Misadventures In the Multiverse

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Chapter One

In some sort of vortex of energy and light. What appears to be a spacecraft zooms through. A much larger vessel is chasing, and firing upon it. As best as it tries to evade with evasive action it is ultimately shot causing significant damage to the ship. On board a girl with orange hair is struggling to keep it flying, most of her features are obscured by darkness, yet her eyes flicker between a state of glowing and regular orange pupils. She grits her teeth as she dives into the edge of the vortex vanishing below. On the larger craft, two individuals look at the results of their actions from the ship's bridge. The shorter one with glasses speaks up. “We can't lose her, we will have to abandon the flagship for now to chase her to that world. Quickly.” The other man simply nods and rushes out of the bridge to do just that.

A young man sits at a desk, bags in his eyes, mindlessly typing away at his computer. It seemed like only yesterday he started working at this job. Everyday was the same, so dull, so boring, and the pay was insultingly low for any amount of effort he would put in, but here he was feeling trapped and with no other choice but to toil. Time seemed to stand still as he kept working on what felt like pointless busy work. He looked around at his co-workers. While they didn't seem to be happy being

there, they were much more content and had long accepted this was pretty much their life now, Clyde not so much. He leaned back in his chair, letting out a sigh of frustration as the clock slowly counted down to the final hour, then at least he could finally go home and find a few hours of enjoyment for his hobbies. It was the longest five minutes of his life, all he could do was contemplate it. How could anyone accept this? Had he not worked hard enough? Was there a better option he didn't see? The clock reached the end of the hour, releasing him from his thoughts for the moment. He quickly gathered his things and rushed out the door, clocking out right away to the dirty looks of some of his co-workers who would stay longer for very little reward.

He walks the streets looking around at everyone out and about, this town had nothing going for it, in his opinion there was nothing to do. No interesting people to interact with. Slowly he reached his dwelling place, a small home he had managed to invest in. The only place he felt somewhat alive. “I just wish things were more interesting.” He sighs, taking out his keys to unlock the door. Before he could do so, the ship from the vortex flashed into the sky and faster than he could think collided with his house, destroying all but the very door he was about to open. It rested not far, coming to a complete halt.

He freezes for a moment before taking a deep breath opening the door and walking through it before looking up at the sky and saying. “Thanks?” He was taking it surprisingly well, all things considered, this was technically what he asked for. His attention was drawn to the spaceship as the door opened, billowing out a large amount of smoke. A very imposing-looking shadow within its confines. As the smoke cleared, the big shadow revealed it was really just a girl with long hair who is now choking up a storm. She was wearing a black coat, shorts, and a captain's hat that didn't seem to fit her perfectly as it was a little big.

She seemed to pay him no mind, assessing the damage to his vessel from the outside. “Man, I need to work on crashing huh? The damage is worse than I thought” She said to herself. Clyde, still

confused, took a moment to take in her words. “Wait, you mean you destroyed my house on purpose! I still had like a million payments on it!” He said, starting to remember the reality of this dilemma. She only now noticed he was there, not turning around to face him. “I mean, I technically did. One of us had to.” She said shrugging. His anger started to boil over, getting the better of his curiosity. She didn't seem to be that sorry about it, but he could also tell she was a little nervous like she had bigger concerns.

“Look, I don't know how they do things in space tiny alien girl, but...” He started to say, only for her to turn around finally and cut him off in annoyance. “I'm not tiny or an alien, I'm human just like you! ...Mostly anyway. Look, I'm sorry about your house, but I'm in a...” She froze after getting a better look at his face like she recognized him from somewhere. He shook his head. “I guess it doesn't matter what you are, either way, you can't just destroy people's houses like that!” He said in protest.

She returned to her senses, shaking her head like she made a mistake. Before he could say anything else, she pulled out what looked like a futuristic gun and pointed it at him. “You are awfully brave to talk to a stranger here like that.” She said, trying to look really serious. Clyde raised his hands, starting to realize how stupid it was to come up to her like that. She lowers the weapon. “That was mostly a joke to calm you down.” She said lightly giggling, and sticking her tongue out. She started to grab a cube on her belt ready to pull it off, “Look I'm sorry about your house, but these people are kinda chasing me.” Before she can explain any further another ship flashes out of a portal hovering over the area.

“Get down!” She said, pushing him out of the way as it opened fire on them. The crackling of a speaker started to sound as someone spoke from in the ship. “This game of cat and mouse has gone on for far too long. Give up and come with us, you're only making things worse for everyone.” The voice says, giving her time to give some sort of response. “Who the hell is that?” Clyde asks her. “They call themselves the Multiversal Empire.” She said as she answered the person on the ship's ultimatum by

transforming one of the cubes on her waist into a gun. It mounts itself to the ground and expands out even more as it charges up. She fires at the other ship, hitting a main engine and causing it to slowly fall, clearly saying she had no intention of going anywhere with them. “Is that a rail gun?” Clyde said with both wonder and concern. How was such a small cube able to transform into something like this?

She looks at him with a smug face, slowly reverting it to a cube. “More or less.” Before the ship crashes, a huge man leaps out of it, crashing down in front of her. He had covered his arms with massive gauntlets, ready to take her by any means. “Really runt? Aren't you... what, how are you still...” he started to say before seeing Clyde also seeming to be caught off guard by him. He shook his head. “It doesn't matter, I'll pummel you both.” He said, striking at her with a flurry of fist. She just barely has time to transform her cube into a shield. “You can try, big guy.” She said, taunting him.

Clyde is unsure what to do or what is going on. She seems to be blocking his blows with no problem, but she isn't able to attack him like this. He has completely put his focus on her. Something seems off to him like she isn't going all out prioritizing Clyde's safety for some reason, and defending him. He looks around for a weapon, anything he can use to fight. In the scorched remains of his former home, he sees an intact baseball bat, somehow spared from the destruction. He didn't even play, but he was never so happy to see it. He picked it up and ran off. She looked back a little sad but seemed to believe he was running away and no longer something to worry about at least.

Once he got a safe distance, he circled back around behind the man. She jumped out of the way of his strikes, reverting her weapon, and transforming it into a sword. “Now I can get...” She started to say as Clyde rushed forward, whacking the man in the back with the bat. The man yelled out in pain, dazed in confusion, but wasn't down for the count just yet. She widened her eyes in surprise that he stayed after all, finishing him off with a knee to the face. It knocked the large man on his back, making him pass out.

“Alright, we did it!” She said, smirking, and throwing up a peace sign. Clyde was shocked at

her sudden burst of strength, looking down at the man who was groaning in pain. “Shouldn't you hold your celebrating and make sure this dude doesn't get back up?” He asked nervously. “Yeah, you're right.” She said frowning pulling out a different cube with a couple of restraints. After finishing binding the large man she paused for a moment, like she was trying to find the right words to say right now. She looked a little conflicted, and like she was deeply longing for something. “Listen thanks for your help you surprised me, and um... I'm sorry about your house, take this.” She grabs another cube from her bag, tossing it at him. He is barely able to catch it as it opens in his hands, showing it contains some gold bars. He was shocked she was just handing it over like that, even if it was only right. He could tell in this world he could live in luxury with it, and for a moment he almost considered that, but after a moment of silence he shook his head.

He managed to close it up and throw it back at her. “Forget that, I don't want your pity, how about you take me with you instead.” He pleaded this was an opportunity he didn't see coming again. She looked like she had wanted him to say that, nevertheless, she shook her head right back. “It's too dangerous for the likes of you. Why would you even want to?” She asked curious. He paused, not sure how to explain it, but slowly finding the words. “I feel like I've squandered my life here. I want my life to be interesting. To mean something.” Her face lit up a little as the smile grew and grew into a huge smirk. “Well, I suppose I could never say no to that face. I um mean a face like yours. The name is Raleigh.” She said, holding out her hand for him to shake. He took her hand, looking her in the eye and saying. “I'm Clyde. Clyde Moore.” She faintly smiled, pulling his hand toward her ship. “Well, what are we waiting for, then let's go on an adventure!” She quickly pulled him into the ship as it sprung to life. It rose into the air, damaged for sure, but still working well enough to fly. It zips into the air and disappears into the sky in a flash of light

Chapter Two

They both enter the ship. “Well here's my humble home.” Raleigh says presenting it to Clyde. He starts looking around. It seems to be mainly composed of some sort of metal. To the left is the bridge, there are all sorts of complicated looking machines he couldn't begin to understand. There are three chairs all fixed to the floor next to some sort of navigation, or radar system overlooking three large windows. At the center of the room was a huge desk, and chair coming out of the floor with wires sticking out all over. It seemed that this part of the ship was a lot newer than the other parts. Something unsettling was going on with this certain section. The closer he looked there was a picture frame on the desk though before he could really see who was in it, she turned it down so no one could see.

He looked out the window peering into a vortex with so many colors swirling about. “Beautiful is it not.” She looks at it alongside him for a bit. “Don't look at it to long you'll fry your brain. He quickly looks away as she snickers at him. “Wait was that a joke?” She shrugs at him with a smug looking face. “Maybe.” He glares at her, but it quickly reverts curiosity getting the better of him. “What is that anyway light speed or something? What planet are you from. Are there more planets out there like yours?” She kicks him in the shins irritated. “I already told you I'm human. Mostly anyway.” He

can already tell she isn't going to bother explaining that last part. “And I'm from earth..... just not that one.” He looked more confused now. “What do you mean that earth? Is there another one in the universe?” “No dumb ass this isn't some dinky spaceship it's a universe hopper. I'm from another universe's earth.” She stands proud. “Waits so there are other earths?” He asked intrigued for once. “Yeah did you really think your boring universe was the only one. They aren't all called earth, but guess I'll have to teach you.” Her smug face grew larger and larger the more she put him in his place.

Seemingly out of nowhere a floating whiteboard materialized. It looked to be holographic and a bit translucent though not a lot. “There are an infinite number of earths with small differences from yours, and ones that are not even recognizable to you.” The whiteboard displays an earth as she explains lines start to come out of it showing more earths all with slight barely noticeable differences. The last one she shows looks to be more of a wasteland than the earth he knew. “So that's what you meant when you said that thing earlier about crashing into my house.” He said stone faced. “Yes yes, you are correct....” He butts in. “That doesn't mean you shouldn't try to!” He yells. “Not that I completely believe you yet.” She starts to pout a little. “Let me finish...” He nods, but doesn't stop glaring at her. “There are worlds way cooler than this one. Worlds that are just like your favorite TV show but real!”

The whiteboard shows a video of some person shooting fire from his hands. She is starting to get excited. “The possibilities are endless, that's where we come in. We are verse hoppers, and this is our vessel the hopper!” She grins posing. He can tell she thinks she looks a lot cooler than she actually does right now. He tries to hide his own excitement. This is just what he wanted or what he thinks he wants after all. “Right..... very original name. Anyway what do we actually do on these... trips.” She looks upset that he would mock her like that, despite her doing the same to him the whole time.” We just have fun!” She exclaimed. “and try to avoid those ass-hats in The Empire.” She mumbles not wanting to get into that right now. The big desk in the center started to make a ping noise, which

catches her off guard a bit. “That's going to need my attention. Why don't you get settled in one of those rooms back there. We will be world bound in a few minutes.” She points to the hallway that is behind them and the bridge. The whiteboard disappears as she walks toward the main desk area. She picks up the wires taking off her hat and sticking them into the back of her head.

He pretends not to be a little disturbed by it walking past her to the hallway. In the hallway there are four doors, two on each side. The end of the hallway seems to lead to an engine room. The door on the left was obviously her room. It had a fancy looking nameplate that said captains quarters. “I'm assuming this one is yours.” She looks back at him though the wires seem to make it difficult. “Yup that's mine.” He walks toward the door on the left thinking that one would suffice. She catches it before she turned back around. “Wait not that room..... that's also.... mine.” She turns around blushing trying to focus on the ship. He seemed to be a bit surprised by this.

“Whatever.” He mumbles walking to the second door on the right. It opens like a standard science fiction door would, sliding. The room has a bed a small desk and a monitor coming out of the wall. “I guess this will do.” That's when he realized the only thing he brought was the baseball bat he was still holding. “Shit why didn't I grab anything.” He sighs putting it down in the room, and returning to her. He avoids looking at the vortex just in case she wasn't lying. Clyde looked at her for a bit. Raleigh's hair was now floating in the air and her eyes were glowing white. She almost looked pretty like this he thought. He quickly shook his head thinking he could never fall for a girl like her. “Hey um..... can you hear me? Where exactly are we going?” He poked her face. She looks at him eyes still glowing. “Of course I can, stop poking me! You'll find out soon enough.” Not long after she says that the vortex started to dissipate leading to a bright blue sky.

Chapter Three

The hopper enters the new world's atmosphere. Clyde approached the window to look for himself at whatever was before him. There were portals all over the sky with aircraft constantly entering and exiting them. The portals almost covered the entire sky with few gaps in between. Raleigh chimes in happily still plugged into the ship. “Interesting right. This is Porta Nexus, people come from all over the multiverse for ship repairs, jobs, and other not so legal activities. They don't even bother closing the portals since there is so much traffic.” They fly closer to the ground to a bustling city there were all kinds of different looking people, and mounts. Some of them looked like they were taken straight out of history while others looked so foreign and strange Clyde avoided looking at them. They slowly flew to a small hanger close by, a couple robotic looking humanoids directing the ship so it can land properly. Raleigh yanks the wires from her head putting her hat on as her eyes reverted to their normal orange color. “Lets get going.” She says in a hurry to leave.

“Oh, one more thing.” She stops at the door opening, a panel that is almost hidden from sight if it wasn't open. There were several cubes like the ones attached to her belt. She throws one at him, he struggles to catch it unprepared for it, almost dropping it. “It's called a Multi-tool.” He struggled to

catch it in his hand, somewhat excited about a chance to use it. “How do you get it to do all that crazy transforming stuff?” He asks with interest. “Oh well, that one's not as cool as mine.” She pulls out the main one she uses, showing it off with an air of superiority. “Most of them can only transform into two things, so you just have the option of a knife or a pistol. We can switch it out later if you want something else.” She explained to his disappointment. He stuffed it into his pocket, significantly less excited.

A young girl with brown hair was waiting for them outside. She was wearing a white tank top, and huge tan pants with tons of pockets filled with all sorts of tools. She was covered in oil or what appeared to be oil. Raleigh stepped forward with a grin on her face like she had already hatched a plan. “Hello there ms as you can see our vessel needs repairs, we barely made it this far. We.....” The girl cuts her off with an annoyed look on her face. “I'm not fixing it for free, I don't know why all of you world hoppers try this.” She crosses her arms waiting for her to answer. Raleigh looks legitimately surprised. “Damn it I really thought I found the right world.” She mumbles obviously upset her plan failed. “Well can't blame me for trying, can you? I have the money for it anyway.” She tosses the cube full of gold to her that she tried giving to Clyde before, after some inspection the girl puts it away. “Alright.” The girl replies. “It might take a day or two with the damage, but this should cover it.” “Thank you, thank you.” Raleigh says turning toward the exit and out into the city. Clyde almost feels like he should apologize. He makes a half-hearted attempt to do just that saying. “Eh...” She cuts him off too. “Don't worry about it, I got my payment. Like I said they all try it. Anyway looks like she is going to leave you behind if you don't get going.” He nods chasing after Raleigh.

He catches up with her outside though barely thanks to the large crowd moving through the city. “Why are you in such a hurry?” He growls. “What, I'm hungry, besides we are going to be here a while, might wanna get a room for the night, and maybe get some temp jobs before the good ones are gone. Where's your sense of adventure?” She explains. He doesn't even try to ask what she is talking about.

“Right.” He puts his hands in his pockets following beside her. Not far behind them a man with long white hair and an eye patch follows behind them just out of their sight.

Clyde sees a group of people standing near a building wearing the same uniforms as The Empire, panicking, and trying to hide. Raleigh looks a little confused until she puts it together. “Oh don't worry, yeah they are around, but the port authority runs this place, they won't do anything to get themselves banned from the world." She points at another group of people in uniforms. They were mostly brown, and gold, but with a little white, they looked more steampunk in appearance compared to The Empire's militarized imperial garb. He calmed down and started to walk with her once more.

Not too much farther down the way, they saw what looked like another faction wearing green uniforms. “What about those guys?” He would ask, pointing to them. She looks over, seeming to not be a huge fan of them either. “Oh them? They are The Union. The multiverses first universe spanning nation.” She said mockingly. “They have a similar sorta deal that the empire does on this world.” “I see.” That is all he says. Looking around, it would seem his small little universe wasn't much in the grand scheme, something that somewhat brought him enjoyment with his feelings on his home.

It was a lot to take in so many different factions, and interests in one place, this place must be a really important hub, he thought to himself. They saw a few other people that stood out, but he didn't want to keep bugging her with questions, none of them seemed as prominent as the main three anyway. One thing he noticed is that The empire seemed to have only human members, while the others had many different races. He saw a cute dog girl patrolling the streets next to a cat person who seemed to clash with her a bit. For all this new information he is learning, it would seem some things never change.

They arrive outside a lively tavern. People are yelling, and laughing inside with no filter at all. Clyde frowns. “We aren't going into this loud place, are we?” She nods her head. “Yep, places like these are the most interesting, and of course dangerous. Besides, this is where I make most of my living

when I'm not on the run.” She opens the door, not caring what he thinks. He just sighs and follows her in. After ordering some food, they sit down, and after a while, they are eating it. Raleigh ordered significantly more food than Clyde. He was surprised that a place like this existed. It very much resembled a guild hall you would see in a fantasy world, but here it was in this world.

She starts shoveling the piles into her mouth. “What's wrong.” She says, not stopping. “Not what you were expecting?” He sighs, thinking they would be taking up one of those said jobs from the board by now. He glares at her. “No, I'm just waiting.....” She stops eating, confused. “For what?” Before he can answer, the man following them points a gun at the back of Clyde's head, making an audible clicking noise with it.

Despite what Clyde just said he seems to be just as surprised by it. “That....” Quickly she lunged toward the man firing at him. He dodges it pretty easy, but her goal was to get him away from Clyde. She pushes herself and Clyde behind a table turning it on its side firing at him. “Who the hell is that.” Clyde yells. “The Reaper, or what I like to call the biggest pain in my ass. You know how many times I've killed his dumb ass?” “What do yo...” Clyde tries asking but failing to as the man resumes his attack. “Look he's after me lets split up for now here's the room key.” She runs out the door while shooting at the man, he chases after her. “Ugh you should never split up it never works.” He looked a little furious running after them. No one in the hall seemed to be phased by it. Unfortunately for him he went to the opposite direction they went without realizing.

Clyde runs into the huge crowd trying to find them. He is completely lost now. “Fuck.” He says out of breath kneeling down. “Why did I skip leg day.” He gets up walking now even though he has no idea where he's going. His surroundings started to change to a very different environment. Bright neon lights were all over. A peddler tried to stop him, Clyde had no trouble shoving past. “Damn it where the hell am I?” Seemingly out of nowhere a guy appears behind him. “Where are you? Well this is the diamond in the rough, the greatest place in this world.” Clyde turns to the guy talking to him, as he

started to laugh. A well-dressed man in a black suit with a very fluffy looking golden main appears before him. “Hello I am Loki at your service.” He gives Clyde a bow like someone preforming a play revealing the lion ears on his head as his tail sways behind him.

Chapter Four

Raleigh rushed through the city running from The Reaper. The crowd made a path for them, not wanting to be involved, but not being all that shocked by it either. Well, that was other than The Port Authority who took notice and started to blow a whistle at them both and chase after them. She ran around the corner, hoping to lose them both. Weirdly enough, she ended up bumping into a man in the alley who looked very similar to The Reaper, but after a closer look, she noticed that he was probably just a look alike. He didn't try to harm her and just looked confused. She ran past him, moving on before the real one caught up. A slight smirk crossed his face when he saw the man, though he also ignored him.

She shot at some barrels that were suspended on a platform knocking them over behind her. She knew this wouldn't stop him, but it would slow him down. Furthermore, she wanted to get away from people, and she knew the layout of the city pretty well. She ran into an almost empty plaza prepared for a fight. Transforming her weapon into a massive axe with a rocket on the other end she positioned herself ready for him to arrive. He soon did as the rocket activated swinging the axe around in a complete circle. He managed to jump above it just barely. Seeing as that attempt failed she warped it

into a sword striking at him just as he transformed his weapon into a knife. He landed back down as their blades clashed together. They were both pretty equal in strength Raleigh only having a slight advantage.

“How many times do I have to kill you before you stay dead!” She yelled out at him in frustration. He simply ignored her managing to free his blade japing it straightforward. She dodged to the right managing to hit him on the back of the head making him fall prone. She didn't hesitate to stab him in the chest. The fight was over she had won. She couldn't help being a little skeptical of that fact though. She leaned down to check his pulse. “Yeah, he's dead alright.” She examined his body a little more making sure he was, even going so far as to restrain his lifeless body. Out of nowhere someone hit her in the back of the head while she was distracted she fell to the floor looking up at the attacker. Her eyes widened, the man before her looked just like The Reaper too. His right eye was bleeding as he leaned down to restrain her. She looked over at the dead reaper's lifeless body still there. “How?” She asked as her consciousness faded.

Elsewhere, Clyde and Loki were sitting in some sort of nightclub. The music was booming the lights were changing colors frantically. Loki seemed to be enjoying himself downing a mug of alcohol before setting it next to many more empty tankards. Clyde not so much. “How did I get here?” He mumbled. “Oh come on my friend lighten up! This is the best place in this world so have a drink, maybe find a lady that suits your fancy, or a man if that's more your style. This place is about as diverse as you can get.” Loki smiled handing him a drink to Clyde's disinterest. Clyde would rebut. “Look I'm not here to judge your lifestyle or anything.” A rather tall-looking woman walked by distracting him for a moment stopping him in the middle of his sentence. He shook his head remembering what he needed to do. “ I have more important things to deal with right now. My frie..... this person I came with took off, and I need to find them. They were being attacked.” Loki grinned “Oh need to find someone, do you? That's my specialty, all I need to know is things like their hair color, height, and their cup-” Clyde

cut him off. “I only know one of those.” Loki sighed. “Well it can still be done do you have a personal item related to this person.” Clyde thought for a moment remembering the cube she gave him pulling it out. “Will this do?” Loki took it in his hands for a moment closing his eyes. “Yes, I think it will. Is she a redhead?” He nods at him. “Excellent shall we go then?” Loki stands up waiting for Clyde. “Wait is it really that simple?” Clyde asked starting to think he had gotten stuck in some elaborate scam. “I know what you are thinking all I ask for in return is a favor. Don't worry we can talk about that later, let us go.” Loki started to walk away, not having much of a choice Clyde followed him.

“Look's like she's around some of The Empire's cronies,” Loki said as they walked. “They don't appear to be friendly.” Clyde looked a bit worried he had no idea how Raleigh stacked up to them. She seemed strong to him, but he was weak for sure. “She was being chased by some guy named The Reaper.” “Ah, The Empires' assassin,” Loki said knowing full well who he was. “Wait assassin? Why would she be kept alive then?” Clyde would ask. “Who knows for sure, the empire must have ordered it that way, all the more reason for urgency.” Loki knew more than he said, but wasn't willing to share it. They both walked out toward wherever Raleigh was being held quickly.

Chapter Five

Raleigh opened her eyes slowly. In front of her was a short old man in a white lab coat grinning at her. She was greatly distressed by his prescience, trying to get up from the chair she was in she would realize she was bolted to it. She wasn't going anywhere. “Good to see you again G-534.” The old man said mocking her. “That is not my name!” She yelled out angry, very offended by him calling her that. “Ah yes you go by that other name now. Not that it matters you're going back to The Trial worlds.” She was visibly shaken by this, but after calming down she started to form a plan. It would seem they didn't know she had modified her hand with cybernetics. She looked around the room for her weapon as she used a tool on her hand to free herself from the binds without him noticing. “Why did you even come here? The reaper could have taken me to that..... place.” “I had a side project to work on, so I decided to come get you personally.”

This greatly worried her, anything this man was involved in couldn't be good. “I know that face.” He grinned. “You want to know what it is?” He pointed to the other side of the room at a large machine, she had no idea what it was. “It's a bomb powerful enough to destroy the entire planet.” She started to grasp what he was saying. “Worlds like these are extremely valuable to The Empire, it will be a great addition to the conquest.” “Aren't there imperial soldiers on this world?” Raleigh asked already

knowing the answer. “There are, but nothing of consequence.” He would say. The Reaper appears interjecting. “Don't you think you've shared enough good doctor?” He didn't seem to want her to know anything about the plan at all. “Oh goodness your right, I just couldn't help myself R-55.” The old man would say. “How are you... alive?” Raleigh asked sheepishly only to be ignored by her as he walked over to the bomb.

Loki and Clyde arrived outside a manhole standing over it. “Their base is the sewer?” Clyde asked. “It would seem that way,” Loki answered using his foot to make the cover fly into the air, kicking it to the side, and jumping straight into the abyss. Reluctantly Clyde followed climbing the ladder carefully instead. Looking around seeing the dirty water, and the terrible smell he covered his nose. “I was kinda hoping it was a fake sewer.” Loki chuckled. “Perhaps it is, only a rather impressive one.” They both started to walk down the tunnel, Loki still taking the lead. Loki stops when they reach a turn. Whispering he said, “There are guards around that corner.” Clyde nodded pulling out the cube trying to activate it. He manages to transform it into a gun prematurely firing it catching the attention of the guards. “Shit!” Clyde yelled out as the guards rounded the corner with their weapons drawn. He fired way more shots at them than he really needed to, making them fall almost instantly. Seemingly surprised he asked. “Are they... dead?” Loki leaned down checking both of their pulses. “It would seem your weapon is on stun. Clyde sighed he wasn't ready to become a murderer yet.

They both turned their attention to the corner. An elevator was before them, it seemed to be what they were guarding. “How close are we now?” asked Clyde. “It's at the bottom of this shaft,” Loki answered. They both nodded getting into the elevator. “Be prepared my friend I won't be joining in the fight If I can help it,” Loki said. “What do you mean?” Clyde asked confused. “I'm a pacifist of sorts,” Loki stated. Clyde didn't seem to understand what the man meant but didn't even know how to ask. The door opened as they reached the bottom floor. They were greeted by a group of armed soldiers. “It would seem they are already aware of our arrival.”

They fired on both of them as they hid on both sides of the elevator. Loki tried to reason with them, poking his head out. “Listen. We don't have to resort to such barbarism! Let's talk this out in a calm manner!” He pleaded with them, but his words fell on deaf ears. “Wouldn't things be better for everyone if we discussed things over a drink?” He kept up his attempts, but all they did was continue to fire at them.

Loki sighed, “It would seem they have forced my hand.” He walked into the line of fire, Clyde was in awe, wondering how was he able to avoid their attacks so effortlessly. His mind couldn't keep up with how fast he was moving. “I detest violence.” The guards seemed to catch on, stopping almost out of fear. “Didn't anyone ever tell you?” Loki held his hat down on his head with his left hand, swiping the air with his other. This produced a huge amount of ice from his hand, freezing them all in place. His eyes glow a light blue as he says the words.“Those who inflict harm should be prepared to be harmed.”

Chapter Six

Sirens began to sound in the room that Raleigh was being held. The old man looking peeved turns to a soldier approaching him. “Doctor Corvus! The two guards up above were attacked how should we proceed.” The scientist sighed. “How many of them, if the union caught on to our plan we might, have to move things ahead of schedule.” The soldier looked a bit puzzled. “It's only two people sir, and they don't seem to be affiliated with The Union.” The old man paused. “Hmm, only two?” After some thought, he answered the soldier. “Send everyone available we are starting the project now.” “But sir” The soldier looked at him dumbstruck. “It's only two-” He didn't let him finish. “That Is the concerning part they must be either confident in their success or insane. Do as I say leave two people to guard me as I take my leave.” He nodded leaving with the others. “Come G-534 we are leaving now.” The two soldiers that stayed behind freed Raleigh from the chair. The binds detached with her connecting her wrist like a magnet. She had managed to free one of her arms at this point, but she didn't want them to know just yet with The Reaper so close by. Her weapon had also started to move, transforming into a robot spider on the ceiling following them out. “Die well R-55,” The old man said to The Reaper both of them saluting before he left. The Reaper didn't seem to care in the slightest.

There were about twenty soldiers in the compound. Five already taken care of by Loki. Clyde and Loki walked down the hallway casually. “So much for being a pacifist,” Clyde Said taking cover

behind a barricade meant to be used by their opposition. Loki made no such effort continuing to take down the next wave of grunts coming his way one by one. “You wound me,” Loki said pouting actually upset it came to this. Clyde while struggling kept up with Loki taking down what he could with his weapon, but the disparity in Loki and Clyde's strength was large. He felt a bit emasculated by it but kept pushing forward with him knowing it wasn't the time to worry about something like that.

Raleigh was pushed down the hallway toward a second lift. She grinned knowing now was the time she was waiting for. “Well, it's been fun, but I think I'm ready to leave.” She yells ripping the binding off of her arm just as her weapon lets go of the ceiling into her hand. Before they can react It turns into a hammer, and she knocks both the guards to the ground in one fluid motion. The old man swallowed hard. “Oh, clever girl I think I'll let you go this time.” He said that running into the lift far enough away she can't stop him grinning as the door closes. She would then take a moment to breathe, and remove the other bindings however a familiar voice. “I expected this much from you.” It was The Reaper. She got ready. “Ready for round two, or however many times it's been?” He didn't answer charging toward her with a knife instead.

Clyde and Loki had made it to the room with the bomb. They had taken care of all the men in the base looking around the room for Raleigh. “Looks like we just missed them they went that way.” Loki looked at the chair, and then over to the bomb with concern. “Go ahead without me.” “What, why?” Clyde asks. He points at the machine. “That my friend is a bomb, and I'm afraid I'm the only one close to qualified to take care of it. That, and well... I cannot leave those men I froze to die in the event I fail.” Clyde gripped his tie nervously sweating. He understood running down the hallway.

“Raleigh!” He yelled out seeing her in the distance. “Clyde?” She looked at him surprised. The Reaper also took notice. “That kid.” Running over to him disarming Clyde's weapon with ease, and stabbing him in the gut in a non vital spot. He pressed the knife to Clyde's neck forcing him to raise his hands at his head surrendering, though it was a little hard for him to stay up. He was in great pain and

felt like he would pass out at any moment. The assassin pulled out a second weapon making it a pistol pointing that at Raleigh. “What a nice Reunion. Let's make a deal, you go up that elevator and play nice with the doctor, and in return, I won't kill your friend here.” She sighed. “I think I know you well enough to know you won't do that.”

He grins showing her that her speculation was correct. He shot at her forcing her back going to slit Clyde's throat. Clyde closes his eye preparing to die. He thought about everything he went through. It was short but it was as much as he could have hoped for despite his complaining. He thought about Loki, and the other interesting people he's met so far, then he remembered back to when he met Raleigh, and how she looked the first time he saw her face.

“No!” He said stopping the blade with his hand. He opened his eyes seeing Raleigh stabbing The Reaper in the face in desperation and inhuman speeds. The cuts on his hands were deep, but it bought enough time, and confusion for Raleigh to finish him off with a long sword. The Reaper fell to the ground dead once again. Clyde fell to his knee feeling weak losing blood. “Clyde!” Raleigh falls to her knees hugging him tightly. “Why did you? How did you?” Clyde answered smiling “Were friends right?” Her eyes widened like she had heard those words before. “I won't take full credit though I had a little help from a pervert.” He says passing out.

Loki appears beside them shortly after, he bows just like he did when he met Clyde the first time. “Hello dear I am Loki, sorry to keep introductions short, but we need to get out of here,” Raleigh remembered the bomb. “What about the-” “Not to worry I modified it.” She looked at him with a really annoyed face with a hint of disgust. He doesn't give her time to argue throwing her over his shoulder picking up Clyde with his other hand running off with them out of the base. Raleigh kicks and screams trying to get him to let her down as they get into the lift. They exit the lift through a hidden door in the wall seeing that they were now in a hanger. Putting Raleigh down he says “This is much nicer than the way we came in how unfortunate.”

“Hey, pervert! What about the bomb?” She asks to his displeasure shaking him frantically. “No need for name calling. I didn't have time to completely stop it, only shorten its range to below. So calm down dear it will get off in three..... two.....” A huge explosion goes off below them as the ground shakes, the lift they were in burst into flames. “Oh deer, It would seem I was a little off, but no one was hurt so its fine.” He starts to laugh. Raleigh screams “You idiot we almost got caught in that!” “Now, now, our friend here needs medical attention.” He replied. She sighed looking at the guy knowing he was right. They both walked out of the hanger. “To the hospital!” Loki proclaimed happily.

Chapter Seven

Clyde woke up in a hospital bed. Raleigh was sitting there asleep, head down on the bed. She is drooling a little. “Well, I guess it all worked out.” He looks at her a little annoyed. She started to wake up slowly yawning. “Oh, Clyde you're finally awake.” She raised her head looking at him with her normal smug face. “Whats with that face.” He asks almost afraid to know. “I didn't know you liked me that much.” She said teasing him. “You looked pretty worried yourself.” He answered her with a straight face. “You lost a lot of blood you probably just imagined it.” Ignoring her he kept pressing. “I'm pretty sure I wasn't.” Her smile vanished “Fine, fine, I was a little worried that I wouldn't have anyone to.....” She paused putting a huge grin back on her face. “Show off how awesome I am.” “Right,” He said giving up. She stood up putting her hat, and coat on. “You should be good to go I already talked to the doctor. Oh, and that pervert guy left this for you.” She left a card on the bed as she started to walk out of the room. “I'll meet you outside.” She walks out into the hallway out of earshot. “Stay alive, and I might tell you the real reason one day.

Clyde looked at the card. It looked to be a business card with Loki's name printed on it. He turned it over to see a little note left for him. He read it aloud “Dear Clyde use this card if you ever

need help. Loki-" He studied the card more not seeing a phone number or any clear way to contact him. "Um, OK then." He stands up putting it away looking for his clothes. They are neatly folded in the corner. Someone seemed to be nice enough to wash them, but they were still torn and slightly burned from his house being destroyed. "Man I need some new threads." He said changing into them anyway figuring he can ask Raleigh about it later. He joined her outside, as they both walked to the hanger their ship was being repaired. When they entered Raleigh stopped to admire her newly repaired ship. "It looks just like new." She was giddy like a little girl. The mechanic approaches them. "I can see you are happy with it. It's all good to go now." Raleigh answers "Thank you!" She faces her grabbing both of her hands with hers. "I really appreciate it." The mechanic girl answered. "No problem everything is in working order." Raleigh ran off inside. Clyde nodded at her. "Thanks, sorry about her." She doesn't say anything just smiled walking away while waving. He followed her into the ship.

Dr. Corvus was in a dark room with a large screen grinning. "Yes she got away from us yet again, but its fine. I will simply work her into my other projects my lord. I think with the modifications I did to her she might be able to help us find him." He seemed to be talking to someone over the radio though he doesn't say anything. He presses a button on his console.

Right around when he does that Raleigh Is hooking the wires to her head ready to take off she is excited to go to a new world. "I wanna go to a crazy world now." The hopper lifted into the air towards a portal as she thought about where she wanted to go. "Oh I know let's go to a gladiator world." Clyde just gives her a look wondering what the hell she means by that. They moved deeper between the worlds now with a set destination in mind. However, something is wrong the outlets embedded in her head started to spark. Raleigh started to twitch in a weird motion, as the ship shook out of control. "Hey um Raleigh you good?" Clyde asks not getting an answer. He pokes her face trying to get some sort of reaction.

They enter the atmosphere of a new world the ship slowly starting to nose dive. “Raleigh!” Clyde yelled out in a panic looking for something to hold onto. Raleigh is still floating unresponsive. They are getting really close to the ground now. Raleigh seems to come to just in time guiding the ship up again. It's enough to save them but not enough to stop them from crashing to the ground. Raleigh falls to the ground ripping the wires from her head and rubbing it. “What the hell happened!” He said demanding an answer. “I... I don't know” She looks just as confused as him rubbing her head, eyes still glowing even though she was unplugged. She rises to her feet sticking one of the cords back in. “I don't know what's going on, but this is definitely not the world I was targeting."

Chapter Eight

Raleigh ripped out the cords again, leaning against the desk like she had been completely drained of energy. Clyde approached with concern. “Raleigh, what just happened, where are we?” Raleigh didn't answer for a while. “I'm not sure, this has never happened before the world is listed as blank in the database.” She had regained most of her energy now, standing up, putting her hat on. “The answer might be waiting for us out there. She passes him heading for the door. Clyde is watching her extra carefully. When she opens the door, stepping out oddly, she falls to her knees like someone just knocked all the wind out of her sail. “Are you sure, you are OK.” Clyde asked, looking down at her with his hand out. “You don't feel that?” She says sheepishly. “Feel what?” Clyde says puzzled. “The world It's like it's in pain like its screaming out.” She looks up at the sky, eyes widening after seeing it. “Oh no.” Clyde doesn't understand she is acting so different from normal.

He looks up to seem what she means, shocked. The sky is cracking, and it seems like the earth is slowly getting pulled into it. There is cars and buildings all floating in the sky. In the centre of it all is a black void with three glowing circles shining through. Clyde felt like they were eyes staring down at him. “What.... is that.” She grabs his hand, climbing to her feet. “Its trouble. This is a dying world, and

that's a caretaker. We must have been pulled in by it somehow. Yes, that has to be it.” She didn't sound so sure about that last part. “But it's OK, we just need to jump to another wo...” She looks over at her once again ruined ship, running over to it and grieving. “No, not The Hopper, I'm so sorry hopper.” He sighs but smiles that's more like the Raleigh he knew. “You need to work on your landing, like seriously, two crashes is way too much.” “Ugh, I know, stop nagging me.” She yells back. “It's no use its toast we have to do one or two things. Find the damaged parts or somehow revive this dead world.

“OK so lets find the source then. What's this caretaker thing anyway, I feel like its watching us.” Clyde would ask. “It's the caretaker of this part of the multiverse. Basically a god, no stronger than a god. Come on.” She walks towards the closest town she sees, or what's left of it. Clyde followed, of course, still urked by even the idea of a caretaker. Making it to the town, they see people they are all over cowering, some of them were looting the nearby stores. Clyde went toward one of the cowering ones. “Hey, what happened here.” The man looks up at him, gripping him tightly. “How do you not know. Our god, he's abandoned us.” He doesn't say anything else, he is too frightened, he just points to a café where a man is laying his head against a table. Both Clyde and Raleigh approach him. They look at each other and then back to the man. He has long black hair and pale skin, he looks dead, but they can tell he's not. “Um strange question, but are you um god?”

The man groans, not bothering to move. “Yeah, that's me, in this world at least.” There is a long pause, neither of them are sure how to talk to him like this. Raleigh speaks up. “So um you.... doing all right.” He sighs, “I think you can probably guess the answer to that.” He says in a monotone voice. After another long pause, Clyde chimes in. “Anything we can do to....help...” “This conversations a pain, your world travellers, right?” He snaps his fingers. “There your ship is fixed you should be able to leave now. Leave me alone.” Clyde looks at him for a little more and then realizes his clothes had been repaired too, they looked brand new. “Thanks I guess.” Clyde turns to leave, but Raleigh stops him, tugging on his sleeves. “Hold up Clyde. I wanna.... help him.” She has a sort of determination on her

face that he hadn't seen before. He sighs at her. “You sure about that captain, he doesn't look like he wants to be saved. We should just thank him, and go.” She shakes her head, grinning. “You should know, I'd never back down from a challenge.”

“Fine, but how much time do we have?” Clyde asks. “Probably about a day, I think.” She answered. “It will be fine. If it goes bad, we can always book it to the ship, and escape.” He sighs again “Fine lets do this but....” She is already gone before he can finish pulling the god from his chair and running off with him. He shrugs, following them behind slowly. First, she takes him to an amusement park, forcing him to ride all the roller coasters. She looked like she is having a blast, him not so much. Next she takes him shopping, Clyde still following close behind. She stuffs a huge piece of cotton candy in the gods face. He glares at her but eats the cotton candy. Again and again, she drags him along to play with her. They play laser tag, football, singing, all things Raleigh seems to enjoy while the god seems pretty indifferent to it. After a while they are stopping, looking at the sunset over a railing together.

“Hmmm what should we do next, there is still a lot of fun things we can....” Clyde had enough, “Stop it Raleigh, this isn't working, haven't you noticed that you're the only one having fun between the two of you?” Raleigh frowns, “I, um.” The god interjects. “Look, in all honesty, you two have surprised me. You have nothing to gain from this as far as I can see at least, but its more complicated than that. Do you have any idea how it feels to be a god? I see everything that goes on in this universe and the neighbouring universes. I am so powerful, yet I'm just a small piece in an endless sea trapped in my own cage. It is pointless, I might as well be the version of me that fails, so the others can succeed.” Raleigh look visibly upset by his words, lowering her head down. “I'm not a god, but.... I do know how you feel.”

The god looks in interest all of a sudden. “What do you mean?” She stares at him, “Take a look.” She says. He reaches his hand out, peering into her mind. He looks at her memories, seeing her

in some sort of lab with other children that look similar to her. Furthermore, he flashes forward seeing her hooked up to countless machines. It would seem he understood now, while Clyde was kept completely in the dark. The god spoke, “I see, I guess you really do know how I feel, but that doesn't really change anything.” “Stop!” She yells, “We live in a multiverse and there are countless versions of our self, but why is that a bad thing? Why are you content with fading away? So what if you failed, doesn't mean you should give up. Do your best, be the best you out there and if you still can't manage it then you can be happy there is a version of you that did. Please just don't give up yet.” He doesn't say anything, the sun is almost gone now.

Clyde decided to say something. “I know I can't relate to you as much as she probably can, but as someone powerless, I'd like to say this. You have so much power that so many people would dream of having a fraction of right, why not use it for something, anything? But I guess neither of us can really change your mind, that's up to you. Only you can decide to help yourself. There is a long silence, followed by the god laughing a little. “Who would have thought you coming here would move me at all, but I'm afraid It's too late. He snaps, restoring the world. They look around seeing the city and the buildings all fixed, nothing floating in the sky any more, but that black void and those glowing eyes were still there. “The caretaker has already decided to purge this world. Tentacles started to seep out of the cracks in the void. “No” Raleigh says in a sad voice. “Is there really no way to talk to it, make it reconsider.” Clyde asks. The god shakes his head. “Now the caretaker is completely indifferent to the worlds, they never communicate with anyone.” “There has to be....” Clyde started to say before disappearing, Raleigh panics. “Did you do that, Mr god?” He shook his head, just as confused has her.

Clyde blinks, not knowing what happened, he is now inside the void. He can almost make out the caretakers body, he can't shake the eyes staring at him. It seems to try and speak to him, but he can't even make out the words. Reality changes from a void to a garden and back to a void. Eventually staying in the garden. It was peaceful, birds were chirping, the sun was shining just right on his skin. A

tall old looking man with a kind face is looking at him. “You wanted to talk. Well, what do you have to say?” The old man looks down at a small tree, studying it. “Are you the.... caretaker?” He asked terrified he got in this situation. “Some have called me that. I took this form so you could understand me. Now make your case, and be quick about it.” Clyde swallowed hard. “We have been talking to the god of that world. He wants to keep trying now, or at least we had made him consider it.” The caretakers face didn't change.

“Do you know why people trim trees? It enhances the tree.” He uses the clippers in his hand to prune a small dying branch from the tree in front of him. “It removes the old rotting pieces to make room for new healthy pieces of the tree.” He pruned another small branch. “That world is no different, it won't get better even with the god's change of heart.” He clipped yet another branch, sounding a bit more angry in that last bit. He hovers over the next branch with the clippers. “Would you deny the creation of new worlds for a sad, dying world?”

Clyde paused. “I'm not a god or anything, but..... I think everyone deserves a shot, don't they?” The caretaker moves the clippers away, not cutting it. “I fail to see your logic, however you have interested me. Yes, sometimes gods try to reason with me, but I never thought such a lower life form would be so bold to a being such as myself. I've decided to humour you. At least for now.” “Wow really?” He was honestly surprised he pulled it off. The area they are in changes again, the tree is now behind him and much bigger, more ethereal looking. Clyde can't help but see how amazing it all is, but the caretaker overwhelms all his senses. “One more thing. Take this with you.” He points at Clyde's arm as it suddenly started to glow with a strange design it hurt terribly, he wanted to cry out in pain, but he couldn't, he was frozen. “Farewell, I'll be watching you.” Clyde blacks out.

Clyde slowly opens his eyes back with Raleigh and the god. Raleigh just looked confused, wondering what just happened, but the god had a face of shock like he already knows what happened with Clyde and the Caretakers conversation. His face changed to amazement, pain, and then fear.

Raleigh spoke up. “Clyde, what happened, are you OK?” “Yeah, I'm fine, my arm just hurts a little for some reason. I'm more concerned about him, to be honest.” Clyde answered. Another long pause happened, which at this point they seemed used to from this guy. “I'm fine, don't worry.” the god exclaimed. Clyde blew a huge sigh of relief. “I'm glad this is all over, believe it or not talking to so many powerful people is stressful.” Clyde would clutch his tie.

“Oh, Clyde, you don't have to be stressed out by me. I know I'm strong, but...” Raleigh said, smirking, only for Clyde to interrupt. “I'm obviously not talking about you!” The god would smile at them. “You don't have to worry. I'm not saying I completely changed my way of thinking, but you've certainly changed my perspective ever so slightly.” he turned facing the moon. “It won't be easy for me, but seeing a powerless person like yourself do something even gods failed makes me want to try, just for a bit longer at least. Anyway, I think you've done enough now, haven't you?” He disappears before they can even register what happened. “Well, that's our cue to leave.” Raleigh smiles, seeming to be satisfied. Raleigh walks forward toward the direction of their vessel with a spring in her step. Although it was night, the town was alive and fully restored, it was almost like it never even broke apart at all.

On the way out of the city, Clyde looked that the table they first saw the god. He ponders if everything really will go right here. “It's best to leave it open-ended.” He said out loud, catching the attention of Raleigh, she looks back curious, but ends up letting him be for now. Neither of them say another word until they make it back to the ship, plugging up and ready to go. They fly off into the sky, fireworks going off almost like the gods way of saying good by, and just like that they were off into the portal, and between the worlds. He stared at her floating body, and glowing white eyes. She seemed normal again like before, nevertheless he had to ask. “Hey um, Raleigh, I know I probably should've asked earlier but are you really OK now?” She stares into the vortex before her. “Yes, yes, I'm fine. Probably anyway. I'm pretty sure it was because of that dying world we got knocked off course, but we

should be fine now.” Her body started to twitch for a bit as the cords sparked. Clyde looked skeptical, but put his trust in her, she seemed to be right most of the time after all, not that he would tell her that.

Chapter Nine

The Hopper had made it to the new world this time with no complications. “You'll love this world, Clyde, it will be a great...” Raleigh started to say, only to stop herself like she made a mistake. He looked out the window, seeing nothing, but a wasteland. “What's so great about this?” Then, almost like the universe heard him say that he was hit with a wave of energy. It didn't feel painful, just different, like there was something slowly starting to well up inside him. Raleigh seemed to feel the same sensation but was less bothered by it. “You feel that, right? What is it?” She looked at him with her glowing eye while she kept flying the ship. “Some worlds just have a different energy to them, you'll get used to that sorta thing.”

He accepted that for now, but couldn't help, but feel there was more to it than that. He could see a city In the distance as they slowly approached till they were right next to it. One of the buildings exploded into flames. It wasn't clear what was going on, but Raleigh quickly moved it out of range. A flying bug-like creature flew out of it, chasing after Them. “Strap in, Clyde, it's going to get crazy!” She said a little too late as he had already face-planted against the wall from the sudden movement. He struggled to climb to a seat and do that as she moved around The Hopper, trying to avoid the bug

monster's attack.

He didn't know if the ship had that much firepower to deal with it, and was somewhat curious to find out. Raleigh managed to maneuver the ship and get in front of the creature. Some turrets on The Hopper started to fire on it, seeming to do major damage. It cried out in pain as they flew off. “I'm going to land us on the city outskirts, there is no telling if the city is safe after seeing that.” She explained to him doing just that.

Once they landed she quickly unplugged rushing out, Clyde following closely behind. There didn't seem to be anything wrong in the area. They both took a deep breath, letting their guard down a little. “That was strange. What's the deal with this place?” Clyde asked. “Looked like they are under attack by some sort of aliens, it's a little weird they aren't swarming the place, though.” She said looking around. Clyde looked deeper into the city, no longer seeing any issues.

“Well, let's go in and see what's up.” She said, already walking into town. Clyde couldn't shake the uneasy feeling like someone was watching them. In the city, most of the civilians seemed to be unfazed by the attack, like it was a somewhat common occurrence. It looked mostly modern in design, but there were a few futuristic aspects to the city such as a few flying cars, and holograms. However, wheels still seemed to dominate the road.

