

EXTREME MAKEOVER - WORLD EDITION

Chapter 5

By Atlantis Jordan

DISCLAIMER: *This fictional tale involves science fiction and adult same-sex situations. If you are offended by such material then this story may not be for you. All characters are fictional with loosely based material derived from my own real life situations and overactive imagination. Regardless of the title, this story isn't about the popular reality show, Extreme Makeover. I hope you enjoy my first public offering. Comments can be sent to: atlantisjordan.com@gmail.com (yes, it's a correct address).*

"Come on, Dante! We want you to come with us! We both feel that moving to Colorado will do you a world of good." Brian says trying to keep up with Dante who is practically running through Briarwood Mall, a popular indoor shopping center in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

"You don't get it, I don't need to go. I've conquered my demons. I feel good about life. Plus, I like it here. Isn't Colorado arid, dry and devoid of green stuff?" Dante says halting in front of the Discovery Channel store. "You know how I love trees and Michigan has lots of them. What the hell will I do in a state where the only trees you see are 2 miles above sea level?"

"That's not true! Denver is filled with trees. There are trees in Colorado. Just not many of them like Ann Arbor... unless, you live in Colorado Springs. At least come out with us and check it out. You can't just pass judgment if you've never even visited the state!" Brian says while blocking Dante's way into the store.

"I don't see why you two can't stay here. Why do you have to move anyway?" Dante ducks under Brian's arm and enters the store.

Brian rolls his eyes and sighs. He was positive Dante would jump at the chance to start over fresh. He just can't understand why Dante is hell bent on staying in a state whose economy is dying... not to mention every important person he's ever been close to has already moved on. In one way or another.

"You know why, Dante. The new promotion requires relocation to Denver. And you know how long Mark and I have worked for this. Come on! Think of this as a new adventure. Hey, if you don't like it, you can always come back. I'll even pay for your relocation back here." Brian senses Dante's hesitation and smiles... he goes in for the kill. "Just give us two months to convince you as well as Denver. I'm 100% sure you will come to love my home state as well."

Dante places his hand on one of those static electricity globes. He stares at the sparks attracted to his fingertips as he touches the ball. Sol appears in spirit form beside him.

"Dante, I've told you that you can't change the grand design. You must follow the exact path you have taken until you reach the same moment you last remembered. Any altercation could have irreparable consequences. Go to Denver. You'll have control back over your destiny soon enough." Sol secretly prays to Gaia that her child listens to reason.

"Fine, I'll go. ...as long as this saves me from your constant nagging!"

"Sorry..." Brian says hurt by Dante's comment.

Dante realizes his mistake and catches himself just in time before explaining that he was talking to Sol. "I'm sorry, Brian. I didn't mean to talk to you like that. I've just had a lot on my mind these days and have been feeling a bit... uhm..."

“...like an asshole?” Brian says with a smirk on his face.

Dante punches him in the shoulder and walks out of the store. “No, I was going to say a little bitchy but I guess asshole was well deserved. I know you and Mark are just trying to help. And don’t get me wrong, I am grateful but I am just feeling like my life isn’t mine to lead anymore and I can’t shake that feeling.”

Brian puts an arm around Dante squeezes his shoulder. “You know we love you, right? Always will.”

“Yeah, I do. And I love you guys as well. Thanks.” Dante looks over at Brian and senses that he still has feelings for him. “Why aren’t you with your boyfriend?”

Brian gets a confused look on his face at the abrupt change in topic. “Oh, uhm... he’s in Toronto for the weekend. I decided not to go. We had a fight.”

“About what?” Dante asks almost knowing the answer.

“About my promotion. About how much more time I spent with you and Mark and not him. About the move. About... well, everything! I think this promotion happened at the right time. It gives me a chance to move on as well.” Brian says as he looks away from Dante pretending to be interested in the shops around him.

Dante knows better though. He knows that he was the reason for the fight. And he feels badly that because of him, Brian isn’t giving more of himself to the men he dates. He remembers Brian meeting his co-worker, Sean, shortly after moving to Denver and how much Brian connected with him. Sol was right. He has to play out the past as it happened to avoid consequences... mainly Brian and Sean probably never meeting because of him.

