Misadventures In the Multiverse 2

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Chapter One

A small infantry carrier craft hums as it flies over a brewing battle. The battle is seemingly approaching its climax those involved being The Union, and the last remnants of The Multiversal Empire. It descends closer to the ground just out of the blast range. Inside there are two Union soldiers next to none other than Clyde. He is holding the railing looking over the side not so sure of himself. “So do you guys do this all the time or?” He started to ask them only for them to not say anything. After a moment of awkward silence, he gets a call on an earpiece. “Clyde where are you? Get down here already,” Raleigh said from somewhere unknown. He sighs looking down at the ground and swallowing hard. “We are almost there hold on.” He said pleading with her to be more patient. “Do you guys think we are close enough?” He asks them for them to still not answer.

He sighs seeing that they have no interest in speaking with him. He jumps out of the open door to the battle below. Both of them look at each other confused. “Who was that guy?” One of them asked only for the other to shrug. Clyde started his free fall explosions all around him as well as crafts engaged in a dog fight this was looking like less of a good idea by the second. He looks over at his wrist still having the Ultra Syncer trying his best to hold a pose as it activated enveloping his body in

light and with The Ultra Suit armor.

His confidence growing as he was about to reach the ground he positioned himself to land on his feet landing hard causing a small crater around the impact point. He was now deep in enemy territory, and he made it known to them. A few of them started to fire at him only for him to easily dodge it, and rush forward toward them. Two of them ran at him with swords, but before they could even strike he kicked one in the gut as hard as he could and punched the other knocking them out.
He keeps up his pace toward one of the ones shooting at him subduing him quickly but not quick enough. Another one tried to take a shot at him from behind. Before he fired Raleigh appeared breaking through the barricade turning her multi-tool into a shield riding it like a makeshift snow board and landing on the guy.

“There you are, Clyde. Well was your little landing everything you imagined?” She asked teasing him. “Well, I guess I can scratch it off the bucket list. Still kinda hurt my shins though.” He explained brushing his shoulder. “And I thought I was the thrill seeker.” She said. Before he can say anything else General Natasha Starcrafter gets on their headpiece. “What's your location? All forces are advancing on the main base.”

“Relax it's like right next to us,” Raleigh said a little annoyed. “Get over here ri...” Natasha started to say only for Raleigh to end the call. “Come on let's get going.” She sighs motioning for Clyde to follow. They pretty quickly make it there to see it's already more or less been taken care of and secured by The Union forces. “Great we rushed over here for nothing.” she groans.
Clyde powers down his suit seeing that the danger is seemingly over. “Well let's get back to base, and see what they are going to pay us this time.” She said sighing getting onto a shuttle leading back to a Union flagship in the sky. “How many more holdouts of The Empire do you think are out there? None of them seem to have any of my sisters I think we may have gotten them all. Man, I hate taking orders like this.” She complained very upset with their circumstance.

“Well, you were the one who wanted to bankrupt yourself on upgrades to The Hopper. The Strongest Metal in the Mecha universe doesn't come cheap even at the saved the multiverse discount.” Clyde said in response. “It will be worth it no more constant repairs after it's finished it will be more or less indestructible.” She said gloating only for him to groan himself. “Great now that you said that someone is going to end up destroying it.”

Raleigh frowned not answering as the shuttle landed, and they started to walk towards the area Natasha was in. Clyde sighs. “Look at it this way. After we do a few jobs for them we will have money and can do whatever, and now that The Empire is the way it is you don't have to worry about them chasing you anymore, you're hunting them down even.” After a moment of silence, she finally answers. “Yeah you're right hopefully that's sooner rather than later.”

They made it to Natasha's Command room where she was looking at a holographic table with her secretary Marcy Miller. “You're back. Thanks for your help I think that we have gotten almost all of the remnant forces that we are aware of. You'll be properly paid once we return to Concordia, and if you're up for it an advance on your next mission.” She explains to them.

“Is there something special about this next mission of yours?” Clyde asked as Raleigh seemed to check out of the conversation sitting in a chair. “Have you ever heard of the Wishing Door?” The General asked him. “Can't say I have.” He answered bluntly. “It is a Door that can grant you any wish simple as that. No god or universe can go against whatever you wish for. I don't think I need to explain why that's a problem.” She answered.

“If they have access to this door why have they not used it?” Clyde asked curiously he wondered what the true limits of such a door would be what would The Caretaker allow was it truly a wish with no rules? “It's a door that requires keys to open. Aspects of the Multiverse one for each body part. Without all of them, it's just a fancy door. But they should know that that concerns me. I know for a fact that they don't have them all. So we will be both putting an end to them and finding out why they

are there." She explained further. Clyde rubbed his arm wondering if he should keep quiet about having the arm. He had no idea it had other uses. "Has anyone ever made a wish." Clyde asked still very interested in the conversation. Natasha thought for a moment. "They say someone did long ago, but as for what they wished for it hard to say. They called them The Phoenix."

Before Clyde can say anything else Raleigh speaks up. "We will do it sounds halfway interesting for once." "The great captain Raleigh is taking part in a conversation with me? Marcy write down this date it will surely go down in history." Natasha said sarcastically nudging her poor secretary who does start writing it down not realizing. "Alright alright, I get it," Raleigh said with an annoyed grunt. "I have also gotten word that your ship has finished being repaired and is being delivered to our base." She said looking at her smugly. Raleigh jumps out of her seat. "Wait really? Hell yes." Her positive attitude starting to reemerge.

Not long after that, the intercom went off announcing their arrival causing her to rush out right away to see her ship. Clyde sighed. "I again apologize for her. Are we good do we need to know anything else before the mission?" She just smiles respecting that at least he is trying. "Our battle plan will be sent to your ship, not that she'll go along with it. Go on be with your captain." She said motioning for him to leave with her hand.

Raleigh had gunned it to get to where The Hopper was it took a long time for him to catch up, but there it was. The Hopper was before them looking almost like a new ship, slightly bigger than before only lacking a paint job. Inside everything seemed a little brighter than before a combination of old empire, Zech, and Mecha Technology. He looked in his room to find more amenities than before including his own bathroom, and for some reason the bat that he had placed in there at the very start of his journey but never actually used.

Raleigh was very impressed and happy with the changes. The Center even seemed to accommodate her method of driving the ship a lot more than The Empire version ever did. It was clear

that everyone who worked on it put all their love and effort into doing so. The Mecha Commander entered The Hopper smiling. “Well is it everything you hoped for? We certainly tried our best.” “Of course it is. It's almost like a new ship but still feels like the old one. It might need a new name at this point.” She answered excitedly. “I'm glad you like it, and well as you can see we left it without paint. In our world, we always leave that to the people using the vehicle. So they can make it their own.” He explained.

“Are you just saying that because you didn't feel like doing it?” Clyde said joking for once. “Well, I guess you caught me.” He said joking right back. “Anyway there is the small matter of the bill I would have loved to do it all for free, but that metal I just can't give it away.” “We already have most of it ready, but the rest we don't have yet. You know we are good for it.” Raleigh said hoping that was the case. “I will put my faith in you. Anyway, I must be going” He started to walk away waving as he did so getting into his Mecha and flying away.

“Well now that we have our house back let's break it in,” Raleigh said grinning. “You mean by sleeping in it right?” Clyde asked. She looked at him smugly meaning to take it out for a test run. “You mean by sleeping in it right?” He repeated only for her to rush inside hooking herself up to it and lifting off. The Union control tower tried to radio them to wait for permission, but Raleigh ignored them flying around dangerously, and all over the place before Clyde could get to a seat.

Chapter Two

After Raleigh had her joyride they at a proper rest for the night waking up earlier Clyde decided it was time to try out his new shower. He quickly peeled out of his jumpsuit and pulled off his shirt stopping shocked by his reflection. He had gotten rather toned in the past year or two to the point he couldn't help but admire it. Somehow through all the running around the multiverse, he failed to notice any improvement until now.

While he was still inspecting himself Raleigh barged in. “Clyde are you ready yet it....” She stopped in place seeing the shirtless man before her red as a tomato. Surprisingly embarrassed he covered himself with his dirty shirt facing her with a fake smile. “Please leave.” That is all he said as she timidly nodded and left right away. Outside she was steaming a little. “Was he always that hot?” She asked herself questioning reality before dismissing it. One thing that was for sure was that she would be knocking in the future.

She quickly forgot what had her so flustered sitting on the bridge bored waiting for him to emerge from his room. After a half hour, he left steam billowing from the top of the door frame. “Man that was refreshing.” He said more casually now sitting down in the chair next to her. With a notebook. He opened it reading all the stuff he already wrote down and checking some of it off. It seemed to be a bucket list of sorts. “What convinced you to start that anyway?” She asks out of curiosity.

“Doesn't everyone have a list like this in their head? I just decided I'm ready to actively pursue most of them. What about you? You're not exactly running from anything anymore? What do you want to do now?” Clyde asked seeming to have become much more positive after the events of their past adventures. Raleigh thinks for a moment but doesn't seem to have the answer. “I'm not really sure. I don't think I could possibly live a boring life, but not having to constantly run all the time is nice.” She looked at the ceiling at a loss. Clyde frowns a little concerned up to this point she had been the one guiding them her power even specialized in that yet she felt lost herself. “I'm sure we will figure something out,” Clyde said but didn't fully believe it himself. “Guess we should head over to that fancy magic door soon, you read the game plan right?” He asked her only for them to give him a look. “Of course you didn't. It wasn't that complicated anyway.”

Raleigh jumps up from her chair heading for the center console. Unlike before it wasn't simple cords hanging for the ceiling there was an actual fixture there with shorter ones. It overall looked more sleek. She hooked in like she had many times before floating in the air, eyes glowing as The New Hopper lifted into the air, and to their destination. They arrived in no time at the site of a world not unlike the source world however instead of a giant ethereal tree there was a barren land of nothing with an unbelievably large door in the center of it all.

It was Grand having a symbol in the middle of a seal depicting a body with multiple limbs. Clyde wanted to get a better look at it, but The Remnant below was blocking the full view of it as a few of them tried tampering with it. The Union Fleet emerged from the vortex starting their assault right

away. “Alright! Let's get things started. Are we feeling Zech mode? I bet those Mecha dudes improved on it.” Raleigh said stoked to try out all the new features she had not yet had the chance to.

“Do you not remember how tight it got in here last time?” Clyde said in protest. She sighed remembering back ultimately agreeing. “Alright, Mr superpower suit.” She said with a hint of disappointment landing just outside the base. Clyde powered up right away as Raleigh followed suit toward the small encampment of Empire soldiers. Something was off there were few of them compared to what was expected.

Clyde punches the nearest one of them into another knocking them both out as Raleigh turns Novabreaker into a hammer doing the same thing as Clyde, but with more of them. “We are one-upping each other now?” he asked to her as she smirked. “I'm not used to you being so useful in a fight.” She teased. Taking it as a challenge he rushed forward leaping high into the air with the help of his enhanced mobility crashing down on many of them taking them out as well.

Before he can flex any more Jacob, and the squad crash down joining the fight already powered up in their armor. “Well look who it is. Been a while mate.” Clyde sighs knowing he looks a lot less impressive compared to him at least in his own opinion. “I guess the party is over." “Well excuse me I didn't know you were too big for your britches now. Remember kid that suit isn't invincible it's the man inside that matters.” Jacob said mocking him.

He doesn't say anything just joining him, and the other forces of The Union that have started to advance. “Something is wrong,” Clyde said a little worried. “What do you mean?” Raleigh asked him. “This is too easy, and there is barely anyone here.” Just as he said that a fleet of Remnant ships appeared over the already attacking Union ship ambushing them. “Me in my big mouth,” Clyde said sighing.

“That just makes this more fun.” She said happily running forward leaving him with the Squad. “It's still about what we estimated they must have been tipped off or something,” Jacob said as they

rushed closer to the door. Clyde ran forward to join them as what appeared to be a higher-ranking officer jumped in front of him. “So we meet again Clyde Moore this time I will best you for sure after you ruined my life.” The man said.

Clyde tilted his head. “Am I famous now? How exactly did I do that?” He asked more confused than anything. “You don't remember me? I'll make you remember with my fist!” He ran up to him in anger not using any sort of weapon just his bare fist that didn't seem to be that strong. “Man The Empire is starting to run low on good people huh.” He said easily avoiding his punches.

He studies the man's face still having no clue who he is. His face was all patchy and improperly groomed, hobo-like hair. The man looked like he had seen a better day. Clyde completely stops taking this seriously ready to end it, but right as he's about to, The Ultra Suit vanishes deactivating right as the man punches him. Clyde panicked taking the hit still not that powerful, but he felt it.

“Ha not so powerful without that fancy armor of yours huh? You're nothing without it.” The man said to him his words ringing in his ears. He froze up he had been relying on it too much. He snapped back to reality before he could do him any more harm pulling out his multi-tool and shooting him down. He took a deep breath looking around to see what the progress was on the battlefield It seemed like most of the ground forces had been defeated, and the Remnant ships started to retreat. Again he took a deep breath, taking the man's words to heart walking forward till he found Raleigh in the others. They were right next to the massive door looking at the makeshift platform that was made. At the top, there were many computers with cords hooked up to the center seal of the door. “Bout time you showed up what happened to you?” Jacob asked him powering down with the rest of the squad now.

“I'm not really sure my suit just stopped working.” Simon the squad's resident tech guy spoke up surprisingly as he adjusted his glasses. “Interesting I'm not super knowledgeable on the scouts tech, but I was able to comprehend some of the designs when we reverse-engineered ours, mind if I take a look.”

Clyde was a little reluctant, but that feeling of powerlessness was starting to creep in again so he took it off and handed it to him.

After studying it for a bit he spoke up once more. “Hmm looks like it might be a power issue. It is almost out of battery. I'd say at most you could use it once or twice briefly.” Simon explained as Raleigh approached the door curiously. “Well, how would I change it? I don't think I ever remember them having that issue themselves.” He asked a little desperate. “It may be power latent in their world that charges it. I believe our models used a different power system for that reason, unfortunately, it reduces the power you can inflict.”

Raleigh studies the door almost like she is being drawn to it. “I see so something I might have to ask the scouts directly about. Not exactly what I hoped. Anyway, what were their plans for the door?” Clyde asked changing the subject seeing that there wasn't anything they could do even though he was worried about it. “Those dumb asses thought they could open it up with a couple of amateur universal hackers.” Jacob laughed mocking them. “Everyone knows you need a key of...”
Right before anyone can say anything else Raleigh reaches out her hand touching the door. Just as she does, it shakes to life. The symbol in the middle started to glow on both of the arms as did Clyde's arm itself and Raleigh's arm. She didn't know she even had it. The Squad looks shocked. “Holy smokes you have a key? Raleigh too?” Jacob said in disbelief.

Clyde sighs seeing that it's all out of the bag now that Raleigh interacted with the door. “I didn't know about the Wishing Door, but I was advised to keep it to myself,” Clyde said as Raleigh hopped down looking at her still glowing arm. “That was what The Caretaker meant.” She said in awe as a giant eye appeared from nowhere above them. “You were wise to keep it to yourself because now everyone will know.” A disembodied voice says as the eye disappears.

The Squad started to surround them both. “Listen Clyde. What you two have is the greatest treasure in all the Multiverse.” Jacob started to say as gently as he could only for him to be interrupted

by Raleigh. “And what you want it for yourself right?” Jacob sighed but tried to remain calm. “We've had a good thing going here let's not ruin it. The Union could use those keys they are life-changing hell they are multiverse changing." Both of them started to back away seeing where this was going.

“I'm not saying you're a bad person, but some of your bosses... I don't trust them to use it for a good cause we both know how the counsel is.” Clyde said in protest. “They don't gotta know. Just calm down we can all go meet with The General and work this out. Raleigh snickered. “As if, don't kid yourselves,” she said quickly throwing down a smoke bomb and taking Clyde’s hand pushing past Tyler the smallest member of the squad.

Jacob chokes up a storm wiping the smoke-free from himself. Seeing they are already in the distance he activated his headpiece with all coms open. “Attention all Union forces. Captain Raleigh and Clyde Moore are now our enemies if you see them capture them at once.” After that, they all quickly powered up to chase personally.

The head start they had on them was enough to get them about halfway to The Hopper, but now everyone was alert and surrounding them ready to take them down. Raleigh knowing that Clyde's Ultra suit was more of a last resort resumed her role as the main fighter pushing past the soldiers she had previously fought beside and defending Clyde. She tried not to hurt them too badly considering she knew most of them were not bad people, but their overwhelming number was making it harder. “They are heading to their ship to stop them,” Jacob said over the open channels. “What the hell is going on down there Jacob why are you attacking our allies,” Natasha demanded to know over the communications. “They have keys!” That is all he said in response as he tried to catch up.

Union Foot Soldiers started to try and sabotage The Hopper and prevent their escape, but some sort of field activated protecting it. “Sweet I didn't even know they added a defense system like that," Raleigh said as they were right next to it. They quickly got inside and flew off before anyone could persue them. Natasha didn't have the time to process what happened still confused and unable to

mobilize the forces in the sky.

They both caught their breath as Raleigh plotted a course to a random world. “What was that floating eye thing, and that voice?” Clyde asked panting. “I... I don't know, but I swear I've heard it somewhere before.” She pauses to think. “I guess we are still on the run after all.” She said sadly. Soon they get the answers to their questions as a screen forcibly pops up in front of them.

It simply says breaking news as it cuts to a man in a blue suit that looks like a very over-the-top New's Anchor. “This Is Aion Anderson coming to you live from Porta Nexus ready to give you the hottest scoop in all the Multiverse.” The man said smiling. “For the First time in thousands of years. All Aspects of the Multiverse are out, and about somewhere. You know what that means folks it's time to get your wish on. Who received the missing arms you ask well that would be these two lovely individuals.” He smiles as a picture of them both appears from when she touched the door.

“An amateur Captain known as Raleigh and..... some guy,” Aion said. “Who are they calling amateur ugh. Why did the Union have to get all the glory for defeating The Empire.” She complained. “At least he knew your name,” Clyde said disappointed but also a little relieved returning his attention to the broadcast. "A list of all notable people who are known to have aspects of the multiverse will be posted later on our site today for those of you who might not know. This has been Aion Anderson Voice of the Multiverse signing out.”

Just as soon as it appeared the screen vanished just as mysteriously. Raleigh slammed her hand down on the console. “You're telling me not only is The Union after us now, but basically the whole Multiverse? Goddamn it.” Clyde didn't know what to say feeling just as hopeless as her.

Back on the command deck of Natasha's ship, The Squad enters as her anger grows. “What were you thinking!” She shouted. “Listen, we tried to get them to come with us, but they weren't having it, so I made the decision to take matters into my own hands.” Jacob said unapologetic. She paced back and forth, wondering how things could have ended more favorably.

As she is mulling it over, a prudish looking man with balding hair enters the room. “Greetings General.” The man said. “What do you want, can't you see I'm busy.” She said dismissing him. “My name is Overseer Avery Medan, the counsel sent me.”

She groaned, knowing that she now couldn't ignore him. “What do they want?” She asked. “In light of the recent developments involving the Wishing door, you have been issued new orders, and to make sure you don't take... creative liberties. I have been sent to oversee you.” He said with a frown. “So what, you're relieving me from my duties?” Natasha asked with anger. “Not quite. The Counsel knows you know what you're doing when it comes to battle. I'm simply here to make sure you stay with in your bounds.”

She sighs, taking a deep breath. “Alright, I get it they don't trust me, just tell me what they are ordering me to do already.” “Right General Starcrafter, and her forces are tasked with finding Aspects of the Multiverse for The Union starting with Captain Raleigh, and her associate.” He said adjusting his glasses. She sighs, not looking forward to working with this man

Chapter Three

Back a little in the past Marcus stands before The Clone pressing buttons on the device as it slowly opens and all the water pours out freeing the girl. “I will forge my own destiny now.” He said laughing as the rest of his legion looked with shaken optimism. At first, it seems The Clone didn't wake up. After all Dr. Corvus never intended to use her for anything other than finding The Source, but soon enough she opens her eyes and takes a deep breath.

She looked around confused with unfamiliar surroundings. Her eyes widened as she saw The Fleet Admiral and his army reaching for a multi-tool she didn't have. He smiles at her smugly placing a hand on his hip. “Welcome to the multiverse G-N. I'd like to offer you something that will greatly benefit us both I believe.” He said confident she would agree.

She looked at him seeming to still lack understanding. “G-N? I'm not, how did I?” She started to say looking down and seeing her reflection in the puddle of her former containment. She dropped to her

knees studying it. Her eyes were orange like she expected, but her hair was black as night. She was in disbelief not wanting to believe she wasn't Raleigh. Marcus wasn't sure what to do as she began to cry. The last thing she remembered was Clyde being stabbed to death, and being taken away to The Trial Worlds but as much as she didn't want to admit it she was the clone.

She looks up at him acknowledging his existence. “And what became of me... Raleigh?” she asked needing to know. “Hmm? Well, she destroyed The Empire with her allies that's why I want to join forces. You're just like her, no Corvus made you better. With you, we can't lose.” He said holding out his hand. She was conflicted Raleigh would never join hands with a man like this, but she again reminded herself she wasn't Raleigh.

After thinking it over she swatted his hand away, and stood up herself. “I will join you for now, but I never want you to mention G-N or that dirty old man's name to me ever again.” She growled turning away from him walking towards their vessel and past the very angry Cindy who didn't like that she did that.

Marcus rubbed his hand feeling like he had gotten what he wanted, but could tell he needed to make more of an effort to cement their partnership. “What shall we call you then?” He asked. She stops thinking about it. “You can call me... Noir.” She said before walking completely away to their ship. “Very well Noir it is.” He said laughing to himself.

He started to walk back with her and the rest of the chimera legion Cindy grinding her teeth. “I don't trust her. I say we should cap her.” She said with anger. Marcus just sighs. “Jealousy doesn't suit you, Cindy. Give it time. Besides, you are still my most valuable asset.” He said rubbing her head causing her to blush.

They all returned to their vessels ready to return to The Empire's home world to lick their wounds still very beat up from the battle. Once they arrive, Marcus lets out a deep sigh of relief. “Oh gods thank goodness we've made it I need some rest.” He said so happy to finally receive some, but

like they were listening The Empire's forces below started to open fire on him making him almost fall on his ass from the attack.

“What the hell? Why are they firing on us?” Marcus yelled out in confused anger breaking his usual cadence of speech. The people on the bridge all scrambled taking evasive action as one spoke up. “We don't know sir.” “Well find out. Get Freya on the line I believe she was left in charge of the Home world.” Marcus demands.

They kept getting fired on as Freya appeared on the big screen before them. She looked like a serious woman covered in newly acquired scars as she was covered in bandages he looked like he wanted to ask her about that, but there were more pressing matters. “Why are we being fired upon we are your allies' auntie?” He said in desperation.

She scoffs. “Our allies? You and that fool abandoned us do you know what happens when you leave almost no one defending your empire?” She said thinking she didn't need to explain. “You're right his plan was pretty foolish, but none of us knew how crazy it was. Please let's talk about this.” He pleaded. “You were a key factor in his success!” She yelled out in anger calming herself. “You are no longer welcome in the home world.” She said ending the transmission.

Marcus kicked the middle console in anger repeatedly. “After everything I've done, this is the thanks I get!” Cindy tried to calm him down but decided against trying to touch him knowing how easily she injures people without meaning to. Before she could say anything Noir barged into the bridge. Seeing Marcus wasn't taking action at the moment Wolf stepped up. “Get us out of here already!” She growled at the people around her.

“To where?” One of them asked. They didn't have a good place to lie low now. “It doesn't matter just not here.” She said as they made the preparations. Noir barged in as the ship shook it and the other small remainder of the fleet couldn't take much more. “Does this ship have a port for me?” She asked only for them to not say anything confused.

She grumbled pushing the navigator aside and ripping open the console. She pulled out cords and plugged them into the back of her skull just like Raleigh. Like she assumes, she can much more quickly get them out of there but not before one last shot hits a main engine. They are in the vortex now just barely making it. “Fuck we were too late I can't control where we are going to end up now,” Noir said in frustration as the ships started to brush against the side of the vortex.

Marcus started to regain his composer taking a deep breath. “Order the other ships to stay close being scattered through the multiverse is a death sentence for us.” He directed the bridge who all nodded informing them. They completely fell through the vortex into an unknown world.
“Brace for impact!” Marcus yelled as they all strapped in nothing stopping them from crashing now. They fell out of the sky landing roughly in a mountain range taking out a good chunk of it. Alarms kept going off as they all removed their binds. “Damage report,” Marcus said right away as the bridge looked through all the system information.

“Travel drive damaged sending a team there now to ensure it doesn't explode. All propulsion systems offline, power limited.” A person started to list off only for Marcus to silence him. “Alright enough. So we are otherwise grounded. What about personnel?” He asked. Luna was already on coms to see if they made it all alright. “It looks like everyone is most unscathed, but still battered from the battle.” She answered.

“What a headache.” He said rubbing his head. “Crow!” He yells as they appear right away in front of him. “Reconnaissance.” He ordered as they saluted and vanished right away. “Luna you will look for supplies to replenish what was lost.” She saluted all the same but growled looking unhappy about it walking off. “Now Cindy for you, I think...” he started to say only to get cut off by a roar from outside catching his attention.

Everyone made their way outside the ship to see what it was only to see a huge dragon flying over them. It took a deep breath about to spew fire all over them ending their lives. Cindy quickly flew

up blocking the fire with her hand following it up with a slash from her other. “Back off buster!” She roared ready to fight the behemoth. It wasn't lost on her that it was a full dragon, and she might not be able to win. The Dragon reeled looking at her with anger. “You dare come here and defile our land outsider!”

“Well, we didn't exactly ask to come here fucker. How bout I give ya a real good wallop.” She said punching her fist into her palm. The Dragon looks ready to give her a real fight before he sniffs the air. “Hold on this can't be. I smell dragon blood, the blood of my kin.” The dragon said stunned as his form shifted to resemble a more human form. “I do not believe it. I never thought I'd see the day when my daughter would return to me.” He said with a tear in his eyes. Cindy just looks at him confused. “Huh?”

Chapter Four

It's another bright sunny day on Solitaris the refuge that Cyrus and their comrades have chosen as their home. The former commander walks the streets with a faint smile towards the market. He approached an old woman. “Ah, Cyrus, how are you?” She asked with a smile. “I'm well, Mrs. Blanchard, how are you?” He answered much more calmly, most of the stress, and up tightness seemed to have left his body after everything that had happened. “I'm great, you're always so kind to an old bag like me. Out on another supply run?” She asked only for him to nod.

She gathered a few ingredients in a bag and handed them to him. He took them happily, making a few more stops before he had collected everything in the market he came for, returning to Darrian's Bakery. He took a deep breath, hoping this would last forever, it was so simple and honest to him. As he entered the shop once more, he flipped the sign open and started to sort all the things he obtained.

Almost right away, someone entered, making the doorbell ring. “Welcome, I'll be right with you.” He said, keeping his back to them. “Commander Cyrus Steelheart.” A woman said making him freeze up a bit. He could feel stress returning to his body right away. He took a deep breath, continuing to sort this supply. “I think you've mistaken me for someone else.” He said, even though it was clear she probably wouldn't buy it.

“We may have never had the pleasure of meeting each other until now, but there is no mistaking it, you're him.” She said, confirming his fears. He sighs, turning around to face her. She was a woman around his height with light purple hair, she looked to be more the serious type, yet she came here still dressed in an empire uniform. “What do you want? I think it's pretty clear I want nothing to do with you. Take your problems away from this peaceful world.” He says, walking closer. “Although I suppose I'm a little curious how you found me. I bet you frightened the townspeople being so bold as to wear that here.”

She salutes him, only for him to groan. “Sir! I only come to you because I believe the empire could greatly use someone like you. As for how I tracked you down. Your little side missions freeing navigation units haven't gone unnoticed.” She answers. He takes a moment to take in her words. They had gone on a few outings to free any of Raleigh's remaining sisters, but they had been careful about returning, seeing as she was here now it must not have been thorough enough.

“Foolish woman. There is no empire anymore, and I was one of the ones that made sure of that, but you should already be aware of that.” He said, looking into her eyes to gauge her intentions. She looks down, breaking the brief eye contact. “Well of course I know that but... Well frankly me and my compatriots think you saw something that no one else did. The Emperor had clearly gone mad, and now we are left directionless the remnants of The Empire reject us for supposedly abandoning them, and the rest of the multiverse simply sees us as those same Remnants. So yes, I do admit it. The Empire... it lost its way, but that's why we need you. Don't you see, only someone like you can guide

us? Do we not deserve that too.” She said, gesturing to his shop, pleading for a chance without directly saying so.

Before Cyrus can say anything else, Darrian speaks up, he had been just out of sight listening the whole time. “Listen punk. This is a bakery, not a war zone, so either buy something or get lost.” He said, crossing his arms. She was about to speak up but intimidated by the large man, she chose to take her leave, but it was clear she was still determined to convince them.

Cyrus takes a deep breath, conflicted with this information, sitting down at one of the tables and rubbing his head. “You know that won't be the end of them now that they know we are here,” Darrian said. “Yes, yes I know, unfortunately, there is some merit to her words,” Cyrus said, lowering his head into his hands. Darrian raised an eyebrow, not sure what he meant, sitting down with him. “The hell you on about?” He asked

“We were a part of The Empire just like them, we weren't exactly the best people, as much as I'd like to leave it behind there is a part of me that feels responsible.” He explains. “So what, you're going to have us pack up, and lead these losers like a new Emperor or something?” Darrian scoffed. Before he could say anything, Tara came down the stairs half asleep, yawning. “Good morning.” She said groggy before seeing the visible concern on their faces. “Something up?” She asked.

“No, it's nothing. Why don't you go ahead, and get into uniform.” Darrian said, dismissing her. “Do I have to wear that?” She asked, not seeming to want to. “Well no you don't have to, but It would look real cute on you, bet it would attract a lot of customers.” He said back. She seemed reluctant but ended up nodding and heading, back upstairs to put it on. She wanted to help them out however she could.

Cyrus picked up the conversation where they left off. “Emperor? No never. I would be amending the problems The Empire caused, not causing more. I don't expect you to follow I insist you stay, take care of Tara, and enjoy your new-found passion.” Darrian didn't seem to be happy with his

answer, groaning to himself. “Alright, fine, but if anything...” He started to say, only for Cyrus to cut him off. “Don't worry about that.” Tara returns in a maid outfit, cheeks red from embarrassment, hearing the tail end of their conversation.

It was more on the classy side, very cute and frilly, but her embarrassment soon turned to outrage. “Wait, where are you going, I want to come too.” She demanded. Cyrus got up, placing his hand on her shoulder, shaking his head. He said nothing else and just walked upstairs to get everything he needed before he left. Tara looked upset. “Why are you treating me like a weak little girl? I don't want to be cooped up here forever.”

Darrian didn't seem to know what to say. “Listen, kid. You gotta understand after everything that has happened. The thought of putting you in any more danger. I don't think either of us could take it.” “So you cage me here for the rest of my life! How is that any better than being in that stupid lab.” Tara blurted out. “Tara,” Darrian said with concern, only for her to storm out of the store. Darrian let her go, flipping the sign to close, and rubbing his head.

Cyrus packed everything, catching up with the woman from before. “Commander?” She said confused. “Yes, it's me. I thought about what you said, and well, I must agree.” He stayed walking a little farther ahead, blocking off her path. “But let's get one thing straight. We are going to do this right, firstly this world will not be touched, and no shady underhanded tactics. No ends justify the means. The Empire is dead.” He said, pointing at her. She seemed a little shocked by his sudden determination. “I honestly was prepared to be here much longer trying to win you over. Very well I'm sure after some trial and error we can do that, but it won't be easy. So if we aren't The Empire anymore, what are we?” She asked.

After a moment of thought, he answers. “A coalition of reformed empire soldiers. The Reformation Coalition.” He stated. She smiles. “I like it well then, commander, let's get going.” He

nods as she leads them out of town to the Forrest where a small world-traversing ship is cloaked right before they are about to lift off, Aion Anderson's Message plays in front of them.

Chapter Five

Clyde and Raleigh stared up at the ceiling from their chairs, seemingly at a loss for what to do now. He glanced back down at her, seeing her slowly start to fade off into her mind. He had only seen her like that a couple of times, but he knew it wasn't good, he didn't want her to lock herself up in her room again. He lightly shook her. “Raleigh focus, we must figure out what we are doing.” He tried urging.

She groaned, looking at him with lost eyes. “What's the point, this nonsense will never end, I just traded one villain for another.” She droned. He frowned, trying to stay positive despite feeling mostly the same. “This isn't the same.” He tried to say, not knowing just how it was, though. After a long pause, he finally struck a new thought. “They are only after us for the arms. We can't just give them away that would be irresponsible, and they would still come after us if they thought we had them. I think our only real choice is to hunt them all down.” Clyde said.

She sat up, pulled a console closer, and opened a page to the site Aion mentioned in his report. She wasn't thrilled but knew he was right trying to sike herself up. “Who was that guy anyway, how did he just make a screen appear in front of us like that,” Clyde asked now that he saw what she was doing. As she scrolled through the list of people with aspects she answered. “Looks like he is a popular news anchor on Porta Nexus, and he has The Voice, its powers make him impossible to silence, apparently. That's probably how he is just able to do that.” “The Voice of the multiverse? I would have thought all the aspects functioned the same as the arms. How many are even out there?” Clyde asked curious.

She keeps scrolling, reading the information. “That's a complicated answer they aren't evenly divided according to this, and some of it is pretty vague.” She moved over so he could get a better view of the information. It was mostly an account of their last known location and how long ago it was, with a promise of updates when they were available. “A very cute weather lady? That's not helpful at all. What even is this guy's deal? Isn't giving out all this information, putting him in the hot seat too?” He said seeing that one of the eyes, and the ears, were stated to be possessed by nothing but a random unnamed weather lady.

“He must be a weirdo, or confident he will get them all,” Raleigh said to him, not knowing what else it could be. “I hate to say it, but Loki would be really helpful for this.” He said in response. “You're probably right, but I think that might be one of the first places The Union thinks to look, I think we should wait before trying to go anywhere near Valhalla.” She said Clyde couldn't deny that. He, unfortunately, knew the scout's world was out for the same reason as their past conversation with The Squad.

As much as he hated it, he would have to remain powerless for now and be careful when he used the suit. Raleigh kept flipping through it, seemingly annoyed when she got to the section about her, and Aion's perception of her. Most of Clyde's section was just about how he was likely to be found with her, they didn't even know his name. She finally got to one that gave her pause. “Frequents the

western vortex lanes of Porta Nexus near Steel-haven huh? That's pretty far from where we are, but we might want to go for it considering The Union, and others can't as quickly travel the multiverse as we can.” She said to him. “Steel-haven? That's the Mecha world I know we paid most of the ship off already, but they are allied with The Union now. They might not be happy to see us.” Clyde said with concern.

“If that happens, we will take them on just like everyone else.” She said regaining her will, standing up ready to go. “Alright, let's do this. Our treasure hunt officially begins now!” She grins, standing up, and plugging herself in ready to get going. Clyde wanted to protest but didn't have a better plan, so he just sighed and accepted that's what they were doing.

Chapter Six

The Hopper lands on Steel-haven, far away from anyone who might take notice. The island that held the code can be seen in the distance, still covered with a field and opened up to The Source world. Clyde looked at it, wondering if it would stay like that forever now that the universe had been modified. They both walk out of the ship, looking at the surrounding forest. “So what's the plan? How do we find someone who likes the chill in between worlds without Loki?” Clyde asks.

She looks at him smugly. “Well, it's easy. You see, the person with The Eye is a pirate. What do pirates do?” she says to him. “Sing sea shanties, and look for treasure?” He said back, not sure where she was headed with him. She frowns, disappointed that he didn't understand. “No Clyde, they pillage. They wait for valuable materials to be transferred from one world to the other, then strike.” She explains.

“Oh, I think I get it now, but what shipment do you know of that they would target?” He asked,

thinking she knew something he didn't. “Well... I don't know, honestly. So we are going to break into The Mecha base like super spies and find out.” She says, trying to convince him. “They know what we look like, though.” He pushed back, not buying that this would work. She groans, “We don't even have to do much, just knock out some guards put on their uniforms and download their shipping manifest, it will take like five seconds.”

Before he can say anything else, she is already running off toward the base. He sighs, following closely behind her. She makes quick work of the guards at the gate, dragging them into a bush and putting on their uniforms. All except for Raleigh's hat. “Listen Raleigh, I get that that hat is important to you, but it doesn't fit with the disguise.” He urges. “Nonsense I…” She tried to say in defense, only for him to cut her off. “We should just leave it on The Hopper, it will be safe there with the fancy new security system.” He says, hoping she will relent.

She seems very reluctant but knows he's about to walk off right before they hear the two guards groaning in pain, waking up. “I guess people don't stay down that long in real life,” Clyde said taking out a multi-cube and using some rope to tie them to a tree for extra measure. After sorting everything out, they entered the base. It was the same one they knew The Mecha commander was based in, so they kept their eyes open, trying to avoid being seen by some who would know them better than the foot soldiers.

Raleigh was about to open the door to the building housing their database when a man called out to them. “Hey Tristan what are you doing, we are supposed to escort the shipment right now hurry up stop flirting with the new girl, and get a move on.” At first, he was confused, but then understood he had been mistaken for this other person. ”Oh, well we aren't... Right away sir.” He said, lightly blushing as he ran off with the man, not sure what else to do in this situation.

Raleigh knew this could be a problem, but she went ahead into the server room, opening up the log. Once she got the data she needed, she went to go find Clyde only to find the man before handing

him a rifle, and shoving him into a ship right before it lifted off. “Fuck.” She said In a panic, but as fate would have it she noticed it was the shipment she had looked up. She rushes back to The Hopper, abandoning the uniform by the still tied-up men, who were now very much awake and demanding to be released. Likewise, she just ignored them getting into The Hopper, and flying off just out of radar distance.

On the ship, Clyde was not completely sure what to do. The show The Mecha World was like didn't touch on random guards' patrol routines, It's not exactly entertaining information. So instead he just walked around acting like he knew what he was doing, and no one seemed to notice. He wondered what it was they were shipping this time and to where. It all seemed pretty uneventful wondering if the pirates would even bother with this one.

His biggest concern was how he was going to meet up with Raleigh again like this. He looked out the window starting to get on board just looking at the vortex when the ship shook, and sirens blared. Looks like she was right after all. All the men rushed to the hangar to get into their Mecha and meet their foe. Clyde ran with them not sure if Tristan was a pilot or not only to see the pirates had wisely targeted the Mechas before they could be entered, the whole crew swarmed the hanger, blocking their path to any of the possible operational ones.

