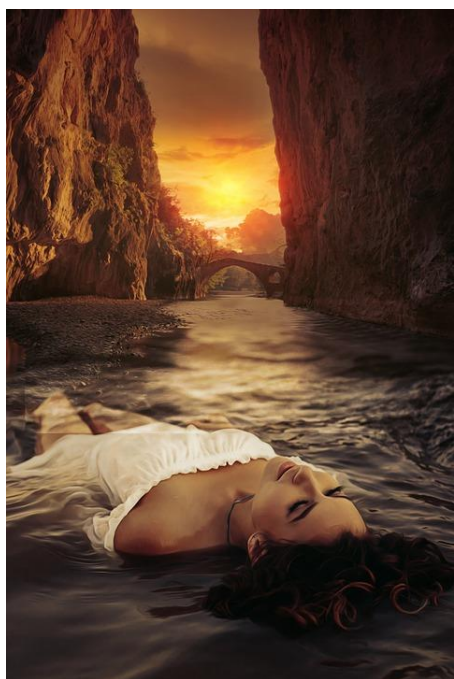


# METAL OF THE GODS





Copyright © 2024 Lynda R. Edwards

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any form without written permission except for brief quotations in critical articles or reviews.

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, businesses, organizations, places, events, and incidents either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

For more information, contact Lynda R. Edwards

<http://www.lyndaredwards.com>

# 1

**T**HE PRIESTESS SALUSTRA hurried through the crowded streets of Atlantis. She could feel the tension as Poseidon's anger permeated the air. The people she maneuvered around had no idea what was in store for them.

Poseidon stood on the balcony that ran along the domed roof of his temple. The majestic shrine stood on the outermost ring of the concentric rings encircling a tropical oasis. At his feet lay the most advanced civilization man would ever know.

As the sun rose, Mount Atla's peaks, the city's watch guard, lay in the distance. Below, the bay's blue waters softly rose and fell, gently tossing the ships anchored in the harbor.

Poseidon lowered his head, and the city appeared in dazzling white below him,

climbing upwards towards the clouds with great pillars and walls, a vast complex of gleaming stone. A throbbing hum rose as its citizens ebbed and flowed like the changing sea as they moved about their day.

Salustra's arrival at the gates attracted his attention. His fury grew as his eyes followed her entrance into his temple. She looked up, their eyes locked before she looked away, her steps drumming a staccato beat against the smooth marble floor. She crept toward the great man, noting the scowl on his face and the furrow of his brow. She stopped a few feet behind him, her head bowed.

"How do I keep the love of my people, Salustra," Poseidon asked without turning to look at her. "Not by loving them! That is clear to me now." He paused as his rage grew in force.

"My people!" He thundered. "Depraved in their urbanity! Must I understand their vices and their insolences to rule them now? We have achieved the peak of scientific understanding. Yet we are a nation in decay!"

"They continue to decorate temples and

build great alters for you,” Salustra commented softly. “It is a reassuring symbol of tradition.” She knew her words wouldn’t soothe him. She was right.

“Religion has lost the power to sway them,” Poseidon replied. “They perform their religious duties, not believing in what they do, providing nothing but lip service.”

“Feed their vanity more than their mouths,” Salustra offered. “They will love and acclaim you for it.”

Poseidon scoffed loudly at that comment. “They are composed of greedy souls, hiding their lust under cover of love, veiling their lewd lips under pious smiles, loving their neighbors outwardly but hating them in their hearts. They claim to be shocked at the vice that surrounds them but remain secretly absorbed in its debauchery.”

Salustra knew he found this iniquity perplexing.

“Your people are tired of discipline and the need to exercise restraint in the great future you have built for them,” Salustra counseled. “But I don’t believe they mean to discard the

mantle of authority in the hopes of achieving liberation from the Gods who have made it all possible for them.”

“The people have grown too civilized with theory,” Poseidon countered. “Success carries the seed of destruction, and I fear it has found fertile ground in a complacent people. They will capitulate rather than face the enemy of contrary thought. I fear the damage is done.”

“Sire, you have a Council of Nobles and Commoners alike, twenty-four representatives of both the people and the Gods,” Salustra began.

“Ahhh, don’t speak to me of those incompetent and shift-less souls,” Poseidon roared. They are all independently wealthy from the posts they hold. They no longer engage in trade or industry, content to live off the investments of the past. Atlantis is becoming a nation of paupers, enslaved people, and aristocrats. A society that cannot long endure without breeding discontent, revolution, and national chaos.”

