

## Chapter 927 Rise

Trian felt himself tense up when the nearby cannon fired. The walls and ground shook, tremors running through the city with every shot of their defensive weapons. A bright red arcane beam cut through a hundred creatures of the void. A trail of burning flesh and bone glowing with fire and ash, crawling with creatures once more a moment later. He blinked his eyes when a set of bright void explosions crashed against the barriers of Ravenhall, right in front of him, hundreds of spells shimmering as they impacted their defense.

He felt his health and mana recharge, the pain in his back lessening with every passing minute. It was difficult to take his eyes off the flickering sun and the thousands of void monsters besieging their city. *If this is happening everywhere... and our region is even stabilized by the Haven, and the Source within.*

He took in a sharp breath, thinking back on Raphia and Morhill, the chaos within. Looking behind, he saw fighters and mages in the streets, many of them injured or entirely spent. Sentinels flew and landed, helping with their healing spells. The little defensive formation in front of the city had been broken near instantly, the few brave fighters forced to flee back behind the city walls and barriers.

The streets farther back and closer to the mountain were less crowded by now, the refugees who had made it here moved through Viscera, or already in the Haven. Instead, the mobile gates had changed their destinations, Executioners and Hunter Praetorians now appearing in regular intervals, joined by flying Destroyers who hovered close and under the shimmering barriers.

*He's moving troops here,* Trian thought, his eyes opening wide before he spread his wings. He flew up and towards the central square in the outermost walls of the city.

He found what he had been looking for. A holographic map of the city and the region, projected by a machine surrounded by a large gathering of people, more joining every moment. He looked around the large group, finding quite a few people that he knew.

Verena had made it back, her face and hands covered in dark blood, her chest armor clean, likely a new set. Behind her was Elder Pierce, the woman pacing with lightning arcing over her heavy full plate armor.

Sulivhaan and his team were present, the Shadows quiet and waiting, watching the map. Next to him stood Dagon, in his battle armor, and with him Elise, the woman clad in near white robes, splatters of black and red blood visible on the fabric.

A single Executioner was present, Aki's green eyes glancing up at him before his attention moved back to the map. Glowing dots showed what Trian assumed to be creatures of the void. Thousands, and more still coming.

He saw Claire standing with a group of Shadows. Charles with his team, and Rivka with hers, Viper and William with Philly, all standing among the Shadows of the Hand, members of the Shadowguard, war machines and adventurers from all over the continent. He saw Orthan and Lyza, Sidney nodding his way when she saw him. He landed to join the faculty of the Sentinels, none of the healers present in the crowd as far as he could tell.

He felt the tremors in the ground, the cannons firing as fast as they could. He assumed they didn't exactly need to aim, seeing the glowing dots on the map. Hundreds disappeared with every passing moment, and hundreds of new ones joined from the edges.

"You made it back," Orthan said.

"Barely," Trian answered, looking at the map. He glanced up when a group of Destroyers flew over the square, thrumming with magic.

"We are monitoring the developments of this crisis," Aki spoke, his voice calm and traveling far. "The Extraction is altering the landscape all throughout the continent, and likely beyond. Effects seem to only affect the surface, with damage and alteration reaching up to sixty three meters into the ground, though mainly hovering at around thirty.

"We're observing what we can, and are analyzing mana readings. Beings of the void have started appearing eighty four seconds after the measured start of the Extraction, they are appearing everywhere, and are continuing to appear, though the phenomenon is similarly limited to the surface of the continent. They do however move into the depths to seek targets, though their behavior so far seems entirely instinct driven, seeking living creatures and those with mana.

"The Haven is entirely unaffected, as is the interior of the Meadow's domain, the Pit, Iz, and any shelter built deep enough below ground. Our forces are defending any such shelters and strongholds."

"We should go help them!" someone shouted.

More calls for action rang out.

"In less than six minutes, the shields of Ravenhall will fall," Aki spoke, silencing the crowd.

"Measured based on the continuous appearance of void creatures and the impact of their magic."

*And they keep coming. How could we hope to stop this?*

Trian felt a ringing come to his ears. Despite the gathered forces right here, despite the machines, the barriers, the cannons. How could they stop something like this?