Before they could get any further, the creature from before showed up out of nowhere, seemingly healed completely, lunging at Clyde. “Clyde!” Raleigh said in a panic, but couldn't stop the monster in time. He had no time to react, he felt like it was going to hurt closing his eyes and hoping he would survive, but that blow never came. He opens his eyes and sees a shadowy ninja spirit protecting him. The Bug looked shocked, backing away. “You. You have a poser!”

Clyde looked a little surprised the thing could speak. He moved his arm up and down, seeing that the ninja was copying him. “Hmm, how about that? More importantly, why are you attacking us, bug man?” He said calmly, filled with confidence in his new-found power. Raleigh looked a little

shocked, but let him take the lead. The Creature just laughed, “The king sent me here to take over your pathetic planet.” Clyde looked a little confused, as did Raleigh. “Wait, like just you?”

“Well there were others, but they were defeated now it's my turn, enough talk.” The monster said, lunging forward once more. This time Raleigh stood in the way, blocking it. A spirit of her own jumped out of her, slashing at the creature, cutting its torso off. Hers resembled more of a robot. “Curses!” The Monster said trying to move away as its body started to regenerate, before he could a man also with a spirit rushed over using his to crush it dead.

He looked around the area, seeing that no civilians were hurt, making his spirit vanish. Four other men joined him. “Fellow poser users? What a surprise, but you helped out, thanks. I'm Kugo.” The man said, holding his hand out to them, ready to shake whoever took it. He was wearing a fighting dojo uniform for some reason, as were the others with him. Raleigh took his hand with a strong grip. “Howdy. We just rolled into a town. Names Raleigh, and he? Well, he's my sidekick, his name is Clyde.” She said to him. “What do you mean sidekick,” Clyde said in protest.

She looked back at him, smirking. “If the shoe fits.” She said, letting go of Kugo's hand and shrugging it off. Kugo let out a chuckle. “Well, aren't you two a laugh? Why don't we host you guys while you're in town?” “Really, just like that?” Clyde said a little skeptical of his motives. “Yeah, why not, we have plenty of room, and you did us a solid. Their leader is bound to show up soon.” Kugo said joyfully. “You bet, lead the way,” Raleigh said, accepting his invitation without another thought. “Great follow me.” He said turning around, his spirit reappeared surrounding him. It looked like some sort of monkey warrior to him.

Before they could do anything, Kugo started to fly into the air and off toward a large stadium in the distance. One of the guys he was with just sighs. “Come on Kugo you should know other people's limits. Sorry about him, he doesn't think about that sort of thing. I'm Kyle.” Said one of the men left behind by him. He also stuck out his hand this time, and Clyde took it. “Nice to meet you,” Clyde said

to him avoiding eye contact feeling a bit awkward for some reason.

He let go, motioning for them to follow them. Clyde looked around curious, having many questions about the world. He was unsure if Raleigh would know the answers. “So what's up with these spirits, I haven't had one for very long?” He asked Kyle. “Oh really? Well they are called posers not everyone has one, but they are really powerful, it's like a piece of your soul made manifest. It's a good thing we have them because otherwise, those aliens would be destroying us.” He explained. “I guess that explains more why they only feel the need to send someone one at a time, do they outmatch the average person that much?”

Kyle sighs. “I'm afraid so, that's why the military shoots every spacecraft they see out of the sky it hardly helps, but the aliens are nothing, but powerful conquerors.” Both Clyde and Raleigh swallow hard, wondering how they avoided that fate. “I um, think I left something back there,” Raleigh said nervously. “It's just over there, right?” She asked, pointing to the stadium ahead. Kyle just nodded as Raleigh got her confirmation she turned around running to hide The Hopper before it was discovered.

Clyde thought it might be a good idea to go with her, but she was already out of sight, so he just stayed. When they got closer to the stadium, he looked in awe. There were holograms all over showing what looked to be Kugo fighting in a match. “The good old days,” Kyle said. “Who would have thought a bunch of Martial artists would be fighting evil aliens.” “That's quite the career change,” Clyde said back. “Well we didn't have much choice, someone had to step up. Things just aren't that simple anymore.” Kyle said leading them in. “Well, The spare rooms are that way.” He said, pointing up a flight of stairs, and handing him a key card. Clyde nodded, walking up to get settled.

Chapter Ten

Without being seen, Raleigh was able to hide The Hopper in a cave close by, returning without issues. They both woke up leaving their respective rooms ready to take on whatever the day at to throw at them. Raleigh Yawns, not fully dressed, only in her white collared shirt and her hat. “Good morning Clyde.” She said, still groggy. Clyde didn't look much better. Despite him wanting to wake up at the same time as her, he struggled to get to sleep, so he was still very tired. “Morning.” He said shortly.

After they both woke up a bit more, Clyde spoke up. “I think they said they serve breakfast around this time, want to head that way?” He would ask. She started to stretch out her body while listening. “Sure, but after that Kugo said we were gonna spar, I can't wait to see how that goes.” She said, finishing her stretching and following Clyde down. Before they even really got a chance to Greet anyone in the dining room, an explosion shook the ground from outside. All of them looked a little annoyed, and not ready to go out and fight whoever it was, that was except for Kugo, and Raleigh. “Alright!” They both said excitedly, running out the door.

“Well, we better get going,” Kyle said, a little upset, they interrupted their meal. They rushed outside to see there were two of them wreaking havoc on the city this time. There was a bug man like

before, and a larger more intimidating one behind him not attacking, he was crossing his arms. Raleigh and Kugo stood in front of everyone ready for a fight. The larger creature looked unimpressed. “Really, you weaklings are the ones beating all my men? What a waste of time, I should've just let him take care of it.” The leader said.

The Bug Man flew closer trying to attack Kugo, but Kyle and the other three jumped in front of him ready to fight. “We will handle this guy, Kugo,” Kyle said Kugo nodded, though it seemed he was already planning to do that anyway. Raleigh seemed to be thinking the same, so Clyde decided to join with Kyle, as he honestly wasn't sure if he could even beat the weaker one. They split up to fight their respective battles. The Bug Man didn't appear to be that much stronger than the one before. He tried to get his poser to appear like the others, but it didn't he didn't seem to grasp how to use it just yet. But when the bug man came hurdling toward him, it quickly appeared to protect him.

They were at a stalemate of sorts. Every blow they made on it seemed to heal given enough time. “Coward, stop running so you can heal!” Kyle said, furious as his spirit attacked it. It connected a hit, wounding it greatly, but it only laughed. Clyde felt like he wasn't contributing enough. Sure, he wasn't much help himself, but with this power, he thought he could do more. He waved his arms like it was throwing ninja stars and just like he hoped his poser shot some out from his hand. He was glad because otherwise, he would have looked really stupid there. This damages it faster than it can heal. It's getting weaker, but so are his allies. It takes two of them out with a single blow, followed by the third one.

Kyle tried to hold his own but struggled. They were both weak, it looked like another hit would do it. Clyde tried pulling out a sword in his mind, hoping the ninja would follow suit and do the same. It did so to his relief. Finishing the bug man off. They had won, but Kyle fell over out cold for now. Clyde breathed heavily, drenched in sweat, and clutching his tie. His Poser did most of the work, but he still felt like it had taken it out of him. Did the Poser consume a lot of stamina, he wondered. He looked

over to see how Raleigh, and Kugo were faring. They seemed to be having the same problem. They had gotten pretty banged up themselves, but ever still they both had a smile on their face.

Raleigh seemed like she was neglecting using her multi-tool for this, relying mostly on her Poser. “Fools, you are no match for my Poser and my healing.” The Leader laughed, showing off that he too had one. They made blows once more. Clyde joined the fight after a breath throwing ninja stars at him. It took the leader off guard, giving Raleigh the chance to slash him up with her robot Posers blade arms, and from Kugo to punch him into a building. “No matter how strong you are we will surpass our limits and grow stronger ourselves!” Kugo shouts. The dust started to rise all over. Kugo, and Raleigh, began to celebrate their victory.

Kugo gave a little side eye to the smoke like he was waiting for something but taking no action. Clyde looked at the smoke, feeling uneasy. He pulled out his multi-tool, setting it to kill, looking into it before shooting. Both Kugo and Raleigh looked at Clyde confused. “The hell are you doing, Clyde?” Raleigh would ask, but when the dust cleared, she got her answer. The Leader was still alive, and regenerating, if not for his actions it would have gotten back up fully healed. “Nooo!” It said falling to the floor now vanquished.

“What, haven't you ever watched a show like this? If there is a bunch of dust and stuff like that, they are fine and about to attack again.” Clyde said making Raleigh laugh. “I can't believe you were right about that." Kugo looked almost angry that he did that. After a long silence, he walked over to Clyde, putting his hand on his shoulder, gripping a little too tight. “Good job bud.” He said with a fake smile before leaning in closer. “But next time, maybe just let us handle it.” He said flying off right away.

Clyde didn't know what to think it was a strange interaction to him, but he shrugged it off for now, going over to see if Kyle and the others were OK. They had already gotten back up, and dusted themselves off, ready to return home. Kugo was eating cereal, clearly looking upset. “Wow, Raleigh,

you're something. You might be as strong as Kugo.” He said only seeming to make him more mad. “Oh hey, Kugo you want to come get drinks with us to celebrate our victory?” Kyle would ask his friend. He gripped the spoon tight, crushing it. “You go have fun without me. I have plans.”

Kyle seemed a little surprised but accepted it. ”Ok, what about you, Clyde?” He asks. Clyde was starting to get some bad vibes from Kugo and wanted to see what was up with him if he could. “I'll pass, that fight took it out of me.” He said, even though that was only half the reason. He seemed to accept that, leaving with the others. Raleigh going along, buttered up by all the praise he was giving her. He stayed back, keeping a close eye on him, but trying to look like he wasn't. It didn't take much time for Kugo to leave the stadium. And fly off.

Clyde decided to follow him, barely able to keep up. He returned to the battlefield for some reason, talking to the cleanup crew. “Hurry up, and get this to the lab." That is all he said before flying off. There was no way he would catch him with the speed he was going. He looked at the crew, thinking something was weird about them. Looking closer, he saw that they had multi-tools on them, something this world didn't seem to have.

He followed them just out of sight. They took the monster to a compound outside the city, making Clyde start to regret doing so. He managed to sneak in behind them undetected. He was about to follow them even further when he saw who else, but The Reaper, in another room with three others. Furthermore, he hid nearby to listen in on their conversation. “Must you insist on working alone? Surely we would have more success together.” A voice said to the reaper. “You are a liability to me. I will take control of this base, and capture her.”

“Wait a minute, this is my base! I'm in charge he...” Another voice started to say in protest but seemed to back down out of fear of The Reaper. “Very well be that way. Darrain and I will be waiting just outside the world when you fail.” The first voice said to The Reaper, seeming to piss him off. Both he, and another one of the men in the room leave, only the empire's assassin, and the enemy

commander remain.

They leave the room as well, heading into the one they took the monster remains. Clyde peeked inside, a little shocked to see Kugo in there with them. “It's about time you got here. The Empire promised to make me strong monsters to fight, not a bunch of weaklings. Who's this guy?” Kugo asks them. “Ah well, he's...” The man starts to say. “Who I am is of no consequence to you. I'm here for one reason only. To capture this person.” He said, holding out a hologram of Raleigh. “Hmm, what a small universe I met her not that long ago, her friend ruined my fun. I think I have an idea that will help us both out.” Kugo started to say.

Clyde was getting nervous, clutching his tie. He pulled his phone out of his pocket. It wasn't super useful now, and it didn't have much battery left, but he figured at least a picture of proof would be helpful now. Then he could run out of here. He raised it, taking one, but forgot to turn the flash off. “Fuck.” He said in whispered frustration. The Reaper had already caught on and put his hand around his neck. “You again. You are lucky, I need someone to draw her out.” He said knocking Clyde out.

Chapter Eleven

Clyde woke up dazed and confused tied to a chair The Reaper, and Kugo standing before him. Kugo seemed somewhat conflicted. “You just had to stick your nose where it didn't belong. I didn't want to have to do this, but I can't let this get out.” Kugo said, while The Reaper simply listened off to the side. “Can we skip this part, and jump straight to the evil plan,” Clyde said, a little annoyed. “Well... You, and that prideful woman you call a captain ruined everything, I'd love to just get rid of you, but my benefactors need you as bait.” Kugo with frustration explained.

Clyde looked around the room, seeing the remains of monsters in tubes, and a few new uninjured ones too. He was starting to get an idea of what he was doing. “So what, this is all some fake game to you?” He asked the fighter. Kugo sighed, taking a long time to answer, like there was a bit of regret. “It used to be real. In every battle I fought, I gave my all it was thrilling to put my life on the line and become stronger.... but after a while, all the threats were gone, and the ones around well... weren't on my level. There are no aliens in this universe, Clyde.” Kugo said, almost sounding exhausted by this charade. “So you asked them to help? Kugo, you don't seem like a bad person. Why are you doing this?” Clyde asked, understanding the plan but not the real motive.

Kugo let out an angry laugh. “Why am I doing this? Because I miss the thrill. But enough of this crap, it's time to get moving, are they ready?” He turns and asks the imperial officer in the corner, whom Clyde had neglected to notice. “Yes, yes.” He pushes a button as two robots enter the room. “Stop this, whatever you're going to do?” Clyde said half-heartedly, knowing he already made up his mind. Kugo simply leaves with them. The Reaper says nothing, guarding Clyde.

Raleigh and the others started to walk back home she was a little worse for wear, Kyle lending his shoulder. “I guess she can't really handle her alcohol.” He says. She didn't even drink that much and felt like this, Luckily enough she could tell she was almost sober again. “Don't worry, I'm gonna be better soon.” She said, barely able to form the words. They walked a little farther as she slowly came back to her senses. The other explosion shook the earth, drawing their attention. “What, but we just defeated the alien's leader!” One of them said shocked.

Kugo crashed down, forming a small crater as one of the robots flew closer. It was all an act, but they were pretty convinced it was a threat. They started to get ready for another fight, but before they could, he spoke up. “We have a new enemy to deal with! I hate to say it, but Clyde was on their side the whole time, he ambushed me!” Kugo said, easily convincing them. Raleigh sobered right up hearing that, shaking her head. “What do you mean he's an evil robot traitor, he's just a dumb fleshy human.” She said in his defense.

He pretended to be shocked. “You must be working with them too. Are you the cyborg queen?” He asked, already knowing the truth. “Well, I am a cyborg, and you can call me a queen if you want, but.” She said, playing into her overconfidence. “See, she admits it!” Kugo says, causing Kyle and the others to back away ready to fight. She started to back away, not wanting to fight them like this. “Hey, calm down, something weird is going on. Let's talk about this.” Before they can answer, the other robot flies in, saying “Protect the queen.” Only further incriminating her.

She looked a bit conflicted, welling up with unpleasant emotions. Her insecurity getting the

better of her, she runs off instead of trying to fight them. They try to chase after her but are stopped by the robots. Kugo is the only one able to slip past. She ducked down an alley she didn't know this town like the port world she was just running around blind. She ran into a big plaza where Kugo was already waiting.

“I'll level with you. I know, you're not a traitor. But I need you both gone, and my friends in The Empire want you for some reason. So surrender, and they won't hurt Clyde, or you can fight me, which honestly I would prefer. It's been a while since I had a real challenge.” He grins, cracking his knuckles. She didn't think he was lying about having Clyde, but she knew better than to trust they would honor their word, so she had no real choice but to fight.

She got into a fighting stance. This time taking out her Poser, and Multi-tool using the cube like gauntlets like the man from before. He laughs, stoked to have this chance. “Perfect. A good and honorable fight, nothing but grit.” He says, becoming one with his Poser. It covered him like armor. He rushed forward, making the first move. She dodged out of the way, taking him more seriously than an average foe. She punched him in the back, causing him to stagger. He tried to retaliate, but her Poser blocked his attempt.

He backed away and flew out into the air out of her range. “Nice, nice, you're very strong, but not for long I'll surpass you soon. Take this.” He put both his hands forward as a ball of energy formed in his hand shooting out a giant beam from his hands destroying a nearby building. She was not expecting that, barely able to move out of the way in time. “You want a fair and honorable fight, and then you go and pull out a huge fuck off laser beam?” She asked, somewhat annoyed by his seemingly fragile ideals, but now that she saw him doing that, she wondered if she could do something like that in this world.

With the swipe of her hand, she tried to get her poser to shoot out an energy wave, and just like she hoped it did so. She smirked, getting into it a little again, the waves were weaker, but she could do

them much faster. Kugo could barely dodge them all. The last one cut him deep in the chest, making him fall, but not quite end the fight. He choked up some blood. “Impressive, but I'm not done yet, all I have to...” He started to say, but she wasn't having it, punching him in the gut. He blocked the next blow, but not the one after, it was getting harder for him to keep up. Eventually, he couldn't hold out anymore. Falling to the ground.

She looked down at him, disappointed it turned out this way. “Where is Clyde?” She asked not playing around with him anymore, but he failed to answer her. She sighed, and walked away, determined to find him herself if he wouldn't say. “Wait.” He said weakly, she stopped but didn't face him. “How could it be that I lost to you?” He asked as it started to pour down rain. “You lost because you forgot what really mattered to you.” She said to him, walking away. The Reaper wasn't that far away. Waiting for her. “I expected as much.” He said the gun pointed at her face.

“Hold on, Mr. Killer guy,” Clyde said, rubbing his arms. With him were some of the creatures in the tubes, seemingly on his side. The Reaper looked a little surprised. “Let's just say these guys are a little tired of playing this game.” He says as the 5 monsters attack him. He isn't able to repel them all at once and doesn't seem to have a Poser, so with only a bit of a fight they manage to beat him down. Afterward, they look at Clyde, giving him a nod of respect and slinking off into the shadows.

“Clyde!” Raleigh said, lifting his face to see if there were any bruises. “How did you get away?” She asked him. He thought back. As soon as The Reaper left he used his Poser to try to free himself, but the poser was also bound like him so it was a bit of an awkward shuffle over to one of the panels, freeing the monsters who out of respect did the same for him. “I don't want to talk about it.” He said, a little embarrassed about how pathetic it was. “What about them?” She said, referring to the monsters. “I don't think they will attack anyone anymore it wasn't their choice to begin with. Still, I don't think we are welcome here anymore.” He said, looking down, and seeing Kugo's body.

She nodded, agreeing with him. “It's a shame, I kinda liked this world.” She led the way back to

the ship, and Kyle and the others found Kugo seeing if he was ok. “What happened? Did the Cyborg Queen get away?” Kyle asked him nervously. Kugo groaned, sitting up, conflicted on what to say. “No, I was wrong, they weren't them after all.” He said standing up them seeming to accept that. He looked up at the sky. “What really matters to me, huh?” He says to himself, going home with his friends.

The Hopper lifted into the air under the cover of night, Raleigh being careful to try and avoid the defenses they mentioned before disappearing into a flash of light like always, Clyde could feel the weird power leave his body. "I hope that doesn't mean we can't use Poser's anymore I kinda liked it." He said disappointed. "Some powers are tethered to the world they come from sadly." She explained to him, but before she could say more alarms began to flare. “What's going on?” Clyde asked. “How the hell did they?” Raleigh started to say. The Huge Multiversal Empire Flagship is in the Vortex right behind them, ready to fight. They were not getting away this time.

Chapter Twelve

The massive flagship continued to get closer. Raleigh struggles to pull the hopper away not making any progress. “It's no use we are being pulled in get ready for a fight,” Raleigh said unplugging herself and stretching. “Oh come on man,” Clyde said tired of this happening. The hopper is pulled into a hanger by a wench on the outside and surrounded by the soldiers of the empire right away. The guy that Raleigh fought when Clyde first met her was waiting for them. “No funny business you two. You aren't getting away this time. Just come out with your hands up.” He demanded of them. They all waited there for a while Raleigh, and Clyde not coming out. He tried saying it again thinking they might not have heard him.”Come out with your hands up you can't escape.”

They still didn't come out. The man pointed to some soldiers directing them to enter the hopper. They searched the ship unable to find either of them. “They aren't here sir.” One of them spoke up to his surprise. “What do you mean they aren't there?” He barges into the hopper to look at it himself also seeing nothing. Enraged he looked all over while Clyde, and Raleigh snuck out of a trap door under the vessel. “Now what,” Clyde asked. “We are still surrounded.” She would toss a bomb into the air toward some of the soldiers causing it to explode catching everyone's attention. They ran toward the explosion

expecting that to be were Clyde and Raleigh were allowing them to run away in the opposite direction down a corridor. “Find them!” The hulking brute yelled out going down the other hallway the direction the explosion was coming from.

They ran down the Flagship's long hallway pulling out their Multi-tools. “The bridge should be this direction. We can disable anything keeping us here from there.” She directed. “What about that guy is he the same one from before?” Clyde asked. “Yeah looks like it. His name is dumbo or something. He has been after me for a while, but he isn't as annoying as The Reaper most of the time so honestly, I don't mind.” She replied to Clyde's dismay. She made it sound like it was a guy asking her out, and she felt bad about hurting his feelings. He followed her down the maze-like hallway as the paths started to diverge. Some soldiers started to show up back on their tails. Raleigh making short work of them, even Clyde holding his own against the nameless foot soldiers.

The hallway opened up into a large room full of storage containers and an elevator presumably leading to the bridge. The brute she called dumbo earlier broke through one of the containers fully geared up targeting Clyde. “Raleigh pushed him out of the way. Clyde seemed to be a little tired of being saved by her. “Go on ahead this is the toughest dude here.” She told him. He didn't know exactly how he was supposed to figure out all the complicated machinery the bridge probably had, but he went ahead up the elevator anyway.

“Well, if it isn't the overvalued lab rat. You can fight your own battles now?” The huge man would say. “You know that's not him right, dumbo?” She says annoyed. “It's Darian!” He attempts to punch her missing and hitting the ground. She shrugged stepping on his fist while he did so and kicking him in the face. “Dumbo, daro, potato, patato.” He almost falls on his back but gains his footing getting angered further. “You won't trick me, you and your stupid captain ruined everything. He swung again destroying half of the containers in the room and part of the wall. She sees the damage realizing this guy could possibly kill her in one punch. “Man I got you angry huh. Aren't you supposed to be taking

me alive?" She asks a little amused. "That's right, but what're a few broken bones. Its less then you deserve with everything you have done."

Clyde had made it up the elevator not sure what to do looking around. It did appear to be a bridge that he was on. A bridge with hostile soldiers. They noticed him pulling out their weapons to fire at him. Clyde ducks behind a control panel setting his Multi-tool to stun returning fire. He had a level of competence now, not always hitting his mark but, after a few misses, he knocked about half of them out. The remaining goons were closing in around him. "Fool! Surrender and you won't be killed!" One of them that appeared to be a commanding officer said. "Fine fine." Clyde Raises his hands not sure what else he can do at this point dropping his weapon and standing up raising his hands.

He looked around the room looking for something he could use to fight. "You made the right choice captain." The officer would say. "I hate to break it to you but that's my friend, not me." Clyde would rebut. The officer got closer studying Clyde's face, and his body. He laughed. "Sorry, my mistake this is much more amusing. It would seem we all were wrong. "What are you talking about?" He fails to answer him saying instead. "Can you say you know your friend or your supposed enemy for that matter?" He thought about it he knew she wasn't being honest with him about something, and keeping secrets. "Well, I guess I don't know much about her yet."

"I assumed as much." The officer would say. "I'm Commander Cyrus. You see G-534 is a problem child, a deserter to the cause. She's only using you." Clyde shook his head. " Well I don't know about all that, but she's a lot stronger than I am I don't think I'm much use to her." He hated to admit it, but he was starting to realize he wasn't much help to her at all." Cyrus faintly smiled. "It might appear that way if only you knew the truth." He walked behind them both toward a large cylinder in the middle of the room. Clyde getting ready for the perfect opportunity to strike. He thought he could take care of them when Cyrus wasn't looking. However, Cyrus had another idea. Pushing buttons on a console near the cylinder. It began to open up slowly unlocking to reveal its contents. He looked into it

seeing not a thing but a person. With short red hair hooked into the cylinder with wires floating in the air. It looked just like Raleigh, but a little older.

“Ra... Raleigh?” Clyde asked forgetting everything the girl was not responsive to his words. “That's what she told you to call her right?” Cyrus would say. “This is one of her many other self's Called Inari.” The elevator opened, Raleigh came out stopping Cyrus from explaining more. “Big sister?” She would say seeing the other her freezing in place. “Ah, you've made it. Are you finally ready to go home?” She ignored him yelling out for the other her to answer. “Inari!” She didn't answer her. “What did you do to her?” She yelled at Cyrus demanding an answer. “I didn't do anything to her.” He paused anger welling up that he attempted to quell. “You did this. I'll assure you she isn't in pain.” If you don't like it you shouldn't have abandoned your mission with that free-spirited fool. She took your place.”

Clyde felt pretty out of the loop not knowing what to do what to think. Raleigh moved closer. All of them focused on her knowing she was the real threat. “Did she?” She was distraught, but it quickly turned to anger. Her weapon turned to a large scythe as she ran toward Cyrus. They fired on her missing every shot Cyrus used his Multi-tool to make a spear defending himself. Clyde ducked grabbing his Multi-tool from the floor firing it on the remaining men. Cyrus was defeated by Raleigh shortly after. She ran over to inari disconnecting her from the wires she fell to the floor glowing eyes turning back to normal just like Raleigh's always did. She looked weakly at Raleigh. “Is that... Is that you sister?” She nodded almost in tears holding her tight. “I had no idea they would do this.” Inari smiled at her. “It's ok Raleigh I was glad to take your place. I did it for all of our sisters. I only wish I was the only one.”

“Damn it,” Raleigh said. "I will get them back for this sis, I promise.” Inari raised her hand brushing it against her face. “Raleigh forget about me. I can't even leave this ship anymore. That's the guy, right? Go live your life.” Inari would say Raleigh not answering. “It'll be fine Raleigh you've done

enough. You don't have to save us.” She said trying to reassure her. “I'm not going to leave you!” Raleigh stated. “You have to. I've lost control of the ship it's heading for a void. If you stay you'll be trapped outside the multiverse forever.” Raleigh pauses. “No, I can do something, anything.” Inari shook her head. “Goodbye Raleigh. I love you.” She slowly started to fall limp, as the light drained from her eyes leaving her an empty husk. Raleigh sat there silently sobbing.

Clyde didn't know what to do. He felt like he needed answers, but he couldn't ask her like this. He wanted to comfort her but didn't know if it was his place. Cyrus was right he didn't know Raleigh at all. So he stood there not saying anything. Eventually, Raleigh stood up drying her tears looking at Clyde like she was wanting something. “I'm sorry Raleigh I really am.” That's all he could muster. She came over to him forcing a hug which he accepted putting his arms around her loosely, something felt unsure to him about it. “Let's disable anything keeping us here, and get out of here.” She said slowly walking over to the main console and doing so. It didn't take her long. She turned back to Clyde. “I hate to ask this Clyde, but.... could you carry me? At least to the ship.” He could see her knees shaking. He picked her up without saying a word getting back into the elevator. She was heavier than expected.

Cyrus came to seeing Inari on the floor out of it. He seemed conflicted like he wanted to stay with her, but he knew he couldn't now he had things he couldn't let be. He clenched his first in anger. A single tear ran down his cheek. “I'm sorry things ended this way.” He rushed out of the bridge taking one last look at her before leaving.

There were still soldiers on the ship, but they were panicking trying to find a way out. He walked back without anyone trying to stop them. Raleigh Plugged herself up flying out just as the flagship hit the side of the vortex being torn apart. Pods shooting out of it one with Cyrus inside making their way to whatever world they could. “We will meet again, replacement,” Cyrus said to no one looking at the hopper fly to the nearest world. They safely landed on an unknown earth nothing

attacking or bothering them. Raleigh unplugged walking back toward her room. “I need some.... time.” She said closing the door.

Clyde was left alone looking out the windows at the new world. “Fuck man.” He banged his hands on the desk. “What's wrong with me?” Raleigh crawled into her bed drowning herself under the covers. She opened a side panel containing some of her personal items including the picture that was on her desk before. She looked at it longingly. It was a picture of a younger Raleigh with a much older-looking Clyde. He was wearing the hat she never took off with a carefree grin and a bit of a stubble. He was hugging her even though she didn't seem to be enjoying it all that much in the photo. The look on her face showed that she truly did look back at this moment with joy and comfort.

Chapter Thirteen

A few days have passed, the time has almost stood still. Raleigh has not been out of her room, leaving Clyde to wander the ship aimlessly. His stomach groaned with hunger, and his head was filled with questions. Neither would be satisfied at this rate. He didn't know if the hopper had food on it or where to access it if it did. He pushed against the walls, hoping to maybe reveal a hidden kitchen to rid himself of the pain he felt in the pit of his stomach. Unfortunately, he found nothing. He sighed, wondering if it was time to confront Raleigh. Approaching her door filled with different emotions. He wanted to know the truth of what Cyrus was talking about, but he knew he couldn't ask now, she was very upset. He reached his hand out, ready to knock but hesitating. Should he be so trusting of her? He ended up knocking regardless, only for no one to answer. “Hey, Raleigh, are you alright.” He waited a while, still not hearing anything that could be considered a response.

He tried opening the door instead, a little surprised it opened for him with no issues. Furthermore, he looked around seeing Raleigh covered in a blanket sleeping face down. “Well, I suppose that's a good sign.” He said softly to himself, not wanting to wake her. He decided it was probably best to leave her alone for now, turning to leave, but not before the picture caught his eye. Her

arm was hanging off the bed, and it had fallen to the floor. He picks it up, looking at it. It's the same picture she was looking at before. He's shocked to see what looked like himself with Raleigh, cut short by the sound of Raleigh waking up, and seeing what's going on. She snatches the picture from him and shoves him out of the room, locking the door. “Wait Raleigh!” He says but has no idea what to say now. She leans against the door, slowly sliding to the floor, sitting there waiting for him to leave, not saying anything.

Clyde isn't left with much choice, choosing to leave the ship hoping time will fix the problems he is having, for now he needs to find nourishment. Sighing, he looks around at the surrounding area. They are in a forest clearing. The trees are orange it must be Fall here he thought. The ground was covered in dark red flowers that came up to his knees, they were everywhere. He made his way east, hoping to find some sort of civilization, walking into the woods. It was calm and quiet. Nothing broke the silence other than Clyde's own steps. Eventually, the trees ended and met a cliff side road, and that road led to a town.

“Perfect, I hope they have Taco King or something.” His optimism was interrupted by the sound of a gun being loaded from behind him. He turned slowly, seeing The Reaper. He raised his hands, backing away toward the forest while the gun was pointed at him. “Do we always have to meet like this Mr. edgy assassin guy?” Clyde asked. “Where's the girl?” He ignored him, asking his question instead. “Well um.” Before he can answer, wolves surround them seeming to be in some sort of trance, something is wrong with them like they are rabid. They attacked The Reaper, starting to maul him. The Reaper managed to kill several of them, but the pack of wolves was too great in number. Clyde ran away before The Reaper got away from them, not sure what was going on with that.

In an empty house, a man who looks a lot like The Reaper with short hair and both eyes is sitting talking to himself. “No dear. I won't be long, I'm just going to pick up supplies. I'll be back in time for dinner.” He says, talking toward an empty chair like he sees someone there. He walks over to

another chair, waving his hand in the air like he is ruffling the hair of a nonexistent person. “I'll try to find you something cool, champ.” He walks toward the door, puts on a gas mask, and heads out.

Clyde enters the small town seeing none other than a Taco King, but something is off, he feels kinda woozy. It looks like the greatest thing he has ever seen. “Oh my gods, I need a burrito so bad right now." He walks toward it but ends up falling over face-first on the ground. He doesn't get up, seemingly ok with it for some reason. Something is very wrong, and the town seems abandoned.

After some walking through the town, The Reaper look a like sees Clyde on the ground, awake now but happily eating the dirt off the ground. The man rushes over to him concerned, pulling out a spare gas mask and putting it on, Clyde. It didn't seem to help all that much. “Are you OK?” He would ask only for Clyde to say. “I've never had a taco this good.” The man tries not to laugh at him, lifting Clyde to his feet. He assisted him to an abandoned grocery store, closing the door shut, taking off both of their masks. He looks around for real food seeing snacks displaced all around the store and feeding them to him, Clyde didn't seem to notice eating them like the dirt all the same, before passing out again. The man went around the store looking for supplies, and butter to take back to his family.

Shortly after, Clyde awoke seeing his new surroundings dazed, and confused. He sees the man mistaking him for The Reaper jumping to his feet ready for a fight. “Woah calm down there friend. You are OK, I found you outside without a mask? My name is Drake, what about you.” Clyde was confused on why he would need a mask or who this person was, he seemed to understand it wasn't The Reaper now, but still felt the need to keep his Guard up. “Why would I need a mask?” Drake snickered.

“You're kidding, right? Wait, you really don't know?” He looked at Clyde's face, wondering if something else was wrong with him now. “I'm not really from around here.” He answered. “Well, I don't know how you don't know, but those flowers are dangerous. They expel a toxin that makes the mind hallucinate. It caused countless.... deaths there aren't many humans left, at least not around here.” Clyde understood what was going on now, and why the wolfs looked that way,

but he wondered if The Reaper would be able to figure that out. Even highly trained assassins can't do much against something like that without the right tools. He hoped that meant he wouldn't be bothering them for a while.

“I see, things did seem too convenient, well thanks for saving me I guess. I'm Clyde.” Clyde stuck his hand out and shook his hand. “Nice to meet you, Clyde, I'm glad you are OK. It is nice to see another person around for once.” Drake said with a somewhat deranged smile. It looked like he hadn't talked to another person in a very long time. “Well it's nice meeting you too, and all, but I should be going.” He said, knowing he should probably get back to Raleigh soon. “Why in such a hurry?” Drake asked. “Well, my friend isn't doing the best,” Clyde answered. “Your friend, there are more of you? I'd love to meet them too.” He seemed a little too interested in seeing her now, making him suspicious of his intentions. “Well, I don't know.” He said, wondering if he should let this guy know she was on a ship capable of multiverse travel. “Oh, don't be afraid, I just want to help. I know you can come and have dinner with my family.”

Clyde slowly backed away toward the door. “No, thanks.” He put on the mask he gave him leaving the store. “Wait!” Drake protested, following after him. “At least let me make sure you get back safely. You don't seem to know your way around.” Clyde didn't see an easy way of getting rid of this guy, so he decided to deal with him for now, walking back in the direction of The Hopper. If anything he could help fight off the wolfs if they were still around. They walk in silence for a while before Drake finally speaks up. “So, what's wrong with your friend?”

Clyde sighs, not wanting to answer him, but he needs to process the thoughts in his head somehow, so he ends up doing it anyway. “Well, we got into a fight with these people, and.... well, someone close to her was killed.” Drake didn't interrupt like he knew he had more to say. “Well, and I learned she might be lying to me about things.” He continues. Drake took in his words, sharing his own. “And you're not sure if you can trust her now, right?” Clyde looked conflicted. “Well, yes, but I

want to believe in her still, but she won't even talk to me. I'm just not sure if I'm the right person to be by her side, and now isn't the time to even ask what just happened.

Drake looks over at him sympathetically. “I think you should still try. There aren't many of us humans left on this earth, we need to stick together.” Clyde understood why someone from a world like this would say that still unsure what to do, but for now, he knew he needed to get back. The sun slowly started to set as they almost arrived back at the forest. They enter together, making it to the clearing without issue, slowly as a bright red moon rises. Drake sees the ship astonished. “What is that?” Clyde reluctantly answers. “I said I wasn't from here.” He looked at The hopper, then back at Drake. Maybe he could help this guy. There had to be another world out there for him. Before he can think about it anymore Drake falls on his knees choking. “Are you OK?” Clyde asks worriedly now. Drake looks up at him, gasping for air. The moon shined right behind him as his right eye started to turn black, and bleed out of him. He stopped choking, looking at Clyde serious.

“Well, well. It would seem this body is right where it needs to be, just when I thought you had escaped my grasp.” Drake would say. “Drake?” Clyde said again worried. “I see, so that's what this man was called.” He would say in response. Clyde readied his multi-tool, had he been tricked? “Were you The Reaper this whole time?” Clyde turned it into a pistol, pointing it at him. The Reaper answered, “No, I've taken this body for myself. He didn't have anything left anyway.” “So that's how you keep coming back.” Clyde looked a little angry. He had stolen this man's life regardless of the condition it was in. “Get out of the way, I'm here for her.” He said pulling out a woodcutter's axe from who knows where wasting no time swinging it at him.

He fell on his ass, avoiding it. Rolling away, and climbing to his feet, and started running away to get some distance. He didn't think he stood a chance against him, but Raleigh was in no shape to fight. He had to find a way. He dived into the flowers, using them, as cover. The Reaper calmly searched the area for him. Any sound would alert his trained ears. He threw a rock near him, hoping to

mislead him on his current location. “Stop hiding, this is beneath me.” The Reaper said, annoyed. He walked up to where Clyde was without knowing it. If he could just knock his mask off, he might have a chance, or so he thought. He lined up the shot, hitting it right on, damaging it beyond repair. The Reaper of course knew exactly where he was now, slamming the axe down at the ground. Clyde quickly transformed his pistol to a knife to block it, barely able to. He was stuck now, he couldn't get away.

With another swing, he knocked the knife out of his hands. Ready to go for the killing blow, but just before then, shots were fired into his back. The Reaper turned his attention towards whoever it was to see Raleigh haphazardly dressed rifle pointed at The Reaper standing on top of The Hopper. “There you are.” He runs to attack her. She jumps down, turning her multi-tool into a sword, clashing with him. No words were spoken, both of them intensely engaging the other. She broke the head off the axe. He still put up a fight dodging her, but his wounds from being shot caught up to him, causing him to get slower and sliced up by her. Falling to the ground, The Reaper again dies. She puts her multi-tool away, walking over to Clyde. “Raleigh? Are you alright?” Clyde asks. “I'm fine, I've mostly gotten over it now, I think.” He seemed relieved to hear that. “I need to apologize to you, Clyde.” She said, a little unsure of herself now.

“Huh about what?” Clyde asked. “You saw the picture, didn't you. I'm.... not very good at this.” She pauses, it would seem she is having a hard time forming her words. “That man was..... important to me, and when I saw you, and you insisted on joining me..... I saw you as a replacement for him but.” She paused again, looking at his face, looking fearful. “Your really nothing like him, despite being doppelgangers.” She realizes that might have been the wrong thing to say. “But n… Not in a bad way, you're just. You're just your own person. So I'm sorry. I would understand if you didn't want to travel with me anymore.” She looked at the ground, waiting for a response. It was starting to make

more sense to him now. The cogs in his brain started to move, he could think again. He could tell she felt bad about it now.

She was about to start talking again to break the waiting, but he spoke up. “I get it now. I suppose I should be a little mad but. I think I want to keep going on adventures with you.” He climbs up onto his feet, looking down at her. He can tell it is hard for her to even say that. “ You don't have to say anything else, I just hope. You can be honest with me starting today, and maybe even tell me more about yourself, when you are ready.” He reached his hand out. “I can do that robot goblin man.” She said clearly having been exposed to too much toxin, slowly passing out. “Oh shit the flowers.” He picked her up, rushing her back into the vessel. Luckily, she wasn't exposed to the flowers for long, so it didn't take long for her to recover. She sprang up to her feet with her happy cheery face once again motivated to start again. “Enough of this depressing bullshit, we have adventures to go on.” She said now in a very chipper mood. Clyde smiled as she plugged herself in, bringing them to the next world.

Chapter Fourteen

A group of color-coordinated heroes were in mid-combat with a strange-looking monster. It laughed maniacally. All of them had one primary color along with a different secondary one. Their costumes were mostly the same, with the minor difference that seemed to show off their personalities. The whole body of the monster was a huge clock covered in smaller clocks, all with the same time on them, 8:45. “It's time for you to die, scouts.” The hero clad in white, and gold stepped forward striking a pose, and pointing at the clock monster he appeared to be their leader. He also had a wide-brimmed hat, which he used one of his hands to hold onto dramatically. “No, it will be you who is out of time.” He changed his pose again. “Evil will never beat the likes of good.” He said, charging forward, followed by the other heroes. They all landed a strike in perfect sync with each other, cracking the main clock on the chest of the monster, and causing his hands to stop moving. They then posed together in front of the monster, and an explosion came out of nowhere to finish him off.

The Purple one broke formation, looking back on their work. “Alright, the city is saved once again.” “Foolish Scouts, I've still got plenty of time to ruin your beloved city.” The clock monster suddenly appeared to grow much larger and fully healed. He was at least 50 feet tall. “Looks like it's

time to call in the Zechs.” The Green one would say. “Right!” They all said in unison, raising some sort of device into the air, calling 5 giant robots to their location. They all leaped up, and into the different ones with no issue. “Looks like he forgot to adjust for daylight savings, guys, let's help him out.” The Orange one said as they started to combine together.

The Hopper enters the city right as the clock monster started to grow. “That doesn't look good, it's a giant clock thing,” Raleigh said, ready to engage it in battle. The turrets were locked on ready to fire, they just needed to get closer. This is the first time Clyde had seen The Hopper truly attack something, He was interested to see what it could do. He would have to wait longer because right as the hopper entered firing range the Five robots were combining, causing them to collide. “Oh shit! Hold onto something, Clyde.” Raleigh said in a panic. The Hopper flew past them knocking them all over the city before hitting the giant clock thing killing it. It fell back, slowly disappearing into dust. Somehow both of them were fine, The hopper not so much. Raleigh ran out of the vessel assessing the damage, grieving her fallen friend this had to be the worst he had seen of it, but at this point, it didn't phase him with the times they have crashed. “Are you sure you know how to fly this thing?” Clyde said, mocking her. “Quiet, you know it was the monster's fault!” She growled, assaulting his arm lightly. “Hey!” Three people with different colored shirts Interrupted their bickering.

Raleigh looked over at them. “Yeah, what do you want.” She said bluntly. Clyde seemed to recognize them. “Oh Shit, Raleigh, those are the Ultra Scouts!” Clyde actually sounded excited for once. “The Ultra... who?” Raleigh said unimpressed. They stood there slightly annoyed but let him explain it to her. “The Ultra Scouts!” He leaned in, whispering to her. “On my earth, they are just fictional people, but it's one of my favorite shows. It looks like the white, and Green ones are missing though” The one in Orange steps forward now. “Who are you guys?” Raleigh oh course chimes in. “I am the great Verse Hopper, Captain Raleigh.” She smiled, looking very pleased with herself. “And this is my sidekick, Clyde.” “Sidekick we are still doing that bit?” Clyde stated underwhelmed by his

apparent position on her crew. “Never heard of you.” One of the teens said. Raleigh looked upset to hear that, but Clyde didn't seem surprised they didn't know her.

Trying to save face in front of his childhood heroes, Clyde said. “We are sorry about running into your Zechs, and everything, we just saw a city in trouble, and wanted to help.” They all seemed to take that excuse pretty well. “Oh, I see, so you're on the side of good too, huh? If you really didn't mean it…” The Orange one said, only for the Purple one to interject. “It is not. White and Green scout was injured pretty badly. Who's going to protect the city with them out of commission?” The blue Scout looked over at them both, sizing them up. “You know, they just so happen to have the same body types as our fellow Scouts. They could fill in for them until they get better.”

Clyde's eyes lit up. “Are you asking us to join the ultra scouts?” They nodded, smiling at him like all of their transgressions were forgiven now. Clyde was ecstatic this was a dream come true for him, this might possibly be the greatest day of his life. “Well, let's do this thing then. “Wait, what about The Hopper,” Raleigh said in protest. The Robots from before lifted It up and away. “I know a thing or two about fixing things like that.” The Blue Scout said, walking away as they both followed them. Clyde couldn't wait for the great times they were about to have, a smile firmly planted on his face for once.

A couple of weeks had passed, and they had not fought a single monster, let alone transform Into scouts. No, all they have done is practice their posing with the others. Clyde's enthusiasm was fading fast. Was this really what they did all day? He realized they had to do something between episodes, but he thought it would be more interesting than this. The white scout yelled at him from the wheelchair he was in. “Hey, Clyde, pay attention, you're three centimeters off. He adjusted his arm with his only uninjured hand. “Remember you're the white Scout, right now the leader! It's very important you get your poses right.” Clyde sighs. “Don't you think I should learn more important things, you know, like fighting the monsters?” They all looked at him like he just said the most

offensive thing ever. “Idiot! Nothing is more important than this.” He was starting to wonder if he had missed something, but seeing that it was a touchy subject, he surrendered his doubt to them, trusting the people he still very much admired.

White looked over at Raleigh. “Now you.” He studied her form carefully. “Perfect!” They all cheered for her, feeding into her ego. Clyde was completely lost now he didn't see what the difference between them was. “Now from the top! A monster just entered the city, everyone sounds off and strikes a pose. If we get it right this time, we'll move onto transforming.” White said backing away, signaling for them to start. Clyde, reinvigorated, jumped out to the center of the room. He really wanted to try on that power suit. “Listen here, evildoer.” He raised one hand and pointed the non-existent enemy. “The Ultra scouts will never stop fighting.” He puts both hands in the air making a v. “I, Ultra White!” They all come in one by one, making their poses around him and stating their name. "Purple!" "Green!" "Blue!" "And orange!" Together, they all say. “Will bring an end to villainy.” The White Scout pressed a button, making an explosion go off behind them. All of them stayed perfectly still. “That was great, guys, but let's go one more time.” White directed. “What, are you a band director or something.” Clyde groaned, wondering how Raleigh was standing this. The answer was easy to see with all the scouts surrounding her, filling her head with praise.

They did drills for a couple more hours until White was satisfied. “I think you are finally ready, you two.” He gave them a thumbs up, wheeling himself out of the room. Clyde's excitement returned to him eagerly following him, Raleigh not far behind. He led them to a room filled with technology, and weapons that he recognized right away as relics from past episodes. He composed himself going forward where white was waiting with the Green scout. She was not as injured as him, seeming to only have a broken arm. “Here are your Syncers we use them to transform into scout form.” She handed them both over to the two of them one at a time. This is the moment he was waiting for, he needed no instructions, he used to do this all the time in front of the mirror when he was younger. He put it on his

wrist, raising it in the air. He pulled a pin on the Syncer releasing white, and black energy over himself. It enveloped his whole body slowly. It formed into a solid-like armour, gauntlets appeared around his wrist, boots around his ankles. His head was covered with a helmet, and a scarf around his neck. It took shape, the black scarf waving behind him. He felt amazing.

“Uh, he looks different from the White Scout.” Green would say. “It will be fine, he can just say it's the super form or something. You know, they usually believe that one.” White didn't seem that concerned. “Now, Raleigh, your turn.” Raleigh looked over at Clyde. “I mean, he does look pretty cool in that, but.” She looked at Clyde, blushing a little. “Do I have to be green can't I be black or something? And why does it take so long to transform?” He didn't even bother explaining, he just glared at her until she activated her own Syncer. It behaved in the same way as Clyde's did, covering her entire body. She transformed, keeping her signature hat, but also oddly having a skirt as well. Her hair flowed outside the suit too. Green looked annoyed now. “Ugh, she's more black than green, she stands out way too much.” White sighed. “We will, have to change everyone's secondary colour to black for now. It will be easier than trying to get their Syncers to look like ours. You know how unpredictable they can be on new people.” Green seemed to accept that, going off to tell the others.

A man in a Multiverse Empire Uniform walks into a dark throne room. He has a big beard edged to perfection, and a minigun strapped to his back. He walks closer to the throne, and the shadowy figure atop it. They are surrounded by silhouettes of monsters similar to the clock monster. “Thank you for granting me an audience, your lordship. Like I said, the Empire has much to offer you, including helping you out with your little Scout problem.” The man says to the figure. The figure stands up walking out of the shadows he is pale, in Victorian clothing. “I know what you want, and you shall have it as long as you remove those pests, and of course play by our rules.” The man nods. “Of course, sir, not a problem.” He grins. “Those guys won't see it coming.” The figure looks at him. “Don't disappoint me.” He turns around, sitting back on his throne. “You may go.”

The man leaves the room, meeting up with his small squad of Empire soldiers. They all look stronger than your average foot soldier. “Boss” A smaller soldier steps forward saluting him. “It's lieutenant now, remember, at least till we get what we want. “Right sorry sir.” He quickly corrects himself. The Boss doesn't seem to care, turning to a blacked haired man with glassed. “How is your research on the Scouts going, do you think their tech can be replicated?” The man answers. “I don't think it would be too difficult, we just need to get our hands on it.” He grinned, that's what he wanted to hear. “You heard him men move out, we have some wimps to fry.” They all started to leave the building, following him out.

Chapter Fifteen

Clyde woke up groaning. He wasn't ready for another day of posing exercises. He hated to admit it but meeting his idols was ruining his image of them. He walked out of the room they had provided for him into the main hall. They had a small communal area where they all had a place to sit during downtime and eat meals. It was pretty nice all things considered a huge couch and media system, and a dining table, and a kitchen for everyone to sit at. All the scouts were eating breakfast with Raleigh, thoroughly enjoying each other's company. Green was speaking to them. “Yeah, I'm pretty much all better now, I just need a little rest. White might need another week or two, though.” “That's great, I'm sure you probably look better in green anyway. Oh hey, you're awake.” Raleigh said, acknowledging his existence. Purple waved at him, smiling as he helped himself to the already prepared food at the counter. “So what is on the agenda for today,” Clyde asked, already knowing what they had planned.

