

D. R. WHITNEY



The  
LAST PRINCESS  
AND THE CUP OF IMMORTALITY  
BOOK 1



the  
GODDESS PROPHECIES

Book one:  
*the last princess and  
the cup of immortality*

*D. R. Whitney*



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Whitney, D.R.

The Last Princess and The Cup of Immortality: a novel / by D.R. Whitney

Summary: When sixteen-year-old Vivienne Le Faye inherits a priceless family  
amulet, she becomes an instant target. As an ancient family curse haunts her and danger  
threatens her, a mysterious boy with blazing golden eyes appears out-of-nowhere to  
protect her. As her strong attraction to him grows, she finds herself on a thrill ride  
to a royal destiny in another world, where she discovers he is *more* than human.

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## dedication

I would like to thank my husband, James Whitney, for his loving support and belief on this amazing journey. I would also like to thank my editors, John Payne and Rich Klin, for their valuable contribution.

The Goddess Prophecies has been a tremendous gift and I appreciate all those who encouraged me to develop it over the years. Myths are rooted in truth and it is my hope that we can embrace the wisdom of the past before we move forward into an uncertain future.

— D. R.



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*Sometimes a greater authority determines  
your path and all you can do is acquiesce.*

— The Goddess Prophecies

*part one*  
*the inheritance*

## chapter one

### the REOCCURRING DREAM

VIVIENNE RACED THROUGH DARK WOODS, FLEEING HER PURSUERS. *The clash of swords rang out amid arrows flying through the forest. "Find the Amulet!" the lone soldier shouted, as his armor glinted in the shadowy light. All was blackness and panic. A terrible gloom surrounded her.*

*She cried out as another twisted limb tore at her flesh. As she dropped to the ground, the sounds of battle echoed in the forest. A faint hum caught her attention. Women's voices reverberated deep within the woods. Her heart pounded in her chest.*

*Before she could move, a light from behind surrounded her; tiny pinpricks of rainbow-colored energy pulsed with incredible beauty.*

*When the brightness began pulling away, she followed it, stumbling deeper into the forest. Then the glittering brilliance settled upon stones of gigantic proportions, towering up in the night sky.*

*Strange, mysterious women appeared, their arms raised like ravens' wings, swaying in unison around the massive stones. Their voices roared inside her until it grew to a mighty, endless shout. Her mind told her to flee, but something inside her resisted. Against all reason she walked into the light.*

*Their hands, strong and grasping, reached out for her. They bowed and touched the ruby Amulet that hung around her neck. A chalice of silver was raised to her lips. They urged her to drink the liquid. As she did, her heartbeat slowed as a cold wind passed through her. Her spirit was released from the confines of her body.*

*She hovered above the women, suspended in midair, when the vision beneath her changed.*

*She was floating above an emerald mountain covered in mist near the shores of a vast lake. With a battle raging all around her,*



*she saw a young woman standing in an ornate shrine holding a little girl wrapped in a heavy cloak. An elder woman with long, white hair was hurriedly placing a ruby Amulet around the child's neck, waving a wand and whispering a strange magical spell. A pool of swirling vapor appeared. The woman holding the child leapt into it. As they disappeared, heavily armored men burst down the door. The sacred chamber was being attacked. Men, women, and children were being slaughtered by the dozens. A lone figure with a black serpent painted on his chest picked up a sacred vessel, laughing.*

*"Lailoken, where are your great powers now," he gloated.*

*Vivienne drifted above the desperate scene until the warmth of strong arms embraced her. The handsomest young man she had ever seen, with black hair and the most penetrating golden eyes, was comforting her as he held her in the fine wool of his purple cloak.*

"No, don't leave me!" Vivienne Le Faye Yorke shouted in her sleep. Her cries became a sobbing moan. She was cradled on one side of her bed when she awoke in the grip of her dream, the one that had come again, about those women dressed in black, the soldiers, and the boy with the golden eyes.

"Hey, what's going on," her roommate shouted as her tattooed arm flailed out of the covers. "Are you having that nightmare again?"

Vivienne's fear and desire commingled in the most conflicting way. She stared at her best friend in the shadowy light. "Oh sorry, I didn't mean to wake you," she said as the terror still coursed through her veins.