"Reinforcements are being moved to Ravenhall as we speak. For now, I suggest anyone here to seek shelter in Viscera and the Haven. I will hold them off as long as I can."

"And let our city be destroyed and overrun yet again?" a Shadow shouted, flying up and brimming with magic. "We let the demons have it. Not again! I will stay here and fight!"

"They will rip you apart," another voice shouted.

"Then so be it!"

A few more shouts resounded.

"There are still more coming!"

"Then we're doomed!"

Trian turned his head towards the skies, when he saw the light of the sun fluctuate. A moment later, it vanished, leaving a single star hanging on the horizon of their home.

He heard a distant rumbling noise, as if their very realm trembled. The grounds and mountains shook, the barriers of their city flaring up with light.

Trian felt the pressure as many crouched, spells appearing as the fighters braced for impact.

“The Extraction process appears to be complete. Appearance of void creatures has ceased!” Aki announced, a few cheers resounding from those who had recovered faster. “Mana readings are stabilizing.”

“Then we should prepare to fight!” a voice called out, cheers and shouts following.

The Executioner’s eyes glowed bright. “I will not stop you. Or anyone else. I will only say that my machines are expendable. You are not.”

“Our home is under siege,” another voice spoke up. Less heated. Calm, and yet everyone listened, heads turning to look at the masked mage. Sulivhaan, the man standing before the Elders of the Shadow’s Hand.

Verena crossed her arms, Pierce stopped pacing, as he addressed the gathered people.

“Thousands have already lost their lives. Sentinel of Akelion, we have your machines. We have the healers of the Medic Sentinels. We have war machines of the Pit. We have adventurers from Virilya, from Riverwatch, from Dawntree, Yinnahall, Hallowfort, and every other city now laying in waste. This is a fight for survival. We make our stand here. Together. Until every last one of those creatures is sent back to where they came from.”

Shouts and cheers resounded, when silence fell just as quickly.

A fissure in space opened up above the mountain range opposite of their city. So vast and bright, it looked like the sky itself had split. A limp hand came out of it, a sickly purple, covered in black pus, massive and unnatural, eight long and gnarled fingers gripped a mountain peak before it pulled, a body moving out of the crack in space, followed by what looked like a head, covered in writhing appendages and wider than the square they stood on. Seven eyes looked at the city as mana thrummed, the wave crashing into the barriers, the pressure felt all the way throughout.

Trian took a step back, his eyes wide as he watched.

How could they face something like that?

“Fissures have appeared throughout the lands! Self sustaining. Our priority has shifted towards their immediate closure! Any space and void mages, report to one of my machines! Prepare for battle!”

Everyone watched as the strange and massive creature stepped out of the void, a thousand spells still impacting the city barriers.

Trian blinked his eyes when he saw a single figure appear above the square.

“This isn’t great,” the man spoke, his wide robes fluttering as he spread his arms.

Trian saw the gathering spell around the large monster’s head, glowing void magic so dense he could feel the spell all the way from Ravenhall. And it was aimed their way.

Erik vanished and appeared beyond the barrier, his entire form exploding in vibrant blue light. A web of floating runes appeared in the air, hundreds of meters wide, barriers flaring up with power before the void magic spell slammed into his creation. The shock wave cut into the ground, tremors moving through the entirety of Ravenhall, splinters spreading through its barriers.

Trian buckled down and covered his head, gritting his teeth against the pressure. He looked up to see the burning remnants of Erik’s barriers, those around the city still holding up. Just barely. He

saw the bright blue dot of the ancient founder of the Shadow's Hand summon a hundred flying projectiles of blue light, explosions of arcane magic rattling through the being of void as complex runes flared to life around the fissure hanging in the skies above.

The void creatures on the ground changed their aim, a thousand beams and flares shooting up as they crawled towards and up the side of the mountain, cannons roaring to take them out.

Trian watched as the first glowing blue runes around the fissure were destroyed, Erik's flying form summoning barriers to protect himself as the massive void being charged another spell, aimed this time, at Erik himself.

