

Westcrest

Episode #6 — Chatravati

Jeremy only hears the gunshots that save his life.

A few seconds ago he realised that none of this was real. Flying motorbikes, invisible islands and ravenous trolls didn't fit into his concept of reality—so he discarded them. But now, as he huddles in the shadow of just such a ravenous troll, he finds himself studying the creature in unlikely detail.

The grey skin of the monster, covered with a lifetime of scars and pockmarks, glows sickly beneath the fluorescent lights of the garage. The impossible creature looks down at Jeremy with wild yellow eyes and a tongue thicker than one of Jeremy's arms stirs inside the troll's cavernous mouth.

Jeremy bows his head and closes his eyes and hopes that he'll wake up soon.

Bang. Bang.

Jeremy's eyes snap open to see the enormous bulk of the troll stagger backwards. The gunshots have left two holes in its face where it used to have eyes. The troll remains standing for a moment, waving its hands in front of its face, before toppling backwards and landing heavily against the concrete.

"I had it under control," says Marcus gruffly as he emerges from beneath a heavy metal shelf. Noticing Sarra collapsed near the troll he rushes towards her.

Jeremy turns to see a man with a neatly cropped silver beard and moustache step into the garage. He's wearing an expensive suit and holding an old-fashioned pistol.

"Nice shooting," says Jeremy weakly.

"I've had some practice," says Chatravati with a smile. His voice is soft and deep and makes Jeremy feel instantly at ease.

"Are you guys okay?" Crackles Conor. Jeremy watches as Marcus gently pushes a strand of hair out of Sarra's face. She stirs in his arms, gazing up at him.

"Sarra?" Asks Chatravati.

"I'm okay," she says, looking over at Chatravati and Jeremy.

"Trolls are *highly resistant* to energy attacks, Sarra," says Helena, rising from behind her desk. She quickly regains her composure. "You should have known better."

"What else was I supposed to do?" Says Sarra. "It was coming right for us and I wanted to make sure it didn't hurt Jeremy."

“An honourable intention,” says Chatravati, nodding. “Though I’m fairly certain our new friend wouldn’t prove quite so easy to dispose of.”

Lowering the pistol so that it points directly at Jeremy, the old man pulls the trigger.