“Wait before that.” Raleigh interjected. “I meant to ask this sooner, but are your names actually colors or do you have real names?” Clyde Spoke up ready to flex his knowledge of the show. He pointed at White. “That's Adrian, Green is called Maya.” He points at purple. “That's Cassandra. And

orange, and blue are called Ember, and Azure.” He said proud to no basic information about them. “Oh thanks Clyde.” Adrian says moving on.”

“Now that everyone's uniforms match, we can practice the right way. We will do some posing, and transformation exercises. Then we'll see how you guys can handle the Zechs.” Clyde perked up. “Wait, I get to pilot a Zech?” He ignored everything else he was saying, his excitement returning. “Awesome, trust me, Clyde they are a blast to drive,” Raleigh told him to the surprise of everyone, they gave her the side-eye. “Well um. I may or may not have taken the green one out for a late-night joyride.” She replied nervously. They didn't have time to respond because the monster alarm went off. They all stood up. “Monsters must be attacking the city, let's go!” Blue said, running out of the room with the others. Clyde of course followed but wasn't sure if he was ready for it considering they had done no combat training.

In the center of town stood the man from the empire, and his squad of Five including himself. They fired their weapons into the air, causing people to flee from them in a panic. The man laughed, causing all sorts of property damage, which seemed to make him very happy, though he seemed to be avoiding actually hurting any people. The scouts arrived at the scene one after the other, posing together. “Hey you, um stop!” Clyde fumbled through his lines, but his position was perfect with the others. Adrian looked over the fight from their base with a smile on his face, proud of him. The squad of course noticed this, looked a little confused. The man stared at them for a second in a daze. Raleigh and Clyde started to notice they weren't monsters, wondering if they should be doing something different against this enemy they knew a lot better than the scouts.

The other scouts didn't seem to see this as a problem, moving on to the next line they had planned. “No matter what...” Azure started to say before being decked in the face by the female member of the squad. The man smiled charging up his gun open firing at the rest of them. They were all knocked to the ground falling in dramatic ways other than Raleigh who had used her multi-tool to

make a shield covering, both her and Clyde. Azure, Cassandra, and Ember didn't know how to respond. It was almost like their brains couldn't conceptualize someone attacking them like this. “What, did you think we'd let you transform into your scout form.” The man said, laughing. This was bad for them. They all seemed at a loss for words, and about to be pummeled into the ground.

Quickly, Clyde transformed while he was being protected by Raleigh. He used the enhanced abilities to leap over her and punch the man in the face. He was knocked back, looking at him with a smirk. Raleigh Also transformed while no one was focused on her. “Hurry guys, well hold them off till you can transform,” Raleigh shouted, kicking the female squad member away from Azure. After thinking for a second, Azure regained his composure attempting to transform, the smaller squad member fired a shot at him, stopping him before it could take form. He was knocked back down, canceling it out. There was no getting out of it, they had no time to transform like this.

Clyde felt amazing. He couldn't fight a guy like this let alone push him back normally, but with this suit on who knows what he could do. He went for an uppercut. The man blocked it with his mini-gun. “Don't get cocky, you little shit.” He said, swinging the large piece of metal at him, knocking him back. Raleigh had subdued the girl, moving onto the small guy, giving Azure time to transform. Cassandra and Ember just now removing and rising to their feet. Before anyone could do anything else the shadowy figure crashed into the ground making a huge crater. His expression was neutral, but the aura coming off him could not be mistaken for anything else but anger, and confusion.

Purple gasps. “That's ma.. monster master.” Clyde turned to recognize him too. He never came onto the battlefield himself. He left that for his minions. “Would you care to explain what you are doing?” He said, looking straight at the man. Even he looked a little afraid to answer, it was clear he could kill everyone there with the power he held. “I'm not sure if I understand, sir. We are doing what you asked of us.” He answered. “No, no, no!” Monster Master rebutted. He sighs, looking at the scouts. I'm sorry about this.” He says to Azure, to the surprise of everyone. “We'll pick this up some other

time. Come on, we are going back to the castle to have a little chat.” The man looked a little upset, but not wanting to go against his employer, he signals them all to stand down. One of them grabs the female squad member, and they vanish before anyone can say another word.

The Scouts slowly regained their bearings, heading back to base utterly defeated. It would seem no one had ever just attacked them like that, like it was a foreign concept in this world. Clyde never really thought about how long it took them to do everything they did in the show. If they were going to have to fight them again, they might be in trouble. As strong as they all were, they weren't capable of fighting an enemy like that. Raleigh walked up to Clyde very confused. “Hey, Clyde, what was that about?” She asked only for him to sigh, saying. "Let's just say we might have some issues." Adrian was waiting with Maya at the base, they didn't look happy at all.

“What was that!” He yelled out, not understanding. Clyde stepped forward to explain. “Well, you see, those guys were from The Empire.” The leader of the squad has a similar conversation in the castle with Monster Master. “That's basic tactics in war.” The man would say to him. “They aren't like The monsters you normally fight. If they see an opening, they will take it. They aren't going to wait for you guys to pose or transform.” Clyde further explained. Both Adrian and Monster Master didn't seem to understand on a fundamental level like not waiting your turn, and making quippy remarks to each other was ingrained into the very laws of this world. “It only makes sense to use your enemies' weakness against them in battle.” The man said. Monster Master shook his head. “What are you talking about, we always let them do that, why would we.” He paused thinking about it like something just clicked in his brain. “Why would we let them do that?” His thoughts began to conflict half of them screaming that it was wrong, and not to listen, nevertheless, he said. “Tell me more.”

Adrian yelled at Clyde. “That's impossible. You can't attack like that, it's just wrong. There's.... no honor in a fight like that.” “Well, unfortunately, in other worlds, they don't see it that way,” Raleigh says to him. It's starting to feel like they are talking to an innocent child. They are all silent, not sure

what to say to each other. It's hard for them to even understand someone fighting like this, how could they get through to them. Maya spoke up. “I think we should all just take a breather, and think about all this for now.” Everyone walked out of the room to do just that.

Clyde sat on the roof of their base looking off at the city. Raleigh Climbed up to it as well, sitting down next to him. “You know, they say never meet your heroes,” Clyde says with a sigh. She smiled, looking at the city with him. “Not like the show? If only every group was so naive.” She said to him. “It's more like they are exactly like the show, but the problem with that wasn't apparent till meeting them.” Clyde answers. She looks down below, watching the cars go by. “They aren't all bad. Do you think we can help them?” She looked him in the eye, he averted his. “I hope so.” She gets up, leaving him there to think.

He gets lost in his own thoughts for a while, looking around the city. Kid him longed to visit for so long. A flash of light appeared in the distance, catching his attention. A person started to grow larger and larger, dwarfing some buildings. It was none other than The Squad leader. He was too far to notice Clyde, but he could see that the man intended to do nothing but harm to the city. His fellow Squad-mates also grew to a massive size. “Haha, this feels incredible. I can destroy anything with this.” The Man says to his partners. “No wonder the empire wants to get their hands on this. Now, let's draw those rats out.” He punches a building, but not before looking inside make sure no one is inside knocking it down. Clyde rushes down to find the others.

He sees Azure running to the Zech bay, expecting they are all already there or soon would be. White is there looking distraught. “This never happens, we can't just start the fight in the Zechs,” White says. “We have to,” Cassandra says, already preparing for launch with the rest of them. Clyde nervously got in the White Zech with only his knowledge from the show on how to pilot it. There was no time ready or not the city needed to be protected. They all launched, ready to engage them in battle. Clyde thought about it for a moment before coming out and saying. “I think we should combine into

the Ultra Zech before be go.” Azure looked ready to protest, but after there last battle he decided to listen. They all got into formation The white Zech formed the base, the other four Zechs the appendages. “Lets go!” They all said in unison.

Chapter Sixteen

The Ultra Zech Flew in a flash to The Squad leader's location, giant sword already equipped, slashing his minigun in half. “Holy shit dude!” He said, backing away from the robot. It was slightly taller than the man. “Don't give him even a second to breathe!” Clyde said taking the lead now. They listened to him being surrounded by the whole squad. They seemed to be cautious of it now that they saw it cut their leader's weapon like butter. The Ultra Zech charged at the leader with a flurry of attacks. He tried blocking with the remains of his gun, only for it to break into more pieces, and force him back. “That's an insane piece of metal.” He chuckles. “But it's too slow.” The other squad members lunge on the Zech Each holding down either an arm or a leg. He punches the center of it, causing it to dent slightly.

Clyde wasn't sure what to do, he was right there, and they could no longer move.
The smaller squad mate Stuck a device on the Zech none of the Scouts saw him do so. The girl squad member grinned, locked onto the arm, aiming to pry open the cockpit and pull the defenseless Blue Scout out. Clyde activated the thrusters, lifting them, and themselves, into the air. It knocked two of them away, the others managed to hold on to the Zechs shoulder, and leg respectively. In the air, It

could move much faster, at least to travel, combat not so much. The two remaining Squad-mates had no choice but to let go, but not before causing minor damage to it. They fall on their backs, passing out, and returning to normal size. “Alright, we know when we've been beaten.” The Leader would say before they all teleport away.

All of them breathed a huge sigh of relief. “That was rough,” Cassandra said. “I'm so glad that is over.” Ember remarks. “I guess those guys are all talk, huh, Clyde.” Raleigh Joked. Something made Clyde feel uneasy. That wasn't an easy fight, and they did gain the upper hand, but their advantage wasn't all that wide compared to them. It seemed to him they fled too abruptly. All they could do now is return to base.

They all docked, and little robots started to repair any damage made to the Zechs right away. Blue looked at Clyde a little conflicted. “Well, you were right, we couldn't have won that fight the way we normally do.” That was a fact none of them seemed to be happy about. “Unfortunately yes. We are going to have to prepare better. Maybe even make some more Zechs.” Adrian, and Maya look at each other, and then at Clyde. “We have been working on one thing,” Adrian said. “We modified your vessel to be able to transform into its own Ultra Zech,” Maya explained. “You did what to the hopper?” Raleigh angrily shouted, very protective of the ship she crashes on a regular basis. Maya panicked about to explain more, however, the more Raleigh thinks about it, the more she realizes what it means. “Wait that's awesome. She grabs her hand, running off to inspect it.

Clyde continues his conversation with the others. “Is there a way to speed up transformation times on the power suits?” Adrian appeared to be in deep thought. “Well, I've never really thought about it, but I suppose it can be done.” he would say. “Let's do that then. Also, I think we should practice fighting in sync instead of posing.” Clyde said, only for them all to shake their heads. “Posing is a part of our very being, part of this world,” Azure said to him. Clyde sighs, “I get it, but let me ask you this. Is your pride worth risking each other's lives on a villain that doesn't give you that respect?”

Azure didn't seem to have the words. Clyde kept going, “I've idolized you guys for a long time. I thought you were all amazing, but not because of your posing, but because you helped people, you were true heroes. And maybe we can still make that work, but.” Adrian spoke up. “I think I get it, Clyde. Maybe... we forgot what was truly important to us. Alright, show us the way then.” He looked at him smiling, reaching out his hand. Clyde shook it, and they got to work.

They used their time more valuable now. The transformation time was cut down to a fraction of a second, and now they were sparing together. Adrian and the others did have a lot to teach him about hand-to-hand combat, as well as with a weapon. Of course, time was short, and he couldn't get completely on the same level as them. This is what he expected when he got here, he felt somewhat competent with his fighting ability now, even without a power suit. Raleigh was off trying her new toy, he wanted to impress her next time they met. It had been a few days now, it was a wonder when the next attack would be.

He returned to his room after a long day's work, satisfied with all they did. The monster alarm went off, waking him, it was early in the morning. He jumped to his feet quickly getting dressed and grabbing the Syncer putting it on. They were all in the main room looking at a screen, silent. “What's going on gu.....” Clyde began to ask looking at the screen receiving his answer. There were thousands of monsters all over the city, a few of them already giant. Monster Master was leading them. They seemed to be walking toward their base. Did they know where it was? It's not like it was exactly public knowledge. Either way, they were screwed.

“I don't even know where to begin with this,” Azure said. Adrian spoke up. “I'll have to pilot the Ultra Zech alone. You guys go, and confront Monster Master.” Maya spoke up. “Hey hold on now I'm probably good to fight now, but you're definitely not. You know it's extremely difficult to pilot the Ultra Zech alone.” Adrian shook his head. “Doesn't matter, we have to.” “I'll be there to help him. The Hopper is pretty formidable in Zech form, just you wait,” Raleigh says with glee way too calm, all

things considered. Maya has no choice but to accept it. They all run out of their base, and toward the swarm closing in on them. The Hopper flew around, firing its turrets at the giant monsters.

They transformed while they were running. The Hopper, and Ultra Zech flying behind them. “Ah, they have arrived. Spare no one.” Monster Master Instructed his army, having them charge forward. “They all get their power from Monster Master, if we take him down we might be able to win,” Clyde Informs them. “That would be a difficult task even if he was alone.” Maya would say. “And killing the monsters makes them grow giant,” Azure said. “I know,” Clyde said, punching the monster at the front. “We have to find a way.” The Ultra Zech stomped on a horde of them while slicing one of the already giant ones, killing it with ease. Now that a path was cleared, it moved out of the way needed elsewhere. They rushed through quickly being surrounded by them all but making it to Monster Master.

“Bravo, but now what you are surrounded, and have no chance of beating the likes of me.” Monster Master boasts in a suave manner. “Even if the odds are against us,” Clyde shouts drawing his Ultra Saber slashing into him causing a large wound on his chest. “We will never give up.” Maya screams, hitting him hard in the back, causing him to get choked up a little. Azure came in on Clyde's right punching him in the face, and Cassandra came in on his left punching him again right after. Ember is ready with a large canon firing at his right arm burning the surrounding fabric.

“I liked this outfit.” He said, looking more annoyed than injured for the most part. The Ultra Zech was the only thing holding the monsters back from overwhelming them all. “I suppose it's time to take you seriously.” Monster master's skin started to turn red, he bulked up physically. Huge horns Grew on his head, and his face was covered in a permanent smile fixed to it. He had long black claws. He began to laugh. “It feels so free. No stupid rules to follow. This is what it truly means to be evil!” He slashed at Clyde with his claws, ripping through his Armour like ribbons. The helmet was shattered to pieces. That was more than he could take, he roughly fell to the ground, out cold. Cassandra grabbed

him quickly, jumping away, hiding him atop a building. “Good job kid. Let us take care of the rest.” She rejoins the other Scouts going all out.

His power was overwhelming it was hard for them to make any ground with him. The Ultra Zech couldn't help it was surrounded by giant monsters now. All the scouts went into their last resort attack. They bombarded him with powerful attacks before he could respond. Monster Master groans. “Enough of this.” He knocks them all back making them crash into the nearby buildings. He grew larger without being killed. It would seem despite the way he was acting he was taking them more seriously than the old Monster Master ever would. He intended to destroy The Ultra Zech and finish off everyone soon after.

“Now it's my turn,” Raleigh says flying the hopper in just out of range. It started to transform the ring moving to the front of it. The stern splits into legs, the ring separating into her arms. The head slowly forms with a captain's hat and long flowing hair made out of orange energy. Two orange eyes lit up fully forming her body. Clyde came around seeing it right as it was fully formed amazed. A giant scythe formed, and she wasted no time trying to impale him. Monster Master blocked it with his claws, and they started to crack, and break. Unlike The Ultra Zech, hers was much more of an extension of herself. It was still slower than her, but leagues faster than the other.

The Ultra Zech broke free of the monsters joining the fight. “It's only fitting that I will be the one to take you down,” Adrian announced running the evil lord through with his sword. “Nooooo! How could I lose? Monster Master Gripped the sword around him the strike was fatal. He slowly started to turn to dust. “Evil never wins.” Adrian answers as the wind takes the dust away with it. All the monsters lost their power turning to dust as well. “We pulled it off somehow,” Clyde said relieved. Somehow all of them won against all odds. He sat down recovering looking up, at the two Zechs with pride.

Meanwhile, The Squad had broken into the empty Ultra Scout base. The man with glasses who had been silent till now spoke up. "It would seem our employer has perished." He was downloading all of the Scouts files on their power suits as the others looked for anything else they could possibly use before The Scouts returned. "Well ain't that a shame." The leader said. The female spoke up. "You realize he was the one with the power to warp sizes right? Without that guy, we can't use it." She looked a little agitated at his carefree attitude. "It'll be fine love. It's not like we were going to give it to the empire anyway. Besides having this tech to ourselves is far more valuable." She gave up trying to reason with him. The smaller one spoke up. "You think we'll run into those two again sir?" The Leader laughed. "I wouldn't have it any other way. Let's blow this joint.' They all removed their empire uniforms discarding them and leaving through a portal most likely to another world.

Chapter Seventeen

The city was in shambles but in the process of being rebuilt. A few days had passed, and the Ultra Scouts were enjoying some much-needed rest and relaxation. Clyde and Raleigh seemed to be getting ready to leave for another world. Adrian being mostly healed now stood up to greet them. “Leaving already, huh?” They both nodded after everything that happened, Clyde was grateful for this experience. In a way, he felt like it had helped him a lot mentally. The rest of the Scouts had got up to say their goodbyes. “Well, thank you two.” Adrian would say, any other words seemed to escape his mind like he had a lot to think about. Maya spoke in his stead. “If you guys need anything, we'll be glad to lend our strength.” White and the others nodded, azure reaching out his fist. Clyde smiled, pressing his fist against it as the other followed suit. Raleigh was growing impatient, whisking him away to the hopper, eager for the next adventure. They all waved before striking a group pose. They had come a long way, but some things would never change.

“Now Clyde, there's something I should probably bring up,” Raleigh said while preparing to take off. “What's up,” Clyde asked curiously. “Well um. It's just.” She didn't seem to want to say anything but was trying to keep herself from keeping any more secrets from him as she promised.

“Well, what is it Cap.” He said mockingly, just wanting her to spit it out. She was debating what to say, not answering until she blurted out the words. “I haven't been able to navigate the ship to the right worlds recently, and I don't know why.” Clyde should've been angry or at least slightly peeved at her, but he was calm. “That honestly makes a lot of sense now that you're admitting it.” He stated. She pouted a little. “Was it really.” Clyde ignored that, pressing further. “Do you think that creepy scientist did something to you? I never saw him, but he had you unconscious for a while, didn't he?” She thought about it, accepting that to be the most likely answer. She quickly changed the subject, plugging herself up, and abruptly lifting The Hopper into the air. “Anyway, let's go, who cares.”

He fell on his ass. “Wait, hold on, you're just taking it by chance?” He asked worried, which she shrugged off. “We haven't died yet.” She said as they entered the vortex. She didn't even bother shooting for a specific location this time. Clyde quickly crawled to a seat, strapping himself in. Thanks to the randomness of the warp, they seemed to arrive much faster to World X. He looked around, seeing that they were in outer space. The planet in the distance was illuminated with lights, almost none of it was free of the light. They slowly flew into the atmosphere. A little robot appeared next to the hopper, and another on the other side. It started to direct her like they were expecting them. The closer they got, they could see a sprawling city booming with music that shook The Hopper, assaulting their ears with tunes you'd hear at a rave. People everywhere were dancing, seeming to be having the time of their lives. Bright neon lights constantly changing color. One of the lights was connected to a huge sign with none other than Loki's face on it, looking jolly and full of life.

The robots lead them to the center of the town square, wanting them to land right there for some reason. Clyde and Raleigh made their way out to see the man himself, parting with the rest of the crowd of people. The music shut off, and everyone slowly turned their attention toward them. Loki was now wearing a nice white suit. “You made it! Welcome to my world, where the party never stops.” Loki Cheered as the entire city roared with cheers like the greatest thing ever just happened. Very

confused, they both stepped toward him. Loki started to size them up as everyone else resumed the celebrating. He looked Clyde up, and down, doing the same to Raleigh. “You two have certainly grown a lot since we last met. I mean, your measurements haven't...” Raleigh glared at him, informing him with her gaze that he shouldn't say anything else about that.

“Right, well anyway. As I said, this is my world, feel free to do as you please, there isn't much that's off-limits here. I can even help you find a few people to hook up with.” Loki gleefully stated to them. “You really have a one-track mind,” Clyde said, unimpressed with his suggestion. He grinned at Clyde taking a wine glass from a random person who handed it to him, taking a sip. “Don't play coy, no one will judge you here. I know what you like.” He smirked. “Well” Clyde started to say, but Raleigh interrupted, quietly handing him a paper, presumably with things she wanted in a partner. He tried not to laugh. “Well, you missed your window, Clyde, I have to help the little lady now.” “I'm not little.” She yelled at him as they walked off. Loki snaps his fingers, summoning a guy and girl to Clyde.

Clyde was left drowned in the crowd of people seeing them leave. He wondered just she was looking for, trying to convince himself he didn't care either way. “She's not my type anyway.” He said. “Well, what is your type, then?” The girl Loki left would ask. Clinging to him, the guy did the same on his other arm. This wasn't his kinda place, it was far too noisy. He never really gave her an answer but was coxed into drinking some alcohol by the guy. All he could think about is how Loki enjoyed this place too much. He sat on a bench somehow he got away from them all, at least for a second, so he could breathe. He could see a light different from the others glowing nearby slowly forming into a massive door, and creaking open. Furthermore, he perked up giving it his full attention, it didn't seem to fit in with the rest of the world's style. An eight-foot person in armour stepped out with two Vikings.

She pointed a Clyde drawing a massive hammer from her back, it crackled with a hint of electricity. “You there, where is Loki of War World?” Clyde wondered who she was. “I don't know, he ran off somewhere,” Clyde said, not sure himself. “You will take me to him. He is my brother.” She

took off her helmet letting her long blonde hair, and lion ears out for him to see. She wasn't going to take no for an answer. He found her to be very attractive and had the sudden desire to help her because of that, as shallow as that was. “I mean, I can try. Your name wouldn't happen to be Thor, though, would it?” Clyde had to ask. She shook her head, staring at him in confusion. “Why would you think that? My name is Theron.” It was awkward now. “I see well mine is Clyde, I guess I'll help you find him.” He leads the way even though he had no idea where Loki even was, hoping he would just run into him.

Raleigh was in a room with two men, and one woman they were all laying on a large bed fully clothed, and didn't seem like they were going to change that anytime soon. “It was huge, I mean like 20 feet tall. No Fifty feet. Anyway, I beat it in one hit.” She brags very proudly of herself, and her story. The others were amazed like it was the greatest story they had ever heard. One of the men spoke up. “Wow, you are so amazing, and strong.” Clyde had made his way to the outside of the door. “I've taken on a lot bigger then that though.” She said as the girl fed her some candy. “Mmmhh oh god that's really good.” Clyde opened the door quickly after hearing this, seeing her he had to know. “What are you.... doing?” It sounded like she was thoroughly enjoying it. She blushed as if she was doing something scandalous. The two people Loki left with him told him that Loki went into this room with her, but he was nowhere to be seen. His mind was at ease now that he saw Raleigh doing whatever it is she was. “Never mind, I don't want to know. What happened to Loki?” He asked. “He said he had something to take care of, and left a little while ago.”

Clyde sighs, leaving her alone with the others in the room, to her relief. He looked around, seeing that he had lost Theron and her buddies. Not wanting to lose them, he quickly left the building, finding them outside where Loki was as well. “That solves that problem, I guess.” He says, seeing that neither of them looks too happy to see one another. “It's time to come home, brother. A new war is about to start, we need your power.” She ordered. Loki shook his head. “I've told you time, and time

again, dear sister. I have no love for such things. If you, and father, want to pummel each other to dust, very well. Leave me be.” She growled, readying her hammer, as the two Vikings got ready for a fight. “Stop being stubborn, and take your place as king! I'll take you by force if needed.”

Loki smiled, inviting her to try with a grin on his face. The hammer lit up surrounded by lightning, as she tried swinging it at him, but for whatever reason, she couldn't. She kept trying, but her body wasn't allowing her to hit Loki, despite her clear intent to attack him. The confused Vikings tried themselves to attack, but to no avail. “What sort of madness is this brother?” She demanded his answer. He chuckles. “I happen to have the Universal Code for this universe. You see, this is my world in every sense, and I forbid violence.” Theron growled but didn't seem to have the power to do anything. “You coward, fight me like a war god should stop hiding!” “It was nice to catch up with you little sister, but I think you should leave now.” He opened a portal, forcing her, and the other two, through it before they can protest.

“What was that Loki? Universal Code? Is she OK?” He hated to admit he was a little sad to see her go, even with her hostility towards her brother. “Ah, you wouldn't know about that, would you. Well, put simply, Universal Code is the very being of a universe. If you have access to it, you can change virtually anything about the world. Though I must admit I can't fully utilize it being a demi god, and not a full god. A normal person even less so. I did some tweaking to make it where it's against the laws of physics to commit violence. Thus making it impossible for anyone on this earth to do so.” He laughed. “I didn't know such a thing could be done? So you can't stab people or anything, huh.” Clyde inquired of him. “Well, I did leave the door open for kinky violence.” He smirked at Clyde who lost interest in the conversation.

“You don't seem to enjoy each other's company very much,” Clyde said, causing Loki to frown. After a long pause, he spoke up. “I love my sister, I do. We just don't see eye to eye.” “Well, it's kinda hard to settle your differences if you just yeet them away,” Clyde said to Loki. “It's complicated.”

Loki's mood had saddened the usually jolly man, ears drooped, looking dreary. “Let's talk about it then.” He would suggest to the god. He nodded. “Not here. Come, there's a wonderful bar around the corner. You'll like it.” Loki said, leading him to it.

They arrived at the bar that was a much more calm then the rest of the world. Not a sound entered the well lit room, and the only ones there other then Loki, and Clyde was the bar tender. Clyde took a sip of ale he was presented with, Loki did the same. “I hate to admit it, but you were right. This is a lot more my pace.” He said to the miscreant. He Chuckles taking a few more sips of his drink before answering. “Places like this have their own appeal. I felt it important to have when people need a change in pace.” Loki was rather considerate in a weird sort of way. Even still Clyde was ready for him to spill is possible trauma to him. “Lets not forget why we came here. Unload already.”

He nodded at him. “Right, well you see. My Family doesn't, approve of my lifestyle. They are a warring people. Nothing brings them more joy than the thrill of battle.” “Sounds like a certain redhead we know.” Clyde says only for Loki to shake his head. “She's her own brand. The people I'm referring to are almost suicidal. They want nothing more to meet, an end in battle. I'm sure you see the issue I have with that.” That part was somewhat similar to the Norse gods he kept comparing them too. “Well don't they have like an after life where they just party or whatever till the end of the world? Sounds like something you'd like.” Loki just looks confused. “What in the bloody hell are you talking about? Theirs is nothing like that.” He now regretted saying anything he had been right about stuff like this in the past. “Forget about it.” He said trying to get back to what really mattered.

“The world it self is known as War World. A world where countless gods, and devils compete in battle. The rule rules of the world dictate that the winners get the Universal Code. I so happens father is the ring leader he controls the world much like I do this one, and has since pretty much its inception. He wants me to take over for him.” Loki would say. “I see. Guessing he wants you to do it his way to?” He asked. “I suppose that's the case. My dear sister would be a much better pick. While I don't approve

of their violence everyone there is a willing participant of it. If they want it so badly they can have it. I just don't want to be apart of such barbarism. It seems my father is still insisting on it. What a stubborn man." Talking about it caused his alcohol consumption to increase.

Clyde wasn't sure what to say to him. "I assume you've confronted him about this." "Of course, but whats the point it all falls on death ears. I'm perfectly happy here without him." He could tell from the look on his face he did wish his father would accept his choices. "Well how about this. We go talk to him, me you, and Raleigh. If he still doesn't listen fuck him. There's more to family then blood I think." Loki seems reluctant to do so, but does want some sort of closure. "You've changed a little haven't you Clyde." He said smiling. "Alright I agree to do so." Clyde really didn't think he was that much different then when he met him something he'd have to think about later. "Great, but lets just chill for a while before that." They both do just that having a calming time together.

Chapter Eighteen

The morning had come. During the night, both of them had retired to a room. Clyde was ready to get this all over with, so he quickly got up, already dressed. That's when the hangover hit him like a truck. “Maybe I need a minute, actually.” He lays back, letting his feet stay on the floor. The words Loki hit him with started to enter his mind. Had he changed? He had gotten a little more assertive, he thought. Being surrounded, by so many powerful people, was rough. He wasn't sure if it was the confidence he had gained, or fear of being drowned out by the others. He felt powerless sometimes and didn't know if he even could get stronger. Humans like himself had a limit. In his world, people couldn't casually do the things he had seen, even after years of training. “Great now I feel like shit emotionally, and physically.”

After he felt like he had recovered enough, he made his way to the rood his fearless leader resided in. “AH! Yes! That's the spot! Right there!” Clyde heard as he was gripping the door tightly. His eyes widened, and his heart raced a little. Was she doing the deed this time? He took his hand away from the handle, walking away from the door. “I'm not jealous at all. Good for her.” He said to himself face flustered. Loki entered the hallway wearing an older style garb. He suspected it might be the kind

of attire they wore in The War Worlds. “Good morning Clyde!” Faint noises could still be heard from inside. “Well, what are you waiting for, let's get her.” He opened the door with no regard. He thought about stopping him, but it was too late.

His eyes looked in to see Raleigh with one of the guys from the night before. They were both clothed still, but she was on a massage table getting a full body work from the guy. “Don't you people know how to knock!” She stopped him, and began throwing things at Clyde, and only him. “We were just making sure you were ready to go to The War World,” Loki informed her. Clyde still getting pelted with whatever she could throw at him.

“War World?” She asks curiously, obviously interested. “Yes, I would've thought Clyde told you by now. We are going to tell my father what for.” She stood up on the bed, putting her hat back on. “Yeah, let's go.” She didn't need more elaboration, the name alone was enough to make her want to go. She turned to the guy. “I had fun with you guys, thanks a bunch.” He smiled nodding. “Alright, well, let's be off then,” Loki said, leading the way. They both walked off, leaving Clyde on the floor. The guy in the room looked at Clyde, winking like he knew something they didn't. “Good luck.” That is all he said before getting up, and walking away too. He dusted himself off, following after the others, hoping they had not got too far. Outside, he saw that the party had died down a lot. Almost everyone was laying down on a bench with the morning sun on their face. In the distance, he saw a full women police force in what looked like leather outfits arresting some people. He elected to ignore it.

They made it to The Square where the hopper was, but instead of heading to it, Loki inserted his cane into the ground, making a large portal rise up. “What, we aren't taking The Hopper?” Raleigh asked, pouting a little. “I know about your little problem, dear. Give me a moment to make sure we go to the right place.” He replied. She looked over at Clyde with angry eyes that asked if he had fibbed on her. “What, I didn't say anything. He probably just used his god powers to find out or something” He said trying to defend himself. “I may be able to help you with that issue. Though it would take a little

time.” “Oh... I see.” She said, accepting that for now. After a few minutes, the portal lit up, showing another place on the other side. A cold breeze swept the square, making him shiver a little. It was snowing pretty hard on the other side. “I think I might be a little under-dressed for this, actually,” Clyde said, backing away. “Nonsense, you'll be fine.” The deity said. “Don't be a wuss, it's just snow.” She said pushing him inside. They all made the trip safely, the portal closed behind them.

Now that she was on this side she was crossing her arms trying not to look like she was freezing. Loki didn't seem all that bothered by it. Her teeth chattered slightly. He wasn't doing much better. “Loki, give me the weird mane thing you always wear.” She demanded. “I will do no such thing.” He rejected her, only for her to pounce on him trying to take it. He sighs, making two thick-looking coats appear from thin air. “You should know better than to interfere with a man's sense of style.” She took the coat. “T... thanks.” She said, feeling a bit guilty now. Clyde just put it on without saying anything, instead of looking at their surroundings. In front of them was a huge mountain with an even bigger castle. At the base of that mountain was a large city. Two men clad in armour were guarding the gate into the city. As they approached, they seemed shocked. “Do my eyes deceive me?”

Loki faintly smiled. “No, my friend, it is I.” He ran over to him, giving him a bear hug. “It's good to see you. Who might your friends be?” He laughs, “Well, let's call them moral support. The little lady's name is Raleigh, and The sexy one's name is Clyde.” He said as a jest. “You haven't changed a bit, have yah, lad. I tell yah, when this one was a boy, he practically swooned over everything that moved.” Clyde and Raleigh didn't seem to be too happy with their given titles. “Oh, where are my manners. I'm Harold The Great Gatekeeper.”

Clyde felt like he was off his game now what happened. He silently accepted defeat once more. “Well, I hate to keep things short, but we must be going,” Loki says. “Right, don't let me keep you.” He says, motioning them to open the gate. They walk inside, seeing a medieval-looking town. Everyone is in armor, even younger kids. Gender doesn't seem to be an issue either, the females look just as

powerful as the men do, though compared to Theron that wasn't saying much. Everyone recognized Loki right away. Some of them waved singing his praises while others silently scurried out of sight looking upset with him. “Well, it seems it was exactly how I left it.” He laughed. Raleigh inched closer to Clyde, whispering in his ear. “Hey, Clyde, why are we here exactly, I just said yes because it sounded cool.” “And here I thought you were always prepared.” He said. “We are here to help Loki with his Daddy issues.” “Aw really is that all.” She would say. He reassures her“I wouldn't write it off just yet.”

They made it to the castle where Theron. “The city is in an uproar, brother. Are you finally ready to take Father's place as War Master?” She asked. “Come now, sister, you know me better than that.” She sighs. “Either way, you've come at a bad time. After failing to bring, your father decided to carry on with preparations for the next war, and if you're really not here to replace him he's not going to be happy.” It sounded like she had a lot of her plate, and also wanted her father's approval very much, though differently from Loki. “Why do you let that man run you into the ground, sister.” He asked. “I will not let you insult The War Master like that!” She raised her weapon. “Oh dear, I haven't been here long, and you already want to fight me,” Loki says with a smile on his face. Clyde can tell he is upset by this in all actuality. “Wait! I'll admit I don't know how everything works around here, but we just came to talk, and try to settle our differences. She focused her attention on him. “You are that little man from before. Alright, I'll stand down now, but only because you helped me.” She said, causing him to blush a little.

Loki seemed relieved, though Theron was still clearly inching to prove herself against her brother. “Give me some time, please. It won't be good for any of us if he gets angry.” Loki nodded. “Thank you, and brother?” Theron inquired. “Yes, what is it?” She lifts him in the air, hugging him tightly, her serious persona vanishing for a moment. She was a good two feet taller than him, “I missed you so much, brother.” The god seemed ill-prepared. “Calm down. Theron, you're a lot bigger now, it's

more than I can take.” This sisterly affection he was getting seemed to warm his heart a little. She let him down. “I had no idea.” He said to her. “Why did you leave me all alone.” She looked as if she might cry.

“I'm.... well I'm sorry, maybe I should've taken you with me or perhaps some other alternative. No, you wouldn't have wanted that anyway, you felt way more at home here than I ever did.” He says. She didn't say anything, however, it was clear to him, he was right. His head began to scream as his jolly demeanor returned. “I think everything is going to turn out just fine. Go now, do what you need to.” She started to walk away. “Your not going to disappear on me again, are you?” “I promise I will not.” He reassures her.” That's enough for her to go on.

Now they were left in the courtyard till she said it was safe to enter. “Well, now what,” Raleigh says. “Well, I guess we could go over anything we haven't yet. Sounds like you have some sort of evil plan brewing.” Clyde suggested. “Oh, it's nothing you need to be aware of, yet, anyway.” They sat on a bench that had a pretty good view of the City below. “Well, for one, everyone is getting ready for a War. They treat it as one of your people's sports games. What is it called again, leg ball? Never saw the appeal of that, either.” Clyde had PTSD flashbacks of high school, and all the overly obsessed football fans. Their school never even won, they were lucky to get a first down. He cringed, trying not to think about it. “Are they at least good at it?” He had to know. “Yes, they are rather good, I don't think they've lost in centuries, but the time does blur together when you live for a while.” He replied. Just how old was Loki, he wondered.

“So is everyone here a lion person?” Raleigh asked. “Hmm, well, I'd say just about every bar, a few.” He answered. “Don't lions usually live in warmer climates?” She asked as well. “Raleigh! That's probably racist or something, don't say stuff like that.” Clyde interjected. Loki just shrugged, not seeming to have the answer to that one, but certainly being entertained by it.

Chapter Nineteen

A skinny man with thick round glasses is presenting something on a whiteboard to someone on a throne. “I think we tried too many air tactics in the last war we lost a lot of people that way, and they didn't even get a chance to fight really. I'm suggesting we limit our Valkyries to a smaller fraction, and use more ground troops.” He says to them. “I see your point, but we were fighting Zeus that time, Surter doesn't have too many anti-air weapons. Much more willing to have a real brawl.” The person on the throne says. Theron enters the room. “Sorry to interrupt father, but well. Brother is here.” He groans. “Well, what are you waiting for, get that boy to come in here, so I can give him a piece of my mind."

She complies, acting a lot timider in front of her father than before. She opens the door, letting the whole gang in. “Well, what do you know, the prodigal son has finally returned of his own accord. Are you finally ready to stop fucking around with those pussies, and be a real man with responsibility like me?” The man said. “Father, I told you....” Theron tried defending him only to get cut off. “Silence Theron. I know what you said he was here for, I don't care.” He stands up walking towards Loki making his face clear to them. From the neck down, he was clad in golden armour befitting of a king.

His face, however, looked like an everyday middle-aged man Clyde often saw back in his world. It certainly stood out compared to everyone else they met here, he tried not to laugh. He had a very square-shaped black mustache. “And who are these two losers you brought back with you.” That one looks like he'd die if you breathed on him wrong. He said pointing at Clyde, Loki didn't say a word like he was waiting for his father to finish ranting first.

“These losers, are my comrades both powerful in their own right,” Loki answered, eyes closed in an annoyed manner. “I am here to settle things once, and for all, father. I will not be taking your place ever. Listen to me now get it into your thick skull old man.” His dad groaned. “Come the fuck on. I let you play with your little sissy friends for too long, it's time to grow up. Become war master already, so I can bash some heads in again. I'm tired of everyone having a blast while I can only watch.” “I beg your pardon.” At first, Loki seemed angry at his father, but his words quickly turned to confusion. “Being a War Master is boring, it's been so long since I've felt the rush of battle." He said. Loki faced palmed, it looked like he had misunderstood his father's reasons. “If that's all you want to have Theron take your place. She would be a much better fit than I.” “Don't be stupid, Loki, it can only be passed to the strongest family member and the oldest. It's been that way for generations.” He retorts. “Our bloodline starts with you and mother,” Loki says, unamused. “Don't talk back to me, boy!” He says, not giving him an answer. His dad doesn't care what anyone else wants, only what he wants.

Loki sighs, feeling like his time has been wasted coming here. “This is stupid.” Raleigh's buts in she has a fire in her words, a chord has been struck. “Not everything is about you, and your stupid bullshit, old guy!” He looks over at her, furious. “How dare you!” He raises his hand to backhand her, something she will not just let him do. Loki blocks him from doing so. “Perhaps I should talk in a language you understand. My two friends and I shall participate in your war. I will show you just how strong they are. And when they bring you victory. You can no longer invalidate them or my lifestyle.” Loki says. Clyde seems shocked to hear that. “Are you really OK with fighting Loki?” It took a second

to answer. “Well, no, not really, but sometimes you do things you don't want to for the people you love.” His father laughed at him, it seems he was satisfied. “I agree, you'll all be starters. I guess I haven't introduced myself to you wimps. I'm The Great War Master.” He paused as if he was building up to something. “Dave.” Clyde's face physically cringed when he said that.

Loki turned one hundred eighty degrees, leaving through the door. “Well, with that settled, I'll be off.” Clyde and Raleigh ran after him. “Wait, Loki!” He didn't stop walking, so they walked with him. “Is this really what you want.” He asks him. “I don't foresee another way. Don't worry.” He stops in the middle of the hall where it intersects and points to his right. “The Armory is that way, I suggest you prepare. I must do my preparations.” He walks away, leaving them there. Raleigh tugs on his collar. “Let's leave him alone for now. He might be a weirdo, but I think he knows what he's doing.” She says. Clyde is hesitant but goes with her to the armory.

No one is in the room, but there is a treasure trove of amour, and weapons-free for them to pick from. She giddily skips around checking it all out. He tries to look for armor that would fit him better, thinking if he's going to survive a war, he needs to protect his vital organs with everything he could before even thinking about attacking. He slides a gauntlet around his arms and started to fit the rest of the Armour around himself. Likewise, he tried to make sure he still had mobility as well. Raleigh seemed much more interested in form over function. Trying many sets of amours in front of the mirror, some with capes. Even trying helmets on, but quickly abandoned that idea when none of them seemed to fit her hat over them. Now that Clyde was fully protected, he started equipping weapons every place he could on his person. Once they settled on something, they walked out together, looking decently prepared for battle.

The war was about to start, and rather quickly. They found Theron with a small company of soldiers joining them as they marched to meet the enemy. “You almost look like a different person in that armor.” She said to him. “Well, I tried my best.” He said, nervously laughing. “This way.” She

leads them to the foot of a mountain, there was a long hallway ahead of them, Loki wasn't anywhere to be seen. “Listen, men. We all have the honor of fighting on the front lines today. Fight with honor like always. Fight with everything you have. The thrill of battle is soon to come. Remember that the keep must be defended at all cost.” Theron informed them, only for them to cheer out in glee. This was it he was getting more nervous by the second we were about to enter a real war zone he didn't have much faith in himself to be alright he just had to put his trust in Loki, that's all he really could do.

He looked over at the captain, seeing she was completely chill and ready to go, he greatly envied that right now. His heart beats faster, and faster as they reached the end of the long corridor, he had never been so scared in his life. He closed his eyes, took a deep breath, walking out into the open with everyone. His ears were suddenly assaulted with loud cheering, and a huge number of people making a beat of some kind. “What?” He looked around, seeing that they were in a huge icy box canyon. There were identical keeps on both ends of it, and all-around at the tops of the cliffs were stands filled with a roaring crowd of people even a small little band directing their chants, and singing. Dave was on top of the cliff near the middle, and on the other side was a giant fire man. He didn't know what to think now. Had he greatly overestimated what they were doing?

He could see that both keeps were already fortified with people, and the opposing army was waiting close by, all lined up. They did the same thing facing the army about forty feet away, waiting for some sort of signal. The song the stands were singing ended as they all went silent. Dave then spoke up. “Thank you all for coming today, let's have a nice, and Honorable fight. Let's just skip all the other shit, and just get on with it.” The crowd began cheering once more, and the music started back up, Dave started to count. “3..... 2..... 1..... Begin!” They all charged at the enemy except for Clyde who stayed back, just walking instead. “Maybe this won't be so...” Right as he said that one of the other sides' warriors stabbed completely through one of the lion warriors leaving a huge gaping hole in his chest killing him. Clyde looked shocked, all his fear returning. “I'm going to die here.”

He could feel Dave glaring at him, clearly unimpressed with him. Theron charged her mighty hammer, slamming it into the ground. The ground broke apart causing the demons to fall to their deaths, any of them that avoided it was electrocuted, by the lightning traveling across. Raleigh Leaped ahead of her, doing her hammer attack. She had made it freakishly huge with a rocket at the other end as she fired it up she went spinning, none of them could hope to dodge something like that getting knocked down like bowling pins. The first front had been easily ripped through. The other lion soldiers got on both sides of the women in a v like formation, pressing forward. Valkyries flew past them to meet with other flying enemies. It was overwhelming for poor Clyde. One of the demons broke the edge of the formation, leaving Clyde little time to block with a sword. He clashed with him, knowing right away his swordplay would be outmatched. He quickly abandoned it by throwing it at the demon to gain some distance.

He pulled out his multi-tool forming it into a gun and shooting the demon in the head who didn't seem to have a concept of such a weapon, therefore, was ill-prepared. He let out a huge sigh of relief. “I should've just started with this.” His unit pressed on without him, he had to try, and catch up with them. They were making great progress toward the demon keep. Unfortunately, the end of the advance broke through on both sides, surrounding them all. With his technology and the enemies' lack of knowledge on the weapon he was able to hold them back for a short time, but that wasn't enough his lack of power was never so apparent, soon they would overrun, and surround him. It was all over for him, or so he thought.

Right before his certain doom. Loki finally made his appearance. Freezing both sides in place with ease, though it did look like he tried to spare their lives if possible. Something they would probably see as more of an insult than mercy. “Sorry friend. I was a little late.” Loki says, turning to him. “Thank goodness. What were you doing this whole time?” He asked. “Well, it does take longer to craft spells, and such when you don't have a universal code. Here is a gift.” He said, forming golden

fire in his hands. It floated over to him, wrapping his whole body. It didn't burn, just filled him with energy, with strength. “You should be more on par with everyone now, at least strength-wise,” Loki says, freezing or burning anyone that would dare interrupt their conversation. “Thanks, and all but doesn't this make it hard to prove what I need to prove?” Clyde asks. “There is more to strength than raw power. Now go buy me some more time, I'd like to end this quickly.” Letters he couldn't read wrapped all around him as he sorted them out.

The lions were dominating now, almost to the keep. They were losing a lot of men, though nothing the two gals couldn't handle. Clyde had rejoined them, filled with energy. He was able to head shot many of them. Raleigh and Theron seemed to be competing with each other now. Two fire giants rose out of the ground like zombies stomping on the poor lion soldiers, easily beating them. They must have left all their trump cards at the rear, the opposite of what they did. Both of them took a giant to fight, hitting them several times, but they didn't go down. A giant ice spear appeared above Loki aimed directly at the keep it was covered in runes, it was still seeming to need a little longer to charge.

Both the girls were trying to kill the giant they were fighting before the other. In a few final hits, they managed to take them down around the same time. Loki's attack had sufficient charge. He fired it at the keep, destroying it completely. Clyde was amazed, every time he thought he had seen Loki at his strongest he was proven wrong. The crowd cheered the war was over. Dave was celebrating. “Yeah fuck you Surter the world isn't ending today.” The fire giant across from him looked very upset but accepted that his army lost. Clyde had somehow survived that, though he felt like he hadn't been that much help. Loki looked up at his father who was celebrating sighing a little, knowing this would only affirm his position of taking his place. He then walked over to his sister throwing down the gauntlet right away. “I challenge you to a duel!” Everyone looked shocked even Dave.

Chapter Twenty

Theron looks at her brother confused, “A duel? You of all people want a duel?” Her blood began to boil Clyde, and Raleigh watching unsure if they should interfere or not. “How many times have you turned your back to me when I demanded the same!” She shouts in anger. Loki walks closer, a slight grin on his face. “I understand your hesitation forgive me, but after the rush of battle, I've had a little change of heart. I think I have decided to take the title of War master after all, and who better to prove myself on than against the strongest warrior in the land.” “What!” Clyde blurts out, seemingly a little taken back by Loki's sudden change in character. Loki would only look towards him, giving a wink.

For now, he would stand back and watch, unsure of what Loki was doing. Before anyone else could say anything, the current War master spoke. “Very well then, son, let's get on with it then. I'd know you'd see it my way one day.” Theron excepted what was happening, despite her misgivings about it. Everyone still alive cleared out of the battlefield, and into the stands, the silence broken up into extreme excitement, it wasn't everyday they got to see a fight like this. It would seem the devils had forgotten their loss as well, eager to see how it might play out. Loki, and Theron faced each other

as Dave began to Signal them to start. “Alright kids, I want a good honorable fight, and go all out.” They said nothing ready to begin. “Alright 3, 2, 1, fight!”

Theron charged in a hammer crackling with electricity, Loki not moving at all. She attempted to slam the hammer into him, but he moved out of the way just in time, not scratching him in the slightest. She would keep up her assault, failing to hit him each time. “Stop playing around, and take this seriously, brother!” He laughed, jumping high above her and shooting a giant fireball that engulfs her. When it dissipates, she is shown to be unhurt, her armor slightly singed. Her body is suddenly engulfed in sparks as she herself leaps into the air seemly to Loki's surprise managing to land a blow, and knock him back to the ground. She didn't stop there, she slammed the hammer over and over on his body, flattening him like pizza dough.

“I've been chasing after you for years. I wanted you to look at me to praise me, to say we are at the same level! But all you did was turn away and leave!” She said as she turned his body two-dimensional. Loki's shadow started to move and creep behind her. He rose out of it slowly, looking a little sad, like he didn't realize the effect he had on his sister. Regaining his composer, he got her attention with a blast of, almost knocking her over but planting her feet in ice. She growled, breaking it with her hammer, chasing after him. He would shoot more, and more different attacks of different elements varying from fire, and ice, to earth. She was landing more hits on him now. It persisted for a while like this, destroying most of the battlefield.