"Prepare to fight!" Aki's voice resounded through the city, his Destroyers flying towards the damaged barriers, his Executioners rushing through the air, his Hunters charging their bows and taking aim. "Protect the runes! Destroy the monsters! City shields will be taken down in five seconds! Rise! Rise and fight! Warriors of the Accords!"

The paralyzing tension of fear and awe broke with the words of the machine.

"Rise!" a terrified voice shouted out. Followed by three more.

Trian found himself flying up, his lightning charging as he saw his students joining in the ascending force, wings and magic of all kinds flaring up throughout Ravenhall, joining the gathering machines.

The barriers around the city flickered and dispersed into shards of light, revealing the swarm of monsters beyond, arcane cannons and blue projectiles burning through the masses. His lightning surged as he advanced with the people all around. As he advanced. With the Accords.

The sounds of his magic and scream were drowned out as a thousand spells flared up and out towards their enemy, beings of steel and ash, of ice and fire, descending on the void.

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Alyris covered her face when an explosion sent chunks of rock and debris against her armor. Her ears rang as spells exploded all around, strange creatures of horror rushing into the shelters as magic tore into them.

Her silver joined the magic all around to slow and kill the beings running out from the dark corridor beyond, the gates dissolved by void magic as more projectiles flashed towards them, barriers thrumming with light and magic to stop the brunt of the spells.

Alyris stepped forward with her Generals, barriers shattering before them as she sliced through one of the monsters with a vertical slash of flying silver. Two more monsters were cut apart by wind, another exploding in gore of flames, and still she saw ten more crawling in.

She moved her flying silver blade to cut through the legs of another monster when something hit her side. She was sent spinning and came to a hard stop on the ground. Coughing blood, she pushed herself up, her vision blurring slightly when she saw the crawling beasts shredded through by

strands of silver, two heavy maces made of steel flying deep into the corridor, mangling everything in their path and pushing back the horde.

Alyris staggered up, seeing a few of the others glancing her way.

*It's not me.*

She saw a man in heavy armor step through the debris and in front of them. Someone cheered in the back. "Go get them! And take some of their meat!"

Alyris blinked, feeling the hairs on her neck rise when she glimpsed the silver hammer in his right hand, a red gem glowing in the head of the weapon as he walked forward, silver threads and large metal chains rushing out and into the tunnel.

**[Metal Mage – lvl ???]**

"Cover him! Keep casting! Barriers!" The shout came from General Ryse.

She could feel her side healing from the spell of someone in the back. *Curse and silver*, she thought and rushed forward, joining her Guard and the Generals of Lys, lightning and flames exploding into the dark corridor beyond, flashes of light showing the carnage and crawling horrors coming down to kill them. Bits and pieces of flesh splattered against the ground and walls, barriers exploding in shards of light as she sent her silver at the enemy.

Alyris reached the front line near the entrance, and joined Velamyr Ryse, Syrithis, and Retribution. All their spells cut into the approaching monster horde confined in the steep and dark stairwell that led towards their shelters, magic lighting up the chaos as stone exploded, black blood splattering the walls. She saw a purple spell striking Ryse in his chest, Syrithis dodging twice before she vanished and was struck in her right leg. She screamed when Retribution charged forward into the tunnel and past the metal mage, his bone armor shredded to bits and pieces when he impacted the front line of crawling horrors. She saw the silver threads and metal spears of the three mark mage cut into the monsters, slowing their assault as he was struck by spell after spell, staggering back despite the floating shields of metal and the barriers flaring up before him time and time again.

"Close the gate!" the metal mage shouted.

Alyris could feel ice and stone magic forming another set of walls to close the entrance yet again, healers and barrier mages casting their spells through the gaps as chunks were ripped out yet again by the void magic of the creatures.

"We need more time for enchantments!"

She saw the metal mage pushed back by dozens of spells, more and more void magic flashing through the darkness as a set of creatures jumped and grappled Retribution, silver threads cutting apart monster after monster, steel crushing their bones and heads as curses lit up farther down the tunnel, the hordes flowing in like a river.

Alyris charged her silver when she saw thick wooden roots appear in the dark corridor and right before the grappled Retribution, separating the injured bone mage from the sea of monsters.

