the Reaper's Blood goes up in flames.

“Hurry!” Prudencia shouts at Iris. Her power isn't trained enough to keep fending off all this spellwork, and more enforcers are arriving on the scene with fully charged wands.

Iris breaks the wall open with a mighty punch, creating a hole big enough for everyone to go through.

“Gravesend,” Emil says weakly.

“Gravesend is dead,” I say.

“Don't leave her.”

Of course Emil cares about the corpse of a phoenix, like it really matters right now if someone takes Gravesend and makes a scarf out of her feathers. But as more spells fire our way, I take the lead and get Emil out of there. Iris sees me struggling and she carries Emil with ease straight into the back of her Jeep.

“Where’s Eva?” I ask. Eva is Iris’s girlfriend, and a powerful celestial in her own right. Emil needs her healing powers fast.

“Eva is Philadelphia-bound with your mother and others,” Iris says.

“I have a connection at the Lynx facility,” Wesley says from outside the door. “We should be able to get discreet care.”

Prudencia hops in the front passenger seat. “We need somewhere closer. He’s losing blood fast.”

Wesley racks his brain. “Aldebaran! There’s good people at Aldebaran.”

“Lead the way,” Iris says.

Wesley dashes ahead on foot and Iris hits the gas, peeling off. I look out the rearview window and see Maribelle is gliding behind. I don’t know when she’s planning on coming back for Atlas’s car, which we used to arrive here tonight, and I don’t care. Emil’s eyes are closing, and I slap him awake.

“Emil, come on. Bro, look at me.”

I was so busy using up each charge in the wand that I didn’t see Luna gut my brother with that infinity-ender. If I were my own wand, my own walking weapon, I would’ve had unlimited power to handle business. Blood rushes to my head seeing Emil in this state. He’s not going to die. This is not how this ends.

“I should’ve gotten here sooner.”

Prudencia turns from her front seat. “You should’ve never left Nova. We had no idea if you were even alive.”

“I was with Maribelle. She was cast out too.”

“No one kicked you out, Brighton.”

I look down at Emil.

Prudencia shakes her head. “You’re not actually blaming your brother while he’s bleeding. Be better than that.”

“But it’s true! He rejected me from joining the next mission. You too, Iris.”

Iris remains focused on the road, swerving around cars to keep up with Wesley. “Don’t come for me when I’m doing my damn best to save your brother’s life.”

“You should’ve taken the time to train me!”

“Too busy saving the rest of the city,” Iris says.

Life whizzes by out the window. People are on their porches and fire escapes staring up at the glorious Crowned Dreamer, even though authorities cautioned everyone to stay inside until it passed. Unlike basic constellations such as the Great Bear or the Hunter that only strengthen select powers, the Crowned Dreamer is a prime constellation that elevates all gleamcrafters, celestials, and specters alike. The media is making it sound like celestials are the problem tonight. It’s alchemists like Luna who need prime constellations like this one to turn people into specters.

“I promise you’re no longer superior to me,” I say.

“And I promise I’m not trying to win some pissing contest with you,” Iris says, steering left.

There’s a question forming on Prudencia’s lips as she begins inspecting mine in the flashes of streetlight. “You didn’t . . . Brighton, you didn’t . . .”

“Someone had to be brave,” I say.

Prudencia looks like she might slap me. “Stop confusing recklessness with courage! That elixir can kill you!”

I’m not going to let anyone talk to me like I’m some idiot,

not even Pru. I know similar elixirs have been tested on people. As soon as the Crowned Dreamer rose on my eighteenth birthday, September 1, the Spell Walkers started tracking specters who were exhibiting powers from multiple creatures—a clear first. Emil’s powers manifested when we were fighting one.

“It worked for the other specters,” I say.

Prudencia’s gaze is uncomfortable. “Do you mean other specters like Orton, who literally burned to death on his own fire? Brighton, your father died because his blood couldn’t handle the hydra essence in him—”

“I know why my father died!”

“Then why are you playing with fire like this? This behavior is why Iris didn’t want you out on the battlefield! You think you’re so tough, but Emil is one of the strongest gleamcrafters on our side, and look at him!”

“Imagine what I’ll be able to do once my powers kick in. Cast fire, walk through walls, regrow limbs, race through the streets. Fly! Maybe I’ll be able to possess people too and—”

“The stars be damned, possessing people isn’t helping you look good. These powers aren’t yours to have. That elixir was created for Luna with her parents’ blood. There might be negative side effects. You’re so irresponsible—”

“I don’t remember you giving Emil any of these talks!”

“Emil didn’t choose to become a specter, and he is actively working to figure out how to bind these powers, whereas you’ve thrown yourself into a dangerous combination of gleam, one that might kill you.”

I stay true to what I told Emil.

I would rather die powerless than watch him doing everything I can't.

We pull into a parking lot, and Iris brakes so hard I have to steady Emil's neck.

The Aldebaran Center for Gleam Care is bright red and shaped like a ring. Out the window I see Wesley is at the entrance, sweating and taking deep breaths as he speaks with three practitioners. The practitioners rush to us, their midnight-blue cloaks swaying, and they gently carry Emil out of the car and onto a stretcher. I swear a couple of them are admiring him, like he's some celebrity. The thing is, Emil *has* become a celebrity, especially to celestials, ever since he went viral multiple times. He's lucky we're not in a regular hospital, where the workers might handcuff him until enforcers could arrive to lock him up in the Bounds.