They both stopped to catch their breath, Loki seemed to be a little more tired than he expected to be his outfit ruined to his disappointment. “Come on, sister, you can do better than that. What do you say, let's finish this?” His hands glowed and light wrapped around his body as he charged at her, she met him head on. “Agreed!” They became incredibly fast like a blur of light clashing against each other over, and over. It looked like both of them were very close in strength. Loki landed another hit on Theron, knocking her back down to the floor, it was now time for the final blow, the next hit would

take her out for sure. Theron rose to her feet ready to take it, but that hit never came, He looked down at her smiling, and nodding at her. She frowned but seemed to understand, landing the last blow with her mighty hammer instead knocking him out.

The crowd roared loving the outcome not seeming to really notice what happened at the end, Dave was the same seeming to have some new-found respect for his daughter. “Fuck yeah that's my daughter bitches.” Loki would rise from the rubble, his sister helping him up. He looked a little sad. “I'm sorry Theron, I honestly had no idea you felt that way. Perhaps I was only thinking of myself all along.” She glared at him. “Why? Why did you let me win? You know I won't be satisfied with that. I had no clue just how far I need to reach was until now.” She asks. “You'll have to forgive me for that too. I did it for this world. In a strange way I still care for it dearly, and no one is better suited to run the world then you sister. Our father never seemed to get that until now.” She looked a little lost, but seemed to understand the reasoning. After a bit of silence she finally speaks up again just as Dave, and the others have made it down to meet them. “I know you always say you don't like fighting, but you owe me for this.”

He sighs, but knows she is right. “Come visit me in my world sometime, alright.” He says, not elaborating any further, though she seems to understand. “Yes, yes you were great out there Theron, I don't know why I thought this fuck in prick I had for a son could beat you. You know what, take the title.” Dave says to her seeming to be in a rush, excepting it pretty easy. He opens his hand as energy surrounds his body, slowly leaving it, and forming into a ball in his hand. “Is that universal code?” Clyde asks, only for Raleigh to shrug. “Probably.” He shoves it into her, transferring the powers, and responsibility onto her right away. “Alright great now um. You fight me!” He points to a random demon that was standing nearby, drawing his sword and running towards him. The demon looks terrified, thinking he's about to be slaughtered. Dave quickly runs out of breath, still attempting to

swing at him, to the demon's surprise. The demon stabs, and kills Dave pretty easily to everyone shock, including his own. “I guess I'm, a little out of shape.” He says right before dying.

Everyone seems unsure how to feel about it, not saying anything before Loki pipes in. “Don't worry, I expected the old fool to do something like this, I prepared a way to save him.” They all seemed to accept that explanation, but a little nervously. “I'll explain later.” All Clyde could think about was their first conversation, where he made fun of him for being weak. “Anyway, we must be going.” Loki says, beckoning for his two compatriots to follow him back home. He opens a portal to his own world, all of them slipping through, including Theron, who seemed to still have many questions for her brother. There Dave was running for his life, he was in a Hawaiian shirt being chased by many different men.

"You can't escape from us, handsome." One of them said, as they chased him. Loki seemed surprised to see him so soon, but took the chance to explain as they caught up with the former god and tackled him to the ground. “Remember that thing you said about an afterlife filled with parties. Well, you inspired me a little. It took some work, but now everyone that dies in the war worlds ends up here.” He laughs, as Dave is clawing his way out of the pile of men, blushing. “Wow, you can really do something like that, I guess it explains your absence. They called it Valhalla where I'm from, it's a fictional world.” Clyde answered, Dave crying out. "I don't know where this is, but it must surely be HEL!" “Hmm, Valhalla? I like it. From now on, this world will be known as such.” “That's great and all, but we should talk away from father. As amusing as it is seeing him like that, I don't want him to see us.” Theron says for all of them to agree, fleeing to the quiet bar they had previously visited. Dave far too preoccupied to notice and running the other direction.

They drank the night away Loki, and Theron seeming to be a lot more chummy now than before, seeing who could drink more than the other while Clyde, and Raleigh observed in the corner. “This is nice.” She said smiling. “Do you have siblings, Clyde?” Clyde took a sip of the mug he hand

in is had before answering. “I'm an only child.” She takes a little while to say anything else. “You're missing out, through good or bad, they are always there, all 708 of them.” He raised an eyebrow at this, but didn't say anything, just glad she was opening up a little. Well, it was mostly the beer because she began to rant a bit. “One day I'm going to beat the shit out of that little man, let all of them out!” He didn't know if that was incoherent ranting or not, at this point. He just let her keep going, listening either way. Eventually they all passed out.

In the morning Clyde would rise from the counter seeing that no one but Raleigh remained still asleep. He debated waking her, but she took care of that decision herself, waking up soon after. She yawned, stretching her arms, and legs. “Good morning.” Before he could say anything, Loki bursts in. “Good morning friends. Good news, I fueled your ship, and had it cleaned for you. I also stocked it with plenty of snacks etc.” He joyfully explains. “What was wrong with the stuff we had already.” She asked, being overly possessive of her ship yet again. “Wait, there is food on the Hopper.” Clyde asks, but a little angry. She just looks over at him nonchalantly, saying. “Always has been, you just never asked.” “Yes, yes, your things were fine before I thought I'd just throw in some things to show my gratitude. Speaking of which, remember that issue you had. I think it's about time we look into it. It won't take long, you can get back on the road by noon.” Loki says.

“Great!” She jumps up following him, Clyde does as well, only for him to stop him. “No, no, no, not you?” The god would say. “Why not?” He asks puzzled. “You've been traveling with this lovely lady for quite some time, and you barely updated your wardrobe at all. So I think it's better you go with Marcel, and get some new clothing. You can't go making your captain look tacky now, can you?" He points at a man they somehow didn't notice till now. He waves at Clyde, winking. Furthermore, he sighed, but saw his point, deciding to go with him. “We are going to find so many great things for you to wear, hun.” Marcel says gleefully.

The first thing Clyde puts on look like a disco ball. “Hmm too flashy.” He says. The next one is a lot more bulky and hard to move in. They keep trying out new outfits, still Clyde comes out wearing a dress, blushing. “Dude, I am not wearing this.” Clyde tells him. Finally, he comes out, it was black tactical gear with a white outline and a white scarf. It's already tailored to him exactly. “Hmm, I like it.” Clyde says. “Of course you do. I have an eye for these things. To be honest, I already have a number of these outfits ready for you knowing they were perfect, I just needed a model.” Marcel says Clyde having no clue how to respond to that.

Back with Raleigh, Loki seems to be examining her head with some sort of magic. The results don't look promising from the expression on his face. “I have to hand it to the man. I can't make heads or tails of what he's done to you, just that it was indeed him.” She doesn't seem to take this information very well. “You're telling me, even with god powers, you can't fix it?” She asks pretty upset. “Afraid not. I'm not very familiar with this, I have the power yes, but certain things can negate that, such as your head. You are aware you have a universal mind, correct?” She nods as he further explains. “Well, such things interfere with my power, and even if they didn't I don't have the know how to fix it just the power to. Trying anything with my lack of knowledge would end with your brain most likely being soup. I'm amazed anyone was able to do so at all. What I can do is remove any control he has, and point you in a direction for someone who might be able to help.” “Do it.” She says right away. “Very well.” He begins to swirl his hand around more, doing something to her head.

Chapter Twenty One

It was time for Clyde, and Raleigh, to leave. Loki, and Theron both came to see them off, along with a few more of the residents of Valhalla. “Here are the coordinates for the man you need to meet. However, without the aid of your mind, you'll have to travel like everyone else.” Loki explains, handing her something that looks like a flash drive, to Clyde. “Like everyone else?” Clyde would ask. Loki chuckles. “Oh, how you've been spoiled till now.” Raleigh starts to explain. “It usually takes a lot more trial and error to get to other worlds even if you have the right numbers, and if it's on the other side of the multiverse it will take a few hops to get there.” He seemed to understand.

He should've guessed that Raleigh wasn't exactly doing things the normal way by now. “Safe travels to you both. You are welcome to join us in war anytime.” Theron said, “Um will do.” Clyde said, a little more timid than usual, not liking the idea of putting himself in mortal danger like that again. “Goodbye friends.” Loki cheers, bringing them both in for a big bear hug that neither of them seemed to want that much, but let him have it anyway. They all waved as they entered The Hopper, ready to jump to the next world. Instead of the normal way Raleigh did things, she went to the front of the ship and began messing with the controls, inserting the flash drive.

“Looks like it will take three, maybe four jumps to get to him. It's going to take a little longer than normal to set things up, so just chill for a bit, OK.” She says playing with the controls once more. He sits down in the chair next to her, clearly having something on his mind. “Hey, Raleigh.” “Yes, Clyde?” She would answer. “Is your, galaxy brain, the reason the empire is always chasing you? What exactly is our goal now?” She looked a little annoyed that he called it that. She paused for a little while, but then explained. “Yes, it... Yes, it is, and... We are going to find The Physician. Loki says he can pretty much fix any problem with a body.” Clyde left it at that, leaning back. “Aye aye captain.”

The hopper sprung to life, lifting itself into the air, and breaking out into between the worlds. It seemed to take longer this time, but eventually, they did make it world-bound once again. Raleigh eagerly checked a screen reading some text, becoming disappointed the more she reads. “Aw, come on. This world is supposedly almost as boring as your world, Clyde.” She states, only for Clyde to sigh a huge sigh of relief. “I could use a breather, honestly.” He says. “You better use your time wisely, then well be leaving as soon as The Hopper is ready to jump again.” She groans, spinning around in her chair. “You are not going to die of boredom. Even you need rest sometimes, right?” He says, thinking he kinda sounds like a nagging mother now. He starts to think he might be wrong about that, considering she isn't completely human. “Fine fine we can chill out for a little bit.” She says humoring him.

They land on the outskirts of a town no one seems to be around to notice. She follows him, out locking the ship down tight Clyde slowly starts to remember why he hated his world. He could tell there wasn't much up ahead. Just a gas station, and a grocery store from the looks of it. He figured there must be a million towns just like it all around this world. What exactly did normal people do for fun he thought. They eventually made it to a gas station Clyde spied a bag of his favorite chips in the window. “At least they have Toritos.” “What are those?” She asked minorly curious. “They are one of my favorite snacks in my old world. Hold on I'll get some.” He fished around his pockets realizing he

didn't exactly have the funds. “Um well actually. Do you have money?” She shrugs. “Not for this world. Maybe they'll take gold?” She asks pulling out a gold coin from one of her cubes.

“I um guess we will see be right back.” She sat on the curb waiting for him to go in and get it. He walked in getting some puzzled looks no doubt because the clothes he was wearing probably looked like cosplay or something to the people here. He finds the family-sized bag heading to the counter to pay for them, but before he can even speak to the clerk someone grabs him from behind covering his head with a bag. The Clerk seems to be in on it leaving his place behind the counter and helping. They slowly drag him away as Clyde tries to get away from them to no avail out the back door. No one in the store seemed to notice.

Outside the store Raleigh was starting to get bored about to go inside to drag him out. “Ugh whats taking him so long.” She groaned. Clyde walked up toward her from the side of the store smiling at her. Something was different about him. He seemed to be more handsome then before his eyes where a dreamy blue now. “Sorry for the wait my lady. I've returned.” She looked up at him very confused, and looked like she might deck him in the head for talking to her like that. However after seeing his face she blushes a little. She stood up still confused, but sparing him from any pain for now. “Why are you talking like that? What took so long anyway? Wait where are the Toritos you were ranting about I kinda wanted to try them now?” He seemed a little unsure what to say.

“Oh um.” He looked inside the store seeming the too people who dragged him out giving him thumbs up. “They were sadly out of stock my dear. Gas station food is unfitting for a beautiful lady such as your self anyway.” She looks a bit weirded out, surprised Clyde of all people would be so openly flirting with her like this. “Did you get hit on the head or something.” She asks. “No I well... Realized I should be treating you with more respect you are a captain aren't you?” He said to her a little nervous she wasn't buying it. “Lets get out of here I'm sure your ready to go on another adventure and look amazing doing it too.”

He grabs her hand pulling her away from the store. He seemed like he really didn't want to stick around much longer. She let him do so her ego getting the better of her. Buttering her up was a very effective way to get her to like you. “Wait Clyde. The Hoppers that way.” He stopped looking at her, and smiling. “Oh silly me I must of gotten lost in your radiance shall we go then.” He turns around letting go of her hand so she can lead the way. Her face remains faintly red as she takes them back to the ship still giving him a side eye a little concerned with his sudden change in behavior.

As they approach It a giant ship pops into the sky. “Oh Shit looks like those two finally caught back up with us lets book it.” She says Clyde nodding rushing to the ship with her. “I don't feel like fighting these losers right now I think we can jump before they notice if we are careful. She starts inputting commands into the console like before quickly flying past the giant ship, and to the next world. The huge vessel seems to have noticed firing at the hopper, but unable to do anything before it gets away following after it.

“Looks like we got away I hope they didn't get close enough to follow. Clyde leans in smiling at her. “You handled that incredibly.” “Oh um... Thanks.” She smiles faintly blushing again she definitely enjoys the praise. “Do you maybe want to.” He comes closer putting his hand on her chin. “Let me show my appreciation for the great job your doing.” She then proceeds to knee him in the balls, and then kick him away from her. Blushing much heavier now she turns away in her chair peeking over at her shes starting to think something is very wrong, she just can't see him actually doing this kinda thing to her. “I appreciate the praise, but don't push your luck buddy.” He stays on the ground in pain with a scowl on his face. “Noted.” He gets up dusting himself off looking very angry. “Excuse me princess.” He says walking toward the back room leaving her alone for now. “This isn't how it was supposed to go.” He said under his breath.

They made it to the next world which also wasn't all that impressive looking at least according to the database she was using. “Whats with all these boring ass worlds. Come on Clyde Lets get going

I'm hoping they at least have good places to eat around here. The alarms started to go off all over. “Whelp looks like the caught up with us anyway. At least things well be somewhat interesting.” Clyde is panicking to her annoyance glaring at him to calm down so they can get ready for battle. She leaves the ship looking outside seeing that it was a much smaller ship than before. Even still Darrion and Cyrus jump out.

“We had to abandon the flagship to avoid losing you sadly. Come now Surrender already.” Cyrus said weapon already in hand. He was giving her a chance, but clearly didn't expect her to do so. “You guys are really saying stuff like that with all the times we've kicked your ass.” She grins ready to beat them up, and move on like usual. “Right Clyde. Clyde?” She notices he is not there looking behind to see him running away behind a box, and giving her a thumbs up. Darrion laughs. “Looks like the runt is scared of us.” She seems to be pretty upset that he would just do that but tries to shrug it off, and not look that way in front of them. “Clyde's not much a fighter anyway he would just be in the way.” She pulls out her multi-tool all the fun has seemed to be taken from this fight for her.

Chapter Twenty Two

The battle was quickly fought even with fighting them alone she manged to beat them into the dirt only causing minor damage to the surrounding area. She quickly hand cuffed them to their ship leaving them there looking around for Clyde. He was cowering in the corner behind a box. “Is it over?” He said scared. She didn't seem to want to entertain this charade any longer. She slams her foot into the box barley missing his head. “What have you done with the real Clyde?” She glares down at him. He answers now terrified. “Wh... what do you mean darling. I'm Clyde.” She doesn't like that answer.

“Clyde would never abandon me like that even if he knew he was about to get his ass beat.” He sees he's not getting out of this without explaining. “Alright alright. I'm not your Clyde please don't hurt me.” “Where is he?” She won't accept anything other then the truth from him. “I don't know they probably took him back to the company.” He says still very much fearing for his life. She lifts him up by his collar looking like she is about to strangle him to death. “What company?” She demands. “I'll show you just... Please stop...” She releases him from her grip. He catches his breath pulling out his phone looking for something.

He finds a video, and presses play. A little cartoon man that look very sad is typing away at his desk in the video. “Is your life boring in sad. Do you wish you could be literally anywhere else.” The video says. “Well here at Replacement Life we can give you just that. For the low price of all your life savings. We will find a life more suited to you.” Two other cartoon men appear in the video kidnapping a very happy looking man, and letting the sad man take his place. “Call now, and start living the life you really want.” The video ends, and he puts his phone away. Raleigh thinks for a second still very angry with this fake Clyde. “So let me get this straight. This random company took Clyde, and replaced him with you another version of him.” “Yes sorry please don't hurt me. I'll do anything.” He pleads.

“Get away from me creep. The only thing I want is my Clyde back so you better find a way to do that or I'm going to destroy you.” Fake Clyde panicked. “Got it.” He fumbled through his pockets pulling out a button with a glass case over it. “I bought the second try package. They told me to push this button if I was unsatisfied, and they would try to find another life for me.” She snatched it out of his hand pressing it right away. “OK listen up Wimpy Clyde you are going to act like everything is normal when they show up so I can have a word with them.” She glare to add another level of intimidation she probably doesn't need to. He nodded timidly. She Walks off out of sight waiting for them to show up.

A little while later. Another ship shows up landing by The Hopper. Its got Replacement Life plastered all over it. Three armed men come out guns drawn. “Your extraction team is here we will get you back to the office, and find you a better replacement.” One of them says. Wimpy Clyde runs behind them getting onto the ship. “Hurry that bitch is going to ambush me. You said she would be easy to get with.” “That bitch she says not exactly surprised he betrayed her, but still annoyed. She hits one of the guys with a hammer. “I'm sorry I'm not your little romantic getaway you bastard.” She knocks another one out. She turns her hammer into a sword pointing it at the last dude. “Give me the location of your base now!”

He puts his hand up pointing to the ship he came in. “I give up don't hurt me. They honestly don't pay us enough for this.” Wimpy Clyde Cowers once more seeing how easily she took them out. She punches him in the gut walking past him to get the coordinates. She then destroys the console, and lights it on fire as she walks out. She walks toward The Hopper not messing around at all anymore. “Wait don't leave me how, am I supposed to get out of here?” Wimpy Clyde pleads with her. “I don't know ask them.” She points to the still unconscious Darrion, and Cyrus not spending any more time with the waist of a Clyde.

Like a bat out of hell she makes it to the world Replacement Life is placed in. The whole world has pretty much been taken over their billboards all over all leading to a huge corporate building. She land right in front of it going inside to the front desk. A voice says “Welcome to Replacement Life, Start living your best life today.” Over the speaker system. The lady at the front desk smiles. “Hi there how can I help you today ms?” “What do you people do with the people you replace.” Raleigh asks her. The lady doesn't seem surprised. “Oh we get that question a lot. We usually send them to processing to start their life as a Replacement Life employee isn't that wonderful?”

She looks a little disgusted at how she explains it. Almost like its no big deal. “Just... Point me that direction.” Raleigh says. “That's against company policy I'm afraid.” She says still doing her customer service smile. She pulls out her multi-tool turning it to a gun, and pointing it to her. “Now.” The lady panics. “It's floor 23 down the hall to the right.” She puts her gun away walking toward the elevator. “Thank you have a nice day.” Raleigh says. The lady tries acting normal pushing a button under the desk that triggers a silent alarm.

She makes it up to floor 23 only to be met with 20 armed guards. She sighs. “Normally I'd try to be quipy but I'm just not in the mood for that today. Tell you what If you guy's leave now I won't make you wish you picked a different line of work.” They look at each other, and then start firing at her. She turns her tool into a shield till she is close enough to them making it an axe slicing into the first two

guards armor, and into their flesh. They try to fire back, but she turns into into a staff and hits the next closest ones in the head with it till they fall unconscious. “These corporate thugs don't seemed to be all that well trained at all compared to the empire.” She says to herself. She finishes the rest of them off about to strike at the last one, but he drops his weapon running.

“This is so not worth minimum wage!” She giggles a little getting some of her normal chipper attitude back. She rounds the corner making it to the room, and opening the door. The inside looks like a class room only everyone there is chained to the desk forced to watch some video orientation. She turns the screen off looking around. “Clyde?” They all look up saying. “Yes?” In unison. “Holy Crap.” she says looking around, and seeing that they are all Clyde's with minor differences. “Well um anyone want to tell me whats going on.” One of the Clyde's spoke up. “You look kinda like this boy I know.” A girl with long black hair, and the same outfit Clyde wears speaks up. “Oh god are you girl Clyde your so adorable.” She looks at her with an annoyed face like he usually makes to her confirming it to be true by that alone. “That's not my name. It seems we were all kidnapped, and brought here. Are you girl Raylin then?” She ask half mocking. “Guess so.”

She goes around the room freeing all the doubles, but her Clyde is nowhere in sight. All of them look similar, but have a difference from the one she knows. “Alright listen everyone. Did they take anyone out of this room?” She asks them all for shorter more boyish Clyde to answer. “They took one of us to a higher floor to see the boss. I'm not sure why.” That's all the information she need. “Well I'm going to go give that guy a piece of my mind then. You guys want to come?” Some of them looked unsure if they should or not, but after Girl Clyde, and a few others raised there hands in agreement they all pretty much decided to go. They already started to grab their confiscated weapons from the next room over. “Wow this is kinda cool actually.”

On the top floor the CEO is with normal Clyde with his back turned. “Do you know why I brought you up here.” He asked. “No not really.” Clyde answers. “Revenge, I wanted to get back at all

you people for what you did to me.” Clyde seemed pretty confused. “I don't even know who you are.” The CEO turns around revealing that he too is a Clyde and probably the angriest one yet. “Maybe not directly.” Clyde seems a little shocked, but doesn't say anything expecting a monologue. “All of you think you are so special because you got to go on some adventure with a hot red head chick. Did you ever stop to think about how your life would be if she never showed up?” The CEO rants. “Yes actually, but I wasn't exactly a CEO before she showed up either.”

The CEO only gets angrier. “It's not fair, I want a hot girlfriend too.” He said whining like he was used to getting his way. “Buy one,” Clyde suggested confused about why someone of his stature couldn't get one, brushing aside his mistaken ideas about his relationship with her. “It's not the same, I want her to love me, not just my money.” He kept ranting, Clyde frowned, not even sure what this had to do with him. Did he bring him up here just to say all this, and why him? “Have you ever tried asking someone out without telling them you're loaded?” He asked, he didn't particularly like this version of him, but being that they were copies he felt an obligation to help him for some reason. The CEO looked at him, it was clear to Clyde he had never even tried.

“All women just want men for their money anyway.” He said to Clyde as an excuse. Clyde was getting more, and more, disgusted. “So in other words, you're a coward, that wants women to come up to you even though they don't even know you exist.” He said bluntly, angering the man. “Shut up, poor Clyde. When I took over I looked at dozens of other versions of seeing them succeed, and get everything they ever wanted, and not because they worked hard, but by sheer luck the multiverse granted them. So I decided to abuse my power and replace all of you with unlucky versions of us, it's only fair. Because if I can't be happy, no one can.” He said, screaming with rage. The buildings shook a little. The CEO looked outside to see a dozen Hoppers all showing up and parking next to the already parked one Raleigh's coming out, and entering the building. He gets on the phone. Cursing. “Everyone at the company to the main building, the redhead girls, must be terminated.”

Chapter Twenty Three

On another floor someone in a white button up shirt is talking to a customer. “You see this version of you has two homes up in the mountains. If would be worth it just for that in my opinion.” He gets cut on by an alarm. “Oh I'm very sorry sir I'm afraid we will have to put this on hold.” He walks out leaving him there joining the massive crowd of people with the same outfit all with a happy customer service face, and brandishing a magnum. The elevator opens, and Raleigh's collection of Clyde's all pile out it was a very tight fit. She points the crowd. “Charge!” They all draw their weapons not really rushing or anything, but still walking towards them. “I guess they are still him after all.” She smiles watching them. “Please refrain from any violence within the premises.” One of the men in suits says firing at one of the weaker Clyde's he falls to the floor the wound is not fatal, but clearly painful.

She realizes her mistake staying back to watch rushing forward to lead them. “They really are.” She says stabbing one of them. It begins to bug out shaking like crazy still walking toward her with the blade inside it. “Please refrain...” It tries to talk but its smoking now. “Looks like they are robots. Girl Clyde says shooting one in the head. “Huh weird. They should've sent these guys to begin with. I don't

feel as bad about destroying some dumb robot.” Raleigh says slicing it in half. One of the Clyde's steps forward he looked like a samurai. He pulls out his katana attacking a few of them, and sheaving it again. They fell to pieces as soon as he put it away. A few of them clap it seems not all of them are the worst at fighting. “That literally makes no since but it was awesome.” A Clyde with glasses said.

They were destroying them with minimal injuries. Eventually defeating every one of them. They all seemed very proud of themselves Raleigh was too. They didn't have long to think though because the ground above them gave in, and giant mechs came falling down. They fired on them to no effect. The mechs lowered their giant first down on them knocking them out cold. “I don't think we can take these guys.” Boyish Clyde says. “Fall back I got this Raleigh says knocking one away with a hammer. They changed their focus to her as Clydes all got out of their range. Some of them still shot at the mechs, but the armor was too thick to do anything.

She knocked off one of the arms of barley dodging its other arm that had a large sword in its hand. They all surrounded her, she might be in trouble now. Another one swung its weapon down on her. All she could do is block it struggling to do much else with them all surrounding her another one swung its hammer hitting her from the side, and into the wall. She got um struggling a little, but knowing she has to keep fighting. The mechs all walked towards her unrelenting about to resume their attack, but before they could a man rushed in cutting one of their legs and the chest cavity it fell to the floor as he grinned looking back at Raleigh. “Sorry we are a little late. Other me.” The man is pretty well built with bright orange hair just like her this had to be the Raylin Girl Clyde mentioned. “Man guy me is kinda hot.” She says under her breath. More Raleigh rush in destroying a mech each. All of them grinning ear to ear at her.

All the different Raleigh were now reunited with their Clydes. Well, all except the normal one. Raylin walks to girl Clyde. “There is my girl.” She blushes a little. “I have a name.” She says just like she did earlier. He smiles reaching his hand out wanting her to shake. She smiled gripping his hand

happy to be with him again. A much taller, and well-endowed Raleigh went over to the short boyish Clyde lifting him into the air and hugging him smothering him thoroughly. All the other Clydes seemed jealous of him. Raylin looks around the room seeing that all of them are paired up with their people except the normal Raleigh.

“Looks like there's only one thing left to do. Kick the boss man's ass, and save the final Clyde.” He says for most of them to say. “Right.” back to him. Before they can do anything a giant robot rips the wall off the side of the building it's about 10 stories tall hovering around the floor they are on. “Useless they are all useless.” It's the CEO talking to them from inside the giant robot. “I'll have to crush all of you personally.” Clyde is sitting in a cage kinda embarrassed he thinks he probably looks like a helpless princess and wonders how exactly it came to this. “Boss fight time.” One of the Clydes yells out.

“Everyone pick a limb,” Raylin says. “You can have point since it's your Clyde.” He says to Raleigh. They all Spread out around it. The Clydes mostly covered them all from behind, and The Raleighs mostly jumped onto the robot itself hacking away. Samurai Clyde joined them though along with a Raleigh that seemed to be a ninja breaking the robot's wings and causing it to crash to the ground below. Raleigh Jumped on it right before it started to fall ripping into the cage to save her partner.

“It's about time.” He said only for her to cross her arms. “Fine, then next time I'll let you stay captured by the evil businessman guy.” He relents taking her hand. “Fine, thank you for saving me.” She smiled happy that he was back now. She picked him up bridal style only further embarrassing him and jumping away setting him down out of the way. The CEO wasn't done yet. The robot got up angry firing indiscriminately. They all took cover. The robot itself didn't have much keeping it together it was just a matter of getting to it. “Let's do a Dopplerganger attack,” Raleigh says for them all to agree. Raylin turns his Multi-tool into a giant hammer Raleigh gets onto it and gets launched it toward the

robot. Two other Raleigh bolted its metal feet to the floor barely avoiding the shots being fired. Finally, Raleigh turns her Tool into a spear holding it forward and piercing straight through the robot. It starts to explode. “No, no it's not fair. Why don't you get it? We are the same you would be me if things were different.” The CEO screams out as it falls to the ground most likely killing him inside. All of them begin to celebrate. Even some of the employees who were climbing out of the rubble were. “I always hated that guy.” One of them said.

Clyde walked over to Raleigh a little lost in thought still. “You know he's kinda right.” She looked at him puzzled. “About what.” “I was lucky to have you show up to my boring world. I really could've been just like him. I guess I should say.” He pauses not wanting to do it but knowing he should. “Thank you for saving me.” She smiles at him. “What. Clyde thanking me for once are you sure you're my Clyde.” Even he cracked a smile at that. “I won't make a habit of it I promise.” Even still it left him with a lot to think about. Luck is something that people don't like to admit played a major factor in their life. They shame others for failing. Saying they just didn't try hard enough when there are so many factors that led that person to reach their goals. All of this he would try to remember. “Oh and Clyde. Have a little more faith in yourself.” She said to him leaving him alone to ponder joining the celebration.

They all mingled amongst each other comparing stories, seeing how different they were from each other. Some of them were a bit further along in their journey than others boasting of their exploits. Some of them had completely different stories that didn't line up with the others at all, but in the end, they all got on their receptive Hopper and flew away. Raylin and girl Clyde were the only ones left. “Man girl me is kinda hot,” Clyde said quietly. “I can hear you, me.” She says glaring. “Guess you aren't that bad looking either though.” Raylin laughs. “Good luck to you guys I hope we can meet again, with less kidnapping that is.” “You bet!” Raleigh smiles. They wave, and leave as well. She leans against The Hopper looking pretty tired. “You were right Clyde I think I could use a break right

about now. I hope the next world we enter has like a spa or something." “That is something we both can agree on.” They both walk back into the ship, lift off, and out of the world.

Chapter Twenty Four

Clyde awoke from his slumber groaning, taking a moment to completely wake up. He tried sitting up, but he couldn't, he was bound to something. He opened his eyes as the hot sun beats down on him. “The hell?” He tries to get up looking around to see he is tied to train tracks he can hear the train blowing its horn in the distance. Sweat beats down his face. “Haha, you'll never save this fair maiden in time.” A man says mocking Clyde while twirling his mustache like an old film villain. Raleigh arrives staring him down. She has her cube shaped like a revolver. "You're outmatched just let Clyde go, and run off creepy old dude." Clyde tries to get off the train tracks, but it's useless. “Oh god am I going to die in the most stupid, and cliche way ever.” He says panicking a little. “Cool it Clyde I got this.” They both draw their weapons. “I'm the fastest draw in the west there is no way you can beat me, little girl.” They both draw, and fire she hits him dead knocking him to the ground, while he just barely grazes her.

She walks over to Clyde freeing him from his binds. “Who was that guy.” He asks puzzled about how he got into this situation. She shrugged. “Dunno he had like no reason to do this it's like this world just follows some sort of generic tropes from old movies.” He didn't like that answer, but he got

up making sure to be clear of the tracks. “I never liked westerns, except that one about the guy doing karate.” He sighed tiredly at his powerlessness. “Sorry.” He managed to say despite his embarrassment. “I guess I'm not good for much am I.”

“Don't be like that Clyde you're good at lots of stuff, like um..... like....” She started to say, but her mind went blank. He sighs again. “Let's just go to the next world already. Are we almost there?” “Oh yeah we are pretty close I know I said like 3 worlds, but I think It will be a bit more than that.” She said as they walked towards The Hopper. Clyde was lost in thought. He felt useless all he did was get captured or beaten up. In a fictional world, he'd have a power-up or something to keep toe to toe with the bad guys, but he didn't get anything like that, at least not one to take with him to other worlds. Sure he had become more competent at fighting and could beat low-level grunts, but compared to her, he was nothing. He looked at her wishing he had the power to prove himself and kept thinking that way as they traveled to the next world.

Maybe if he still had the ultra suit from the scout's world he would be able to keep up with her, he thought. They arrived at the next world only for all power in the ship to turn off while they were in mid-air. “What!” Raleigh shouted seeming to bug out herself. The Hopper started to nose dive. She couldn't seem to move. “I don't know what's happening Clyde.” He was frozen he had never seen her like this. Was the old man somehow doing this he thought. They crashed hard into the ground knocking them both to the floor. And worst of all it seems they took down half a church with them. Clyde struggled to his feet going over to her. “What happened?” He asks. She twitches on the floor a little. “I can't use any of the cybernetics in my body they have completely shut down.” She sounded panicked. She must have had way more robotic parts than he thought if it was affecting her so greatly.

“I think it might be the world we are on. Look around The Hopper is completely offline. This world must forbid technology like this from existing. We might be in real trouble Clyde.” He started to understand the potential severity of the situation. “Can you stand?” She attempts to do so struggling

quite a bit. “Yeah I can, but that's about all I can do.” She started to walk to the door trying to push it open. “Come help me open this. It should have disabled any locking mechanism since everything is powered down.” He helps her push as it slowly started to open. He had to put his back into it.

They made it outside to see the destruction their crash had caused the poor church. A lone Priest was standing there shaking with anger about to say something, but he paused looking behind them. There was a stained glass window still intact depicting a man that looked similar to Clyde holding a sword up in the air. “Oh, great merciful Goddess. The prophecy is being fulfilled as we speak!” He said with glee tearing up a little bit. They were both prepared for this guy to justifiably yell at them for destroying the place, but for some reason he was praising them now. “Prophecy?” Clyde asks. “Yes, yes. It's been foretold That a mighty warrior and his servant would fall from the sky one day and defeat the evil demon lord.” Raleigh spoke up. “Hey! Who are you calling a servant? I'm the boss here.”

He smiles at her looking like he doesn't believe her in the slightest, or maybe It's that he doesn't want to. “Oh, great hero please follow me we must tell everyone of your arrival!” Clyde doesn't know what to say. He is glad to get some praise for once even if it's a little undeserved. He decides he better say something before Raleigh does. “Hey um I know you're all hyped, and stuff, but I think there's been some sort of mix-up. I probably can't beat a demon king.” He completely ignores him. “There's no need to be humble great hero. Now come.” He rushes out the door to tell everyone the good news. Clyde and Raleigh both look at each other not sure what to do. “I guess we should go along with it for now. I'm not at full strength probably best not to make any enemies.” She suggests.

He nods as they follow after the man, although at a slower pace because of Raleigh. She seems to slowly be getting more used to walking without her cybernetics. Outside is a sprawling fantasy city. It's very vibrant and covered in all sorts of greenery. There are elves, dwarves, and other fantasy races all over interacting with each other. When they see them they look in awe seeming to have heard the priest ranting and believing it. He was walking towards a castle in the middle of the town. Everyone

murmured with excitement. He wasn't sure what to say he knew he probably couldn't beat this demon they wanted him to fight he was sure they would be horribly disappointed. A girl in the crowd watched them walk into the castle smiling. She stood out wearing clothes that differed from the normal fantasy clothing everyone else was wearing including some headphones and some sort of device on her wrist, however like their tech hers was powered down too. It was a lot more modern looking. She leaps into the air and over the castle wall without anyone noticing.

They reached the throne room the priest introduces them. “My king the hero has finally come there is no question about that.” The king gets up from his seat studying Clyde. “You are right there is no doubt this man is the hero. Wonder full news two cities just fell to the demon king's army.” The king said, he no longer worried about it now that the hero was here. “Look I know you think I'm this hero guy, but I'm hardly capable of fighting a whole army,” Clyde says in protest. “Modest just like the stories say.” Just like the priest, they don't seem to be hearing him. “Quickly you must pull The Sword of Destiny from the pedestal, and take the fight to them.” He points to the courtyard urging him to go out and do as he says.

“Oh, so we are doing the whole sword, and stone bit,” Clyde says thinking this will be, an easy way to prove he isn't who they think he is, although he is a little concerned about what they might do when he can't pull it out. Together they all walk to the courtyard. An ornate magic sword lies there stuck in the ground. He looks at it in awe. Raleigh perks up pulling on Clyde's sleeve. “Clyde that's not just some super-powered sword. It has universal code inside.” She whispers. “How can you tell just from looking at it?” He would ask. “My Universal mind is still functioning perfectly fine, it tells me stuff like that. You might be able to fix the hopper if you can pull the sword out.” The king interrupts them. “What are you waiting for great hero pull The Sword of Destiny out.”

He took a deep breath walking over to the sword. He didn't think he could pull it out. Furthermore, he put both hands on it. Energy started to rush through his body, it felt incredible. He felt

better than he had ever felt. He pulled out the sword raising it to the air surprised it came out. The king and priest looked content. “Well, I don't know what to say It came out for me. How many people have tried to pull it out anyway?” He asked curiously. “What do you mean why would anyone try to take it other than the hero?” The king would answer. Clyde raised an eyebrow. “Wait so you're saying not one person even tried?” The priest spoke up. “Well, we take it to the blacksmith every so often to make sure it's in good shape.” He facepalmed. It would seem he misread the situation anyone could just pull it out.

The girl that was watching them before jumped down from a tree she was hiding in laughing. “That's so rich. I can't believe anyone can just grab a sword with the power of a god, and use it, and no one even tried to because of some dumb revelation someone made.” Raleigh seemed to recognize her looking over. “What are you doing here?” She smiled. “The same as you, I got marooned here because of the laws of this world. Now that I know that anyone can use the sword why don't you hand it over.” She she tried reached her hand out but as her arms were fully robotic they just failed in the air. She looked a little embarrassed like she wasn't used to something like this.

He of course does not do that but instead says. “I take it you somehow know Raleigh.” Before she can answer the king blurts something out. “Another party member showed up just like in the legend!” The king and priest started to freak out like they were their biggest fans. She looked at him like he was out of his mind. “What's wrong with you people?” “We must celebrate. Tonight we party tomorrow you go to vanquish our foes.” The king says walking away not letting them have a choice.

The whole city starts to rejoice, they are brought to a huge dining hall where everyone is happy to see Clyde and his two servants. Neither of them seems to like being called that, but are going along with it for some reason. They are given seats near the front of the table, and all the food they could ask for all of them chowing down. “You know this place isn't half bad maybe we should stay for a while,” Clyde says. Raleigh looks at him like he just said the most unreasonable thing ever. Are you joking I

can barely move here, and they shit in buckets?" She points to a small room off to the side with a bucket with disgust. He looks at it a little grossed out too with all the flies surrounding it. "OK, fine it's not perfect but what world would be." The praise seems to be going to his head a little. "Shut up, and use that sword to fix me already!" She says angrily grabbing him. The girl was looking closely at it without him even noticing. "He can't the code is incomplete." He slowly pulls the sword away from her as she says that.

"I mean yeah I don't know how to do that, but why should I trust anything you say? You're probably just trying to run off with it the first chance you can get." Raleigh sighs. "Nah she is probably right as much as I hate to admit it. This is Rebbecca, a crack-shot Universal Hacker." "Excuse me I'm a damn good one thank you very much!" She retorts. It would seem they don't particularly like each other. "What's a Universal Hacker?" He asks. "They try to find worlds with easy-to-steal universal codes, and sell them to the highest bidder," Raleigh explains. "You make it sound so bad. It's a perfectly fine profession just like any other." She says defending herself. "Anyway, it looks like we are all stuck here till we can find the rest of the code. The sword mostly just greatly increases your physical power, and magic even if you didn't have any before."

Clyde groans now that there are two ego-maniacal women around him. "So in other words you're going to follow us around." "Yep." She says sticking her tongue out. "These people wouldn't be happy if we went against their little Prophecy from what I've heard there is at least one other person in the heroes' party," Rebbecca says. "What nonsense it goes against the very concept of the multiverse. Even if everything goes like they think there is another world where it didn't." Raleigh says trying to pull the sword away from Clyde. He also pulls it away from her. "Oh no, you are not taking this opportunity away from me." He says worried his chance to prove himself, and be powerful for once will end before it begins. "Fine." She says sulking.

Chapter Twenty Five

The Three Stooges were getting their powers evaluated. Like worlds they had visited before this world had a power that was tethered to this one. That power being magic. Clyde's class and powers were off the charts, but that was most likely more because of the sword than him. Both Raleigh and Rebbecca were in support classes. “What do you mean I'm a healer? That's so lame.” Raleigh said very disappointed that most of the powers granted to her by the supposed goddess involved healing. Rebbecca didn't seem to mind, she summoned a small little fire wisp smiling. “I think it's cute,” The Hacker says looking like she wants to reach out and hold but her arms are still dead weight. Raleigh grumbled ignoring her.

The person evaluating them spoke up. “Alright, you are all set to leave whenever you're.....” A guard rushes in, interrupting her. “Noble hero! The demon lord's army has reached the west gate, please save us.” Clyde seemed more confident and sure of himself. “Don't worry, we'll get over there.” “Hold on, Clyde, do me a favor. These arms are slowing me down like this, would you take them off for me? We can keep them in your bag since you're a big strong man” She asks, teasing him a little. “You want me to what?” Clyde said, a little uncomfortable. “Nope, I'll do it. It's not like he would know how

anyway.” Raleigh said, seeming to be a little more defensive of Clyde.

“Aw, Raleigh, I didn't know you were so eager to get physical with me.” She said to her with a grin. “Zip it.” is all she said, studying her arms to try and find the way to disconnect them, not firing back any remarks. “You're no fun,” Rebbecca said, pouting as she ripped them both off one after the other, handing them to him. Clyde took them, feeling a bit weirded out, but she surely did seem to be more nimble now. The evaluator seemed to feel the same way but didn't say anything.

Like he said they went to the gate seeing the army standing there waiting for them. A larger one stepped forward. “I am one of the demon king's five generals! I challenge the hero to a duel!” At first he's hesitant but both Raleigh, and Rebbecca nudge him forward. “Alright, I guess.” He draws his sword it gives off a slight glow. He laughed. “Don't take me so lightly Hero.” He took out two large axes from his back. “I would never do that.” He said in response focusing ready to give it his all. His weapon started to glow brighter like it was charging he didn't seem to notice. As he swung forward energy shot out the sword cutting the general in half along with his entire army, and the mountain behind them. “Holy shit!” He said shocked hoping no one was living on the mountain. They both seemed shocked as well.

All the knights still inside the walls cheered they never doubted this outcome. The head knight opened the gate coming out. “I'm amazed, noble hero. There has been word that a second demon general is marching toward a city to the west. They'll need your help.” Clyde's head was growing larger because the stunt he just pulled. “Well let's gather the men, and let's go then.” He said only for the Knight to shake his head. “We can't the Prophecy says the Hero must only go with his party.” Clyde groaned again tired of this whole Prophecy nonsense. “What are you going to do if the city falls before I get there, or whatever.” “It won't the divine revelations are never wrong.” He sighs but sees he won't convince him, and considering his current overpowered status he relents, and leaves to save them himself.

When they get there they also beat the next demon general with ease. Raleigh and Rebecca didn't even get to do anything. Clyde was growing smug for once. They all showered him with praise, he was reveling in it. “If the other three are this week there won't be a problem. Why don't we get a little musical accompaniment.” He points to a bard who starts to play a nice fantasy melody. Clyde shakes his head. Doing something with the sword he isn't even sure how he did to make the music turn from that to heavy metal even though it functionally shouldn't be able to. They travel the lands felling demon generals to bad ass music one after the other till they are all defeated with ease and they finally reach the Demon King's Castle.

Before they enter they can hear someone screaming. “Do you hear that?” Clyde asks looking around. They do the same not seeing anything until a man falls out of the sky face first making a crator. He gets up dusting himself off. “Oh sorry I'm late I see you brought my sword.” They look at him confused, but upon closer inspection, he does look a lot like the stained glass depictions they saw of the hero, even more than Clyde. “What are you talking about?” Clyde asks. The man pops his arm back into place. “I'm the hero. Sorry I overslept.” They all seemed a little taken back by his casual nature.

He holds his hand out waiting for Clyde to hand over the sword. He pauses for a moment not wanting to give it up. “This is probably some half-assed attempt by the demon lord to get the sword.” They all decide to ignore the guy and keep walking. “Hey wait where are you going? Look kid I know the sword is super cool, and stuff, but it's time to give it back. Hey! Stop!” He demands only for them to keep walking toward the front door of the castle.

The door opens slowly inviting them in despite there being no one around. They walk into the dark halls going deeper into the heart of the place. None of them seem all that concerned. Finally, they reach the throne room to find who else, but The Reaper. He sat there looking mostly like he normally does, but with long demon horns, and fancy clothing. “You've all fallen right into my lap. I couldn't ask

for a better scenario.” He leans forward putting his palms together. Clyde quivers a little. "I know you're strong, but with this sword I'm unbeatable."

The Reaper smiles seeming to be in a better mood than normal. “That would be true if I didn't have this.” He pulled another sword out identical in almost every way only this one was black. “This is the strongest body I've ever possessed, half the world's code is already mine, and the real threat is unbelievably handicapped.” He laughed referring to Raleigh. “Since went have I ever needed to be fully functional to beat your sorry ass. How many times have I killed you again?” She smirked as his face dropped. He came to his feet looking at Clyde. “You'll understand true powerlessness soon.” He said firing a powerful fire bolt right at Clyde engulfing him. With the sword, he was able to cut it in half, and come out unscathed, but he could tell just from that how much more powerful he was even compared to normal.

He froze even with the sword there was no way he could match The Reaper's skill or his powerful new body. Should he just hand the sword off to Raleigh he thought? He felt in over his head, and like he failed, and all it took was a single fire bolt. The Reaper closed the gap striking Clyde who was only just barely able to block with the sword. Raleigh began to buff Clyde up with spells, and do the opposite to The Reaper. It worked, but not close to the amount needed to. He was getting pushed back further, and further. Rebbecca temporarily surrounded him with fire trapping him. “We need a game plan like right now,” Clyde said not sure if they can survive this in their current state.

They all thought hard, Clyde was ready to hand over the sword if he needs to. Rebbecca spoke up. “You both have half of the code, and can already influence the world. You can't fix the tech problem with your half alone but.” They can see the fire slowly dissipating. “Just keep clashing with him, and wish hard for us to be fixed.” The Reaper broke out clashing with him again right away. He didn't completely get it, but he had no other ideas. He thought long, and hard wishing for them both to

be restored to full strength. With the third strike, the sword energy crackled between them making a small bubble that grew larger expanding to the size of the room.

Raleigh looked down seeing that her Multi-tool were faintly glowing clearly working again as her body becomes fully operational again. “Alright the power is back on.” She said reaching in the bag handing Rebbecca her arms that didn't take long for her to reattach. She looked at the screen seeing it was powered on now, and she could grip her arm again. “Much better.” She said deploying two small drones that seemed to be very much like the fire wisps.

“You think that will be enough.” He charges forward toward Raleigh seeing her as the main threat now. Rebbecca keeps using her fire wisps in combination with grenades, and some kinda cable to help slow him down. Raleigh pushes him back now while Rebbecca wrapped a cable around his arm lifting the sword from him. Raleigh stabbed straight through his heart knowing better than to mess around with him. He laughs seeming to be a little unfazed. “This body does not need organs.” He grips the blade pulling the tool from her hands, and knocking Rebbecca out. The other sword falls to the floor at Clyde's feet. It calls to him. The real hero enters the room finally seeing him reach for it. “Wait don't do it!”

He picked it up anyway seeing that Even powered up again this new body The Reaper has got is dangerous they need every edge they can. As soon as he picks it up more power courses through him, it's overwhelming. Too much for his body to handle. Even still it feels incredible. His eyes start to glow, and his body started to move both blades together into one. “No!” The Reaper yells out trying to reach out, and take the merged swords, but he is knocked back by a shock wave. Clyde uses his new power to atomize his body erasing him from the world before he can do anything else. “Wow way to go Clyde,” Raleigh says with glee. He doesn't answer the power is consolidating he can hear everyone, and everything all at once. He can do everything, anything he wants or desires could be his with no effort He thought.

“Ugh, why couldn't you guys just give me the sword I knew this would happen. He can't handle the power It's too much for his mind, and body.” The Hero says to her. “Clyde can you hear me he's right if you don't do something you'll die!” She says worriedly. He didn't hear them. He was growing nearer, and more powerful only getting more so every second, when someone grabbed his shoulder. Likewise, he looked back to see himself. “Hey, are you sure this is what you want?” He paused thinking back to the depressed god they met what seemed like a lifetime ago.

The only way he would survive with the sword is to have it make him a higher being, not something he can turn back from once he does so. He thought of all the people he met, and the fun he's had despite not being that strong. Then he thought for the first time. What is it that he wanted? No matter what ideas he came up with it all came back to one thing. Raleigh's face popped into his head. That's right he started this journey to go on an adventure, to do something interesting, not be some all-powerful god.

He used the power while he still had it to spread it all over the world. The sword vanished as Clyde turned back to normal. “Clyde!” Raleigh said hugging him which he seemed a little surprised by. “I know I joked about you being useless, but you're not. You do so much, you're always the most level-headed in the room. You always have ideas no one would even think about. But most importantly your Clyde.” She says looking up at him. He blushed but pretended it was no big deal. “I guess I do always have a big strong girl around to save me all the time huh.” He said hoping she would release him soon. “Hey wait a minute where's the sword man?” The hero would ask.

“Well, whoever decided it was a good idea to leave god powers lying around was pretty dumb. I just spread them out and made them harder to access. Oh, and I also turned the power back on.” Clyde answered as the hero was about to pull his hair out. “What the hell man you ruined everything. I did that on purpose. Every hundred years I come down, and do this crap because it makes me feel awesome.” Clyde raised an eyebrow as the hero would rant. “All I had to do was to kill The Demon

King that spawns with little to no effort, and everyone praises the hell out of me, and all the girls want to bang me you ruined everything. Being immortal is boring how else am I going to fill out my time."