"It's okay," Chris said, punching her pillow. "But you've got to do something about it, talk to somebody," she said with conviction. "Otherwise we'll never get any sleep."

"Well I told *you*, doesn't that count for something?" Vivienne retorted as she got out of bed and wrapped the down comforter around her shoulders.

"You know what I mean. You need a professional, a shrink."

Vivienne took a breath. "What for? They're not going to believe me. Look, they didn't believe me when I was a



little girl and I saw *ghosts* and they're not going to believe me now. Only Gran knew the truth. Our family's always had this gift of sight. These dreams are not just a figment of my imagination. They're real and they're sending me a message. I only told you because you're my best friend and you promised not to tell anyone."

The cold March air stirred between them in the middle of the night. Chris switched on the table lamp, her eyes glistening with concern. "You know I'd never say anything. I'm the one who's always breaking the rules around here and getting in trouble. So have you figured out who the boy with the golden eyes is yet?"

Vivienne was silent for a long moment. "No, but he's familiar, really familiar, I've seen him before. I know he's protecting me. I just don't know from what." Parting the drapes, Vivienne peered out from the dorm-room window, grief-stricken and shaken. Up until two weeks ago before Gran had died everything had been normal in her boarding school on the Upper East Side of Manhattan.

"Well, at least your dream has one redeeming quality," Chris said, shrugging. "The guy sounds really hot. But seriously, Viv, the last few weeks have been so hard on you with you being emancipated and your grandmother passing away so unexpectedly and then inheriting the family heirloom. Don't you think just maybe you're reading too much into all of it?"

Vivienne shook her head. "No, I've thought a lot about it. You knew my Gran. She was an eccentric, a scholar, and she never did anything without good reason. She emancipated me because I'm the last of the Le Faye family line and it was important to her that I stand on my own two feet, make my own decisions. She insisted that I study martial arts with Lee Lau, the Shaolin master, so I could defend myself. And she introduced me to obscure history and magic for a reason. Maybe she knew I was gonna have these dreams and she wanted me to be able to figure them out. I don't know...or maybe it has something to do with the family curse that Gran was so obsessed with."



“Do you think the curse could be tied to the necklace?” Chris asked as Vivienne stood pale and agitated in the moonlight with her raven black hair falling in waves around her face.

“I don’t know. My parents died in a freakish accident before Mom ever inherited the Amulet and apparently other members of my family did too, but Gran never was willing to discuss it.”

Vivienne recalled how meticulously her grandmother attempted to trace their ancestry on their maternal side and how convinced she was that the family had some kind of dark spell cast over them for centuries, so only vague information was given to her about her own parents’ tragic deaths.

Chris looked over at her latest painting leaning up against her easel. “Well, I don’t always understand where my paintings come from, so I guess it’s reasonable to wait and see where your dreams lead you.”

Vivienne glanced over at Chris and saw her worried expression. “Thanks for trying to make me feel better. You really do like lost causes, don’t you? Go back to sleep. I’m okay. I just need some time to think about things for a while.”

“Okay, but no more dreams, please, not even the sexy ones. I’ve got to get my beauty sleep.”

“Yeah, right—like you need it and I’m that lucky,” Vivienne whispered.

As soon as Chris flopped over to the other side of her twin bed and closed her eyes, Vivienne grasped the window frame as a wave of panic threatened to consume her.

How could Chris have guessed what Vivienne had so completely overlooked? Her dreams had become stranger and darker ever since she received her inheritance: the family’s famed treasure, the Celtic ruby Amulet.

She recalled Gran’s terrifying screams in the night when she was growing up. *Did Gran have similar dreams?*

Unconsciously, she wound the heavy golden linked chain around her fingers. Ever since she was a little girl, Vivienne was



told that the ancient necklace was priceless and it had been in her family for countless generations.

She touched the bright, glowing ruby Amulet set in a Celtic knot of silver and gold. The beautiful serpent-like interlocking design was delicate, unlike anything she had ever beheld. The more she wore it, the more she became convinced that it did have a power all its own. If only she could understand the strange and ancient markings that surrounded it.

Closing her eyes, she held the treasure tightly, trying to untangle the clues in the shadowy images in the dream once more.