Alyris squinted her eyes, seeing the walls slowly close up when she glimpsed another figure appearing in the corridor beyond, a single mote of warm light appearing from thin air.

A woman dressed in black leather pants and a flowing white shirt walked towards the two defenders remaining in the tunnel, her back towards the closing walls and the shelters.

“Cannot be helped,” the woman spoke as wood appeared around her. “I suppose this does constitute as an emergency.”

Alyris tried to place her, but she didn’t know who she was looking at.

Wooden roots now grew from the walls, floating leaves appearing, each glowing with dense mana, each one flying out in serene motion to block a spell of void, silver threads and metal rushing past to kill more creatures.

“You’re not bad, metal boy,” the woman spoke when she reached the three mark mage, her hand resting on his shoulder before she walked past. “Let’s clean up this mess.”

Alyris saw the woman walk into the approaching hordes, wooden roots stopping their assault and slowly grappling dozens of monsters. She waved her hand, and limbs were torn off, heads ripped away with spines still attached, three mark creatures of the void torn in two by the thick roots as the woman whistled a tune.

An old tune that Alyris remembered from her childhood. One of her teachers had whistled it a few times, she remembered. A teacher hired by her father.

The sounds of breaking bones and tearing flesh dulled when the walls closed up and enchanters rushed forward to prepare their runes.

Alyris took a step back, touching her side, hand coming away with her own blood. Her mind reeled with the fact that a Shadow and an unknown mage were winning this fight for them, and still, she could perceive the hundred fighters behind her, and knew that they would survive. Taking in a deep breath, she prepared to show strength.

She still heard the tune in her head. A painter, she remembered. A few months only.

*What was her name again?*

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Nes Mor Atul focused her magic, the air thrumming with her power as she saw the flaring golden barriers before her. She pushed, far reaching gusts of wind flowing through the wracked town and up the natural walls, thousands of void beings raised into the air and sent back out. She knew it would likely leave them injured at best, but there were simply too many.

Looking down, she aimed and summoned sixty lances of thrumming air, sending them down to pierce through the creatures crawling through the city. Golden light and barriers flashed up here and there, cutting monsters in two while others were teleported away.

Scipio appeared below her flying form with another two survivors.

Nes healed them and established a telepathic connection to each. “*Find a machine that can talk, and tell it we require reinforcements in Dawntree.*” Her voice was calm despite the ongoing Extraction. Panic would not help, not in them nor within her own mind.

More and more creatures crawled over the walls, some now falling down from straight above them and the tunnels leading down to the shelters.

Seven flying blades of air appeared as she linked her fingers, the weapons rushing out to cut the three mark creatures in two, more lances rushing out when the first void spells impacted her steel armor.

She saw Scipio appear again, the man setting down another survivor before he remained and joined the fray.

*“We should move down into the tunnels soon, or they will overwhelm us,”* she sent to him when she heard a roar.

The shadow of a winged creature moved over the city before the form of a red dragon flew along the walls, white flame roaring into life as his breath incinerated a hundred creatures in a single sweep.

Flying down near her, she could feel wind magic resonating with her own and saw the form of a white haired elf, his spells joined hers to cut through the encroaching masses.

Isalthar waved his hands, blades of wind flowing past, leaving nothing but chunks of twitching flesh as the dragon flew down and landed on the square with a crash, flattening a few of the creatures. His head was struck by void magic before his burning claws cut down, his jaws snapping shut, black blood dripping down as he whipped his tail around, sending a few monsters flying. White spheres of fire flashed up above him and shot out towards the crawling masses on the walls.

“One elf and a dragon is not enough!” Scipio shouted as he summoned his barriers to block a few of the monsters from going down into the tunnels.

“Look up,” the dragon growled when near white lightning flashed down into the creatures of the void, a hundred of them disintegrated in an instant.

Nes looked up to see the suns blotted out, a flying fortress slowly coming into view. She saw dozens of figures fly out of Verleyna, Cerithil Hunters and the Elves of the Sky Domain joining the battlefield.

A barrier of light appeared far above when she felt an overwhelming pressure. The mountain shook and the bright magic flared with light.

Nes narrowed her eyes to see a strange fissure form kilometers away as white lightning snaked along Verleyna.