"Wait so you are the former god of this world, but got bored, and decided to LARP as an isekai protagonist?" Clyde asked confused. "Whatever man just go away." He says sulking in the corner. He doesn't know how to respond to that, but thankful Rebbecca buts in. "Well it's been nice and all, but I'm heading out." She walks over to Clyde stuffing a blank card with her name on it very similar to the one Loki gave him into his pocket. "Call me if you ever want to ditch this loser." she says "Hands off him, you harlot!" Raleigh says in protest. She keeps walking using her wrist device to open a small portal walking through. It would seem she travels a little differently than them. She looks back at them before walking through saying. "It's such a shame I couldn't get my hands on that code," Raleigh grumbles. "I hope this will be the last time I see her again."

Chapter Twenty Six

In some dark room, 3 spotlights shine down on Darrion, Cyrus, and The Reaper. “Time after time you have failed to capture the asset.” A voice in the darkness states. “How is it so difficult to....” The voice pauses. “Why is it so dark in here?" The voice turns the lights on revealing they are in an office conference room with a man in a white suit, and a mask with L.E.D. lights. The lights make up a frown text face as he starts talking to them. “Why is it so hard for you three to capture a little girl?” Cyrus sighs. “You should know she is more than some little girl. Her power grows by the day not even The Empire's Mutt can take her down Proxy.” The Reaper glares at him not saying a word.

Proxy looks at the screen behind him, showing three shadowy figures on call. One is the old man, but the other two are unclear. “To deny her power is a mistake, yes.” Dr. Corvus says. “However, after my little modification, I've given you many opportunities to capture her, and now someone has gone, and tampered with it. Now I can only track her location.” “It seems to me you three are running out of time. We could indeed use her to draw out that person, but after that what? We won't be able to track her anymore.” Proxy says

They are about to speak up and defend themselves, but he keeps speaking. “Operation

Deforestation is almost ready to launch. This will be your last opportunity to capture her. No more failures.” Dr. Corvus adds making it even more clear time is pressing. Darrion, and Cyrus, swallow hard. “You are dismissed to leave.” He says all of them get up, leaving Proxy in the room alone with the two of them. “I trust that regardless of their success, you have a workaround?” The shadowy figure asks. “Of course my lord, it's just a longer, more strenuous process I'd rather avoid. It will delay everything quite a bit.” The old man replies. “Very well.” He says before he ends the call, followed by the old man. The other figure remains silent also ending the Call. Proxy sighs, not saying a word as they all leave.

On the other side of the call, one of the figures leans back in his office chair, thinking deeply. He has a uniform very highly decorated. “Hmm.” He said before pushing a button on his desk. “Crow, come in here.” Like they were already waiting close by, a murder of crows swarms the room, slowly forming into a person fully covered up. They had the standard foot soldiers' armor on, only with a cloak and a bird mask. “Yes, Fleet Admiral?” They would ask. “What do you know of Doctor Oswald Corvus?” He would ask them. “Everyone in the empire knows he is a key figure. I'm afraid I don't have many details on him that aren't public already.” Crow would answer.

The Admiral was deep in thought. “The man always seemed suspicious to me. My uncle relies on him far too much, but I suppose his burden has left quite a toll on him. I want you to dig up dirt on him, anything that would make him look bad to The Emperor. I will be the one at the forefront of this Empire, not him.” It would seem the man didn't have much more than a hunch, but all he cared about was growing his power, and glory, it seemed. “It will be done.” That is all Crow said before vanishing.

Darrion, and Cyrus both look unsure of what to do following behind The Reaper in deep thought. “I don't suppose you have any great ideas?” He asks The Reaper. “My ideas are inconsequential to you. All I require is time.” “So you want us to buy you time in inact some type of plan?” “Let's just say I was inspired by the last vessel I possessed.” He says not saying another word.

Darrion speaks up. “Why do I get the feeling we are going to get completely screwed over.” "Because we are. Nevertheless, let's send all the units we can to their current location."

Back with Clyde, and Raleigh, they have landed on a new world once again. It seems to be nothing, but wasteland, and buildings in ruins. “So what is up with this place?” Clyde would ask. “Looks like all the countries in the world just kinda started a huge war and wiped each other out. There are people still just not a lot. This should be our last stop before The Physician.” She says smiling happy they are so close to getting her fixed. “Why don't we just chill on the ship then till It's ready to go? You said this world was abandoned.” He suggests to her. “And miss out on a possible adventure? No way.” He sighs but expected that response from her.

They leave The Hopper seeing a town in the distance put together haphazardly by scraps of metal everyone there doesn't seem to be doing well like they were just attacked. “Are you guys OK?” Raleigh asks a man sitting on a porch. “Oh yeah, we are fine. Jason just showed up again.” He would answer. “Jason?” Clyde asks only for the man to be shocked they have never heard of him. “Yes? He goes around robbing and killing everyone on a whim. We try to stop him, but he's just too strong. You two must not be from around here if you haven't heard of him, he's like a force of nature.” The man started to get shaken up a little. “Hmm interesting maybe we should have a little talk with this Jason,” Raleigh says amused. “Are you out of your mind? He will destroy you!” He says in a panic. “Don't worry old man, I'm a bit of a force of nature myself just point the way.” The man relents pointing in the direction he went. “Why are young people so eager to die? I won't stop you, but be careful.”

They walked into the wasteland in search of Jason. Clyde started to wonder why she even wanted to be fixed even if the empire wasn't on her tail she jumped into the first danger she saw. It didn't take them long to come face to face with a man covered in makeshift Armour, weapons strapped to his back. "I don't think I've ever seen a skin like that in this game. I'll be happy to add it to my collection." He said swinging his machete at her which she blocked easily with a sword she formed.

“Oh god, that weapon seems rare too I must have it.” He says with glee. “I'm the only person that can use Novabreaker, buddy.” She says diverting it to a cube to move past him and kick him in the gut.

“A named weapon? Sweat, and you got some fight in you. It has been a while since I've met anyone who knew how to play this game.” He pulled out a shotgun and fired it with one hand tossing it to the side afterward. She turned her weapon into a shield to block the spray of bullets. Clyde started to wonder what this guy's angle was as the two of them fought. He kept mentioning some type of game. The two of them were pretty neck, and neck eventually Raleigh won out knocking him out cold. “I guess we should drag him back to that town and make him give all that stuff back huh,” Raleigh said. “Wait I want to ask him something first.” Clyde pleads. She shrugged tying him up and starting a campfire.

Jason slowly opens his eyes trying to move. “Oh come on guys why didn't you just kill me, so I can re-spawn.” Clyde sips something out of a mug. “Well, because despite what you might think this isn't a video game and certain people want justice for your actions.” He laughs. "You role players like to get into this stuff huh? If they didn't want me to steal all their crap they should've got good at the game." Raleigh stokes the fire listening, but not saying anything. “Why do you think this is a game exactly?” Clyde asks.

“Are you joking? I've been playing Allout for years in the Ravagelands, and the Forsaken Fields when they released the VR version I was stoked, Yeah it looks real, but it's just VR. It is a little weird I haven't been able to log out, but I'm sure they'll fix that soon.” Clyde facepalmed. “How long exactly have you been playing this game with no communication from the developers?” “Well, I guess it has been a couple of years now...” He slowly started to understand what Clyde was getting at. He didn't want to believe it. “No, that can't be how would the war have ended exactly like the game?” Jason said trying to think of ways Clyde was wrong. “I guess all the people I looted begged for me to stop, saying they had kids and stuff, but I thought they were just super into role-play.” He goes silent, not sure how

to respond, not wanting to believe it.

He thought back to when he first put on the headset to go into the game. He felt the ground shake but dismissed it as nothing. Not only that, but he wondered how much time he had spent in the game, and how many real people he would've hurt. “Is this some sort of new meta scam?” He says, not wanting to believe it. They don't answer, letting him think, taking turns through the night to watch him, and make sure he didn't escape, giving him plenty of time to think.

When morning came, they dragged him back to the town, to everyone's shock. The old man looked at them, “My god, you actually brought him back.” The people began to surround them, a mix of gratitude, and anger towards Jason. They just kinda awkwardly surround them at first till someone speaks up. “I say we string him up!” All of them seemed to agree, taking the rope Raleigh was leading him with, and starting to build a makeshift gallows. “Hey quit it,” Jason said, protesting as a woman spat in his face. “You killed my family!” She said, “You stole all our food!” Another one said as they pushed him toward the gallows. Clyde looked at Raleigh, unsure if they should stop them. He had wronged them with his delusions, but he didn't realize that.

All of this was becoming too real for Jason. He couldn't deny the truth any longer as people shouted at him and punched his body. He felt remorse for the first time. “I'm... a horrible person.” He said quietly. He stood there as he put the noose around his neck, he took a deep breath like he was slowly coming to terms with the fact he deserved this. “Let me say something!” He shouted, suddenly self-preservation taking over his mind. All of them quieted down. It would seem they all wanted some sort of closure from him.

After they all calmed down to listen, he spoke. “I won't defend my actions, but I will explain them. This whole time I thought this was a game. I know it's stupid, but I believed it, or maybe I convinced myself over time it was, but now I've seen the harm I've done. I can't take back what I've done but... I truly apologize from the bottom of my heart.” He said, crying from the inside of his mask.

Clyde was conflicted, not sure what he should do, no one in the crowd seemed satisfied with that explanation.

Three Multiversal Empire ships appeared in the sky drawing everyone attention away with Cyrus and Darrion on board. Cyrus was on a call with The Reaper. “How much more time do you need?” The Reaper appeared to be in a war zone. “I'll need the day at most. Make it happen.” He said ending the transmission. He sighs getting on the loudspeaker. “Raleigh, and Clyde. This is your last chance to surrender. No punches will be pulled this time if you don't yield we are authorized to bring you back in less-than-perfect condition. You have 2 hours to answer before we scour the planet. This of course only applies if you don't attempt to leave the world.” Raleigh looks up at the three massive ships. “They aren't messing around this time.”

All of them seemed terrifying not what to do there is not technology this advanced in their world. Jason is equally surprised thinking for a moment. “We aren't in a good spot here. Do we really have anyway to get to the hopper, or fight back with them above us like that?” Clyde asks only for Jason to speak up. “I don't know how it will fair against that thing, but there is an old base no to far from here that might have the firepower to fight back. I know I can never fix what I did, but at least let me atone but showing you where it is.” He said pleading with them. The citizens of the town didn't seem to believe him, but ended up relenting not having much of a choice if they decided to shoot the town into oblivion. They nodded in agreement as Raleigh freed him, and he led the way out of town.

“Do you have eyes on the target?” Cyrus asked as a low-level grunt does something on his terminal. A Big screen appears showing them running into a building. “Great let's send a welcoming party.” “I thought you were going to give those runts some time,” Darrion said. “They are already scheming something. That offer has expired. Send that half-wit with them." “Roger,” Darrion says walking to the elevator.

They reach the building by going down a spiral staircase deep underground to find none other than a giant missile. “Is that a nuke?” Clyde asks. “More or less,” Jason said. “They only thing is they will know that, and shoot it out of the sky before it gets close, but also...” She starts to say more but stops herself. “If we are going to do this we need to find a way around that, and a way to avoid hitting the bridge of each of the ships.” “You won't have to worry about that sexy.” Someone says from behind them. Wimpy Clyde steps out of the shadows wearing the empire's uniform smirking. Three large robots followed him. “You are already surrounded. Completely, and utterly. Just give up, or you'll pay for doing what you did to me.” Clyde shot him a dirty look. “Who's this douche?”

“Eh, he's loser you or something dunno.” Raleigh shrugged not seeming to remember him. He didn't like this shouting out. “How can you say that after you left me stranded? Do you think I wanted to join up with these guys? I had no choice.” He pointed forward, and the robots attack. Raleigh of course held them off. “Oh, I vaguely remember now.” She says as she slices into the robots with a sword. Wimpy Clyde charged at Clyde with a sword he didn't see him as much of a threat. Clyde turned his weapon into a knife. “What's so special about you anyway!” Clyde parried it knocking the weapon from his hand. “Not a lot I'm just not... you.” Wimpy Clyde backed off scared now. “We are the same person.”

Jason had used the opportunity to activate the rocket and the base's defenses. Outside large canons rose from the ground starting to fire on the ships above. Though many smaller ships had come out to surround them now. The silo opens just as Raleigh finished the final robot, but more would be arriving soon. “Go while you still can!” Jason said. The Missile started to rise. The ships now focused on trying to take the turrets down. Raleigh grabbed onto the rocket holding out her hand to Clyde. He was a little reluctant to do so considering it was a bomb, and about to be launched into the air, but he put his trust in her letting her pull him up. It launched upwards, Clyde holding on for dear life Jason waving as the empire's men started swarming in. “This is how I atone.” He says attacking everything in

sight. “Raleigh! Please tell me you know what you are doing!” Clyde asks her. She just gives him a nod.

Back up on the bridge, Cyrus sees the missile. “All guns ignore the turrets, and focus on that bomb if it hits us we are done!” He commands, and they do as he says. Raleigh transformed her Multi-tool into a grappling hook latching onto the main ship. Letting go of the missile. They managed to shoot it down before it can make contact. The ships are all heavily damaged by the turrets below. It seems to have met its purpose of getting them onto the ship though. Unfortunately, the turrets are finished off not long after that. The hanger seems to be in too much chaos to notice their arrival. They sneak off into the maintenance shaft to go over their next move. “Alright, we are going to overload the main driver. Doing that would cause a portal to rip the ship in half, and pull everything inside to a random world.” She says handing him what looked like a flash drive, and a map of the interior. “They'll be focused on me, so I think you should do it alone while I'm distracting them.” “Wait if this ship can do that, does that mean the hopper could also.” He can't help but ask. “You have to be very intentionally trying to do it to get it to do that.” He nods seeming to understand. “Do you trust me to do it alone, or is it something else?”

She looks down not wanting to say anything. “I'm afraid some of my... sisters are on board. I want to make sure they are OK.” He remembers back to Inari, and how upset not being able to save them she was. He didn't know how or why they would be here, but after what he had seen it was at least a little likely. “I get it don't worry about me then.” He gets up running off before she can say another word.

Cyrus sighs knowing they are somewhere on board leaving the bridge to go find them. Raleigh steps out fighting everyone in sight using every weapon at her disposal from guns, to knives. They aren't a match for her but chase her anyway. Darrion blocks her path. “Don't you ever get tired of this runt? Even if you beat us the empire is not going to stop chasing you.” He seemed almost exhausted

from this game they were playing. “You can't seriously say that to me. After everything you people have done.” She says angrily hitting his head with a giant hammer. “ If we are going to talk about wrongdoing why don't we talk about yours!” He punched her knocking her into a wall. He is filled with anger surprising even her. “You betrayed us!” She managed to dodge the next hit switching to a mini-gun and firing it just out of his range. “Is it really a betrayal if I was forced to be on your team!”

Clyde is looking at a map sneaking through the corridors right outside the door to the engine room. He opens it to find Cyrus waiting there. “Hello, their replacement. I see you choose to follow her despite my warnings.” He says already having his spear out ready for a fight. “I thought this might be your goal after last time.” “Cut the crap?” Clyde replied. “Yeah I might not know everything, but I think I know enough. She can tell me the rest when she is good and ready.” Clyde uses a pistol to fire at him. “How unfortunate,” Cyrus says swinging his spear hairs away from Clyde's face and destroying some of the railings in the process. “How many lives has she ruined on her little adventures.” He swings again Clyde is barely able to dodge. “Do you think you'll be the last person she uses?” Clyde transforms his weapon into a knife using it to block the coming blows.

Every time he meets this guy he questions his world what does he actually know is he perceiving things correctly? He wavers for a moment giving him an upper hand and knocking the knife away. “I'll offer you a different deal. Join us, and we will take you anywhere you want to go. That's more or less what she offers correct? My offer just comes with less danger. A safe and pleasant journey till we arrive at your dream world.” He pauses considering it for a second or rather pretending to. He is using the time to see how he can get to the core of the engine. Furthermore, he sees only one way, and that is to make a mad dash to it. “Sorry, but you need to work on your sales pitch.” He says while running past Cyrus chasing him.

Raleigh made it to the bridge seeming to have beaten Darrian. She opens the panel that looks just like the one Inari was in to reveal another version of herself just like before. “Tara? Is that you?”

They don't answer they are non-responsive just looking forward with glowing eyes. “Damn it!” She cries out slamming her fist into the console next to her. She looks at her more closely it looks like she had been completely hollowed out more than she had seen before. There was nothing there just a soulless machine. “That old man will pay for this.” She cries walking away not as upset as the time Inari died. She uses the bridge to ram the main ship into the others assuring they will have no chance of missing the blast.

Clyde reaches the console just before Cyrus puts in the drive. It seems to have worked Cyrus slashes the console trying to stop it but fails. He kicks Clyde in the gut in a fit of anger. “Moron. We are all doomed now.” He runs out of the room trying to get away before it explodes. Clyde regains his footing by doing the same. He can feel the ship getting ripped apart both of them inches away from being caught up in it. Raleigh rushes to find Clyde walking past the unconscious body of Darrion.

They all meet up in the hangar Raleigh knocking Cyrus back into a wall. He cursed at them as he is swallowed by the portal. "We have to jump!" Raleigh said urging him to do so. He looks off the side knowing there was no time to argue with her. They fell as blue energy swallowed the ship whole before vanishing. Ship parts that missed the blast falling from the sky. Raleigh had turned her tool into a makeshift turbine to keep them in the air. He held onto her tightly trying not to move much. Once they reached the ground Raleigh looked up at where the ship was. He looked at her with concern. “I'm assuming you didn't find anything.” She didn't look at him right away but eventually did smile holding back tears. “Not a soul.” He hugged her anyway not fully believing her.

Chapter Twenty Seven

The Reaper entered a large room with another version of himself. “Brothers! Our reputation has been put on the line. This battle decides everything. Remember who we are fighting for. For the Empire!” He tells them. All of them salute him ready to take on anything that lies ahead. Someone who looks like The Reaper with nice blonde hair stands inside a large immaculate building. He is wearing the garb a pope normally would wear. “Your Eminence. Filthy heretics have arrived at our doorstep.” an attendant says to him. He sighs looking a little sad, but unsurprised. “Send all the non-combatants away. We will defend the church for the good of the Multiverse, even if it costs us our lives.”

The ship The Reapers arrived in lands outside. All of them go out to meet the army waiting for them. The Reaper steps forward as does The Pope. “So you have returned at last. I doubt It's to become a follower of our ways again. So why are you here.” The Reaper stays quiet slowly pointing at him. “Your body.” He says to him. “Oh? I see, and you couldn't just take it over like the countless other versions of us you've taken over. Have you ever felt remorse for that?” The Pope would say with anger in his words. “My only job is to serve The Empire.” The Reaper answers. “The Empire that tortured you? Tramples all around the Multiverse without care. Can't you see despite your crimes you're a

victim in this too?" The Pope says trying to reason with him. "I didn't come here for a sermon." The Reaper says pulling out a multi-tool, and transforming it into a sword. The Pope's men draw their weapons as do all the other Reapers. "Very well. We will give you exactly what you want then." The pope says pointing the staff he has forward, directing his army to charge.

The armies begin to clash The Reaper's doubles have a clear advantage slaughtering everyone in sight. The Reaper slashes at The Pope he blocks it with the staff using his skill with it to brush along the blade, and wack him in the head. The Reaper retaliates using a knife he concealed in his offhand to stab him. The Pope staggers backward The Reaper cutting his head off without a second thought. The Reaper's numbers are overwhelming the army almost none of them remain. The Pope's body rises into the air attaching his head completely healed. "What were you hoping to gain from this? No matter how many times you cut me down I'll rise again!" He twists his staff opening it to reveal a sword hidden inside. He cuts The Reaper's head off just as he had done to him. Another Reaper simply takes his place resuming the fight.

"If you cut me down two more will rise in my place." The Reaper says one of them slicing his arm off while the other one stabs him through. The Pope knocks them away attaching his arm back on pulling the sword out from his chest now using both of them to slice the Two Reapers into pieces. More joined in lunging at him as it would seem all rust The Pope had from fighting had fallen off as he quickly disposed of them. Even still all that remained on the battlefield was The Pope and thousands of Reapers. They all start to dog pile on top of him weighing him down. At first, it looks like they finally got him down for the count, but no. He broke out killing all of them with precision, and ease with a few gaping wounds that closed up faster than they appeared.

"How many lives are you willing to throw away to try, and take me down? In the end, it's all fruitless. You can't beat me." The Pope yelled out to all of them. They kept attacking him even though every one of them that grew near dropped like flies. "My unwavering conviction has no equal!" A

Reaper clashes with him holding his own. “You arrogant old man. You will see soon enough what this gets me.” He says before he is run through with a sword. Seven Reapers surround him cutting him to pieces even still he rises from the ground completely fine. The only hint of damage would be his clothing which was barely on him now with the damage they had sustained.

The Pope's heart suddenly burst he felt weak. The Reaper's numbers were dwindling but still in the hundreds at least. “What have you done?” The Pope asks still able to keep up with them all the same. Slowly he grew weaker. “You have dug your own grave.” One of The Reapers said. The Pope's eye started to blacken like it would burst open. He fought it trying to get it to stop knowing what it meant. “No, you... With every death, it became easier to try, and get inside my head.” The Pope says understanding that he might have just become his own undoing. Even still he fights for control, but inside his mind, thousands of Reapers have entered grabbing onto his inner self they all pulled him down into the darkness. The Reaper steps forward within his mind. “You were formidable we will put your body to good use.” The Reaper said. “I'm not like all the other versions of us. You can't completely get rid of me I'll always be here in the back of our shared mind ready to take back control.” The Reaper started to walk away. “That I am well aware of.” He says while walking. The Pope cries out. “It doesn't have to be this way. You can still change!” He says trying to reason with him one last time as he's pulled completely into the darkness.

The man thinks back to a moment in the past seeing a much younger Reaper before him that he looked down long happily. He wondered how it had gotten to this point. The Pope's eye burst open bleeding all over like he is crying blood. He slowly rises as the blond hair changed from blonde to black. The Reaper had truly taken this body for his own. He smiles wiping the blood away from his eye as one of his other selves hands him an eye patch which he puts on. "Now no one can stop us." They light the church on fire get inside their ship and leaving not looking back once.

Chapter Twenty Eight

Raleigh and Clyde stood at the foot of a grave with the old man from the village. They both looked rather somber. It would seem Jason didn't make it out of that alive. It was painfully silent. Clyde spoke up to break it. “I know he did some bad things, but...” The old man cut him off. “I'd like to believe everyone knows that, but you can't fault them for not being OK with it nonetheless. Thank you two for your help.” The old man looks toward the grave one last time paying some sort of respects before leaving them there. Raleigh looked down. “None of this had to happen.” She said. Both of them mourn for the potential Jason that could have come from his willingness to repent. “Let's get going. I don't want a single person to be affected like this again.” Clyde followed her not sure what to say but understanding her. It was less about Jason himself, and more about the consequences of being associated with her. All he could do is make sure he stayed with her. To prove that wrong.

They made their final jump making it to their destination at last. Hopefully, this doctor would fix everything. No more issues jumping from universe to universe, and no more Empire knowing exactly where they are. They looked around to see this universe had no earth, just an endless sky that seems to go on forever in every direction. There was no sun, but it was fairly bright, and there were

giant floating cubes all over. They landed on one of the cubes got out and looked around. He looked down at the edge of the cube. His perception of gravity was greatly impaired just from looking. He almost fell off the side. “Well now what? How are we supposed to find this guy?” Clyde would ask. “Eh? That's a good question. This place seems to be void of life. I was expecting people to be around to point us his way or something.” She said pacing and looking all around. “Where is that pervert when you actually need him? He's the one good at finding people.” She said a little annoyed Loki didn't tell them about this.

They both look off the edge together brainstorming on what to do now. “Whatcha guy's doing.” A woman asks appearing out of nowhere behind Raleigh. Raleigh almost falls off the edge startled by her not sensing her at all. She backs away from her ready for a fight. “Who the hell are you?” Raleigh says. The woman waves her arms trying to show she isn't a threat. She has tan skin, white hair put up in twin tails. She is pretty well-endowed. Her choice of clothing is a black t-shirt that shows a little of her belly, short shorts, glasses, and a white lab coat. “Calm down girly just asking what your business here is. This place isn't exactly possible to find unless you know exactly where it is.” She says to her. Raleigh calms herself relaxing. “Well, our friend Loki said there was this guy that could help me here.”

The woman somehow sneaks up on her again feeling around her body. “Hmm, you seem pretty healthy to me.” The woman says as Raleigh pushes her away. “Thanks, but I think I'd like to Get The Physician's opinion,” Raleigh says. The woman tilt's her head. “What do you mean I'm The Physician.” Both Clyde and Raleigh look shocked. “I think Loki would've mentioned you were a woman considering he's him.” He says. She smiles. “Well, I guess I was a man when we used to hang. I go by Lucy now.” Both of them looked way more confused now. “Technology sure is amazing. I feel way more comfortable now than before.” She says to them both. “But enough about me tell me about the problem already.” She started to study Raleigh again getting close. Raleigh seems to have excepted

after all there were stranger things out there in the multiverse. Clyde just wondered how many people would love to have access to whatever technology she used.

Raleigh was about to explain, but Lucy stopped her. “Let's head to the clinic.” She sunk into the ground as a path of cubes formed for them to walk on. “Meet you there.” She said before completely disappearing. They follow the path suddenly appearing in a doctor's waiting room. It seems to go on forever. They see the doctor was off in the distance walking toward her, but she vanishes. “Universal code?” Clyde asks. “No quite, but not a bad guess.” The Physician says opening a door. “The Doctor will see you now.” She walks into the door Clyde staying behind not sure if it's OK for him to go with her. She looks back at him. “It's alright.” She motions for him to come with a slight head movement. He follows glad she has a little more trust in him now. They enter a normal-looking room that you might go to for a check-up. Clyde sits down on one of the chairs. “If you would please remove your hat, and coat.” She says to the Captain. At first, she seems reluctant but removes them handing them over to Clyde to look after.

The woman begins examining the back of her head looking at the outlet removing the hair rubbing against that one, and the one on her neck. It would seem she already had a basic idea of the issue despite playing dumb before they entered the room. Raleigh's lips quiver. “It's sensitive there.” She says asking her to not touch it if she can help it. “They did a number on you. Poor girly.” The Physician says not speaking for a while just touching the outlet. “Oh no...” She says concerning them both. “What is it.”

“Well, we might be screwed. I have to act quickly. Hurry get on your stomach.” Lucy says with more panic in her voice. “What why...” She tries to ask before getting cut off. “Those guys messed with you real good. They have a tracker inside you.” Raleigh got on her stomach as instructed. Clyde had already assumed that was the case just not to this extent. They seemed to have some influence on what

worlds she went to it made sense considering they always seemed to be right behind them. Raleigh didn't say anything feeling even more violated than she already did.

The Physician got to work using a combination of what looked like magic, and the technology on hand. “If I remove their control before it's too late it will be fine. Hold on this may hurt, or at least feel kinda weird.” She reaches her hand inside her head Raleigh cries out in pain. Slowly Lucy gets sucked into her head vanishing. Clyde stands up looking around not sure what to do. Raleigh cries out in pain. He grabs onto her trying to comfort her wondering if they had just been duped.

Lucy appears in some sort of mindscape belonging to Raleigh. A large titan size Raleigh is standing before her proudly out of confidence, but not seeming to react to her presence. Behind the titan is another figure hiding in her shadow. It's another Raleigh in the fetal position covering her face. Further Inari is also there with countless smaller people who look similar to her behind her. She looks to the opposite side of the area seeing the man from the picture Raleigh has. The older Clyde with a bit of a stubble looks at her smiling along with the regular Clyde near him. "Hmm, where is it? It doesn't seem to be here." She sinks to the ground popping onto the other side. A titan-sized Reaper is there with Dr. Corvus. It would seem the other side was the people she held dear while this side was the people she hated most, but could never forget. The old man started to move warping into a monster attacking her. She jumps out of the way running up his monstrous form.“How arrogant old man.” She says arriving at the face and punching it causing the space to crack, and fall apart.

Furthermore, she appears back in the room with them Raleigh letting out one last painful cry before stopping and passing out. “What was that?” Clyde asks. “I have a universal mind that allows me to make any modification to a body I want." I had to go into her mind to stop it. I fear I didn't make it in time though. Raleigh wakes up sitting on the edge of the table. “They are coming aren't they?” She asks as she nods confirming their fears. “But now you are free. Let's not let that be in vain.” She looked down but nodded in agreement.

They leave the room walking around the endless hallway to the outside. “I think this might have been their goal all along. The empire has been looking for me for quite some time. You led them right to me.” Raleigh looks distraught making a tight fist so through with this all happening. “Hey don't think this is your fault. I would never turn down a patient despite the danger.” They appear outside. There are Multiversal empire ships everywhere more than they had ever seen before. “This won't be like the other times though. Be prepared.” The Physician said now that her fear was all but confirmed. She raised a hand commanding the cubes to move. They started to cluster together taking out some of the ships in the process.

“We can't jump with The Hopper with them surrounding us like that. They will blast us out of the sky before we even get off the ground. We really might not have much of a choice other than to fight.” Raleigh says lost unsure what to do for once. Clyde then remembered back to when Rebbecca used a different type of device to travel worlds. “I know you probably don't want to abandon the hopper, but what about portals? You know as the kind Loki and Rebecca used.” He says to her. She looks at her ship looking down. “It's just a ship.” She had more attachment to it than that but knew they didn't have much choice. “That's a great idea boyo. The problem is getting to the portal. I can get their lickity split, but I don't know about you guys.” Lucy exclaims. “But what other options do we have I'll lead the way.” She started to walk down a hallway again waiting for them to follow.

The old man overlooks the giant cluster of cubes with interest. The black-haired Reaper is there with him along with a few other normal white-haired ones, and some military officers. “So he hid where a world used to be. That's astounding, no wonder he vanished from sight. Begin your assault at once.” He said looking amused with how it all turned out. The Reaper turned to him saluting as they all left to begin their attack. The ship's ruthlessly fired at the cubes as soldiers landed elsewhere just out of firing range.

The ground shook alerting all three of them that the attack had started. They ran down the hall already encountering low-level grunts and robots. They readied their weapons ready to fight the toughest battle of their lives. The Physician surrounded herself with cubes sending some out hitting her foes with them hard enough to knock them out cold. These guys were never much of a challenge to defeat even Clyde was doing a decent job subduing them, shows how far he has come. They enter a larger area where three white-haired reapers are waiting. “Oh, shit now there are three of them,” Clyde said thinking one is hard enough. Raleigh charged in shooting a rifle quickly transforming it into a sword taking one out while meeting blades with another. The Physician took on the other once binding him with cubes and running him through with more of them that seemed to have been sharpened. Clyde shot at the remaining one as Raleigh was attacking him knocking him out.

They keep heading down another hallway. “We are about halfway there.” More, and more enemies surround them as she says that. The Empire had never been so ruthless before. Had they deliberately been going easy on them Clyde thought. He shook his head thinking he knew his enemy well enough to know that wasn't true. This was just overwhelming even for the likes of Raleigh. Some of the walls started to crumble from the ship's assault. The cluster would not last much longer if it stayed like this. Another white-haired Reaper appeared. “You will not get away this time.” He said as Raleigh stabbed him with a sword running farther ahead. Another one appeared striking at her, she blocked it with the sword. “Give up. Give into your despair.” He said before he too was stabbed to death. They reached the room with the portals finally, but the black-haired Reaper they had come to know was waiting.

“This is your end.” He says to them. She tries stabbing him like the rest he makes no effort to stop her. She removes the blade expecting him to fall over, but he just smiles as the wound closes. “What have you done?” She asks him fear growing. “I evolved.” He said as other white-haired reapers, and a few combat droids surrounded them. They were all back to back now each taking out a few of

them, but they kept replacing the fallen ones. One of them stabs The Physician making her collapse to the floor. She isn't dead but severely injured. Clyde tries his best to hold off as Raleigh is knocked to the ground by a kick.

Her hat falls off her head sliding onto the floor. He doesn't know what to do they are about to strike at her once more. He knows he can't win, but he charges forward to attack him anyway. The Reaper easily knocks the knife from Clyde's hand stabbing him through. Clyde Gasps for air falling to the ground. “You were almost as big of a nuisance as her. At least I get the satisfaction of seeing you die unlike her.” The Reaper says. Raleigh cries out and gets up with second wind slicing his arm off and then his torso. She keeps stabbing him with tears in her eyes. She can't keep it up though she is losing too much blood.

The Reaper simply stands up putting himself back together. He knocks her back to the ground grinding his boot on her head. “I'll give you one thing. I'm very low on bodies now. There is only a hand full left. Not that I need them with this body.” He says more talkative than normal revaluing that he finally prevailed over her. He released his foot as other hims carry her away. She thrashes but doesn't have enough energy to get out of their grip any longer. She cries thinking Clyde has died, and she indirectly caused it as well as The Physician's death. Clyde is just barely staying awake bleeding out on the floor.

The Reaper completely removes his presence from his mind no longer concerning himself with such a weak person. He turns to The Physician as two soldiers lift her. “You can't fool me with that new form I know who you are. The Empire offers its hand to you. Your skills are valuable to the empire.” He says. “She spits blood on his face, but if you refused. Well you're too dangerous to be kept alive. “Go to hell.” She yells at him. “How unfortunate.” He says stabbing her and ending her life even looking a little happy she declined his offer to her. The Reaper leaves with Raleigh still crying Clyde

slowly watches reaching his hand out to hear as his eye closed, and he bleeds out. The last thing he feels is that burning sensation in his arm.

Chapter Twenty Nine

Lucy took a deep breath gasping for air. They had been laying there for hours inches from death. The Empire was gone right after they confirmed her heart, and brain waves stopped, yet here she was still alive although barley. She herself doesn't seem to understand how it is she is still alive. She looks over at Clyde seeing symbols glow on his arm. She gasps knowing what they are. She uses cubes to lift herself up, and forming a stretcher to take Clyde to her emergency room. First she starts healing herself knowing they are both dead if she can't. With her technology, and knowledge she patches herself up turning her attention to Clyde. He is a lot worst for wear barley clinging to life.

A few hours pass, and he stabilizes no longer in danger. She gets a call on a big screen she answers it to reveal its none other then Loki calling. At first he looks worried, but then confused. “Doctor is that you? You are fine as hell.” She smiles. “It sure is lion boy. I'm glad you like it.” She say's winking. “Well enough about that did my friends make it to you?” “Yeah they did...” Loki cuts her off. “Why is Clyde's card red? Oh well I guess it isn't anymore, but.” She looks a little annoyed. “You should've told me they were coming. The boy is fine its the girl that's in trouble. The empire took her.”

Loki look's distraught. “I was afraid you might say that. They tried to attack us too, but because the rules of my world they couldn't, and ended up fleeing. I fear that they might have attacked worlds they recently visited. Should I..” She interrupts him. “I know you prefer that hippy peace, and love stuff so why don't you just sit on your fanny for now I got this.” She hangs up on him before he can say anything else.

Clyde had woken up hearing most of their conversation. “What did they do with... her...” He asks weakly. She takes a moment to answer. “Most likely they took her to The Trial Worlds. The place they keep all their experiments.” Clyde stops to think this is all a mess. He wanted to save her, but he didn't know if he stood even a fraction of a chance or why they are still breathing. He felt like he had not really been taking there journey seriously. Selfishly fulfilling his dream of living an interesting life. He sat up burying his head into his knees. “Tell me how are we still alive.”

“Well I suppose you are to thank for that.” She says. He raises his head looking at her. “I did?” He said confused. “Well more accurately the power granted to you by your arm.” She states touching his arm causing the symbols to glow. “I don't know how or why, but you have an arm of the multiverse. Not many people know about it.” She explains. “That meaning what?” He asks. “Well sorta like a guiding hand granted by The trees caretaker. It manipulates the odds in your favor. We probably only survived thanks to the minuscule chance we would.” He thought about it for a moment. He had been rather lucky. Escaping death many times. It almost seemed unfair he wondered if he should thank The Caretaker or curse him. If everything always went his way are you really living. Then he remembered his predicament. “So the power of a protagonist? That would be cool if I wasn't still weak as hell, and Raleigh was alright.” He sunk his head back into his knees. “Well unfortunately it just increases the chances you can still die, and all that. But I guess that's already apparent.” She says.

“You said you could modify a body with your mind right? Could you make me stronger?” He ask keeping his head down. “Well I may have... Over exaggerated my power. While I do have to

knowledge to do that I don't have the technology and resources after that attack. The only thing I can do right now is return your body to it original stake removing the scars you've accumulated, and such. And even if you managed that The Old man has the Universal code in the Trial worlds he could erase your existence as soon as you arrived." Clyde sighs he doesn't know what to do he can't possibly save Raleigh. He thought of anyone who could help. He figured Loki wouldn't be able to this time around, the Ultra Scouts maybe? He really wished he had god powers from that fantasy world now. That's when he remembered Rebbecca. He raises his head saying. "Universal Hackers."

"Hmmm? What about them boyo?" She asks. "Could they help me sneak Raleigh out of The Trial worlds?" He asks. "They might be able to. You'd need a very skilled one to do that though." She answers. "How do I get in contact with one?" He asks as his hope rises. "Well I'm not sure. A lot of them are pretty shady, and untrustworthy." She says to his disappointment. "Loki could probably find one for you. Hate to ask him though after I told him to not get involved. "We have no choice I'm not abandoning her." She stands up smiling at him slowly giving her a hug. He started to cry, and show great concern for her way more than he usually does. She just comforts him softly letting him cry.

A few hours later Clyde gets off the hopper look at it one last time for now. Without Raleigh pilot it can't move. He puts on Raleigh's hat knowing how much it means to her keeping it safe till he can return it. He leaves the ship meet back up with Physician at the portal. "Are you sure you don't want me to heal you're scars before you go?" She asks him. "No I think they are good reminders." He says. She coos at him. "You sound all grown up, and manly." He ignores her asking a question of his own. "What will you do?" "Well I think I might head over to Loki's world too I just need to gather some things. Just a reminder you will have to take a few portal's to get back to his world. I'm sending you to Porta Nexus that should be able to lead you there. Oh take this too before you go." She pull's out a card with her name on it like the one's Loki, and Rebbecca gave to him.

“What are these things? I have like three of them now.” She turn's on the portal as it sparks too life. There is damage on it that she doesn't seem to notice. “Well it's called a soul card. It turns red when you are in mortal danger, and black when you die doesn't matter where in the multiverse you are. Loki loves them they complement his mind ability. He was about to rush over here when he saw your card was red.” He look's at them all seeing that they are all white. Stuffing them back in his pocket.

He gets closer to the portal. “I'm sorry things went the way they did. Thank you for everything.” He says, she nods at him as he's about to enter the portal. That's when she sees the damage slowly becoming more visible, and crack the frame. Ripping the portal apart. “Wait get away from the...” She yell's, but it's too late the portal rips itself apart pulling him in, and closing up. He falls through the vortex blindly. He hits the side falling into it, and to a new world falling into the ocean. He almost drowns luckily a fishing boat was nearby. A man pull's him out of the water letting him breath. “You really came out of nowhere lad. I'd be surprised if ye were the first to fall out of the sky.” Clyde seemed confused in disoriented. “Out of the sky?” “Why yes. About a year ago these two young lads also came out of the sky, and I had to pull them out too. Very odd.” The Fisherman says. Clyde steps up regaining balance. He looks at the island ahead it seems to be a small town with minimal technology. “Thank you for saving me.” Clyde says. “Don't mention it. I'll drop you off, and you can even stay at my house for a while if you like.” The fisherman kindly offers. “Well thanks for the offer, but I'd like to get a lay of the land first I can't stay long if I can help it. He seems to understand giving him a nod.

He drops him off at the dock waving him goodbye as Clyde walks into the town. It seems pretty busy considering the size of it. That's when he locks eyes with Darrian of all people. He look's shocked. “You!” He runs up to Clyde. Clyde is utterly screwed there is no way he can beat Darrian. “I Didn't think I'd ever see you again runt. Now I can finally pay you back for sending us here.” Clyde braces himself for a punch, but that never comes. Darrian bows to him instead. “Thank you.” He says looking like he was about to cry. “What?” Clyde says very confused. “I know you were my enemy, but getting

stranded here allowed me to pursue my true calling. Baking!" He says excited. "Never would have discovered it if I wasn't trapped here." Clyde pauses unsure how to respond to that. Is this some sort of trick? "That's cool anyway see you around." He tries to walk off. "Nonsense. I really do want to repay you." He slams Clyde's back. "Come let's go to my bakery." He pushes him toward the other end of the street toward his bakery he isn't getting away from him that easy.

He leads him to it opening the door. Cyrus is there waiting in a nice uniform themed after the bakery. He smiles. "Welcome to Darrian's delightful baker..." He starts to say before seeing Clyde a scowl forming on his face. "How is it possible you have arrived here of all places?" He asks with an annoyed tone. "I'm just as surprised." Clyde says to him. "What crazy odds right. Go ahead Clyde sit down we'll treat you to anything you want." Darrian says with glee. Clyde sits down starting to believe at lease one of them is enjoying his time here. "So what are you like his manager or something now?" Clyde asks. "I manage the front, the budget, and entitled customers yes. It might seem surprising to you, but such a simple life turned out to be appealing to both of us in the end. You'd understand if you grew up in the world we did. Even still I wont thank you for stranding us here like that oaf." Cyrus said. "I'm just glad your not trying to kill me honestly." Clyde said. "In a way you've freed us that I'll admit. Tell me what happened to her?" He said knowing that something happened just by the fact that he's alone, and wearing her hat. "Well..." Clyde started to say telling them everything that transpired.

"I see so that's What that mutt was planing. The Empire just might be unstoppable now." Clyde eats a pastry that Darrian had made thinking it's actually pretty good, he can tell that he really does have a passion for it. "Well with her back home now there isn't much you can do you might as well give up." Cyrus says. "No I won't I will find a way or at least die trying." He says to Cyrus's surprise. "You can't win. You probably can't even make it off this world." Cyrus retorts. "I don't care." Clyde says.

Cyrus sigh's. “I can't help you wont help you fight the empire, but I maybe able to get you off the world at least. If you want to destroy yourself after that so be it.” “Really? Thanks I guess. One thing first though. You claim to know Raleigh, and all about her supposed home so tell me.” Clyde says. “Oh I thought you were going to ask her about that.” Cyrus states. “I'm not saying I'll fully believe you, but at this point I need to know. About her, and The Trial Worlds. It may be the only way I can save her.” Clyde says. “You seem almost like a different person every time I see you. Perhaps that's her rubbing off on you. Very well I'll tell you, but you should know this is my perspective.” Cyrus say as Clyde nods taking everything is about to say with a grain of salt.

Chapter Thirty

Cyrus, Darrian, and The other Clyde from Raleigh's picture step out of a shuttle in the past. He stretches his arms out yawning before looking out the viewing platform. There are three planets right next to each other seeming to be perfectly stable, and not affecting each other. There is no sun, yet there is plenty of light. In between the planets is a large space station. “So these are The Trial Worlds.” He says to them both. “Yes, you better be on your best behavior, we aren't at the academy anymore, and what's with that hat that is clearly against regulations,” Cyrus says to him. “Man you are always so uptight Cyrus, I just made a few modifications to it. I think it looks cooler like this.” He says in response. “That's beside the point,” Cyrus says protesting. “It will be fine.” He says as soldiers come to escort them. He keeps walking while Cyrus lectures him. “Lay off him Cyrus, at this rate your complaining will be more of a bother to our superiors.” Darrian groans. Cyrus lets it be for now as they board another vessel heading for one of the planets.

They arrive at the planet labeled as Planet G. They walk the long halls looking into the windows. It almost seems like a nursery, but a lot more depressing. There are tons of orange-haired girls of all different ages. They looked at them through the window. Some of them are curious others

are fearful, talking amongst themselves. They arrived in a large lab where Dr. Corvus was waiting for them along with three of the girls. “Greetings. I expect great thing's from you recruits regarding this exercise.” He smiles eager to conduct his newest experiment. He pauses looking at the hat but decides it isn't worth the effort. “As you most likely know the multiverse is still very wild, and unmapped. This is a complication solved by these experiments. All of them can navigate the multiverse with ease, It's as if they know the placement of every world in the multiverse, and how to get there. You have each been assigned one of them to use as a navigation device because of your skills shown at the academy. As well as promotions straight to Captain congratulations.” The man looks like he's about to nod off from his briefing. The old man clears his throat as Cyrus' elbows him trying to get his attention.

“As I was saying. These girls have shown to have greater success identifying worlds, and withstanding the process. For now, you will simply make supply runs, with them, but other tests will be conducted, at a later date. Now to assign them. G-112 Step forward.” She steps forward she looks older than the other two they seem to look up to her a little. “She will be assigned to Captain Cyrus her sync rate is 80 percent. G-885 You will be assigned to Captain Darrian.” She also stepped forward she looked the youngest. Also having the shortest hair.

“Unfortunately her sync Rate is only around 60 percent.” They didn't understand just what that meant yet, but let him finish. “Lastly our most successful product G-534 step forward.” He says, but she doesn't listen staying put. He sighs. “G-534 Step forward.” She still seems reluctant looking down and not showing much emotion. After looking at G-112 She is encouraged to step forward. “My apologies she has an astounding sync rate of 99.99 percent, but a bit of an attitude. This is a problem that will be corrected in the future, surely. That is all take them, and begin your tests. I look forward to the results.” He says walking away.

The three of them look down at the girls. “I thought we were moving up in the world, but it looks like we are just babysitting a bunch of runts to me,” Darrian says. G-885 glare's at him. “Clearly

you fail to see the bigger picture. This is the future of Multiverse Travel.” Cyrus says. The other Clyde kneels to be at eye level with the girl in front of him. “Hey look's like we are going to be working together for a while, you got a name that isn't some number.” She doesn't say a word just shaking her head. G-112 speaks up. “The numbers are the only names we have.” Cyrus seems a bit uncomfortable knowing that but chooses to ignore it. “My name's Mark, but you can call me Mentor.” He says to her with a smile. “Would you like a name too?” She again doesn't answer. He thinks for a moment. “What about Raleigh?” Mark asks. “You mean like the famous explorer from The Home World?” Cyrus said. “Yes, it seems fitting to me.” He says chuckling a little. “I like that name.” She says softly. “That's great. Raleigh it is. What are you going to name the other two.” Both of them look interested wanting a name too.

“Ridiculous you're getting too personal with them. Tell him, Darrian.” Cyrus says only for Darrian to say. “Tara. Because my girl is going to be tough as rocks. Right.” He Grins Tara's glare seems to disappear into a smile. “Fine,” Cyrus says as he starts walking away. “Your name can be Inari. You will bring us success won't you?” He keeps walking Bringing a smile to her face too. This might be the most human interaction the three of them have ever had. They all walk into the hangar seeing three identical ships that look like the hopper without the orange paint job. An engineer walks over to them. “Great you are here. The cargo is already loaded, and ready. Be careful with these babies they are prototypes. The only ones like them in the whole fleet.” Mark and Darrian were already inside their ships before he even finished talking.

Cyrus nodded sighing deeply. “Thank you for your hard work.” He says. “For the empire!” The engineer says saluting. “For the empire,” Cyrus says saluting him back. Inari follows him closely. “Sorry about my sisters I try to look after them and make them mind since I'm the oldest, but they don't always listen.” “You're sisters,” Cyrus asks. He assumed they were clones or robots. “Well, we aren't

actually siblings. But we like to call each other that.” She smiles softly. “I see.” He says a little uncomfortable again not wanting to confront The Empire's possible dark side.

“Can you explain the sync rate The Good doctor mentioned?” He asks her. “Oh well a lot of us have the ability, but our bodies can't handle the strain, or we just aren't adept at it. Raleigh's is the best they have ever seen. It um... used to be me.” Inari explained with a little sadness in her voice. “80 percent seems like a respectable amount to me.” He says trying to cheer her up, but it doesn't work. “Should we begin?” She asks he nods walking into the ship with her.

Back with Mark, and Raleigh he is watching, as she hooks herself up to the ship. “You don't seem very talkative,” Mark says for her not to answer. “That rough, huh?” He asks catching her attention. “Let's focus on the mission, for now, we'll talk when you're ready alright? Do you know where to go?” He asks for her to nod her head. All three of them lift off to different worlds. It doesn't take them long to make a run clear across the multiverse and return at the end of the day without issue. Cyrus seems astounded it normally would take much longer for such a run this would greatly help the empire's expansion. Inari and Raleigh both unplugged themselves from the ships without issue, as Cyrus took notes. Darrian runs out of his ship a little panicked. “Something's wrong with Tara she won't respond to me.”