The Mecha forces took cover firing on the pirates, but seemed ill-equipped to deal with this kinda of enemy without their giant robots, they had never been great at this kinda of combat in the show Clyde thought. He looks around trying to figure out who their leader is, seeing a large brute of a man barking orders from the back.

He looked at the rifle he had, and the multi-tool wondering which was superior, ultimately deciding it was the tool tossing the other as he snuck around the chaos trying his best to make it to the brute. If they were anything like pirates he knew, without a leader they would probably cave without him, and fight amongst each other for the title.

He managed to get about halfway through the skirmish, but too many things and people blocked his path, he debated using the Ultra Suit, but with its limited time use, there was no telling if he would last long enough. He sighs, not sure what to do before he notices he is right under a still-functioning Mecha. He quickly climbs into the cockpit, closing it up and trying his best to emulate what he had seen them do in the show.

It creaked forward as he struggled to control it, almost stepping on one of the pirates as he ran in fear. He started to fire on them as they slowly moved toward the brute. He roared, pulling out a rocket launcher, something Clyde was not ready for. He had only moments to jump out before it was destroyed, but it got him where he needed to be. Not only that, but his actions allowed Mecha Forces to advance, and gain more ground.

He took a deep breath not knowing if he could take this guy in a fair fight, but he tried his best to sike himself up for it pulling out his multi-tool, and making it a pistol. Right behind him, a woman walks out from the pirate ship pointing a flintlock at the back of his head and cocking it. “Well, what do we have here? That's a weapon you most see The Empire using, but they ain't friends with Mecha. Who are you?” She asks, not willing to take an excuse.

He tried to turn, and face her, only for her to wack him in the back of the head, knocking him out. “Captain Dawnstaarr!” The brute said happy to see her. She smirked, looking at the hangar, seeing that despite Clyde's intervention, The Mecha forces had still lost. “Well, what are y'all waiting for, grab what we came for, and let's get out of here.” She said, placing a hand on her hip confidently. “Oh, and we are taking him with us.” She said.

The Brute raised his eyebrow. “What do ya want with em?” “Let's just say he might lead us to an even bigger prize.” She said grinning, as her left eye glowed with a symbol similar to the one on Clyde's arm. His started to do the same.

The Hopper was right behind The Mecha ship, but it was too late. The Pirates had already

loaded up their prizes, Raleigh saw them in the hanger taking Clyde as well as starting to fly off through the vortex, she just barely made it in time to follow. Raleigh bites her lip, disappointed in the outcome. “I'm sorry Clyde, I'm coming.”

Chapter Seven

Raleigh followed the Pirate's ship right behind them, something was weird they were staying in the vortex, almost like they didn't have travel drives looking for a natural portal back to their world. Raleigh didn't have much time to think about that, though, as she was suddenly surrounded by the Mecha Commander, and his men in their respective Mechs. “Captain Raleigh. I'm disappointed this is how we meet each other again. Betraying The Union and in league with pirates.” He said on her com.

She doesn't seem like she wants to entertain his banter right now. “Don't be stupid, you should know better. The pirates who robbed you are getting away. They have something I want, they have something you want. I will fight you if you get in my way, but I'm hoping you're smart enough not to do that. Truce?” The commander thinks for a moment before relenting. “Alright, lead the way.”

She zoomed off right away, barely still having them in her sights now. “What's your plan?” He asks her. “I plan to go in guns blazing and take Clyde back.” She answers. “Hold on sure we should

follow them to find their base little ms, but we don't know how great their forces are, let's scope things out first." He pleaded. She sighs. "Alright, but we aren't taking all day to figure that out." They keep following the pirates, who finally make it to a naturally formed portal. The pirates land at a cove and unload the cargo as Raleigh, and the other Mechas do the same out of sight watching them.

Dawnstaarr's men drag Clyde to the main room, chaining him up to a pole as she slaps his face to wake him up. "Hey, wakey wakey." She snaps as he groans, slowly waking up. He slowly remembers what happened, not that concerned about it, considering this wouldn't be the first time this happened to him. "Oh, is it time for exposition already? Well, go ahead, tell me what you want from me." He said yawning.

She laughs with a snorting sound. "I like this one. I'll cut to the chase then at first I was a little unsure what to make of you, but then I saw that glowing arm of yours, and remember that weirdo news guy popping up out of nowhere. What do I want? I want that arm of yours, and your little friend's too." She said with a grin that showed she had a few screws loose. "Sorry, they aren't for sale," Clyde said calmly.

She seemed both impressed and amused by his lack of fear. "What do you know about these supposed Aspects of the Multiverse?" She asked. "Probably about the same as everyone else." He answered honestly. "They all have different powers, very useful powers. It seems to me all those dumb asses are overlooking that for the thought of some wish. I don't care about the multiverse at large, our ships don't even have the means to traverse worlds without that big ol portal outside. It's a shame most of the worlds I've seen don't bother exploring the rest of their universe before heading off to some other one." She drones on.

"Isn't that more of a practicality thing, not every universe has things worth exploring." Clyde rebuts. She gets uncomfortably close to his face, pointing at her eye. "This eye has been incredibly helpful to me, it allows me to see anything I want at any time, all I have to do is think about it. The arm

will help me all the same.” She said, backing away, and pacing to the other side of the room. “Through my hunt, I discovered there are only a few ways to get the Aspects. Killing is a no-go there is no telling where it will go, sometimes objects, sometimes on the other sides of the universe. The only real way to get it for yourself is for the owner to give it up willingly, or to cut it off while they are still alive, but that's messy, and I'd like to avoid that.” She said, turning to face him once again.

Clyde swallows hard, clearly getting more nervous. “But I'll give you a third option, you seem capable enough, so join my crew, and work under me. I mean sure at first I'll have to keep you chained up or something, but after trust is built we will be a great team, so what do you say?” She said offering her hand even though he couldn't shake it chained up like this, but he had prepared for this keeping a small laser in his sleeve they failed to notice starting to cut the chains that bind.

“I say that I'm already working under a captain, and she will be here, any second, to kick your ass.” He said confidently. “Oh really? Ain't that an amusing idea? I assume you're talking bout that redhead the news guy was talkin' about.” She mocked, but before she could say anything else the ground shook as Raleigh began her assault in The Hoppers Zech form the Mecha forces seemed to follow reluctantly as she didn't give much time to strategist. Now The Pirates were on the back foot, ducking for cover.

Clyde took the chance to break free grabbing his Multi-tool, and Syncer off the table he debated using the Ultra Suit again but decided against transforming the Tool into a Pistol and firing it into Dawnstaarr's back before she returned her attention to him. “Fucking hell, that hurt like a bitch.” she groaned, falling to her knees. It was set to stun and should've knocked her out. “It'll take more than that to take me down. You're one ballsy motherfucker.” She grinned, kicking him in the face before drawing her weapon.

That's when Raleigh located them shooting The Hopper's cannons through the window, destroying half the room. Dawnstaarr seemed to be obliterated, by that attack. Raleigh reached out the

giant robotic hand to Clyde. “Are you alright?” She asked him a little worried. He climbed onto the hand, dusting himself off. “I'm fine, though I think that blast just now was cutting it a lot closer than our actual foe.” He said glaring. “Fine, I get it.” She groans. Now that he has a better look, the New Zech form looks like a slightly upgraded version of the old one, still needing to be painted. She opens a hatch on the chest, signaling for him to enter.

“Don't worry, it's much more roomy in here now.” She reassures him as he does so. It's not much bigger, but it gives him enough space to sit or stand near her. “Well, that was a bit anticlimactic. They didn't put up much of a fight this time. Guess giant robots are the Mecha world's strong suit.” Raleigh said glad Clyde was safe. “You might have ruined our chance to get the aspect, though. According to the crazy pirate lady, dying makes it harder to take.” Clyde said only for a huge robot 10 times the size of all of them to rise out of the water before she could say a word.

“This is what we've been building with all that shit we stole, fuckers.” Dawnstaarr said from within the robot, that somehow she had escaped death. Raleigh looked in awe. “Oh my gods, it's so cool. We get to have a Mecha boss fight.” She charged forward with the other Mecha's that had already engaged. The work seemed kinda shotty compared to the well-crafted Mecha robots, but the sheer size and firepower were easily turning the tide to her in the pirate's favor. Dawnstaarr started to laugh. “My universe has never seen the likes of this technology, with this I will dominate it as the Pirate Queen.” She said as she stomped on a few unlucky Mecha pilots, crushing all 3 of them. She fires her massive cannon at another group, but the commander steps in, parrying it with his giant sword.

“Size can't stand up to Mecha engineering.” He boasted. “It ain't just about size, fucker.” The giant arm started to open up, revealing a travel drive. “We planned on outfitting our ships with these after we stole them, but this will work just as well.” She said as it pulsed, growing unstable. Clyde thought back to the Ravage lands, where he caused Cyrus's ship to do something similar, thinking he saw where this was going. “The idiot, she'll be caught up in it too. Guess it's time to show off The

Hopper's ultimate weapon.” Raleigh said, grinning as she pressed the robot's hands together, forming a blade out of ethereal energy.

She rushed forward slicing Dawnstaarr's robot arm clean off followed by several smaller cuts on the arm still it was reduced to ash. “Don't those also have a chance of blowing up if you destroy them like that,” Clyde said nervously. “Well yeah but...” “Don't be so reckless!” Clyde demanded. Dawnstaarr was surrounded, most of her weapons destroyed as the Mechas fired on her over, and over. She slammed the console in anger, seeing no choice, but to run as her weapon fell apart around her. She jumped in an escape pod that Clyde quickly took notice of, pointing it out to Raleigh. They easily caught up to it with The Hopper's speed, grabbing it.

“Alright, uncle, you win. Let me go. If you do, I'll give up the eye willingly.” Dawnstaarr pleaded. Raleigh unplugged, setting The Hopper to just fly on stand-bye, sticking her head out from the cockpit. “Alright, then hand it over.” She said, motioning for her to do so. “So you're her.” She said before smirking throwing a grenade at her, Raleigh caught it holding it like a hot potato before having the foresight to throw it away before it exploded. Dawnstaarr jumped off the pod into the water, almost getting away if it wasn't for the Mecha commander already waiting for her.

Now that the battle was over, they managed to all go back to the cove, and handcuff everyone still around. The Mecha Commander turns to Raleigh. “I suppose I owe you an apology. I assumed the worst when I heard you betrayed The Union. I guess it's more complicated than that, though, isn't it?”

They both took a moment to explain the situation to him, and he seemed to understand. “I see well. Being that we are allied with The Union, and would like to keep it that way, we will have to officially report that you got away. But off the books, you're good with the Mecha forces, and consider your help with the Pirates your final Payment.” He said smiling. Raleigh's eyes light up. “Really? Thank you.” She said, hugging him to his surprise.

“What about the Aspects and the wishing door,” Clyde asked. “I understand the appeal, but that is no reason for us to turn on each other I want no part in a fight like that... I've seen enough of that sort of thing in my life.” He said, rubbing his beard before looking down solemnly. Clyde who has seen the show This World Is Based on frowns knowing that he had been in all sorts of conflict surrounding fighting former allies.

Dawnstaarr is dragged closer to them by two Mecha soldiers. “Well, are you going to give up your eye pirate or what?” Raleigh asked. Dawnstaarr grinned, spitting at her feet. “Do you think things will end well for you like this? Even if you refuse, and the Mecha forces just let you keep it in prison, you'll be a sitting duck. Your days are numbered, with the whole multiverse after you.” Clyde said, trying to convince her.

She laughs. “You're right, fine, it ain't worth that much heat on me.” With a burst of energy, the power surged in her eye flashing with light before going out, it seems to have left a black tattoo in the same shape on her eye. Clyde slowly feels the power entering his own eye. “Shit that hurts like a bitch.” He said as his own eye flashed with light, even with him covering it while rubbing his eye. “Well, boy, I hope you have fun, your days are just as numbered as mine would have been in my book.”

She laughs as they drag her off. The Mecha Commander just nods, leaving with them, acting like he never saw them. “Why'd she have to give it to me, my eye is on fire. It would have been way more useful for you to have it. I hate eye pain.” Clyde complained. “You can still hand it over, can't you?” Raleigh asked. “Well probably, but I'm not sure how, and I don't want to deal with even more eye pain." She just laughs. “And here I thought you had gotten all tough breaking free on your own, and everything.” She teased, japing his ribs. “Shut up.” That is all he said as they walked toward The Hopper.

Chapter Eight

The Hoppers crew preps for launch, unsure of their next destination yet, but before they can do anything, the center console begins beeping. Raleigh curiously goes over to it, clicking on whatever it is, only for a huge screen to pop up with Loki's face. “Clyde, Raleigh! I've been worried sick, you're all over the bloody news. How dare you ignore my calls.” He said furiously. Shocked by his sudden anger, they are both without words till Clyde finally speaks up.

“Well, we've been busy if you couldn't guess, and we didn't really think it was a great idea to head over to you considering it's probably the first place they look for us.” He explained. Loki took a deep breath. “Hmm, I suppose while it's true they couldn't harm you here, It may be difficult to leave with them lurking around. That's fair enough, but what's your plan? You can't just run forever, but I suppose you already realize that more than most.” He asked.

Clyde explains everything, including their motives, to Loki briefly. The lion man listens

intently, rubbing his chin. “I see, I suppose in your situation there isn't much else you can do, I doubt your captain will be content finding a hole to hide in. Allow me to help, you know finding people is my strong suit.” He grins, pulling out a tablet to look through the different people known to have an Aspect. He doesn't answer, causing Raleigh to tap her foot impatiently. “What's the hold up, Mr. Perv?”

He sighs. “Does it not take you a moment to find the right world when it's more tricky? Well, finding people works quite the same, even more so when the information is vague. Not only that, but it would appear that some of these are no longer alive, as I can't locate anyone.” He closed the tablet, looking up at them once more. “After review, I think I know the best one for you to target next. And it just so happens that it benefits me.” He smiles, mumbling the last part.

“What was that, I think there is a connection issue or something,” Clyde said with an annoyed face he didn't hear what he said, but he could feel there was an ulterior motive. “Nothing, nothing. I will send the information about the man, and where he is currently post-haste. Good luck to you both, and I'll be watching your soul cards in case anything goes airy.” Loki said, bowing, and ending the call quickly.

Raleigh looked over the information he sent, quickly plugging herself in and lifting off a hint of excitement on her face. “Wait, where are we going?” He asked her. She laughed. “It will be easier just to show you.” She said with glee. Sighing, he strapped just in time as The Hopper lifted off, this time it didn't take them long to arrive at the new world.

He looked out the window and saw a strange sight, the world seemed to be comprised of nothing, but countless battle arenas all in different styles, In the distance there was a massive coliseum with a sign that welcomed everyone to the world they called Coliseuma. The walls seemed to stretch out in every direction… “Yes, that's right after all this time, we finally get to go to the gladiator world!” Raleigh squealed. Clyde looked much less enthused. “And how is our target related to this?” He asked as they found a landing pad.

Raleigh wasted no time unplugging and running out of the ship tossing some gold at the robot there to take payment for parking there. Clyde struggled to keep up. Finally, she answered. “You see according to Loki that guy runs the whole show, and the best part is he's been running tournaments forever, guess what the prize is?” She said still very siked. “One of the Aspects? But why would he want to get rid of it like that? And does that mean he's participated himself and remained undefeated all this time? Something doesn't seem right about this Raleigh.” Clyde said with concern.

“Ugh, why do you always have to assume the worst,” she said annoyed, puffing up her cheeks. “Because I'm usually right.” He said, but exactly thrilled about that fact. She looked like she was about to say more, but was quickly lured by the sounds ahead, it seemed like a big fight was going on. She rushed past to check it out. He followed much slower.

When he made it to the commotion he looked around seeing that he was now in the stands of the Coliseum with stands that seemed to have an unimaginable amount of seating. In the center was a floating platform that reminded him of a fighting game he used to play a lot back in his world, though this one looked like it could change shape drastically depending on the battle. Close by, the platform was a floating tower with shadow figures peering down at the fight below.

The crowd roared with excitement as Clyde approached the railing next to Raleigh, focusing on the actual event. It seemed to be some sort of battle royal everyone for the most part attacking everyone, and anyone that was around, but a few of them grouped up together to fight. There was no uniformity. A wizard was shooting fireball spells at a man in gear a soldier would wear in modern times as he dodged out of the way, unloading all his bullets into the wizard. At first, it looked like the bullets brutally murdered him, but before he could tell for sure, the man seemed to have vanished as a screen above the arena marked a big X over a picture of him. Did they have some sort of way to prevent people from dying, but that still allowed them to go all out? He wondered to himself.

He kept watching the battle, wondering just how it all worked, but his thoughts went blank

when he finally noticed he recognized a couple of the faces. Kugo was there with Theron Backs to each other as many people surrounded them both. She raised her hammer causing lightning to shoot down, frying half of them, while Kugo rushed in taking advantage of the chaos to easily knock out any stragglers. Very few people were left seeing the two of them as the biggest threat, they all ganged up on them only to get defeated without either of them breaking a sweat. All that remained was the two of them and one other guy, who seemed to be using the strategy of hiding in the corner and letting everyone else beat the crap out of each other. Seeing there was no way he could beat them he jumped off the platform to the void below eliminating himself.

The crowd cheered as Theron, and Kugo shook hands, nodding at each other with respect before waving at their fans. “How the hell did those two find each other, let alone form an alliance!” Clyde said with a loss for words, a little jealous of Kugo the person he never expected to see again. Raleigh looked at him, frowning. “Who needs them when you got me.” She said stepping on his foot lightly. “Besides, who doesn't want a challenge on the way to their goal," Raleigh smirks, turning back towards them both. She was right, they would most likely have to fight them.

Chapter Nine

Marcus holds onto the back of a dragon for dear life with Cindy and a few other members of his forces, including Noir. He swallows hard, thinking it's a long way down. With the unexpected revelation that his subordinate is related to this creature, he took advantage right away, offering to broker an alliance of sorts whether their relation was unfounded or based on the truth. He looked over at his greatest ally, not entirely sure how she felt about it all. The dragon girl seemed conflicted, unsure herself what to believe.

They slowly approached a large castle town teeming with life of every race imaginable, though the most prominent seemed to be dragonkin, and human. A lot of them stopped what they were doing, waving up at the dragon as he flew by, happy to see him. The dragon got closer to the gates of the castle, flying just past it, and landing around the front door. Once they have all climbed off of his back, he shifts back into a more humanoid form as attendants rush to him with clothing and a crown of sorts

that fits around one of his horns.

“Now that we arrived, allow me to properly introduce myself, I am known as Emberon Flamecrest, ruler of this kingdom known as the very same.” He does a slight bow. Marcus seemed both shocked and thrilled, not only is his subordinate allegedly related to a powerful man, but she is the crown princess. He was eager to exploit it. “And you, my daughter, I have never known. Your name was Celestria Flamecrest though I suspect you never knew considering the emotions I feel from you.” He said she stays silent still processing it all.

“Yes you would be correct most would know her as Commander Cindy leader of the Chimera Legion. My most valued subordinate.” Marcus said speaking for her. Emberon raises an eyebrow at this. “Is this so? And what makes you so remarkable, I don't need to fight you to know you aren't the strongest of your... legions.” He asks, turning his attention to the Admiral. Before anything else can happen, Cindy steps between them. “He is very remarkable... father. He saved me.” She said a little uncomfortable with calling him by that name.

The dragon king backs down. “Saved you from what exactly?” He asked. She paused for a moment before swelling up with anger. “If you're really my da, where have ya been all my life? Do you know what I've suffered before I met him?” She screams, gripping her arm tightly. He looks at her with sorrowful eyes. “Please, I insist you tell me.” He pleaded. She looked down, and away from him. “Raised by a good lady. Adopted me when I was left for dead before I could even walk… Humans were scared… I couldn’t control my strength… Made me do things…” She struggled to say. "Look, enough with the sob story, alright? Marcus busted me out and gave me a reason to keep goin'. So show the boss some damn respect."

Her father didn't say anything for a while before his face welled up with tears. “I'm sorry, my child, I wish I could have been there.” He said, pulling her in for an embrace. She let him but was looking up with scornful eyes that screamed why. “Your mother was human, and at the time our union

was criticized by groups of this world that saw it as taboo. When you were born, she left a letter saying she was going to take you away to another world where you would be safe, but when we found her dead body. We searched tirelessly for you, but nothing led to clues on whether you lived or died." He let go of her, walking a little away from her to overlook his kingdom. "Well, did ya at least mess up those bastards who killed her?" She asked.

"Of course, and since then the kingdom has only changed for the better you hardly see any of that anymore if only she could see this place now, and that you were well." He said solemnly. "Ight I forgive ya but. I ain't gonna be your little princess, pops. Get that straight." She declares, only for Marcus to quickly grip her shoulders. "What she means is she will need some time to process it all." He laughs nervously. "Enough of this dragon dude, where's the grub, I have literally never eaten anything in my life," Noir said with anger.

Emberon taken aback says nothing before letting out a hearty laugh. "Of course my apologies, we should be celebrating the return of my daughter, and our new good friends." The doors of the castle open as he leads them inside, and the attendants rush off to prepare a feast for them all. Marcus walks by his side. "I'm curious, leader to leader, how the logistics, and politics of this world work, if you haven't guessed we hail from other worlds." He asked with curiosity.

"Ah, inquisitiveness is a remarkable trait, it helps everyone come closer to an understanding. Our nation Flamecrest sits in the center of the world, and is the biggest, most powerful nation as it stands." He goes on to explain. "Hmm that seems to imply that wasn't always the case, you must have had a glorious rise to power," Marcus said trying to butter him up a little.

"There was nothing glorious about it. The human nation was a plague on this world their lack of understanding, and greed infected every nation, rotting them away. We knew better than to believe all humans were that way the powers behind them stoked the flames of racism well among the masses, it was bloody, truly horrible. My late wife's union with me was supposed to unite us, but it wasn't sparked

in actuality until her death.” Marcus nervously sweats, thinking maybe he was stepping on a land mine asking him all this. “Right, forget I said anything.”

“Your questions do not offend me. As I stated, understanding is gravely important. Now the human empire is gone, but not forgotten. Even still, the humans live as our equals in this land, and the other nations stand with us in unity.” The king goes on to explain. “Not unlike the empire I was a part of,” Marcus said, truly believing it, regardless of what the truth is. “That's good to hear. No doubt we will have much time to talk about such things, but first I have a question of my own. Your armies and vessels seem strange, are they some sort of magic?”

Marcus begins to explain as Cindy and Noir, both look very famished. As promised, after a while the feast was before them, and they talked late into the night, Mostly the two leaders with a bit of Cindy in the middle. Noir was too preoccupied with eating to care, this body had never had food, after all. As the night went on they all retired to rooms, Emberon placed his hands on Marcus's shoulder, stopping him from going just yet. “Perhaps I overstep my bounds not knowing my daughter well yet, but I must know. What are your intentions with her.” Emberon ask.

“That's simple, she is a valuable asset, and I intend to keep utilizing that asset as long as she allows me.” He said, regretting not being more tactful about it after seeing his face. He squeezed his shoulder tighter. “No, that's not what I mean. Even a ballrog could see the infatuation that she has for you.” He said with stern eyes. “Well I don't know what a ballrog is, but I will assure you while I do value her greatly I do not seek such things with her,” Marcus said, sweating bullets. The dragon sighs, letting go and walking off. “Very well, but you may not be the one who decides that, to my dismay.”

Marcus takes a deep breath, walking towards his room with Cindy. A shit-eating grin forms on his face as he laughs. “Oh, Cindy.” He said, hugging her. “This is unbelievable luck, who could have expected this outcome? Can you believe he believes he is your father? What a fool, we can easily use him to build up our power again.” At first, she just blushes not expecting him but quickly pushes him

away, hearing the second part a little too rough making him fly into the wall. “Too hard Cindy.” “Sorry, boss didn't mean to.” She quickly said, conflicted about what she was about to say. “What if he ain't lying? I don't know how to explain, but, I feel something with em.”

Marcus takes in her words as he dusts himself off. “Well, I suppose it doesn't matter one way or another. Through him, we will rebuild stronger than ever as the new empire, no, we will call ourselves the Neo Empire.” He said with excitement. Cindy didn't know what to say, she wanted to do as he wished, but also wanted to get to know her newfound family. “We don't have ta step over him to get there, do we?” She asked, more timid than usual. He stops to study her face, only now picking up on her feelings.

“Oh, Cindy, I had no idea you felt that way. Of course, we can, he seems like an invaluable ally. But regardless of what happens, never forget the Chimera Legion is your real family, we will never abandon you.” He said, hugging her once more with a twisted grin. She blushes. “Right, I know you guys are. Good night boss.” She said, walking away toward her room. Noir walks by just as she enters, looking at him with disgust. “Scumbag.” That is all she said before walking to her room. Marcus sighs, heading to his own he sits on the rather fancy bed calling out. “Crow, are you here?” Crow appears in front of him right away.

“Ah good, why don't I tell you what I've learned, and then you can tell me the truth of the matter,” Marcus said, explaining everything Emberon had said to him. “I would say that the king's assessment is mostly accurate, though it's shakier than he leads on, The wolf tribe seems to have the most issues with the current order, but Luna has already run into them. A few underground groups are looking to gain favor, but for the most part, this land is indeed peaceful, and prosperous. It has many of the resources we need to repair our ships, and they do not know the value of the resources, so it may be easy for us to obtain.” Crow explains.

Marcus thinks for a moment. “It's always strange hearing you say so much when you usually

choose to keep quiet. Now as for...” He started to say, only for a screen to appear before him with the news report informing all the multiverse about the wishing door to start playing. They both watch intently till it ends. “Aion Anderson is well known, I doubt he would pull a stunt like this if it were, I lie. Crow, does your portal gun still function?” He asked only for him to nod. “Good, in the morning have our strongest meet me here, we can't let this chance slip away from us.” He said with a grin as Crow saluted, and disappeared.

Chapter Ten

When the Morning came Crow had made their way to all the most important fighters informing them to come to the castle. All were close by other than Luna, and Bear. Watching a giant bear walk casually through town with a wolf girl riding on its back caused quite a commotion. Cindy, Noir, Crow, Wolf, and Bear all assembled in the courtyard before Marcus.

“Great now that everyone is here we can get going,” Marcus said. “And where pray tell are you heading off to?” A voice asked from the sky as Emberon landed on the ground near them. “We are going on a quick excursion. We will be back soon, this opportunity can't be wasted. I trust that you will allow the rest of my forces to remain?” Marcus said hoping he would understand. Emberon rubbed his chin not seeming to like this sudden exit.

“Your men will be fairly treated, Is this really something you must do? I must admit I know

little of the worlds beyond this one.” The king said showing his ignorance on the subject. “An event of multiversal per portions has begun. We must.” Marcus explains. “Hmm I see, I would insist on seeing it for myself, but well. My people need me if I was to be stranded in another realm... Nevertheless, take care of my daughter. I pray for your safe return.” He said turning to leave. He seemed to want to stop them but didn't feel as though he had the right to they were still mostly strangers.

“Right. Crow if you will.” Marcus said directing Crow to open the portal they usually used for covert missions. He gives a quick explanation of The Aspects of the Multiverse before ordering them to enter the portal. They all rush through to the other side Marcus running through last as it closes. None of them other than Crow were used to this type of world travel, but will their ships damaged they had no other options.

When they arrived they seemed to be floating, and space Marcus gasped for air thinking there was none, but an ample amount entered his lungs. He looked around confused. Upon further inspection, the things around him he thought were stars were something else entirely. “Are those multi-cubes?” He touched one of them only to activate it, and cause it to open with a huge explosion. Cindy only had seconds to push him out of the blast.

He pulled at his sleeve sweating. “That was close. What is with this place? At first, I thought the portal gun had improperly sent us to the wrong place, but.” He said confused Crow flew by offering an answer. “This world has been heavily modified.” They pointed before a much larger cube in the distance. As the bear floated around with glee she seemed to like the feeling of flying.

“How strange. Well, Cindy, and Crow if you would.” Marcus commanded knowing they were the only ones that could even attempt to traverse the space-like area with their wings. They obliged Cindy hugging Marcus behind and flying toward the giant Multi-cube as Crow helped Wolf, They tried to do the same with Noir but she shoved them away. “Hands off I'll figure something out.” She said. Crow moved on pulling Wolf toward Bear and then pushing them both towards it as well, but seemed

to struggle with how big the beast was.

Noir looked over at the cubes floating everywhere they were made as some sort of trap for larger vessels attempting to invade. If Marcus had a working fleet it would have been obliterated as soon as it became world-bound. She inched closer to it kicking it into another. It exploded into another one causing a chain reaction that propelled her forward much faster than their flying. Everything around them was engulfed in flames. “Hey, what the hell are you trying to kill us you crazy bitch!” Wolf said growling. Noir just shrugged as she reached what looked like a door opened it up, and went inside.

It didn't take them long to catch up in enter with them. The door slammed shut behind them sealing anyway in or out. A screen flashed on showing an old man in a dapper suit, and a top hat. Goggle covered his eyes but it was still clear he had a screw loose. “I knew you would come... Hahaha... but I'm ready for you you won't steal any more of my idea's Corvus.” The old man said in a deranged tone. “Corvus? What does that bastard have to do with this?” Noir said in answer. The old man seemed to not understand who was in front of him or he just didn't care. “You can't fool me, Oswald. Don't pretend you forgot me the true inventor of The Mutli-tool and cube. You may have a new face, but you're still wearing those uniforms.” The man went on. “My word it's Dr. Icarus Helix, they said you were dead,” Marcus said.

“Still playing coy,” Icarus said getting closer to the camera on his screen. “You ruined me! I'll make you pay for that.” “Wait you are confused we have no love for Corvus, the man is dead in fact let's talk.” Marcus tried to say. “No more lies, you're in my world now Corvus, and I'm going to make you play my game. The Screen turns off as two doors open on opposite sides of them. “The man's gone mad. I only chose this one because it was the closest to us the description used a different name, an alias. I never expected we'd be hunting one of our own.” Marcus questioned with disbelief.

Noir scoffed. “You say that like the empire has loyalty to anyone. They chewed you up, and spit

you out too, didn't they? The old man probably did steal credit he was an arrogant bastard.” Marcus couldn't deny her words with what had happened as of late but before he could say anything she started to walk through one of the doors. “Noir wait we need to stick together who knows...” He begged as the door closed behind her. She stuck her tongue out flipping him off as it did. “Recruiting her was a mistake,” Wolf said starting to walk towards the other door.

“It's a gamble yes, but I think with time she will come around. Besides hearing an outside view is useful.” Marcus said defending himself. Seeing that was the only option left to them the rest of them followed except for the bear who couldn't fit through the door. They looked back at her not sure what to do. “Sorry big girl, looks like we we will have to do this without you,” Cindy said patting her head. Bear roared looking a little upset about it, but ended up walking into the middle of the room and laying down to take a nap as that door also closed.

They ventured passed the endless corridors that seemed to go off in every direction with many forks they had no way to know if they were making progress or not. “This is a labyrinth. We have walked this cube ten times over it must be much larger on the inside.” Wolf said with anger. “There has to be some sort of logic behind it,” Marcus said looking around for a clue.

“Level one defenses active.” A robotic voice said from a speaker as lasers started to come out of the wall and toward them. Marcus barely dodged it melting the bottom of his shoe. “That might be enough even to melt Cindy's Scales. Keep moving.” He said worried as he rushed forward. The lasers only increased. He thought for a moment what was the point. Was it to keep them from thinking the maze was just a trap for intruders?

Noir was having a much easier time. She moved through the hallways like she knew exactly where to go like something was almost calling out to her. When the lasers activated on her side she avoided them even using one to melt the wall and pull out a panel. She plugged herself into it directly even though that's not what it was designed for. Her eyes glowed as she shut down the lasers, and

downloaded a map of the maze she displayed on a hologram starting to see what was making it the way it was.

Marcus and Co were still struggling to avoid all the lasers as they had gotten to a level where they covered the entire hallway leaving no place to dodge all except Crow who dematerialized through them. Before they could catch up the wall closed up separating Marcus, and Crow from Cindy, and Luna. They narrowly avoided face-planting into the wall and running in another direction. “The maze must be trying to separate us,” Marcus said concerned.

“Hey, idiots.” Noir said on their ear com “I figured out how this place works, but you're too far away for me to shut off the lasers. There are panels in the wall that cut the power and stop the lasers.” She explained. “Cindy ripped open the wall easily destroying everything in sight, and like she said the lasers stopped, but only in the section of the hallways they were in. Crow did the same though much more elegantly, and without breaking open the wall, they simply reached their hand through it like it wasn't a tangible object.

Noir kept talking as they all sunk to the floor exhausted from running. “Well, now that you aren't dead I guess I'll explain the rest. This thing is impossible to get through the hallways are designed to constantly shift. That's why it feels like you aren't making progress, because you really aren't. On top of that it stretches on almost infinitely in every direction. “So how the hell do we get out of it?” Cindy snarls. “You don't at least not without breaking the maze,” Noir explained.

“And how do we do that?” Wolf growled in annoyance. “how do multi-cubes function?” Noir asks to explain before the coms become filled with static. “No, no, we can't have you cheating now.” Dr Helix said. Robots started to run down the hallways and attack them. Marcus drew his multi-tool as Crow materialized a blade out of shadow. They all engaged the same enemies in their separate locations. Noir sighed knowing this was going to be a headache as she interacted with the console more a hidden elevator came out of the wall and she entered.

“I say we just start breakin everythin,” Cindy said ribbing apart the robots followed, by the walls, wolf joined her mostly out of frustration. Marcus thinks about Noir's words trying to make sense of them. Most multi-cubes have a touch-sensitive button to open them, though some have fingerprint, or genetic scanners so only the owner could use them. It was hard to focus on the chaos surrounding him. He stabbed into one of the robots still at a loss. They both round the corner Marcus almost has a heart attack when he sees a bunch of bones in an empire uniform clutching a multi-cube tightly. Marcus takes a deep breath picking it up while they have a free moment. He opens it but nothing is inside. He opens and closes it hoping it might lead him to something.

Wolf and Cindy are destroying everything in sight. With a burst of fire breath, the dragon girl melts open the ceiling revealing another set of hallways above that are slightly different. She flies up, as Wolf jumps with her continuing the destruction. “Oh, Oswald do you truly think that mindlessly breaking everything will free you? I knew you were a hack but...” Helix said on the intercom mocking them yet almost seemed worried like he was trying to shame them out of doing it. “You know it's almost therapeutic,” Wolf said destroying everything. “Yeah, we gotta come back sometime to relieve some stress,” Cindy said grinning.

Noir makes it up the elevator to a much higher floor the hallways are much smaller and more practical. “What the how did you get up here,” Helix said in a panic as she walked towards what looked like lab she seemed uninterested in the contents walking forward. But when she passes another room she is drawn in. “Was it you that called for me?” She asked approaching a multi-tool with white, and red paint that floated in the air. “Don't touch that.” Helix pleaded.

Marcus looked at the cube from the inside as close as he could seeing a slight glow from the circuits. “That's it. It has these central nodes to keep the space inside compact if we find them, and shut them down.” before he could finish that thought Cindy and Wolf had destroyed one of them causing the whole maze to shake. “Ahghgh, no that's against the rules,” Helix said in frustration, as the maze shook

seeming to struggle to keep itself together as the walls warped both smaller, and bigger.

Looking at the inside of the cube again he used it as a map even though it didn't have the hallways. If I had to guess we were somewhere around here." He pointed to the center of the cube. He dragged his finger from there to the node. "Can you take us there?" He asked Crow only for them to nod. They phased through the wall, and deeper into the structure to an area much deeper finding the node, and simply cutting power to it before returning to Marcus. The Cube shook more violently as the hallways warped more making it hard for them to progress anymore. "There are at least three left," he said worried they wouldn't find it in time.

Noir had taken the Multi-tool and found one of the nodes turning it off further breaking the integrity of the cube. "Stop it your nothing Corvus I'm the superior mind!" Helix yells to all of them on the speaker. "Shut up about him already. I hate that bastard as much as you!" Noir yelled with anger. Cindy and Luna ran into another one in their path of destruction. There was one left, but it may not even be necessary to get to it as everything was falling apart around them.

Marcus and Crow find the last one cutting the power to it as everything shoots out into pieces. Marcus passes out only to wake up floating through space again, looking around at all the wreckage. He looked around for some sign of the man seeing nothing, Crow grabbed onto him flying around to search bumping into Cindy who was doing the same. "No luck?" He asked only for them to shake their heads.

"This isn't over you fools!" Helix said appearing in front of them in a small battleship. Training his guns on them. He is about to fire, but Noir had managed to slip into it before everything fell apart cocking her newly acquired tool at him in gun form. He just laughs. "Do you think I will surrender to you? I would rather..." Before he can say more she knocks him out. Chaining him to the chair.

All of them meet up including Bear on the bridge of his ship waiting for him to come to. As he slowly opens his eyes. "So listen old man. That maze was well... A pain. I don't feel like being nice. So

you can either hand over your aspect, or we can lop off your head.” Marcus said leaning back in his chair. “Wait you mean you're not trying to steal my work?” He asked confused. “I hate to break it to you old man, but your work has long been stolen. No, we are here for the Head of the Multiverse you possess.” He explains starting to wonder if the old man even understands what is happening right now.

“Oh, this old thing? It's brought me nothing, but misery. His head started to glow with symbols before shining brightly and disappearing reappearing of Marcus. “I can finally think clearly.” The man said. “That thing. It is amazing. With it, you be able to process things much greater than any human or machine can, but if it's too much you'll go mad just like me.” Helix laughs. “Nonsense. I'm better than you I will succeed where everyone else failed my empire will rise, and we will be the rulers of the whole multiverse.

“Such lofty goals. I was once like you thought the same didn't think I could do it without the power, maybe I was right, but look where I am now.” Helix said sadly. “Father execute scenario 5832.” He said as a robot appeared with glowing eyes that looked like a more masculine version of Mother. It reaches its hands out killing the old man by making his head pop before disappearing.

“Let's get out of here,” Marcus said breaking a sweat after seeing that. They return through the portal seeing Emberon waiting for them. The sun was setting. “Welcome back. Did you find the power you seek?” Marcus nods. “Was it worth the risk?” The dragon asked. “Only time will tell.” The Admiral answers. The king accepts his answer walking with him. “Emberon if I may call you that. If I was to ask you to make new uniforms for us do you think your people would have the means?” He asked with a confident grin. “Why yes though for the amount of men you boast of commanding it may take a while. Did you have a particular look in mind?” He asked. “I was thinking... white, and red with a hint of gold...” He smirked ready to reinvent himself completely as his subordinates looked at him with concern.