*Why did the old woman put my Amulet around the little girl's neck? Why did they bow and touch the stone with such reverence? Is Gran trying to tell me something from beyond the grave?*

As she caressed it, she was caught in the web of its magic, lost in the rapids of a raging river. She wasn't going back to classes now, not when the dreams held her. She could afford to miss a couple more weeks without her grades suffering if she kept her homework up. And she already taken the dreaded SAT's a month before and gotten a pretty great score. Besides, everyone in school already thought she was peculiar. What did a couple of weeks matter when strange powers shadowed her awareness?

She paused, reaching out for the desk chair. If Gran hadn't passed away, she would have known what to do. Gran had studied dreams and she knew about history, magic, and sacred relics. But it was too late.

She turned away from the window and thought about the boy in her dreams again. If only he were real. In his arms she had felt strangely safe. Exhausted, she allowed the fresh scent of him in the wet, mossy grass, pine trees, and damp sea fog to surround her once more. What was that name she had heard the armored warrior call out in her dream? Afraid, she barely spoke it aloud.



## chapter two

### *the boy with the golden eyes*

“LAILOKEN,” THE YOUNG FEMALE VOICE WHISPERED.

As the magical name pierced the darkness, particles of shimmering rainbows began dancing together, forming the body of a young man. In the small clearing ringed in gigantic fern, tall grasses, and ancient pine, the figure grew denser. The glistening form stood suspended, frozen within the last rays of ghostly light. Then air was forced into his lungs in an explosion of sound.

Lailoken gasped, fighting for breath.

Slowly he opened his golden eyes.

A voice had summoned him from beyond, the only voice he would not deny—that of his beloved.

*Where are you?*

Listening with all his supernatural powers, only the unbroken quiet answered him. He stared down in bewilderment at his new body. His youthful form was tall, lean, and muscular.

He had strong legs and powerful arms that glistened in the moonlight.

The blood pulsated in his arteries and his hands tingled. He was alive.

In an instant he had been re-created, awakened from a deep, profound sleep. He lifted his hand toward the waning moonlight. Inside he felt the same, but outside he had been made stronger, younger.

He bent his head back, laughing. His long black hair tickled his shoulders. He touched his face, felt the fine mist, and listened to his heart beating, marveling at the miracle of awakening.

Unsure of himself, he attempted to move and collapsed to the ground in the heavy spring growth. The slick, wet grasses



and lichen felt cold beneath him. He smelled the sea fog and saw the dark, looming volcanic cliffs.

Staring up at the shining pinpoint of light, he could have sworn he had just been one of those glittering stars.

*How long has it been since I've seen her?* he wondered, still disoriented and confused.

As he tried to remember, a tremendous rumbling shook the ground. A giant mass of clouds veiled in smoke surrounded him in a sudden downdraft. A herd of mighty centaurs, bloodied from battle, leaped past, carrying swords and bows. Above, a flock of red draught dragons pursued them. A thin, wailing cry filled the skies. The Derg Corra giants were fleeing behind them, the mythical creatures escaping for their lives.

Lailoken hid behind the twisted trees. The rest of the animals in the forest were not far behind. Mighty herds of stags and deer darted past. The wolves followed on the outskirts looking for easy prey. He saw the owls, ravens, hawks, and eagles fleeing the darkening skies.

He thought back to those many years ago, after his beloved's death when the Holy Isle was burning. Had the Gods and Goddesses returned him to that time?

*"Transfere dracluma suspiritus,"* he commanded, using his gift of spell craft. The cool, wet vapor rolled in. The dragon's breath, the great coiling mist, put out the hot embers, now floating on the winds. The clearing filled with such a thick, blinding mist he could no longer see in front of him. Dampness clung to him until he was drenching wet.

After a short while the panic that had filled the heavens quieted and the threat to this part of the land had passed. The fire would destroy no more woodland.

Lailoken breathed a sigh of relief. The madness and grief that had once consumed him was gone. He still had his magical powers. The vastness of the universe had not let him down. He had to come back to walk the earth once more but this time not alone. His beloved had been reborn in another world and soon her inner beckoning would bring them together.



## chapter two

Though he had lingered in the stars, no detail had been forgotten. He recalled the years after when he returned from taking her spirit to the vast heavens. He had shut himself off from the world, in the wild and rugged highlands in a desolate wilderness cave filled with the clearest quartz crystals—only accessible by the sea.