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Nelras Ithom, former Monarch of the Sunlight Wastes and former Ressanoov flew out of the third Ascended facility assigned to him when he felt a strange sensation pass through all that was. He narrowed his eyes and hissed, rushing up the tunnel when he saw the exit above vanish, stone shifting as he braced for impact. Had he taken too long? Had they failed?

Teleporting past didn't work, and so he used his magic. The darkness lit up with his flaring light. In his right hand appeared the spear given to him, carved from dragon bone, yet lacking powerful enchantments and perfection in its making. A crude weapon, he found, but the only one from the Accords capable of holding his power. The tip glowed with light before he rushed forward and cut through the layers of stone in his way. Up he went, until a few seconds later, he broke through, chunks of rock and debris exploding outwards as he flew up into the landscape of the North.

He froze in the air, looking at the flickering light of the sun. Niraela, the first star. He watched, hand gripping his spear before he hissed. He felt the mana all around change and shift, the balance threatened as the Architect fulfilled his plans.

"Nelras!" A voice broke him out of his despair.

He looked down and found one of the green eyed silver machines. It lay undamaged, but he could no longer see the gate that had brought him here. He teleported down to the creature. "We have failed," he spoke and felt his heart raging, his chest tight.

"Where is the Architect? Where is Ker Velor?"

"We have not failed. The first mesh was damaged beyond usability," the machine spoke. "But there was a second."

He blinked his eyes. "A second?"

*For both stars.* He hissed, the sound deep.

"I have yet to find Ker Velor, but our settlements are impacted by the Extraction. The gate was destroyed, you will have to find the nearest one. Will you help?"

"I will fight," Nelras Ithom spoke. "Lead the way, machine."

They flew for minutes on end, over the storm riddled wasteland of the North, Nelras keeping his attention on the suns. He would remember the first star, as he remembered the third.

He slowed when he saw creatures stepping out into the lands. Monsters of the void. He looked around to find the Architect, but there was no one there.

The first of the creatures charged their spells and flung them up at him.

Nelras moved his spear and deflected all, raising his hand as shards of glass appeared and floated all around, charging and redirecting the light of the suns, though he found the Extraction interfering with his ability. He hissed and used his own light, the shards moving as two dozen monsters were cut apart by a hundred beams of scorching heat.

"What is the meaning of this?" he asked, looking at the machine that stood in the air next to him.

"We are analyzing. This is happening everywhere. Void creatures appearing. Correction, it seems it's happening above ground only, waiting for confirmation. We should move to the gate. I would prefer if you could defend one of our settlements. If that is agreeable."

"You have brought me back. I will fight where you need me," Nelras said and continued onward with the machine next to him, his light cutting through all the creatures that he saw. Hundreds there



were, stepping out into the world, thousands, crawling over the lands and hiding into crevices when the arcane storms of the North shook the grounds.

“We’re approaching the ruin, down now!” the machine spoke and Nelras followed.

He spun and cut through the void creatures near the entrance. He turned and thrust his weapon through the length of a charging beast, flung it aside at another before the blade of the spear lit up with light. He hissed and cut through the last remaining three creatures with a single horizontal slash, his light reaching out to close the distance.

Nelras saw the machine had opened up the entrance. He halted right in front.

“This is a place of creation.” He spoke the words and hissed.

The machine turned to look at him, green eyes shining bright. More monsters stepped into their world nearby. “We don’t have time. Our people are getting slaughtered and our cities are crumbling. I know what I’m asking of you, Nelras Ithom, but the next gate not within a dungeon is hours away. If you wish to fight, this is the path.”

He stood without motion, eyes locked with those of the machine as he felt the monsters of the void crawl closer, their magic burning bright to his senses.

This creature asked of him to sully a place of creation? To break a wish of the Oracles.

He thought it a ridiculous motion.

And yet.

Had he not fought with those he had considered cursed?

Had he not been saved by a human?

Had he not renounced his ancient title, and his seat of power?

He had learned about the beings of the world, had learned about the Accords. Would he throw away their kindness in the face of an ancient rule?

Glass shards appeared around him before a hundred beams reflected and sliced apart all of the approaching beasts.