Chapter Eleven

Cyrus and the woman enter into a new world with her vessel. As he flies into orbit, he looks out to see a mountain that has mostly been transformed into a massive base. “A mining facility?” Cyrus asked with curiosity. “It was at one point, but now it serves as our headquarters, at least our fragment of the empire's anyway.” She explained as they touched down in a hangar. There were a ton of people waiting for them, all in Empire uniforms, they all saluted him as he walked out with her.

He sighed, waving his hands to dismiss them. “There will be none of that with me.” He said, a little annoyed. Upon further inspection, he recognized some of them walking up to them. “Wallace, and Johnson? So this is where you ended up.” He said with a smile. “Commander! You do remember us.” Wallace said with glee. “Of course, we were in the same unit for 4 years.” He said, reaching out his hand to shake both of theirs. “A lot of our old unit is here. And the unfamiliar soldiers here are just

thrilled to have you on.” Johnson said, patting his back. “Though I would like to apologize to you, sir.” The man said looking down. Cyrus looked at him thinking he knew what he meant but doesn't say anything. “We shouldn't have listened to Proxy, we thought you had betrayed us, but the truth was The Empire was the one that did that.”

Cyrus does his best to find the words. “What's important is you found your way here. I don't blame anyone for not siding with me.” Cyrus said, patting him on the back and returning to the woman so she could give him the base tour. Both of the men looked at him with admiration. It was a rather large base, but it seemed as if they were now struggling to fully occupy it, low on manpower. After showing him everything from the mess hall to the war room, she led him to the very top floors where the officers slept, and planned. “And well, that's the base.” She said awkwardly, as he had mostly stayed silent, his mind swarming with thoughts on how to manage it all.

“What is the budget like?” He asked. “Well, I won't say we are drowning in money, but we aren't really in the red either.” “If we are going to do this we need to separate ourselves from the empire, and part of that is changing our uniforms if we can spare the money or resources, I think that should be our priority. Secondly, we need a direction.” “I'm sure it will make things tighter, but I think we will manage, what did you have in mind?” She asked.

He wasn't so sure himself, he walked out the door to look out the balcony at the people below, what was it they were fighting for? “I would say taking down the Remnant, but no. This isn't about just cleaning up some mess we made.” He paces a little before returning to face her. “I want to help people. I want to be a force anyone can look at and be inspired by.” She rolls her eyes, seeming to be getting a little annoyed by his new attitude. “If I may. I think you're being a little unrealistic with that kinda talk. How would we even do that? The whole multiverse either hates us or is indifferent.” She said looking down.

“We prove them wrong,” Cyrus said, moving closer. “We can offer ourselves as mercenaries for

hire at first, and guard shipments.” “And you think that will be enough?” She asked, not convinced. “No, it won't be, but that is step one. Once we gain our bearings we will go on a mass recruitment campaign anyone who aligns with our ideals will be admitted.” He goes on to explain. “I think we should go after the aspects.” She said not buying his plans would work.

“I get why people are drawn to the possibility of having any wish granted but...” Cyrus started to say, only to be cut off by a floating screen showing none other than Aion Anderson. “Good morning everyone! We had breaking news just in time for our morning broadcast. We are here to give everyone updates about that particular door.” Aion said, grinning, folding his hands together. “It's only been a few days, and yet two Aspects have already been claimed. Firstly, by the amateur Captain Raleigh and the mysterious man she hangs out with.” He said as a video played of Raleigh, and Clyde fighting Dawnstaarr, and then one of Clyde's eyes flashed with the symbol.

“I have to say personally I'm rooting for these two underdogs, they surprised us all now having collectively 3 aspects already.” He said with joy, before calming down. “And the other Aspect? Well former fleet admiral of the Multiversal Empire, Admiral Marcus Novastride has taken it for himself, watch out for this one. The Empire may be gone, but it looks like he has some fuel left in the tank.” He said, looking just as thrilled despite the threat Marcus seemed to pose. “Now there are far too many aspects floating around to explain where they all are in a segment, but we will be talking about them later tonight at 10 so turn into that, you don't want to miss the juicy information we have gotten. Now for the weather! Take it away, Mia!” He said, as the video kept going and a woman with a short stature cheerfully started to report.

Seeing that the important part of the message was over, Cyrus turned back to the woman. “I think you may be right after all, but not for the reason you probably expected.” He said to her. “Enlighten me.” She said, not amused. “That man may be the key to reshaping our perception, and it seems he is very interested in these aspects for whatever reason. If we obtain one, we may get an

interview with him." She pulled out a tablet, already loaded to the page with the list of names of people with aspects she was ready for. “We have looked them over and this one is our best bet, but I think we might need to go right away considering how fast the others were taken.” “Well, let's get going then. I can take us.” Tara said from behind Cyrus, causing him to almost fall over in shock.

“Tara? How did you get here? Don't tell me you plugged yourself in.” He said concerned. “No, no, I promise I just stowed away on your ship, but I can help you. No I can get there faster than anyone.” She said pleading with him. “Out of the question. Do you want to be stuck in another coma?” He said flat. “Well no but... I want to help you guys, I don't want to just sit on my hands.” Cyrus pauses, unsure what to say. He can see she is earnest and that their desired slow life wasn't valuable to her, but throwing her into a battle was something he just couldn't do. “Alright, you can stay,” He said, not sure how he was going to explain it to Darrian. “Great, well, let's get going to this place already.” She said, raising her fist, ready to fight.

“I said you could stay here not join us on the battlefield, you have no training, maybe in the future we can consider it.” He said frowning. She does the same, lowering her head. “Fine, whatever.” She mumbles, walking out of the room. “I can assign someone to watch her.” The woman said. “Thank you, now let's be off.” He said wasting no more time and heading back to the hangar ready to mobilize their whole army. They only had a small collection of ships, hopefully it would be enough.

“My apologies, I don't believe I got your name.” He asked the woman from within the bridge of the flagship. “Tess Varden.” She said, holding out her hand again as he took it. “Nice to meet you.” Is all he says as they leave the world for their destination. It takes a few jumps with their lack of navigation units, but they arrive just before nightfall to a desolate world that seems to have nothing but ruins.

As they touch down, leaving their ships, Cyrus turns to his right hand once more. “What do we know about this person?” He asked. “Not much, they are one of the more vague distributions on the

site, but they were the closest. All it says is a warrior from the past that refuses to die and holds the heart.” She explains as they walk, not seeming to notice the fog is slowly thickening around them.

“That's disconcerting. They must be formidable, how long have they lived to earn that sort of description.” Before he can ponder more a hand rips out of the ground and grabs his foot, He yanks it away stepping back and having no time to react as decaying bodies rise from the ground surrounding the army that had already partly been separated by the fog. “Maybe refusing to die holds a different meaning.” He said, drawing his multi-tool into his spear. Though these forces had been divided they were still holding out against the endless waves of zombies, they didn't seem like much of a challenge to these seasoned warriors. Tess worked to reestablish connections with the rest of them while the others defended her.

“That wasn't so tough.” One of the grunts said, kicking the corps he just brought down. But like the universe heard him, a loud shriek shook over the battlefield seemingly from far off as all the dead bodies they just felled rose once more, and attacked. The fog further thickens, separating them all. Cyrus looked around, seeing that he was surrounded, but something was different. Upon closer look there weren't random dead people, some of them wore empire uniforms and looked like fallen allies, Lucius Novastride was leading them. “You think you can replace me, you're nothing.” The corps of Lucius gargled as it launched at Cyrus.

“What is this, there is no way his dead body ended up here.” He said stabbing at it in terms of fight ability it was nowhere near the alive ones. Was it just all some sort of trick or illusion? Before he could think about it, a smaller body grabbed hold of him, dragging him down. “Don't fight it. Cyrus, your ambition is nothing. You're only doing this out of obligations, right, why not just die with them and be done with it.” The body grabbing him said. He looked down in shock, seeing it was Inari. This shook him much more than the rest of the recognizable faces.

“What a joke of a man you are, you say you care about us? Yet you stood by so long, you killed

me.” Inari said to him as he pushed her away. “No, I.” He said, losing his will to fight. “If you had gone with Mark that day, maybe I'd still be alive.” She kept saying, crawling towards him. The Reaper appears next to him. “You were always a joke you couldn't even catch one girl, what makes you think you can lead an army, let alone a nation.” He said, slashing into his chest, causing Cyrus to fall over and start to bleed out.

Lucius, Inari, the reaper, and others all surround him ready to finish him off. “Join us your soul with no heart.” They all said in unison. They got closer ready to end his life, but right in the nick of time, Darrian rushes in, punching them all away. “Snap out of it! Don't listen to their bullshit.” He urges. “Darrian? How did you?” He asks, wondering if he's there. “Believe me I'm not thrilled to be back into it, but that stupid brat we call our daughter... nothing, just take my hand already,” he said holding it out.

He took it taking a deep breath, only then hearing the chaos that was the earpiece communications, all of them screaming pleading for direction. Cyrus wasn't sure how they would make it out, fighting everybody that came near as he thought about what was happening. “You have no heart.” One of them said. They seemed to be fixated on that word. Cyrus opened the com channels, speaking to everyone. “Listen everyone, do not give in, I believe this is the power of the Heart of the Multiverse, don't let it influence you.” He urged as they kept screaming over coms.

“They are everywhere we can't...” One of them said, only for Cyrus to interrupt. “Listen to what I have to say. Every single one of you was a part of the empire with me. We all have our reason, and we all thought what we were doing was right, but somewhere along the way we lost ourselves. We lost our hearts.” He said as they kept fighting all over, the fog seemed to lift a little. “Don't you long for something greater, to be someone truly to be admired? Don't give in take up arms, and we will reclaim our heart, and soul not for an empire, but for ourselves!” He proclaimed, running forward with Darrian as the fog slowly dissipated as they got closer to the sound of shrieking. His men inspired by his words

charged forward, all of them ending up in the same locations before a floating specter-like being. “You, you reached me... you must... you must have a heart after all...” The Ghost said to them. “For thousands of years, I have waited... Yet you are the first to reach me...”

Cyrus points his spear at the figure. “To what end?” “Long ago I sought the Aspect, much like you do now. I wasn't able to obtain any other than the heart, but after experiencing its power...” The figure started to say, only to stop like it had forgotten. “All that matters is that only those with a will reach me.” “So what then must we fight?” Cyrus asked. The spirit groans. “My resolve weakens by the moment, I will soon pass to Take the heart and use it to your own ends.” They say as they pass through Cyrus and slowly fade away along with the fog. Cyrus grabbed at his chest, feeling like he was having a heart attack, falling over and passing out as the sun brightly shone around them.

Chapter Twelve

Raleigh, and Clyde both look at Kugo and Theron as they make their way out of the arena, wondering if they should say something to them. Theron was a friend, for sure, but they didn't leave on good terms with Kugo. They both look at each other, not sure what they want to do about it. “Well, I suppose Loki had slightly ulterior motives after all, I guess we should go up to them,” Clyde says.

Both of them make their way toward the crowd that has formed around them. In their time here, it seems they had grown quite popular. Clyde tried his best to politely move through the crowd, but Raleigh's impatience got the better of her, taking his hand, and shoving through. They both recognized them right away. Kugo surprisingly didn't seem angry, even though Raleigh was ready to fight. “Ah Clyde, and Raleigh, it's been a moon or two since I've seen you. What brings you here?” Theron said with a light smile.

“Well, I didn't expect to see you two again, and you know Theron?” Kugo said, rubbing his neck, a little embarrassed. “Aye, we have fought battles together,” Theron explains. “But how do you know them?” She asked. “Well it's a long story but as you can see by the redhead's fighting stance it wasn't on the best of terms, but in truth, I want to thank you now that I've been given a chance,” Kugo said. Raleigh relaxed in confusion. “What do you mean?”

“Well, to put things bluntly, your ass pounding humbled me a bit, and because of that I was able to find true strength.” He said to them all. “Well, thanks, I'll beat it anytime,” Raleigh said, happy to be complemented as always. “Well, I don't buy it,” Clyde said, not as convinced he had changed his ways. “Whether you do or not, I'll vouch for him. He is a formidable warrior. We have both been here for a time honing our skills together as partners, but enough about that, did my brother put you up to this?”

“Well, I mean he pointed the way, but we are here for different reasons, we didn't know you would be here,” Raleigh said to them both. “The aspects?” Kugo asked. “All of us saw the broadcast that man put out, to watch yourselves. If others notice you they might not hesitate to attack on the spot even if it is against the rules to fight outside of matches.” Kugo explained to them both.

“And neither of you have interest?” Clyde said, raising a brow. “Not really, most of my desires are already fulfilled by this place, I almost don't want to return to War World,” Theron said happy. Kugo just nods in agreement. “If you're looking to win the tournament we won't go easy on you though. Sign-ups are that way.” He said, pointing in a direction as he walked away with Theron.

Clyde does a double take, looking a little jealous. “You don't think they are...” He asked Raleigh, only for her to get upset. “And so what if they are?” She said with a faint blush. “Nothing, nothing, I suppose we should get going, that looks like a long line.” he groans. As they are in line, the newest news from Aion pops up, informing everyone that they have 3 aspects, and Marcus's claim of one. The video keeps playing, showing the weather lady describing the weather. “Is this the fabled cute weather lady?” He asked, keeping his attention on it, seeing that there was nothing else to do in line.

“The portals are all back on in northern Porta Nexus so try to avoid that route if you can, but other than that the skies are clear, and no astral showers are projected.” The girl said cheerfully, making Clyde wonder if there was some sort of weird weather in Porta Nexus, he never really questioned. “As for the multiverse portals seem to be unstable around the southeast at the moment be careful, if you fall into a vortex storm there is no telling where you will end up.” She said, winking cutely.

Clyde turns to Raleigh surprised. “That's a thing?” he asked. “Well, yeah it is, but because of my power, it's not something we have to worry about. They aren't super common, and they have gotten pretty good at predicting them so it's mostly an issue of the past, but never count out the law of averages.” Raleigh explained smugly. A chill went down his spine as he kept listening. She mostly just talked about Key worlds important to the Multiverse like Concordia's weather patterns before signing off with a wink.

Clyde thought hard seeming to have a hard time understanding the motives of Anderson then he remembered he had the eye, maybe he could do some counter-spying it. He wasn't sure how it worked, so he closed his eyes and thought about wanting to see Aion. At first, nothing seemed to happen, but eventually through time, and space a disembodied eye appeared in front of the man who was still at his desk leaning back into his chair.

“What a time to be alive, eh, Mia.” He started to say as he noticed the eye in front of him. “Yes Mia? You know if you need something you just have to ask." He said talking directly at the eye Clyde was seeing though. “That's not me Aion.” The weather lady said approaching him with a much less cheery almost emotionless face.

A face of shock and awe washed over him as he looked with wonder. “Well, all be. Well, Mr. whatever your name is. I must say I'm a huge fan of you so far I'd love to schedule an interview. I can't wait...” Aion started to say, only for Mia to interrupt. “He can't hear you,,, remember I have both ears.” Mia reminded him as both her ears and one of her eyes glowed. His neck started to glow with a symbol

as a reaction. Clyde took notice of this.

“Ah, well, you're right,” Aion said with disappointment, leaning back in his chair to think. “Ah, I got it.” He said, raising a finger in the air. He started to write on a piece of paper, holding it up to the eye with the words Rooting for you on it. Likewise, he smiled as Raleigh shook Clyde, pulling him out of the trance. “That the hell are you doing, Clyde, you're making our Aspects glow?”

Clyde looked around as people were starting to pay more attention. Both of their arms glowed, as well as his eye. “I just thought I'd use the eye to see what was up with that news anchor he's a real weirdo,” he explained. More people started to surround them seeming to be salivating over the idea of taking their aspects like it would be easy. “I hope it was worth it,” Raleigh said ready to transform her cube ready to fight if necessary.

“Everyone stop what you're doing.” Someone from the crowd said pushing their way through. They seemed to be some sort of employee of the arena. “You know the rules not fighting outside the matches.” She said to everyone. “Who cares about that now.” a skinny-looking man said pulling out his knives and charging at Raleigh but before he could even get close two giant men who looked like they might be living armor slammed their weapons down on him pinning him to the ground. The other handcuffs him as they drag him off. “Well, now you're banned for life.” She sighs.

Turning her attention back to them she started to talk. “Listen considering you have aspects we need you to come with us to avoid... further commotion. You're not in trouble or anything we just need to maintain a semblance of order.” She explains. “And how do we know you don't want them to?” Clyde asks. “It seems you don't fully understand the point of the tournament. The prize is The Great Coordinator's Left leg of the Multiverse, but by joining the tournament you also agree that if you lose you will hand over your aspects to him.”

“You sound mighty confident he's going to win,” Raleigh said. “Well he has remained undefeated since he established this world's order 50 years ago, so yes I do think the odds are greatly

against you even if you do hold aspects. So what will it become with me or be banned from the world? You'll get to skip all the red tape.” She went on to say. “Pft that's all you had to say waiting in that line was getting old,” Raleigh said following her even though Clyde wasn't too sure about it yet.

As promised they were brought to a private room and asked for basic information about themselves before the match started. “Alright, that's all we need, seeing that you are uninformed about the setup briefly explain it. Since every Tournament has an overwhelming amount of contestants we phase most of them out with a battle royal to start you can team up with a small group if you wish. Oh, and don't worry about dying, any damage incurred in the arena will vanish once he leave it.”

“We know that much we saw the first one,” Clyde said. “Good well after the rift raft is eliminated it's more like your standard tournament with one-on-one matches. The winner of those matches will have to right to challenge The Coordinator's best warriors, and if you defeat them you get to fight The Coordinator himself, though it has been a while since anyone has. With that, I wish you good luck.” The woman said before leaving the room.

After a moment of silence, he looks over to Raleigh. “I still think it's fishy.” She moves closer to Clyde leaning against him. “Look Clyde, yeah it's probably a trap to lure aspect holders in or something but we have been through a lot. We are made of sterner stuff some silly tournament organizer isn't enough to take us down.” Raleigh said as she waved her hand in the air like she was trying to get him to visualize it. “Easy for you to say.” He sighed knowing without his ultra suit even if he was useful in other ways he wasn't in one battle.

She frowns moving away from him to look out the window below where another battle royal was already in the process of happening she seemed to be tired of trying to reassure him otherwise. He sighed once more wondering if he could use the eye to spy on The Coordinator. He closed his eyes again trying to visualize it, but since he didn't know what they looked like it didn't seem to be something he could do. Then he remembered the floating tower in the Colosseum thinking if he was

anywhere it was there instead of focusing his eye on that, like before the eye appeared just outside the balcony. He groaned feeling like he hadn't made any progress.

Chapter Thirteen

The Crowd roars to life as Raleigh and Clyde enter the arena with the other participants, Most of them seem to be trying to avoid being placed around the edge as it gives them a disadvantage, but with how many there are it becomes difficult to do so. Both of them get lucky to secure a spot in the middle which comes with its own problems being surrounded. They put their backs on each other, resting their weight on the other. “So how are we doing this.” He asked his captain.

“Just stick close to me and provide support, alright.” That is all she said as the cheers grew louder. A spotlight shines on those standing on a floating platform above them all. “It's time for the final Battle Royal before they officially kick off this event. Are you ready!” He said as the crowd got even louder and more excited. “Well then, without further ado, let's start this thing. 3...” He said,

counting down as everyone below got into a fighting stance.

The crowd followed along with the countdown, saying it in unison. When they reached zero, everyone in the area wasted no time starting their attack. Clyde had to duck right away as a flying disk flew at his head, almost taking his head off. It seemed people were already targeting them over everyone else. He took his gun out, setting it to kill since it didn't matter in this battle, and took a couple charging at them down right away. Raleigh transformed Novabreaker into a scythe, doing a spin and reaping a dozen of the men who came near.

“Hmm, maybe you were right these guys are a bunch of losers,” Clyde said, immediately regretting it as a giant lumbered toward him, raising his foot to step on Clyde. Raleigh quickly pulled him out of the way, carrying him like a rag doll as she ran up his leg, turning her tool into a giant sword and cutting his head off. They both stood on its shoulders, using it as a vantage point before it started to fall and crush some people below. He noticed that there wasn't any blood, it was all pixelated like a game.

She finally lets go of Clyde as he falls on his face. Most of the ones focused on them died from that, everyone else was focused on each other. A cute little chicken walked over, pecking at Raleigh's legs. “Hmm, oh my gods, you're so cute.” She said, picking it up to its annoyance. “Raleigh, I don't think you should fuck with it,” Clyde said nervously. “Why not he's so cute he couldn't hurt anyone, want to join our team, little guy?” She said, talking in a baby-like voice to it.

The Chicken looked at her angrily as it transformed into a much larger bird, morphing to have a more human and extremely ripped body. “Bock bock!” It yelled out trying to punch at Raleigh, this time Clyde pulled her out of the way took her hand, and ran off. “Don't fuck with chickens, you'd know this if you played RPGs.” He said as they both ran as the monster chicken grew larger and angrier. “An RP what?” Raleigh asked confused.

“Forget it, let's lose him,” Clyde said in a panic. Raleigh seemed to college the threat but didn't

understand what was so scary about it, but this time she chose to listen since he was being so earnest about it. They managed to lose it as the chicken joined up with 2 other chickens and started to destroy everyone around them. Raleigh's eyes widened. “They... they might be the strongest foes we ever faced.” She said, being completely serious.

They don't have much time to dwell on it, though, because they are in the middle of a fight, and what looked like mongrels appeared slashing at them from their horses. They dodged out of the way, but before they could attack a group of warrior women jumped up, stabbing them all, killing them. “I guess they forgot to pay child support,” Clyde said. “Do you think anyone's going to get that dumb joke?” Raleigh groaned, punching the man who was running to attack her from behind.

The battle raged on, the number thinning out greatly until all that remained was Raleigh, Clyde, the Chicken People, and a farmer. They all did a face down, not knowing if they could beat this enemy, maybe they had overestimated their chances. But before they can contemplate what is happening, The random farmer walks closer, dropping his picture fork. “I know what I have to do.” He said seriously as he pulled out a handful of bread crumbs, showing it to them.

They pecked at the floor even though they were still in their humanoid form, seemingly drawn to it. Seeming that it was working, he ran off toward the edge of the cliff, throwing it off. The chickens jump off to get it, losing the match. Clyde, and Raleigh both looked at him in awe like it was the most incredible thing they had ever seen. “I don't even want to fight this guy, he's a legend.” “Let's just say he's on our team,” Raleigh said agreeing. The Announcer seems to accept that, officially ending the match, declaring the three of them the winners.

They gave the man a strong handshake, giving him eye contact, and showing him the respect he deserved as they all walked out of the arena together. They wave goodbye to the man as they return to the room for some rest, all the scrapes and bruises they had gotten disappear just like the lady said. “Universal code?” Clyde asked, a little worried. “Could be, but even if The Coordinator has the code,

he is most likely human and can't fully utilize it like Loki or another god," Raleigh explained.

"Well, yeah, but what if he has a robot like Mother or something?" He said, suddenly wishing Rebbecca was here, but that made him wonder if she was even alive since she kinda vanished after the final battle. Like she could read his mind, she looked a bit annoyed. "We don't need her." Walking toward the balcony once more, Clyde joined her this time as it seemed they were ready to announce something.

The battlefield shrunk down to a small ring, joined with the tower as it started to float closer to the center. "Alright, everyone, it's time to make this thing official for real!" The announcer said firing up the crowd. "And to kick off the events, a word from The Great Coordinator Gaius Quintillus! You all know him, you all love him!" He said as the crowd roared once more chanting his name. The announcer's platform floats away as lights shine on the balcony. An older man in Roman-like armor walks out waving to everyone, screens appear all over the stands to help people have a better look at him.

"Hello everyone, welcome to the 35th annual Battle tournament, and what a great turnout we have this year, rising stars, and individuals with aspects here to take my title. Wonderful, truly wonderful. I welcome their challenge, though it will be another 50 years before they can beat me." He said, raising both his hands up as the crowd screamed In agreement. "Now here is the bracket. I hope everyone has a great time." He turns to leave, back into the tower, as a bracket appears on the giant screen showing who is fighting who.

A portrait of all the fighters appears in a bracket they see that already Clyde paired with Kugo. "Really? What rotten luck." He said, not confident he could beat him. "Don't forget he shouldn't be at full power, can't use his fancy pose power here." Raleigh reminds him. "Hmm, you're right, and my Ultra suit might have a little juice left in the tank." He said, placing more faith in himself."Forget all that, I need a moment to process the bullshit that Battle Royal was." Raleigh said, collapsing on the

couch face first. Clyde sat next to her but on the floor next to it, not wanting to disrupt her nap.

Chapter Fourteen

A day passes, and everyone participating in the event is given a room for the night most of the first round goes by without too much excitement. After the 3rd match, the farmer they fought with is paired up against this powerful-looking Orc. Both of them cheer him on from the stands only for him to be quickly defeated by the Orc. “Noooooo!” Both of them said in unison upset at his loss. “Don't worry Clyde we will avenge him.” She said placing her hand on his shoulder. He silently nods in agreement.

“Well looks like I'm up.” She said rising to her feet eager to take on her opponent. They both arrive on the platform that Clyde now noticed had been significantly shrunken for this battle facing a bulky man with gray skin and a long mullet. “Greetings warrior, I am known as Kael the Untamed strongest warrior in my world,” he said to her but she didn't look impressed. “Untamed huh.” She said

sounding uninterested not even bothering to introduce herself because the announcer does it for her. The countdown ends, and Raleigh gets ready to fight him. “Do not underestimate me girl I have felled many strong foes...” He started to drone on mono-logging Raleigh taps her foot waiting for him to get on with it, but he just kept going.

Eventually, she gets fed up with it transforming her tool into a battle axe and cutting him in half right away even though she seemed surprised at how soon he lost. The crowd cheered but it seemed to be mostly out of thankfulness that the man couldn't talk anymore. “I could get used to this kinda of praise.” She said raising both her arms soaking in their cheers like a plant would with sunlight. “Guess they better change your name her Kevin two pieces.” She said not even remember his name.
She returns to Clyde slapping him on the back. “Looks like it's your turn tough guy, show up what up.” She said as she kept slapping his back. He sighed not looking forward to it, but knowing in the end even if he lost as long as Raleigh won they would be fine. He took one more glance at the bracket only now noticing that even if he won the next two rounds he would be pitted against her. He gulped having no idea if she would go easy on him if somehow he made it that far.

He entered the arena where Kugo was already waiting. The Announcer to floats by him. “Hey, kid looks like there was some issue with the paperwork what's your name?” He asks. “It's Clyde Moore.” He answers. The Announcer raises his eyebrow. “Are you sure kid?” He asked again. Clyde not seeing what the issue was nods as the man floats away. They both meet face-to-face not having much time to chat because the announcer starts to speak.

“Well everyone looks like we have made it to the final match of the first round how is everyone feeling?” The announcer asks the crowd only to get a thunderous response back as he holds his hand up to his ear. “That's what I like to hear so without further ado let me introduce a rising star, and fan favorite in the arena over the past year. The man who uses nothing, but his bare fist because that's all he needs, Kuuuuugoooo.” The crowd cheers louder than Clyde had heard before they really must like

Kugo. “And the other contestant? The Mysterious man that Travels with Captain Raleigh that not even Aion Anderson knows the name of. Holder of The Right arm of the Multiverse, and the Eye. Clive Smores!” The announcer said trying his best to hype him up, but the Crowds wasn't as impressed their cheers were a lot more low energy. “It's Clyde! Why in the world would you think it was Clive.” He yelled at the announcer but he couldn't hear.

They counted down to zero once more. Kugo cracked his knuckles walking toward him slowly. “I can tell you have gotten much stronger since we last met. I commend you but it won't be enough even without the use of posers.” Kugo said grinning showing a little of his more arrogant side. He punched at Clyde he was able to dodge it without much issue. “You know a lot of people have said that to me but I don't see it. I get my ass beat all the time.”

“So unconfident in your power. Why.” He asked as he went for a kick that Clyde blocked with his arms. Kugo hasn't started to go all out just getting to it wasn't that difficult. “What power?” Clyde asked punching him in the chest. He took it but it didn't seem to do much damage. “The latent power I can feel within your soul,” Kugo said looking around and seeing that the crowd was starting to get a little bored. He jumped backward getting into a fighting stance as power seemed to swell around him.

“It's time to get serious. I didn't lie when I said your captain beating me made me stronger. It humbled me and showed me what true strength was.” He said charging up as the crowd seemed to get more excited. “Well, I assume you mean this thing guess now is as good of a time as any if I have any chance of winning,” Clyde said striking a pose and pulling the Ultra Syncer transforming into the Ultra Suit possibly for the last time. The crowd went wild not expecting this at all.

The battle intensified as they both clashed much faster and with more powerful blows. People could barely keep up. “Impressive, but this was not the power I was referring to.” He said punching Clyde in the face and cracking a bit of the helmet off, Clyde could tell it was more fragile than normal it probably wouldn't last much longer. Even though Kugo was able to keep up Clyde was a little faster

like this so he quickly fired a furry of blows at him all of which he took, but not without consequences. “The hell are you talking about then.” He demanded to know as Kugo landed hard on the ground forming a small crater.

Clyde lands light on his feet ready for him to get back up. The fighter groaned slowly getting up it hurt him significantly. “I asked someone once, what true strength was. They seemed unfathomably more powerful than me. They truly showed me the error of my ways. You know what they said to me?” Kugo said as Clyde formed the Ultra saber preparing the final blow knowing if this didn't take him down the suit was over. He ignored Kugo striking at him with all his might making a large gash on his chest that he couldn't dodge.

The Ultra suit vanished Clyde looked a little beat up, and out of breath but mostly fine. Kugo staggered walking closer. “She told me I forgot what mattered to me, and she was right.” He explained somehow still standing with a smile. The crowd had gone silent seemingly unsure how this would turn out. He punched Clyde hard causing him to fly into the air and almost off the side of the arena. “What mattered to you?” Clyde asked struggling to stand after that powerful punch not understanding how Kugo was standing at all.

Kugo keeps walking slowly toward him everything seems to be slowing down as he struggles to breathe his ears start to ring. What did matter to him had he forgotten? He thought about all the people they had met and that he had spoken the same line to them. Was he a hypocrite? Kugo was closing in he didn't see a way out of this but then he heard Raleigh's voice somehow even though it was impossibly far away He looked over seeing that she was cheering him on from the sidelines.

Whether he won or lost she would be proud of him as long as he gave it his all. She was what mattered to him not being strong, maybe in pursuit of being useful to her, he forgot that. He took a deep breath getting a second wind as he charged at Kugo. Kugo tried to punch him once more but he dodged almost making him fall forward. Clyde used that chance to pull out his multi-tool and shoot him

ensuring his descent to the floor, He wasn't out just yet he rose to his feet once again both of them close to the edge.

Clyde didn't know if this would end in a draw but he lunged at him causing them both to fall off the side positioning Kugo to hit the thing that atomizes them first. The Crowd fell silent again also unsure what it meant. The announcer seemed to be talking to a referee or something to get confirmation. Clyde, and Kugo both appear, in an empty room with a video playing of the event as the announcer finally speaks up. “The regulators are calling it. Because Clive was the one who pushed him over, and Kugo hit to atomizer first... We are giving the victory to Clive Smore!” The Crowd cheers

Clyde's assumed named making him feel strange like had accomplished something great. Kugo just smiled reaching out his hand to shake it. “That's the inner strength I was talking about. He was a little surprised to see he wasn't angry, past Kugo probably would have been. He took his hand with a smile both of them earning each other's respect. “That concludes today's matches look forward to round two tomorrow!” The announcer said as everyone started to leave.

Clyde and Kugo went their separate ways, and he met up back with Raleigh. “Clyde!” She said happily jumping into his arms. He almost fell over because of how heavy she was. “I knew you could do it. Now lets go get some grub I'm starving.” She said taking his hand right away and dragging him off.

Chapter Fifteen

Another day dawns as the next round begins. “Alright everyone, things are going to get even wilder in the next rounds, we are rolling out the old varied environments!” He said as the crowd cheered, seeming to understand what the Announcer was talking about. The floating platform expanded and morphed into a Forrest-like arena with trees and greenery. “All environments are loosely based on information about the fighters!” He further elaborated as two of the remaining fighters entered the field to start the first match.

The warriors seemed pretty strong, and the surrounding area seemed to both help and hinder them in different ways. The match ended after one of the fighters managed to gain the upper hand. The crowd seemed only moderately excited about the results. The area morphed once more into a more

technological landscape with tribal banners hanging over metal pillars as both Raleigh and Garruk the powerful-looking Orc from before entered the battlefield. The crowd's cheers seemed to amplify greatly from this. “You will pay for what you have done,” Raleigh said seriously, confusing the man.

“What have I done to earn such fire girl?” He asked. “You defeated him.” That is all she said. He takes a deep breath. “I see, I know better than to underestimate someone so small. This multiverse is full of surprises. I will fight you with everything I have.” The man said, pulling out a ceremonial blade. The fight begins and they both clash, seeming to keep up with each other. Raleigh isn't going all out, but he is trading blows with her without any issues.

Clyde watches in a locker room of sorts as his match is shortly after hers. Theron enters in very revealing gladiator armor. “Ah Clyde, your battle yesterday, you did well.” She said, sitting next to him as she got ready for her match, not seeming to notice how red his face had gotten. Even sitting down, she towered over him. “Thanks, but why are you wearing that?” He asked, completely embarrassed. “This? Well, my armor was a little too hot, I'm not used to such arid, and dry climates.” She answered, not understanding what had him so flustered.

“Besides, ever since I dawned this armor the local's respect has gone up, and I have been challenged to many more fights.” She said happily, her tail swaying with excitement. Clyde tried to look up at her but avoided looking at her directly. “Is that so?” He asked, still very flustered. “Why yes, all of them confidently declaring they will smash me even if they lose, and their desire for us to pound each other senseless!” She said with glee.

Clyde seemed to understand what they meant, feeling a bit bad she didn't understand. “Listen, Theron, the thing is, I think they are talking about another kind of battle.” He started to explain. “A different kind of battle? You mean like a battle royal?” She asked, not seeming to understand. Clyde looks down, folding his arms together, not sure if he should rip the band-aid off. He knew her dad was kinda weird about stuff like that with Loki, had he been an overprotective father that doesn't let men

even approach his daughter like that?

“Well, no, it's more like the battles your brother likes to take part in... Sexual ones.” He says, deciding she should know, even if it's awkward. Her tail stops moving, and her ears droop a little. “So they don't want to fight?” She asked, sounding very sad. “No I don't think so Theron I'm sorry, but I don't think it's all bad, it shows that people would love to date someone like you.” He said, hoping that at least would cheer her up. It seemed to but only a little.

“Well, if they wish to bed me first, they must travel to the Megaladore tree and fight the chaos falcon. After they secure the feathers, they must then take it to the Forge my mighty hammer was forged and form it into a....” She started to go on, Clyde seemed to get lost about halfway through. “Wow, you guys have a complicated ritual for that, it's weird when Loki just kinda does it all the time willy-nilly.” He said to her. “Well, Father said it was only for the Princess of War World alone. Though every man that tried never returned.” She explained more or less, confirming Clyde's suspicions

Before they could talk more, the screen drew their attention with the Announcer's force declaring Raleigh the victor, hardly surprising to either of them. “Your time has come, go now.” She said, patting him lightly on the back, but even with her holding back it pushed him onto his feet. “Right" is all he said, walking nervously toward the battlefield and pulling on his scarf.

On the battlefield this time it turned into a city street, this opponent already waiting like before. “I am Zane Shadowstep, you will soon learn why.” He said, as Clyde just kinda stood there awkwardly. He didn't look that strong but was dressed like an edgy-looking ninja so it was hard to say. He knew he couldn't rely on the suit anymore, so he wasn't sure if he could beat him or not.

The match started, and almost right away Zane seemed to multiply into multiple people overwhelming Clyde right away. He tried to fight back, but they quickly defeated him. The Crowd seemed disappointed, as their opinion of Clyde had risen after the previous fight. “Well... the winner is Zane.” The Announcer said bluntly also sounding disappointed. “How the hell was I supposed to fight

against that!” Clyde said as soon as he woke up completely healed, Raleigh was already waiting. “I think it was just a bad match-up. Don't worry, I'll get revenge for you too.” She said, confidently grabbing his arms and taking him off to the room.

Out of the corner of his eyes, he sees that Theron is fighting now, easily defeating them, and making it to the next round. “Man, Theron is pretty strong, looks like it's going to end up with the two of you fighting.” He said to her. “You think so! I think we both have been kinda wanting to.” She said, excited by the idea.

The next day was about the same as the one before now that Clyde was out of the running he simply cheered Raleigh on from the sidelines as well as Theron. Raleigh was matched up against Zane at first she didn't seem to understand how to fight him either, but after a moment of reflection she ended up using an attack that would hit all of them at once with a wave of energy the clones disappeared showing which one was the real one she quickly transformed her multi-tool into a machine gun and unloaded into him till he was dead.

“And the captain avenges her crew mate! I'll tell you what, folks, the finals are ramping up to be an event.” The Announcer said hyping her up. As of now, whoever wins the next match will fight Raleigh for the championship. The crowd cheered with the same enthusiasm. Raleigh felt a bit strange, in all her years there had never been so much positive attention on her. Clyde was happy for once that she didn't have to deal with negativity but was a little afraid it would swell her head even more.

As Clyde expected, Theron quite easily won her match, confirming that they would fight each other in the finals. “That contends today's matches, we will pick back up tomorrow. I dare say that both of these powerful women might even give The Great Coordinator a run for his money this time around.“ The announcer said, bringing it all to a close for the day.

Chapter Sixteen

The final day of the Tournament had arrived. The Crowd roared as the battlefield morphed into a field filled with both technological pillars and snowy cliffs. “Good morning everyone welcome to the end of this year's tournament. The winners with have the right to challenge The greatest warriors of Coliseuma, and The Great Coordinator himself. Now let's give one last introduction to our fighters. Thunder god of War World leader of armies, and War master. Theron Thundermane has wowed us over the past couple of months with her battle prow-less.” The Announcer yelled as she entered fired works going off all around her.

“And the person taking her on. Coming out of nowhere, she surprised us all with her power and resourcefulness throughout the Tournament! Captain Raleigh!” The Announcer hypes up as she too

enters to fireworks surrounding her. She does finger guns at the audience loving all the attention. When they finally make it face to face the Announcer floats down between them. “Now do either of you have final words before your fight?” He asked. Both of them shake their heads. “Let's just get on with it,” Raleigh said. “Let our weapons do the talking,” Theron said in agreement.