Inari and Raleigh both look down. “It's because of her lower Sync Rate. She should be fine after she rests a bit.” Inari says a little unsure of her own words, but wanting to believe them nonetheless. After a few days, Tara was alright, but Darrian was a little shaken up. He sat in a break room looking out a window alone. Mark and Cyrus join him. “Hey, are you OK? I've never seen you like this?” “What are we even doing? Those kids.” He says head falling into his hands. “I'm sure the girl will be fine with a little more training. Think of the future.” Cyrus says. Darrian stand's up slamming his fist into the wall. “I don't give a shit about a future like that.” He says walking off.

They kept running missions without issues. Tara didn't freeze up like that again it seemed like she had improved as Cyrus said. Another mission end's Raleigh unhooking the cables from herself. “I hate this place. We all do.” She says finally speaking up. “But we can't leave That Man will never let us leave. You shouldn't have grown any attachment to us.” She says walking off. He doesn't know what to say. Inari unhooks looking way more winded than normal. Cyrus looks concerned for her. “I'm fine it just took more of a toll on me today, but. I have to be the strongest.” Inari says. “Why do you push yourself so hard?" He asks her. “For them. My suffering prevents theirs.” She says walking out. This time Darrian doesn't get off his ship. Tara again has frozen up this time it looks like she might stay that way. He doesn't move just staying with her waiting for her to snap out of it.

Dr. Corvus walk's in wanting to check the progress before they leave. “Hmm, it seems while the results are different they are all promising. If G-885 is still functional in that state it may be a better alternative. We don't need navigation computers with personalities anyway.” He says pleased with all the results. “We will move to phase two. Each of them will be fitted on a larger vessel, and if that goes well we will be ready to implement the rest of them on a larger scale.” He is enjoying the fruits of their labor. Mark look's like he might attack The Old Man but stopped himself.

Later that night Mark lays in his bunk eyes open unable to sleep, Darrian had stayed on the ship with Tara. Mark got up leaving his bunk and heading for where the girl's slept. Cyrus woke up seeing him leave. Mark came into her room shaking her awake. “Hey get up I'm getting you out of here.” He whispers. “What.” She asks dazzled. He shushes her. “Quiet. I mean it I'm getting you out of here.” “What about my sisters?” She asks he doesn't have an answer. “I wish I could grab all of you, and make a break for it, but I can't. Please let me save you at least.” He says a little desperate now. She agrees to go with him, and they both sneak around almost to the ship. “See this will great, and without you, they won't be able to move forward with their project which is good for your sisters.” He says trying to convince her, and himself that everything will be OK.

“What are you doing?” Cyrus says blocking their path already having his spear out. “Cyrus? What do you think I'm doing.” He gets in a protective stance in front of Raleigh. “And you think saving one girl will be enough. You'll burden the rest of them, and make their treatment worse.” Cyrus says. “So you're not going to let me go, old friend,” Mark says drawing his multi-tool into a sword. “Don't do this I don't want to fight, but I won't stand aside either.” Mark clashed against his weapon metal against metal. Mark show's his skill knocking Cyrus aside. Running off to the ship with Raleigh in tow.

“Treason it is then,” Cyrus says sadness in his eyes. They were good friends for a long time. This isn't how he wanted things to go. He always dreamed they would rise through the ranks together bringing the empire to a new age a better empire, but as Mark slowly fades from sight so does that dream. The Old Man was furious her absence set them back decades, and they still haven't fully recovered. He assigned Darrian, and Cyrus to a Reclamation unit, along with Inari, and Tara, though Tara never did wake up. A couple of years have passed Raleigh, and Mark had successfully evaded the empire for all this time, but they finally caught up.

Raleigh is 18 looking much more like a woman now. He smiles at her knowing they probably can't keep this up forever. He looks down at her smiling. “You've grown so much. I don't regret any of my actions.” She frowns as he takes off his hat, and places it on her head. “Hold onto that for me, and go ahead to the next world. There are a few old friends I need to say hi to.” She started to cry but listened leaving as soon as he got out of The Hopper. The Reaper was waiting for him there. They fought Briefly, but in the end Mark couldn't match The Empire's dog dying.

Back in current times in the bakery, Cyrus look's a lot sadder now. “My biggest regret is not making it there before The Reaper. I wanted to detain him not kill him.” Cyrus said. Clyde didn't say anything taking in all the information he had just received. He could tell Cyrus cared about all the other Raleigh in his own way, but he didn't agree with his methods at all. “So why exactly did you think bringing Raleigh back would help them all?” Clyde says with a little anger in his voice. “For the

reason, I stated while telling you the tale. The experiment going well would cause them to be treated better. Or at least that was my hope. I wanted to reform the nasty parts of the empire. I failed Clyde. I failed all of them, but I tried. What can one man do against an empire?" Cyrus was starting to get upset. Clyde's anger subsided, at least for Cyrus. "What about him?" He asks referring to Darrian who was blissfully making a cake. "He never got over it. He placed all the blame on Raleigh. Fortunately, Tara survived the Crash with us although still frozen. She's in the bed upstairs. He thinks one day she'll wake up."

"So you're just going to give up now?" Clyde asks. "Before we had no choice, but to fight that's simply how we were raised. I'm tired of fighting I don't expect you to understand." Cyrus says. He didn't like that answer but felt like he had to accept it. "Well, that's fine because I'm going to save them all for you," Clyde said with more conviction than he ever had in his life shocking him. "You will fail," Cyrus says. "Then I will die trying. Now tell me how to find a way off this world, and to the nearest universe hacker." Clyde demands. "Very well. In the year we have been here we were able to put together small vessel capable of universe hopping with the intention of leaving, but well now... He have no desire to do so. It's in a cave at the foot of the mountain. I don't know how you will be able to pilot it though." Cyrus answers. Clyde grabs a cake eating before leaving. They both look at each other nodding. "I'll get one of the neighbors to look after our daughter for a while," Darrian says flipping the sign of his Bakery Closed. They walk out joining Clyde. "What did you guys have a change of heart or something?" Clyde asks. "I just don't want to see you fail to even leave the planet with our only working vessel," Cyrus says.

Chapter Thirty One

Raleigh wakes up in a dark room strapped to a chair saying nothing. She knows where she is and has nothing to say about it. “Good morning G-534, and welcome home it's been quite some time since you've been back. To say you've been missed is an understatement.” The Old man says taunting her. She offers him no reply just continuing to stare blankly. “Hmm, what's this? No more witty comebacks? It's good to see we have come to an understanding. With you returned to us, we can finally move forward with Operation Deforestation. You know you, and your doubles were never considered for combat, but you've proven yourself to be quite proficient at that. Perhaps we should've implemented more of you into our army in places other than navigation. That hardly matters now though. In truth, we won't even need you anymore. Since you've proven to be more of a liability we have decided on using a slightly different approach.”

Raleigh's attention was now focused on him still not speaking, but giving him eye contact. “Oh? Are you interested to learn about your replacement? Well, We have classified her as G-N she is almost a clone of you. The difference is she won't have thoughts of her own all we needed was you to complete her at least for the time being.” He laughed turning to leave. “Your siblings as you call them

will be implemented into the final plan just like always, and we will keep you around for other research for sure, however, you will never be leaving this room again." He left her alone to silently cry after that. The Reaper looks inside the room from a distance not saying anything. "You can still do the right thing." The Priest says in his inner mind, only to be ignored by him.

Crow has made their way to Home World of the Empire searching the ruins of an only laboratory. They spent some time looking through old computer records, and anything left behind. The logs had been scrubbed of information nothing to really go off of that would make Corvus look bad. They sighed seeming to feel like they met a dead end. That's when a flash of light reflected on a flash drive drawing their attention. They went over to it wondering just how it had gotten here. The Doctor was careful to cover his tracks, but not careful enough it seemed. They plugged it into the computer seeing corrupted files about a formula to light someone on fire from the inside. This was what they needed though this alone might not be enough. Crow looked around a little more before opening up a communicator to tell the Admiral what they had found.

Clyde, Darrian, and Cyrus arrive at the port world. They all had the same clothing on as before except Darrian who seemed to have changed into a Hawaiian shirt for some reason. "Why are you wearing that?" Clyde asks. "It's camouflage. I don't want anyone from the empire to recognize me I'm supposed to be dead." Darrian answers. "Idiot. If anything it makes you stand out more. Besides after the empire's plans were foiled they were kicked off the world." Cyrus retorts. "Wait this is that port world? I didn't think everyone really picked up on their plan." Clyde said. "It seems your friend with lion ears tipped them off. This world is neutral only in name now the union controls it." Cyrus explains.

This is the first time Clyde has seen the aftermath of a world he visited he didn't know enough about The Union to say if it was a good thing or not. The world didn't look all that different from the last time they visited. "What do you know about those guys anyway?" Clyde asks. "The Union and The Empire are in a Cold War more or less. They have a non-aggression treaty in current standing. They

can't attack each other directly, so they often use proxies to fight.” Cyrus answers. “Proxies?” “Yes basically aiding less developed worlds, and pitting them against each other. Though their non-aggression treaty is shaky at best it wouldn't take much for either of them to be provoked into all-out war. The union claims they are only trying to stop the expansion of The Empire.”

“Sounds messy. I don't think I want to involve myself with them even if they are in the right.” Clyde stated. “You may not have a choice in the matter now that this world is a major staging area for them. I hate to ask a former enemy for help but if there are hackers in this world they are most likely employed, by them.” Cyrus sighed. “How rare are Universal hackers even?” Clyde asked curiously. “They are very rare. Hackers are self-serving after they hack a world they desire they see no need to further pursue the profession the ones that continue are freelancers I'm not sure what the logic behind their decisions are.” Cyrus said Clyde didn't like that answer. “Nevertheless if there are any they would be here. I know exactly where to look.” Cyrus said motioning for them to follow him.

They follow him to The Guild Clyde, and Raleigh were attacked by The Reaper in, it seemed as rowdy as ever. It felt like it had been ages since he had been here. Cyrus went up to the counter to ask them about the information they needed while they sat at a table. Once he returns he explains the situation to them. “They say there are none currently available, and won't be for quite some time.” Clyde sighs looking at his face. “You don't seem to believe they are being honest.” Cyrus nods. “That might not be information they give out to just anyone.” They don't seem sure what to do now. Clyde pulls out the soul cards looking at them all. They are all white so he at least knows none of them are dead that's when he gets an idea. “What if I show them this soul card? It belongs to a hacker.” Clyde says. “It's worth a try,” Cyrus says.

Clyde goes up to the Reception this time. “Hey. I was wondering if there was a hacker by the name of Rebbecca around here I have her soul card right here if that means anything.” The Receptionist seems to look at the card seemly to be able to tell it's authentic. “Interesting she doesn't give those out

to just anyone. You're in luck she's on a job on this world right now.” She says smiling. “Wow really? Can you point me in her direction?” Clyde asked. “Sure I can, she is in the forgotten depths. I'm afraid that's all I know about the job she is on.” She answers. “I think that's all I needed to know thank you,” Clyde said walking off. He didn't think the soul card was that rare of a thing to give to someone.

“Looks like we are going to a place called The Forgotten Depths,” Clyde says to them. “A hacker is doing a job here?” Cyrus said a little more concerned. “Yeah is that a big deal?” He then thought about it a bit more. “I guess that is kind of a big deal huh.” “Sounds like we better get our asses over there,” Darrian said while eating a turkey leg he ordered. They all got up leaving the Guild. “The forgotten depths is a place on this world that was once inhabited by this world's original inhabitants. They are all but wiped out other than one family who runs this world.” Cyrus explains. “Look's like they left her a trail to follow there,” Clyde said.

They reached the edge of the city after a few hours of walking. They looked down at the void below. A few buildings breaking through to be visible. “There will most likely be some less-than-desirable people waiting for us down there so be on guard,” Cyrus said starting to climb down. Once they reached the bottom they noticed that it was mostly abandoned, but a few people were sitting around the streets. They kept walking leaving them be. Clyde wondered what one had to do to end up here it didn't seem like a place they enjoyed presiding in, but here he was too. They walked through the barely lit ruined city no one questioning why they were there but growing no closer to finding Rebbecca.

Darrian groans. “We are just walking around in circles here.” They both sighed at him knowing he was right. Just as they said that they heard a noise up ahead. They walked toward it to see what was happening. The men were firing at something in the darkness looking fearful. A cord launched out of the void wrapping itself around one of them, and pulling him in while he screamed. Rebbecca emerged

from the shadows punching the other man before returning to the darkness. “That was her,” Clyde said loudly running after her into the building she entered.

As soon as they walked in all three of them had cables wrapped around their legs, and were lifted into the air upside down. Raleigh's hat fell off Clyde's head, and to the floor. Rebbecca walked closer to them not seeming to recognize him at first but once she did, her face became more relaxed. “Oh hey, Clyde.” She smiled making no effort to help him down. “Hey, Rebbecca. Would you mind releasing us before all blood rushes to my brain?” Clyde said pleading with her. “Hmm, did you finally decide to leave that boring captain of yours and chill with me?” She said caressing his head in a teasing manner. She looked down at the floor seeing her hand. “Hmm, maybe not.”

“It's... a little more complicated than that,” Clyde said. “Aw, that's too bad.” She teases them more lifting his head, so they can make eye contact. “Well unfortunately I don't have time to play with you right now Clyde see you later.“ She says entering the darkness again the cords drop them on their faces shortly after.

They get up dusting themselves off. “Can't say I'm a fan of this lady,” Darrian said protesting. “She seems to be good at what she does. I don't really know anyone else that can help us anyway.” Clyde said ready to press forward. They followed the trail of bodies Cyrus looked down at one. “They are Port World Authority. They must be down here guarding something.” “Universal Code,” Clyde says. “Perhaps, or something that would lead one to it.” Someone must have hired her to take this world's code the question was who. They kept following them going deeper into the depths. They reached a big cave. Rebbecca was there looking down at a grave.

“A long time ago the original rulers of this planet gained access to The Universal Code of this world. They used it to open portals up all over The Multiverse all leading here. They wanted people from all different walks of life to come here to mingle. For the other worlder's sake, and their own. They made the perfect world for superpowers to use for Multiverse conquest without realizing it. You

don't even need inter-dimensional travel with the portals open.” She turned to face them smiling. “But that's the problem with low-intelligent humans gaining ultimate power. They don't know how to use it or the consequences. All that power and they were still powerless like the rest of us.” “Who hired you to take the world's code?” Clyde asked. “It was The Union. They like to act morally superior to The Empire but in the end, they wanted this world for themselves all the same. They were just more subtle about it hiring me.” Rebbecca answers.

“Well, are you going to let them have it?” Clyde asked a little fearful of her answer? The Union must be unsure of their control over the world if they resulted to this. “Well, they did pay me to do that.” She said with a shrug. “I don't care about The Union, but wouldn't doing that effect the people of this world. Is money really that important to you?” He asks her. “Money?” She giggles. “This isn't about money. It's about doing something interesting, it's that why you are traveling with her? Being God is boring. I would think you would know from experience and even more so with the company you keep.” “I guess we do share the same goal then, but I can't let you do that.” He said. “Clyde what are you doing we need her remember.” Cyrus whispers to him in a panic.” She puffs up her cheeks pouting. “Alright. I'll play the villain for a while then. Tell you what I'll leave it alone if you studs can defeat me.” She smiles sticking her tongue out at them. She backs away letting them prepare.

“You blew this one pal,” Darrian said as they brought out their multi-tools. Clyde decides to go with a knife this time. Rebbecca deployed two little drones on each side of her waiting for them to make the first attack. Darrian charged forward trying to punch her. She shoots out cords from her wrist wrapping them around his arm and pulling him to the side like a matador fighting a bull. Cyrus tried attacking her with his spear while one of her hands was tied up with Darrian, but the drones fired at him protecting her. Clyde approached close enough to stab at her. He was aiming for her equipment rather than her. She dodged using her free hand to punch him In the gut. “Weak.” She said smiling at

him and knocking him to the floor. She planted her boot into his chest. Now all that was left was Cyrus. He stabbed into one of the drones destroying it to her surprise.

“At least one of you can fight, but I think that's enough.” She said swinging the hand with the cords as well as Darrian at him making them fall too. Now that they are all down she takes her foot off Clyde's chest helping him up. “Relax that was just a little test. I couldn't hack into the code completely anyway.” She said to Clyde. “What do you mean.” “Well, the previous owner of the code was smart enough to make it almost impossible to obtain even by a hacker like me. Kinda like what you did in that world.” Rebbecca said. “I thought I might as well see what I'm working with since you need my help with something.” She started to leave the cave. “So would you actually give it to The Union if you were able to?” Clyde asks. She looks back at him with a grin. “Who can say? Let's head back to The Guild.” She walked off leaving them alone. Darrian groans. “I'm tired of getting my ass kicked by pint-sized punks.” Cyrus sits next to him not offering any response.

Raleigh lies there still strapped to the chair. Her eyes look dead she had been left there as The Old Man promised her. It is unclear if he disabled her cybernetics or if she had simply just lost her will to fight. She had no other nourishment than an iv that barely left her alive. She started to hallucinate. Mark stood before her in her trance. “Why did you abandon me Raleigh? Why did you abandon all of us?” He looks up blood came from his eyes she saw countless other versions of herself behind him. “I'm sorry I... I'm sorry...” She didn't know what to say she felt responsible for all of it. A vestige of Clyde appeared. “You said you could protect me. That I didn't need to be strong. Now I'm dead, and it's all your fault.” He says to her. “I know... I know...” She keeps crying. The Reaper is still watching her out of sight. “Is this really The Empire you want to be a part of.” The Priest would ask from his inter mind once more trying to sway him. “You never understood anything, old man.” The Reaper said to him. “Enlighten me then.” The Reaper doesn't answer him.

Chapter Thirty Two

Rebbecca sits down with them eating some food as she hears them out. “That plan sounds completely insane and borderline impossible. I love it.” She says smiling. “You were easier to convince than I thought,” Clyde said. “I would love a chance to hold something like this over Raleigh's head for the rest of time.” She says giddily. Cyrus sighs struggling to keep their attention. “There are things you need to know if we are going to do this. After Raleigh escaped the first time security was majorly tightened. You can't even enter the world without permission. All such lifeforms will be erased as soon as detected.” “Well depending on how well protected the code is that's not a huge deal. I can use my skills to make us invisible. Does that creepy old dude have the code himself?” Rebbecca asks not looking worried at all sipping a milkshake she bought. “No, he gave it to a machine named mother. It governs the worlds for him though he has full authority over it.” That seems to have piqued her interest. “A robot with universal code. I'd like to get my hands on that.”

Cyrus looks a little uncomfortable with how lax she is. Darrian had fallen asleep at the end of the table. “We don't need to interact with Mother at all if possible. I think it's best to locate Raleigh, and the others, and leave before they even notice.” Cyrus said. “I have a feeling that isn't going to happen,”

Clyde says. “First we need to go to a universe near The Trial Worlds to see if it's even possible.” She explains. She dips a French fry into the milkshake and eats it. “We are all ready to go,” Clyde says to her. “No, we need to rest.” She says he's about to protest, but she gets up. ”I'm going to bed, see you guys tomorrow. Unless you want to join me that is.” She said lifting his chin. He isn't sure if she is serious or not blushing. He wouldn't nearly be brave enough to enter there now. She leaves them as they rent their rooms for the night getting the rest they will need for the big fight ahead.

They wake up in the morning suiting up with more combat-ready gear they return to their small craft with her after looking inside she says. “I think... I'll walk.” It is a tight squeeze as is. They shrug getting in any way as she uses a portal to travel from world to world. Once they arrive in the new barren world she is already working. She has a small portal open with one of her cords sticking through it. She has a hologram coming out of her arm that she is typing away on it. “Man they made it hard for us,” Rebbecca said still typing. “Can it be done though?” Cyrus asked. “The Old Man overlooked a few things.” She answered. “That doesn't sound like him,” Cyrus says. “For a less skilled hacker, maybe.” She smiles. “Even still the best I can do is cloak us. If they find out we are in the world we will have to fight. It will save us from being erased.”

“Most likely The Reaper will be there I think we will be fine if we can avoid him,” Cyrus said. Rebbecca began scanning all of them and coating them with some sort of energy. It slowly faded. “Easier said than done wise guy,” Darrian said. She kept running checks till everything looked good to her. “Alright, everything is all good.” She said. “Let's get going,” Clyde said growing restless. She opened a portal. Placing her hand out to them. They all put their hand in knowing it was now or never. They broke walking through the portal. Furthermore, they make it to the other side seeing that they are on one of the three planets. “Look's like we are on Planet H. The field-testing world.” Cyrus said. “Is that a good or bad thing?” Clyde asks. “It doesn't look like they are performing any tests. Still, I wouldn't like to wait around.” Cyrus says. “We just need to get to planet G where the girls are. They

should have shuttles in that building over there. Just stick together, and everything should be...” Cyrus looks around to see they have already left him behind Clyde, and Darrian walking ahead while. Rebbecca run's off on her own. He just sighs. “Amateurs.”

Proxy enters a large room climbing up a catwalk. He seems a little nervous. He walks down the catwalk toward a giant robot. It has a feminine form, and long blue ethereal-looking hair, it has no mouth and glowing eyes. “Greetings Proxy. What is the purpose of your visit?” It says looking down at him. “Oh well, I just wanted to see your lovely face.” Proxy said twiddling his thumbs. “Illogical. Proxy model seven's primary function is to serve as The Emperor's median. Admiring my face does not fulfill this directive.” She says to him. He sighs having some sort of crush on her despite them both being machines. “I have no duties at the moment I wanted to get more acquainted.” He says. “Proxy model 7 has all the empire's databases available for him to access there is no need for Proxy 7 to collect data on Mother.” She says. “Well yes I do, but...” He sighs not seeming to get through to mother he sighs still trying anyway.

Back with Clyde. They have subdued the few soldiers stationed there securing the shuttle. They waste no time climbing on board to make their way to Planet G all except their hacker. “I have other plans Here take these.” She tosses portal projectors at them. “Use those to get all of them off the world, Kay.” She says winking, and running off. “Wait come back we need to stay together.” Cyrus pleads but she is already gone. They make their way without them. The shuttle lifts into the air toward the planet alerting mother right away. She activated their Communication system. “Shuttle 2759 your launch is unauthorized please stop your Ascent, and explain your actions.” “Um well, we...” Clyde tries to come up with something thinking they have already been found out. Cyrus steps in ripping the communication system from the ship. “What the hell,” Clyde said. “We have no explanation to give them. We have little time now we have to hurry.”

Proxy is still trying to flirt with her. “Request for Proxy Model 7.” She says. “What is it, mother?” He asks her. “Unidentified lifeforms have stolen a shuttle on planet H their destination is estimated to be Planet G. Please investigate,” she asked him. “Unidentified lifeforms how can that be how did they not get erased,” Proxy asks. “Unknown. Even now I am unable to erase their existence. Searching for possible explanations now.” Mother explains to him. “Very well I will go there myself to find out.” Proxy said hoping to impress her leaving right away.

They make it to the planet now a company of soldiers waiting for them. “Let us take point maybe we can convince them,” Cyrus says as they both stand in front of him opening the door. All the men look ready to fire until they see them. “Commander Cyrus, and colonel Darrian? They said you were killed.” One of the men said. They walked closer to them acting as if they belong. “It was part of our current mission. I suggest you forget about it not even mother is privy to this information.” Cyrus explains. They look like they believe him. “Oh OK sir I trust you, but why didn't you inform her?” He asks. “This mission is strictly off record. Report that it was a false alarm.” Cyrus tells him. He nods agreeing to do so. They started to walk past them toward the wing The Raleighs are located. “One more thing. Do you know the location of G-534?” Cyrus asked. He looked confused. “Last time I heard any information on that was before we all thought you died.” Clyde and Cyrus look at each other not sure what to make of that.

They walk down the hallways looking in the rooms that are all empty now. Darrian and Cyrus take a moment to remember the past. They reach the final room and open the door to see countless Raleigh in white outfits. They are all grown up now and looking at them all with interest. “Who are you guys?” One of them spoke up smart enough to know they don't exactly look like they are supposed to be there. Until they see Clyde gasping. “Are you that man?” One of them asks Clyde. “He does look like him.” Another one says. “What man?” He asks. “The one who took her away from this place.” One

of them says. “Well not exactly, but yes.” He answers them. They all suddenly look overjoyed celebrating. “We dreamed you would return for us one day.” One of them said.

Cyrus looked down having no idea how they felt about it wishing he could've done this much sooner. He looked around the room noticing there are fewer of them than there used to be. “We will get you out of here, but where are the rest of you,” Cyrus asked. They all stopped celebrating looking sad. “They were implemented into a vessel already.” She answers. Darrian slams the wall with anger. “We were too late damn it.” “Calm down. We need to get the ones here to safety first then we can worry about them.” Cyrus says to him calming him a little. Clyde open's the portal to the universe they came to before this one. “You guys hang out here for a bit look's like we have a few more of your sisters to save before we can leave,” Clyde says. They listen to him seeming to understand a couple of them hug him before walking through. They all look so similar to Raleigh with slight differences, and hairstyles. They don't act like her though. Even still it made him feel a certain way.

They successfully get them all to the other side closing the portal. “No sign of Raleigh either where would they keep her?” Clyde asks. “She must be in the central station between the worlds where The Old Man resides, and most likely The Reaper.” Cyrus sighs. “The ones already inside a vessel are unfortunately scattered all over the multiverse most likely.” Darrian balls his fist with anger. “Three dead men stand before me with an idiotic goal,” Proxy says from behind them. They turn ready for a fight. “Woah, Woah not so fast. I must inquire about a few things before we get into that.” He puts his arms out pleading with them. “You are just trying to buy time,” Cyrus says slashing at him. He dodged it. “I guess I can't pull one over on you can I. I am curious though.”

Rebbecca steps out of the shadows in front of Mother. “I found you.” She says to the giant machine. “You must be one of the unidentified lifeforms please remove your existence from this universe.” Mother says to her. “Well, aren't you sweet? I'd love to get a look at how you function.” She

says. “That information is restricted.” Mother says. “ It won't be for long she said releasing her drones and getting her cords ready. Mother began to rise. “I may not be able to erase you, but this body is equipped to fight threats that greatly exceed you. Give up and perish.” Mother said. Rebbecca just smiled launching forward to attack her.

Chapter Thirty Three

Doctor Corvus was working near a body that looked almost identical to Raleigh. The body shape, the hair everything was the same. Other than the color of the hair. Mother call's him. “What is it I told you not to bother me?” He grumbled not liking it when his work was interrupted. “Intruders somehow made it past the firewall master. I can not detect them, or erase them.” Mother answered. He nearly fell from his chair. “How can that be?” He said to her. “Two of the four have been identified as former members of The Empire. The others have yet to be identified. Motive unknown. Methods unknown.” Mother explains.

“Show them to me.” He demands. A screen appears in front of him showing pictures of all four of them caught on camera footage. “Cyrus, and Darrian. I knew they had misgivings, but didn't think they would ever be so bold.” He says as he looked over at them all. “The girl I'm unsure of, but...” He started to say looking at Clyde. “Captain Mark? No, it's that double she used as a replacement for him. Was he not confirmed dead?” He asked concerned.

“The Reaper Reported that everyone there was killed.” She said. That information troubled him a little. “The girl must be a hacker be wary of her.” He says. “I'm unfortunately already engaged in combat with her.” She said. “How can this be? Surely this is the worst outcome the multiverse could have given to me.” He said slumping back into his chair. “I have no choice, but to abandon this world, at least for now. Buy me the time I must finish G-N, and back up our files to The Home World before I take my leave.” He says having no issue throwing her away. She doesn't answer for a while almost like she is disappointed in that answer. “Yes, master.” She says ending the call. He gets back to work.

Proxy hold's out his arms his hand's open firing bullets at them. Cyrus run's him through with his spear before he can do much harm. His face glitches out he tried to keep attacking, but he falls to the ground twitching unable to move. “We need to get to Central Station post-haste,” Cyrus says rushing out of the room. The men from before run toward him. “You! Proxy told us everything. How could you betray the empire!” He said charging at him. Cyrus flipped his spear over to hit them with the blunt side. He had no desire to harm these men more than he had to. Darrian Joined in knocking a couple of them out. Clyde took out the last one stunning him with his gun. He paused looking over them. “They are good men, but empires make good men do bad things.” He said rushing onto the shuttle.

Crow had made their way to The Trial worlds. They had the authorization to be here, but knew they would be questioned on why they were here exactly, But weirdly enough no one ever came to ask,

all distracted by others. This was the best outcome they could have asked for. They put on a space suit and used their wings to propel themselves forward to Central Station, not wanting to be seen. It took a while just floating through space like this. They made it sneaking in unnoticed, slipping right past Corvus, who was still putting the final touches on G-N in a panic. They moved into the server room, accessing the files like before. There were so many, you would never be able to find what you were looking for if you didn't already have an idea. Once they found what they were looking for, they downloaded it and took it away to show their boss.

Rebbecca backed away catching her breath still smiling. “You don't pull your punches.” A lot of her drones are on the ground destroyed. Mother had taken major damage. “Your resistance is pointless.” She says as her metal body is fully restored in, an instant. “Any damage I sustain can be undone with the power of Universal Code.” She doesn't seem to be surprised by this. “Something does not compute. I have risen the temperature of the area to temperatures humans can't survive in and poisoned the air. Yet you don't seem affected by it. How is this?” Mother said perplexed. “Well since you ask so nicely. You see I'm not exactly in this world. I'm somewhere between. It prevents you from affecting me in such a way.” She said taunting her. “Master has run a test on that subject before. All failed. I will add this to the database.” She said trying to slam her fist into her. “You are smart enough to know we are basically in a stalemate,” Rebbecca said. “Your hypothesis is most likely correct. However, I must persist.” She said as to keep fighting.

The shuttle landed at Central Station. The Reaper Is already waiting for them. “Tell me, boy. Why do you do this? Can't you see the futility? Even if you succeed here by some miracle you will fail in the end, and countless other versions of you failed right at this very moment throughout the multiverse. No matter how hard you try you can't save all of them it's a statistical improbability as long as the multiverse still exists.” The Reaper doesn't attack seeming to be interested in the answer. Clyde

took a moment to think. “You're probably right, but I'm a selfish son of a bitch.” Clyde said. “I see, and here I thought you came to some conclusion I hadn't considered.” He said making a sword with his tool meeting blades with Clyde.

Like always he is no match for him falling on his ass. Cyrus steps up to the plate engaging him. Darrian got behind him and hoisted him in the air. “Now!” He shouted. The Reaper Broke his shoulder to break free stabbing into Darrian's shoulder. Clyde handcuffed his legs together. Darrian lets go holding his shoulder in pain. Cyrus stabs him before he can react impaling him into the wall. Clyde handcuffs his right arm to a pipe. Proceeding to bind his remaining limb. The Reaper knocks him back with powerful force. “Interesting plan you've come up with.” The Reaper said commending them. He tried to break the bones in his arm to free it. Cyrus Slams his foot into his free hand giving Clyde the chance to bind it. They didn't stop there. They tied with rope and surrounded him with some sort of putty.

“That seems a little excessive,” Cyrus says. “You know how this guy is he just won't stay down, and now that he can't die this is the only thing we can really do.” The Reaper tried to break free, but he was stuck completely. He went silent not saying anything. They turn their back to him so close to where Raleigh and Corvus are now. The Reaper was completely humiliated, by someone nowhere near his skill level even with help it was embarrassing. The Priest laughed from inside him. ”Selfish reasons or not that man follows the Teaching of the Church well. Like you used to. I think I understand now.” He says to The Reaper for him to ignore him like always.

Rebbecca has damaged Mother significantly again now looking a little worst for wear. In a battle of stamina, she could never beat a machine like this something she knew all too well. “I think it's about time we wrap things up." She presses a button on her wrist as portals open all over the room. “It took a little time to set up but.” She jumps into the portal and wraps her cords around the large machine

pulling it through the other side. Some of her limbs were separated from her as a result of falling into multiple portals. “You don't have any power over this world.” She teases the now heavily damaged machine that can no longer fight back.

“Now to take the code from you.” She said connecting cords all over her metal body. “I can not willingly give you the code because of my programming, however, I can make the process easier for you. I have a request.” It would seem, that she had some level of autonomy despite still being programmed to serve the old man. “Oh, and what would that be?” Rebbecca asked interested in what the robot would request of her.

The moment had finally arrived they had made it to the room Raleigh was in. He took a deep breath opened the door, and walked in. She was barely awake. “Raleigh! It's me Clyde we came to save you.” She looked at him still a little out of it. “No, you can't...” She cried softly. Cyrus disabled her bindings which brought her back to reality a little. “Clyde?” She looks at him welling up to hug him tightly. “I thought you were dead.” She said balling. “I'm sorry.” He wrapped his arms around her too. “You have nothing to apologize about. Let's get out of here. Well after we beat that old dude's ass we've gone this far we might as well.” She looks at him still crying a little but smiling. “You don't have to worry about that. I rigged this world to implode on itself now that I have the code. Think of it like a system reboot.” Rebbecca shows up behind them. Cyrus looks at her like he's about to say something. “Don't worry I sent everyone that isn't a moral monster out of this universe already.”

“Even still I think we should make sure that bastard isn't going to weasel his way out of here,” Clyde said. “Fair enough. You have 10 minutes.” She said content following him further into the facility. With the pressure on they rush to the end of the hall to the innermost room, but like Clyde suspected there was no one there. “Well, I guess we can't win them all,” Clyde said a little disappointed. “It Looks like it will be a while before this can truly end,” Cyrus said. They enter the

portal back to the nearby world just as the universe collapses in on it before exploding back out like a second big bang.

They reach the other side near Mother's body laying on its side. All the Raleighs seem very excited they have returned. “I never thought we would get this far,” Cyrus said smiling. “Yeah, but now we need to find a place to drop these little runts. We can't take care of all of them.” Darrian said also smiling. “Don't pretend you are some macho man all of a sudden you would adopt all of them if you could.” He says back to him. “You cheeky bastard,” Darrian says They walk toward them Leaving Clyde, Raleigh, and Rebbecca.

Rebbecca looks over to Mother where Proxy is fully restored. He looks at his body not sure how he is there. “What happened,” Proxy asked. “The lady was worried about you,” Rebbecca said jabbing at his side. “She was? But she never seemed interested in our conversations.” He said turning to her. “Mother has always thought Proxy model seven was cute. And your film reviews on YouTube are entertaining and very informative.” She replies.

Proxy's face turns literally red. “I didn't think anyone knew about that. So you were just playing hard to get this whole time?” He asked her. “The database informed me that was an effective method in pursuing a relationship. How illogical.” She says to him. “I'm overjoyed, come darling let's celebrate by performing our first kiss.” Proxy says making a kissy face on his screen “Both, Mother, and Model Seven don't have the required parts for this action.” She informs him. He looks down. “Oh right.” Rebbecca seems very amused. “Don't worry I reprogrammed them to be loyal to me. I think they look cute together.” She whispers to Clyde and Raleigh.

She also leaves them alone. Clyde looks at her taking her hat off his head, and placing it back onto hers. “Cyrus told me all about that world, and what that man did to you. I wanted to hear it from you, but under the circumstances...” She cuts him off. “I understand. Thank you, Clyde.” “We are

going to get him back you hear me," Clyde said to her. "When did you become so confident?" She asked giggling and turning away. "You saved my sisters that's enough for me. That's something not even I could do. It's OK to give up now Clyde." She said more somberly than usual. "In Truth, I'm not the person I pretend to be. I'm not confident, and full of myself. There is no smugness. I don't know what I'm doing. All that was a front to cope with my powerlessness. I don't... want to lose anyone else. But it's OK because even if we stop right now another version of us will take care of it for us right?"

Clyde thought for a moment. "I know all that, and maybe this is selfish, but I think we should keep pressing on. You may think that of yourself, but it's not just a front. That's part of you too. Even if inside you are damaged, and closed off. Thinking back all this time I have been nothing but selfish, haven't I? But I have no regrets. Being a part of your adventures was the greatest and most selfish thing I ever did." She smiles giving him another hug. "Well, who can argue with that." She said. "Great, but we might need to figure out what happened to The Hopper first." "What do you mean! Where's my ship, you bastard?" She said aggressively assaulting his arm.

Chapter Thirty Four

All of them are still congregating together planning their next move. “Well if we are going to stop them we need to know more about whatever it is they are planning,” Clyde said. “The old man said it was something called Operation Deforestation,” Raleigh spoke up. “Do you guys know, anything about that? Wait why are you guys even here, and on our side?” Cyrus sighs. “It's a very long story... But no that was above our authority we have only heard the name.” Mother began to speak still mangled, and half-broken. “It was his pet project. He plans to go to the center of the multiverse to avenge The Emperor's wife.” “His wife?” Clyde asks. “Yes everyone in the empire knows of the tragedy,” Cyrus says. “It's honestly kinda messed up,” Darrian says.

On The Empire's home worlds The Emperor of the great multiverse empire sits in darkness. This is pretty much how he spends every day at least now. A ray of sunlight pierces through the window assaulting his face. He stands up slowly opening the door out onto the balcony something he rarely does now. He is overlooking everything he has built below. They are in a huge castle surrounded by a large city, that seems to stretch on for miles in each direction, yet there are plenty of beautiful

statues, and greenery as well. Soldiers march in the streets in perfect formation. The sky is littered with ships flying all over. The Emperor is rather tall with fading brown hair and a modest beard he wears a uniform like the rest of his men just a color difference, and more decorated. He sees all this and has nothing, but an unsatisfied look. None of that matters now that his beloved at left him.

He thought back to when she was still alive everything seemed wonderful. His world had been trapped in an endless war for decades. He brought them all together and unified them bringing a new age of peace. He was a much kinder, and gentler man back then. Likewise, he wanted a better world for everyone in his empire. For his comrades, and her, but one night he approached her smiling taking her hand happy to see her. “You look wonderful tonight my dear.” He smiled at her. “Thank you. You look dashing as usual too.” She said teasing him. She turns her back to him overlooking the balcony. It was a lot less militarized than it is now. “Isn't it wonderful? Our children won't have to grow up in a world like the one we did. They will live in peace.” She smiled patting her belly. “You're not saying?” He asks only for her to turn and nod at him with a smile. “That's wonderful.” He says returning a smile, and some light tears.

She was about to say more, but her body abruptly began to burst into flames right in front of him. She falls to her knees trying to grab onto her husband. He panics looking around for something to put out the fire. He tried pouring water from a glass nearby on her to no avail. “What... is happening...” She says crying out in pain. He desperately calls for help trying to put it out with his clothing now, but that doesn't help either. She smiles at him one last time saying. “I love you.” Before turning to dust before him. He falls to his knees screaming into the sky. What happened made no sense there is no reason for what happened. Yet it did. He slams his fist into the stone railing no longer wishing to remember such a painful memory. Doctor Corvus appeared beside him.

“It's rare to see you outside your room.” The old man says. “What do you want oswald.” The

emperor says to him. “Well those bastards destroyed my lab so I had no choice but to return here for now, but also to remind you why we are doing all this.” He turned to him getting right up to his face. “I don't need to be reminded what that thing took from me. This is my plan my reason to keep on existing.” He said furiously. “Well, you won't have to wait much longer. G-N is almost ready then we can proceed what a pity I had to sacrifice my lab for this.” He seemed to care more about that than anything else. “The Caretaker may watch over the tree, and mend it to his will, but it's outgrown his control, and soon I will use that against him.” The Emperor says returning to the darkness of his room not saying another word.

Back with Clyde, and the others he asks. “So The Emperor blames The Caretaker for her death?” “Well not directly, but the multiverse necessitates that every possible outcome occurs. So there would be one where his wife died for no determinable reason as well, it just so happened to be the world our former leader presided in.” Mother explains to them all. “That's awful,” Raleigh said. Clyde understands why someone might want to lash out if that happened. He didn't know what to say. “Well, we obviously can't just let him destroy the multiverse. I'd think that the Caretaker would step in at that point though.” Raleigh said taking some of the reins back from Clyde. “Before any of that, we need a safe place to bring your sisters.” Cyrus starts to say, but before anyone can answer a large door appears, and opened up. They all get ready to fight. Loki and Lucy walk out causing them to drop their guard. Loki grabs Clyde by the collar shaking him not giving anyone time to react. “What the bloody hell were you thinking!” He then stops looking around. “Do my eyes deceive me or are there a ton of Raleigh here? Bastard, did you actually manage it?” Loki says. “Slow down we can explain everything,” Clyde says as he is released. “Fine but let's go somewhere safer.” He gestures to the door he just came from most likely leading to Valhalla.

“Welp you guys have fun I'm gonna head out now,” Rebecca said making her portal, as proxy

does his best to try, and drag mother through it. He struggles but is making ground just slowly Rebecca makes no effort to help. “Really? Just like that? We are probably going to need your help though.” Clyde said. “And when that time comes I'll be there. For a price of course.” She smirks at Raleigh. “Oh yeah well I'll be there to rub it into your face when we have to help you with your tragic backstory,” Raleigh said crossing her arms. “Thank you...” She says reluctantly as Rebecca is about to walk through the portal. Clyde nods thanking her for her help too as it closes.

They all walk into the doors to Valhalla this time on a seemingly more remote, and calm part. “This is my villa. It seemed more appropriate for this. It's on an island some no one should bother us.” Loki says as 5 maids appear. “Welcome home master.” They say in unison. “Well... Other than them.” He laughs as Clyde and Raleigh glare at him. After everyone settles down a little They explain everything to Loki and the Physician. All The Raleigh's chow down on food they had been denied for the longest time enjoying themselves. Raleigh smiles happily to see them all like this. “If you are going to do this you are going to need a lot of help.” Lucy chimes in. “I'm sure there are a few people we have met that can,” Clyde says thinking back to all the people they have met. He was sure he could count on the scouts for sure, but he wondered if people like Kyle would be willing to help after everything that happened. “Even still It's not enough,” Raleigh said.

“My sister and I will help along with All The War Worlds no doubt,” Loki said. “I'm afraid that won't be enough either though.” He sighs. “I don't think you have much choice, but to ask The Union.” The Physician says. “Ugh that sounds annoying... but you are probably right,” Raleigh said not a fan of the idea. “I will do my best to help find more allies. The empire has made countless enemies over the years it's just a matter of finding them. For now, though let us rest.” Loki says only to see Clyde already knocked out cold face-first into the plate of food in front of him. “Looks like the poor boy is all tuckered out now.” The Physician giggles. “Oh, Raleigh I'm sure you would be happy to hear your ship

is docked just outside. We should probably do a check-up before you try using it though.” She said. Raleigh nodded seeming to be lost in thought as she looks at Clyde.

Everyone slowly started to retire to their rooms for the night. Raleigh carries Clyde to a bed She lays him down on it watching him sleep peacefully climbing in bed with him for a little while gripping his body tightly around hers. She stays like that for a while trying not to disturb his slumber. She had made up her mind. She was tired of dragging other people into her problems. Not only that, but she needed to resolve them, and she needed to do it without Clyde. She couldn't bare the thought of something happening to anyone else she cared about, but he was determined to help her now. This meant the world to her, but she couldn't let him go with her any longer. After a while, she let go of him leaving him and taking one last look at him.

She rested in her room for a couple of hours knowing she would need to sleep getting up early to make her leave without him. She went outside already, fully functional only to find Cyrus, and Darrian already awake, and loading her siblings into a ship like it was some sort of inter-dimensional school bus. “Good morning.” He said still a little miffed about working with her with their history. “Where do you think you are taking them?” She asked. “Well, we are going to find them homes, families. Give them the lives they had been robbed of.” Cyrus said adjusting his glasses. She looks like she wants to stop them still not fully trusting them, but knowing his intentions are good. “Won't the empire just find them again?” She said. “Well, The Physician solved that issue. She used her power to dampen their powers. They won't be easy to find, and the empires no longer pursuing them either.” He said.

“Alright take them then, but if anything happens to them.” She threatens. “I'll hold you to it.” He says climbing onboard. “Are you going to leave without him after all this?” He asks her. “That's my choice.” She says. “Very well.” He shuts the door, and they start to lift off into the air. Raleigh waves

to all of them hoping they find the life they want a little sad to see them go, but happy they are free now. She walks toward The Hopper where Loki and The Physician are waiting to see her off. It seems everyone already knew she would probably try to do this.

Clyde exits the ship. “Looks like everything is good to go, captain. Not that I could understand half of the tech in there though. What did you think you could get away from me that easy?” He said smiling. She looked surprised but smiled happy that he was there all the same. She walked up to him punching him lightly in the stomach. “You better not die.” She says walking into the ship not saying anything else. “Aye aye captain.” He says following her in as they lift off to go to The Union's world. “Never a dull moment with those two,” Loki said to her while they watched them fly away. She clung to his arm resting her head on his shoulder. “You worry too much.” She said to him.

Chapter Thirty Five

They arrive at The Union's home world with no issues. No one tried to shoot them down, and Raleigh didn't bug out. Clyde is almost weirded out it went so smoothly. They land in a hangar shortly after exiting The Hopper. They are met with a line of soldiers in green uniforms standing at attention, and a lady who looks very nervous is also in uniform. She has neat brown hair tied up, she has blue eyes and glasses. Her lip quivered nervously. “Well... welcome Captain Raleigh we are pleased you agreed to come to meat us at Concordia today. Please, right this way.” She said sheepishly walking away toward outside the hanger. They follow her out to where soldiers are training they stop their drills to salute them.

“What's with the warm reception,” Clyde asks out of concern. “Well, they have been trying to recruit me for a while. I kinda lied, and told them I was going to join, maybe.” She whispers. “What are you going to do when they find out you lied your ass off,” he asked looking around at all the smiling faces they must have told them to be on their best behavior to impress her. “Most people can't just waltz in here and tell them what we need to tell them.” She said. He sighs hoping they aren't too upset

by her deceit. “As you can see we have the best men we can get, and they have amazing... training regiments.” The brown-haired girl says trying to impress them.

She leads them into a large building and an elevator. “The General is very excited to see you today. Please um... don't disappoint her. Who is this guy you brought with you by the way.” She asks her. “He's... my first mate,” Raleigh said holding back on calling him something silly since they do need to speak with them. “Oh, I see. If he is with you, he must be quite strong.” She said nervously like she is walking on eggshells around them. “Oh yeah, he's super strong. He can bench press a mountain for sure.” She said snickering. “Wow really?” She asked believing her completely even backing away from them a little. The elevator opens to the top floor, and into a reception room. No one is at the desk. The brown-haired girl walks near the door. “The General is in here waiting.” She said sweating bullets now.

In the next room, a woman is sitting at a desk. She has a serious-looking face, short white hair, green eyes, and an officer version of the green uniform everyone else was wearing. She looked to be in her twenties very young for such a high rank. “Oh good, you arrived. Please take a seat. I was surprised you finally decided to join our side. I'm General Natasha Starcrafter.” She said putting away the paperwork she was doing. Clyde and Raleigh both sit down while the brown-haired girl remained standing. “Yeah about that. I kinda lied. I needed to talk to you guys about something else.” She smiles apologetically. The brown-haired girl looks like she might faint. The General Glares at her. “You said you were sure she was being honest.” “I'm sorry, I'm sorry, she seemed genuine on the call.” She said in a panic thinking she was about to be fired for sure. The Natasha sighed. “It's alright I half expected this. For punishment, you have to finish all my paperwork for me.” She says. The girl sighs in relief. “Tha... thank... you…” She managed to say taking the stack of papers from her desk and taking it out of the room.

“At least I don't have to do all that anymore. Now tell me why you are here, and it better be good.” She commands. Raleigh started to explain everything about Operation Deforestation sharing the data they had with her. “Well that is pretty serious if I'm to believe you, but honestly I don't think this is enough evidence for us to mobilize.” She says. “Wha... aren't you guys chomping at the bit for any reason to attack each other,” Raleigh said a little disappointed with that answer. “While we do have a shaky non-aggression pact with them. We aren't exactly excited at the prospect of war.” She General sighs. “That's probably what the bigwigs just told you to say tell me how you really feel,” Raleigh demands. She pauses for a moment, but ends up answering her. “look I don't know how you think a nation is run, but it is complicated. It's not a decision I can make alone. It's not like the empire there are levels of bureaucracy. The Union doesn't like to make the first move.”

Clyde thought back to his old job, and the red tape thinking it was similar but on a smaller scale. So many things couldn't be done because of it simple things at that. “Oh yeah, I forgot you guys like to play the morality card.” She groans. “I'm not going to say you are completely wrong, but come on we have made the multiverse a better place, and stopped the empire in many ways already.” The General says only for her to scoff. Clyde interrupts them both. “Arguing like this isn't going to help. We need your help. Do you think we can convince whoever you need to listen to reason?” He agreed with Raleigh mostly after what he had seen from the union mostly the job they had Rebecca do, but talking to them like that wouldn't get them to help. He didn't blame Raleigh she was used to doing things alone.

“I will talk to the council on your behalf this is an issue that needs to be addressed regardless of whether we agree to work with you. It's just going to take some time.” She says to Clyde. “I have a request. I'd like you to meet some of our men and go over battle tactics while you wait. I was already planning on asking you this, so they are expecting you." “Sure I guess we can do that while we are waiting,” Raleigh said leaning back in her chair. “Well, I better get going then. Marcy, come in here.”

She said as the brown-haired girl rushed into the room. “Yes ma'am?” She says saluting her. “Take them to The Squad.” The General ordered. “Yes Ma'am!” She said back to her. She once again leads them to another location into what looks like barracks. Five people are sitting at a table eating together.