Dante places his hand on Brian’s shoulder and smiles. Brian smiles back as he knows that smile all too well. “I’ll go.”

“Go where?” Brian teases.

“You know where.” Dante says irritated by Brian’s knowing smile.

“I want to hear you say it... go where?” Brian leans in playfully.

“Denver fuckin’ Colorado, okay!” Dante barks out a little more loudly than he intended. He then makes a speedy exit from the Mall after drawing the attention of most of the patrons. His embarrassment is made all the more tangible by Brian’s unmistakable laughter clearly audible above the noise of the Mall.

Sol secretly watches the exchange and smiles to himself. “That’s my boy. I knew he would make the right decision.”

Unbeknownst by Sol, an Atlantian infiltrator by the name of Raynor was also watching the exchange. He raises his arm to speak into a device on his wrist.

“My king... I think I may have found the Gaian.” Raynor whispers into his wristlink. “The bio-energy reading you received was verified. I scanned the human called Dante and the readings matched. But it’s strange because I’ve been scanning this region for months and the signal just appeared...”

“Maybe there was a blocking device in play here that prevented earlier detection. Whatever it is, we now have an advantage.” Xander, monarch to the Atlantian dynasty says as he looks out his portal to the beautiful planet below. He sends a silent prayer to Gaia that his mission can be completed by the time the Centennial Equinox begins... now that his suspicions about the gender of the Gaian child are confirmed.

"Sir, should I attempt contact?"

"No. You said that you suspect that the Gaian would be relocating to a different region? Then wait for him to settle before attempting contact. We want him settled so that you can properly prepare him." Xander says while monitoring his son, Orian's exercise regime with some of the other royal guards. "I will have to think up a distraction for Orian so that you get the time you need to prepare the Gaian."

"As you wish, Sir. I will stay in the Gaian's shadow as I've been picking up residual scanner readings for the past three months. I suspect that it's the Centaurians." Raynor says as he exits the Mall. "Don't worry though, my King. I will not let any Centaurian come near the Gaian."

Five weeks later...

"What is a Centennial Equinox, Sol?" Dante asks while participating in one of Sol's training exercises. He has been diligently working on mastering his powers at a more rapid pace as the move gets nearer.

"Essentially, it's a renewal cycle that occurs every thousand years. Before you even ask, yes, centennial usually means 100 years by Terran standards but on Atlantis, it's measured as 1000 years. You forget that Atlantian's have a much longer life span than Terrans thus a different interpretation of time." Sol says while maintaining a virtual environment for which allows Dante to use his powers without detection from both the Atlantian's and the Centaurians.

"I see. So is this equinox about to occur on Earth? I only ask because I feel some type of shift is occurring planet-wide... it's a weird feeling and I have had these strange dreams as of late."

Sol advances on Dante grabbing him by the shoulders, "How long have you been having these dreams?"

"Only a few days, why? What's wrong?" Dante says alarmed by Sol's panicked expression.

Sol breathes a little easier. "It's nothing. I was worried that the Centennial Equinox had already started but it's not due until the day you move to Denver."

"Why then? And what does that have to do with the dreams I've been having?"

"Dante... you are the first full-blooded Gaian born to Terra since the dawn of mankind on this world. The dreams you are having is called the awakening. You are becoming more and more attuned to the Planet thus you feel everything... literally. I'm trying to help you adapt to this change so that you can handle yourself when the day comes that you are fully connected to Terra and ultimately its fate." Sol releases Dante and walks about 20 feet away before waving his hands. "Our training session is complete." Just then Dante's apartment living room materializes around them.

"Wow, will be able to do what you just did?" Dante asks excitedly. To him, it's like being in an episode of Star Trek Next Generation with the ships holodeck.

"Yes, and a lot more. But baby steps my pupil... baby steps. More power than you can ever imagine will be within your grasp soon. But it will destroy you and everything else if you are not prepared to control it properly."