“Alright then let's begin!” He floats up doing the final countdown. Theron and Raleigh both pull out their weapons with a grin. “I've long waited to fight you.” The lion girl said. “And I've wanted to try something out for a while now.” The captain said tossing Novabreaker into the air as it transformed into a weapon very similar to Theron's hammer. “I see I had no idea it could copy a weapon so closely, but you might find using it disappointing.” She explains raising her hammer into the air with a crackle of Lightning.

Raleigh attempted to do the same as she blocked the strike. No lightning appeared she effectively blocked it but it seemed to go through the hammer and electrocute her a little causing her to spaz out. “Wait does that mean?” She starts to say only to get an answer right away. “Aye, the power is not from the hammer. It's merely a conduit to channel it through.” She said showing her fist also crackling with electricity.

“Well, I guess that changes things with a shot huh.” She transformed the hammer into a shield with sharp edges and a gun barrel at the end. “Wait she had a gun sword this whole time!” Clyde said watching the screen with Child-like wonder at something so simple yet cool. With every strike Theron brought down on her Raleigh was able to counter with an attack of her own though even with the shield it seemed to take a toll on Raleigh's stamina.

Theron decided to change tactics stepping backwards as clouds swarmed around her almost like armor. They lifted her into the air seeming to charge up with energy. Raleigh aimed the gun at her firing a quick succession of lasers at her. The crowd loving it seems to have seen the attack from Theron before. Seeing that the short rounds didn't do much she pulled a switch on the back of her shield

changing the type to something more heavy.

The rounds were slower but seemed to be breaking through now staggering her a bit, but it wasn't enough to stop her from bringing her hammer down. Raleigh barely dodged out of the way as the whole platform shook and broke apart some of it falling off to the ground below. Theron was able to hit her again and charged up a little still knocking her away into the cliff. The dust rose covering up the arena making it hard to see if she was OK.

Clyde looked on nervously did she lose? When the dust finally faded Raleigh was there mostly unscathed with her tool transformed into the giant rail gun she hadn't used in a long time. Wiping a bit of pixelated blood away from her mouth she said. “If there is a bunch of dust and stuff like that, your opponent is fine and about to attack again!” Winking in the direction Clyde was as she fired at he smiled at the reference.

The crowd went crazy as the huge wave of energy shot out from it enveloping Theron completely tearing away her cloud-like armor and even hitting the wall of the stands causing the force field protecting them to crack a bit. The energy dispersed Theron looked worst for wear but was still standing. “Well, you have sapped me of stamina. Let's finish this.” She grins huffing in puffing over to Raleigh.

Both of them stopped with the flashy attacks mostly because they had exhausted themselves clashing with all their remaining strength. The crowd fell silent not sure who would win. Clyde kept cheering his heart out trying his best to encourage her to keep going. After a few more exchanges Theron falls to a knee holding on to her hammer as she pants heavily. “You have proved your strength to us all. I cannot fight anymore, I yield.”

The crowd went crazy as Raleigh reached her hand out to shake Theron smiled taking it and standing back up making her victory of the whole tournament official. “We have a winner! Congratulations!” The Announcer said coming down with a huge trophy. She didn't seem to be

expecting it but took it happily waving to the crowd. “But as you all know it's not over just yet Now she will have the privilege of fighting the world's greatest warriors one by one!” He started to say only for Raleigh to butt in. “One-on-one? No, I'll take them all on at once!” She excitedly said the praise had gotten to her head a little.

The crowd murmured with shock and awe. “Hmm, are you sure about that little lady? You're strong for sure but taking them all at once?” The Announcer said giving her an out Clyde hoped she would take, but knowing her. “Nope, I said what I said we don't wanna drag this out for too long like some people like to do! That would be boring.” She said confidently as the crowd went wild once more. “Well um... We will break for lunch and return with a five-on-one match!” The announcer said floating away.

Theron looked at her with respect. “Looks like you have your work cut out for you. I wish you luck.” She said patting her on the back as she walked away. Clyde ran over to her grabbing her shoulders. “Are you insane? Look I know you are really strong and stuff but do you think you can take on five dudes with comparable strength to Theron?” He said shaking her.

“They can't be that strong the real fight to worry about is the one with The Coordinator. They are just appetizers before the main course wouldn't you say?” She said brushing her hair confidently. I hope you're right about that. Clyde said nervously pulling on his scarf. “Just be careful Raleigh,” he said as they both went to have lunch.

They quickly reconvened the arena that at morphed this time into simple cliffs all in which a shadowy figure in Roman armor stood atop none showed their faces leaving a bit of mystery on who exactly they were. Where they the past victors? “Here we are girl the strongest coliseum.” One of them said seeming to take over the narration for this fight. “Here to test your worth.” Another one said pointing her weapon at her. “We are The Coordinator's five mighty toes!” All of them said together as each of their legs glowed around their toes each having a different one.

Raleigh tried not to laugh wait you chose to call yourselves “The Five Mighty Toes? That name... it's so stupid.” she couldn't hold back her laughter. Clyde was doing the same off to the side. Even in anime where they had villains themed around numbers they usually made them sound kinda cool. But seeing that they were trying to go off of the Toes of the Multiverse they had he figured it was hard to come up with a good name.

The one in front seems to have lost a bit of his composure from that. “No your wrong its a super cool name!” He said in defense. “It's really not,” Raleigh said calming down a little. “Silence we are The Mighty Toes, and we will step on you like the insignificant bug you are!” Another one loudly declares. “Did you practice that in front of the mirror every night?” She asked still laughing. “N...no... they said insisting otherwise much more sheepishly.

“Enough of this.” The biggest among them jumped down striking at her as she dodged. “I the big toe will end you!” He yells as the others run over to attack too. She keeps laughing but quickly stops getting serious. They all coordinate an attack making it very hard to dodge showing her that they are nothing to be laughed at even if they do have a silly name.

She turns her tool into a sword breaker trying to catch the one with a sword blade. She managed to do so but another one struck at her before she could break it forcing her to dodge. All of them surrounded her now having amazing teamwork. Clyde started to get worried wondering if the name was part of their strategy to lower the person's guard. Individually they were strong but nothing that Raleigh couldn't handle and not on the level Theron is like he feared, but together he wasn't sure she could win.

Behind him the woman from before entered. “Well, Mr. Smore like I said you have lost. Now if you would please come with us so we can hand over your aspects.” She said motioning for the two living armors from before to get ready if he resisted. “Firstly it's Moore, and don't count my Captain out just yet,” Clyde said doubling down on his faith in her.

“Regardless of that, she will have to meet with The Coordinator anyway so you might as well come with us.” Clyde frowned not sure if he could take them in a fight and even if he could it might cause problems for Raleigh so reluctantly he raised his hands and went with them still trying to watch the fight from the screens placed all over. They walk through the hallways passing Theron, and Kugo who are both watching. Kugo notices him Clyde mouthing the the words he's in trouble as they pass by. He droops an extra ear piece on the ground discreetly. He gets Theron's attention as they leave the hallways both of them deciding to follow picking it up.

Raleigh was struggling to keep up with all five of them. She had turned her tool into a shield that all of them were attacking one after the other. She started to feel like she had made a huge mistake. She took a deep breath trying to form a plan. She remembered something outlandish Clyde told her once time deciding to try it. She transformed her tool into a giant building block with studs on top of it.

They all seemed confused but eventually seemed to get it. “How dare you mock us!” She used that second she was granted by their anger to transform it into a simple sword, and cut through one of their legs. He fell to the ground wounded but not defeated as the rest of them changed tactics to defend him. She changed her weapon to a hammer knocking two of them into the cliff side, and finishing off the one she had started.

One of the ones she hit into the cliff died leaving only 3 remaining. She smirked feeling like she had gained the upper hand. She transformed the hammer into a spear. “I guess it's time to see why Cyrus likes this weapon so much.” She said stabbing and piercing between the armor plats of one of the men. With the extra reach of the spear, they couldn't attack her back. The other two surrounded her quickly so she removed it running towards the one she stabbed and kicking him in the face before the others could hit her. With him on the ground, she stabbed him again ending his life too.

The last two started to back away starting to think they couldn't win. “Impossible what trickery is this!” one of them said in shock. “You guys just suck,” Raleigh said turning to a gun and shooting

them each bringing another one down only once remained and she was weak. “Guess you got stubbed,” Raleigh said shrugging and shooting them one last time causing them to fall. "You were supposed to take us all on one at a time in a long drawn-out battle slowly revealing each of our tragic pasts." They said weak and frustrated as they passed out.

“Unbelievable!” The announcer said taking back over. “Not only did she beat all of the top warriors she did it all at the same time!” The crowd was ecstatic chanting her name some of them now believing she would win against the coordinator.

The light showed on the Tower as Gaius himself spoke to her. “Incredible! I commend your victory. Our battle shall commence at dawn, but first, let us have dinner together.” He said reaching out his hand as part of the Arena formed into a staircase up to the tower. “You got it old guy I'm starved after that!” She said rushing up it.

Chapter Seventeen

The Coordinator sat at the end of the table with Clyde who was already awkwardly set in the middle, and an empty plate was set at the other end clearly for Raleigh. The silence was deafening. “So um... can I make a suggestion?” Clyde asked hoping he wouldn't be annoyed or that Raleigh would arrive already. “What is it?” He said dismissively. “Well, your name for the toes. What if instead, you called them the Cinque Dita Possenti.” He said.

The old man rubbed his chin. “Hmm, the Five Mighty toes in Italiano. Simple yet somehow more interesting. I might just do that after today's events. You've caught my interest how do you come to learn my mother tongue?” He asked curious. “Well I wouldn't say I'm fluent but I picked a few words up when I was super into this video game with a Roman emperor. She was pretty cool.” He said regretting it right away.

It had been far more than just learning a couple of words he even started to pretend he was a

Roman at school briefly like a weirdo something he'd rather forget about. Thankfully Raleigh finally arrived as the servants directed her to the end of the table. “Wait, Clyde? What are you doing here I thought I'd have to get them to go grab you or something.” She said confused. “We collected him for you dear, now let us forget our troubles and enjoy a meal together after we talk battle.” He said waving his hands to the help signaling them to bring in the feast he prepared.

“All right it looks delish.” She said drooling a little. It was a bit awkward Gaius had table manners befitting of a royal, while Raleigh spent no time pigging out, Clyde was somewhere in the middle using a knife and fork at least. The old man seemed a bit annoyed, but like he expected as much. He finished with grace placing his silverware down as the servants cleaned it up right away. Clyde tried to follow suit, but Raleigh kept going till there was nothing left.

Once it was all gone Gaius stood up facing away. “I take it you both enjoyed the meal?” He asked. “It was great old guy.” She said wiping the crumbs from her mouth missing a lot of them. “I'll get down to it then. Put simply I've grown old I can't fight to the level I used to I am certain you would trounce me if we had a real duel the way I am now.” He explained pacing back, and forth.

“But I need to keep up the illusion that I am still fit.” He said turning to face them again. “So what are you proposing?” Clyde asked nervously as he activated the earpiece so Kugo could hear if he had picked it up, he knew Raleigh probably wouldn't want to just say they lost right here even if it possibly got everyone off their backs. “The Leg of the Multiverse is far too valuable to hand over, unfortunately. So I'm willing to offer you an alternative prize. All you have to do is make the fight look convincing enough and throw the match. You'll also need to hand over your aspects of course.” He said with an air of confidence that they won't refuse.

“Nope, not happening we came for the aspect we are leaving with it,” Raleigh said with an annoyed tone leaning forward figuring theirs going to be a fight right there. He laughs. “I do this as a kindness. In truth, I don't need you to stage the match I have ways.” He motions to a person in the

corner that shape shifts into Raleigh briefly before changing back. “If you refuse I will simply take what I want. Your aspects” He said walking closer. “Your strength.” He kept saying till he was almost right next to her. “Even your youth.” He said smiling.

She looked at him straight in the eye seriously. “No deal.” That is all she said. Clyde was a little worried he had the code still and would erase them both on the spot, but instead, he turned away. “Very well.” He said as the Cinque Dita Possenti appeared all around her with their weapons drawn at her neck before she could even move they were more emotionless than before. She had beaten them, but now they were healed just like Raleigh had been, and they would have to fight Gaius as well.

Suddenly the tower shook like there was an earthquake of some kind. “What? Impossible.” Gaius said in confusion it was a floating tower after all. The shaking grew more intense and the sound of destruction got louder till the floor was broken through by Theron holding Kugo under her arm to his embarrassment before she put him down. “We heard of your plot how despicable I respected you greatly,” Theron said pointing her crackling Hammer at him.

“Your opinion of me only matters publicly. You were foolish to come here, but it works in my favor I will simply take yours as well.” He said confidently as he turned to leave. Clyde could feel a hint of panic in his words now like he was running to somewhere, but wanted to act like he wasn't. Raleigh takes the chance to break free. “I beat your asses once I can do it again.” She grins turning her weapon into a fist and punching the nearest one. “This time you do it with comrades,” Theron said charging in seemingly happy to have the chance to fight them too.

“Kugo thanks. I honestly didn't know if you would help me.” Clyde said as he walked up to the much calmer man. “Gaius reminded me of my past self I can't let him make the same mistakes I did.” He started to say as the shapeshifter transformed into him attacking them both with a few of the maids. They put their backs to each other ready to fight brothers in arms.

Raleigh, with the help of Theron, was making much quicker work of them than before

pummeling them all down. Raleigh remembered Clyde's words about killing them making it hard to obtain the aspects so she settled for knocking them out yet their toes all seemed to vanish with everyone they beat. “What the hell we need those!” Raleigh said with anger hoping it wasn't a lost cause.

The shapeshifter turned into Raleigh facing Clyde. “You wouldn't hurt me right Clive?” She said trying to make the cutest, and most attractive face possible. After a bit of reluctance, Clyde punched her in the face. “Please I could never beat the real Raleigh. Thanks for the treat though.” The Shapeshifter was knocked on the ground to their normal form rubbing their head as Kugo finished them off by slamming his foot down onto them.

They all catch their breath. “Come on we will lose him,” Clyde said running ahead of them for once. They followed suit, but the hallways seemed to be hard for someone unfamiliar to navigate. They were already pretty high up. In Clyde's mind going to the top floor would be the right way looking around for stairs.

Eventually, they found some making it to the top of a huge hallway. It had pictures of Gaius at different stages of his life with plaques explaining the event. This first one was when he was a boy. “Young boy fells a god, and becomes ruler,” Clyde said to them all wondering just how he did so. At the end of the hallway was a giant door. “OK if that doesn't say final boss I don't know what does.” He said to them all.

They all look at each other nodding ready to take down what lies on the other side. The door opens up dramatically lighting up with torches one at a time. In the center is Gaius in a chamber. When the lights all activate they show many other people in similar-looking chambers. Right before they can get there energy shoots out from all of the chambers into Gaius. His face seems to grow younger his muscles more defined. This must have been what he was referring to earlier.

His Leg glowed with the full Leg of the Multiverse he must have discovered a way to loan out

the power and return it whenever he wished. The Chamber opened letting all the water out as he walked out. “It's a shame really. All these lives just for a fraction of the power I once held.” He motioned his arms around the room showing that most of the bodies had shriveled up. “You're sick! You tatter your own legacy, and for what?” Theron said with anger.

“For everything.” The man said with a smile. “Kugo stepped forward hoping to reason with him. “As someone who walked a similar path once. I urge you to think again this is not true strength. I came to this world in the first place, because I heard of your power I wanted to emulate it. In a way, you helped me find this strength. Don't lose yourself?” Kugo pleads only for Gaius to laugh.

“What do you know of strength You are a child trying to find meaning in worthless words.” He mocked him. “Enough talk,” Raleigh said impatiently swinging a sword at him. He grins, and like he was never there he appears behind her swiping his weapon into her back. “What?” she asked confused as she fell to her knees.

“Did you think me too frail to not be prepared? This leg is the greatest of all the aspects.” He said striking at both Kugo and Theron in an instant. Clyde panics unsure what exactly it is he is doing. His arm started to burn hotter than ever as he started running randomly trying to figure out how it worked. It seemed to have some success as the old man missed his attempts at attacking him.

“Damn that arm of yours,” Gaius said with anger as the other three recovered. He reappeared on top of the container acting more carefully. “Your arms allow you to influence the odds into your favor by a great margin yes?” Gaius asked Clyde not answering, but he already knew he was right. “The legs are similar, but.” He said striking at Kugo again since he had no arm to influence the odds.

It seemed Gaius wasn't about to elaborate more about the arms Clyde thought deeply as Raleigh and the others attempted to hit him more. After still having trouble Raleigh decided to just start throwing every bomb, and trap she had in every direction hoping that the randomness would help her chances. Her arm glowed like Clyde causing her a little discomfort.

Like hoped when Gaius reappeared he was knocked back from an explosion into a trap that binds his feet. Taking this chance they all charged at him. The Coordinator was still formidable able to block their strikes with ease. “It will be another 70 years before you will beat me!” He said, confidently but his face showed a bit of fear as the strain of battle was making him revert to his elderly age.

He was having more trouble keeping up breathing heavily. “Enough!” He said shouting as he broke free from the trap managing to land a blow on all of them disappearing once more. He reappeared looking like he was worst for wear. “Look you can't keep this up,” Clyde said. Gaius didn't want to admit it, but he was right.

Gaius thought back to his youth when he had defeated the god of this world, he was so effortless in his power that he saw no need for crutches like Universal Code letting the access fade with the God. “Damn it all if only I had taken the Code back then.” He said with anger still not wanting to relent just yet. He tried to keep up the attacks, but the next vanishing act left him falling over on the floor. He slammed his arms on the floor in anger. “Fine you're right I have lost I can't go on it will be the death of me.” He said breathing heavily as he sat up.

“So you'll hand over the code?” Raleigh asked. “And stop this madness,” Theron added referring to the used-up bodies. After a moment of silence, he finally answers. “Yes, I will give it to you. You were right I had lost my way, but you don't get it. Do you have any idea how it feels to have your power slipping away from you through no fault of your own your own body betraying you because of time?” He lowers his head in defeat.

Kugo walks over to him. “Our paths are a little different, but yes in a way I can that's why I was so adamant. You were a good man once, you can be again physical strength is not always the answer to true power.” He explains. Clyde was surprised at how introspective Kugo had become truly happy he had changed for the better his friends would be so proud of him.

Gaius looked like he resonated with his words a little. “Very well It would seem even an old codger like me can learn something. I will hand over my Aspect.” He said resigned to it now. “Wait how exactly did you do all that you did?” Clyde asked. “Well, you see. Instead of influencing the odd, it allows you to walk through those odds, and leave a path for those you wish to follow I have had decades to master it, though I suspect its applications may be different for every user.” He explains that he sees no point in hiding that information now.

“That's good to know.” A voice said from the shadows all of them looked around confused as Jacob, and the rest of the squad jumped down to surround the old man knocking Kugo away. All of them are already powered up in their off-brand Ultra suits. One of them holds him down as Jacob cocks his rifle at him. “Hand over the Leg to the little tike or I'll blow your brains out right now,” Jacob said meaning every word.

The old man still very much afraid of his mortality relents transferring the aspect to Tyler instead as the young man rushes off the second he gets it from him. “Jacob, what the hell how did you?” Raleigh said in protest. “Sorry Missy but we are taking this one for ourselves.” He said as he threw Gaius down ready to fight. “You got pretty beat up during that fight maybe we should go ahead, and take your aspects as well,” Jacob said.

They all get ready for another fight quickly trading blows with each other four-on-four Their suits are formidable, especially for Clyde who can't use his suit anymore. Raleigh and the others were holding their own even still. Jacob sighed. “Well looks like you still got plenty of fight left in you. I'd rather get gone with the one than possibly lose them all.” He said stopping his attacks. He looked over at Simon.

“Tyler has gotten away,” Simon said. It seems they were mostly buying time for him to do so. Simon shoots out a portal gun as they turn to leave. “Watch your back we won't be backing down next time.” Jacob said right as the portal closed. “Damn it I hate that guy, always doing shady underhanded

stuff.” Raleigh groaned in anger.

“And they call themselves the good guys,” Clyde said looking down at all their hard work stolen from under them. He could see a disembodied eye floating above them watching the whole thing. He flipped them off right as they disappeared. “And of course, Aion saw the whole thing.” He groaned. All of them sat on the ground feeling defeated.

Chapter Eighteen

Natasha leans against the console on the Bridge of her flag ship's face palming as Avery started droning on about problems. “So many things against regulations. Miss use of funds, lax, or ignored routines. All of this is a problem.” He said prudishly. She sighs not wanting to have this conversation. “Look I've already explained to you. I use a bit of the budget for things like higher quality meals, and I am lenient with the things that don't matter as much because it keeps my men happy, and morale high. Instead of nitpicking all the small stuff why don't you step aside and let us work.”

“No no no this will not be, how much of our money have you wasted on such things when rations suit soldiers just fine I've already use my authority to correct this.” He stated. “I know I have every man on every ship bitching about it now.” She groaned. “Well, I never. You say all this, and yet you have still failed to even catch up to those two.” The Overseer said mocking her. “That's not entirely true sir. They were held up in one place for a while, and we were able take one out from under them.”

Jacob said entering The Bridge back from the world.

“Listen you know why we can't catch up. Raleigh simply has a power we don't possess. I think we should focus more on finding other Aspects before it's too late.” Natasha said trying to get him to see reason. “Well, I suppose you may be right. As for the G units the counsel has had something in the works after learning of them. It will give us the edge in that department they should be arriving within the month.” He said adjusting his glasses.

“Don't call them G... They were living people I'm all for trying new things, but that's a path we ought to not go down.” She said sternly. “I assure you our methods are much more... ethical than the Multiversal Empires you'll see for yourselves soon enough.” He assures her. Before any more can be spoken that screen appears like it had many times in recent history revealing Aion was ready for another important broadcast.

“Breaking news everyone! We are here with another exciting update on the Aspects in the Multiverse, but not only that some juicy news no one saw coming. Let's get right into things. Commander Cyrus Steelheart formerly of the Empire has formed a new group of formidable warriors Calling themselves the Reformation Coalition quickly securing The Heart of the Multiverse from a man who just wouldn't die. Our reports show that Cyrus expressed regret in being part of the Empire, now he has formed this new group to right those wrongs. The Heart will surely help in this endeavor. As for how he plans time will tell we definitely would like to know.”

Marcy enters the room as they are all watching dropping the paperwork she had in a panic. “Oh no oh no already it has only been a couple of weeks and more people got their hands...” She said freaking out only for Natasha to yell out in a commanding voice. “Marcy calm your nerves!” She quickly stopped talking as Aions message kept going.

“And for the other Aspect? Yes folks it seems we are doing these babies in twos. You see Captain Raleigh and the mysterious crew mate we now know is named...” He started to say only to

look down at his paper confused. “Clive Smore? No way that must be a mistake.” He said tossing his paperwork. “At any rate, this guy needs a name already so let's call him Orion Vesper!” He said pointing his hand in the air like he made a great triumph.

“Oh my look at me getting distracted sorry everyone. So Orion and his captain made their way to everyone's favorite world Coliseum to battle it out in this year's Tournament how exciting. Captain Raleigh ended up wowing everyone winning the Tournament and defeating all five of The Coordinator's Warriors at the same time! Unfortunately for them just as they defeated Gaius and were about to claim his Aspect a third party came out of nowhere to claim it themselves. That's just cold all that effort for nothing really gotta feel for the lass. Information is still sparse on the third party but they seem to be members of Hero of the Source World battle, and General, Natasha Starcrafter's forces.”

A short video played of Raleigh and the other's victory over Gaius, and Jacob swooping in last minute. Natasha looked over at them with anger. “I told you to join the tournament, and win. Not do a scummy thing like that! We will be talking about this later.” She said returning her attention to the message. Avery walked over to him speaking with a lower voice. “What you did is expected in our line of work keep it up, but try to be more discreet.” He said approving of his methods a lot more than The General.

“But that's where the fun stops, unfortunately. Sadly I regret to inform you all that Gaius Quintillus has some nasty secrets. Not only was the whole Tournament a set up from the start this man was kidnapping poor saps, and using them to keep himself young.” Aion said looking disappointed it seemed a lot of people looked up to Gaius.

A video played of his men taking him away to prison seeming to be disgusted with him, or at least playing the part to keep themselves out of hot water. “The fact that he was capable of this, and misled us all for so long. It's heartbreaking the man's old age got to him.” The Announcer said looking sad as he took off his shades.

“He ain't beating any of those allegations we captured everything with our special recording methods we will release all the footage later today. Well sorry to leave on a bit of a somber note we hope that next time things will work out much more nicely. Aion Anderson signing out!” He said waving to the camera and the screen vanished.

All of them take a moment to process the information before Avery speaks up. “This Cyrus person, if I'm not mistaken you worked with him before?” “In a limited scope, but he has my respect.” She answered. “I suggest we consider trying to recruit him,” he says. “Hmm you know, that might be the most reasonable thing you have said all day, though I'm not entirely sure what he will say. Marcy, we still have his contact right? Give him a call right now.”

She nods sheepishly running over to a console searching through it until she finds it displaying the call on a big screen everyone can see. Cyrus answers right away seeming to also be on the desk of his own Bridge. He is now in a blue uniform with white trim around it as is everyone else in view. Tess Varden is right next to him they seem to be in the middle of something. “General Starcrafter. What do I owe the pleasure of this call?”

He said ready to listen but still focused ahead on their task. “Listen we heard about your little operation. I'm a little surprised honestly you seemed to want out of war last time I saw you. I'll get straight to the point The Union wants you.” She explains. “Well, you're not wrong about that. Wants to recruit me?” He stops looking ahead focusing his attention on the com instead. “General. I respect you, but I do not hold that same respect for your Union, I must decline.”

“What! Why this is a golden opportunity for a war criminal like you?” Mr Madan blurts out not seeming to understand his refusal. Natasha quickly waved her hand to shush him. “A war criminal? Is that what we are now? Hopefully, the future won't agree with you. Who's your friend?” Cyrus said with an air of confidence he didn't seem to have before. In the background Darrian, and Tara entered with a cart handing out muffins to everyone on deck He handed one to Tess, and Cyrus before leaving. They

both ate them without a care. “Delicious.”

“I am Overseer Avery Madan.” The man said pausing like it should mean something to Cyrus, but he just kept eating without blinking. “If you join hands with The Union you won't have to change anything You'll simply fly our flag full autonomy as a special force, all that we ask is that when the time comes you hand over your aspect so The Union can use the Wishing Door.” He said none of The Union forces knew how much of what he was saying was true or just fluff to try to get him on board.

Cyrus finishes his muffin Causing the members of the Union Bridge to drool a little sick with rations. He crosses his arms not seeming to think Madan was being truthful either. “I have no interest in the wishing door personally Whether I end up there in the end is another matter.” Before he can say more the bridge shakes Tess looks at the console with worry. “Sir we have Multiple Remnant ships inbound. “Well everyone it's time to earn our paycheck and defend the cargo!” He directed them all briefly ignoring the call it seemed he was already doing as he said he would defending vessels trying to trade between worlds.

He returned his attention to the call. Listen The Union is bloated with bureaucracy, and other things making them not much better than The Empire. If I had the time I would go into debt with all my issues in joining, but I'm stretched for time. It's people like you I have a problem with.” Cyrus said referring to The Overseer before ending the call. All of the Union forces felt a bit strange until the call ended like something was pulling on their heartstrings.

Natasha paced around the deck thinking hard about what they should do next. “So realistically there are only a few we can go after The Hopper crew is still an option.” She said a little hesitant. “We can't exactly take Aions without problems...” She kept thinking pulling up a map. “That narrows it down to 2 locations for the ones we know of.” She said looking at the map as both dots are on the opposite sides of it while they are near the center. “Well um doing the research, one of them is only the last known location. The other one... well it looks like they don't move around often.” Marcy

sheepishly said.

“Well, I guess that settles it let's head off to that one good work Marcy,” Natasha said patting her back as the poor girl blushed. It took a few days to reach in that time they all went about their day. Madan kept being upset over every little thing, and frustrating the men even daring to have some fine steak prepared for himself while they still had to eat rations. Natasha was also offered it, but she declined choosing to stand in solidarity with her men.

As they became world bound Marcy started to explain the details. “Everyone will need to wear Type 3 protective gear here... the air is toxic to most races.” All of them listen putting on their normal armor but with respirators that protected most of their faces. The Squad chooses to forgo that in favor of using the Ultra Suits. “What about our target?” She said a little confused.

“It would seem... they are not one of the races that it is toxic to. Oh god, we are going to die!” She said nervously sweating. “Maybe that's why they chose this world?” Jacob suggested. All of them shrugged walking into an airlock as Avery watched from a platform. With her small company of men, she walked out of their ship onto the planet that seemed to be spewing out toxic gas all over. Most of the land seemed to be barren with an orange color never touched by man.

After a while of walking around and searching for any signs of life, they found nothing. “Are you sure this is the right place?” She said her secretary who was only getting more anxious she seemed to be less worried about her stress now that they were outside ready to engage the enemy. Marcy's muscles seemed to swell bigger the more stressed out she got. “The reports say everyone that tried to take it from the current aspect holder found him around here.”

Before anyone else could say anything a giant figure rose out of the ground he stood tall above them all. He was monstrous in appearance with four arms, and grey skin. His face was jagged and contorted. He wore a bit of armor but only around his shoulders and covering his groin area. They seemed to be standing in a pool of acid that didn't seem to hurt them at all. “So more have come to take

this power from me?" The Creature said as his torso glowed with symbols reacting to Tyler's Left leg.

All of them get ready to fight the Creature hesitates raising his fist to attack only to stop, and sit down. "How I tire of this. For hundreds of years, I have stayed here for a goal I can no longer obtain. If I may? Instead of fighting, I propose an alternative. A... test of endurance." The thing said still towering over them sitting like this. "You're saying you'll willingly hand it over if I pass this test of yours? It seems heavily stacked against my favor." Natasha said thinking this might be a trick.

"I understand why you would think that way humans and other races are far more frail compared to my people. I will push you to your limits, yes, but I will not ask the impossible. On the other side of this world exists a more... Hospitable area that should allow you to breathe normally. Meet me there, and I shall give you what you seek." The Monster said getting up and walking away.

Jacob and the others start to charge not going to play into it, but Natasha blocks them with a arm motion. "No we will do this with Honor I will accept his test." She said only for Jacob to cock his hips. "Are you mental? There Is no way he's going to do as he says even if you pass." He protests. "If that happens the rest of our forces can swoop in and take it. It's called having integrity." She said starting to follow the monster. "Wait General? Wh... what are we supposed to do why we wait." Marcy asks.

She stops turning to give them the last orders before she leaves. "Jacob you and your squad can go after the other Aspect. Marcy and the rest of the army will stay here if things go south." She said vanishing into the toxic smog. "I don't like this," Jacob said rubbing his head. "Well, orders are orders let's get back to the ship before the time runs out on the suits." He orders the rest of the Squad leaving Marcy as they run off. "Wait!" She runs after them scared they will leave her.

Both Natasha and the monster make it to the place he mentioned. It looks somewhat livable even having plants. No creatures seemed to be around though other than some fish she could see in the water. As they got closer to the center she saw a massive waterfall fall thinking it looked pretty beautiful all things considered. "So you have come. If you are serious take off your armor and

breathers. Take in the air, and sun.” He said standing In the water.

After a little hesitation, she does as he said feeling the difference right away. The humidity in the air was worse than in any world she had been on, and something else was burning her skin like crazy. Without the suit, she can also tell that gravity is much heavier here. The monster was right it was survivable, but not by much even standing up proved a challenge making her sweat from the intense heat she had never experienced to this degree before.

“This is the test. First, acclimate to this climate. Once you do we will move on to a more harsher area.” He said pushing the water along one of his hands. “This water is much hotter than it may appear once you get used to the air you will bathe in it, and then.” He looks over at the waterfall meaning that will be next. “If you can do all this I will give up my Aspect to you.” He explains. “Very well let's get started.” She said sitting down and trying to meditate.

Chapter Nineteen

Two Marcus's face off against each other each looking younger than the one everyone knows. One is standing proud and confidently in A Multiversal Empire uniform. The other looks much weaker with longer hair, his uniform is similar but instead of a red outline, it is green. He cowers on the floor as the other one pulls out his rapier pointing at him. “Pathetic. To think someone like you is me in another world. Frankly, I'm ashamed to have an association with you. Whatever die now.” The more confident Marcus said jabbing it forward with intent to kill.

The weak Marcus barely moves out of the way in time. “Please don't kill me I'm not a warrior. I had no choice.” He pleads rushing to his feet running away. “Pft, there is always a choice your just upset at your weakness.” The other one said swiping at him missing but taking out the center console of the ship cleanly. This seemed to cause a reaction the ship was already shaking, but now it was falling.

The weaker one pulls out his rapier pointing it forward and closes his eyes expecting to die, but

right as the strong one rushes forward to end his life the ship rocks back and forth causing him to lose his footing and fall directly onto the weaker one's weapon. He chokes up blood. “You bastard you'll pay for this. You'll never be strong!” He said with a gargled voice some of the blood spat on his face.

Marcus looks horrified dropping his saber. “What have I. No, I didn't mean to.” Before he can dwell on it more Lucius Novastride appears behind him looking incredibly angry. “You killed him?” He asked as the ship kept falling. “Yes I'm sorry, I'm sorry It was a mistake.” He cried. Lucius took a deep breath. “He was my beloved Nephew. One of the few remaining loved ones I had left, and to think he died in such a pathetic manner by a weaker version of himself.” The Emperor said clenching his fist.

Marcus shook not sure what to do talking didn't seem to help. Lucius took a deep breath before lifting him by the neck and choking him, but he stopped right before he ran out of air completely. “Yet I also killed your beloved Uncle yes?” Lucius questioned looking at his still blood-soaked hands from the other version of The Emperor he killed before arriving. He had very little love for his version of Lucius, he was the one who forced him into this, but to survive he said. “Yes, I loved.... him dearly.”

Lucius let him go turning away he looked out the window seeing it wouldn't be much longer before they crashed. “Then I have a task for you. Take your other self off this vessel switch uniforms with him, and give him a proper burial.” He said walking away toward the escape pods. “You're sparing me?” Marcus asked confused. “It depends how you look at it. You are now my Nephew you will learn to be strong, or learn to regret it.” Is all he said walking away. The ship crashed before he could make it out.

Marcus woke from his dream crying out in pain. He took heavy breaths never liking the nightmares he had every now in then, but looking around it was clear he was in Flamecrest castle in his private chambers. A knock was heard in the room that sounded like someone was trying to be gentle yet it was a lot louder than expected. “You may enter,” Marcus said rubbing his head.

Cindy entered in her night gown that surprisingly wasn't torn up the fabric must be made for her

kind in mind. “Boss? I was walking by, and hear yer screamin' are you ok... Was it about the dobblwastit war again?” She asked with concern. He sighed “It's always about the Great Doppelganger War.” Cindy got closer to him sitting on his bed with a hint of blush from nervousness. “Do you wanna... Do you wish to talk about it?” Marcus stayed silent knowing he probably shouldn't he needed to stay strong, but in truth, he was still weak folding and choosing to tell her.

“Wow... killing you like that... was that really what that war was about?” She said not sure what to say. “Yes, you see around the time Lucius formed his empire he ran into an issue. Other versions of himself with the same goal also wanted what he did, so they fought. It was chaos. It was hard to even tell who was who sometimes, but in the end the ones that survived formed the true empire.” He explained calming down a bit.

“That's heavy I don't know if I could fight myself,” Cindy said still not sure how to comfort him finally concluding. “I think you're plenty strong for a human. The Chimera Legion wouldn't listen to ya if ya weren't... We all respect you greatly.” His head started to glow with symbols. “You don't get it. It is not really about power, it's about survival, and this head doesn't allow me to stop thinking anymore. All the plans in my head are brilliant it exhilarating, but maybe Helix was right my nightmares have become more frequent.

“Well... I don't know bout all that stuff but... I'll always have ya back.” She said smiling her tail swaying back, and forth. “Thank you, Cindy. Truly the night is still young I think I'll be ok sleeping now.” He said smiling. “Well um... I could sleep with ya. Maybe it would help.” Cindy suggested bright red as a tomato like she regretted it right away. Marcus looks at her large hand and kisses it greatly flustering her.

“Such things wouldn't be proper for a princess.” He said just afraid she would break him without meaning to in her sleep. She got very hot standing up quickly. “Yer right night boss.” She said rushing out trying to hide her feelings but her big ol tail was still going crazy with excitement. He

chuckled to himself laying back down to sleep.

In the morning Cindy flew through the skies her father following behind her both of them laughing. It seemed they were playing some Dragonkin version of tag. They flew passed the wreckage of Marcus's Fleet that seemed to be almost completely repaired, and they were even working on a newer and much grander vessel. It would seem Crow's information was true and they didn't find much value in the resources like the Neo Empire. She flew higher into the air.

“How fast can yer big body fly pops you'll never catch me!” She declared. “Don't count me out just yet daughter. He seemed to have no trouble keeping up she couldn't lose him at all. So in a sudden change, she decided to free fall positioning herself to glide like she had seen a falcon do. With the help of gravity, and wind she was able to gain much more speed losing him, and making it back to the castle ground before he could. The dragon landed transforming back into his human-like form.

“Well done. How did you learn such a trick?” Emberon asked. “Marcus had Crow teach me!” She said smiling. “Ah, the quiet one.” He said rubbing his beard. “Well, thanks for indulging me with these childish antics. I have longed for a day where I could play with my daughter as such, but you are already grown.” Emberon said bowing. “Ah, it's no big deal pops. I kinda like are time ta gether now.” She said with another smile only to follow it up with a frown seeing his form.

“What's wrong my daughter?” The king asked. “Well um... no forget it. I just kinda wish I could transform like you da. I tend to break things a lot.” She said looking down. Emberon thought for a moment. “I don't want to get your hopes up, but there may be a way for you to learn to better control your strength. Being half human just complicates things.” He explained. “Wait really?” Her face lit up, and her tail once again swayed frantically.

He took a deep breath walking closer holding out both hands. “From a young age, we are taught transformation. It's important so we avoid hurting others. Place your hands on mine, and focus.” He directed. She did as she was told taking a long deep breath. She closed her eyes trying to focus the best

she could, and not let her mind think of all the things that happened in her past. “Yes like that I can feel your aura. Think of slimming down to a more gentle form.” He said with a calm tone.

She took another deep breath imagining it her arms seemed to shrink just a little bit. Just as it seemed like it was working Wolf Rushed up through the gate on all fours. “Commander!” Luna said sounding stressed. Cindy swelled up with anger as her arms got even bigger than before. “What is it!” He said turning around very upset she is interrupting.