“Hey um, Squad meet miss Raleigh and her first mate.” Marcy would say to them. The man turns toward them, it's none other than the same squad they fought against back in the ultra scouts world. “Well if it isn't the pip squeak we fought way back when. We never did get to properly thank you for your help.” He stood up grinning. The rest of them stayed sitting but seemed ready for a fight. “What the hell why are you guys here? You were wearing empire uniforms.” Clyde said very confused his anger grew a little more than it normally would. In a way, they ruined the purity of that world in his eyes. “Oh, that? We couldn't go around The Multiverse making The Union look bad now, could we? We were trying to get our hands on that growing power, but these power suits are pretty amazing so I'm glad about how it all turned out. We couldn't have done it without you two.” He laughed gesturing to his waist. He had a device very similar to the one The Ultra Scouts used to transform.

This seemed to upset Clyde. “She that's what's wrong with The Union they act like the good guy, but then they do stuff like this under the radar. It's why I would never join you guys.” Raleigh said nodding as he had only affirmed what she thought. “Oh yeah, girly you want to go?” He squared up ready to fight though he doesn't seem to be taking it that seriously. “Ca... calm down... They are our... guest.” Marcy says terrified they might start fighting, and she will get in trouble. “You need to learn to chill Marcy. A friendly sparing match should be fine.” The girl member of the squad said to her wrapping her arm around her. “That's a great idea, Lucy. So how bout it I'll take you both on alone.” He boasts. “Let's beat that power suit off him," Clyde said unusually fired up.

They go outside, men had already started to gather around watching, and cheering. “Oh, I forgot to introduce myself. The names Jacob.” He said grinning from the other side of the yard. “Clyde.” He

says assuming he already knows Raleigh's name. He pulls out the multi-tool making it a gun. “Man this guy is in way over his head.” Raleigh laughs transforming hers into a hammer. “Don't write me off just yet.” He strikes a pose transforming much faster than the scouts do it he is covered in the colors black, and green just like The Union's uniform. He rushes at them with lightning speed. Clyde almost doesn't have the time to react. Clyde fired at him dead on, but it didn't seem to do anything. “That little pea shooter ain't gonna do squat against me with this on.” He laughed striking Clyde again. Raleigh knocked him away with the hammer making him fly back a bit.

“Damn you pack a punch girly. If I wasn't wearing this that might have knocked me out. No wonder The Union wants to recruit you.” He says. “Yeah, I am pretty awesome.” She smirks as they engage each other again. She wacks him several times as he counters. They never fought against the suits before, so they may not have realized just how strong they were Raleigh even gets knocked back a little. “Prop's to you, I didn't expect this fight to go on this long.” She smiles. Clyde switched the gun to lethal mode thinking it wouldn't kill him with the armor on anyway He fired on him seeming to cause minimal damage. Raleigh whacked him again with more force than before cracking the helmet and revealing a bit of his face. Jacob groans standing back up. “Alright, you proved your point I give.” He said reverting out of the power suit. The Crowd cheered, a few of them seemed disappointed with the outcome they had bet money that Jacob would win.

“I understand you might be mad we stole this tech from your buds, but we have helped a lot of people with it,” Jacob said smiling. “Whatever. If we end up teaming up. You have to apologize to them.” Clyde said walking back into the barracks with Raleigh. “You got it mate.” He said a little out of breath. “Come on Clyde I know we fought them before, but they seem alright,” Raleigh said. “You are just saying that because he complimented you.”

The General was speaking with a group of people standing in the middle. “As you can see this is extremely important everyone in the multiverse might be in danger if we don't act.” She says to them. “Yes, yes. We see the issue, but we need to think about the best way to approach it. The optics on this one could be bad.” One of them says. “We would be the Multiverses saviors.” She tried to convince them. “Or seen as a warmongering nation just like the empire. Elections are coming up soon until then we need to be careful what we say.” Another one says they all seem to agree with them. Natasha Clenched her fist. “We don't have time to worry about that this is life or death!” “Your concerns are noted, and we will keep them in mind for sure. You are dismissed.” She leaves not liking the answer she was given.

Chapter Thirty Six

Marcy shakes as her phone rings. She answers it. It's a call from The Natasha. “How are things going over there Marcy?” She asks her. She holds her hand to the phone looking over at Them, they are chanting while Clyde, Raleigh, and a few members of the squad are having some sort of eating contest. Clyde had already given up laying his head down bloated, but Raleigh, and Jacob still had plenty of room somehow. “Everything is... Fine... Please come back...” She pleads with her. “I'm afraid It's going to be a while they all have their heads up their ass. You're a big girl Marcy I'm sure you can keep everything civil.” She says to her hanging up. Marcy lets out a huge sigh very stressed. “Where is all that food going in your tiny little body?” Jacob asks close to his limit. “Trade secret.” She giggles seeming to be able to keep going. “I give up.” He says passing out onto the table. Raleigh stands on the chair triumphantly lording her victory over them all. “Haha you Union guys think you are so tough, but you haven't beaten me at anything yet.” Raleigh brags.

“Well how about one more game. We need some booze to wash down all this food now anyway.” Jacob says. “Your on.” She grins sitting back down. Clyde knows this will be one battle she

isn't going to win. “Um... we aren't allowed to drink on base... remember.” Marcy said meekly. “Come on live a little.” Lucy said jabbing her sides sitting down with them. “That never stopped us anyway.” Marcy looked like she might cry. “I suppose I should introduce you guys to the rest of our team.” Jacob said taking the first big chug of his beer that had already been prepared by the man wearing glasses. “This lovely lady is Sara she is our muscle.” He said as she smiled flexing. “Now this gentlemen is our resident smart guy. His name is Simon.” He pointed to the man in glasses who sat down joining them. “And lastly our little trooper Tyler. He's only nineteen so he will have to drink juice instead.” He says making quotation marks as he slid a beer of over to the youngest member of their squad. He has long green hair, you might even mistake him for a girl. “Thanks boss I love juice.” He winked. “Oh and hue.” Jerks his neck towards a smiling man at the end of the table.

They all started to drink Raleigh quickly started to get buzzed and even a little drunk. Sara giggles. “Wow she's a total light weight that's embarrassing.” She laughed harder thinking about it. Tyler followed soon after, but ended up passing out. The drinks piled up till only three remained. Lucy was starting to get woozy. “Damn it... I'm out.” She said passing out. All while Marcy panicked in the corner powerless to do anything. It was down to just Jacob, and Clyde. “Well look at you, I didn't expect it to end like this. Well you got another one in you?” Jacob asked. Clyde didn't seem all that phased at all. He had grown quite a tolerance for alcohol over the years despite not partaking too often. “I can do this all day.” He said downing another drink in front of him. “Why you two even here it's gotta be something big right?” Jacob asked in a drunken stooper.

“It's not really a secret. We came here to get your help against the empire before they destroy the place.” Clyde answers only for Jacob to pass out soon after. Clyde sighs looking over at the only person still awake in the room. “So whats your deal why are you so nervous?” “I have to deal with this everyday with the threat of losing my job. Why wouldn't I be panicking!” She yells. “Well if you ask

me that is making it harder.” Clyde said not sure what to do now that everyone is out for the count. “Thanks but I didn't ask.” She said seeming to be more irritable now. He shrugged waiting for everyone to get back on their feet.

Not far away outside a portal opens in the sky, and five figures emerge, and land on the roof of one of the barracks. It's none other than The Ultra Scouts. They all look a little more jaded than before, wearing cloaks covering their power suits. “We finally made it.” Adrian says to them all. Azure looks around a little unsure of everything. “Something seems off.” Azure says only for Maya to speak up. “What do you mean?” “Well the signatures did lead us here, but look at those men down there they aren't wearing the same uniforms, as The Empire.” He goes on to explain. ”Only one way to find out.” Adrian says striking a quick pose in order to fully power up helmet, and all jumping down below. The others sigh doing the same. One of the men below quickly sees them as they land not very quietly. “Halt this is a restricted area! Identify yourselves!”

Adrian simply walks closer to him. “I'm warning you surrender!” The guard says in a pleading manner only for he to keep walking up to him. The guard fires at him only for it to bounce off the suit. he quickly lifts him up by the throat until he drops his weapon to the ground. He tosses him to the side as more guards alerted by the noise appear. The alarm is sounded as more of them surround them all. Try as they might, they are no match for the scouts. Jacob, and the others quickly come to from the sound of the alarm. He groans a little hungover now. “Is that the invasion alarm, are they doing a drill today?” He asks Marcy she shakes her head now terrified. “Well I'll be damned I don't think I've heard that go off ever on a base this deep in our territory. Let's go say hi to the sons of bitches that were dumb enough to attack us.” He grins getting all fired up. Clyde attempts to wake up Raleigh, and Tyler, but they are both out cold. “Let em rest I'm sure we can handle whatever this is.” Jacob would say to him. They run ahead of Clyde to take on the threat.

Reaching the outside they saw tons of men already on the floor defeated. Sara checks one of their pulses seeing that they are still alive upon further inspection they all seem to be just badly hurt. “I knew it we finally found you.” Adrian said to Jacob. Jacob laughs “You were the last couple of punks I expected to see. So you found us huh now what?” “You pay.” he says charging at him. Jacob barely has time to strike a pose, and transform. He seems shocked he was able to. “I didn't think they would be able to replicate our suits.” Azure says. The rest of the squad powers up each of them taking on one of the scouts except they were one member short. Marcy looked at the ground not saying a word very upset, but seeming to be much calmer than she had been. She looks up at Cassandra the only Scout not engaged in combat yet charging at her full of rage. “How dare you hurt them!” She screams showing a monstrous amount of strength cracking a bit of the visor with a single punch.

Clyde finally makes it out to the yard looking at what has transpired. “Wait stop everyone calm down!” Adrian looks over to see him. “Clyde? Why are you here? And with them?” Even though his face is covered Clyde can feel the rage well up inside him. He knocks Jacob back leaving him, and attacking Clyde instead. Clyde not expecting this barley is able to pull out his tool and make it a knife to block the punch. “Was it all a lie? You were working with them?” Clyde shook his head. “Look a lot has happened. If you stop fighting we can talk about it.” Clyde said attempting to reason with him. “The time for talking has long past. Not after what The Empire did to our world.” He goes in for another strike knocking Clyde down. “They decimated the city. Its gone Clyde. Nothing like Monster Master!” Adrian explained.

Jacob re-engaged him. “What are you talking about?” Jacob asks. “Don't play dumb! After you left they came with a fleet of ships, and rained fire on us.” Green says. “The fuck we did. Our mission was simple. Find useful tech from other worlds for The Union, and bring it back. We even went the extra mile made sure to avoid hurting civilians on your world.” Jacob retorts. “The Union?” he ask

confused finally stopping his attack. “Like I said a lot has happened.” Clyde says with a sigh. They all power down ready to really talk things out. Clyde explains it to them all.

“So you guys were only pretending to be The Empire, so your own nation wouldn't look bad for stealing technology, and The Real Empire that showed up later is unrelated? That sounds needlessly convoluted. We always defend those who are good. We could've worked together” Adrian says to them not really understanding. “Your too naive. I would have thought we taught you that when we beat your asses.” Jacob says. “In their world everyone's like that you idiot, even the evil vampire looking guy.” Simon says. Jacob nods not saying anything. “As for The Empire's attack. That may have been our fault.” Clyde says reluctantly. “The Empire has been chasing Raleigh all over the multiverse.” Adrian, and the others look at each other unsure of the next action they should take.

“We can't really blame someone in trouble for bringing that trouble to our doorstep.” Green says to White. He just looks down, and reluctantly agrees The Empire's attack must have really changed his outlook, but like before he seems to accept it easily most of his rage subsiding. Before anyone else can say anything The General appears dumbstruck. “What the Hell happened here!” The Squad Salutes, as well as the once again terrified Marcy. “Just tying up some loose ends ma'am.” Jacob says. She sighs facepalming.

After they all sat down, and talked the situation over Natasha did not look pleased. She looked over at Jacob closing her eyes taking a deep sigh. “I am fully aware some people in the empire will use underhanded tactics, but your in my army now not theirs. Why wasn't this in your report?” She asked in a soft but angry tone. “Well I.” Jacob started to explain. “No excuses, do you realize you basically declared war on another world. That's not how I do things. Your lucky If I don't court martial you for this. Apologize to them right now.” She demands. Jacob stands up, and with great hesitant says the words. “I'm sorry. I was just trying to do what I thought was best for The Union.” He holds out his

hand to Adrian who also hesitates, but takes his hand. “While I think you were incredibly misguided I can respect your desire to defend your home.”

“Great, Major Jacob you are dismissed. Your punishment will be decided at a later date.” She states, he just nods to her leaving the room somewhat upset with how that ended. “Other units do that shit all the time.” He says under his breath. She turns to The Scouts. “Now. I know your experience with us hasn't been great. I'd like to change that. And your testimony to The Counsel about the attack on your world might help us both. What do you think will you or your world join The Union?” The General asks. “I can't claim to speak for my entire planet, but as for me, and my team we will help you. The Empire must be stopped.”

“I'm glad we could come to an agreement. Now back to...” Natasha says about to talk to Raleigh only to see that she is asleep, drooling on the table next to Clyde. Clyde managed to shake her awake. “Wha... oh sorry this conversation was kinda boring me, and I'm still a little hung over.” She answers. The General glares at her bringing chills down her spine. “I mean! Well... I honestly have no desire to join... it would be too... restricting for me... but we do need your help.” She nervously says. “I see that all to well. I expected that from you after knowing you for a short while. It's going to be rough to get The Counsel to move on this, but I will do my best to make it happen.” The General says. “Great.” Raleigh says cheerfully. “Come on Clyde lets get out of here.” She grabs him, and drags him out of the room before, anyone can really say anything. “Wait! We can't just leave like that.” Clyde protests.

She lets go of him looking him straight in the eyes. We don't have a whole lot of time to find more allies Clyde.” She says to him as he sighs knowing she is right. “Who else can we even ask that we already know. I doubt Kyle will be willing to help us.” He asks. “I was hoping you had some ideas honestly.” She said sulking at the fact he didn't. Clyde stops to think long and hard. “I know. Well The Ultra Scouts are strong right? And in my world they are fictional people in a show, so it stands to

reason that another universe from my childhood is out there, and honestly I would already know if they are a good pick or not.” She smiles happy to know he's already thought of something waiting eagerly to hear the answer. He started to walk towards the hopper as he thought about it more thinking of all the things he watched, and played as a kid. “I got it. It might sound weird but if I'm right they are perfect.” He says. “Well who is it.” She said impatiently. “It would be easier just to show you.” He explains only for her groan.

Back on The Hopper Raleigh got a viewing screen ready with whatever Clyde was talking about. It was an old cartoon called Crazy Critters she watched as the toons did a bunch of wacky shenanigans including dropping anvils, and hitting each other with huge hammers. “I don't get it.” She says confused. She keeps watching as Clyde explains it. “Well it might not be someones first thought when it comes to power these guys are insane. They can pretty much take any hit, and the win most of the time just by annoying the bad guy into submission.” She watches more seeming to understand. “Oh I think I get it now, but how are we going to convince them to join.” “Carrots? Maybe a friendly game of basketball? I'm honestly not sure that's the hard part.” He says as she starts hooking herself up to The Hopper ready to go. “It's worth a shot.” She says.

Crow had returned to the Fleet admiral who was now with a hooded girl, it looked like they were about to go somewhere. “Ah, you have returned to me Crow, and with something damning?” He asked, confident they had succeeded in their mission. They simply nodded, looking over the information on the desk's console. Even he seemed a little shocked at what he found, losing his composer for a moment. “Well, this certainly is damning. Good work, Crow, you may take a well-deserved break.” He said to them as they disappeared into crows again. The Fleet Admiral seemed to be conflicted with the information he had just learned like it shifted what he thought he knew.

Chapter Thirty Seven

Loki wakes up when his alarm goes off. He rises with a smile on his face ready for a new day. He gets dressed going to his bathroom to finish getting ready The Physician is there brushing her teeth. “Morning handsome.” She says winking at him finishing up herself. “Right back at you.” He says grinning. “You remember our plans later today right?” She asks him in a slightly less cheery manner it seems she is already expecting he might have forgotten. “What? Of course, I remember the thing.” He sweats a little nervously because he had forgotten whatever it is he promised. “Ok good. See you at three then.” She smiles leaving the room. He sighs trying to remember what it was as his phone starts to blow up. He opens it to see messages from Marcel, and other people all asking where he is or if he was still coming later. “Oh, dear.” He says to himself.

Despite being very under-prepared he makes his way to Marcel first he had promised that he would model for him. As Marcel measures him, and gives him clothing to wear Loki explains his dilemma. “What a pickle you've got yourself into. Can't say you don't deserve it though.” He seems amused by Loki's plight. The Lion man puts on the outfit he set out for him posing for Marcel as he

takes notes. “Deserve it? Enjoying people is kinda my whole thing.” Loki says boastfully. The tailor sighs “I don't think you get it sweetie. Think about all the heartbreak you must surely bring. There is only so much of yourself you can share with people, and I'm not just talking about your time hun.”

Loki shakes his head. “I couldn't disagree more! I'll show you, Marcy boy.” Loki proclaims storming out of the building. Marcel just shakes his head “I'll be here for you when it all goes wrong.” Loki opens his phone to see who is his next appointment. Only to see that he promised a girl and a guy that he would meet them for a coffee date at the same time. “I can make it work.” He considers asking them both to sit at the same table together but realizes a lot of people might be upset by that idea. Instead he ends up meeting the girl first.

“Sorry, I'm late dear. I got tied up.” He says sitting down. She warmly smiles at him. “It's alright I'm just glad you agreed to join me today.” Just as she says that he sees the man he was also supposed to go out with on the other side of the shop looking at his watch no doubt thinking he had been stood up. “Oh right me as well. Pardon me I need to go to the little boy's room.” He gets up heading to the other side of the store hoping she doesn't notice. “Sorry friend. I know I'm a bit tardy.” Loki says trying to stay out of the girl's line of sight. The guy's eyes light up as he begins to speak. “Yes! I was afraid something might have happened, now about...” The man started to say only for Loki to Nod sipping the coffee the man already ordered for them both not paying attention and trying to make sure the girl doesn't find out. She looks like she is beginning to get annoyed with her phone tapping her foot. After about five minutes. Loki interrupts the guy mid-conversation. “Yes that's very interesting, but I do need to relieve myself. That Coffee... went right through me.” Loki said getting up. He looks disappointed but seems to understand.

He makes his way to the other side of the store again sitting down. “Sorry about that,” Loki says. “Is everything alright you were in there a while.” She says out of concern. “Oh, I'm fine no need

to worry.” He says laughing nervously now concerned the man will notice. “That's good I hope you don't mind me ordering for you.” She smiles brightly. “That's just fine.” He says leaning back and relaxing a bit more. Just as he starts to think that he can pull this off his phone starts to go off like crazy. He checks it to see more people asking where he is. He stands up nervously unsure of himself now. “Sorry to cut this short, but it seems something has come up. Don't worry you were wonderful. If you ever need anything do not hesitate to ask.” He bows reaching his hand out for a side hug. She accepts the hug seeming to understand. “It must take a lot of work to run a whole universe I get it.” He does a sigh of relief quickly leaving the restaurant. He texts the man more or less the same thing not affording him the luxury of an in-person explanation he just didn't have the time.

Furthermore, he meets up with one of the assistants that showed Clyde around the square. “Great you are finally here! I'm ready to learn some magic.” He excitedly explains only for the other girl assistant to show up behind him. “What? But Master Loki said he was going to teach me how to break-dance.” The two of them start to argue over it as Loki stands there unsure what to do, but before he really can a blonde girl comes around the corner spotting him. “There you are did you forget that we had a date today?” She asked a little annoyed. Loki seems a bit overwhelmed unsure what to do. He wishes he could do all of it, he ends up running away. All of them chase after him.

Another one of his promises blocks his path wondering what he is doing, he runs in the opposite direction. It snowballs, and snowballs till there is a huge crowd of people. Loki hides in a back alley as they pass by not seeing him. He stops to catch his breath checking his phone to see it is now four he missed the deadline to meet up with Lucy. He slowly puts his back on the wall slinking to the floor. “Marcel was right. I let everyone down.” A man in rags that was sitting in the corner unnoticed till now raised his head. “Son? Is that you?

This really is HEL.” The man says stepping out of the shadow to reveal it's his father. “Dad?

What the hell happened to you.” Loki says concerned he still had plenty of reasons to hate his father, but he looked like he was homeless and had not eaten in a while. His facial hair was a mess, and he was dirty. “This place happened. The sissies are everywhere, and I can't even beat them up. A bunch of hippies with their peace, and love. No violence whatsoever.” Dave explained. Loki sighed. “I see you haven't changed at all.” He expected his dad to get over it eventually or at least not be hiding in some back alley there were plenty of places he could go. “Whatever what fucked up shit did you do to get stuck in this horrible place?” Dave asked.

Loki thought about it not sure how to explain it or if he would even care. “I suppose I tried to please everyone and ended up pleasing no one.” He explained. The former War Master laughed. “And you say I'm the one who hasn't changed.” Loki thinks about it for a moment. “That's fair, though I never thought we would have a conversation in this manner.” “That's about as deep as I'm going to get with you.” He said scoffing. “Have you learned your lesson.” Lucy walks toward them seemingly knowing what happened she reaches her hand out to him. He grabs it as she pulls him to his feet. He lowers his head in shame. “Yes.” She raises her eyebrow. “Well explain it so I'm sure.” “I need to clone myself, so I'm capable of helping everyone.” She frowns. “That joke is in poor taste.” He smiles softly. “Fine, Fine. I should know my limits.” She smiles back at him “Close enough let's go home.” She holds her hand out to him as he takes it they both walk away from his father. “Wait don't leave me here!” Dave demands. Loki doesn't pay him any attention but doesn't stop him from following him either. “So what exactly were our plans again.” Loki asked her. “I'll let you figure that one out.” She says to him.

Clyde, and Raleigh quickly enter the ship shutting the door though it's a bit difficult considering they are flattened like an actual pancake. They take a deep breath slowly regaining shape. “That was terrifying.” Raleigh said to him. He nods in agreement. “Not my best idea.” Clyde said disappointed things didn't work out. “Well there are plenty of other fictional characters we can try.” Raleigh grips his

arm tightly. “For the love of all things in the Multiverse please pick something more grounded in reality.” Before he can respond a cartoon cat appears behind them. “What are you guys talking about?” He asks they turn their heads slowly before fleeing in terror.

Chapter Thirty Eight

A huge Multiversal Empire ship travels through the vortex between worlds to an unknown destination. Inside the ship, it is quite the buzz everyone is gathered in front of a platform waiting for something. Some of the higher-ranked officers begin to show up and take their seats on stage including The Old Man, and The Reaper close behind. The Reaper seems to have not escaped completely unharmed from the universe being reset as his new body is missing an arm, a bit of the remains seem to float near him like they are trying to reform, but the thing they are trying to reform no longer exists.

The Admiral stops to gawk at him for a moment. His uniform had much more decoration then before in the form of medals and other flashy things. Next to him was the shorter woman wearing a hood covering her body completely though what almost looked like animal ears or maybe horns too shape on the hood. “Well if it isn't the Empires' mutt such a shame what happened, and you just got your fancy new body too.” The man mocked him. The Reaper seemed irritated by his presence, but one glare from Corvus stopped him from doing anything foolish.

“Don't be angry I've already been following what has been happening to you closely clearly a couple of traitors and a civilian were too much for you to handle. We should all know our limits.” The Man shrugs his shoulders lording his superiority over him to The Reaper's annoyance. The Man quickly losses interest, and turns his attention to th old Man. “Sir allow me to hunt down these insects that have been giving you trouble. It's my duty to show the strength of the Empire to all.” The Man suggested. The Doctor sighed not seeming to want to entertain this man any further. “That won't be necessary Fleet Admiral Marcus Novastride. They are irrelevant to our plans now they can do nothing.” he walks away to find his seat not giving the man any more time to speak with him. “How rude.” He smiled knowing that he was about to remove everyone's faith him soon says finding his seat for the time being.

Everyone settles down as The Emperor makes his appearance. He is surrounded by his honor guard the best foot soldiers in The Empire. They are dressed in all black like they are attending a funeral, equipped with the finest weapons. Everyone is in silence as he approaches the podium. The Emperor has not made a public appearance like this in some time. Cameras begin to focus on him live-streaming the event to other parts of the empire that can't leave their posts. “Children of the empire! I your leader Lucius Novastride am pleased to announce out plans to all of you. It is finally time for us to enact our greatest achievement. No doubt some of you have heard murmurs of it. We have decided to call it Project Deforestation, and what a fitting name that is.” The Emperor's words were just what many in The Empire had waited to hear for a long while tired of the inaction. Lucius pauses for a moment as the crowd roars to life with cheers.

“This Multiverse is cruel and unfair. Many of you have lost people you loved, as have I, and not because we didn't have the strength or the technology to stop it, but because the multiverse demands that every reality happen. This is outrageous, and cannot stand to be any longer!” he says with passion

and rage. “Now we finally have a chance to change that. We will go to the point of origin, and siphon The Tree's power and take it for our own, and then we will take out the very Thing who created it all in the first place. Because we have outgrown them, even with all its power it has become weak compared to its creation.” He spits every line with venom meaning every word. The crowd has gone silent.

“I can't promise that all of you will live to see the day, but what I can promise is that your deaths will be the last, ever! You will have saved The Empire, and its people, your families, everything. No more uncertainty, and chaos. We will mold this place in our image, and no one will ever suffer hardship ever again!” He says ending his speech. At first, no one says a word unsure how to respond, but slowly the crowd begins to cheer once more ready to go to war. He grins from the reaction before turning to leave while they still clap, and cheer his name.

The Admiral attempts to stop him. ”My what a great speech my lord, though I think the meaning might truly be lost on the laymen.” The guards look like they might attack him for daring, but The Emperor stops them with a hand wave. “It matters not nephew. Only that they are sufficiently motivated.” Lucius answers. “Very true, though I can't help but be a little concerned about Corvus's end. Perhaps it's his hubris, but it seems like they are more of a threat than he leads on.” Marcus says to him. “It seems like you have an issue with the man? You are not to pursue them.” He says as he walks away only to stop once more to say more things. “However if they somehow interfere with our plans, destroy them. They no longer have any value to us.” The Admiral seems to take that as permission to do as he pleases. “Well about that there is something I need to give you.” He hand the flash drive to him he accepted it in his hand. “Insist you look at this. Preferably somewhere with no prying eyes.” Marcus urges him. “Very well you don't often press things like this I will look at it later.” He says walling away with his guards. Marcus just smirks.

The Woman with him lowers her hood showing her giant scaly hands, and dragon horns. Her

hair is emerald green, and she has only sharp teeth. “So are we busting their heads in or what?” She asks him. “No need for such crude language you know better.” He says frowning slightly. “Sorry sir.” She said looking down. He pats her head smiling again. “It's alright, and to answer your question. We will have to get a little creative.” A drone floating amongst the other cameras floats out of the ship returning to where it came from. It was Rebbecca's she recorded the whole thing and looked it over. She sends the video to Raleigh who is now safe on The Hopper no longer being chased by a cartoon animal.

“That's not good we don't have much time left, and this is pretty vague as far as how they are going to go about it,” Raleigh said to Clyde. “We have at the most time to jump to one more world if we are going to also have time to meet up, back at Valhalla for a while that is.” Clyde thinks for a moment not sure where to go it seemed his last choice was terrible where could they go now, who would help them, in a lot of ways he was overburdened with possible choices there were a ton of fictional characters that would not hesitate to help, but who was the best choice. “I think I got it.”

Chapter Thirty Nine

The sun rises again on an unseen world. Giant mechas fly across its sky seemingly being somewhat common in this world, but none are quite as impressive as the one in front of a young woman. She looks at it in awe as the crew does maintenance on it. “You mean I get to pilot this thing?” She asks with excitement. One of the older men working on it chuckles. “Well of course you got higher scores than everyone else, and we need the best of the best when testing these wonders. It's not your run-of-the-mill Mecha. It will be ready in a few moments, dear go ahead and climb into....”

Before he can finish speaking, the ground shakes, and explosions can be heard from outside the hanger they are in. The girl looks outside to see the giant loom of countless Multiversal Empire Ships. None of them had seen anything like it. They did have impressive robots but no vessels were quite as advanced they didn't know what to expect or where this new threat came from.

Fleet Admiral Marcus appears on monitors all over the world. “Greetings, denizens of... whatever you call this place. You have the esteemed honor of being absorbed into The Great

Multiversal Empire today. Normally we would give you a little time to surrender to us, but well. We are on a bit of a tight schedule today, so I'll give you about 30 minutes to lay down all your weapons and submit, and stay out of our way." Marcus said with a devious smile. Though it seemed, this world didn't take any time to fire back to his delight. "Ah well, that simplifies things. Prepare to be conquered." He said as the transmission cut off

The girl turns to the man, confused and unsure what to do, just as another man appears on the screen. He has a long bushy beard and an eye patch, he is wearing a blue uniform showing that he is someone important. He sees her already ready and speaks. "Ah perfect, as you can see we are under attack, finish up getting ready and move out." "I couldn't possibly... this is a real battle, I'm not..." She says in protest but gets cut off. "One can only be so ready for a war, there is no training like real combat. I have faith in you, so move out." She nervously salutes him. "Ye… Yes sir," she says as she does as ordered.

Marcus sighs up on the bridge of his ship. "Everyone always wants to do things the hard way." Cindy walks up to him, slightly blushing, struggling to hold a tiny cup of tea in her massive hands. "But boss, you normally are all about beating the shit out of these piss ants." "Cindy, what have I said about your language? Speak with more decorum. Of course, I like playing with our food, but we have a much more important goal. Anyway, I'm sending out the Chimera Legion, so make me proud." Marcus sighs, waving his hand to shew her away dismissively.

"Well of course I'll get right on that, and sorry... but before I go, I made you some tea." She tried to hand it to him, but it fell from her hand to the floor, shattering. She lowered her head. Marcus seemed a bit annoyed but stepped over it to look her in the eye. "I appreciate it, but we both know you aren't suited for such things. Let the others that are take care of such things." He placed his hand on her chin, lifting it slightly as his face got closer to her. "So again I ask. Go and lead your army to victory,

and use your talents for me, alright." He lets go of her, turning his back. She had gotten quite red from this, clearly smitten. "Ye… yes sir. I won't fuck around no more... I mean, I will not waste more time." She said, correcting herself, rushing off to do as ordered.

"Well now that we have our distraction, let's get to the real goal at hand. Hackers, have you located the code?" Marcus asks the sizable number of people, all typing away at their desks. It would seem Rebecca is much more talented than them. "Sir, we have found a possible lead, and have already entered the coordinates into the navigation." One of them says. "Perfect, just on time," Marcus says, somewhat relieved.

Cindy rushed to the hangar of the ship, surprisingly lacking any sort of aircraft. A large group of soldiers were waiting for her, these were somehow different from the regular foot soldiers. They were all deformed or monster-like in appearance in a way that stood out. They were known as the Chimera Legion. Marcus had a weird taste in acquiring oddities and showing their potential. Most of them greatly admired him for this. They had been looked down on and mocked by everyone, but he gave them a chance, even if his intentions were not very pure. The few regular soldiers around the hanger seemed to be avoiding them and looked a little disgusted by their existence, something they were all too used to.

A girl with long black wolf ears and messy snow-white hair approached Cindy. She seemed to be wearing a frown. "Well, took you long enough we are all itching to fight already, are you done flirting." She said unimpressed with her leader. "I was not flirting, stupid wolf. Besides, you're just jealous I get to spend more time with him than you." She said smugly closing her eyes knowing she was right. The wolf girl gets flustered, and her tail stands up like she is ready to attack. "I do not, you slimy little lizard. I should be the leader of the pack, not you!" They both look like they are about to fight but a big bulky bear woman steps in between them growling. They both seem to understand what

she said, stopping. “Right, save it for the battlefield,” Cindy says.

“Crow, give us the deets!” She shouts out as a figure appears out of nowhere with several crows. They are fully covered up, only showing their beautiful black wings off to the world. “All their key locations have been identified and marked on the map for everyone.” Crow says to them. “Well, what are we waiting for then, men, let's clobber the crap out of those guys.” Cindy commands, jumping out the hanger door to the ground below. The rest of them follow suit, despite half of them not having wings.

The Hopper enters the world mid-combat being bombarded by both the mecha army's defense and the empire's assault. Raleigh takes evasive maneuvers. “What the... why is the empire already here,” Clyde asks confused, getting out of the line of fire, Raleigh says. “I'm not sure, it must be part of their plan. That's not good. We need to find this mecha place boss before it's too late.” “I think it would be better to try and find the protagonist of the show. She has the most recognizable robot, and well she was kinda OP from the start, people were complaining about it online.” Clyde says in response. “Pft well, I guess we should blend in then. I'll transform into Zech mode.” Raleigh says excited to try it again. “Wait, we still have that? I feel like that definitely would have been useful to know.” Clyde says, a little upset that was an option considering some of the issues they had faced.

“Quit complaining and strap in. It gets kinda cramped in here.” Raleigh said activating the transformation. Clyde was not ready for it. The walls closed in quickly, forcing him to stick to her. “Hey, get off me, you pervert.” She said in protest. “I can't even move, I'm stuck like this.” He tries to defend himself. The Hopper lands on a smaller Empire vessel as they argue, easily destroying it as they use its descent to cushion their fall. They take out a few more of the smaller crafts on the way down, still fighting inside the cockpit. They land right in front of the girl from earlier, already inside her Mecha. “That must be the enemies Mecha I've never seen that model before.” She said to herself,

attacking The Hopper while they were both distracted.

“Hey, hold on, we aren't here to fight you,” Raleigh says through her loudspeaker after noticing the attack. “We are here to help.” The pilot stops her attack, unsure if she should believe them, “Is this a trick?” She asks them, “Why would we tell you if it was a trick?” Raleigh asked her. “I guess that's a good point, well um... This is awkward.” The Pilot says. “I forgot how airheaded this protagonist is,” Clyde says. Before they can say anything else, fighters fly in and try shooting at them. They both turn to face them, quickly subduing them. “Look, we don't have a lot of time, who knows what they want with this world? Can you take us to your leader? They might be in danger.” Raleigh says. The pilot pauses but in the end relents. “Alright follow me.” She says, activating her mech thrusters and flying off as The hopper does the same.

Chapter Forty

In a hard-fought battle, the Mechas seem to be gaining the upper hand. They simply have more maneuverability than The Empire's fleet, however, they make up for it with firepower. All it takes is one to completely obliterate a Mecha. On the ground, the two sides have started to fight on a smaller scale. The Mecha army has some sort of exo suit that strengthens them, but The Empire's multi-tools and superior numbers are too much for them. They are easily pushed back by a group of them. That is until Mecha reinforcements arrive, decimating the army. The Empire's forces on the ground fall back as the Mecha forces cheer their victory, but that seems short-lived.

Cindy flies in, ripping apart one of the Mechas easily with her giant claws like it was made of butter. She grins as the other members of her legion land on the ground, seemingly unscathed from falling from such a height. The Empire's forces were not running from the Mechas they were running from the Chimera's. Despite most of them being much smaller. They don't seem to have much issue at all ripping the giant robots apart, some of them even look like they are enjoying it.

Wolf charges ahead on all fours ripping one of the legs off a nearby Mecha with her teeth, it collapses onto its back as she rips open the cockpit licking her lips as the pilot screams. The Giant Bear

lady starts knocking the rest of them away with powerful punches, roaring out a battle cry. “That'll be enough of that.” Someone says arriving in a blue Mecha that looks more advanced than the others. The pilot is the man with an eye patch from earlier. His Mecha came equipped with a giant great sword, which he used to destroy the ground below, knocking most of the legions back. Wolf and Cindy are all that can withstand it. They both grin, happy to find a worthy foe both charging at him.

Despite its more durable hull, and more powerful horsepower. A giant robot is ill-prepared to fight small creatures. He struggles to land a hit on them. “Blast, what are these lasses made of, a normal human wouldn't be able to take a single hit from me.” He says in frustration. “Do we look like normal humans to you shithead,” Cindy says with a scowl, grabbing onto a joint and squeezing till it is crushed in and unusable. He takes to the air, but it's no use, he can't out-speed them. They are moments from ripping the cockpit doors off when The Hopper arrives with the girl in tow.

“Well, it was fun, but I don't want them to scratch up our house,” Raleigh says, opening her cockpit in midair and jumping out. “Wait! I definitely can't drive this thing.” Clyde shouted as The Hopper thudded to the ground. Raleigh transformed her multi-tool into a rapier stabbing at Cindy, catching her off guard, but her thick scales proved hard to pierce. Cindy grabs the end of it, grinning. “Well, well, well, look who it is. I don't know why you are crashing our party, but I bet the boss would give me lots of praise if I brought your head to him.”

The Mechas just stood back as Raleigh yanked her weapon away, transforming it into a chainsaw with energy blades. Wolf lunges forward ready to pounce, only for Cindy to step in her path. “No, fuck off, she's my prey,” Cindy says to her. “You just want the glory, you stupid lizard,” Wolf says in protest but obeys her. Cindy takes a deep breath before spewing out a plume of fire from her mouth, surprising Raleigh, who is barely able to dodge out of the way in time. “Holy hell, that's kinda cool, actually. How does that even work.” Raleigh asked inquisitively. Cindy just shrugged, slashing at

her more with her claws.

Elsewhere, it seems that Marcus has deviated far from the battle in the flagship, landing on a deserted island with a temple. There were large statue-like things all around that resembled golems. The team of hackers were all gathered around the room with their computers still typing away. “Status,” Marcus says, tapping his foot. “The Operation is almost in its second phase.” One of the men speaks up. “It seems the code of this world is not so easily obtainable, but like expected it will lead us to The Source.” “Hmm that's unfortunate, but I suppose that was just extra credit in the end, how soon can you open the path?” He inquires. “I would estimate that the hacking will be done in 10 minutes, sir.” The hacker says in response.

The Battle rages on between Cindy and Raleigh. Raleigh has switched her multi-tool into a fist to try and match her in raw strength, but it seems they are evenly matched. Raleigh Throws a bomb at her feet and jumps away. It does minor damage to the dragon. She wipes away the blood from her mouth. “Alright, that's what I'm talking about,” Cindy says gleefully. She is fired up now, ready to fight on forever, but Marcus invades her ear with a transmission, quickly changing her demeanor. “Cindy status.” He asks bluntly. “Sir! We were totally owning everyone until that girly you were worried about showed up out of nowhere to fight me, She's pretty strong.” She says, hoping that will earn her brownie points with him. Raleigh doesn't try to fight her, but is ready for her if she attacks. “Really now? How interesting it turned out that way, it's too bad. We must move on now, return to me.” He says with a sigh. “But, weren't you worried about them, shouldn't I...” She tries to give a justification for her to keep fighting her. “I didn't say not to leave them with a parting gift. We want to be good hosts, after all.” He says, ending the call.

Cindy smiles. “I wish we could've finished bustin you up ourselves, but we gotta bail. See yah." She grabs Wolf and flies away before they can do anything. All traces of the others had vanished as a

payload dropped to the ground nearby, starting a timer. The Fleet started to fly off toward where Marcus had gone. Raleigh and the others approach the load confused, right as it opens to reveal the same type of bomb The Old Man tried to use to blow up The Port world. Clyde who had gotten out of The Hopper somehow realized the severity of this. “There is no safe place if that goes off, and we don't have a demi-god to help us this time.” He tries to scramble, thinking of a way they could get it away. But without thinking, the protagonist of the Mecha show grabs the bomb and flies off into space with it. “Wait, no, don't do it, you'll die.” The Man with an eye patch pleads with her. “It's ok, pops, this is what a hero does.”

She flew out as fast as she could, and as far as she could getting just far enough away to save everyone from the blast it sent shock waves all over the planet, even taking out part of the moon. Marcus looked at the explosion from the island, tugging at his collar. That was risky even for him. He would have died in the explosion too if they didn't stop it, but it did what he needed it to. The Hackers finished their work. A pillar of light shown across the sky, enveloping the island. Making an impassible force field around it as a giant portal opened up. The Emperor looked on from inside the vortexes between worlds. “Yes now with all the doors unlocked we can truly begin Project Deforestation! Attention, all empire forces. Abandon your post, and follow me!”

Other massive portals were opened on other worlds that also were being invaded in the same fashion as the Mecha one all of them linked together creating an even larger portal countless ships entered the world with the portals and through those portals they were able to arrive at their true destination, The Source of it all, the trunk of the tree. Raleigh and the Mecha forces may have successfully defended the planet, but it seems they may have lost the war.

Chapter Forty One

The Mecha Forces Lick their wounds the fighting has ended all over, and they work to rebuild the damage. In the command center, Clyde, and Raleigh sit at a conference table with The Man from before. Clyde stays silent. “I see well, after an attack like that I'd say we have no choice but to join forces with you.” He says to Raleigh. “It is a shame what happened to her. She had so much potential...” He slinks down in his chair, covering his face. “I wanted what's best for her, maybe I pushed her too hard.”

Clyde is pretty broken up about it as well. He wasn't thinking about the potential lives lost. He simply chose this world because of how overpowered some of the robots, and pilots are. Not only that, but he didn't stop to think about how involving them would deviate them so much from the path of the show he was familiar with. He felt somewhat responsible. Raleigh seemed to notice this and tugged at his shirt, getting him to stand up and follow her. Before leaving, she stops, and turns to the man once more. “I'm sorry, I really am, but unfortunately we don't have much time, we will send you coordinates to where we are meeting.” The Man looks up, regaining his demeanor, nodding in agreement as she pulls Clyde away.

When they are out of the building, she lets go of him and gives him a short hug. “It isn't your fault, Clyde, They would've come here even if we didn't.” She says in an attempt to reassure him. “I guess you know me pretty well by now, huh.” He says, raising his head. “I know all that, but, I still can't help but feel partly responsible.” He says, pausing like he has something else weighing on his mind as well.

“All this time. Have I just been selfish? In some of the worlds we visit, people live in life-or-death situations. It makes the problems I thought I had seem trivial. They didn't choose this, but I did.” He lets it all out to her. Raleigh pauses for a moment, wanting to make sure she uses the right words. “It is a little selfish. But I don't think it's wrong for you to seek something meaningful. That's how it was, right? Dull, boring, lack of meaning?” Raleigh can only speculate so much, as she doesn't know all the details. Clyde thinks about it more before answering. “It was, but not just that. Every day was work, work, and more work, all for a little bit of money to sustain myself, it was barely enough, and hardly fulfilling. There was no path ahead, everything seemed so bleak. Why was I even alive?” He lowers his head, not missing it.

“Well In a way... that is life and death isn't it, just not nearly as glamorous as a battlefield.” She says, hoping to lift his spirits a bit. “I'm sure there are many people who would like to live in such a world, but so many more that would hate it just as much as you do. People's desires are complex and contradictory like that.” She says, not knowing what else to add. Clyde raises his head. “Your right. I guess there isn't much point in dwelling on it now anyway. I'm already in the thick of it. Thank you, Raleigh.” He says, walking past her to The Hopper.

The Empire's Fleet begins to emerge from the gate they opened to the source of it all. This place resembled a wasteland for the most part, but in the middle of it, was a massive white tree that glowed lightly with astral energy. Its branches looked like galaxies. Most likely this was the physical

embodiment of the tree and the branches were the worlds everyone inhabited. The ships all leave the branches, landing near the base of the tree that stretched on for miles.

Countless men and women started to exit the ships, following Their great emperor to the trunk. He was of course joined by The Reaper, and Corvus who had the girl with black hair that resembled Raleigh hooked up to a mobile machine. He was interacting with a machine that seemed to be leading them to the right place. Marcus and his legion walked close behind. Lucius kept glancing at Corvus with a hint of rage, but held it in.

At the base of The Tree, a woman with long green hair was waiting for them, with followers of The Multiversal Church all around her. She appeared to be blind but pointed Right at The Emperor anyway. “This is as far as you go.” She says getting ready to fight. The Emperor looks amused, “Oh? The Church is finally taking action too are they? Your apathy has led to your downfall already. I'm surprised any of you remain after my subordinate took your leadership's body for himself. You relied on him too much.” He mocks them. The woman looks displeased, knowing that most of what he said is correct. Her anger is mostly directed at The Reaper.

“It was never our place to control the multiverse, we simply show people the paths available.” She says in protest. “Enough of this rabble, lets be on with it already.” The old man says impatiently tapping his foot. The Empire's forces surround them all. The church's numbers are so much smaller by comparison. The Reaper steps forward. “My Emperor, if I may. Allow me to clean up the mess I left alone.” “Very well, no one interfere.” The Emperor says, agreeing. The Reaper rushes forward, surely to make quick work of them. The Priest simply frowns from inside his mind, not saying a word.

Raleigh and the others have all taken a short rest and regrouped at Valhalla. Cyrus, Darrion, Loki, Theron, The Physician, Rebecca, Proxy, The Ultra scouts, The Mecha world commander, and The General were all there as well as all the other allies they had recruited ready to hear the plan.

Rebecca seems to be taking the lead and directing it. She turns on a holographic display showing a tree. “I'll try to keep this brief since we are short on time. This is a representation of the Multiverse.” She starts to explain.

The hologram highlights seven points, and they slowly connect, swirling to the trunk below. “The Empire invaded these worlds simultaneously not to conquer them, but because they were gate worlds. Hacking into the code allowed them to open the gate, and they were able to follow that code to The Source world. Fortunately for us, they also left the door open for us to enter. They have all but abandoned almost all their territory, leaving only small skeleton crews to maintain them. Their plan is not so clear to us yet, but one thing is for sure. If they can hack into The Source code, it's over for everyone. They will effectively be the gods of every world in the multiverse.” “The very attempt of something like that is audacious,” Loki says. “I think at that point even The Caretaker would step in.”

“I'm not so sure. That guy's goals are hard to understand.” Clyde says. “I'm not going to lay down and die hoping that The Caretaker might do something.” Raleigh buts in. “Fair enough,” Loki says as Rebbecca continues. “I'm proposing this.” Ships appear at the base of the tree, along with triangles representing armies. They are separated by colors, she points to the green ones. “The Union has the bulk of the forces here, in tandem with The Mechas You will be tasked with the main assault along with a few others. Then a smaller team of our heavy hitters would break their line, and enter the tree to pursue The Emperor. Loki will erect a barrier to keep anyone from coming in after them, half those forces will stay to defend him, and the other half will form the strike team to take down The Emperor. I know it's a little rough, but it's the best I could manage with the time and intelligence I had.”

“There is one issue with your plan, though at this point we have no other choice, do we? The big wigs on The Council refused to grant us the approval to help, they are far too concerned with their own interest to do so. I'm technically defying orders being here, so I'm afraid the fleet I was able to

gather is smaller than expected, but I'll be it they are the strongest, and most loyal The union has to offer." Natasha says hesitantly. They all seem disappointed to hear that. "I think my men can hold the front lines on the ground," Theron says, reassuring some of them. "Well, as much as that sucks, we have no choice but to go forward with it anyway." She says facing Proxy, hoping to get a status update from him. "The Emperor has entered the tree. I estimate your probability of success drops every minute we waste from here." The Robot replies.

With that, they all nod, leaving the meeting to ready themselves for the fight of their lives. Loki seems a little sad, Clyde walks up to him, concerned. "What's wrong dude? I know you don't like fighting in all, but." He says, trying to console him. "It's not that. I was just hoping we would just have time for some fan service. Marcel had all the swimsuits ready and everything." Loki whines, quickly losing any sympathy Clyde had for him. "Seriously, you're thinking about that now?" "You don't understand. It is a moral thing, surely after seeing so many wondrous body types everyone would be inspired to fight on harder." Loki uses it as a defense, Lucy grabs him by the ear, dragging him off as he protests.

Everyone reached their ships or other ways in which they traverse worlds and head off ahead of them. All that is left is The Hopper and the two teams. "Alright, everyone, moment of truth, who's doing what." Jacob of all people speaks up. "I would like to join the strike team. Darrian as well." Cyrus says, and Darrian just flexes with a grin. "I will stay by Loki's side to watch his Health, as well as everyone else on the defense team. I Think they will need it more than anyone." Lucy says.

"Well there is no way I'm not going to be on the strike team, and we will probably need Rebbecca too," Raleigh says, making her choice firm and clear. "Naturally," Rebbecca says with a hint of arrogance. "That just leaves you guys," Raleigh says referring to The Ultra Scouts, and The Squad. "As much as I'd like to be the one to beat the shit out of the big bad, I think we both would be more

help with the defense team," Jacob says to all of their agreements. "Alright perfect, let's get going, but The Hopper is not big enough for all of you guys you're going to have to get your own ride."