He had wished to fight. Had faced his own death. And he was still here.

Nelras Ithom closed his eyes for a short moment, then opened them.

This would not stop him.

He hissed and flew into the the ancient ruin.

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The Endless Meadow saw all inside of its domain.

A fluctuating fabric.

The arcane storms of the North.

The tears ripped into this reality, by the process of Extraction. Not gates that led to another realm or anchors, but fissures only to the void. Creatures crawling out, soulless husks seeking life and mana. Single minded organisms.

*Just like Erendar.*

*Just like the eclipse.*

*Just like the Astral Spirits.*

And it had fought in Erendar. For centuries, until the last Awakened beings inside of its domain had perished. It had failed then, itself the only survivor. The same fate that would've come to pass had it not found and contacted the realm of Elos when it had predicted the next eclipse.

The species it had harbored, now lived on, in this realm brimming with diversity and life.

And once again it harbored those too weak to fight against calamity.

And once again, the Endless Meadow chose to fight.

The fabric thrummed with its magic, cracks mended, crawling horrors ripped apart and buried by stone, living beings moved to safety deep below the ground.

For it was the Endless Meadow, Shield of Hallowfort and all that it harbored.

Today and tomorrow. This year, and the century to come.

For those awakened, and the future of this world.

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The mana inside of the place of creation felt strange. Different. Only slightly more dense than the outside, and still, Nelras felt something inside of him altered, changing. He felt the searing pain but chose to ignore it. A moment later, he found himself on the gate and vanished, appearing in the domain of the Accords, and the Meadow.

*“Nelras Ithom. I need to monitor you while your body adjusts,”* the Meadow sent.

*“It is nothing. Send me to battle,”* Nelras sent but he could feel his very soul trembling with change.

*“The effects are caused by you, not by an attack. Your power does not exempt you.”*

*“Then let me fight above, in your domain, until I have bested this,”* he spoke.

*“If that is your wish,”* the Meadow sent. *“But make sure not to get in my way.”*

Nelras vanished a moment later, appearing in the wastelands above. He fell to one knee, hissing at the wrongness in himself. He saw his veins running black and dark blue, gritting his teeth as he felt it all. When he looked up, he saw the glinting light of the two suns, and above still, he saw a floating obelisk of stone. He could feel the pressure emanating but couldn't focus.

He hissed once more, and felt that any moment he tried to fight the change, it surged and halted, so he chose to leave it be. He closed his eyes and breathed, his spear vanishing as he felt the warmth of the stars, the last light of Niraela. He felt its power flow through him.

Distant and close by explosions resounded, and when he opened his eyes, he saw the wasteland changing, stone shifting as void creatures appeared within, struck by rocks flying at the speed of sound or ripped apart by an invisible force, their blood coloring the shifting stone with black. Hundreds were destroyed with every passing moment, and as far as he could see. Creatures swallowed by the land. Closing fissures cut them in half. Boulders flew far into the distance, impacts killing monsters that he could not even see.

He grinned. *A foolish thought.*

The Meadow had not brought him up to fight. There was no battle here, for this was its domain.

His attention shifted and his eyes widened when he saw Niraela fluctuate. He ground his teeth and watched.

A moment later, the star vanished from the skies.

And the world shook.

He looked up and saw a barrier of golden light thrumming into life as the landscape all around cracked and splintered, a wave of pure mana crashing down into the lands.

Nelras grit his teeth as the world roared one last time, and then it settled.

And he himself settled with it.

He breathed, calm now, despite his knowledge that the balance had been changed. He saw that no more creatures moved within the surrounding lands, changed a second time by an Extraction.

And then he saw the fissures. Wide and gaping, creatures of the void pulling their way through and into this reality.

He hissed and felt a thrumming surge of magic coming from the obelisk floating above, his own magic surging to protect himself from the waves of air and power.

He saw a spear of stone a hundred meters long forming in the skies above. It trembled right before it soared towards the fissure with a trail of burning air and impacted with a wave of force the head of a mountainous creature, tearing flesh away as rains of black blood fell from the northern skies, a deafening screech echoing out from the titan before more spears came into existence.

He felt something inside of him stir as he saw the distant fissures ripping into this realm, his spear appearing in his hand as he watched with awe.