“It's the wolf clans they have had enough, they are about to attack Flamecrest,” Luna explained. Emberon pulled his hands away walking closer to her. “What?” He said shocked. “Yes they have been unsatisfied with their treatment for a long time, and they have decided to do something about it. “What nonsense I have heard no grievance!” He said defending himself.

“With respect. They don't trust you, but I was able to gain their trust through the months we have spent here.” Luna explained. The king sigh's “Why couldn't they just speak with me on this matter? I'll confront them at once.” He said ready to fly off. “Wait you Highness!” Marcus said walking out with Crow in his new White uniform. “Crow explained the details. Allow us to take care of it for you.”

“Nonsense you are outsider's this is a kingdom matter.” He said in protest. “We got this pops this place is my home now too,” Cindy said flying into the air to pat his shoulders before flying off towards the Wolf clan's territory. Marcus and the others called a smaller ship over to take them there. Emberon stood there not sure if he was ok with them handling it.

Cindy reached the border much faster where like Luna said an army of Wolfkin were marching. Unlike Luna, they were much more beast-like like she was not from this world like Cindy. “Dragon!” One of the wolves said as the whole pack surrounded her weapons drawn. “Listen to me... we don gotta clobber each other,” she said raising her hand in the arm not good at diplomacy.

The Wolves only surrounded her more ready to strike when the chance was granted to them.

The other's arrived just in time Luna jumping down next to Cindy. “Chieftain please stop this. Emberon wishes to talk.” She pleads with them. One of the Wolves steps forward his fur, and outfit seem to be a slightly different color. “What good will words do? He has made no efforts to understand our ways in his years as ruler. You would betray us now for them?”

“It's not a betrayal!” Luna growled at them. “Has our time meant nothing? We bonded together and hunted together. I might not be your kin, but we were like a family were we not?” Luna snarled. “You are right you have reached our respect, and you do understand our ways, but this is not enough.” The Chieftain said sadly.

Luna's ears drooped as she became more angry. “Then I challenge you to a duel over the leadership of the clans!” She lunches at him and attacks before he can say anything else. The others except for Noir who didn't seem to bother coming this time Land the ship, and join the fight. “The king has outsider's fight his battles for him!” One of the Wolfkin said insulting him. “I'll have you know we have an army, but we don't need one to defeat the likes of you,” Marcus explained hoping he wouldn't have to go back on his words.

All of them engaged in a fight, but the only one that truly mattered was between Luna and the chief. He started with a ceremonial blade but fell back on using his claws to match her moves. Luna was surprisingly struggling on the ropes many times. She managed to gain the upper hand for a split second slashing into his chest with her claws ending the fight. Everyone stopped a looked towards her. She knew what it meant she was officially the chieftain now. It would be harder for them to accept if she wasn't some sort of wolf.

“Lay down your arms we will go to Flamecrest Castle, but not to lay siege,” Luna ordered. All of them dropped to a knee exposing their chest to her dropping their weapons showing they acknowledged her as their Leader now. “My my, Luna well done you might have been able to do this all on your own.” Marcus praised making Luna's tail sway like crazy. They walked toward the castle

town a little hesitant to enter without weapons but after Luna growled at them they fell in line leaving it outside. Emberon looked surprised as all the wolf clan leaders filled in obediently sitting at the table to talk.

“Friends forgive me it seems I have earned your ire in a way I did not know. Please tell me of your troubles.” Emberon asked at the edge of the table. All of them started to shoot out their problems only for Luna to growl at the other end of the table silencing them. “One at a time.” She said deciding to go first herself. Noir sat at at the table next to a Wolfkin who looked confused she looked indifferent only there because dinner would be served soon kicking her boots on the table.

“Emberon King of Flamecrest. You often say understanding is the most valuable thing one can have correct?” Luna asked not knowing as much as the others. “I do, and it would seem I do not understand your plights like I believed.” The king explains. “The Wolfkin are a nomadic people. When the human nation fell you gave them land to call their own as a kindness as you did for many races. Unlike the rest, this was seen as more of a prison than a reward. They long to roam once more.” Luna explained to him.

Emberon didn't say anything thinking hard. “I think I understand my error now, but I'm not sure how I can rectify it without angering the other Nations.” Emberon stoked his beard trying to find a way to make it work. Luna turns to one of the other leaders of the clan. “Flamecrest has the most claim to the land on this continent is this enough?” She said unsure herself. “Yes, I do believe so.” Emberon seems to understand what she is getting at. “I will allow the Wolfkin to move through my borders freely so long as they promise to not make trouble with my people, and not cross other nations' borders that do not wish to be crossed we will have to work the details out over time. Is this agreeable?”

All of them look at each other before nodding even the defeated chieftain seems to be ok with this arrangement. “Then let us drink, and be marry for the night.” The dragon king said as the diner had indeed arrived. All the wolves howled with excitement ready to chow down. Emberon made his way

over to Luna, and Marcus who was still praising her and petting her head to Cindy's jealous glares. “I'm impressed I had no idea how little I understood about the Wolfkin thank you for helping us avoid conflict young one.” Emberon commended as they all joined in on the feast.

Marcus went to a quiet room to eat this time As a message from Aion played it didn't seem to pop up for anyone but Universe Traversers. It watched seeming to be a little shocked Cyrus was in the game at all. “Hmm if we don't start mobilizing soon, we may miss our chance to get the remaining aspects. Crow!” He called as they appear right away like always. “The ships are almost all completely repaired, the new flagship may take a little longer to finish. “I see we might have to take a smaller force out then for the time being. My head is swelling with plans I can taste our victory already. Have everyone prepare to head off in a couple days.” Marcus orders they nod and vanish.

Chapter Twenty

Raleigh, Clyde, Kugo, and Theron all sit at a table chowing down together. It would seem after Gaius was found out most of the hostility was dropped against them, and they were left alone, but they had all gained both fans and enemies for bringing that information to light. “So what are you two going to do now?” Clyde asked knowing that Raleigh was too busy eating to contribute to the conversation. “I think it's about time I return to Contestus. I found myself here, and now I should utilize that power for my friends.” Kugo said biting into a huge turkey leg. “Aye, even with how everything ended I learned much in my time here,” Theron said sipping some meed most of her plates already picked clean. “What about you will you keep up your hunt for the Aspects even after this... setback?” Kugo would ask.

“We don't got much choice,” Raleigh said with her mouth full. “Yeah, as long as people know we have them they will come after us. We will probably consult your brother on that.” He explains

referring to Loki. “Speaking of that. I'm sure he's worried about you maybe give him a call?” He suggested to her. “He was indeed this is the farthest I have ventured from War World, but when I told him he was starting to act like Father he quickly stopped, that might be why he pushed you to come here.” The War Master explained.

“Well, it was good to see you. Both of you. I'm surprised I'd ever end up saying that to you though Kugo.” Clyde said laughing nervously. They both shake hands showing that the feeling is mutual. After they finish their meals they separate once more waving goodbye. On the way back to The Hopper they were swarmed by Raleigh's new adoring fans. She smirked thrilled to see it.

As they cheer she bows “Thank you thank you. You want my autograph?” She asked them all assuming they did, and for once she was right. Clyde stood there awkwardly as a line formed, and she signed random things for them. One person came up to Clyde surprising him. “Mr. Smore! You're my hero please sign this.” The woman said pleading. “Wait why? I got my ass beat in that tournament? And a signature?” He never really understood why people went crazy for stuff like that half the time you can't even really prove it's theirs.

“You were so dreamy in that fight with Kugo.” She started to say blushing. Raleigh took notice not seeming to like that he was getting that kind of attention. “Hold on a minute!” Clyde shrugged playing into her jealousy. Signing it with his own smug face for once, and he looked his Captain in the eye. “Oh thank you Mr. Smore.” She said happily about to run off only for him to stop her. “Hey, one thing though. It's Clyde Moore, not Smore.” He corrected her she just nodded running off.

Raleigh grabbed Clyde quickly not finishing her signing. “Ok, time to go before your harem gets here.” She said dragging him onto the ship. “If one of us has a harem here it's you Raleigh!” He protested. “Well yeah everyone finally sees my greatness.” She said with a smirk as the door closed. She let go of Clyde both of them sitting in the chairs up front getting the call ready for Loki.

He glances over at her and sees that despite their failure she seemed happier than normal. “Hey.

How do you really feel about all this?" He asked. "Hmm, what do you mean it feels great to finally get some respect for once?" She said confused. "That's not what I mean I'm not saying you don't deserve it but... well I guess I'm just a little worried it will go to your head." He said thinking that was probably the wrong thing to say.

She frowns closing her eyes. "Well, Clyde maybe it wouldn't feel like such an important, and life-changing event if you praised me yourself more." She turned her nose up growing upset with him. He sighed knowing it was true. It's not that he didn't know she was amazing he just sucked at expressing his feelings about that, and he was also afraid saying something would grow her ego as well. He ended up staying quiet. She didn't seem to like that moving on to call Loki.

"Hello, my friends!" Loki shouted clearly at some sort of rave this time. He looks even more chill than normal. Suddenly he gets as close as he can to the screen looking dead serious. "How's my sister doing?" "She is fine Loki. She told us about your doting. I think you're forgetting that she is a powerful, and sexy warrior and a god. She can handle herself." Raleigh glares at him with complete scorn. Her eyes ask why he can say it about another woman, but not her.

"It's a lot easier to compliment someone you're not with." He said defending himself. "Yes... sorry for my rudeness Clyde, but is this a good time it seems like you two are in the middle of something. A lovers quarrel?" Loki asked knowing it would only make it worse. "WE ARE NOT LOVERS!" Both of them said in unison. Loki laughs. "Fine, fine I'll drop it. I assume you want to know the location of another Aspect Holder?"

"Yes, that's right." She said to him. "Right well, I took the liberty of looking into it myself after the last broadcast sorry you failed to get the leg." The man said flipping through names on a tablet. "Yeah we kinda wasted our time here, well I guess we learned a thing or two at least." He explained. "You can learn something from any experience, my friend," Loki said. "Ah! So here's a bit of a summary. There are twelve keys. You both have 3, Cyrus has 1, That Admiral has 1... The Union has

the leg you tried to get, and Aion has the Voice, I'm guessing one of his associates has the other eye." Loki ran through.

"Yes, I was able to find out that when I used the eye to spy on him. Looks like she has both of the ears too," Clyde explains. "Wow, what a peculiar power maybe I'm interested in the Aspects after all would you be willing to hand over your eye..." Loki started to say. "Focus pervert we aren't letting you use it for such depraved reasons," Raleigh interjected. He just sighs ears drooping. "You, you both think so little of me." Both of them just gave him a look that said yes.

"Well moving on, and counting the accounted Aspects that leaves... 2 remaining wow I thought it would be longer than half a year before so many were collected," Loki said surprised. "Can you locate them?" Clyde asked. "Eh well I already tried, and that's the issue. It would seem The General, and her fleet is engaging one, and well the other one is... well dead." "Screw Natasha let's bust in there and take it out from under her nose like she did to us!" Raleigh said getting fired up.

"You know we can't fight her whole army alone, even more without the power of my suit," Clyde said dismissing her. "Grrr I know, but I still want to." She said pouting crossing her arms. "Well unfortunately you will have to confront each other at one point you're going to have to come up with a way to deal with that if your minds are made about the door I fear," Loki said worried.

"I'm sure we will figure something out for that if anything we can let them beat the shit out of each other, and pick up the pieces," Clyde suggested. "We are not doing that Clyde, that's lame, and in your words villain shit," Raleigh said in protest. "Whatever the case may be. I think I might be able to find the new aspect holder of the other leg given time. It's a lot harder for my powers to find someone I have almost no knowledge of, and according to the information I have the Aspect could have gone anywhere. So what will you do in the meantime?" Loki asked.

Raleigh thought for a moment. "I guess we have gotten enough heat off us by now, I think we will head over to Ultratera to see if they can figure out the problem with Clyde's suit." The Captain

informed them both. “Wait really? Thank you I didn't think you cared about that.” He said happy. “Of course, I care about the plights of my first mate, and or quartermaster. I listen to your complaints.” She said with a smile. Maybe he was being a little unfair to her he didn't think she listened to him about anything like that.

“Very well. I will start looking from here in the morning and get back to you.” Loki said waving and rushing back over to the rave as the screen went blank. “Thank you great, powerful, and generous Captain Raleigh,” Clyde said deciding a little praise wouldn't hurt even if it was a little backhanded. “Don't mock me, idiot.” She said lightly kicking his shins with a faint blush.”

Chapter Twenty One

Without a hitch, they arrive on Ultratera, but something is a bit strange as they both look out the window they see that the city is pretty much in complete ruins. “Man... The empire really did a number on this place.” Raleigh said solemnly. Clyde looked shocked wondering what even was the point. To get Raleigh before they left the world? To steal their technological advancements? He didn't have all the answers, but he couldn't help but feel like he was a little responsible.

They land in what used to be a park leaving the Hopper. “Well, I can't say I have much meta knowledge on this. It's significantly deviated from the show I know at this point.” He said not even sure where to begin with all this. “Do you know if they had like a secret secret base?” Raleigh suggested. “Well yeah, but only Zoltan knows about that, and that was in Ultra Speed they never really explained how they transitioned over properly.” He went on to explain Raleigh getting lost in his nerdy

explanation.

Clyde's Ultra Syncer started to beep and make all sorts of noises forcibly transforming Clyde into the suit like all the missing power rushed back in, and overflowed it. He looked down with surprise. “Well, I guess that's one issue solved. For now at least, but now that we are here...” He went on looking at the city that was completely wrecked noticing that it didn't look like laser fire from a ship that caused the devastation there were claw marks and other animal-like prints everywhere.

“Whatever the case...” She started to say only for lizard monsters just like in the show screeched out surrounding them with foot soldiers. They both got ready to fight. Clyde noticed that these throw-away fodder enemies the Scouts normally faced weren't like any of the ones he had seen before. Regardless they weren't a problem for either of them. The lizards were a bit tougher.

The true problem arose when they just kept coming in never-ending waves. “They aren't stopping! Zech form?” Clyde suggested as Ultra Orange landed in front of them joining the fight. He was a little scuffed up, but under his cloak was the Ultra suit armor. It would seem he never took it off anymore only choosing to forgo the helmet. “Leo? What's going on?” Clyde asked. “No time to talk let's get in your ship, and fly somewhere else. I know a place.” He blurted out.

Seeing that there was no end to them they nodded in agreement getting into the hopper, and lifting off. “Right over there,” Leo said pointing to a mountain range just out of the city. She followed his directions Clyde still powered up turned to him. “What the hell is going on here?” He asked. “Well to be honest I'm not completely sure either. I woke up, in a base I didn't know we even had, and everything was like this. I was trying to gather more information.” Orange explained distraught.

“Did the empire do this?” Raleigh asked only half paying attention while is driving the ship. “No. Compared to this the Empire's attack was a paper cut this is, something else.” He went on to explain only perplexing them more. “What about the other Scouts?” Clyde asked. “I tried to contact them, but no one answered.” He explained as they landed and exited the ship. He pointed up at a

telescope coming out of what would otherwise be a completely hidden secret base one that Clyde recognized from the sequel show he mentioned.

“But one thing I have learned is that the Zechs are in the city I saw the White one Roaming so they must be out there somewhere,” Leo said trying to convince himself. “But hey you two are pretty strong, with you here maybe we can turn it all around.” The scout said with optimism. “Right, so why did we need to come here then?” Raleigh said a little annoyed they didn't just go after the Zech or something.

“It's almost nighttime. Those monsters are tough enough in the daytime. At Night they multiply even more, and are way stronger.” Leo explains. “Who is the villain behind all this then? It must be related to this world with that kind of monster.” Clyde said placing a hand on his chin brainstorming. “Afraid I don't know that either they didn't announce themselves like Monster Master,” Leo said sounding a bit frustrated at himself for not being able to provide any more information.

“Enough of that, we get it you don't know show me to the pantry I'm starving,” Raleigh interjected. “Well it's this way, but it's mostly rationed so I wouldn't get too excited,” he explained as she groaned, but followed anyway. Clyde did as well trying to power the suit off, by pressing the Syncer, but it didn't seem to deactivate. “Oh yeah. For whatever reason all the suits are overcharged too. If you need help taking off the helmet I can show you.” Leo explained as they walked inside.

Clyde felt weird now that he had the opposite problem, but it explained why Orange wasn't taking his off. The interior looked different than Clyde was expecting. It looked much more like a bomb shelter than the base from the show even the Chair Zoltan their mentor sat in just never seemed to have existed in this version. The only thing that was the same was the telescope. “Well, that's the run of the place. Just pick a cot somewhere, and we'll head off in the morning.” Leo said disappearing quickly almost like he was trying to hide from them.

Both of them sat in a chair alone again. “Who could have done this?” Clyde said in disbelief

was this somehow his fault? “The same type of person that fucks shit up everywhere we go. Some asshole that ruins everyone else's fun.” She said nonchalantly. “I mean that's not exactly an incorrect statement, but... well I guess you're right it doesn't really matter who, what matters is why, and where.” He said still not liking it. She took his hand. “And in the morning we will go beat the shit out of them, and save the day like we always do.” She reassured him.

He smiled at her bluntness. “Thanks, captain I know I can always count on you.” He said trying to give her some praise at least. “What's with all the sudden praise? Not that I am complaining.” She said only to start walking away. “Whatever I'm going to bed.” She further went on to say leaving before he could say another word. Her face is full of bluster.

In the morning they both wake up entering the main room with the telescope. Leo is looking through it like he is trying to find more signs of Zech's. “Oh hey. Are you two ready to go? I spotted the purple Zech on the south side of the city it looks like it's staying still.” He said still looking somehow knowing they had entered the room.

“Yeah we are ready, but what about your giant robot?” Raleigh asked him. “It's completely trashed I found it a little before you two showed up actually, and if you weren't already tired of me saying it. I don't know why.” He sighed. “Well, we have The Hopper so...” “Raleigh don't be rude think about if the Zech was The Hopper,” Clyde interjected she seemed to understand after he explained it like that she looked down. “S...sorry.” She sheepishly whispered.

“We weren't that intimate it's just a big hunk of metal,” Leo said trying to lighten the mood. Without that, they got going toward the Purple Zech. Clyde studied Leo a little more wondering just how he felt. He was usually the least popular member in nerd circles because he was kinda a dimensional meathead, but something seemed to have changed that he couldn't quite place, But he didn't have too much time to think about it because they had already made it to their destination. They landed close by.

Now that they were closer they could see that there was some sort of encampment around the Zech, and humans were walking about inside. They entered curious to know what was up the humans stared but didn't get near avoiding any attempts, any of them made to have a conversation that is until they saw the Purple Scout talking with someone quickly catching her attention. “Leo is that you?”

She ran up shocked. “I thought you were dead!” She said hugging him, as she sobbed a little. “Sorry to make you worry then, but I don't know what happened at all. How did we get here?” She let go of him only now seeing Raleigh, and Clyde. She looked down pausing before answering. “Come with me, and I'll explain.” She said walking toward a tent near the Base of the Zech.

Once they were all inside she started to explain. “What's the last thing you remember?” She asked him as the other just stayed as spectators for now. “We were nearing the end of reconstruction when the Machine Menace attacked,” Orange explained. “Wow, that far back?” She took a deep breath shocked. “Well, we took care of them pretty easily instead of waiting for the monsters to show up we pinpointed where they were at, and destroyed them all before they could cause that many problems.”

Clyde knew about the Machine Menace they were the villains after Monster Master, and they didn't take them out like that in the show she kept going. “Well a little while after that another threat appeared, but something was different about it. Like it was adapting to our new tactics. People everywhere started transforming into monsters like it was virus of some kind. It was complete Chaos, and well that's where my knowledge gets a little unclear. We rushed in to fight them, but they were all over, and we had no clue where the mastermind was they never showed themselves.”

“There wasn't even a named monster like usual?” Clyde asked. “Well, I'm getting to that. Adrian and the other 3 were already in the area, and when I caught up I saw you, Leo. You rushed into a building, With Adrian, before everyone could make it. I heard your screams as a huge tiger man walked out attacking all the scouts, I think he might have gotten Adrian too... we couldn't defeat him he was too much for us.” She looked down looking defeated. “He must have ruffed me up because I don't

remember any of that, but

I did wake up with a huge gash on my chest," Leo explained. "Anyways what happened after where are the other three scouts? And Adrian dead? I don't know if I buy that." "Well we couldn't come to a decision on what to do so we all ran off to do our own thing they should be alive, but my Zech is the only one that survived I think, and that's how I ended up here defending everyone." She explained.

All of them had a lot to think about, but the ground started to shake like something was coming. All of them rushed outside to see that some of the people were clutching at their chests, and transforming into monsters. Some people ran away as soon as they saw what was happening while others chose to stay with their loved ones even if they ended up killing them. The monsters seem to have the same traits this time being more golem-like. They started to destroy everything inside the encampment. All four of them rushed in to attack the monsters.

"What about the Zech?" Clyde asked her. "There are too many friendly targets." Purple said to him quickly understanding why she didn't go for it. Raleigh transformed her weapon into a mining pick starting to hack at one. "Can they be turned back?" Clyde asked. "I don't know I'm not a doctor that is what Blue went to find out," Purple said punching the head off of one. Clyde did the same a little reluctant since they were innocent humans.

It was a moderate challenge but nothing they couldn't handle. They defeated each, and every one of them as the humans cheered. "I wonder what triggered them. Do you have some sorta virus detector?" Raleigh said pulling out things from her pouches and seeing if she did herself. She shook her head. Clyde hated to say so but like Orange, Purple was kind of seen the same way amongst the fandom, just the one-note girl of the group.

The other scouts didn't have much better, but Blue was definitely the tech guy, and Green worked on the Zech, White was one of the more popular ones, but that was more because his personality was Leader. "Ah ha. Knew I had one." Raleigh said pulling out the detector, but before she

could do anything with it the golems started to get back up.

Instead of reforming, and attacking they floated upwards, all combining into one giant golem. It would seem they didn't have much choice, but to use the Zech now, but before they could get near the sky started to hum with the sound of an engine. The Green Zech flies in from nowhere in its bird form diving into the Golem and breaking it apart. It landed quickly pecking at the slightly different colored Rock that seemed to be the monsters core destroying it before it could do any more harm.

The cockpit opens up Green pops her head out looking just like the Ultra suit on with a cloak over it without the helmet. “Good, I made it in time.” She said catching her breath. “I thought you said all of the other Zechs were destroyed?” Raleigh said raising an eyebrow. Green jumps down ready to explain. “I repaired it. I did design them after all. I had to use the spare parts from the destroyed one I found though.

Chapter Twenty Two

Night had fallen once more. Green cradled the camp like a makeshift wall with her Zech. All of them retreated to inside as a swarm of monsters sounded the walls attacking it at all sides, but not seeming to have much luck. Orange grabbed at his chest looking like he was in pain. “Are you ok Leo?” Clyde asked. He quickly stood up straight. “Oh, it's nothing I just feel awful about everything that's happened. “Is it alright if I take the first watch?” He said walking away before they could say yes or no. “He's right we have a long night ahead of us who knows if the barriers will stay in place,” Purple explained leaving with Green to their tents.

“This is messed up. Even with our influence, they aren't equipped to fight an enemy like this. They are supposed to fight each other loud, and proud.” Clyde said lamenting at the worlds innocence. Raleigh stokes the fire looking solemn. “Well everyone's got to grow up sometimes. The Multiverse

isn't a nice place sometimes. It better that we could help them instead of them being completely in the dark.” She said with sad eyes almost like she didn't wish it was true.

He looked at Raleigh concerned. “Is there something you need to get out? You know I'll listen.” Clyde said worried. “No, it's nothing. Anyway I scanned the infected I was right it works like a virus spreading from person to person, but it seems to have one other factor to it that makes it different.” She said brushing off his words.

“Is there some sort of cure we could make?” He asked. “I don't know I'm not Lucy, but if anything about this world logic remains intact. I think it might be as simple as defeating the big bad like how all the monsters disappeared when we killed Monster Master. Anyways I'm tired.” She got up going off to a tent looking more exhausted than normal. He thought about saying something but ultimately chose not to. He followed suit not long after, but before his head could even hit the pillow a loud noise of destruction woke everyone up followed, by a roar.

All of them woke up rushing toward the noise. At the barrier was a huge Tiger monster with whited-out eyes smiling. He had easily destroyed the wall letting the monsters file in. “Purple took a step back out of fear they had already lost once to this monster, and they didn't have the full team with them. “Where's Leo?” Green said not seeing him anywhere. The Tiger Charged at them laughing. “I hunger for violence!” It slashed at Raleigh seeing her as the biggest threat. It seemed to catch her off guard for once ripping open her jacket and drawing a big slash of blood.

Raleigh backed away shaking her head like she was waking from a daze turning her tool into a pair of claws just like his. “Oh, that's how you want to play huh?” She said clashing them against each other and causing sparks. The two female scouts flank the monsters Raleigh keeping back for some reason. Clyde is about to help them out until he sees the monsters have started to attack the humans thinking they could probably handle it he decides it is better to save them.

He was able to stop their progress, as the humans fled deeper into the camp. It seems Purple had

a game plan for this most of them headed toward the Purple Zech. He held them off until they had all gotten away. “Man, I missed this suit.” He said turning his attention over to the other fight with the tiger only to see the Tiger right next to him about to slice his face off. “You live?” The tiger questioned seeming to have mistaken Clyde for Adrian.

Clyde dodged out of the way in time only getting grazed, but even that seemed to tear through the armor like nothing. “Woah this guy is no joke.” He said looking behind the Tiger with concern, but the other 3 were already running to attack him. The tiger kept laughing easily keeping up with them all, but something changed he grabbed at his chest. “No, I won't argh!” The Tiger said. “Fine, I will hunt another day.” They started to walk away leaving confusing them all.

They regained their breath Green quickly moved to her Zech to block the hole in their defenses. All of them got pretty beat up, but Raleigh surprisingly got it the worst. Clyde ran up to her applying basic first aid Lucy had taught him. She pushed him away. “Lay off I'm fine.” She said in protest. “No, you aren't even if it's a flesh wound. He argues. She gives up and lets him do as he wishes.

“We can't keep this up, we need to find the villain before it's too late Maya,” Purple said to Green. “Skyler told me he was heading to the observation tower with a lead he had, but that was a few days ago. I was going to suggest we go there in the morning already.” Maya said referring to Blue. “Oh, so he'll tell you what he's doing, but not me,” Purple said crossing her arms. “You know how he gets when he is sidetracked Cassandra,” Maya said. “No, we do get to play the. Oh, he's just being an aloof card! I was worried, worried about all of you, but you all just ran off, and did your own thing!” Cassandra said in tears.

“Purple I...” Green said looking like she didn't mean to upset her, but before they could talk more Leo limped towards them is half ripped off showing his shirtless body that had fresh wounds all over. “Leo! What happened?” Purple said running up to make sure he was good. “I think that monster got me from behind. I blacked out for a while, and woke up like this.” He said clearly in pain. Clyde

looked a little skeptical of this most of the cuts seemed superficial except for a prominent one on his chest.

The Suit was already self-healing though no doubt because of the surplus of energy that seemed to be around it was already reforming around him. Clyde decided with how shaky the team is right now he better not speak up. After that, they return to sleep each of them taking turns throughout the Night. Nothing of note happened. They all got ready to take The Hopper to the Observation tower on the other side of the City. They were a bit nervous about leaving the camp, but they had to take the risk if it meant saving them.

They landed near the tower. It seemed like the once normal tower had been morphed into some grotesque structure swarming with monsters of every kind even flying ones. “Well fuck how are we going to break in there?” Clyde asked. “Why bother let's just knock the whole thing down,” Raleigh said ready to transform The Hopper into Zech mode, and do just that. “Azure is probably in there,” Purple said in protest. “So we are stealthing it?” Clyde asked only for them to nod. He frowned knowing Raleigh particularly wasn't great and keeping a new profile.

She glared already knowing what he was thinking. “I'll use the Zech to draw their attention.” She said volunteering does not give them time to talk about it as she runs off like she tends to do. She flew in stomping and swatting at every monster in sight all of them running towards her to fight. It was just what they needed to sneak in. A few monsters seemed to be inside still all of them behaving differently. Instead of mindlessly attacking they were patrolling the hallways.

They just barely were able to use the shadows to sneak passed to the top floor. They stood right outside the door. Green, and Purple to one side of it, Clyde on the other. They nod at each other putting their helmets back on not knowing what to expect. As soon as they enter the room they see one but Blue hung a cross-like thing hanging from the ceiling, he had been there for a while from the looks of it. “Blue!” Cassandra said rushing to free him. His eyes are weakly open.

“No... it's... it's a trap.” He said weakly bug monsters piercing her armor, and stabbing her in the gut. These monsters seemed smarter and more strategic, yet not like the named enemies or the Tiger. They engaged in combat both of the bugs slashing with their blade hands doing more damage than either of them thought possible with the suits powered on, and overcharged.

That was when she remembered they were overcharged. He tried posing like he was going to transform. It caused him to be covered in the light, and shoot out the energy in every direction not seeming to harm his also suited-up allies. The bugs were slammed against the wall giving the girls time to run them through with their Ultra Sabers. “What did you just do?” Maya asked. “I released some of the energy from the Suit,” Clyde said as it started to vanish briefly. “I guess that's a side effect.” All of them make sure to keep that in mind.

The free Blue's weak body. “Blue are you OK speak to me. Did you find anything out?” Cassandra asked fearing he might die. “I'm fine just weak. In a manner of speaking, I found out everything, but we need to move they are coming.” He said as they helped him move draping his arm over their shoulders. “Also about Orange.” Blue started to explain while they walked. “What about him?” Maya asked. “He's...”

“Wait where is Leo even?” Clyde asked only now noticing he wasn't there. Blue passed out before he could say anything else. They managed to escape once again outside Raleigh was still fighting an army and some ever grew larger scaling with her size in Zech form. She was starting to get overwhelmed. “Raleigh we got him Let go,” Clyde said on their earpiece. She didn't say anything just flying over to the tower kicking it down before transforming back into ship mode opening the door so they could quickly enter, and fly off.

They managed to do just that the tower now destroyed made some of the monsters shrink back to normal size the flying ones tried to pursue them, but they couldn't keep up. Orange was on The Hopper rubbing his head. “What happened?” He asked confused. “You collapsed before even leaving

the ship," Raleigh said in annoyance. He sighs. "Well, I guess there is no point in hiding it. I've been blacking on a lot I honestly don't know why, I just get this pain in my chest and..."

Blue started to wake back up again interrupting him. "You... betrayer!" He said as loud as he could despite his lack of strength. Orange looked over at him confused. "What are you talking about?" He asked. "You idiots. He's that tiger monster!" He said passing out again all of them got into a fighting stance again Raleigh was not sure how to handle it because she was still plugged in and never fought inside the hopper like this before.

Chapter Twenty Three

Leo's breathing increased as his heart pounded. “What do you... No, that monster can't be me.” He pulled at his hair like he didn't know or believe it. “Calm down. Maybe this explains your blackouts.” Clyde said still keeping his guard up. “So what if it does you won't get away with this!” Maya shouted striking towards him with her ultra saber, purple stepped in the way defending him. “Wait he is our friend, he doesn't remember anything that happened we should help him. She pleaded with her.

“I think it's a Jekyll, and Hyde sorta thing,” Clyde said hoping that would be a sufficient explanation. Green hesitates only for Orange to start laughing his face contorting, and transforming to more like the tiger. “I hunt again.” The tiger said from half of the face that had been altered. Orange fought back suppressing it, but it wasn't enough he fully transformed shortly after his failed attempt.

It laughed tearing everything around it apart. “What are you... stop that.” Raleigh said more distressed than Clyde had ever heard from her. That didn't denture his rampage in the slightest as he destroyed all the consoles in front of him. Maya and Casandra rushed in surrounding him while Clyde moved Blue to a safer place. They couldn't hold him back for long. He again targeted Raleigh this time cutting some of the cords that allow her to control the hopper. She falls to her knees spazzing out in incredible pain.

The tiger grabbed Casandra breaking open the door of The Hopper and jumping away. With no control they crashed thankfully they were not that high up. Maya ran after them right away while Clyde rushed over to Raleigh. He lifted her unsure what to do. Her eyes glowed like they always did when she was connected yet they looked almost static-like. Almost as if she wasn't home. He was starting to panic unplugging the severed cords hoping that would be enough to save her.

Slowly her eyes returned to normal she looked around at the mess the interior had become looking like she might cry. “I... Leave me alone for a bit ok.” She said. Clyde didn't think he should, but relented taking Blue's unconscious body with him. No sign of the other scouts outside they could be anywhere now. He sat just outside leaning against The Hopper. It had been a while since they had crashed how nostalgic he thought to himself.

On the outside, it looked like it hadn't been touched the super metal from the Mecha world did its job, but the damage to the inside. Who knows the extent of the damage would it even fly? After a few minutes, he noticed no monsters seemed to be around, and Raleigh wasn't coming out. He walked back in hoping she was ok now. She was on her knees looking like she started to try and repair something only to stop halfway through breaking down. There were no tears and no words she just sat there in silence.

He sat down next to her not saying a word. After what felt like forever she spoke up. “Will this ever end this is supposed to be our home?” She said staying in the same position. “I... I don't know...”

He said only seeming to put her more into her mind. “Listen. We can fix this I know you can, but to do that we have to beat The Tiger. You know that bastard that destroyed your precious Hopper.” He said hoping it would motivate her a little. She stood up seeming to understand, and walked out without another word.

Just as they were more of the flying monsters were flying off with Blues body. “Hey wait!” Clyde said stomping his foot unable to reach them. “We'll follow them. I'm sure they will lead us right to their boss, then we can end this.” Raleigh said seeming to regain her motivation after all but acting much more serious than normal.

Like she said they flew right to their base. A theater of some sort that looks like it had been condemned even before all this happened. They snuck in weirdly enough to no monsters patrolling like the tower was their main base, and were simply regrouping here. As they entered the main hall they looked seemingly getting an answer countless monsters were sitting down in the stands as a bug monster danced on stage. Behind her stood Adrian but his eyes were dead, and his armor had turned completely black. His hair was long, and his facial hair was unmanaged for a long time.

The bug monster kept dancing twirling around before finishing she bowed as they all got up giving her a standing ovation. “Oh beloved it's wonderful all your friends will soon be under my control too then no one can stop me.” She said moving closer to the leader rubbing her face with her bladed hands before nuzzling against it with her face. Tiger dropped from a balcony dropping Casandra, and Maya at her feet. “You harlots thought you would take him from me. Well, now I'll make you scrub toilets all day. Good boy.” She said referring to Tiger he just growled at her.

The flying monsters flew in with blue shortly after. “Now my collection is complete let's start the process right away everyone!” She said gleefully. Clyde was about to rush in to fight, but Raleigh stopped him this time. “There is a whole army in there we need a plan.” She said grabbing his arm. “Of all times now you want to stop, and think things out?” He groaned relenting to her. They kept watching

as the monsters set up chambers for the scouts it seemed they planned to turn them into monsters too The lady monster was controlling them all behind it all.

“We are pressed for time. Who knows how long it will take to transform them into monsters.” Raleigh said as they both looked inside seeing them load all of them into the chambers. They see Tiger rubbing his head, and gripping his chest as he seems to swap between the monster and human form. “Is he fighting it?” Clyde questioned. “I'm going to sneak in and talk to him. “Wait stop we can't trust him, not after what he did,” Raleigh said in protest.

“We don't have time, he wasn't in his right mind,” Clyde said trying to pull away, she keeps a hold of his arm like she was afraid he would vanish into the air if she didn't. “I have to do this this is all my fault!” He screams at her getting more emotional even with a mask on something he rarely seems to do. She lets go both of them look at each other in silence not having the fortitude to have a real conversation about this. He sighs. “Watch my back alright?” He said walking off and sneaking behind all the monsters whether she followed or not.

All the monsters seem to focus on their task tiger is leaning on a pillar off to the side. “Hey Leo it's me! Listen you have to fight it.” Clyde whispers. The Tiger doesn't move only looking towards the direction of the noise. “What do you know Leo is weak everyone knows this everyone laughs at him. I am strong.” The Tiger said looking like he wanted to attack but Leo is holding him back. “I won't say you were ever my favorite but...” Clyde started to say only for Tiger to regain control striking at the pillar destroying it.

Raleigh grabs him pulling him into the darkness just in time. “I am the strongest!” Tiger said as everyone took notice. “Intruders? Well, go get them.” The lady monster ordered as they all stopped what they were doing to look for them. She flies over to Tiger leaning into their ear. “Strongest? Don't make me laugh all the Ultra scouts are better than you, they are better looking, You are nothing I gave you this power, and you would be nothing without it.” She mocked as Adrian walked to her mindlessly.

Tiger fell to his knees fighting with himself again. “I suppose I should thank you. Without your weakness I never could have taken the other Scouts out.” She laughed with no fear of retaliation as she had control of him. Clyde and Raleigh ran upstairs just in time to avoid them looking over the balcony. The monsters are closing in mostly leaving the main stage.

Inside Orange's Mind, he is fighting with the Tiger. “Why do you resist?” The Tiger growls in anger. The words the Lady Monster said come through making him lose some of his fight. “Why do you go along with what she says?” He asks. “I must, but she underestimates me, just like everyone underestimates you. Soon I will grow even more powerful, and then she will not be able to control me.” The monster explains. “That sound's almost like praise,” Leo said confused.

Leo thinks for a moment more than he ever really had as the aloof Scout. “No, I don't think you will, not alone.” He said as the tiger angrily pulled away ready to scratch him. “Let's work together, and take down that woman.” Leo pleads. The Tiger stops right before slicing him up. “Work with you?” He asked confused not liking it, but after thinking it over he relents.

Outside the Lady Monster still mocks, and even kicks him only for Adrian to suddenly pull her out of the way like he senses danger. The tiger begins to glow with energy not unlike that of a suit transformation it sends out a violent burst of energy making all the monsters still around turn to ash. As the light disperses Leo appears in the suit again, but in a new form. It looks like an upgraded version with a Tiger theme. Claws on its wrist.

“What you can't, how could you!” The lady said in protest. “I figured it out. The monster is not an enemy it's me and us becoming one makes us both stronger.” Leo said forming a fighting stance. “Grgh how dare you. Destroy him, my love!” She said Directing White to attack not seeming to care if he killed him anymore. Adrian transformed into a giant black bear charging toward Leo. Clyde and Raleigh jumped down freeing the other scouts. As soon as they were safe he ran at the Lady Monster attempting to strike her from behind. She blocked it with her hand turning to face him.