"I have just the thing." Loki brags, ready to show them the way. The Strike team starts to load into The Hopper as Clyde stands still. "Come on, Clyde, let's go," Raleigh says, only for him to shake his head. "Should I be going, I'm never much help in a battle," Clyde says, not so sure of himself. "Enough of that, you've grown so much Clyde, can't you tell? Yes, you may not be the greatest powerhouse we have still, but you are more useful than you give yourself credit for." Loki says slapping him on the back. "And that's not even mentioning that arm of yours, your presence alone would increase our chances," Rebbecca said. Clyde isn't sure how she knows about that, but fires back. "So you're saying you just like me for my body?" "That's right." She sticks her tongue out, getting on the ship.

White walks up to him. "I was planning on giving you this anyway, but here, it's a gift for you to keep." He hands him an Ultra Scout Syncher, and walks away to join Loki. He didn't want to admit it, but that made him feel much more reassured than the words. Furthermore, he got on The Hopper with the rest of them, ready for the final battle.

The Reaper had swiftly ended The Church Remnant in their way and cleared the path forward. "Great work, you have been The Empire's Greatest Warrior till the very end." Lucius commends him before turning to Marcus. "Nephew, unfortunately this is where we part ways. I'm sure people from all over the Multiverse will be coming soon to try and stop my vision. I need you to be ready to stop them. You are the only one I can trust to do this." "I suspected that might be the case. Not to worry, I will perform my duty to the letter as always." Marcus says with a smile, firmly shaking his uncle's hand. Lucius, Corvus, and Reaper Enter the Trees Enards as Marcus returns to the flagship to await the coming enemies.

Chapter Forty Two

Within the tree The Empires forces have been surrounded by strange white creatures. They are long and skinny with no faces and giant claws. The Emperor watches the frontal force struggling to hold their ground. “What are these things?” He asks The Old Man. “Hmm curious I think they are like the trees antibodies. There the last line of defense. If only I had time to study them.” The Old Man answers. The Emperor cracks his knuckles, and his neck. “Right time is short Its seems I'll have to step in.” He rushes to the front in the blink of an eye punching the closest one and obliterating the area around it.

His men look in aw as he quickly does the same to all them cheering at the strength of their great leader. “Onward men to victory.” He shouted spurning them with new found determination as they all rush forward. Corvus, and Reaper choose to walk conserving their energy for challenges that might be ahead. Lucius grabs The Reapers shoulder. “A moment.” He says wanting to pick his brain.

Corvus shrugs going on ahead as they talk. “You've been a valuable member of our nation for years, but Its unclear to me where your loyalties truly lay.” The Emperor asks him the assassin doesn't answer right away thinking about the question more than he would with other conversations.” “When I

was a boy... I learned of your late wife's passing... The very idea of this being a possibility is unacceptable to me. It wasn't the first time something like this happened in my life." He offers as a response. This wasn't exactly what he was expecting to hear but The Emperor seemed to accept this response. "When the time comes then. I will be counting on you to draw out the ones that would mock her sacrifice." He walks off leaving him a little puzzled and unsure what that means.

Outside Marcus has positions the entirety of the army around the tree. The fleet flies in the sky ready to meet any opposition that may rear its head. The ground is competently covered in their forces geared, and armored up. The General and her forces emerge from the tops of the tree approaching The Fleet admiral slowly they have a considerable force, but compared to The Empire it looks like nothing at all. "Open a channel." The General orders from the bridge. She is already fully in armor herself. Marcus appears on her screen. "Well, well. My old rival has come to play with me. I expected this but my word the resistance you've gathered up is rather pathetic. I expected more from you." He mocks her.

She clinched her fist. "You know better then anyone its the grit of the soldier that matters more then numbers." He scoffs at her. "Your words are worthless if you don't have to power the back it up dear. Why even bother opening your calms we all know how this ends." "To appeal to whatever humanity exists inside you. You can't think this will end well for everyone they left behind." She shouts at him. "The supreme leader didn't leave us behind you foolish woman. He has faith in our success. He will not fail, and when he succeeds we will emerge as indisputable rulers of everything that exists." He laughs at her. She sighs knowing this was inevitably going to be the outcome. "Then drown in your arrogance." She said signaling for them to cut the transmission and begin their assault.

The volley of laser cannons begins as Mechs emerge from the hangers of The Union ships to engage them directly. They may be out numbered, but not outmatched. On the ground Theron emerges

from a portal with an army from The War worlds some of them Lion people but with plenty of others like the demons they previously fought among them. “Don't be careless if you die here you don't get any second chances.” She said as she lightly tapped the handle of her hammer on the ground signaling for them to attack. They charged forward seeming to have a much easier time defeating the ground forces in front of them. Even still there were so many of them they were quickly surrounded by the massive army.

The Chimera descended from the sky landing violently before Theron with the exclusion of their commander. Cindy was still on the bridge with Marcus. She was a little torn. She had a desire to help them, but knew how dangerous the battle was she was afraid if she left his side he might meet his end. “Listen. I know I'm not nearly as strong as you lot. But I can hold my own. Go help them a reward is in order for after the battle.” He said enticing her with empty promise. She blushes with the possibility of what it could be. She salutes. “Yes sir!” and rushes off to join them.

She lands on the ground killing a couple of demons without mercy they cry out in pain as they die. She looks a little confused. This isn't the first time she has encountered enemies that are more monstrous, but she was always a little more unsure about fighting them. She felt a weird kinship with them after all her, and the legions discrimination for being different in The Empire.

Theron zips at lightning speed to her hitting hard with her hammer knocking her away and taking out a chunk of the army in the process. Cindy gets up weakly wiping the blood from her mouth grinning. “It's not everyday I fight someone that can make me bleed.” The dragon flaps her wings speeding toward her striking her with her fist knocking her down with a powerful hit just the same. Theron stands up recovering. “Aye. We may be enemies but we are also sisters of war. Let us fight.” She smiles gladly taking her on for the fight of her life.

That's when The Hopper finally enters the battle. Everyone on board is wearing armor. Clyde is

a little surprised Raleigh just had some ready already. Rebecca didn't seem to be much of a surprise to him She put on a helmet and activated a propulsion system on her back. She forces the door of The Hopper open. “Hey hands off my ship. Where are you going anyway.” Raleigh would ask her. “I'm going to go ahead of you.” She jumped out of the door to flying off toward the base of the tree before they could say anything. Raleigh wanted to go straight there to but she was flanked on all sides by empire fighters. Some of the Mechs cleared a path but she still had to take evasive maneuvers to avoid the chaotic sky's and laser fire.

Loki finally showed himself but what he had chosen as a transport was rather odd. It appeared to be a giant floating parade float with a giant hologram of himself dancing over it. “The party has arrived everyone so lighten up.” Loki said dancing as the float kept charging forward. Both The Squad and Scouts seemed a little embarrassed to be associated with him standing on top defending against anyone stupid enough to try and climb up and fight them. Jacob and white stood parallel to each other both with their arms crossed. They still didn't like each other its seems. “Come on.” Adrian said pleading for Jacob to do something. “I'm not doing it.” He said defiantly.

“You owe us remember.” The white scout said now sounding more like he was demanding whatever it was he wanted more then asking. Jacob groans not really wanting to comply but after thinking about getting chewed out again her relents. “Fine but quickly.” All of them begin to strike a pose transforming together. “Alright that wasn't so bad was it.” Adrian said enthusiastically. “Shut up and fight punk.” Jacob said bluntly.

Both The Hopper, and Loki's float had gotten past The line Theron's army had made and progressed closer to the tree. Everyone with enough power to stop them was preoccupied with their fights leaving little resistance but the path they made was quickly closed by Swarm of enemy shoulders. They land at The Trees cave like entrance all getting out ready to defend the position until

Loki got the barrier up. The Scouts, and Squad took the front successful in holding back the wall of men trying to stop them. Loki started to write in the air and mumble something under his breath.

After a moment a pillar of light surrounded them all covering enough ground to shield everyone inside and their ships. The army seemed confused at first but started to attack the barrier with everything in their arsenal from there personal multi-tools to bombs and missile launchers. They made the barrier flicker a little but it held strong.

Marcus noticed this from above. “What! How could you let them slip past you so easily.” He shook his head in disappointment opening coms to the entire army. “All forces focus on destroying that barrier!” Just as he said that his ship was hit hard with a barrage of fire from The Generals flag ship. “I suppose I can't turn my back on you though.” He said slightly annoyed. Other then his ship and a few others already engaged in combat everyone else turned their weapons around to fire opon it. Loki winced in pain as now the fire power from both the army and the ships above were proving to be to much he was struggling to keep it up. Lucy quickly healed him and replenished his stamina, but was clear to them all that this would not work forever. “Go!” The doctor demanded of them.

All of the strike team looked at each other and nodded at her rushing into the tree to confront The Emperor. Raleigh takes one last look at her ship a little worried about it, but knowing this was the best option. Loki grins still seeming to struggle a little to keep it up. “Like I'd go down so easy.” He reached out his hand ready for them all determined to keep it up.

Chapter Forty Three

Lucius and the others have reached the deepest parts of the trunk, looking at a void that seems to go down for miles. A path slowly spirals down the abyss. Rainbow lights shine and move up and down it like some sort of information network. Dr. Corvus seems very interested in taking all this in. The control panel he is holding lights up with something, so he stops to check it. “Ah, perfect, it won't be much farther just down this hole.” He says excitedly. The leader looks around as well. “So this is the source of everything. It's wondrous indeed. Too bad that thing squandered its potential.” He says with a bit of anger.

“All remaining forces other than The Reaper, and The doctor are to stay here and hold this position. Hopefully, it won't come to it, but you are the last line of defense, understand?” The men saluted him, showing their willingness to do so, even though it seemed they had lost a lot of numbers just getting here. Rebbecca watches them descend just out of sight, not taking action for now. She pretty easily avoids their notice and still keeps up with them.

The Strike team has made it to the area with strange white creatures, they struggle a little to subdue them, but it doesn't take them long to take care of all the ones around. Clyde catches his breath, looking ahead at the miasmic fog just ahead. Raleigh slowly approaches it, touching its surface. “Careful... I'm not sure how I know this, but... if we don't stick close to each other in this mist, you could end up on the other side of the multiverse.” Clyde looked at her, wondering how it was she knew that. Was it the same as her finding the right world to go to in the multiverse? If so, how did Rebbecca get through, he wondered.

Cyrus pulled out a cable from a multi-box. “How about we tie this to each of us as you lead the way,” he suggested. “That sounds like a good idea.” She nods in approval. After he goes about tying the cable to everyone, Raleigh takes a deep breath, entering the fog. It disoriented all of them, but Raleigh everyone was struggling to keep focus, but she felt fine, and drawn to something. They saw a few Empire soldiers fighting the white monsters or just looking lost, but none of them seemed to be able to see them. It grew thicker and harder to breathe, Clyde struggled to keep his head straight, he felt like he was losing his mind. Like it was being pulled In every direction. He was everywhere, and nowhere at the same time.

Raleigh grabbed onto his hand tightly, looking back at him. She tried to speak, but no words came out, but somehow he knew what she said anyway. They were almost out, it kept getting stronger and harder to see. She didn't let go of him as they finally made it out on the other side. He took a long deep breath, returning to his senses. Now they were before the void, but also the army waiting for them. They seemed a bit surprise to see anyone, but they quickly charged at them, leaving them no time to recover.

The Emperor walks a little ahead of the others. His goals are so close to being achieved he can taste it just a little farther down. Even still, he stops. “Before we take another step, I need to know

something.” He says, turning to face the old man. He looks at him with feigned ignorance of whatever it is, but mentally prepared himself for a fight. “What is it, old friend.” he asks. “Enough of this. I know you better than anyone. What is it you are truly trying to gain from this?” He asked him. “After all this time, you would question my motives. I've been there since the beginning. I've followed you every step of the way.”

The Emperor pauses for a second. “That's right, you have been my greatest ally. I didn't always agree with your methods, but I accepted them as a necessary thing to further our goals. Goals I thought we shared. But looking back on it. It was all too smooth. You had your answer for what happened to my beloved right away. You directed my anger here. Why?” He said, demanding an answer from him Corvus sighs once again. “For the same reason as you must I explain it?” “I know what you did.” Lucius said to him. At first he looked shocked, but after a moment her spoke. “I grow tired of playing this game. It seems in the end we were both using each other, but now I don't need you anymore.”

He waved his hand dismissively. “Reaper kill him.” In a rare moment of shock, The Reaper's eyes widened. Was this what The Emperor was talking about earlier? He didn't have a lot of time to decide, but he already knew whose side he was on. He stabbed the old Man in the back without a second thought. He was not expecting it at all, falling to his knees, and choking up blood. “How did you... you're not supposed to be able to go against me. I gave you everything, you ungrateful...” He couldn't get the words out before choking on some of his blood again. The Reaper walked closer to The Emperor, destroying the robots with a sword. “You never controlled me.”

The Emperor finally spoke up, saddened by his actions. “Was it all really just a means to an end for you? I thought we had bonded together.” He knelt closer to his dying body to hear what he had to say. He started to laugh weakly. “Your foolish ideals always disgusted me. But I was able to experiment and learn so many things because of you. When the war ended... Your morals got in the

way of that research...” He started to laugh again. “So I gave you a little push to keep going.

Lucius looked at him grabbing him from the collar with anger. “A push, you murdered my wife, and my unborn child you bastard! Was that really the only reason?” He wanted to strangle him to death right there, and be down with it. The man laughed, his voice distorted. “I suppose I should thank you. You freed me from this flesh prison I inhabit.”

Corvus's dead body started to meld into something else. It absorbed mechanical parts from around the area and grew larger and larger. Lucius let go backing away ready to fight it. “I could have become much stronger and done all of this myself, but I was afraid of dying.” The Reaper got ready to fight. “My lord, I'll take care of this, please finish this.” The Reaper says, rushing toward the monstrous new form of Doctor Corvus. He did as he pleaded, going ahead now taking the Raleigh clone and the Machine with him.”Make him suffer.” is all he said before disappearing below. Sure he wanted to do it himself, but he was running out of time and he was still determined to carry out his plan. It didn't mater what was true. After his wife died he encounters many other versions of himself with the same story he would do this not just for himself, but for them.

Rebbecca Emerges from the shadows, opening a portal below the monster as it falls into it. “You... you're the one that destroyed my laboratory.” He says with rage, trying to climb out of it. “Your shotty code and over reliance on robots made it so easy.” She said, confidently, jumping down onto the thing. The extra weight was enough to make him lose his grip and fall completely in. She used her thrusters to avoid falling in herself, but a tendril grasps onto her leg, pulling her in. She amps up the power to avoid it, but it proves to be a losing battle. “Quit meddling, woman, this is my fight.” The Reaper said, jumping into the portal while slashing at her. She dodged out of the way but was still pulled into it with them both.

The Reaper and her both land in darkness near each other. “Who are you, and where have you

brought us?" He demanded of her, pointing his blade at her. "I have no clue, the subspace between things? It's hard to say opening a portal in the source world is much more unpredictable than usual." She said, looking around her curiously, not seeming to feel threatened by him. They appear to be in a large, dimly lit room. The Monster slinks out of the dark, much larger now.

"You'll both suffer for a long time for what you have done." He says to them both. "That form reflects your soul a lot better, but what did you have to sacrifice to achieve this abomination." She asked inquisitively, buying time for herself to re-adjust her portal gun and get out of there. The Reaper seems to have caught on. "This form will consume all. It will become a part of my body, and my mind will have free rain to test every facet of the multiverse with no restrictions. Don't think I've come unprepared for you either, traitor." A Cannon surfaces from the flesh, pointing at The Reaper. Neither of them knows what it is, but anything from this man is dangerous.

Rebbecca readies herself to open the portal and leave them both but the reaper slashes at the gun destroying it. "I won't let you leave your in this now whether you like or not." He said to her annoyance. The old man doesn't wait a moment more to start hitting them with his weird flesh tentacles and mechanical sickles. They fire the first shot of the canon the reaper is barely able to get out of the way. The floor explodes and turns into what looks like a mini black hole adsorbing everything near the impact. The Reaper would not be able to heal from that.

The Monster laughed. "I suppose you could say she inspired that attack. How Ironic." Rebbecca focused on repairing her weapon only dodging out of the way she knew she didn't need to fight them just get away. The Reaper wasn't going to let that happen attacking her every time she tried while still also trying to do the same to the monster. She sighed not feeling like her normal self in this situation. She called out her drones to fire on The Reaper while Her cords extended to one of the machine parts on the monster plugging itself in.

“Foolish move.” Corvus said taking notice sucking that part deeper into himself as well and dragging her closer. “Right back at you.” She said overloading it to cause an explosion inside him. He roared in pain attacking indiscriminately in every direction. She had to detach the cord from her to avoid getting caught in it. “I think you lost some of your smarts doc. I expected more intelligence in your attacks.” She mocked him narrowly avoiding The Reaper slashing horizontally at her he managed to destroy one of her back repulsers removing her ability to fly.

The monster surrounds him while he is focused on her almost absorbing him, but she cuts off the tentacles and moves out of the way in time. The monster has stopped growing now that there is nothing left for it to take in. “I'm the smartest being in The Multiverse!” The Old Man proclaims grabbing her by the head with one of his robotic arms. He slowly started to squeeze her head. Her helmet started to crack and break away. She fires her drones at it while The Reaper starts to hack him up on the opposite side. This caused him enough pain to release her and let her recover a little.

One of the cannons managed to hit The Reaper's lower hip causing a large part of his lower body to just vanish. It looked like it was attempting to heal but just couldn't. However, despite him missing a large part of his body he was still able to move and walk around like normal. Rebbecca finally had enough time to repair the portal gun and move out of that space collapsing just outside of it. The Reaper was angry but had no means to get to her now, and this thing in front of him was proving to be a bad match for him.

Inside his mind, The Priest speaks up. “I think I finally understand why you are doing all this. I still don't agree with your methods but I respect them.” “I don't have time for another lecture.” The Reaper growls at him. The Priest breaks free from his binds standing up and placing his hand on his shoulder. “My son. Even after all you have done, I still love you. How could a father hate his son? I will help you now.” His body started to glow as their bodies started to merge. “If I could have one last

thing from you. Could I please call you by the name I gave you once more?"

The Reaper nods. "Thank you. Dusk." He smiled, merging with him completely. In the physical world, his hair started to change from black to white, and gold over and over. He was reinvigorated, slashing at the tendrils that seemed to never stop coming. He cried out with determination to defeat him. The monster started to slow, still firing the cannon as well, but The Reaper, no Dusk, was too quick. He hacked at the main body, slicing it up like paper. It was too much, it couldn't recover anymore. "No, curse that woman. If she hadn't interfered, I would have absorbed the whole tree by now, but I'll at least take you with me, assassin." The monster said clearly in pain.

His whole body started to sputter with light. He had turned into a makeshift bomb. He laughed as it made a huge black hole that took him out and started to suck Dusk in with it. He looked content dying. He did what he needed, and surely The Emperor was already inducting the plan as they spoke. He is slowly absorbed into the hole, and annihilated, soul and all. This time, The Reaper would not be coming back.

Rebbecca slowly recovers back on the spiral path, making her way down it, not in the best condition. The Emperor was at the bottom of a large circular room. The Clone next to him hooked up to a small seed floating in the air. He didn't seem to notice her yet, so she stuck with her last remaining cord, trying to connect to the machine the clone was in and stop whatever it was he was doing. He caught it in midair, yanking her closer. She no longer had the strength to fight, so she was easily pulled closer to him. He kept his back to her. "Amazing isn't it? All that is comes from this small, plain looking seed. This is the heart of the Multiverse."

He finally turned to face her. "You're in no condition to fight me. It is commendable you even made it this far. Out of respect, I will let you watch." She fired at him anyway with her drones. All of which he took, shaking it off like it was nothing. "I gave you a chance." He said, kicking her hard

against the wall. He pushed a few buttons on the machine, and it started to siphon the energy from the tree, and into him. On his other hand, he took out a communication device and sent something out to everyone that would listen.

Outside, in the battle, the Union and allied forces didn't seem to be doing well, they had mostly been driven into a corner. Loki was struggling to keep the barrier up, and The Physician was too exhausted to do anything else for him. The General's flagship took a nasty hit to the hull. “Ma'am they hit several critical systems we are going to crash.” One of the members of the bridge said worried. “Use every last ounce of power this ship has and set a course to ram into their flagship, then abandon ship.” She ordered as they did so and all rushed to the escape pods. Marcy stopped, seeing that Natasha wasn't leaving. “What about you, General.” She said nervously. “Don't worry about me, worry about the men. I'm charging you with their safety." She timidly nodded, rushing off to do so, looking back at her once more with concern.

Chapter Forty Four

“Sir, we retrieved a pre-recorded message from the great leader.” A person on the bridge of Marcus's ship proclaims. “It can only be good news, transmit it live to everyone.” He said already knowing that was part of the plan when it got to a certain point. It plays over an intercom, but also on the personal communication devices of everyone in the empire's employ, as well as anyone who wanted to listen. Marcus gets ready to listen happily, only to see The Generals' vessel barreling down toward him. “Is that woman mad? Evasive maneuvers now!” He ordered, but it was far too late to avoid it. They collide, and slowly start to crash to the ground below together.

On the ground, Cindy looks up to see it terrified. She tries to rush off, but Theron grabs her by the tail and slams her back down. “Our fight isn't finished yet.” She seemed to be enjoying it. She reluctantly kept fighting her, but her focus was elsewhere. Wolf rushed in, clawing at Theron. “I'll be your opponent then. Go to him, commander.” She said, standing in Theron's way. She flew off right away, looking at her with a thankful expression. Theron seemed a little disappointed but accepted her challenge.

The Message started to play. “Hello to all that are listening. It is I the leader of The Multiversal Empire. If you are hearing this message, it means that Project Deforestation is entering its final stage. It's far too late for anyone to stop us now.” The men all cheered, morale rising higher than ever. The recording keeps going as they break down the barrier and Loki passes out. The Scouts and Squad defend him the best they can, but are being over run.

“For many reasons, we could not fully share everything about this plan right away, but you all have a right to know. When I said we would be taking on The Caretaker, I meant so in a literal sense. As this recording plays, I am at the source of it all, siphoning all the power the Multiverse has to offer and becoming so powerful not even it can hope to defy me. Then I will recreate The Multiverse in my image. A Multiverse with no suffering, everyone will live in the happiest moment they have ever had forever in that state.” He says, sounding truly happy.

Marcus rushed to try and escape his falling ship down the hallways, only somewhat listening to his leader's message. Natasha stops him in his tracks. He sighs, seeing that he has no choice but to fight her. He pulls out a multi-tool and transforms it into a fencing sabre putting his right hand behind his back as he engages her. She blocked it just with her wrist and punched him in the gut, but he backed away, still able to fight

The Recording persisted. “There will be no death, no life, just being in the moment for an eternity. No longer will there be endless probability and senseless deaths with no meaning or reason? This, of course, includes all the people that opposed me. We may have never agreed on things, but this was my goal all along. The unfortunate thing about all this is everyone will die.” Marcus froze in place, eyes widening, as did many all over the battlefield. That didn't stop the general from punching him, though.

“Sadly, that's just how it has to be for me to be able to do all this. This Multiverse is set up that

way after all nothing can get done without sacrifices, but I assure you it will be like you never died once everything is recreated, and it will never happen again. Oh, my dear love, it won't be long now till I get to see you again. All hail the empire." The Transmission ends. The battlefield is covered in silence for a moment before many of them throw down their weapons in a panic, running away or lying down to die. Some, however, were still proud to fight under The Empire's banner.

"That's the man you all fought for. He used you, left every one of us behind, and now he plans to kill us all for some vague fantasy." She said as she punched him several times consecutively. He stopped fighting, not sure what to do, filled with mixed emotions. Before she could land another hit, Cindy swooped in, grabbing him and flying away. "Well, shit." She said, looking around for a way to escape now that her opponent was gone. That message was sent all over the multiverse. It may be a little too late, but people all over everywhere got off their asses and started making their way to the source world since it was still opened up for anyone to enter, granted they could find it.

The rest of The Union finally mobilized and surrounded the empire's force that had gone into shambles. Now it was The Empire that was overwhelmed by numbers. Theron defeated Wolf, charging forward, and leading the way. As surviving members of the Legion grabbed their fallen comrades, limping away, no longer caring about the battle, just trying to get away.

In the roots of the tree, the strike team finally makes it face-to-face with The Emperor. "Hmm, so more of you made it here. How vexing. But no matter, even if I'm not fully powered up, you can't hope to stop me now." He says, looking down on them like they are nothing to him. Clyde sees Rebbeca in the corner, rushing to her. "Why did you have to rush ahead like that," Clyde said, hearing no answer. He checked her pulse to see if she was still alive, and as far as he could tell, she was. Cyrus spoke up, "We heard your message. What nonsense."

"Commander Cyrus. I was saddened to hear you and Darrian had betrayed us, you were some of

the best we had. Don't you wish none of the suffering in your life happened, that you could live in a moment forever? I'll forgive your transgressions if you betray them and join me now." The Emperor offered. "You're going to kill us all regardless of my choice! Sir, I used to idolize you. You were a great man, but I'm sorry the death of your wife has driven you mad." "It's a necessary sacrifice. It pains me greatly to have to do it." Lucius says, dismissing most of what he said.

"Cut the crap. How can anyone even trust you to do everything you say? You and that man tortured me, and my sisters, since we were born. Was that also necessary?" Raleigh said with anger. "I can never truly be forgiven for what we did, but this is my way of rectifying it." He says to her coldly. Clyde sighs, standing up and getting closer to him. He strikes a pose right away and transforms into Scout form, running at him. "Do you even believe the bull shit coming out of your mouth right now!" He hit him in the face, not letting him ramble on. Every second they waste is a second he becomes stronger. He catches his fist even with the power suit on and squeezes his hand, slowly crushing it.

"Clyde!" Raleigh said, rushing in to help with a hammer to his face. He took that as well, like it was nothing. "It's no use, I'm already..." The Emperor started to say as Clyde's hand started to glow red. "Curious, it all makes more sense now. There is nothing special about you. You just had the arm, but your advantage ends here." He lets go of Clyde, showing his hand to him. It starts to glow just like his. They gasp and Clyde starts to think it really might be too late, and he is more or less useless with his arm nullified by another. "That works both ways, though, right."

"The kid is right." Darrian laughs, punching him hard in the stomach, seeming to do damage. "It's not enough!" He Punched Darrian even harder, knocking him to his knees. "I was born on the battlefield. I've trained for generations before you were in the gene pool to get stronger. In what universe could you ever beat me!" He screamed, swiping his hand, creating a shock wave that knocked them all down.

They slowly rise to their feet, demoralized. It was starting to feel more and more hopeless. Behind them, the machine the clone is in started to make alarm noises. Rebbeca has managed to get up for a small moment and hack into it with her remaining cord, rendering the machine useless. The Emperor panicked for a moment before taking a deep breath. “You were so close, but I can feel it now.

The power within me. I need no machines anymore. I can seize this power with my own hands!” He reaches behind him and rips the seed free from the air it was floating in, stopping the flow of information. It flows in his hand as his presence starts to become more and more overwhelming. A flash of light envelops them all as he laughs. “Let me give you all a taste of what's to come. Surely then you will see what I'm doing is the right thing."

Chapter Forty Five

Clyde wakes up in a hospital bed looking around at his surroundings. A tv was on playing something in the background. He was confused did they win? A nurse enters surprised to see him sitting up. “Oh your awake. Let me go inform your parents.” She turned to leave, but he grabbed her arm stopping her. “Wait, did we beat him? What do you mean parents?” He asked slowly getting more confused and scared. They were not all dead so they must have right? She pulls her arm away. “Listen Mr. Moore. There was an accident at your home that caused a huge fire. You've been in a coma for about a year. Sometimes people have dreams that are so vivid they confuse them for reality.”

Clyde looked down, and at his body his arm was burning like hell. “No it can't be... there's no way she wasn't...” He started to go into shock obviously concerning her. But then a more intense moment on the TV caught his attention with the noise it was making. He looked to see a girl who looked similar to Raleigh fighting someone. He stared with disbelief but slowly started to except the depressing reality. “Your parents suggested that show they said it was one of your favorites maybe it made its way into your dream?” She asked a little relieved by his quick acceptance of things. She left

the room to call for them, and a doctor.

He didn't want to believe it, but all the evidence pointed to all his adventures with Raleigh being a delusion. A tear fell down his cheek as he held his head in his hands. Not only was some of the most fun he ever had been a facade, he was back here in his world. The hospital bill would destroy the few savings he had, and he no longer had a place to live. He would again have to return to his soul crushing job. It didn't take long for the nurse to return with his parents.

They seemed almost indifferent about him being awake now. Both of them resembled him in different ways. “You're finally awake. I was beginning to think that would never happen.” Clyde's mother said seeming to be a little more emotional then before. She hugged him before sitting down in the chairs next to the hospital bed. “Sorry for all the trouble I guess.” Clyde said awkwardly unsure what to even say to them.

“Well speak up all ready. Think of all the worry you put me and your mother through.” His father grumbled, but didn't even give him time to answer him. “The doctor said you can leave as soon as tomorrow, you'll need a little physical therapy, but can start working again soon. It will be a tight fit, but me and your ma will like you stay with us.” Without another word he got up, and left. His mother frowned. “He has been pretty busy at work lately.” “He's always busy with work, so is everyone.” Clyde said a little dejected.

His mother wanted to say something but she didn't have the words. “Honey. None of us really want to spend all day working, but it's how things are. Its better then being dead.” She looks at her watch. “Oh dear I hate to do this to you but looks like I have to get back to it as well. I'm glad your OK. She gives him another hug before rushing out. He lays back in the bed raising up his arm. “Is this really living. Feels pretty damn dead to me.”

He felt like he barley knew those people. They lived in the same house for 18 years before he moved out yet they still felt like strangers busy with their own problems only here out of obligation. He looked over at the TV and at the girl on screen heartbroken he couldn't bare to look at it anymore. He turned it off, and faced the other way. He did so much learning to be a better person. He built relationships, did things with purpose. He finally felt like his life had meaning, and it turned out to be a lie. It started to get dark outside as he sunk deeper into a depressive state.

“No I refuse to accept this.” He said sitting up suddenly ripping out the iv wincing in pain. He gets up falling right away. His body had lost a lot of muscle from laying down for so long. He still managed to get up some how and hug the wall to get out of the room. He went down the hall, and up the stairs till he reached the roof. It said emergency only, but he didn't care. The past him wouldn't have opened it. He stares at the bright glowing moon breathing in the air. He wasn't completely sure why he came up here half hoping the sky wouldn't be there, and he would expose that this was all some sort of trick, but that didn't happen.

“Raleigh! Where are you! Raleigh! Answer me!” He yelled out into the sky. The Nurses had discovered his escape and come to collect him. “Calm down Mr. Moore. Lets get you back to your room.” He pushes her away looking around for some way to get away. There was a fire escape close by he slid down the ladder pulling it down barley able to keep a hold with his diminished strength. They tried to stop him, but he was able to get down and duck down an alley before they could catch up. He caught his breath not sure what to do now.

It reminded him of the first time he met Loki in a similar looking alley. He saw the shadow of what looked like him. “Loki!” He shouted excited rushing toward the shadow, but when he got closer he would only discover that it was a cat you ran away startled. What was he even doing he thought sliding down the alley wall to sit on the ground. He knew he would have to return to the hospital.

Had he been wrong this whole time for wanting to leave this world behind? He thought about his world and what it had to offer. It was true that it was bleak, and he spent most of his time working to survive, but could he have tried harder to make connections, did he really try to find meaning in the world he was already apart of? The answer was most assuredly no. Who knows if if would've worked out, but he never truly tried complacent waiting for change to come to him.

That was what he learned on his journey whether is was real or not he stood up his arm burning even more. His looked down to see it was glowing with the symbol it had had every time it does that. He laughed relieved crying a little. “Thank goodness.” He said punching the air creating a crack in reality. He was right all along, but perhaps he just needed to come to this conclusion to do something about it. Raleigh is already standing on the other side. “I heard you calling.” She smiled holding out her hand. “Well come on lets finish this adventure!” She said smiling as he took her hand.

This time he led her through the void. “How did you get out?” He asked her. “Pft, that man has interesting ideas on what my desires are.” She said a little amused.” He punched the air again breaking into another area. Darrian and Cyrus were both there, but back in their empire uniforms. It seems the big guy just baked a ton of sweets for everyone, and they all seemed to be enjoying it. Tara, and Inari were with them happily eating it. Raleigh looked away like she had a similar fantasy happen already.

“Oh great you made it you little punk. Here's some freshly made muffins just for you.” He said holding them out for her. “Come on big guy you know The Empire doesn't allow this sorta creativity.” She said bluntly. “What are you talking about... Your right what was I.” Darrian said panicking a little starting to realize its all fake. Tara tugs on his shirt. “Whats wrong dad?” That seemed to snap him back into a trance. Cyrus walked up to them looking a little sad. “I figured it out pretty quickly, but I didn't have the heart to try and convince him, or maybe I just didn't want to lose her again.” He lowered his head looking in Inari's direction. She looks, and him and smiles.

He looks away with mixed emotions. “Not to stick an knife in you, but how come you guys get happy cake time and I get depressing real world.” Clyde said not actually wanting him to answer. Cyrus sighs but knows its time to end this. He walks up to Darrian reaching up to grab his broad shoulders. “Listen Inari maybe dead, but our other daughter is still out there. We need to return to her. “Our daughter... your right shes alone right now. I'm... sorry everyone. Lets go give that piece a shit the ass pounding of a life time.” He slowly started to remember tearing up a little as he sees tara, and Inari together looking confused. Clyde punches them out of the reality as Cyrus, and Darrian take one last look both getting teary eyed. “We will see you soon Tara.” Darrian said rushing off into the void with them.

The Emperor is still in the room, but he looks completely different his body has morphed into a monster made of astral energy. His body looked like it was comprised of star clusters, maybe even whole universes. More cracks formed in reality as tentacles emerged, and The Caretakers 3 glowing eyes peered at him from the void. “You finally rear your ugly head.” The Emperor says with rage breaking into the space it inhabits.

It morphed into the comprehensible human looking world as he did. The Caretaker looked around at his tree, and then all around him as countless saplings started to rise from the ground. He didn't seem surprised almost like that's what he expected. His surrounding changed to that of a beach the sun was slowly setting as Lucius approached in his new astral form. The Caretaker didn't react just watching him as he got closer.

“I've finally made it to your level, now I'm going to drag you down into the dirt with everyone else. You will know suffering like all of us do.” He said to them. The Caretaker didn't say anything not looking threatened by him at all. This only made The Emperor angry. He ran toward him becoming more monstrous by the moment. Clyde, and the others broke through the sky and landed in his path.

“What! How did you escape. Why would you want to?” They all looked at him ready for round two.

Final Chapter

The Caretaker watches as Clyde and the others have come to confront The Emperor. “I don't understand. Why would you not want the worlds I gave you? Free from war, your loved ones with you. No worries.” The Emperor asked, confused. “If you think any of us were satisfied with that reality, real or not, this plan of yours would never work out for anyone,” Clyde says, pointing at him getting ready to fight. “Nonsense! A world without strife should be everyone's ideal.” The Emperor screams.

Clyde transforms, charging forward with them, punching him in the gut. The Emperor doesn't dodge. “Fool, even if you were able to break out of the paradise I made for you. You still can't hope to win against me.” He said arrogantly. Clyde's arm glows brighter as part of The Emperor's monster-like skin breaks off around the impact area. He backs away as the light escapes out of him and into Clyde's arm, it turns from mostly white to crimson red with an aura around it. “I see now. That cursed arm isn't useless after all.” The Emperor says, becoming more guarded now that he knows Clyde can take some of the power he's obtained for himself.

I won't let you get to my level. His body started to change and become less human-like, growing tentacles. He reached out his hand, shooting out a giant energy wave. It was too huge to dodge it. He

braced himself, closing his eyes, not sure if he would survive it in all honesty. But he felt nothing, he opened his eyes, surprised to see his poser had returned to shield him. His arm siphoned more of the energy from the attack. “Well, look at that,” Clyde said, unsure why it was able to be here, maybe something about this being the source of everything.

He thought for a moment of what other things he had left behind on other worlds unable to leave them like the universal code within the sword, and like it heard him calling for it the fragments appeared from all around combining back together into the sword. “This doesn't make much sense, but man is it cool.” He counter-attacked, swiping the sword at The Emperor. He could feel his speed, and cognition, increasing by the second. Lucius was still able to dodge each strike, though, as now he was trying to avoid getting hit. Raleigh and the others stood still, they didn't know what they could meaningfully contribute to this fight.

To remedy this, he tried something. He reached out his hand to them thinking about sharing his power, hoping that would be enough to do so. He felt some of the power start to leave him and enter them. “Alright!” Darrian said feeling like a million bucks rushing in with Cyrus to help out. The Emperor whipped his tentacles at him and shot more concentrated energy beams at his face. He was able to dodge some of them, but a few hit him and cracked his helmet a little. The poser took the brunt of the attack, starting to fade away, not able to help any longer. Cyrus rushes to one side, Darrian on the other. Darrian used his fist and Cyrus stabbed into his mid-section, causing him pain.

It seems they could also take his power through Clyde now. “Your little trick works for me too.” He said, grabbing onto the Sword and crushing it in his grasp. Some power returned to him. “I saw into your world. What a joke, why would you ever part with a world like yours.” Clyde's helmet started to break off, showing his face. “I suspect you'll never understand. As I will never understand why you think this is a good idea. No one wants bad things to happen to them, but that's how we

evolve, and grow into better people.” Clyde said solemnly. The Emperor swiped at him, releasing a huge wave of energy similar to how he did before. They were all knocked back, mostly drained.

“Even now, you can't defeat me. You squandered your chance. You have no power left.” He said, mocking them. He was about to turn his attention back to The Caretaker who had just been watching them from the sidelines when he realized he wasn't at full power. “What did you do? Where is the girl?” He looked around, only now recognizing her absence. “This whole journey I've gone on. I didn't do any of it alone. I couldn't have.” Clyde said, smiling, a flash of light appeared behind him. He turned to face it, Raleigh sped toward him, she had been given all the power they took and been off to the side charging it up for a final attack. All that energy is in her hammer. She wacks him with it with everything she has. The Skin on his body cracks completely. The human version of him falls out of it like it was some sort of exoskeleton.

“Nooo! How could you do this? I was going to save everyone. I was going to see her again.” The Emperor said, slamming his fists on the sand. He tried to get up, but he was beaten, only falling again out of strength. Raleigh reached out of the exoskeleton left behind, pulling out The Seed. It was over, they had won, though just barely. Clyde, and the others, rose to their feet. Raleigh smiled with glee. “I can't believe it, we did it, we did it.” She put her hands up, expecting him to high-five her. He did so, just as excited as her, but still feeling weak and injured from the fight.

They kept celebrating as The Caretaker got closer, clearing his throat, they stopped to look at him with worry, unsure what to expect. “If you would please hand over The Source.” He said, reaching out his hand. Raleigh seemed a little reluctant to, but didn't know if she could stop him. “What are you going to do now? We kinda just saved the multiverse for you.” Clyde said in protest. The Caretaker smirked, amused by his candor. “Is that what you think you have done? No, nothing so simple.” Before anyone could react, he had taken it from her grasp.

“I never did like the vermin that clung to my creation like termites, but I suppose I needed you all. The tree runs off probability, it always has, and your kind increase its possibilities. But those of you who traveled to different worlds changed everything. My little sapling started to grow exponentially. Every world you visit creates so many more. What do you think something on this scale would do.” He asked, hoping they could figure it out themselves. “You were happy this all happened,” Clyde said, thinking he understood now. The others looked a little lost still. “That's right. You created a paradox. One where you save my wonderful tree, one where you fail miserably.” His body begins to glitch and look like The Emperor in his monster form. “And so many others. I don't have just one little sapling to look after anymore.”

He returns to normal as the area around them changes to a forest filled with glowing white trees. Most of them look similar, but a few of them look black, and dark. They all look around with wonder, not sure what to make of this information. “I commend you all for this great feat, even that man.” He says, referring to The Emperor. “However, you intended to harm my precious creation. You will not be forgiven.” He faces him as the ground starts to open up to swallow him. “No stop it. You won't get away with this! I swear I'll return to take your head!” The emperor says as he is pulled down below.

They all were a little uncomfortable by what they just witnessed. Clyde didn't want to know the suffering he would surely be experiencing for who knows how long. “Now to answer your question. As far as your multiverse is concerned, nothing will change. Though I will seal off the chance of anyone being able to do this in yours.” He said nonchalantly. “I suppose you may have that as well.” He waved his hand at Raleigh, turning his back to them, her arms started to burn like Clyde's confusing her. “I don't think we will meet again. Tell me, did you find the meaning you were looking for?” He asked Clyde with interest in his voice for once.

He was a little confused a first, they had never had a conversation about that, but he accepted

that he just knew being who he was. “Yes, I think I did.” He smiled as The Caretaker walked away, vanishing. They blinked and were back in the room that housed the source, but nothing was there and everything was shaking. Rebbecca was gone as well as the clone. “Crap, we need to get out of here before that thing seals us all in here,” Raleigh said In a panic, still holding onto her arm in pain.

They all nodded, running up the spiral path as it collapsed. They got to the top just in time, but had to keep going. Branches started to fill the hole and create a huge wall that would crush them to death if they didn't get out in time. They forgo the cable and just hold hands to get out of the mist, a lot of soldiers still trapped within it got pushed elsewhere to the unknown with the creatures. They made it just in time to the entrance just as it closed in on itself.

Loki, and the others on the defense team, were there getting their wounds treated. Most of The Empire's forces had fled or started to flee. Everyone seemed satisfied with the outcome, not chasing them and choosing to return home instead. Loki got up weakly, gripping Clyde's shoulders. “You did it, I'm so proud of you. All of you.” He said to them. Raleigh looked over in horror at The Hopper. It was pretty banged up. It needed serious repairs right away if there was any hope of it flying again. Clyde rubbed her back, consoling her. “I'm sure someone will give us a discount this time after everything we've done.” He said to her in hopes it would make her feel better. She smiled. “Yeah, you are right.”

Epilogue

Everyone had gathered at the base of the tree, all enemies had scattered throughout the multiverse. The once great empire that boasted control over a large section of the Multiverse was scattered, surely they were not completely gone, but they were out of the picture for the foreseeable future after being hit with such a heavy blow. Clean-up started to commence as Union, and Mecha soldiers searched the now-empty battlefield for survivors and notable casualties. The General managed to climb out of the rubble of the crashed ship, very banged up, but alive. Marcy was close by, already searching for her, ecstatic to see her. She approached her like a little dog happy to play with the people around.

“Well, we aren't dead, so. I'm guessing we won out.” She said dusting herself off. Marcy just nodded, smiling. After everyone had been found or recorded, they met at the base with the rest of them, with one exception. Rebbecca was never found, she looked down at them from way above the tree. She tapped her headphones and started a call with someone. “I got what we came for.” She told them. “What about your secondary mission.” The person on the other end asked. “I had the clone with me,

but I lost it in the miasma.” She said with a much less cheery tone than usual. “Unfortunate, but no matter, good work, Trojan.” The call ends as she takes one last look down at all of them, choosing not to interact and leave through a portal before they notice.

Everyone at the base talked amongst themselves, briefing each other on the basics of what happened. Loki tapped his foot in annoyance. “Enough of this. We should be celebrating, it's not every day we accomplish a feat as great as this. To Valhalla! We can discuss it more there” He commanded with pretty much everyone unanimously agreeing. Natasha shook her head. “If my men want to go, I'll allow it, but I have to return for my punishment.” She said, making her men a little sad. “Forget those shitheads, you did nothing wrong, boss,” Jacob said to her before anyone else could speak up.

“I don't disagree, but it's something I have to do. If it saves the rest of you from being punished." She says. The Squad surrounds her with smug grins. Marcy looks like she wants to stop whatever it is they are doing, but she lets it happen as they start to tie her up. “If you're going down we are going with you stupid, so have a drink with us,” Jacob said as the rest of them carried her off. She looked a little annoyed but was too injured to stop them, she ended up smiling as they carried her off.

The Mecha Commander approached Raleigh with his giant robot. “Allow us to take your ship back to wherever you want it to be repaired.” He said to her. Her eyes sparkle with excitement. “You mean it!” “Yes, Ma'am.” He said, saluting her with the Mecha as a few others picked it up, and carried it away. “You still better be careful with my ship!” She said as they flew off.

They all reached Valhalla ready to have the party of their lives. Loki had already made preparations, confident they would win. Some of them got banged up pretty badly, but were lively all the same, drinking and being merry. Clyde sat next to Raleigh, eating some well-deserved food. “I never would have thought that the day we met would end up like this.” Raleigh was chowing, scarfing a ton of food down but stopped a moment to answer him. “What did you think would happen?”

“Well, a part of me thought we would crash into something and die with your landing skills,”

Clyde said, teasing her. “Haha. You're lucky, you're beat up right now.” She said, annoyed with him. She ate a bit more before resting her head on his shoulder. “I'm glad we met.” He didn't exactly expect this, but he didn't stop her smiling. “Yeah me too.”

On the other side of the table, Loki was almost fixed to the chair, unable to move from how exhausted he was. Lucy decided to feed him, giggling. The Squad decided to do something similar with The General, but well it was more like a game of pong, all of them very drunk, including her. Cyrus and Darrian stayed off to the side, feeling a bit unsure if they should join in on the celebration any more than that since their past association with the empire. But Jacob quickly pulled them in, handing them some flagons to drink from.

Everyone started to get drunk except for Clyde, who quickly started to feel like a babysitter surrounded by children. Theron however also seemed mostly fine, and she had packed them in like the rest of them. “Why don't you take her to bed, I can watch over everyone.” She winks at him.“Oh, um, we aren't.... Never mind.” He decided it was better just to do as she said than try to explain anything further.

He struggled to guide the giggling woman to her room. She was much stronger than him, after all. Before they reached the room, she passed out, only making things harder. He lifted her, struggling with his battle damage, and because she was pretty heavy. “Damn it, why do you have to have so many cybernetics.” He mumbled, finally dropping her off at her room. He was about to leave, but she pulled him into the bed, clinging to him tightly, still giggling.

He blushes lightly, accepting this was just where he was sleeping tonight, hoping he wouldn't become on the receiving end of her fury in the morning. When the morning did come she woke up before him steaming hot red with embarrassment. She was about to punch his still sleeping body, but she stopped herself after remembering he was injured, she would let him have this even though it was her fault in the first place.

Everyone started to return home. Loki waved them all off With Marcel and Lucy. Theron stayed with them too until everyone left, returning to The War World, she was excited to begin working on her new ideas for The War World now that she was in charge of it all. “I'm still a little disappointed no one would put on a swimsuit,” Loki said sadly. “Well, maybe not everyone but," She pulled open her shirt a little to let him see inside. “Want to go see mine.” She said, winking at him. He nods with serious eyes as they rush off to have fun, and Marcel shakes his head.

The Union did indeed punish The General, and her officers, though now everyone knew The Empire's plans she had received most of the credit from the public perspective. So most of their punishment ended up being superficial. They wanted to bury her. She smirked just thinking about how angry they were, finally feeling happy with her place in the world. The Squad, and Marcy were off to the side waiting for her return to them with joy.

The Scouts, for better or worse, were influenced greatly, from all this time outside their naive world. They had returned home much more jaded, and edgy, maybe it would inspire a new show in Clyde's world. For now, they would rest and wait for the next threat to their world to appear, and it didn't seem like they would be waiting long, as a monster started to attack the city they were overseeing while it was being rebuilt.

Cyrus returned to the island with Darrian. They set out to do everything they wanted. All of Raleigh's sisters found a home somewhere in the multiverse. They went around attacking hold-outs of the empire they were told had sisters in their possession occasionally freeing them, and finding them homes as well. It was impossible to know if they ever freed everyone single one of them, but the had done more then anyone could have asked. Now they can finally sit back and relax. It was hard, still feeling guilty of their part in the empire's plans. One day as they were opening the bakery Tara woke up, Darrian hugged the confused girl sobbing uncontrollably. He was worried that would never happen. Cyrus watched a little off to the side, a little sad Inari couldn't be here to see it. But her warm smile

brought him back to reality. They still had this daughter to take care of.

Somewhere in Between Spaces in The Multiverse, Marcus struggles to walk around. All that remains of his mighty fleet is a handful of ships and the battered Chimera Legion. “I can't believe that was his plan. What a joke. Screw him, screw all of them! I'm going to forge my destiny now. We will rebuild the empire better than ever before, and we will do it using her.” He laughs, limping toward the Capsule holding the clone of Raleigh. Through a stroke of random luck, it had come across his path. Cindy was wary, not sure if she should try and convince him otherwise.

His men still loyal to him looked on with shaky optimism as he pressed buttons on the machine, opening the capsule. The water flushed out, and nothing seemed to happen at first, but after a moment the clone took a deep breath and opened her eyes, something The old man never intended to happen when he made her.

Clyde, and Raleigh, looked through a window as their ship was being repaired to be better than it ever was. The greatest reward Raleigh could ask for after it all. He wasn't sure what to expect in the future. It had been a long journey to get here, and it marked the end of this story, but not the end of theirs. They will surely go on many more adventures together. Raleigh held out her hand as he took it, they watched through the window with excitement and anticipation for the future.