Footsteps drop behind me out of nowhere—it's Maribelle landing. She's caught the eye of the female practitioner, who glares at her, which isn't uncommon. Maribelle's mother, Aurora, was the one caught on camera bombing the Nightlocke Conservatory, and since then, celestials have had a harder time living in peace. Still, with the way the practitioner is looking at her, you'd think Maribelle blew up the conservatory herself. The practitioner looks away, assessing everyone. Iris, Wesley, and Prudencia are already pretty beat—bleeding, dirty, bruising. I got off good, no one touched me; it's like I've got phasing powers already. I was careful and more alert because being taken hostage by the Blood Casters one time was more than enough for me.

I catch up to the practitioners who are handling Emil right as the elevator doors are closing.

“Family only,” one practitioner says.

“He’s my brother.”

Damn right he’s quiet. If they know him, they should know me. Emil’s only been featured on my YouTube channel multiple times.

They’ll all know me soon enough.

The elevator rises to the top level, the fourteenth floor. The lights in the hallway are warm and bright, and it reminds me of being onstage delivering my salutatorian speech. I stumble, dizzy, but right myself. The practitioners wheel Emil into a private room with white walls, wide windows, and most notably, a ceiling that is shuttered open, which is standard in most Gleam Cares so the night sky can heal and strengthen celestials—and specters too, but to a lesser degree.

This practitioner is taking his sweet, sweet time cutting open Emil’s power-proof vest. I shout at him to hurry the hell up, that Emil was stabbed with an infinity-ender blade. Emil is white in the face, and I stay close, holding his hand, even when someone asks me to give them space because my brother has to know that I’m here with him. Eva Nafisi could save Emil’s life in moments, but the Spell Walkers never bring her out into battle because losing the healer would be a great loss for us and a great gain for our many enemies. I’m relieved when the female practitioner reveals a moderate healing ability of her own. Her power isn’t as colorful as Eva’s, which glows like a rainbow, but the muted red lights are helping replenish Emil’s blood. Slowly, but surely. The only thing is she doesn’t seem to be strong enough to fully seal the cut. They might have to give him old-fashioned stitches.

I wish Emil and I could heal each other, power to power.

All this blood is making me light-headed. I should sit, have some water, but this reminds me too much of Dad dying. Emil didn't want to fight, but I pushed him. The room spins when I think about Emil dying. He deserves to live; come on, this is someone who cares so much about making sure we don't abandon a dead phoenix. The lights fixed on the wall are growing dimmer. I don't feel the Crowned Dreamer working to make me more powerful, to keep me upright. My grip loosens around Emil's hand and I stumble backward.

I once asked Dad what it felt like living with his blood poisoning. He said it was all over the place: body shivers, flushing skin, dizziness, vicious heartbeats. Sometimes his breath would shorten, like mine now, getting cut in half, then those halves cut in half, and the closest I can compare anything to this suffocation is when I had anxiety attacks over exams, or even worse, the ones when Dad would return home from hospital appointments with shorter life sentences.

I collapse, looking up at the fading Crowned Dreamer from the floor, and as my eyes close, I have that blood-and-bones feeling that the Reaper's Blood isn't going to make me immortal—it's going to poison me to death.

WHO WILL LIVE FOREVER,  
AND WHO WILL DIE TRYING?



INFINITY  
SON

ADAM SILVERA  
*NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING AUTHOR

**‘A MAGICAL JOYRIDE WITH  
A CAST FULL OF HEART.’**

MARIE LU

AUTHOR OF WARCROSS

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER  
ADAM SILVERA

HISTORY

'OVERFLOWS WITH TENDerness AND HEARTACHE'  
PATRICK NESS

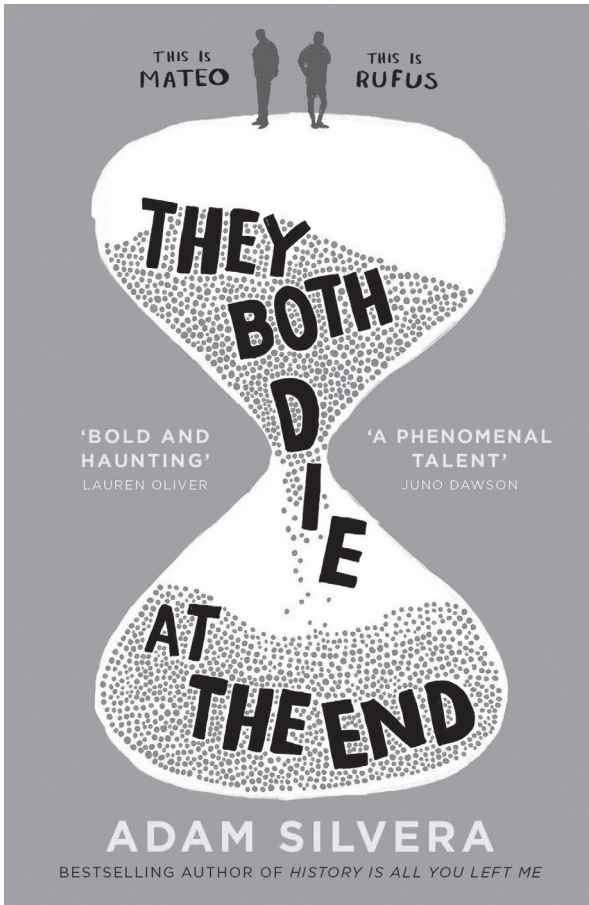
IS ALL  
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ME

'WILL MAKE YOU CRY, THINK, AND THEN CRY SOME MORE.'  
NICOLA YOON

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**NICOLA YOON**

AUTHOR OF *EVERYTHING,*  
*EVERYTHING*



**'A BOLD, LOVELY, AND HAUNTING  
STORY OF LOSS, HOPE, AND THE  
REDEEMING POWER OF FRIENDSHIP.'**

**LAUREN OLIVER**

AUTHOR OF *BEFORE I FALL*