Dante nods his head in agreement and walks into the kitchen for a drink of water. 'So I can teleport myself anywhere or create alternate pockets of reality?' He thinks to himself. 'Hmmm... I may have to test that out. I'll start with traveling to Denver... just to see if I can do it.' Dante is as scared as he is excited about these powers. He feels like a superhero from his childhood comics. 'And didn't Sol say that I have control of the weather and geological activity? I don't want any more natural disasters occurring because I can't control my emotions. I'll have to practice using those abilities as well.'

"Dante? Dante? Are you listening to me? I asked if you remember what your dreams were about." Sol stares at Dante trying to sense if anything is wrong. "You are blocking me! How did you learn to do that?"

"I'm not... am I?" Dante beams as he hated having someone around who could literally read his thoughts whenever he wanted. "If I am, I'm definitely not aware of it."

"Right..." Sol doesn't believe him but what other choice does he have. He has to prepare him for the upcoming struggle between Orian and Omega. "Well, I believe we are finished for today. I will leave you to pack up for the move this weekend. If you need me, just call out my name."

"Sure thing and thanks for everything you've done for me" Dante says sincerely.

"My pleasure and privilege! Remember, stick to the events that have happened. Don't alter your behavior at all. You will have your life back in no time. I promise." Sol says hoping that his words ring true to himself as well.

That weekend...

Dante paces his balcony off his apartment with his cell phone to his ear. He's not nervous because of the person on the phone but more impatience in wanting to initiate his planned experiment. Sol had announced that he wouldn't reappear until after the move so this was the perfect time to make his attempt. The only problem is....

"Dante, you should've been here hours ago! Why aren't you done packing? We leave in about 4 hours! And you know how Brian hates rush hour traffic!" Mark yells over the phone. Dante smiles as he is all too familiar with Mark's mothering and uncalled for hysteria. But he grows impatient as all he wants to do is get off the phone and begin his experiment.

"Mark! Relax. Everything is ready here. I just have some... loose ends to take care of and I'll be right over to help you guys load up. Yes, the movers just finished loading my stuff but I have utilities to take care of... the fucking cable company messed up my disconnection date! Again!" That was a lie but you could always count on the utilities to fuck something up.

"Alright but get your butt over here in the next hour so that we can leave on time!"

"Yes, mom." Dante silently giggles to himself as he knows Mark hates being called that.

"Shut up! Just be here or I'll drag you over here myself! Don't think I won't do it."

"Oh Mark, I wouldn't put it past you to do just that. I said I'll be there. I've got things to do and you're not helping. Bye!" Dante hangs up quickly before Mark has a chance to retort. "Man, he can be a worry wart sometimes! Now where was I... yes!"

As he walks into the bedroom, he lights a few candles to set the mood and takes a seat in the middle of the now empty bedroom. Taking up a traditional at rest meditation position on the floor, Dante begins slowing his breathing just taking in long deep breaths. As his mind clears and his heart rate slows, he visualizes his future apartment in Denver and tries to picture himself standing in the parking lot.

"Sol makes this seem so easy. Now what did he always do before teleporting us to his little pocket of reality outside the space/time continuum... oh, yes! I almost forgot." Just as Dante raised his hands to mimic Sol's hand gestures, Sol appears.

"Dante! What the hell are you doing! STOP!"

It's too late. Dante startled by Sol's sudden appearance disappears and then reappears a few seconds

later. He has a dazed look on his face as he gets up off the floor and faces Sol, who is staring at him with a stricken expression.

“Dante? Are you alright? You were gone for just a few seconds, where did you go?”

Dante blinks a few times, looks down at his hands and then to Sol and waves his hand at him.

“What the...” Sol disappears instantly.

“Where did I go, you say? I was trying to teleport to Denver but something else happened. I connected with Terra and I am through with listening to you and everyone else concerning what my destiny is. Earth has spoken and she is not happy with how humans have been treating the Planet.”

Sol materializes a few feet away erects a psychic shield around Dante. He knows it won't hold him but he needs to reason with the Gaian in order to salvage what Dante's little experiment has destroyed.

“Why were you trying to groom me to hook up with one of those aliens when I don't need them? Why are you so afraid of the equinox? You make it sound like this horrible catastrophic event that I must prevent. But you know what? After finally getting the truth, I have my own agenda now and it doesn't... include... YOU!