*"This is happening everywhere, is it not?"*

*"It is,"* the Meadow spoke.

Was this the end of all life? The end of this world?

*And so be it.* He felt a calm flow through him, the light of the sun shining down on him, and his spear glinted with its power.

What else was there to do but fight?

*“I am ready. Send me to battle.”*

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Ilea watched the white flame of the Fae and wiped away her tears. She took in a deep breath and smiled, then summoned her own fires.

*“I’m so fucking glad to see you.”*

Looking out onto the massive fissures the Extraction had ripped into the fabric, she charged her wings and aimed at the first of the large and impossible creatures. *“Let’s start then.”*

She could feel the presence of the Fae all around her, white and yellow fires mingling as they flew into the fray, searing through the skies with increasing speed.

She watched a beam of void vanish into nothing right before they crashed into the monster, their combined magic engulfing its massive form. Flesh burst with their fires, bones charred below, magic itself burning away in their presence. And behind, she saw the vast tear in space. Impossible to comprehend. Sunbound Creation activated and Ilea saw the fabric, saw the void leaking through into their realm. She grasped at the frameworks, but found the fissure closing fast already, large tendrils of white flames spreading out to engulf and mend the fabric of reality.

With a pulse of mana, the wound in their realm shut, air sucked in by the sheer scope of magic.

Ilea left her own reality and addressed the Fae, having seen its power. *“You should probably focus on the tears. I’ll take care of the monsters.”*

*“This realm must be rid of both, though we agree and we shall mend the fabric,”* a thousand voices spoke into her mind.

Ilea took in a deep breath and charged her wings. *“Don’t wait up on me.”*

*“Good luck,”* the voices sent. *“And Lilith…”*

*“What?”* she asked, looking at the bright and burning flames.

*“Violence,”* a thousand voices sent and the Fae fire shifted, its entirety appearing kilometers away, focused not on the moving monstrosities, but on the fissures themselves.

Ilea smiled and focused, then flew and teleported to the monster left behind, the fissure that had brought it here closed already. She felt the magic charge within the flying titan of the void as her smoke spread out and covered its entire form. She willed her flames through it all, the bright light of a star flaring up above the wracked lands of the Plains, consuming all and everything before her.

**‘ding’ ‘You have killed [Gron]- lvl 1683]**

She saw the Fae in the distance, white flames engulfing the enormous four marks invading their world, tears closing in mere seconds, as if the Fae manipulated tiny cracks in space. The cluster of beings did not stay to kill the monsters of the void, but appeared at the next crack, and then the next.

*“Request from the Meadow for you to open up a gate to its domain. Someone wants to join you.”*  
Claire’s tired voice resounded in her mind.

Ilea obliged, charging her wings as she aimed at the closest abomination covered in specks of white fire, the monster screeching and sending out bright and massive spells of void in search of its foe. Her gate opened and out flew a grinning elf wielding a spear of bone.

*“You’re late,”* she sent and shot off, squinting her eyes as she once more summoned her ash and fire. Impacting the large monster, she burst into its flesh like a bullet, shattering bones as thick as trees before she exploded with her gathered heat, the primordial flame spreading outwards to create a hole within the large creature. She moved into her Sunbound Creation and pushed outwards her ash, smoke, and black glass, all of it burning with the yellow flames of the stars.

Mere seconds did it take her and the creature burst, its remains burning away into nothing as it was consumed by heat and fire, a chunk of its mana fueling Ilea once more as she charged her wings and aimed for the next. In the distance, she saw the flickering glow of Nelras Ithom, wide flaring light cutting into one of the floating monsters, limbs a hundred meters long cut away by the former Monarch, trailing light following his form.

*I’m glad I brought you back.*

Ilea burned into and through four more behemoths, all of them below level two thousand.

When she turned and looked into the distance, she could see a few specks of burning white light, but no more fissures as far as she could see. And to the south, she saw a glowing blue speck close in on a flying monster, three pulses of blue light shined, each one brighter than the last before a beam burst into life and engulfed the entirety of the large being of the void, its scorched corpse careening down into the wastelands.