“What another Adrian? No your... your him.” She said with anger slashing at Clyde. “Who are you why did you do this?” Clyde asked blocking her attacks with the Ultra saber. “She laughs. I did it all because of you.” He stopped in his tracks not sure what she meant, but it made his heart heavy. “When you came you tainted my perfect world, removing its innocence. I adored the Scouts, watching them struggle and overcome was wonderful, but they learned to fight the way you do and ruined any of my monster's chances of winning. So like them, I too evolved my Monsters.” She explained. It seemed to the world still have a bit of its old DNA considering she spilled her whole evil plan.

“Wait are you saying you Created Monster Master and the others?” He asked confused as the show's cannon never said as much. “That's right, and I had plenty more plans too, all scraped because of you, and The Empire.” She sliced at them once more this time breaking through the sword and into his chest. He lost a lot of his drive to fight. He was responsible for all this.

Raleigh Jumped in front of him stabbing through her chest and cutting her in half it seemed to hurt her pretty badly, but her body quickly regrew for a moment it quickly showed a human form underneath. “What's the point of manufacturing these fights? For your sick kicks?” She said seriously. “No not at all. I love the scouts I want them to grow stronger, but only after they are truly challenged. Your interference just means I had to do so more directly from now on.” She laughs It did make sense to them considering she seemed to plan on collecting them like prizes now.

Adrian and Leo kept clashing. For once Leo seemed to have the upper hand slashing into the bear's thick fur damaging it significantly. “Listen to me white. You are our leader and the strongest among us. She was able to take control of me through my insecurities, but you are stronger then that fight her control!” He pleaded. The bear lumbered and took heavy breaths. “What do you know of me? I have to shoulder everything all your bullshit, all this pain. Now I don't...” He started to say only for the monster to seemingly take hold again breaking through some of Leo's armor.

He didn't give up stabbing into the bear trying not to hit anything too vital. “Maybe you're right

we put too much on your shoulders, and now with everything that has happened with the empire, and this... We all should have helped with that burden more especially me." He said looking down as the Bear cried out in pain. He started to grab at his chest like Leo did before seemingly bringing that inner conflict to him.

Clyde, and Raleigh both clashed with the Lady Monster he had become much more hesitant. "Once I take care of you, I'll finally be able to marry Ultra White!" She said with glee only for the light to shoot out from behind them like before. Like Leo Adrian had transformed white once again with a bear-themed suit. "Enough of this you sick monster we are going to take you down and end this once and for all!" Adrian declared.

"What, no what are you saying? You love me don't you?" The Lady monster said in distress. "I could never love someone as heartless as you," White said as they both charged at her. "No, no, no, this can't be happening." She flew up scratching at her face with anger. "No matter I will just have to reprogram you again!" She screeches contorting and growing larger breaking the ceiling of the theater that could no longer contain her size.

She looms over them reaching out her hand forming monsters from it dropping them to the ground. When they land they can see that one of them is Monster Master alive again, leading an army of not only named villains, but the final bosses of every Ultra Scout show Clyde had seen. It would seem she wasn't lying about being the one controlling it all. "We are so dead," Clyde said not knowing just how they would get out of this.

Chapter Twenty Four

All of them look at the overwhelming number of incredibly powerful-looking monsters they look at each other all in agreement they need to flee. They pick up their fallen comrades and book it as far away as they can ducking into alleys. The now Giant Lady Monster Screeks. “Where do you think you're going? After them!” She commands. All of the final bosses do as she commands not seeming to be more than mindless monster. It would seem they lack the autonomy they do in their respective shows.

Not only that, but every monster still lurking around the city started to close in surrounding the area. They all regroup in an abandoned building unsure of what to do now. “How is she able to effortlessly recreate someone as powerful as Monster Master? And that other one was the Boss of the Machine Menace, but I didn't recognize the others.” White questioned. “They are future villains. As

you know in my world you guys are a TV show. Well every one of them is the evil boss from that show all comparable in strength to Monster Master.” Clyde explained.

“How can we possibly fight against that it was hard enough before that. How does she have so much power?” Leo asked Clyde not having the answer. “Your suit power. Where does it come from?” Raleigh said seeming to have a thought forming. “It's a power innate to the world the Syncers are used to channel it. It's pretty complex, and we have hardly delved into the full scope of it.” Blue said coming to and regaining enough strength to stand. Clyde knew that well. Even in shows where they got new powers they always channeled them from the same place using different methods.

“Ever since we got here your suits have been overflowed with energy to the point you can't turn them off. Could it be that the monsters also use that same energy this whole time, and you have amplified each others potency?” Raleigh surmised as the other fallen scouts woke up regaining their bearings. “I think you might be onto something, but I'm not sure how that helps us now,” Adrian said.

“I think I get it. Our power is the same therefore your weaknesses should also be the same. Combined with my meta-knowledge of the bosses I think we might have a plan there. I think the Lady Monster might not have all the power she appears to after an attack like that.” Clyde explained as the ground shook they were running out of time. They huddled closer talking forming the plan before breaking all of them and running off in different directions.

Purple and Green stood atop of a roof as they called their Zechs towards them to pick them up, wasting no time attacking the Lady Monster. Like they guessed the giant form seemed to mostly be a form of intimidation they easily ripped off the bug skin revealing the fleshy human-like skin underneath. She screamed out in pain flying away. Running the purple one through taking it down just as easily. She had little defensive power yet incredible offensive power.

On the ground, They all approach the encroaching army of Bosses ready to fight. “Wow, how they might have fallen. Who knew the great Monster Master would be reduced to a peon for some

stupid bug lady.” Clyde said mocking him. He didn't respond just attacking. “And working with Mecha Monarch don't you two hate each other maybe you both just realized how pathetic you are,” Raleigh said not knowing the context just saying the words that had been fed to her. Monster Master clenched his fist at this.

“I think you should all sit back, and let me take care of it. Even me, the weakest scout can take care of them alone like this.” Tiger said jabbing them more just as the Zech struck at the Lady Monster. It seemed to loosen their control on them but also allow her to end the green Zech as well. “Wait... what am I I am the superior villain step aside Mecha Monarch you are nothing.” Monster master Orders. “Oh yeah, says the guy that lost to them before me.” Mecha Monarch argued back.

The ego seemed to have spread to all of them as they started to fight each other instead. “I honestly wasn't sure that would work, but I guess that's what happens when you have too many cooks in the kitchen,” Clyde said rubbing the back of his neck. It was clear even if the Lady Monster made them they were designed to rule not take orders, and with her control waning that was proving a challenge.

The battlefield erupted into chaos as everyone started to fight everyone the Scouts still had to defend themselves, but it was mostly infighting now. Maya and Casandra drop down to help now that they don't have a giant robot. The Lady Monster screams in anger hurt badly as she reverts into her smaller form. “No, no, no! Stop fighting listen to me!” She demands, but it would seem their hubris has overridden her control at this point. She created new less powerful monsters to attack, but in doing so her arm seemed to evaporate revealing a human hand. It was clear she was running out of power.

She furiously charged at them with the help of a few bosses still with their eyes on the prize. All of them defended themselves slowly backing away to gain some distance. Once they did so they all nodded doing something Clyde had always wanted to do but never got the chance. Together they formed a quick pose as a piece of a giant gun formed in their hands it merged quickly firing out a huge

beam of energy enveloping the whole area in light.

They put everything they had into the team attack except for Raleigh who did not have a suit. She didn't know what to do so she just kinda put her hand on it to look like she was half hoping it would contribute somehow. They poured all their remaining power into it making their suits vanish with the attack. As the light vanished they overlooked the aftermath hoping that was enough to end the threat. Everything in that direction of the city was gone reduced to nothing except for a human woman who lay there naked.

“How could I lose.” She said making it obvious she was the monster. “Dixie Wu?” Adrian said both confused and heartbroken. Clyde recognized her as the very woman he said. She was a comic relief character who often showed up in almost every Ultra Scouts show in some form or fashion even if it didn't make sense. In the first show the joke was mostly her being madly in love with Adrian but him not even aware of that as every time she tried to confess something happened to stop it. With this new context, it makes things so much stranger. “How could you do this.”

“You'll never understand my feelings.” She said weakly. “How could we you were our friend, and yet you did all this, and you always were behind it all?” Leo said with anger. Raleigh and Clyde stayed out of it letting them talk it out. “There is no point of talking about it. Just kill me already.” She said seeming to be done with it all. Clyde honestly didn't know what they would do. The more naive versions might try to redeem her, but now he wasn't sure.

“I think a prison might be more appropriate for this. I think it's important we understand why she became this way.” Adrian said. It would seem his intentions while sparing her life weren't for any sort of redemption. She just laughs choking on her blood. “Theirs the stupid innocent scout I fell for, but no I won't give you a choice.” She rises as the bug armor seems to form around her again.

Raleigh got ready to fight her seeing that all the other Scouts were still depowered. “If you don't kill me now I will never stop. I will come back again, and again. Out of my love for you!” She said

laughing Leo sighed took out a pocket knife, and stabbed her in the chest. “I believe you.” He said as the light faded from her eyes. A smile and some tears came out right as she fell to the ground. The other Scouts seemed a little shocked, but didn't stop him.

All of them look down unsure how to even process it all, but as they do humans from all over the city begin to surround them cheering them on way more that were in the camp. It would seem all the monsters that didn't get killed turned back into humans upon her death.

A few days passed as everyone regrouped celebrating the hardest-fought victory of their lives, at least in this world. All of them were happier than they had been in a long time. When they scrounged up enough resources they had a party everyone was happy the nightmare was finally over. Raleigh, and Clyde both sit awkwardly in the corner they still have a lot to process with everything that happened not feeling like they had a right to take part. They didn't even know if they could leave this world now with the damage The Hopper sustained.

Leo seemed to pick up on this coming over, and placing a hand on his shoulder. “Listen I know you expressed feeling responsible for all this in the past, but don't. If anything it's on me for letting them get the better of me.” He said trying to reassure him. Clyde shook his head. “It's more than that. Ever since we met our presence caused your people so much strife, can you honestly say this is better than silly posing and punny monster fights?”

Leo looked down thinking about it. “Don't get it twisted, regardless of why evil people did what they did for evil reasons, You did your best to try, and stop them doesn't that count for something? While I'm sure things would have been better in some ways like that, in other ways no. I would've never grown so much if I haven't had to go through those challenges. Keep your chin up.” He said patting him firmly on his back and walking away.

Clyde started to tear up a bit not sure if he could forgive himself even still, but the words helped him feel better Raleigh noticed wanting to reach out, but still not ready. She looked out at the happy

crowd of people, They had had it rough, but they had also come out of the other side of that determined to rebuild their home, and press on. “These people, they are stronger than I thought. Do you think we can rebuild like them?” She asked softly. Clyde wiped his tears away. “Yes... I do think that.” He said both of them caving into their feeling embracing each other.

In the morning they slept in the camp with the others. The Scouts graciously provided anything they could spare to potentially help fix The Hopper. Blue looked over Clyde's Syncer as that was the whole reason they came there in the first place. “Hmm, it seems to be working as it should I don't see any damage. It really must be a power issue.” Azure explained. “So what can we do about it,” Clyde asked nervously.

“Well, I'm honestly not sure. You could do something like you mentioned the squad did with a sacrifice to power. No matter what you choose the brass tax is that you will have to find another power source if you want to keep using it. At most, I would say you could use it two times outside this world for a long period more in short bursts. Sorry, but that's all I can do about it.” He said wishing he could do more. “No it's alright I was half expecting this, but I guess we never would have been able to fix this mess if it didn't stop working,” Clyde said trying to find the light side.

They left Blue's makeshift workshop ready to return to The Hopper. They planned to leave if they could get it flying so they said their goodbyes to everyone lastly to White. “So you two are off again huh? Safe travels,” he said solemnly. They nod walking past him only for Clyde to stop. “Hey, Adrian. Do you think monsters will still show up? I mean will you guys be alright?” He asked, but White seemed to understand the true thing he was asking.

“Just like always monsters or not we were overcome, and kept going. You can do the same I believe in you both.” He smiled softly as they both waved, at him once more before fading into the distance. It took a while to reach The Hopper something was off right away. The door Tiger had ripped off was back on like it never was broken off, and the landing gear was properly out.

They both entered The Hopper weapons out ready to fight whoever was onboard. Rebbecca was tinkering with parts. It would seem while not perfect she had repaired it for them. She noticed them quickly turning around raising two fingers toward them as a greeting. “Yo. Long time no see.”

Chapter Twenty Five

Rebbecca Sneaks through hallways avoiding armed soldiers patrolling someplace unknown. She doesn't seem to be having any trouble doing so. When she reaches a checkpoint with a guard standing in front of a gate she sighs seeing she has no choice, but to take him out. She sends a cord to snake around the ground slowly rising behind him when it reaches his head a spike comes out of the cord sending a shock of electricity that knocks the man out. She walks over to the door taking the key card he has for the door so she can open it.

She keeps up her infiltration of whatever this place is until she reaches one of the deepest corners of the facility. With a small army of men guarding it. “Look's like I have no choice.” She said not happy about it. She goes over to the nearest control nod plunging her cords in to disable all the alarms before running in starting with a grenade. It takes all of them off guard taking out a chunk of

them yet seeming to spare their lives at least.

They all begin firing on her as an energy shield forms around her. Her drones appear firing back at them while she whips her cords out of both arms ready to strike at them. Some of them now seeing that their weapons are ineffective switch to swords charging in one of them even breaking the barrier and and allowing everyone to attack her.

“You were that desperate for some skin contact huh?” She said winking at the man making him hesitate long enough for her cords to wrap around him, and use him as a makeshift shield/bat. The rest of them fell pretty easy not scratching her at all. She dusted herself off picking off anything she thought would be useful from their bodies. She then turns to open the big door in front of her. That says level two.

Despite her turning off the alarm drones started to fire on her as soon as it opened like they were ready for her. She rushed past them slamming two into each other with her cords causing an explosion. Inside the explosion, she activated a hologram that made her look almost invisible hoping to confuse them and make them think she fled.

She managed to evade them for now making it to the next level which was one big tube that seemed to go down for miles with lasers covering every inch. The normal way of getting down is no longer an option with them knowing she is here now. She jumped down in a free fall slipping through the lasers just by a hair using her cords to grab onto something when she approached the bottom so she didn't turn into a pancake. The fourth level was more of the same only with much more challenging robots guarding it, and the hallways doing their best to throw everything they could at her to stop her advancement.

Even still Rebbecca managed to slip passed making it to the final Level stopping in her tracks. It was at the very center of the world the thing she came from was in the middle of a void impossible to reach even being in the same location was hard because gravity seemed to be pushing everything the

opposite way of the center to an incredible degree. Her Drones slammed into the walls unable to stay flying. She thought for a moment trying a couple of things even trying to shoot her cords at it only for them to almost hit her in the face. She sighed giving up for now. “She opened a portal leaving through it to another world.

In this other world, it seemed odd. The world is an endless sky with white forming platforms leading upwards towards a man standing while Typing on a holographic console. Before she can fully approach he turns around as another hologram of a person forms. It would seem he's getting a call of some kind. The man wears mostly green with a mask that covers everything, but his cold calculating eyes. He Had robotic arms just like Rebbecca.

He looks down at the hologram with skepticism. “Cipher why have you not returned?” He asked the nervous-looking man. The man looked to be a hacker like them both but was shaking with visible fear. “Look boss I failed, I know what you'll do if I return, I know better please let me go. If you don't I'll tell everyone about your plans.” The man said pleading. “You are right to be afraid. You have failed me for the last time, and what's this you think you know enough to gain protection?”

“I... I...” The man starts to say only to get interrupted by the boss. “Don't think just because you're out of my reach that I can't silence you. No matter the supposed dirt on me you have you must be dealt with now.” He presses a key on his keyboard as the man starts to contort and implode from the inside. “How did you I'm nowhere near your world how did you.” He started to say as the man popped into a million pieces. “I would never be so foolish as to not prepare for an outcome such as this.” The boss said calmly. Rebbecca approached with her usual smile, but sweat beating down her neck after seeing that.

“Ah, Trojan you've returned. Yet I see no artifact.” He said walking down the steps to face her. “Well, it seems there are some complications on that front.” She said nervously. “The Millennium Vault is designed to be impossible to break into, but I know you are capable of doing so do it for the mission.

That device is vital for our survival.” He goes on to explain. “Well, I do have one idea that may help with this if I may.” She suggests. “Go on my child.” He said fully intending to listen. It would seem she has gained more trust with him than most. “Well, frankly the Aspects,” Rebbecca said. The man sighs turning his back and looking at the endless sky.

“We have talked about this. While I'll agree the Aspects hold incredible applications, and the door would be invaluable. There are simply too many eyes on it we can't risk someone possibly deterring our plans. The Once, and Future enemy is rising with the dawn we must be ready.” He explains. “Well, it's more of a means to an end to get the artifact. Do we need it that badly?” She asks.

“Ah, I see you take after me more than expected if it's just a means to an end maybe it is worth pursuing. As for the artifact, I will explain its importance when it is relevant for me to do so.” He said turning to face her once more. She sighs but keeps up her smile like she expected that answer. “Before you go. That's quite a trick you discovered hiding between worlds to avoid getting erased by my power of the code of this world. Ingenious, but it wouldn't help you here. I control the code of all the neighboring universes as well.

It would seem Rebbecca had pulled the same tactic she had used to help Clyde infiltrate the Trial worlds without getting erased on the spot by Mother it wasn't clear if she did this out of fear or to gain some sort of admiration from him, but he seemed to be impressed enough. “Well, I was hoping to pull one over you for once but no you saw right through me as usual boss.” She laughed more genuinely. “Oh, I almost forgot I collected these on the way when I found some easy-to-hack into worlds.

She opened a bag pulling out a few balls of incredibly condensed energy that of a whole universe. “Excellent, it may be only a drop in the proverbial bucket, but it does serve our ends. Good work.” He said taking the balls from her. She opens another portal ready to leave. “One more thing child.” He said making her stop. “Don't forget personal relationship's for us are only to further our

goals, and never forget your pain.” He said.

She faced away from him still rubbing at the area of her arm where the human flesh met cold metal. “I could never forget that.” She said walking through the portal as it closed. She opened up a screen looking at it to see a map with a dot seeming to show the location of something. She followed it to its source, The Hopper. Seeing it broken and seemingly abandoned for the time being she walked in. She must have put a tracker on it at one point that even the Mecha World didn't notice during repairs.

She sees the destruction a little surprised, but quickly gets to work repairing while she isn't an expert she is probably better at repairs like this even more than Raleigh is. She does what she can making it not as perfect as possible, and as well as she is capable knowing it would help leverage what she is about to do.

Raleigh, and Clyde both enter shocked to see her. “Rebbecca?” They both say in surprise. “Yo. It's has been a while.” She said winking at them both. “We thought you had died or something. The only reason we knew anything is because I still have your soul card. Where the hell did you go?” Clyde asked upset with her. She moved in closer leaning close to his face with a smile. “Ah well, let's just say something important came up.” She said.

Raleigh crossed her arms. “More important than Multiversal destruction.” She said not convinced. “You two did a great job with that though, didn't you? Besides I took out that crazy coot of a doctor for you. Your welcome.” She said moving closer to Raleigh. “Wait really? I mean we figured out he was dead along with The Reaper, but we never figured out how.” She said softening a little. “Hey, that just means you stole my kill!” She said returning to her anger. Corvus had done much to Raleigh she wished she could've done a little to make him suffer at least.

The Hacker just ignores her. “I fixed The Hopper up for you.” She said putting her hands together pleading for half-hearted forgiveness. “This was you? Maybe I misjudged you after all. I think she's a wonderful woman.” Raleigh said seemingly falling into good graces with her. “You're deflecting

all our questions," Clyde said with a more serious expression. "The truth is. I got lost on my way to the bathroom in that fog." She said trying to look dramatic.

Clyde just sighs. "So you have no intention of explaining wonderful. Why don't you go ahead, and tell us what you want then?" "Oh Clyde I knew I liked you." She said getting uncomfortably close again clinging to his arm and brushing her chest against him. "Hey hands off the merchandise, and explain why you're here!" Raleigh demanded with a faint blush once again not liking Rebbecca after seeing her do that. "Alright, alright I'll cut to the chase. I need your help. You owe me." She said letting go of him and shrugging confidently.

"Well, I suppose you are right about that even if you did do it mostly for your amusement," Raleigh said. "Guilty, but this will benefit us both you see. It's about the aspects you're hunting." She said raising a finger in the air. "You have information on them no one else does? How does getting one for you help us out?" Clyde asked. "Yes, and I'll explain further only if you agree to help. You are both people of your word right?" She said to them both.

Both of them look at each other with skepticism before turning to face her again. "Alright if it will lead us to an aspect I guess we have no choice, but to help you. "Oh great I knew you would. Tell you what I'll even sweeten the deal with a kiss if we succeed. Right on the lips." She winked Clyde got incredibly red. "You will do no such thing!" Raleigh said in protest jumping in front of Clyde like she was defending his purity, face equally red.

"Aren't you two so cute? Anyway, let's get to it. You see there is an aspect a lot of people don't even realize is needed to open the door not even Mr. Anderson knows about it." Rebbecca explains. "Wait what how can that be?" He asked confused. "Well, it's simple they failed to account for a non-human-like body part. The Wings of the Multiverse, and it just so happens I know where to get them." She said with a smirk. "Amusing we believe you what is your plan why do you want it." He asked.

"The Wings of the Multiverse have the powers of limitless traversal. That is why I want them, I

could care less about the Wishing Door. So it's simple you help me, and after I use it for my own goals I will help you on your quest.” They all take a moment to think about it. “Fine we will go with you, but don't think about running off leaving us high, and dry this time,” Raleigh said. “Great I'll explain the details on the way there.” She said cheerfully putting her hands together in gratitude.

“We should probably at least check up with Loki first,” Clyde said. Raleigh seemed annoyed by this idea but agreed sending him a call. He didn't seem to answer which was odd so she tried calling him again. This time the call was answered but it took a while and the screen showed no one in the room. “Huh, what the hell do you fuckers want.” A man asked way too close to the camera it would seem he wasn't too good with technology. “Wait is that Loki's dad?” Clyde said confused and annoyed.

Loki must have taken pity on him, and let him stay with him. “Yeah, it's me bitches what do you want. He dropped the camera looking around for something with a beer bottle in his hand he had let himself go with unkempt hair and a huge beer belly. “We need to talk to your son,” Raleigh said in annoyance. “Huh? Good luck he went out doing de...” He started to say only for Marcell to enter the room quickly. “Mr. Thundermane you know Loki said to stay out of here.” He said pushing him out.

“But I ran out of booze I know he's hiding some in there.” He said whining. “There is some beer in the cellar ask one of the maids to help you find it,” Marcell said closing the door. “Sorry about that.” He says. “So where is Loki?” Clyde asked. “Well he was looking into who had the leg, but he hit a wall so he decided to go on a dive,” Marcell explained he looked like he felt a little bad for them.

“What's a dive?” Raleigh asked. “Well... you know what hentai is right?” He started to explain Clyde nodding with a frown thinking he understood where this was going. “A dive is seeking out a world with the logic of one... and performing it. He's done some really out their ones in the past.” The man explained somewhat embarrassed.

“Wait what's a hentai?” Raleigh said with distress. “It's a... A cartoon where they do lewd stuff.” Clyde tried to explain. She sighs trying not to get flustered. “I suppose I shouldn't be surprised that and

degenerate like him is doing that. He's supposed to be helping us.” She said annoyed.

“Well after Lucy left, and everyone else was busy with Wishing Doors he had gotten pretty lonely. To everyone's surprise, he had relations almost exclusively with her for a while. He needed motivation to keep going in his words at least.” Marcell tried to defend him. “What happened to Lucy,” Clyde asked surprised she wasn't chilling with him anymore. “She was simply ready to move on now that The Empire was off her back. They left on good terms. Whatever the case I will make sure he calls you as soon as he returns with information.” He said they both nodded at each other. “Thank you, Marcell,” Clyde said as the tailor winked, and ended the call.

“So much for that I guess we have less of a lead on that front than I thought.” Clyde sighed mad at Loki but somewhat understanding how he felt. “Let's get down to it. You see the wings are not held by a person, but a thing.” Rebbecca said pulling up the whiteboard Raleigh had used before. “Hey get out of my systems only I should be able to use that!” Raleigh said in protest. Clyde just looks over asking her to deal with it for now.

Rebbecca continues her explanation. “An ancient whale that travels all over the Multiverse is the holder it's very majestic to see.” She shows a few pictures of a white, and pink whale floating through the air. “You know about the rules for the Aspects right we can't just kill it, and take the power. Doesn't it being a more mindless beast like that make it impossible to get?” Clyde asked.

“I don't want to kill it. I hope to equip it with a device that more or less allows it to do as it always has.” Rebbecca frowns seemingly a little upset he would even suggest murdering such a creature. “As for how we get it ourselves I have a few ideas, but it will start with a bit of trial, and error. So what do you say? Are you in?”

Chapter Twenty Six

Tara was in the woods running around alert as she could be. She wore armor that mostly focused on covering her arms, similar to Darrian's gauntlets. The giant man comes out of nowhere punching her straight in the chest only for her to block it with her arms. “You learn quickly. You and the runt ain't so different when it comes to that.” He said stopping his attack to contemplate referring to her sister.

Tara frowned not liking everyone's constant comparison. “I am not Raleigh!” She punched him in the gut before he could block. It knocked the wind out of his sails but didn't seem to hurt him that badly. He laughed. “Right, My mistake runt. You are your brand, but don't think that means you're ready to beat me in a spar.” He smirks raising his fist and bringing them down toward her. She dodged out of the way just in time countering with another punch that seemed to hurt him more.

He mixed it up, but sweeping her body with his foot knocking her hard into a tree. She groaned in pain struggling to rise again. He worriedly approached. “Was that too much I'm sorry.” He said looking to make sure she didn't need first aid. She pushed him away. “I am fine!” Before they can talk more about it they are drawn to the sound of Cyrus's flagship rising from the base, and flying away. “Where is he going?” She asked feeling a bit left out.

“Oh, he had an interview with some big shot or something,” Darrian said not seeming to understand the full importance of it. “Wait I want to go!” She said frustrated that she was stuck training instead. “Listen, kid. I will admit you have taken my training in like a sponge way quicker than I thought with everything that happened, but you're not ready.” Darrian explained. “He's not even going off to a battlefield this time!” She said in protest. “Well, we don't know that for sure yet.”

Cyrus arrived at Porta Nexus later that day. The crew of his ship seemed lighter than it should be only a few men, and Tess with him. They docked at a space station instead of the planet directly. As they left their ship they were met with a small army of the Port Authorities forces. They had uniforms that were white, and brown, with gold trim, and seemed to be very steampunk-inspired. The whole station seemed to go off that theme weirdly enough. As they got closer an Officer of some kind approached with another officer.

She frowned. “Good so you followed our stipulations for coming after all we were prepared for a fight. I am Captain of the Peace force, Darla of House Dog, and this Is Captain of Intelligence, and home security, Alister of House Cat.” She explained not seeming to like that she had to work with him. Cyrus knew vaguely of their prominence as two of the most influential figures in Porta Nexus offer known to but heads. “I understand your hesitation after the Empire's ban, but I promise you we will be on our best behavior. “Oh Darla you are always a stickler for the rules can't you see we have new friends, and we should treat them as such,” Alister said while licking his hand like a house cat would.

“Let's take the long way around, and show them the good restaurants only us locals know

about.” He said acting friendly but only out of his vain interest. “Command was clear they are to be escorted to the Interview with Anderson, and then return here immediately.” She barked at him in protest. Both of them lose a bit of their composure staring each other down like they are about to go at it. “Please there is no need for this. I plan on doing as your bosses said.” Cyrus sighs pleading with them to calm down as his chest glows briefly.

Whatever that was it seems to have pacified their anger. Both of them walked ahead standing in front of their line of men, upon a further look they both led exclusively people of their kind though they didn't seem to be the same race just different races with dog or cat-like attributes some fully covered in fur while others were more human.

They took a shuttle down from the space station to the planet right to a huge tower that said Anderson's News Network on the side of it. Cyrus looked curiously down at the city, but really couldn't see if it had changed that much in the 2 years or so that he had been there. The Port Authority led them inside once they landed doing one last security check before they were going to let them meet with him wanting to make sure one of the most beloved figures in the world would be safe.

Darla went ahead to speak with him. “Are you sure you want to go through with this? I know you pulled a lot of favors to get everyone to agree, but this could be terrible not just physically, but politically, and financially.” She asked the Anchor. “Well of course I do! Now what are you waiting for we go on in like ten minutes get him in here already. She relented motioning for them to let him enter with Tess. He seemed a bit shocked to see that Aion's production crew was nonexistent the only one else other than Them, and the Port Authority seemed to be Mia who was sitting out of view with no cameras in sight.

“Cyrus Steelheart! Glad to meet you I wanted to give you more of a run down before we started, but it seems we are out of time.” Aion said happily reaching his hand out to shake. Cyrus took it nodding. “That's quite alright. I had plenty of time to prepare.” Cyrus said confidently. “Wonderful.

Then take a seat on the other side, and we will begin broadcasting in. 3, 2, 1.” He said abruptly barely giving him time to sit down. It would seem he wanted to keep it right on the hour.”

“Good evening everyone! Aion Anderson reporting to you live from Porta Nexus! Today for our late show we are Joined by Commander Cyrus Steelheart this man has quite a resume, and we plan to pick his brain about it today as one of the Aspect holders!” Aion said talking in the direction of Mia despite there being no camera. No one seemed to think he was crazy so Cyrus just assumed he had some other means of recording everything Like the Aspects. “Yes greetings everyone I'm glad I was invited on to talk today thank you very much, Mr. Anderson.”

“Oh stop it with that Mister nonsense call me Aion, but without further ado let's get down to it. For the folks at home that might not know everything Cyrus has quite a history a former Commander of the Empire's Science, and Reclamation Unit, and the information I have dug up says he was key in stopping their nefarious plan in the end, now he's got his little operation going trying to do good. Is that a fair assessment of you?” Aion asked.

“Well as a summary I suppose that suffices.” He said in agreement. “Perfect now let's get down to the nitty gritty there are a few key points I'd like to go over with you in the interview is that alright?” Aion again asked politely. Cyrus just nodded as he looked over his notes. “Right let's start with The Empire my sources say you worked under them for most of your life, and that you were very loyal what pushed you to ultimately take part in the fight against them?” Aion asked starting right away with hard questions.

After a moment of thought, Cyrus came up with something. “I was raised from birth to be an Empire Soldier I cared for little other than rising the ranks with my comrades, but well as we all did so we saw The Empire's dark side. This may be hard for some to understand, but we saw The Empire as the good guys it wasn't until I encountered the experiments the head scientist of The Empire was working on that I questioned if we were. These experiments were living people exploited by a higher

system. At the time while I saw what they were doing was horrible I lacked the power to do anything about it. My logic was, that if I stayed and rose in rank I could, but I'm afraid even in my years of trying I failed that is why I decided to fight against them more directly."

"How horrible. Everyone had had awful experiences with The Empire especially here after they tried to blow the whole world to bits, but to think even that wasn't off limits is truly terrible." He said taking a moment for everyone to possibly take it in. "That leads me to my next question an anonymous source claims that not only did you take part in the final battle you defeated The Emperor yourself. This is a little controversial to some as Natasha Starcrafter is the one that is Widely believed to be the one responsible for that. Are there any truth to these claims?" Aion asked.

"While Natasha was an invaluable part of our plan providing the bulk of the forces, no she was not there for that fight, though I didn't do it alone," Clyde explained. "Oh? Is that so? And who are these would-be allies?" Aion said raising an eyebrow looking like he was eating well. "Well it was many people, but the Rallying Cry that brought us all together and even informed everyone of their Plot was someone you might be familiar with. It was Captain Raleigh, and her crew mate Cly... Eh, I suppose you know him by Orion Vesper." He explained deciding to keep other's involvement on the down low but thought Raleigh might appreciate the recognition.

Aion looked shocked like he was about to fall out of his chair. "You're pulling my leg? How have they gone unnoticed for so long? The Multiverse is a small world after all." He laughed. "Oh how I would love to ask you so many questions about that, but we have a limited amount of time hopefully I can get them both on one day as well. Let's keep going with other questions." He sifted through his papers.

"People question your abilities and authenticity. Your former Peer Admiral Marcus particularly expressed this when we asked him. Yeah, we thought about an interview with him two folks, but well let's just say he's a little more of a danger in my eyes." Aion said pulling at his collar with sweat. They

played a video recording of Marcus. “Cyrus is an incompetent leader who failed to capture a single girl his one, and only mission ever assigned to him. His supposed change of heart is clearly a facade to trick people into believing he turned over a new leaf.” Marcus said calmly from a chair.

“This was shortly after he Announced to the Multiverse his plan's of conquest through Aspects, and his New Neo Empire. What do you have to say about that?” Aion asked. Cyrus seemed to be less prepared for Marcus trying to form the words. “You are right to be wary of that man, he is among the worst our former Empire had to offer. I will address the failure of my mission. I was tasked in capturing one of the experiments that escaped and she proved to be formidable in her way, but the truth of the matter is my heart wasn't in it. In the end, I freed them all, and helped defeat the emperor that's a feat is it not, I was able to take the Heart of the Multiverse where many others failed. As for my Authenticity. I understand why people wouldn't believe us, but let us prove you all wrong through our actions.” Cyrus said.

“Quite the bold claims. What are your plans for the future then Do you plan on going after the door?” He asked. “I personally have no interest in the door if I end up there will be more to prevent the Likes of The Remnant, or Marcus from using it that would be devastating to us all. We have been guarding freighters that wish to trade between worlds but are in danger of their cargo being raided. What we want is to show everyone even though we were once a part of a horrible system not all of us were evil, I will do everything I can to bring us to that goal.” Cyrus explains.

“It seems that your efforts have not been in vain I have been told your numbers grow by the day, but really no interest in the door how vexing?” Aion Laughs. “I'm surprised you have none either myself,” Cyrus said back. “Well, I say the aspect itself is all the use I need already,” Aion explains. “Now for one last question before we have final thoughts. You seek to do good why not Join the Union as they are widely believed to be a force for good in the Multiverse.”

“I will agree that The Union in a lot of ways has done much for the good of the Multiverse, but

their shady underbelly is comparable to The Empire in my view. They are chained to bureaucracy and the interest of powerful men all the same. What I seek is true reform not control for the sake of control. Not only that, but someone everyone can look to, and be inspired by doing things not for self-gain, but because it's the right thing. If this appeals to anyone out there. I want you to Join The Reformation Coalition." He said pointing at the invisible camera.

"Well, there you have it folks what an interesting opinion on the Multiverse from someone unexpected. Thank you Commander Steelheart for conducting this interview. and impromptu Recruitment Ad?" He said a little less grateful about that last part. "Well that's all the time we have left for tonight This has been Aion Anderson signing out." He did a pose in the air as the broadcast seemed to end even though there wasn't an indication of so. Cyrus took a deep breath glad it was all over.

Chapter Twenty Seven

Natasha is deep within the water now. While it seems to be causing her some discomfort she is treading it and heading towards the waterfall. She climbs onto a rock sitting right under her trying her best to withstand the pressure and heat from the boiling water but it is too much she falls, and is washed out toward the river bank. She rises gasping for air only to look up seeing Marcy who looks worried. “What is it? I have almost passed.” She said staying in the water trying to stay acclimated. “Well, I um... Well, Mr. Medan wants to talk to you.” Marcy meekly said.

She looks around seeing no one else. “Where is he?” She asks. The secretary pulls out a tablet sitting down to display a video call of Avery. “General, it's been too long we are losing are chances how long will you sit here?” He said with anger. She sighs. “It won't be much longer. What happened?” “What happened? The whole Multiverse is in an uproar. That man had an interview with Anderson and

caused all sorts of chaos, as well as another issue." He rants from the safety of the ship.

"Just show me already." She groans. "Ms. Miller if you would. My point is we are running out of time to wrap it up before the Counsel questions why they have any trust in you." He said ending the call. "I'm s...sorry Tasha... He just... I..." Marcy said. "It's alright just show me what he is talking about." She said pulling herself out of the water mostly holding her shoulder to reassure her. She plays a video of the interview. "And after that people were saying they were going to leave The Union to join with him instead," Marcy explained. "I see that isn't great, but he has a point, but anyway he mentioned there was something else?" Natasha asked. Marcy nodded pulling up a separate video that seemed to feature Marcus.

He stood on a platform surrounded by the Chimera Legion except Noir all of them standing at attention by his side as the bulk of his army is below being addressed. "Greetings, It Is I the great Fleet Admiral Marcus Novastride true successor of our glorious empire! I am here today to announce my rise, our rise. Our founder Lucius Novastride betrayed us, The Remnant foolishly rejected us. They fail to see what we have done for the Multiverse we have brought both unity and Control to worlds suffering under their infighting and barbarism, through conquest." He started to explain.

"They forget what made our Empire great, to begin with, well we are here to remind them with my new Empire. The Neo Empire!" He said as the army cheered he waited a moment for them to calm down before starting again. "My former peer has decided to go on a recruitment campaign of sorts to bolster his numbers with false promises and supposed reform? No, we have always been in the right, and I urge all like-minded individuals to seek us, and join with us! Through all of your support, we will show them what true power and reform is!" The crowd again cheers as he bows. Cindy and the other officers do the same as the roars of people is still going.

The Video ends and Marcy puts away the tablet. "The effects... seem to be similar to the interview... we don't know about The Remnant but worlds all over with issues with the union, are

stating they will join with him. Medan isn't wrong when... He says time isn't on our side.” Marcy said nervously. Before they can dwell on it The Monster drops a large cooked fish near them causing her to panic hiding behind Natasha in fear. “It seems like you have more Important things to worry about than this trial.” The Monster said. “You're right, but the Aspect is also important I can't leave without completing your Trials,” Natasha said still resolved to do it.

The Monster Sighs sitting with her as they all eat together other than Marcy who is still cowering. “Let me tell you a story. Once long ago... I was not a good man. A tyrant even. I ruled my lands through power, and strength no one could stand up to my fist. However, as I grew older... The new generation of my kind usurped my rule, and cast me aside.” He started to explain they both listened, but aren't sure what the point is.

He keeps going. “I was left for dead and yet. The very people who I oppressed took me in and nursed me back to health. They treated me like one of them something I thought I knew with my kind, but I was wrong. I tried to defend them from my brothers, but I had grown weak I could do nothing. So I came here to train for eons. I always questioned if I was waiting too long, but I wanted to make sure I could win against them. I waited too long... once I returned there was nothing left.”

She takes a moment to take in his words. “I see, that's awful.” She said. “I... don't want you to make the same mistake. You have impressed me with your resolve and sincerity. I will give up my aspect to you.” He explained. Both of them look shocked Natasha shook her head. “No I will pass your tests otherwise I would be letting everyone down.” Before anyone could say anything else she got back into the water taking a deep breath as she approached the waterfall once more wincing in pain from the water already. She climbs up sitting down closing her eyes trying her best to withstand it, and she does.