With that, the psychic shield was broken and the shockwave shattered all the windows in the apartment and sent Sol flying into the wall. He escaped harm by reverting to his energy-based form.

“I know you are upset, Dante. It wasn't my intention to lie to you and I haven't. I was simply giving you the info you needed and only what was appropriate to keep you sane. I haven't tried to temper you in one direction or another. Didn't I say that you would have control over your destiny soon? I haven't lied to you. I am only trying to help you!”

Lowering his hands, Dante drops to the floor and begins crying. “You ask me to be the savior of mankind but what has mankind done to deserve saving? Maybe the equinox is supposed to happen in order to restore the proper ecological balance. Maybe what the world needs is a makeover?”

“Not that kind of makeover, Dante. That would eliminate all human life on this planet.” Sol slowly approaches Dante. “And I'm sure you wouldn't want to be responsible for wiping out an entire species.”

“Maybe I would. Humans have done nothing but destroy the planet that provides them food, water and protection. They act like they are Gods! That they have a right to do as they please at the expense of the other co-inhabitants of Earth. Sol, open your eyes!”

He walks over to the balcony and points at a nearby dumpster. “Look! Humans have destroyed so much natural habitat that small mammals and birds have become garbage disposals. Their whole physiology has changed to where they now depend on humans for food! That isn't right and it sure isn't part of your damned grand design. Humans have not shown me that they are even worthy of being saved. Hell, they can't even save themselves!”

Dante stops and looks towards the front door. “Leave me!”

“No, we are not done. I need to make sure you are alright. You are reacting exactly the way I feared you would. Please, you are this planet's only hope for survival. And think of how many ways you can now help show humanity the consequences of their actions. You be a spokes model for the animal and plant kingdoms!” Sol advances on Dante.

“I said... LEAVE ME!” Dante waves his hand again and Sol screams in pain before he disappears. Dante feels a moment of regret for hurting Sol before the feeling dissipates as someone knocks on the door. Upon opening it, Mark charges into the apartment.

“Why are you still here? You promised that you would be on time for us to leave. It is now approximately one hour past the time we were supposed to leave. Dante, I love you dearly but sometimes you make me want to.... What the fuck happened here?” Mark says looking at the broken windows.

“That’s what I was going to tell you. I needed to get a hold of the landlord about that. I’m sorry I didn’t call earlier but I was just as stunned as you. Thanks for reminding me about the move. Let’s get going now.”

“Wait, what about the windows. Did you get in touch with maintenance?”

“No, but I left two messages. Let’s just leave before it gets too late. Don’t say another word, we’re leaving... now.” Dante pushes Mark out the door before taking more last look at the apartment. He has decided to follow the events leading to Sol’s interference. Mark’s appearance somehow brought him out of the daydream he was having a minute ago. Well, it felt like a dream. He didn’t feel like himself at all and he recalls telling Sol to leave but why did he leave. Did he do something to Sol?

While walking up to the car, he sees a guy fling a fast food sack out of his car window. A couple birds fly down to investigate the bag and the guy purposely puts the car in reverse and attempts to run over the birds.

Buckling his seatbelt, he mentally screams at the birds to fly away. But he feels the hunger that the birds are experiencing and knows that hunger is ruling out over their survival instinct. The anger and rage he felt towards that particular human who is intentionally trying to harm the birds’ wells up and he visualizes a bolt of lightning striking the vehicle. Just then, the sky rapidly gets dark and out of nowhere, a bolt of lightning strikes the man’s vehicle electrocuting the occupant instantly. The car rolls to a halt before hitting the birds who are happily picking apart the remainder of a hamburger bun and fries.

“Holy shit! Did you see that? Oh my God, I wonder if that guy is okay.” Mark stops the car and attempts to get out. “What?”

“There are fifteen people running to the guy’s rescue. We have to get going if we are to beat rush hour. We still have time if we leave now. The guy will be okay. There are other good Samaritans to take care of the situation. Let’s go!”

Mark looks over at his best friend almost not recognizing him. Just then, Dante looks over and smiles at him. Then places a hand on his and gently squeezes it.