Aiming for the next monster hanging in the skies, Ilea breathed out and focused.

She could kill them.

They could close the fissures.

And she was not alone.

The Architect and his technology had left this world shaken, but they were still here, fighting back.

And she would fight until the last monster was dead. Until the last fissure was closed. And until she burned away the very soul of Ker Velor.

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Aki sent out his remaining Watchers, now that the world had stabilized once more. Above the arcane storms, they flew, marking every distant fissure, every group of Void Monsters on the ground. He saw the burning light of the Primordial Flame, flaring up time and time again as Ilea burned away the flying titans.

His machines moved through the lands. Their lands, his Guardians rushing through the crevices and cracks with Destroyers flying far above, his Executioners running above ground, powered by the higher mana density now present throughout the Plains and beyond, their shields flaring in the arcane lightning, as they hunted down the monsters of the void, as they searched the settlements and towns now swallowed by the earth, seeking shelters and survivors.

Most of their teleportation network had broken down during the Extraction, but some of the mobile platforms and Taleen gates below ground remained, as did materials for more gates. Not many, but enough to reestablish the connection to important cities, if they did remain at all, below the ravaged lands.

He saw the Mava, their oasis in the western deserts spread out and grown to protect them with a sheet of trees and glowing light, their spells cutting through the hordes of void creatures, collective ranged attacks slowing and damaging even the flying titans above.

He still saw into some of the shelters, where high level machines of his remained. Riverwatch, Halstein, Yinnahall, Stormbreach, and many more, the shifting earth leaving them deeper in the ground, enchantments damaged, but more difficult to reach for the creatures of the void squashed or stuck in the destroyed stairwells leading down.

He saw the cracked and broken form of Karth, once towering above the western frontier of humanity, and he saw the former Navali forest to the west, broken and swallowed, arcane storms raging through the remaining vegetation, what little that remained. The Domains and their elves fought the hordes on the ground, their most powerful warriors up in the skies, battling the titans, some few even closing fissures, though he could not tell for sure who or what was responsible, the white flames of the Fae appearing here and there as well.

He looked towards the far north, behemoths clashing in the skies, bright storms and fire raging in the distance too far for him to see with any clarity.

He saw the Courts in the West, battling the oncoming hordes and flying titans, Marrindanye their only city that remained untouched by the moving earth and arcane storms, their ritual powered by the First Vampire himself.

He was asked to join the being at the center of his castle, and of his domain.

A request for assistance with the approaching flying titans. One that Aki gladly relayed to the most powerful mage of the Accords, using one of the many marks she had throughout the lands.

Mere moments later, she appeared in Marrindayne and shot up towards the sky.

The barriers of Ravenhall were active once more, its cannons still firing as those injured in the attack on the void beings received healing. Aki coordinated willing strike teams consisting of all kinds of fighters to help and reestablish contact with lost settlements, to move equipment, or to fight and clear out creatures of the void.

One of his Watchers appeared in the west, an ancient Taleen ruin with a working gate. He sent the machine up and out, barely avoiding detection by the crawling monsters. Up he flew, past the range of the arcane storms and adding yet another eye to his network. The density of mana had changed

throughout the lands, and creatures previously incapable or unlikely to venture into the Plains were now very much able.

Few would be able to survive against the hordes of void monsters. But there were some.

His watcher flew farther west, until its eye focused in on a streak of green flame, descending downwards. He saw the wings twirling in the air before they vanished behind a hill. His Watcher ascended and flew closer, the image he saw through the machine clear.

Audur's green flames lit up and burned far into the air, the dragon grounded, scales crushed and shining with fresh blood, its wings thrashing before a shock wave ran out and across the grounds, cracks spreading through the stone, accompanied by sparks of lightning.

Wings crashed down, the dragon left unmoving.

Aki watched as a being appeared nearby. Four arms behind its back, four white eyes set in a vertical line within its head, its entire form made up of metal.

Ker Velor.

The Architect.

He watched as from near the dragon's wings, a single form stood up and rolled its shoulders. Near three meters in height, another Ascended stood. No decorations adorned its head, two eyes of white light set within, the being's shape that of a warrior clad in heavy armor, made entirely of broad metal plates and covered in blood.