Both Marcy and The Monster look at her Proudly as she keeps it up staying there all through the time she said she would. She returns to them both looking accomplished. “Well done. Now there can be no doubt this belongs to you.” He said as the glowing symbols vanished from his torso onto hers. It's a

strange sensation her skin seems much less irritated than before, and she isn't having any issues at all withstanding the air anymore. “The Hide Of the Multiverse grants incredible durability. You'll be able to withstand almost anything. A mysterious man once gave it to me after seeing the results of my training if only he had given it sooner.” The Monster explains solemnly only for a random group of union soldiers to appear and shoot him in the back causing him great pain.

“Stand down! Who the hell ordered you to do that?” Natasha said outraged. He saluted her nervously. “Ma'am The Overseer ordered it he said you were in danger!” The soldier explains. Natasha looked over at The Monster with sorrowful eyes. “I am fine it will heal with time I forgive him. I leave you with one final warning. Choose the company you keep wisely even one twisted man, can lead others to do just as he.” The Monster said weakly walking into another area of the Planet to rest away from them. She took his words in upset it ended this way. One thing was clear she needed to return to her ship.

She quickly storms the halls of her ship, all her men seem happy to see her but standing aside seeing her anger. Marcy tried to keep up as they reached the war room where Madan was sitting. “Madan! Where do you get off we had that handled, and you almost jeopardized everything.” She growls. He turns around in his chair. “Watch your tone. You were taking too long we need to get back to the real task at hand.” He said not intimidated. “You said yourself I know battle, so stay out of my fights and let me take care of it!” She barks.

“Well whatever the case you got what we came for, just in time for the new Navigation units to finish installation.” He said mostly dismissing her words. “I see then we are off to help Jacob with the Leg.” She said calming down a bit. They all nod despite being at odds knowing they have to work together, but the monster's words still linger in the back of her mind.

Chapter Twenty Eight

Clyde wakes up leaving his room only to be stopped by countless layers of tape, and barricades in front of his door, he falls into them into the hallways as they wrap around him. “Raleigh what the hell is this?” He asked seeing that both Rebbecca and Her were already up sitting across from each other in a sort of stare down. “Oh, you're awake good! And that? I just was making sure this Harlot didn't break in and steal your honor away from you.” Raleigh said jabbing at her. Rebbecca just smiled seeing to enjoy how much it was getting to her.

“I'm not a helpless princess,” Clyde said annoyed as he removed all the stuff stuck to him now. Before they can talk about it another broadcast by Aion himself appears him doing his usual stick. “That's right everyone I have more news for everyone about those Aspects as well as political unrest how wonderful.” He said sarcastically. “Firstly let's get to the aspect Beloved hero Natasha Starcrafter

Claimed the Hide of The Multiverse yesterday giving The Union an edge in the upcoming conflict. By golly, I'll say I never expected all of this to happen so fast It has only been 4 months since the initial report that they were all out there. I guess I should be a little nervous huh." He said pulling his collar from sweat. Did he never believe anyone would get this far after so long?

"With that, it leaves only the Leg up for debate on its location as the previous user was killed leaving it location unknown to all, but with the rate everyone has been going I predict that might not be the case for long." He said smiling as he shuffled the papers on his desk. "In other news, I had a very enlightening Interview with Commander Cyrus Steelheart in our late show I recommend you all go watch it, we talked about a range of topics from His motivations to what happened during the Fight against the Empire's evil plan. Get this he claims that fellow Aspect Holder Captain Raleigh, and Orion Vesper took down The Emperor themselves." He said amused by the idea.

"He did what!" Raleigh said shocked that he would say something like that normally she would have no interest in something like that but now when she had a moment she might look into it. "As why I'm mentioning this in this format? Well, it seems our interview caused quite a stir seeming to push many people not satisfied with The Union to Join up with his Coalition as well as his Rival Marcus Declaring his own Empire publicly and trying to recruit people as well. People from all over seem interested in them both and are flocking to their causes for better or worse. This year has been one crazy ride, and it seems like it's only going to get crazier to hold on tight everyone. Aion Anderson signing out!"

Clyde looked at Raleigh seeing the conflict on her face she was happy to get some praise and recognition, but looked unsure how she felt especially with Cyrus being the one who was saying it apparently. "Well, that makes it hard to stay in the shadows. Thankfully they still don't seem to know about the wings." Rebbecca said annoyed but still amused by it all. "Looks like thing are only getting more heated everywhere Natasha is not our ally, and Marcus certainly isn't, but what about Cyrus is

he?" He asked them.

"Of course he isn't he's... I don't know." Raleigh said not so sure herself. Rebecca spins around in her chair. "I think you two are missing the bigger picture. Whether or not you are allies at the moment. You will have to fight over the door in the future. That's why you're not friends with The General right." She said still spinning. Raleigh seemed to not know what to do they had fought countless times, and their relationship was weird, but see looked like after everything since then she didn't want to fight them.

"We will figure that out when we get to it. For now, let's get going after this whale." He said placing his hand on Raleigh's shoulder to comfort her. Rebbecca stopped spinning. "Finally." She stood up pushing buttons on control panel as a screen showed up with Proxy's face he looked annoyed. "Have you figured out its patterns?" She asked him. "You know I wasn't designed for this right? I am a diplomatic robot, not a field agent." He said not answering her question.

"Proxy? You're still hanging out with Rebbecca I would have thought you, and Mother went off to some faraway place to get married or whatever. A hologram of a tiny version of mother appears right in front of his face. "Incorrect. This Unit and Proxy Model 7 have chosen to stay with the Cyborg known as Rebbecca." She explained as Clyde recovers from a heart attack from her sudden appearance. "Well did you finger out whatever she wanted you to do?" Raleigh said annoyed he didn't answer the question. "Of course I did who do you think your talking to?"

"Send over the data, and keep watching the Whale alright we will form a plan, and head over there soon," Rebbecca ordered as the call ended and both the screen and hologram of Mother vanished. "I'm kinda surprised you kept them around you seem to like working alone most of the time. "Well they have their uses, but it's mostly because their beautiful love story amuses me so." She said half mocking the two robots.

"So are they like your servants now?" Raleigh asked a little upset. "They have free will to do

whatever they want, well more like one step away from that. I reprogrammed them to greatly admire me, and not be able to hurt me in any way.” She explained. Clyde frowned wondering about the true implications of that. Were they people or just machines that acted almost like people? “Anyways back on topic here is the plan...”

They Lift off in The Hopper with this Information heading straight for its location trying to test its speed. It seems with how impressive The Hopper is it never seems to quite catch up The Whale just slightly out of reach. They seem to lose it when they enter other worlds as it can enter the other side much faster than even Raleigh can with the wings. After a while of doing that they give up landing for now. “Well, that was a long shot anyways, good data though,” Rebbecca said unbothered by their failure like it was expected.

“Wait you knew chasing after it wouldn't work? Why did we waste time, and fuel on it then.” Raleigh said a little annoyed. “Yeah, what's your real plan,” Clyde adds. “They are all my plans, if simple works why not do simple, if it doesn't well we learned new information.” She said shrugging. “Time isn't on our side,” Clyde said in protest. “Oh, silly boy even if everyone collects all the aspects they can't start the fun without you two. We have all the time in the world.” She said leaning in bopping his nose.

“Not if someone finds the Leg before us!” Raleigh yells. “I don't know what to tell you we can't just punch out this guy like you normally do it requires a long process of planning and error.” She wait bluntly with a smile. “What are you afraid I'll steal Clyde away if I stay too long.” She said sitting in his lap. He freezes in place Raleigh standing up right away. “Get off him! He's mine! I mean... you should respect his boundaries as a human being.” She said blushing trying to deflect, any affection she had.

Rebbecca laughs very amused getting up from his lap. “Oh, how rude of me.” She said mocking her. “Well take a break for now while I run through the data.” She walks back to the room they let her

stay in for now. Raleigh sits back down seeming to be more exhausted than normal. “You two do have a history don't you?” He asked inquisitively. “Well yeah, without getting too much into it we clashed a lot when we were younger at The Guild. She always loved pushing my buttons. Don't worry Clyde I will protect you from her.” She said confidently.

“I wouldn't say I need protection from that... or maybe I do,” Clyde said backing down after seeing her face blushing a little himself. She turns away deciding now is the time the check on that Interview. After watching it all the way through she sits there in thought. “Why would he... He didn't outright say I was the experiment, but he was sure to say I helped bring down Lucius. I don't understand.” She said looking downward. Clyde sighs not sure how to explain it or if he knew the real reason.

“I mean the dude has always cared about you in his way, not saying his actions were justified, but after all the time I spent with him, I'd like to say he knew you deserved the recognition, but didn't want to air out all your dirty laundry,” Clyde said. “You think so? I'm not so sure.” She said getting up and going to her room too leaving him alone. He sighs not sure what to do, only for Proxy to enter the ship with the Hologram of Mother still looking not super thrilled to be helping.

“Greetings Clyde.” He said with an emote that looked annoyed despite his still jovial voice. “Proxy what are you guys doing here?” he asked. “We need a break too we aren't pack mules.” The robot explained. “Are you guys sure you want to be doing this? Are you not able to leave?” Clyde asked low key feeling a little bad for them. “Oh, well we can leave whenever we want its just we kinda owe her even if she is overclocking our systems.” He explained striking a pose.

“It not for the one known as Rebbecca, Proxy Model 7, and I would have never found love.” Mother explained floating closer. “Right it's not about being forced, it's about obligation, and we are dedicated to this.” He said raising his fist triumphantly. “So... how exactly is that going? Your love that is?” Clyde asked with minor curiosity.

“Wonderful we have gone on many dates first we stood motionless for exactly two hours, staring at the moon just like humans do!” Proxy said emoting with a more cheerful expression on his face. “I don't think that's what..” Clyde said only to get cut off. “Oh, but our most romantic date so far was what humans call a Candlelit diner. We lit so many candles the building burned down, that means our love burns brighter than everyone else's right?” He said happily. “Well no...” Clyde tried to say again only to get interrupted once more.

“This unit has observed that jealousy plays a critical role in romantic relationships. Should this unit become jealous of the human known as Clyde’s relationship with the Cyborg known as Raleigh?” Mother asked Proxy. “What kind of relationship do you think we have,” Clyde said in defense only for them to ignore him. “Yes from now on I will be extremely jealous of every machine that even looks your way!” Proxy said happily. Clyde just sighs giving up on trying to hold a conversation with the star-crossed lovers.

Chapter Twenty Nine

Days turned to weeks as they tried their best to get to the whale trying all sorts of things. First, they tried a massive net that would appear right as it entered one of the worlds it frequently visits on its route. Still, because of the wing's ability it simply disappeared outside the net as it covered The Hopper tangling all around it and weighing it down causing it to crash to the ground. With each failure, Rebbecca marked the plan off a super long list of things.

Next, they tried bait. “What do multiverse whales even like, multiverse krill?” Clyde asked as both of them shrugged. They look up pictures of normal Krill, and Multiversal kinds but don't seem to find anything. They ended up getting a great big assortment of things from fish to junk food in a pile on a platform waiting for the whale to pass by and dig in. They waited off to the side eating their lunch on a table. When it looked like the whale was approaching they got up to prepare only for the whale to

pass by their pile and eat their rather tiny comparison lunch. “Hey, that was my sandwich, you bastard!” Clyde said with anger. Rebbecca just crosses it off the list.

“What if the whale is just lonely and trying to find a girlfriend,” Raleigh suggested. Both of them look at her like she is stupid, and not even considering that plan. “What if it's smarter than we think why don't we try talking to it?” Clyde suggested. Rebbecca nodded as they started setting up a huge beacon that emitted whale sounds. As soon as the whale passed by in a few days they tried it and the whale did indeed respond to the sounds but the translation was nonsense. Saying things like stars smell like seaweed. “Well onto the next thing.” She said like she expected it not to work.

Next, they tried dropping right above it. Raleigh landed on the creature without a problem but looked around confused about what she was supposed to do. “Now what?” She asked. “I honestly didn't think you'd make it that far,” Rebbecca said in amusement. “What if he just needs a massage or something he's been flying for a super long time.” Raleigh again suggests only for them to ignore her crossing it off the list too.” Raleigh quickly leaves the whale ready to give her a piece of her mind only for Clyde to plead with her not to.

Next, they try putting a pair of custom-made VR goggles on the whale to trick it into thinking it's moving like normal, but standing still while they extract the wings, this fails almost right away as the whale just started to move, and crashes into things. Rebbecca sighs pushing a button that releases the goggles from its face. “Oh I know it bored it just wants a good race. It probably hasn't had one in a long time. I'll modify the thruster to go faster it will make it harder to steer though.” She said going to do it before they could reject it.

Neither of them thinks it will work, but weirdly enough when they fly right next to it it seems to catch its attention. It started to make a lot of noises following The Hopper, but after it didn't make them back it started to fly away. “Oh shit it almost worked quickly someone makes whale noises,” Raleigh said in a panic. Clyde seeing that no one else was willing goes up to the intercom and starts to make

really bad impressions of a whale mating call that scared it away.

They land sinking into their chairs defeated. “It's been a month Rebbecca don't tell me you haven't come up with a better plan in that time,” Clyde said annoyed they are still doing it. She sighs. “Alright yes, I think I have enough information to try the real winning strategy.” She said both of them perk up with excitement. “It won't be easy, and it combines a lot of our failed attempts into one.” She goes on causing them both to raise an eyebrow. She smirks leaving The Hopper to show them.

They follow seeing that Proxy and the giant robot version of Mother had already started to paint The Hopper and modify it into a shabby-looking whale disguise. “What the hell are you doing we haven't even gotten to paint it how I want!” Raleigh said in protest. “Well it seems the theory about the Whale being lonely wasn't so far-fetched after all,” Rebbecca admitted making Raleigh soften from the praise. “Oh well of course I knew that.”

“So here's the plan. Both you and Clyde with use The Hopper like this to attract the whale with actual mating calls Mother has simulated for us.” Mother just looked at them giving a thumbs up. “Once it's following you. You will lead it to a world that I have already hacked into, and try to keep it there as long as you can while I extract the wings.” She further explained. “Wait, but don't the Aspects Transcend the powers of Code?” Clyde asked.

“Yes they do, that's the hard part, but without explaining all the technical jargon you won't understand anyway, I ask that you trust me.” She said only for both of them to look skeptical “This is going to work for real?” Clyde asked. She smiled getting closer to him again. “Of course, and afterward you'll get your reward!” Raleigh breaks them up before she can do more. “The wings will be enough.” She frowns.

“This was always the direction I expected this to go, I simply wanted to improve our chances everything even the net, and the bait taught us important information. It's movements and preferences.” She said walking away and pointing her finger in the air. Both of them frown a little frustrated she

expected all it to fail was it really necessary? She seemed to pick up on this answering. “While the whale isn't particularly intelligent I don't think it will fall for this again, so we needed to make sure it worked alright.” She said further walking through a portal to the world she hacked before they could say anything else.

Both of them look at the hopper that had been painted to look like the Whale to a silly-looking tongue sticking out and what looked like giant googly eyes on the sides. “It looks ridiculous,” Raleigh said upset with it. “After this is over we can paint it for real just like you wanted,” Clyde said reassuring her it would be alright. They lift off not sure if this will work was Rebbecca even being honest with them that it would?

They pulled up a map of the whale's patterns, and its current location Flying ahead to prepare to meet it. Once it enters the world they are waiting they fly up to it playing the Whale sounds given to them. The Whale seems attracted to it following them surprising them both. It started to rotate around them causing them both to take a moment to look at how majestic it looks. “Buckle up Clyde I'm gonna do a spin,” Raleigh said but started doing it before he could making him face the wall. He should've known better by now.

The Whale seems to respond well to that following them more eagerly as they jump into the world Rebbecca has hacked into. It's clear right away this world has been modified a lot both of them feeling a bit uneasy knowing that she is a god in this realm. They fly upward into rainbow clouds as The Whale follows. They keep spinning the ship making the Whale seemingly happy was it part of some mating ritual?

Before they can think about it time seems to slow to a crawl as Rebecca gets closer to The Whale. Like expected she can simply take the wings she thinks for a moment as the creature slowly rises to chase after the hopper that has also slowed down. She rubs the area around where the wings are pulling them off with a device seeing if that does anything. There seem to be invisible lines connecting

them even after they are cut off piquing her interest. It would seem that even severing them doesn't exactly work even if the limb becomes a separate being you still have to get that to willingly give it up.

Time seems to be speeding up again shocking her a little was the Whale breaking out of her control? With one last attempt, she made a copy of the wings with her power over the code. They don't have the aspect but biologically they are the same. She attaches them to the whale taking the wings with her the invisible connection seems to snap like it has tricked the whale into thinking they are its true wings like she hoped. Lastly, she puts a portal gun of sorts on its back that responds to the creature's brain waves. It will function the same as the wings even if it is greatly inferior to them. It's all it needed to do what it always had. She leaves the area resuming time.

The Whale speeds up again after The Hopper. “Mission accomplished you can stop now,” Rebbecca said on their coms surprising them both. “Wait really? Already.” Raleigh said shocked, but they left the world right as they said that. The Whale followed, but without the wings by the time it caught up, they had already landed. The Creature cried out sounding sad perhaps it was lonely. Both of them looked up at it feeling a little bad. Rebbecca appeared next to them. “Why so glum we got what we came for?” She asked them both.

“Was that ok? We played with the poor things feelings.” Raleigh said looking up sadly at it still crying out looking for The Hopper. “Most likely the Whale wasn't born this way however they obtained the wings it evolved them into this creature, its always been the only one of its kind. It doesn't need the wings to do what it does.” Rebbecca said mostly speculating about the origin of it. “That's not what she means.”

“Oh don't worry about that. I'm not that cold, give me more credit.” Just as she says that a whole pod of Whales emerges from a portal all looking a little different surrounding The Whale making it look overjoyed. “I copied genetic information in that world and made copies with variations in sex, and size,” Rebbecca explained looking up at them all flying together happily. Both of them looked

surprised yet again almost like they were about to get choked up by their own emotions. “I guess we did misjudge you,” Clyde said apologizing. “No, you were right. I am who I am, but that doesn't mean I don't have a soft spot.”

As they leave for the next world Raleigh looks at Clyde with teary eyes. “Why can't all our adventures be like this we didn't even beat anyone up this time.” She hugs him from the side happy it ended like this, as Rebbecca just smiles off to the side.

After their moment Rebbecca finally speaks up. “As for the wings. I did get them, but it will take some time to transfer them from this hunk of flesh to someone, so give me time, and I'll be there to give them up after I finish what I need them for.” She said showing a tinier version of the whale's severed wings in her hand. Clyde frowns looking at her annoyed again. “So you bailing on us again? How do we know you'll make good on that?” He said not sure she would.

“I'm a woman of my word. I just stretch that word sometimes, now as for your reward.” She said licking her lips and getting closer to Clyde. “Wait no I don't...” He started to say blushing as she got closer Raleigh was about to jump in and stop her like always only for her to sidestep Clyde, and kiss Raleigh on the lips instead. She froze red as a tomato not sure how to react. She released her fellow Cyborg looking satisfied, and Raleigh just looked lost and Flustered.

“Sorry Clyde, but I never said who I'd be kissing, I don't have much of a taste for men anyway. Well, see you later!” She said leaving without another word. “What the hell was that!” Raleigh said still not sure how to feel about it. “I guess I'm the one who needs to defend your honor,” Clyde said looking a little jealous. Even if they won't admit it they have grown much closer.

Chapter Thirty

Clyde and Raleigh are washing the Hopper ready to clear it free of the awful disguise, and finally paint the thing just how they want. They appear to be in some random hanger of a space station that isn't specified. “What is this place anyway?” Clyde asked as he was going over it with black paint how the previous version of The Hopper looked. “We it's like the Porta Nexus of the edge of the Multiverse. Not nearly as grand, but still very important to commerce, and stuff.” She explains.

“So no one's going to come looking for us here?” Clyde asked thinking he already knew. “Well, that never really stopped The Empire from attacking me back in the day so who can really say.” She sighs seeming to be more bothered by that than before. They both finish painting letting it dry. It still needs some touch-ups, but it looks much better and suits her taste a lot more. A device pings on her wrist as they overlook it. “Oh looks like Loki is finally back let's go answer his call.” She said with

surprise.

They both enter The Hopper sitting down, and answer his call. “Hello! My friends, I have good news and bad news!” Both of them frown at him. “So you're done with your sexual escapades then?” Clyde said disproving mostly because he agreed to help them, and it's been more than a month. His ears droop looking a little guilty. “They told you about that, did they? Well yes, I did partake in such acts, but I was at a dead end I needed to give myself vigor again you see.” He explained thinking they would understand. Both of them look uninterested in his excuses.

“Right well so the good news is I pinpointed where the leg was.” He kept on. “Was as in you no longer know?” Raleigh asked confused. “Well yes, it seems the person that has it I haven't quite identified so my ability to find them is... Hazy at best but given more time I can better do so, but for now I thought you might wish to visit their last location in case they returned. Sending you that information now.” He explained. “Wait really that's all,” Clyde asked disappointed. “I'm sorry friend I tried my best, but this was harder than expected I will do my best to keep looking,” Loki said not sure how to respond.

“Well, I guess we should thank you for helping us at all, it's just disappointing,” Clyde explains. “I understand, and I hope you can have more success. I wish you luck.” He said ending the call with less bravado than normal. “Well what do you think is it worth going there we might encounter the others?” He asked his captain. “What choice do we have Rebbecca was right they can't open the door without every Aspect so everyone needs to have some motivation for heading that way, this new leg holder is unknown, and the sooner we find out their aims the better.” She said plugging in ready to head out.

They arrived quickly landing just outside a nearby town. It looked older with little technological advancement, but a quaint, and happy place, but once they were noticed flying over the villagers seemed to shut all their shops up and board the windows. “Are they scared of us?” He asked. Looking

at the building they looked like they had been repaired from some sort of battle more recently. A couple more brave villagers rushed out with pitchforks, and woodcutting axes surrounding them. “Woah hold on we aren't here to fight?” Clyde said pleading with them. “Nonsense you have one of those fly creatures like those Pirates did!” One of them said bringing the fork closer to his face.

“Pirates? We aren't pirates.” Raleigh said in annoyance.”We aren't stupid your even wearing the same type of clothes that that crazy lady was.” Both of them look at each other starting to see whats going on. “Wait you mean a lady with green skin, and off her rocker? We aren't friends trust me we even took her down already.” Clyde Said referring to Dawnstaarr. “Yes, she killed the Mayor, and tried to take his special power! You won't trick us.” The man answered but wasn't putting his guard down.

“Look if we were with them why would we be talking to you all? Wouldn't we just attack like they probably did?” Clyde said trying to reason with them more. The man took the fork away from his face looking like he had to think about it, but before they could more crafts appeared out of the sky humming over the city Landing close by. “That was a Remnant ship.” Raleigh said concerned. Remnant soldiers started to rush into the city. “Go hide we will take care of this,” Raleigh said pushing the man still pointing a weapon at her away fearing for his safety as a noncombatant.

“Well, well, well look who it is My old rival Clyde Moore, or should I say Orion Vesper now.” A man said clapping as he walked toward them. “Rival?” Clyde said not seeming to know who he was. The man growled in anger. “Yes, we have fought many times don't pretend you have forgotten.” Upon a closer look, he did recognize him only a little. “Oh, you're that guy I fought at the wishing door I wouldn't call one fight a rivalry. How'd you get away from The Union anyway?” He said dismissively mostly just to buy time for the villagers to get away.

“What about the battle of Twin Moons did you forget about that, or the siege and Sangria? Our battles were so intense there is no way you have forgotten.” The Man said stomping his foot in anger. “You were there for those? No can't say I remember fighting you there.” Clyde said not knowing him

was their fight so brief it was a much bigger deal for this guy than Clyde?

“Whatever it doesn't matter. We came here because we found a potential lead for the leg, but if we take you down and take your aspects. The Reaper and Leader Freya will be pleased greatly!” The man said as the troops surrounded them. Raleigh laughs. “The Reaper? That guy is dead.” “He is not, and he will lead our forces to victory over all of you!” The man said as all the soldiers drew their multi-cubes and charged at them.

They fight them off like normal Raleigh going for her hammer that seems to be her weapon of preference waking them into each other without much trouble. Clyde just uses his knife to stab them and easily dodges most of their attacks without having to rely on the suit. Pretty much all of the ones attacking them fall leaving only the rear guard that stayed back to guard the rival.

“Enough of this I have been granted a great power, and with it, I can't lose! Behold the Middle Finger of the Multiverse!” The Man said raising his middle finger in the air as it glows. “Wait what? But we both?” Raleigh said looking down at her hand that started to glow as a reaction seeing that the arm was indeed missing the middle finger. “Huh, how bout that.” She said more amused than scared.

“Well if I had to guess it's a less powerful version of the powers our Arms have, but just to be on the safe side,” Clyde said striking a pose ready to use the Ultra Suit. The Rival lifts his finger smirking as the Ultra Suit seems to spark and malfunction not activating. “What? Come on Ultra Suit do your thing.” He said in disbelief doing it again only for the Syncer to spaz out and let out a puff of smoke. “You underestimated me for the last time.” The Rival said pulling out a sword. Clyde is barely able to block it with his knife not prepared for the suit to fail like that.

Raleigh fights against the rest of them hoping to finish them off quickly and engage them, but as he sees all the men around him go down he seems to chicken out. “Re... Retreat! This isn't over Orion! I swear it!” The Rival said running tripping, and falling on his face before getting back up and running. Any of the Soldiers that are still moving run after him. They leave in their ships abandoning anyone

who didn't make it in time. Both of them catch their breaths it had been a moment since they took on so many people at once. “Great another aspect to deal with.” Raleigh groans.

Clyde looked at his hand wondering if he had not been utilizing the full power of the arm this whole time. “Why do you think Lucius of all people would give that away assuming it was him,” Clyde questioned. “Who knows why he did anything he did, maybe it has something to do with its power.” She answers just as confused. The Villagers all start to leave their hiding places curiously before surrounding them both and cheering.

“They saved us they really are noble Pirates!” One of them said, and the other lifted them happy for their defense of the town. Both of them looked surprised by the warm welcome but went along with it. “We aren't Pirate though,” Raleigh said softly a little annoyed that part of the discussion was still misunderstood.

They prepared a huge feast making them the Guest of honor as all the town folk drink, and be merry. They sit next to an older woman who seems to be the leader of the village as they try to explain things to her. “So what exactly happened here,” Clyde asked her. “Well you see these Pirates attacked us out of nowhere one day, somehow they discovered my husband the Mayor had this special power, that our village used to thrive, and they... they killed him. We were afraid it was going to happen again until you good pirates showed up we thought all pirates were bad, but you saved us.”

Raleigh seemed to be getting more annoyed by the pirate thing but was too busy filling her belly to protest. “Well I know we are similar looking, but no we aren't pirates, but that's beside the point. You said you thought they'd come again to take it did he transfer it to someone before he died?” Clyde asked concerned for their safety. The woman looks hesitant to share that, but after seeing his clear concern for their well-being she relents. “Yes, our son he was visiting, and he gave it to him before that wretch... killed my beloved.”

Clyde leans back thinking over the information that they learned. Dawnstaarr must have been

mistaken, and not realized he had down so leaving the village, writing it off as a failure. “Where is your son now? I think you're right to assume they would come after him.” He urges her to tell. “I... I'm afraid I don't know lad. A group of travelers came not so long ago asking about what happened to the village. They seemed to be from a neighboring village so we were more loose with our information, but my boy got spooked and ran off, He was never one for our life, he might have seen it as the final push to go out, and see the world.” She explained.

“Wait what did these people look like?” Raleigh butted in thinking she had an idea. “Well I believe it was a month or two ago, and there were 4, no 5 of them. I don't remember all of them that well, but one of them was a rather large man with a well-groomed beard.” She said not getting why it was important. “Jacob!” Both Clyde and Raleigh said in unison.

“Look if they are who we think he could be in trouble, do you have a picture or some clothing of his we could have to help find him?” Clyde asks. “Well yes, but I don't see how that will... If it's enough to save my boy It doesn't matter.” The Woman said standing up to go get some. Clyde knew that with those Loki could much more easily find them. Above them, Crow listens standing on the roof support beams following the woman back to her house.

They trail her easily with every step leaving no noise, but the wind. She looks back almost frightened only to see no one there. As she grabs the picture, and a well worn jacket taken out of a chest she has of her son the Scout takes a picture of it disappearing just as quickly as they appeared. She returns the main hall with them handing them the frame. They both look curiously at the picture. Seeing a young man with his parents. He seems to stand out compared to them Styling his hair differently, and with two different colors, yellow, and green. Was he the closest thing this world had to a rebel?

“Well we can make a copy of the picture so you can keep it, but what about the jacket is that important?” Raleigh said. “Oh no, it's just some old rag he used to wear until it fell apart.” The lady

explained. “Oh great, honestly I think you guys might want to consider leaving this village or getting help from someone of this world to help defend you. I don't think people will leave you alone till we solve this conflict overall.” Raleigh said. The old woman looks down. “Abandon our home... I will have to give it some thought. Perhaps we can convince the kings men to defend us. We will prepare a place for you to rest for now if you wish.” The woman suggested both of them nodding.

Chapter Thirty One

They both awake from their slumber leaving their rooms quickly eager to see what Loki has found after they send over the information. They walk through the small village in a rush as it has mostly gone back to normal. Raleigh stops in her tracks when she sees a little girl with her mother holding her hand as she leads her to her dwelling. “What's up Raleigh?” He said before picking up on it himself thinking he understood why. “Nothing lets go.” She said walking ahead.

They enter the Hopper wasting no time waiting to call him. “Good Morning friends.” He said yawning still half asleep it looked like he was still in bed only dressed in a bathrobe Early mornings are not Loki's thing. “I'll get straight to the point I was able to find his exact location with the picture. The personal item you have might be able to increase my precise measurements, but well, there is unfortunately another hurdle.” He explained still groggy.

“Ugh, what is it now?” Raleigh asked. “Well to put it simply, they are not staying still. With whatever means they have moved several times in the last couple of days to different worlds. Right now they are at Misty Point, but for how long I can not say.” Loki explains. “Hmm well, that sucks nothing can be easy huh,” Raleigh said forming a plan in her head. “Is there something wrong with Misty Point?” Clyde asked not knowing anything. “Well no it's a fairly normal city that is a part of Multiverse trade, it is just home to a lot of criminals. They mostly hide in plain sight. There are plenty of normal people there too, or as normal as it gets in the Multiverse.” She further explains.

“Well it seems like you all have it figured out, I'm going back to bed If they move again I'll be sure to send that information,” Loki said about to end the call. “Wait! Loki one last thing?” Raleigh said sounding more urgent. “Hmm? Yes, what is it?” He asked half curious, and half just wanting to sleep. “Well, the people of this village... They have a place they call home, and they didn't do anything to deserve this.” She said more timid than usual. “It's an unfortunate fact. The wishing door Leads to things like this, among other things,” he said back.

“It's wrong! Why should they have to suffer like that? Please Loki you have all sorts of crazy magic, take them in, or protect them!” She pleaded. “My, my I'm not used to such earnest pleas from you dear girl. I'm always willing to take people in, but from the sounds of it they don't want to leave their home.” He says back. “Then defend them or convince them otherwise!” She continued to beg. Loki doesn't answer thinking for a moment. “You know how I feel about fighting... but I will pay them a visit, and see what I can do. At the very least perhaps I can convince Theron to guard them till this whole mess has ended.” He relents. “Thank you so much, Loki!” She said genuinely grateful for this. He nods ending the call.

She smiles happily Clyde looking a bit worried. “I think I get it. Why you care so much about this.” He said, she looked over curiously, but then frowned. “You know nothing.” She said blushing trying to shut his attempts down. “Are you sure you don't want to talk about this? You know I'll listen?”

Clyde urges. She shakes her head. “There is nothing wrong with me I am strong.” She exclaims. Clyde gets up walking towards her. “Of course you are, but even strong people can feel things, and break under pressure. You've been at this for a...” He said as she cut him off. “Enough Clyde drop it!” She shouts.

Without another word, she plugs herself in ready to lift off to Misty Point. It had a port for them to land in not unlike Porta Nexus, but not nearly as pristine. They quickly pay the parking fee and head into the city. It seemed foggy most likely where it got its name, but other than that it didn't look unlike other places they had visited, but as Clyde looked for oblivious signs of Criminal activities he saw none. “They are good at their job Clyde your not going to see it so easily, most of them just come here to lie low. That why I've been here as much as I have.” She explained. “How did you...” He asks.

“It's written all over your face.” She said annoyed, but just as she said that a man bumped into a cute little girl, and she pulled a rocket launcher seemingly out of nowhere and destroyed him with it. The Police types in the area quickly rushed in to clean up the mess not seeming to care about arresting anyone. “What the hell. This place is crazy dangerous, and like you won't even see the danger coming.” He said significantly more nervous. “That's what's so fun about it,” Raleigh said smugly as they kept walking looking for the Leg Holder.

Inside one of the restaurants nearby, Clyde's supposed rival sat with his men eating a meal. A woman came up to them with the check confusing him. “What the hell is this?” He said confused. “Your bill.” She explains trying to keep a customer service face despite his obvious stupidity. “I don't think so.” He said raising his middle finger as it glowed. At first, she just looks angry but the paper turns to ash confusing her followed, by the kitchen bursting into flames drawing her attention away. “Let's blow this joint men.” He said as they all got up to follow him.

He approaches a nearby vending machine.”You guys thirsty? it's on me.” He said as he flipped off the machine. It sparked and all the drinks started to shoot out. Most of his men seemed thrilled, but

one looked concerned. “Eh, sir... are you sure you should use that for such... mundane things?” “Pft, like it matters I need to practice with it more anyway.” Just as he said that he sees both Clyde and Raleigh across the street. He grabs onto the one talking to him pointing in their direction. “Do my eyes deceive me?” He said shocked. “No sir it seems your Rival is right there.” He answers.

He laughs. “Finally we can settle things once, and for all. This won't be like the battle of Cancune this time our fight will be more than five seconds even, no it will last days!” He said raising his fist in the air and rushing forward to meet them as the rest of his men follow. But before they reach him Clyde's arm briefly flashes to life as a large group of burly Rino men stampede through stomping on him as they get away not even knowing he was there. “Curses foiled again.” He said passing out from pain.

Raleigh, and Clyde keep moving forward looking around until they spot who they are looking for he looks lost, and confused in a world nothing like his home, how did he even get here Clyde wondered. Raleigh pointed at him trying to avoid shouting. “Is that the guy what was his name again... Tristan?” She asked in a whisper. “Tristan!” She shouted catching his attention as she waved. “How do you know my name?” He asked.

The man looks severely out of his depth. “It's a long story but...” Clyde started to explain only for the Rival to finally catch up. “There you are now we can finish our duel!” He shouts scaring Tristan off as he books it away. “We don't have time to play with you right now fuck off dude,” Clyde said chasing after him. “Hmm, is that guy, the Leg Holder? A ha I will get to him first how about that!” The Rival said running after him as well raising his Middle finger as a kart of goods broke free from their restraints right at them both crushing them. “Ha ha take that Orion!” The Rival said running ahead.

They climb out of the Rubble seeing that they have already gained quite the head start of them running forward to catch up. “You know what let's see if I can give you a taste of your own medicine. Fuck You!” Clyde said in frustration raising his middle finger towards the men having no idea if it

would do anything. Just like that a water tower above them started to break under its weight like someone had neglected to replace the strained bolts for a long time. It fell to the streets below causing all the water to rush at them like a tidal wave washing everyone on the street away while this worked it was now coming towards them all so sweeping them up in it. “What the Hell Clyde!” Raleigh said with anger. “I guess it's a little harder to control than it looks!” They said trying not to be drowned as it pushes them away.”

Tristan stops in the middle of a square catching his breath seeing no one is following him now. Crow watches him from the rooftops but doesn't move to capture him seeing all the people around. Just as he started to run again he bumps into who else but Jacob, and the rest of the Squad. “Hey slow down kid what's the rush?” Jacob asked. Tristan pants. “I just these guys are chasing me and...” He started to explain before seeing the man's face. “You're... one of those pirates!” He said in fear running the other way.

“Wait you all mixed up come back!” Jacob said running after him with the other Tyler rushed ahead it would seem his leg was helping him keep up better. Raleigh, Clyde, and The Rival managed to catch back up seeing Jacob ahead also chasing. “Oh great this is turning into a real mess,” Clyde said debating on trying the finger again. “Don't you dare use that again, not till you train with it more?” Raleigh barked. “Idiots what good is power you don't use!” The Rival said flipping them off once more as a stone bridge above them blocks their path right as their foe can slip past.

Raleigh taps her foot annoyed. “It's not even a powerful ability its just annoying.” She screams in frustration. “It seems to play off of the odds just like the whole arm does but in a more critical failure sort of way,” Clyde said more inquisitively. “No time for speculation!” Raleigh said making Novabreaker into a drill, and breaking through the collapsed bridge. They again catch back up only for Tristan to run ahead seeing a random portal opening, and jumping through none of them can follow before it closes.

“Well that's a shame, but look who we have here, we caught an even greater prize,” Jacob said turning around. “Oh, I am so ready to beat your ass after what you did,” Raleigh said rubbing her hands together ready to relish their fight. “Not so fast I will be I who takes their Aspects, not some pathetic Union Dog!” The Rival butted in. “Who's this loser?” Jacob asked in a low voice not seeing him as a threat. “I am Orion's Greatest Rival, so step aside, and let us conduct our duel!” He said as his army tried to hype him up.

Jacob looks unimpressed pulling out a riffle and shooting a single shot into the man making him fall. The army drags their leader away quickly scared to stay any longer. “Anyway, back to business. Are you two sure you won't join up with us? I get the Counsel is a bunch of ingrates, but we had a good thing going for a year or two.” He said hoping for the easy way out. “You're still trying that stick? We can't trust you either, Counsel or not.” Raleigh said annoyed. Clyde suits up himself knowing better than to think he could fight them without it even if it only left him with one other chance to use it.

“Well let's get down to it then,” Jacob said laughing striking his pose, but that's when Clyde remembered what happened at the Village, he raised his Middle Finger right as they were doing it causing their suits to malfunction, and not activate like his before. “The hell did you?” Jacob asked confused Clyde wasted no time punching his face knocking him backwards. The rest of The Squad surrounded them as he kept laying into Jacob. Raleigh stopped them from attacking him taking them all on at once, but Tyler with the power of the leg seemed hard to hide slipping passed her and managing to power up himself, and Kick Clyde into a wall.