The Cave of Revelations was vast, deep. The winding grottos led to many subterranean caverns. Only one held the wisdom of the Gods and Goddesses. There he allowed the shadow of despair to blacken his heart.

He bent down by the rippling stream in the moonlight. He searched for her face in the still cold water before it rushed over the glistening rocks, bubbling and singing on its long journey to the sea. In the faint rays of light he saw his own image. The vision shocked him.

His large, piercing golden eyes stared back. His chiseled face was the same, with his high, Celtic cheekbones and strong chin. He looked as he had when he was last with her. He was utterly alive.

He waved his hand, stirring particles of energy around him. "*Facio capsarius.*" A thick, woolen purple cloak appeared. He threw it about his shoulders.

The clouds shifted. In the mist a figure materialized without warning, completely transparent.

The Steward of the Misty Isle stood statue-like in a great ring of giant boulders. Around her was the faint glow of mist. Her long white hair reached her waist. It blew in the wind as her dark gown billowed behind her. Despite the change in her appearance, Lailoken recognized her instantly.

"Maral!"

She had aged immeasurably. Her eyes stared like dark coals straight ahead through the silvery mist. Her figure appeared small, frail, thin. He approached her with hesitancy, studying her face. Her expression seemed forlorn, her face lined with worry and deepening sorrow. She wore the navy blue linen mantle of the Head Priestess of the Goddess clan, cinched at



the waist with a leather belt. On her finger she wore the ring of the priestess.

“Mara, has my beloved called you too?”

Gathering his courage, he reached out to touch her, but his fingers passed through her shadowy form. The sending was like a familiar dream created by a wind funnel of mist and light, suspending all time and space. The image wavered in the growing light until it dispersed into nothingness. It was the time outside of time, the magical instant when night transcended to dawn. The enchantment of the sending could not be sustained as the dawn lifted its bright veil to morning.

He blinked. The wind died down as the clouds parted. The sending vanished. The rising sun painted a canvas of color on the dark blue sky.

He closed his eyes, trying to imagine the sacred isle. For an instant, he heard the Priestesses’ sweet communal voices rising up in prayer. He had no time to lose. He disappeared among the thick moss-covered trees. The deep, lush green forest swallowed any trace of him.



## chapter three

### the funeral

AS THE SWEET SCENT OF HIM VANISHED, VIVIENNE SHOOK HER head. She had been adrift in the depths of her own despair and had forgotten all about the cemetery.

She leaned on the windowsill and closed her eyes, recalling the noisy gathering. There amid the moss-covered marble and granite headstones in the Lady of the Isle Cemetery, Vivienne believed magic was real—the sort Gran had always spoken of; the peaceful, yet frightening beautiful, kind.

It had been at least five years since she had been back there. It was Gran's last wish to be buried in the family plot next to Vivienne's mother and father. Two weeks ago on that crisp, overcast March morning, the sea breeze had a bite to it on Long Island. She remembered pulling up her black winter coat tightly around her. Shivering, Vivienne was grateful that Chris had insisted on coming with her. Together they sat and watched as the women of various ages in black suits, dresses, and hats stepped up to the casket to pay their last respects to her grandmother.

Bewildered, Chris nudged her. Her black eyeliner was running down her cold cheeks and her windblown hair had wild red and purple streaks. "I thought this was gonna be a private ceremony," she murmured, embarrassed. "Who are all these women?"

Vivienne gazed into her pale blue eyes, with surprise and alarm written on them.

"I dunno, I've never seen any of them before."

"Are you sure there was no an announcement in the paper?"

"I didn't tell anyone but the lawyer and the next-door neighbors. I don't know how all these women found out."

As the two girls sat under the blustery canopy in front of the polished mahogany casket draped in flowers, the odd women came up and stared at the large portrait of Louise and then murmured their condolences to Vivienne. Both of them felt their intense curiosity about Vivienne, who was the spitting image of her grandmother when she was young.

Unable to bear their scrutiny any longer, Vivienne stood up with Chris and walked a few feet away, looking past the elaborate gravesite surrounded by wreaths of lilies and white roses. In the deep sea fog, shadowy hooded figures appeared floating among the bracken and trees, like dark sentries. Vivienne shook her head. A strange feeling rushed over her, as a tingling sensation shot up her spine. “Chris, look over there.”