“Trust me. He will get the help he needs. You’re not a doctor so what can you do. There are others around who will the authorities. We are not needed here.”

“Maybe you’re right. This has been some day.” Marks says, as he leaves the apartment complex. “First, all of your apartment windows are blown out... from the inside, I might add. And now that guy getting struck by lightning. This has definitely become one hell of a freaky Friday!”

“Yeah, it has. And unfortunately, this is just the tip of the iceberg.” Dante says absent-mindedly.

“What was that, Dante?”

“Nothing. All I said was yes it was a strange day. And I can’t wait for it to be over.” Smiling at Mark, Dante turns towards the passenger side window. His smile instantly drops as he realizes that he probably just killed a man. Then he sobers just as quickly remembering what that man was trying to do.

“I will not feel guilty for protecting the innocent. And anyone else who kills for any other reason other than for survival will feel my wrath. And if that means wiping humanity off the face of the Earth... then so be it.” Dante says to himself.

“Did you say something, Dante?” Mark asks as they pull up to Mark and Brian’s house.

“No, just saying to myself how much I’m looking forward to waking up in newer surroundings. You know, I actually feel good about taking a different direction with my life. And I thank you and Brian for convincing me to do this. I think it’s probably the best wakeup call I’ve ever had.”

Mark smiles at Dante as he exits the car. Dante waits a moment before exiting himself. As he walks up the sidewalk, he sees a stray dog eyeing him from behind a bush. He stops and smiles at the dog. The dog lunges out from behind the bush, teeth bared and racing towards him to attack.

“Dante look out!” Brian yells as he leaps from the porch.

Dante puts out his hand and the dog stops immediately, whimpering and bowing in submission. “That’s okay little guy, I know you were just scared, hurt and angry.” And in lower tones... “You only take it out on those who hurt you. Not innocent bystanders. Not all humans are bad.” The dog wags his tail, as if understanding walks up to Dante and licks his outstretched hand. “Go on now... take your revenge.” The dog trots away with his tail wagging vigorously.

“Unbelievable... Are you alright? I swear that Rottweiler was going to tear you apart. That looked like old man Calloway’s dog. I wonder how it got out, if it is. No matter... as long as you are safe.”

“I am fine. But someone may want to call Animal Services about Mr. Calloway. If that dog is out, somebody better secure him before he really hurts someone. I just hope that this Calloway man isn’t an animal abuser.”

“I don’t know but it’s not our problem. Now get inside, we have a ton of boxes to load up before we leave.”

“Sure, I’ll be right in... I just need to tie my laces.” Dante lied as he turned away from Mark and bent down.

“Alright, we’ll be in the basement. Start with the bedrooms. I’ll be back up to help out in a few minutes.”

After Brian left, Dante stood back up and looked directly into the sky. ‘I know you’re out there Omega. I see why you want to destroy Earth but I don’t believe in your way either. Neither you nor Orian will have me. I would rather destroy everything before I let another man get that close to me... and hurt me again.’

A single tear rolls down his face as he turns around and heads back into the house. Just across the street, a man hides behind a parked van. He witnessed everything including what Dante said at the end. What has him worried is how does Dante know about Omega and Orian when they’ve never met? Or have they?

“Something is not right here. I have to let King Xander know about this immediately.” Raynor presses a button on his wristlink and disappears.

End of Chapter 5....

Note from author: *I do appreciate the emails asking about the next chapter. It keeps me motivated to continue sharing. Please feel free to email me at atlantisjordan.com@gmail.com.*

PS... I am also working on two prequels tentatively called "Chasing Dante" and "My First Night With You". The latter deals with my real life love story of meeting my first real love interest, being secretly pursued and coming out together. This will be listed in the College section. The first will be also based on a real life situation where I was pursued by two suitors (Mark and Brian? Maybe... you'll have to wait and see). It was as awkward a situation as it was exciting for me. Who wouldn't want two hot guys fighting for their affections?

I'm writing the outlines for both stories so that I can release those stories quicker when I begin work on them. I'm learning a lot about planning and devoting time to writing these stories. So hopefully, you'll see more frequent chapter releases. Thank you to the other authors who have shared their techniques and words of encouragement! It means a lot.