“It is true, sire,” Salustra capitulated. “Our courts are slow, and punishment is uneven,

with immunity from justice becoming a matter of money and influence. The very bloodstream of Atlantis is being polluted. But I beg you! What is the cause? Is it unjust laws, poverty, or overpopulation? A turn away from honest labor for fair wages? Is lethargy protesting against a miserable and drab existence?"

"You test my patience, Priestess!" Poseidon bellowed. "If Atlantis does not worship her Gods, it is your fault! Priests and Priestesses who interpret but encourage 'do as I preach, not as I do' have allowed religion to become polluted with superstition!"

"A ruler can only go as far as the people wish to go," Salustra said quietly. "I have counseled the Twenty-Four against such complacency."

Poseidon clapped his hands in agreement. "And the result is a people corrupt and cowardly, looking to be cared for from the cradle to the grave. A welfare state of parasites!"

Salustra smiled wryly to herself. *How well he knows his people*, she thought.



"The temples of the Gods have become the philosopher's realm, and each one preaches a contradicting gospel," Poseidon complained. "These so-called intellects wage wars dedicated to speculation."

"That is true, sire," Salustra agreed. "Theseus, weak of body but envious of virility, preaches hatred, strength, and courage, saying equality is the doctrine of the democrat and goes against man's ruthless nature. Belus reasons that ultimate happiness depends on man's harmony with nature and that men are inherently good but absorb malevolent sin."

"Fools! One and all!" Poseidon raged.

"Neleus believes that God, the universe, and man are one in a great pantheon, moving together toward a single shared goal. Agenor goes one step further, claiming an ideal state exists when all individuals operate as coordinating wheels, spinning together toward a common good," Salustra completed her list of the different schools of thought permeating Atlantis.

"Spinners of dreams in a web of deception!" Poseidon muttered. "Thought is

the death knell of action.”

“But don’t the Gods experiment with us mortals?” Salustra asked quietly. “Maybe it is not us who should consider whether or not the goal is worth the effort or to decide the issue at all. If free will dictates that what we desire is what we must work toward achieving, then does that not mean God is in us, and we are in God?”

“You speak in riddles, Priestess,” Poseidon was losing patience with her.

“Nay, I do not,” Salustra said. “If your effort, as our God, is toward ultimate perfection, it causes upheavals in human nature. We are imperfect, sire, and we fail.”

“Yet all your philosophers claim to know the truth. They claim their truth is the only truth,” Poseidon countered.

“Today’s truths are tomorrow’s falsehoods, sire,” Salustra answered.

“The doctrine of intolerance, hatred, and fear war against the doctrine of tolerance, love, and courage,” Poseidon mused. “There is no consensus of hope over evidence or knowledge over materialism.”

“Sire, these so-called proponents of truth do nothing but attack human origin and lower the dignity of man,” Salustra added.

“You have to give them credit. These thespians love their drama,” Poseidon conceded.

“It is much more palatable to have a man come forth from the loins of Gods than to creep painfully up the evolution ladder. This is further proof that these religions are just another example of man’s unrelenting and insolent ego,” Salustra said dishearteningly.

“They promote the desire for society to make gods of all men,” Poseidon concluded.

“Milos is, without a doubt, the most dangerous of them all,” Salustra continued as Poseidon began to pace. “His teachings have submerged individualism under a quagmire of mediocrity. He has flattened the mountains of thought, and a vast barren plain remains. The great among us are reduced to the level of the masses, killing originality. We now call mediocre men, great, and great men, madmen.” Salustra fell silent in the wake of Poseidon’s aggravation.

“And he preaches this doctrine in the shadow of my temple,” Poseidon bellowed.

As Salustra cowered in the terrifying visage of his anger, he relented.

“And you believe it makes it difficult for you? The very exploiters of your followers?” Poseidon asked derision in every word.

“Milos does not value duty, sire,” Salustra said cautiously. “He is vague about what constitutes duty but claims it can only be virtuous if unpleasant. He speaks of duty to the state, family, and oneself as the only virtue worthy of consideration. He has confused love with purity.”

“But we know love to be a pleasure,” Poseidon said, looking at Salustra’s downcast face. “To deprive oneself of pleasure is to become cantankerous and harsh, wanting only to inflict this discomfiture on hapless family and friends. Yet the greedy statesman desires duty to be taught to the masses so he can more readily exploit them, like the wolf who taught the sheep to be submissive so that he might devour them.”

“Such is the fate of those who serve

humanity,” Salustra replied meekly.

Poseidon snorted. “Better to concede to fate!”

“What would you have us do, sire?” Salustra asked.