As they both stared, ghostly apparitions seemed to sway in the sea fog around the mossy headstones. Strange lights danced in the mist. Terrified, Vivienne held Chris’s hand tighter as they heard the wild cries of the seabirds.

Then off in the distance, Vivienne noticed a golden light appear. It surrounded a young man standing on the cliffs. He was looking out at the sea when he turned his chiseled face and his fierce, brilliant golden gaze met hers. A raw, blazing flash of emotion shot through her and then in an instant he was gone. Shaking, she staggered backward and tugged anxiously at Chris’s sleeve.

“Did you see him?” Vivienne asked as the color drained from her face.

Chris turned to her with her eyes stinging from the cold mist. “See what? I’m still freaked out by those moving shadows over there by the graves.”

As the bell tolled they returned to their seats, Vivienne moving closer for moral support.

Behind them an attractive old woman with gray hair came gliding up to the casket whispering a strange magical blessing. Then she placed some wreaths woven in spring flowers and vines upon it. Turning to Vivienne, she lightly touched her shoulder.



## chapter three

“Do you mind, child, if I put these here?”

Vivienne shook her head.

The tall, graceful woman leaned into her.

“My name’s Lilly Forester. I was one of Louise’s closest friends. You must be Vivienne, her granddaughter, and this must be your artist friend from boarding school, Chris Hern. Louise used to talk so much about both of you.”

Stunned, Vivienne and Chris stared at her. Vivienne had lived with her grandmother ever since she was two years old. As far as she was aware, her grandmother had never mentioned Lilly, nor had any real friends. None of what she just heard made any sense, but nevertheless Vivienne thanked her for her kindness. Lilly returned back to the noisy assembly. “Who the heck was that?” Chris asked in an astounded whisper.

“I don’t know, it seems that Gran didn’t trust me enough to tell me about her life—oh God, it’s time, the music’s starting.”

As the organ music wafted in on the wind, Vivienne took out a piece of paper and stood up with Chris standing stubbornly by her side. Vivienne’s sapphire eyes filled with tears as she gazed upon the casket. Her jet-black hair blew about her square, angular face and Irish features. Two priests eyed her suspiciously as they walked past, making her even more nervous. She concentrated on the piece of paper with her hands shaking.

“I—I want to thank you all for coming to honor the memory of my grandmother, Louise Le Faye Claire-Gerouard. She was an amazing woman. I know she knew how much I loved her and how grateful I was that she gave me such a wonderful life with her. She told me once that she believed when she passed in this world, she would be reborn in another. Death never frightened her. She embraced life and lived every experience to the fullest. I am very sad that this part of her journey has ended, but I know she’ll never be far away. Bless you, Gran. You’ll always be in our hearts. Rest in peace.”

The gathering bowed their heads and said a silent prayer.

As it began to rain, Vivienne threw a handful of dirt and sand on the casket. Then picking up one white rose, she buried her face in it as her tears flowed freely. Gently, Chris squeezed her

arm and escorted her back to the waiting limousine. Grasping the family Amulet she had hidden under her dress, Vivienne slid into the backseat next to Chris, relieved it was all over. Now she wore the responsibility of the family's heritage around her neck.

As she let the painful memory fade, she turned away from her bedroom window and climbed back into bed. Sitting up, she glanced over at the guest book from the memorial service that was still lying on her desk. It was so weird that none of those other women had bothered to sign it or leave their names or numbers.

*Did they know anything about the famed family treasure?*

Reaching for it, she thought about one of the rare occasions when Gran had actually spoken of the Amulet's magic and its importance to her family. They had been rocking together on the front-porch swing after lunch. Vivienne vividly remembered how she reached out for it as it glimmered in the sunlight around Gran's neck.

"The Amulet's full of magic and every Le Faye in our family has worn it for generations. It has secrets only for us, but just one of us will know its true meaning."

Distressed, Vivienne wondered if she was the one who was meant to learn its secrets. In the back of her mind, she hoped not. She turned the ruby upright. The bright red stone drew her into its many shimmering facets. An image wavered in her mind. The boy with the golden eyes was standing motionless like a perfectly formed sculpture, his skin glimmering in the light amidst a dark and foreboding wood. He was staring straight ahead, not seeing her. Then he was gone. Startled and angry, she clutched the Amulet even tighter.

"What are you hiding?" Vivienne demanded.