“I have tried to free my people from these charlatans who demand unquestioning obedience,” Poseidon lamented. “I have opened their eyes to science, hoping they would jettison the yoke of superstition. I had hoped to free them from the chains of artificial religions, but I am condemned and cursed for my efforts.” Poseidon’s sadness permeated his voice.

“You could have slain a thousand of us, and all would have been silent, subservient to your Statesmen and Priests,” Salustra countered.

Poseidon looked at her. His eyes were so damning she was forced to look away.

“The hour of reckoning is upon the City of Atlantis,” Poseidon warned.

“That we have challenged our Gods will now condemn us to chaos and ruin?” Salustra asked, alarmed.

“What would you have me do, Priestess?”

Poseidon questioned harshly.

Salustra knew her Lord's anger would exact a heavy toll. "Allow me a prophesy, sire!" Salustra begged.

"A savior?" Poseidon shouted. "Whatever message your redeemer has for the evil generations to come will be drenched in his blood! Your savior stands to be betrayed; his very existence doubted by the generations that follow."

"No, sire," Salustra begged. "Atlantis will reveal itself only to its liberator- one who will carry its torch into the darkness to free the exploited, bring enlightenment to the ignorant, and gladness to the hearts of the downtrodden. Atlantis' protector will open the doors to intellectual freedom and usher in the dawn of enlightenment. The love they possess will release humankind from the chains of oppression!"

"You doom your redeemer to suffer a cruel destiny, Salustra!" Poseidon warned. "Such is the fate of all those who have pierced the veil of lies and hypocrisy. To end tyranny and enslavement of the weak by the powerful

will result in the death and anonymity of your savior.”

“Ah, sire,” Salustra said, her voice soft as she looked toward the future. “The passion that inflames Atlantis’ savior will never be quenched!”

His loyal Priestess’s plea moved Poseidon. “Write your tome Salustra! Wait for your redeemer. I will have mercy on their soul.”

That night, as Salustra slept, the waters below Atlantis rose as the gates of heaven opened. A great noise pierced the night sky as Mount Atla belched a noxious sulfuric gas. Atlantis seemed to heave, breathe deeply of the deadly fumes, and sink beneath the waters without further warning. Millions perished without an offer of prayer to the Gods who abandoned them.

Salustra opened her eyes to an encompassing darkness that spread across an ocean. She was alone as she bobbed in the roiling waters around her. Terror gripped her heart, the sole remnant of a destroyed people headed toward an unknown port.

She closed her eyes as an unbidden voice

invaded her thoughts.

“A new world will emerge, and in it, your savior will dispel old lies, abandon old ways, and lead a new generation of humankind,” Poseidon said. “For this, I have brought you forth from the other side of the flood!”

### **Cuba 1980**

Isabella knew the mysteries the mountains, valleys, and sea on her island guarded. She spent her life finding them, then hiding them away again. Secrets were the only thing the world saw when they looked at Cuba, an island shrouded in enigmas.

Looking at the sample in her hand, she sighed. She held Cuba's greatest treasure, the one that would give the island independence from all who sought to rule her. She dragged her eyes from the rock and looked out over the valley sprawled below her, a myriad of hues of green only found in the Caribbean islands.

A gust of wind wound through the valley and ruffled her black hair. Slightly irritated by the intrusion, she threw the rock sample on



the table before her and fell into the chair beside it.

This was it! Her life's work was reduced to a small, glittering piece of shale. She touched the rock gently, emotion running through her. From the day she was old enough to understand the spoken word, her life had been building toward this moment.

She was so intent on finding this metal of the gods, so focused on this one goal, that she realized she had no idea what would come next.

**THE END**

# A b o u t   t h e A u t h o r

Lynda R. Edwards's novels have garnered critical acclaim for their powerful storytelling, vivid imagery, and insightful exploration of Caribbean society and history.

Critics have praised her ability to weave intricate narratives that captivate readers from start to finish and her skill in delving into the complexities of human relationships and cultural identity, transporting readers to the heart of the Caribbean experience.

She is deeply committed to promoting the unique voices and stories of the Caribbean.

**[www.lyndaredwards.com](http://www.lyndaredwards.com)**



@lynda\_r\_edwards



Lynda R Edwards-Author

From the Author of:

**Redemption Songs**

**Friendship Estate**

And the exciting conclusion  
to Metal of the Gods...

**I AM CUBA**

In "I AM CUBA," Lynda R. Edwards delivers a pulse-pounding thriller in which the personal and political collide, and the price of freedom is measured in secrets and blood!