Jacob wiped the blood from his face. “That's some trick you learned, but It ain't enough to take us down. They all use their chance to power up while Clyde isn't able to flip them off successfully doing so. Clyde recovered ripping himself out of the wall and seeing Raleigh struggle to take all five of them on, but his attack was effective Jacob even with the suit attacks seemed slower and weaker than what they would expect from him. Weirdly enough Tyler seems to be doing the most against her with

his new power.

He rejoins the fight focusing on Tyler now thinking that if he can hold him off Raleigh can finish the others off. “You're almost out of gas,” Raleigh said to Jacob only for him to laugh. “That may be the case, but what about you, it seems like you've been running on fumes for a long while. “He said slamming his fist into her gut causing her to choke. She slams her hammer down hard on his face knocking him out but cracking the Cybernetics in her arm causing her to cry out in pain.

The other members of the Squad jump in trying to kick her while she is down. “Raleigh!” Clyde shouts pushing her out of the way just in time doing a spin on his head to do a roundhouse kick of sorts knocking Simon, and Hue out of the fight deactivating their suits. Now all that remains is Sara and Tyler, but they don't seem ready to back down everyone seems at their limit. Raleigh getting up ready to fight even still. Jacob groans sitting up and rubbing his head. “Stop, stop, they got us let's just get out of here,” Jacob said getting up and starting to walk away.

“Wait the hell we are done. Get back here!” Raleigh said ready to keep fighting despite being in a ton of pain. Tyler, and Sara both support Jacob as they limp away. “This might sound weird coming from me, but.. I don't think this is a battle worth dying over.” He said as they got away completely. Raleigh screams in frustration only to pass out Clyde is barely able to catch her in time.

Elsewhere the Rival comes to all of his men seem happy he is ok, but tense like something is wrong. “Beaten again, no matter we will get them next time.” He said still confident he would win against them. “There is no next time.” A voice says causing him to sweat bullets. “Lord Reaper I had no idea you were.” He said Kneeling to the figure before him. It was a man fully covered in his Remnant uniform wearing a hat, and a skull mask it was hard to tell what he was thinking, but all the men were both frozen with admiration and fear.

“I don't know how you came to hold that finger, but you will relinquish it to me now, if you do I might consider sparing your life.” The man they are calling The Reaper said. “Of course my lord please

forgive me, I promise I'll make it up to you!” The Rival said as the light vanished from his finger onto The Reapers. “No, I don't think you will.” He takes moment to admire his glow before pulling out his sword slashing at the man off without hesitation splattering his blood all over making it unclear if he survived. “We have no room In the Crossbone Remnant for the likes of him. He has no backbone, You would all do well to remember this.” Without another word, the man leaves them.

Chapter Thirty Two

Raleigh slowly started to wake up. Clyde was carrying her on his back looking around for the nearest hospital. “Wha... what happened?” She asked. “You're awake. I was worried it was worse than it looked.” He said still carrying her only for her to jump off walking next to him. “What do you mean I'm fine?” She said. He frowned at her taking her hand and lifting it to her face trying not to touch a part that might hurt her. It was all cracked, and a bit of blood was seeping out. “This is fine? We've been doing this for a while now years even...” He started to say.

She yanked her hand away even though it caused her pain. “What do you know of me I have been doing this for way longer than that. You act like you have me all figured out, but you don't If I say I'm fine, I'm Fine. Now let's go.” She said running ahead to The Hopper so they can reengage Tristan. He looks conflicted like he doesn't know what to do. She was right they had grown much closer, but did

he know everything he thought he did? In all their adventures they had had plenty of near-death moments, but nothing seemed to be quite like this.

When he entered the ship she was welding her arm's metal pieces back together in the corner trying not to scream. Her breathing was heavy and intense. “That can't be... the correct way to do that. Please we can stop, and get you fixed up we don't have to go after him right away.” He said much more worried now. “We can't go anywhere everyone wants this stupid power we have! I've been doing this all my life! I know what I'm doing!” She shouted making him stop talking again. She wrapped her arm up as they both stood in silence. The air had never been so tense with them he doesn't know what to do or say. Every attempt to reach out is rejected by her.

She walks over to the console seeing that Loki had left another message this time in text form. “Great why'd he have to go to a place like that,” Raleigh said still angry, but Clyde wasn't sure if he should talk yet or let her go through her grief. She looks back like she is confused as to why he didn't ask about it. “It's a dying world.” She explains anyway shocking him.

Tristan runs through a world with no people. All the cliffs and buildings are littered around destroyed half put together like someone just placed them randomly with no thought. The sky is cracked open as The Caretaker's monstrous form peers through with its 3 glowing eyes everything starts to float towards it, but suddenly it stops once it sees Tristan it no longer goes through with the process of pruning the world just watching him.

Crow had somehow been able to follow him even now flying close by just out of sight. It would seem they are about to make their move only to stop when The Hopper Emerges from between worlds landing nearby upon their arrival The Caretaker leaves the space like he didn't want to possibly erase anyone with the Aspects. Crow vanishes back into the darkness getting on call with Marcus. He answers right away. “Ah, Crow were you able to capture the Leg Holder?” He asks. “Negative. It seems like there are too many eyes on them to properly do so. However Clyde Moore and Raleigh are

hear at the moment, and they don't seem to be at full strength.” Crow explains watching her run out rubbing her arm in pain as they look for Tristan.

“Excellent we will be there soon. I foresaw this outcome with the Head. Delay them until we arrive.” He laughs ending the call. He looks at his troops already on standby to go wherever they need to, and with Noir, they can travel there in no time. Emberon appears behind him ready to offer his farewells. “That speech you gave. It's not the one of prosperity and harmony. Words like those are dangerous.” He said wary. “My words are a call to action, and while not pretty they are necessary in conquest. Without Conquest we can't make the worlds prosperous is that not what your beloved nation did to the former Human empire.” He said mostly parroting the words of his Uncle.

Emberon looked down in thought. “We were not the first to draw blood, but yes in the end we did just as you said... Just keep this in mind. I know not your intentions just that power can lead even the purest of souls to despicable places.” Emberon said seeing that he had less room to talk than he thought leaving him with that warning. Marcus scoffed entering his Flagship as they lifted off to meet Crow.

Clyde and Raleigh leave the ship only seeing The Caretaker for a moment before they vanish. “Well, I don't know if that's a good or a bad thing. He must want someone to make a wish on the door.” Clyde said nervously. “No time for that let's find this dude before he runs off again. She runs ahead not waiting a moment. As she runs weird things happen like falling rocks almost crushing them, all of them they can dodge yet it seems more like someone is trying to slow them down.

“Something isn't right here, and I don't think it's just a quirk of this dead world,” Clyde said looking around Raleigh stopping to do the same. “I'm going to try the finger again.” He said. “The hell you are,” Raleigh said in protest. “I'll make sure to aim it away from us this time.” He said using it on a building nearby hoping it would answer his weird feeling. The building collapses almost crushing Crow who only has seconds to jump out of the way, but now is revealed to them.

Crow looks confused like this rarely happens to them. “Who even is that?” Clyde asked Raleigh she shrugged not seeming to know either. Crow had hidden themself from them all this time despite their past confrontations with Marcus, and Legion. “Are you from this world? Have you seen a man with blonde, and green hair running around?” Clyde asked them not sure what to do now. Crow nodded deciding to lead them away from Tristan now that they have mistaken who they are. Walking in the opposite direction without a word.

As they got closer Raleigh noticed they had multi-cubes on their belt. “Wait hold on? Who are you? Only the Empire, and I guess Cyrus has Mutli-cubes like us.” She said stopping in her tracks. Crow lowers their head upset with their failure to hide something that would give them away so easily. Without a word they form a sword out of shadow and strike at Clyde he only has seconds to dodge it as they vanish back into the darkness. “I um don't know what that was about, but I think we should go the other way.” He said as they both nodded turning around this time with more urgency.

They manage to make up for lost time finding Tristan walking seemingly led by an unknown force. “Tristan wait!” Clyde yells trying to stop him. He looks back frightened another portal opening up as he slips through. “God damn it,” Raleigh yells in anger. “Can't he just see we are trying to help him? He is so stupid he just needs to... he... he's just like me.” Raleigh said calming down and looking at the floor. None of them have time to think about it though, because Marcus's Fleet jumps into the world catching their attention right away.

Smaller vessels start to spill out toward them. On the ship, Marcus smirks already having them on his screen. He doesn't see how they will slip away from them at all. A hologram appears over the ships next to them of him, with Cindy, and Wolf. “At last the bane of the former empire at my feet, vulnerable, and at my mercy. You are surrounded, Your ship is impossibly far away. Give up, and hand over your Aspects, and I might let you live. Perhaps we could even Join forces, without your aspects of course, but if you wish to fight be my guest. Our beef by be less personal than others, but I will relish

your defeat all the same.” He said smiling.

Clyde pointed his finger up at them hoping to do something but all it did this time was cause the display to malfunction and vanish. “I see well then prepare for a fight.” Is all he said to them before turning off the speakers leaning back in his chair satisfied. “Sir Noir ran off on her own. We tried to stop her but well.” One of the officers on the bridge said nervously. “She did what?” Marcus said leaning forward again, but quickly relaxing again as the Head of the Multiverse started to glow on his head filling his mind with need plans. “I'll drag her back boss!” Cindy said clenching her fists.

“No this is fine poetic even, however, you are to go down there, and help.” He directed, as both of them nodded ready to go, and lead the Legion against them. He grinned as he watched them run toward The Hopper once more, their only realistic way out of this in his mind, he was glad they seemed to agree.

They kept running through the ruins, and weirdly misplaced mountains, and ground forces started to land all around them ready to fight them. When they entered a more open area one headed straight for them, and didn't look like it was stopping. “Uh, Raleigh!” Clyde said pointing at it. She turned Novabreaker into a grappling hook gun grabbing him, and letting it pull them out of the way just barely in time. A figure in the fire started to emerge from the vessel unscathed. Both of them stopped feeling that it was a real powerful foe.

As they got closer they were revealed to be Noir wearing an outfit similar to Raleigh Hat in all, but the colors were inverse mostly being White and Red. She smirked at Raleigh who looked at her with disbelief. “Are you that... that clone?” She asked confused as to why she would join Marcus of all people. Noir got closer not saying anything yet only faltering when she saw Clyde a faint blush on her face. Both of them look at her not sure what to expect just yet.

Noir looks over at Clyde with a bit of longing. Noir leaned in, her eyes softening as she gazed at Clyde. It was like looking into a mirror of her past life, one filled with what she had lost and what she

had never truly owned. She tried to kiss him only to be stopped by Raleigh with a slash of her sword. Clyde backs away just as confused his heart racing a bit trying to remember it wasn't Raleigh. “What are you doing?” Raleigh said pointing her weapon at her demanding answers. “What am I doing? What are you doing? Your whole life you have done nothing but devalue the things that you cherish. I know because I was you.” She said her anger rising. “What are you talking about?” Raleigh said confused. “You have everything!” Noir said pulling out her own Multi-tool transforming it into a sword, and clashing blades with her. “And you ignore all of it!” She further said as Raleigh defends herself.

“You're wrong I..” Raleigh said transforming the sword into a shield not seeming to want to admit she wasn't struggling with the battle damage she already has. “You aren't even living life! You can't even be honest with your feelings.” Noir screamed relentlessly striking at her. The damage done before started to reopen and crack again as she calls to the ground screaming out in great pain once more. “You're pathetic!” She said as she was about to bring her weapon down into Raleigh only for Clyde to jump in the way powered up already.

She seemed to not be expecting this or for him to have the suit. “I... I don't want to fight you.” She said with sorrowful eyes. “It's a relief you're even alive,” Noir said trying not to break into tears. “I don't know what exactly you are upset about, but why do we have to fight? Please let's get out of here, and together we can talk.” Clyde pleads not sure what she knows, only knowing that she is Raleigh at least to some extent.

Noir's resolve wavers, but the Neo empire's forces are closing in surrounding them She can see Cindy, and Wolf in the distance rushing over. “No, we can't I can't with her...” She said taking a deep breath and attacking Clyde even though she didn't want to. Raleigh gets back up seeing that she is slowly pushing him towards the edge of a cliff below is a void a section of the world that seems to already have been erased by The Caretaker.

She jumps back into the fight but is only able to use her other arm Noir slashes into Clyde's

chest enough to hurt him, but not kill him deactivating his suit. Raleigh jumps in front of him just in time to her frustration. Noir turns her weapon into a hammer whacking her so close to the edge she almost falls Clyde pushing Noir away just in time for her to regain balance. Raleigh rushes forward stabbing into Noir. Her clone scowls transforming into a hammer too surprising Raleigh, as only Novabreaker is supposed to be able to transform into multiple weapons. She slams her into the ground causing more parts of her body to become cracked and break apart as they mix with the blood.

The ground shakes like it's going to give in. Noir transforms her weapon into a knife ready to stab into her. She does so raising it again to finish her off. Clyde arrives for the second strike blocking it with his back. “Stop it! Let me fight her. Then we can...” She started to say overwhelmed by her own emotions only stopping when she realized in his eyes she wasn't her, and what she was doing now is the worst possible thing she could do. She hesitates as the ground shakes. He helps Raleigh back up but it gives way before they can fully move. Noir's heart breaks reaching out to him not wanting to see him die a second time even if it means her other self lives another day.

Clyde tries to reach out for her hand but it's too far away. Seeing the conflict, and fear on his face he smiles. “Don't think I'll die from something like this.” He said almost like he was comforting her even with her actions towards him. As he falls into the void most likely to his death. Noir cries out uncontrollably sobbing. Marcus slams the armrest of his command chair with rage. What do you mean she killed them? Now there is no telling where their aspects will end up. We had them in our hands how could he let this happen? Bring her to me right now she will answer for this!” He yells to whoever will listen.

All of the Neo Empire forces halt their advancement looking into the void as too figures from above leap down into it without anyone seeing. Cindy and Wolf both stopped next to Noir who had calmed down, but was still on her knees. “Come on we gotta get back to the ship now... boss is not taking this well.” Is all Cindy said as she pulled her up.

Chapter Thirty Three

Noir was brought before Marcus as he tapped his foot in nervous anger. “Do you have any idea what you have done? The Aspects they had upon their death could be anywhere in the Multiverse now. How long will we have to wait for them to reappear on someone else?” He shouted with anger. Noir didn't seem to be listening thinking about everything that happened in her mind.

“Answer me!” He demanded breaking her from her trance. Her expression hardened. “I joined you for one reason, and one reason only revenge. You promised I would get that and I delivered it in part, but they aren't dead.” She said looking him in the eye. He is caught off guard by her talking back. “What makes you so sure?” He asked. “Because Clyde told me himself he wasn't going to die.” She answered with a faint blush.

Before he could say anything the familiar screen of an Aion Anderson broadcast popped up. He looked more grim like he was sad about something. “Today I must report that the hunt for the aspects, and wish has taken a turn for the worse. Both Orion Vesper, and Raleigh holders of the Arms, and Eye Aspects have fallen after a conflict with Admiral Marcus.” He frowns as a video plays of the fight with Noir, and them falling.

“Even with my resources I am unable to confirm where they fell, but I would say it's more likely than not fatal this is tragic for several reasons. Orion and his captain were becoming a favorite to win an obvious choice over other Tyrants such as Marcus, and secondly, now that they died in such a way their aspects could end up anywhere and on anyone making the conflict more drawn out, and certainly more bloody. Rest in peace Orion, and Raleigh you will be missed. Aion Anderson signing off.” He said truly saddened by the news's ending his report.

All over the multiverse people hear the new's and are shocked. First Cyrus was eating a meal with Darrian, Tara, and Tess. The Food drops from his fork as the broadcast ends. “Impossible there is no way... And the clone...” He said a loss for words. Tess doesn't seem to know what to say about it. Darrian just laughs. “Something like that would never do our girl in she's made of sterner stuff.” He said not believing she was dead Tara nods in agreement.

Cyrus looks down knowing that with her track record, it may very well be the cause but he is still unsure. Suddenly he stands up not finishing his meal as he puts on his jacket. “Where are you going,” Tess asks. “We are moving in we know where he is this is our time the strike. Gather up our forces.” He explains walking out of the room as they all look at each other nodding doing just that.

Next is Loki he just looks shocked quickly rushing to another room where he keeps all his soul cards rummaging through them all until he finds Clyde's It's red, not black but the color seems to be growing darker. Worry in his face only increases as he rushes to where ever they ended up.

Rebbecca was still tinkering with the wings seeming to make some ground transferring the left

one to herself only for the broadcast to end her happiness and make her wear a frown. “So not even they could make it huh.” It didn't seem like she believed they were alive. She just got back to work Proxy looking in from the other room with a raised eyebrow emote.

Marcus snorted a laugh. “It would seem the Multiverse disagrees with your assessment. If they’re alive, you’ve failed in every sense. You’ll never have what you want. ” Yet again he doesn't have much time to respond, as Natasha's Fleet appears in front of them. “Damn it it's one thing after another!” He thinks it over for a moment his head started to glow as it feeds him with more plans. “Not a total loss after all. Men get ready for battle. Even if they attempt to hail us for conversation ignore it. We will hit them strong and hard.” He commanded waving his hand at Noir not wanting to see her face right now. She did so not wanting to participate in the fight anyway.

Natasha looks over at his flagship from her bridge with The Squad and Medan. “I can't believe they are dead. They were good people.” She said in disbelief despite everything they all still respected them. Except for Medan. “Yes, it was a great loss of time losing the aspects like that.” He said not understanding or maybe he just didn't care all of them looked at him and scowled. “Learn to read the room,” Marcy said uncharacteristically loud and demanding.

“Ma'am they are refusing any communication.” one of the officers on deck informed her. “Alright, that settles it. This will be the moment we choose to take him down. Not just for us, but for Clyde, and Raleigh!” She said as the whole bridge cheered with the exception of Medan. It would seem they still hold some comradery with them after all.

Both ships begin to open fire on each other as ground forces are deployed. Marcus's head is a nonstop glow as the battle brews below. He smirks knowing he has the numbers with his added recruits giving him an advantage only for his smile to fade when he sees just how inept some of them are. It would seem they aren't like the soldiers he is used to who had been trained and hardened all their lives.

The Union forces were much more skilled in taking them down and advancing quickly. He

throws his hands up in frustration seems some of them are even unsure how to open their multi-tools properly. The glow of the symbols on his head grew brighter filling him with more thoughts. “Omega unit. Move to quadrant d2.” Marcus said through coms. “Yes sir... where is that...” They asked confused. He growled that they didn't know something as simple as that. “The valley in the center draw as many Union Troops in as you can.” He ordered.

“Yes sir!” They eagerly said aiming to please him. They stopped fighting The Union forces running away as they gave chase others followed suit as their line broke apart into the clearing. “Alpha team as soon as they enter the clearing mow everyone down.” He said to one of his more well-trained groups. “Are you... certain sir there is bound to be friendly fire.” He asked taken off guard as it's not something he normally asks. “Just do it!” Marcus demands. Alpha team started to set up around the clearing waiting for them to enter and opened firing on all of them as they did killing both Omega and Union forces like. It was a large bulk of their forces.

Natasha looks in shock as she sees the loss of all those men. “Something is wrong. That's not a ploy he would normally deploy.” Natasha said looking down at a holo table with The Squad. “So he's gotten more ruthless. Do your job and counteract it.” Medan said bluntly. “Come on we are Joining the battle ourselves. I fear for what happens if we don't.” Natasha orders all of them following her. “Wait are you mad? A general doesn't lead the front lines.” Medan argues only for them to ignore them.

Marcus keeps doing the same tactic smirking after seeing it's working, but they have woken up now, and aren't falling for it anymore. The Bulk of the Chimera Legion hits the ground running seeing the tail end of one of the attacks. “What are you doing Marcus those are our men!” Luna said in protest. “And no one of consequence focuses on the battle.” He said dismissing her. Luna, and Cindy both look at each other a little worried but charge forward with Bear hoping for a little time reliving their glory days.

They destroy everything in their path not needing to rely on tactics this is the type of soldier

Marcus valued and used throughout the years. Wolf destroyed their armor, and even vehicles like they are made of nothing while Cindy took down small squads with her fire breath. Crow was deep in enemy lines sabotaging their equipment as Bear broke through their front line with the rest of the legion charging through.

The Union forces were falling apart losing a lot of their drive to go on against the might of the Mighty Chimeras. Natasha and the other's dropped down just in time landing on the giant bear and knocking her out on impact. All of her forces rallied behind her as they marched forward the Squad splitting up to help out all over already powered up in their suits.

Seeing this Cindy flies toward her intending to slash her to pieces with her claws, Luna does the same on the ground, but it does nothing. Both of them looked in shock as Natasha was undamaged she didn't even flinch. She motioned for them to come closer knowing they were the strongest of his forces they engaged with her giving their attacks everything they had only for her to stand there unhurt as her torso glowed with the light of the Hide.

The tide of battle had changed. Union forces charged forward with new vigor overtaking the Neo Empire once more The Squad leading the way. Tyler using the power of the Leg was able to catch up to Crow to their shock slamming down into them. They were able to partly dodge still taking the blow and the damage that comes with it as they slunk away into the darkness.

Cindy and Wolf are both still doing all they can to do something anything against her new power, but it's not doing a thing. “That thing is almost cheating,” Cindy said stopping for a moment to catch her breath. “Your forces only have two choices. Surrender, or die.” Natasha said more coldly. “Oh ho ho... is that so. Never said we were out of tricks too.” She smirked ready to try something her father taught her as her dragon scales, and arms started to bulk up much larger than she ever thought possible.

Luna did something similar opening up a portal that let the light of the moon shine down and hit her skin. She started to morph almost like she was becoming more feral. Both of them charged in once

again this time drawing blood to her surprise. “Well done this is a testament to your strength. I'll have to fight back now.” The General said grabbing Luna by the tail and slamming her into Cindy.

They were sent flying into other members of the Legion who were struggling to fight against Jacob. They stopped their attack to take care of him first. Natasha rushed over after seeing this. With Teamwork and precision, they ripped into the suit stabbing him in the side as he fell to his knees. She catches back up with them punching Luna in the face as their fight resumed.

Off to the side Crow had managed to get the upper hand on Tyler holding him up by the throat. “Give me your aspect.” Crow demands with a soft voice. Hue, Simon, and Sara making it just in time to push Crow away and stab into them. Crow limped away not able to fight anymore ending up flying back to the flagship.

Things were not looking good for Marcus. Even with Cindy, and Luna both on Natasha it was only doing moderate damage at a slow pace. They could win the fight but they would be exhausted, and surrounded after they did. Marcus thought hard over what to do the Head still poisoning his mind with plans. “Crew of The Razor's Edge.” He said on their channel. “Yes sir?” They answered.

“All personnel abandon ship, direct it to crash into Natasha.” He said laughing. “Sir are you?” The crew of the Edge started to question. “Silence do as I say this is the only way we are winning this.” He demands as coms go silent. “Let's see how you like having a ship crash onto you.” he muttered. Escape pod's and smaller vessels start to fly out of one of his Frigates as it barrels down toward the ground. “All forces prepare for impact.” He said through all com channels. His forces only have seconds to get out of the way. It was aimed to hit the heart of their forces right where Natasha and the two women were fighting. By the time they noticed Cindy only could grab Luna, and fly out of the way, but as it impacted the ground they got caught up in the explosion.

As the dust settled most of The Union forces had been obliterated on the ground Natasha was fine but her breathing labored Cindy, and some of the legion while not the target were pretty heavily

damaged. His plan was effective but cost them much. Luna and Cindy looked at their forces still alive but barely rising to their feet ready to keep fighting to their last breaths. “Yes, this is it well will beat her, and take her aspect for ourselves,” Marcus said with glee.

“All forces withdraw,” Luna said over coms Cindy didn't argue. “What what are you doing, ignore that order,” Marcus demanded over coms. “You won't have any men left if we keep fighting, that goes for both sides,” Luna explained to his anger. He was about to give her a piece of his mind only for Cyrus to finally arrive at their location dropping their chances of winning to very slim margins. Reluctantly he gets on coms and says. “All forces do as she says we are leaving.”

All of them retreat to the ship even before he gives the order after Luna makes the call. The Chimera Legion needed to have a serious talk with Marcus something was wrong. Amongst the Chaos Noir had slipped down to the ground finding The Hopper rubbing her face on the door. It was different than she remembered, but it was still her ship. She plugged herself in taking it to Marcus's Flagship as soon as she landed she retreated to Clyde's room laying in his bed not planning to come out for a long while.

Cyrus takes a couple of his forces down to the surface even providing medical attention to everyone he sees. Tess seemed to have an issue with this but didn't defy him. As he approached The General she looked at him with confusion as Marcy treated the few wounds she had. “You're healing my men? And here I thought the fight was just beginning. “I came here to avenge my daught... My fallen comrade. I have no need for your aspect I never was in this for the door.”

“Well unfortunately it seems they are going to live to fight another day. Be careful with that one Cyrus. We fought countless times over the years, and none of those times were quite like this one. I don't know why, but something has changed in him.” She said even though they are technically enemies. “I will keep that in mind.” He said knowing that all too well after witnessing the aftermath.

Cindy, Luna, and Crow all meet back up on the Ship as it started fly back to Flamecrest. “What

was that Marcus? You have never led us like that?" Luna said the most upset about it. "You dare question me?" Marcus said as the head glows. "It must be the aspect. Marcus that crazy old man was right it's driving you mad." Cindy said with worry. Upon this realization, Luna's face softens which clears up most of her frustrations. "No, I. Your wrong!" Marcus yells only to think about it more. "You... you may be right."

Chapter Thirty Four

In a void, Clyde, and Raleigh's Lifeless bodies lay there the faint glow of both their arms the only thing illuminating them in the Darkness. Their blood had poured out on the floor, and mixed together. They were barely alive probably only thanks to the arm's pushing the probability into their favor. Some one else drops down near them getting closer kneeling next to their bodies. “It's like you thought they are alive, those arms are amazing.” The man said as his arm glowed with the same Symbol as well as the person with him.

“So what do you think are they going to be able to help us out?” The Man asks treating their wounds regardless. “I don't know, but I have this feeling in my gut that says so. Their survival is a testament to that right?” The woman said. He nods finishing his first aid. It isn't great, but it's enough to

stabilize them and stop the bleeding they have never been in a more dire state. Both of them stand up walking away. “Now the real test is their ability to get out of here.” He said disappearing into the darkness with the girl.

Clyde wakes up not long after touching his body seeing that it had been treated as well as Raleigh who was still out. “Thank you?” He said looking around to see nothing the area slightly more illuminated. He looks over at Raleigh concerned shaking her slightly to see if that will wake her up. “Raleigh! Please wake up.” She slowly started to sit up still in great pain. “Wha... we aren't dead!” She said in shock.

“No, we aren't, and someone healed us.” He said half worried whoever it was at an ulterior motive. “Where is here anyway.” He asked. After she checked her wounds she rubbed her head trying her best to determine their location. “I... don't know... I don't know.” She repeated with concern she didn't know. Clyde was shocked as well despite crashing, and not always arriving at the intended world she always knew where they were and what could cause her not to know.

He looked around trying to think of a reason seeing nothing, but a void with the vague concept of walls around them barely visible. “Could this be outside the Multiverse? Like The Caretakers trash bin, he hasn't thrown out yet?” Clyde said thinking it sort of made sense. Raleigh looked unsure more useless than she had ever felt without her Navigation powers. “I just don't know.” She said again.

“Well, we should probably get going. Are wounds are... still pretty severe.” He said weakly rising to his feet. Reaching out his hand to Raleigh. She slaps it away trying to get up herself but with all the damage she sustained she can't so instead she just sorta lays there for a moment staring into the void. Clyde again offers his hand to her, and she reluctantly takes it. They walk against the wall Clyde touching it looking for anything that might give them a clue as he supports Raleigh with his other hand. Both of them are struggling but they push forward all the same.

After a while, Clyde falls over unable to support her anymore so they both fall to the ground. “I

guess we are taking a break. Clyde said sitting up she didn't say anything after a while she also sat up still looking off into nothing. After some rest, he rose once more attempting to take her hand. “Let's get going.” He said trying to sound optimistic. Her head, and arms sunk into her knees not taking his hand. “Just leave me here.” She said like she didn't understand why he hadn't already.

“What? Why would I do that?” Clyde asked his heart sinking. “I can't do this anymore!” She yells. “I'm tired of this I'm tired of everything. All I do is run and run, and you think it's some game? Well it's not I just played it up that way because I wanted you to stay.” She said laying it all bare finally. Clyde thinks for a moment trying to make sense of what she is saying sitting back down. “Well yeah you certainly sold it that way to me, but now that I'm into the thick of it I know better, but that was never really the reason I chose to follow you.” He explained.

“You Don't you don't know what it's like to be pursued endlessly! It's all I've ever known.” She snaps back. “I don't know. You're right I wasn't there from the beginning but ever since I was I got more than a taste, and everything we went through is that nothing to you? We have gone to countless places, beat an emperor, The Reaper, and so much more. I think I know what I'm getting into, but you're probably right. I don't know all the pain you have gone through even knowing what happened.” He said with a hint of frustration.

“I'm not the idealized version of me I pretend to be, that you think I am. I'm sad, I'm lonely, and I don't want to lose anyone else, but I can't keep doing this. Do you think it's some noble act standing by me? What a joke. I dragged you into this now it's time for you to fuck off it was all my selfishness. It's too reckless if you keep doing this you will die.” She yells again.

“You don't think I'm scared of that? Not just for me but for you. You always run head-first into conflict before you even have a moment to breath. I'm terrified that one day it will be too much, and you'll still charge in like you're invincible, but it's not about safety it never has been you should know that much. I'd rather be in constant danger with you than in misery in supposed safety. I'm not going

anywhere.” He rebuts.

“You don’t get it! You’ve always had a choice! I never did. I never got to decide if I wanted this life, it was forced on me. And now I’m forcing it on you.” She said getting closer to his face getting more and more upset. “And my choice was to spend it with you. I'm not here because anyone is forcing me. Raleigh, I don’t want you to be perfect. I don’t need you to be the fearless captain all the time. I know you’re hurting, I know you’re scared. But I’m not here because I think you’re ideal. I’m here because I see you, All of you.” He said as she stayed silent.

“And when it's too much?” She asks. “Nothing is too much not The Trial worlds, not anything. You're not alone anymore I'm here. Here because I want to be, because I believe in you, in us. You taught me to believe. I'm your partner and whether we make it through or not I'll be right next to you weathering the storm.” He says hoping that would be enough.

His body shifts as she looks down again like she really wants to open up and let him in but just can't. “I don’t know how to let you in, Clyde. I don’t know how to show you the parts of me that I’m so damn afraid of. The parts that are ugly and broken and... so damn tired.” She looks away, struggling to find the words. “I keep thinking, if I just keep moving if I just keep fighting, then I don’t have to deal with it. I don’t have to face the fact that I’m scared to death of losing you. Of losing myself.”

Clyde takes a moment to find the words knowing what he has to say but needs to muster the strength to say it. “I love you Raleigh, all of you. The part that fights like hell and the part that’s scared and hurting. I don’t need you to be perfect, I need you to be real. And that means letting me in, even when it’s hard, even when it hurts.” Her eyes widen from his confession.

“But what if...” She started to say only for him to stop her. “Enough. We can talk about what-ifs all day. But what matters is our actions.” He pulls her into his arms embracing her tight, but not too tight to avoid hurting her. “Growing doesn't happen in a day. Not real growth. We will stand in it together. Now shut up, and let it all out.” He said as she started to ball into his arms. They stayed like

that for a long while until she had no more tears to shed. “You're right one day at a time, and Clyde. I love you too.”

They get back onto their feet walking forward. The Void almost looks brighter than before. “Hey, Raleigh. I've been wanting to ask. I see the way you have been looking at certain people for a while now is there a... maybe it better to say it like this? Say we do use the wish what would you want to wish for now that you have thought about it?” Clyde asked.

“You mean with the girl? Well... It's just... promise not to hate me?” She said still a little afraid to open up about it. “I won't,” he said quickly. She still hesitates not answering for a while. “I think I'd wish for a real place to call home. I love The Hopper but, after everything that has happened, I want something more now.” She said still fearing his rejection of the notion. “Wait did you think I'd hate that?” He said not understanding why. Stopping their walk to rest again. After he thought about it more he thought he understood.

“Is it because you think I wouldn't want that too?” Clyde was only for her to silently nod. “My world... I hated yes, but a place to call home, that's not the same thing everyone needs a home to return to. If that's what you want let's do it.” He said smiling already all in on the idea seeing now how much she truly longed for it. “Wait what about our adventures?” Raleigh said shocked he was so willing already. “We can still have plenty of misadventures in a home.” He explained sounding almost like an expert as someone who has lived in a home before. It wasn't true in the slightest but Raleigh didn't know that. “Thank you.” She said softly The Void seemed to get even brighter.

They look at the walls as little lights shine all going in the same direction. Now they can see that there had been multiple paths all this time. “Wait were those always there? It kinda reminds me of that room the source was in think we should follow it?” Clyde said confused. “Most definitely,” Raleigh states.

They keep going now following the paths only the lights are heading until they reach a familiar-

looking room yet different. It looks very similar to the room holding the seed, and source of the Multiverse they were in when they fought Lucius, but there was no seed, and in the center of the Room were two people they met before.

“You made it I knew you could?” The man with orange hair with similar clothes to Raleigh said. “Wait Guy me, and Girl Clyde standing in front of The Hopper. What are you two doing here I was wondering if we would ever see you again after the Replacement Life thing.” Raleigh said confused. “Ugh I'm tired of everyone calling me girl Clyde, my name is Clara! And if you forgot his name is Raylin.” She said crossing her arms with a frown. “Wait was it you two who patched us up, and if so why stop there?” Clyde asked confused. “Well, you see. We wanted to test you a little. This place we are in now. Are the roots of the Multiverse if you could survive, and make it here you'd pass, and if you didn't well. We'd at least try to rush you to the nearest hospital afterward.” Clara kicked him in the shins not liking his response.

“Right sorry, but what's important is you passed,” Raylin explained. “What was this for?” Clyde asked still confused. “For the Future,” Clara explained. “Well that's a spoiler, but without getting into too much detail let me ask you this Raleigh. Ever since you defeated Lucia... Eh, Lucius? You have noticed The Multiverse is less foggy? Like the places are more grounded than before, more tangible? “ Raylin asked. Raleigh thought for a moment.

“I guess I haven't thought about it, but you're right It does kinda feel that way.” She answered. “Well that's because of the paradox you made, the paradox we both made. When you defeated her... sorry I mean him it created a whole nother Multiverse where you failed, and countless other ones in between. In doing so you made your Multiverse less of a concept of infinite possibilities and into a real lived-in place making it both smaller and a bigger place at the same time.” He explained but it was starting to go over their head.

“So like? The Multiverse has its own multiverse.” Clyde said. “Yes just like that you beautiful

man. He said getting closer only for Clara to pull him back. “Hey just because they are me doesn't mean it's not still cheating.” She said frowning as he laughs. “That still doesn't answer our questions. “ Raleigh said Clinging to Clyde protecting him from the male version of herself. “Well like I said spoilers, but for now just know. The Once, and Future Enemy is on its way, and when the time comes we will need all the help we can get to stop it.” He explains.

“The Once, and Future Enemy?” Clyde asked interested. “That's all we can share on that front, but we may be able to spoil other stuff for you if you like,” Clara says. “Ok, how about the wishing door does that work out?” Raleigh asks right away. “Well actually we kinda never did that quest we still have our arms they are useful I think our paths deviate a lot after Project Deforestation. So we can't help you there.” She explained as they both raised their arms showing the glow of them. “Ugh just when I thought we had an advantage,” Clyde said annoyed.

“Wait does that mean we can go to your multiverse and take the aspects to our door?” Raleigh asked. “If I had to guess the door wouldn't accept it unless it is from this Multiverse. That's just speculation though. Well, I think that about covers it see you around for the final battle.” Raylin said turning to leave on his Hopper only for Clara to rush toward Clyde “One more thing.” She said striking at him out of nowhere. He held his hands out in confusion ready to block it expecting it to hurt, but as he did the gauntlets of the ultra suit appeared blocking her blow.

At first, he seemed confused but after seeing that he was more confused. “Just as I hoped you found the new power source.” She said smiling as she showed her hand covered in the gauntlets too. “I'll let you figure out the basics, but let me give you something to look forward to.” She smirks transforming into the full suit like it's an extension of herself, but it's not just the normal one it looks like it had been majorly upgraded. “I hate to say this Clyde, but I'm kinda crushing on girl you,” Raleigh said blushing as she walked into The Hopper. “Oh and don't wait too long in here someone is waiting for you outside,” Raylin said closing the door to his version of the hopper as it flew into the

Void.

“Someone is waiting for us?” Clyde said looking at Raleigh. Both of them keep following the light until they reach what looks like the mouth of a cave on the other side it looks like the Source World they step through looking back to see the way they came was sealed, and no longer available to them. “Clyde, Raleigh!” Loki said jumping down from one of the massive roots bringing them both in with a bear hug.

“I knew you weren't dead your soul cards told me so, yet it was so hard to find you. At first, I couldn't find you at all and then my senses seemed to get a little thrown off perceiving you as the opposite gender. You both looked hot as hell by the way at least your weird shadow forms I saw anyway.” He kept saying only for Raleigh, and Clyde to both butt in at the same time. “Too tight!” “Right, my bad. I'm just so happy you're alive. Now off to Valhalla, I won't be taking no for an answer.

The massive doors Loki uses to traverse worlds open on his villa as he carries both of his comrades over the shoulder to their embarrassment. He places them down on a bench just outside his home taking a deep breath. “Right now let's get to it. I'm not as capable in the health department as Lucy but I think I have a workaround.” He started to explain to them. “What would that be some kinda healing magic?” Clyde asks. “Well not quite. I was thinking more along the lines of a copy. The world saved the state your bodies were in during your last visit. I will reset you back to that point with your current memories. Now stay still.” He further elaborated.

“Wait hold on!” Raleigh said in protest only to start choking on blood. He raised an eyebrow in concern but stopped himself. “I know you said we would have our memories but... is there no other way? It's just that it was a while ago, and we have gotten stronger and gained scars we didn't before.” She said in protest. “She's right and I seemed to have unlocked a new power I don't think I'd be able to use it still if you did that,” Clyde said as well. Loki sighed looking them both over. “You're both in a dire state right now the fact that you are still alive, and able to talk at all is a miracle in itself. I don't

know very many methods in healing beyond the basic, and while I could probably track down Lucy with enough time, I fear it won't be soon enough. Although there was her parting gift.” He said a lot more serious than normal speculating on the thing she left behind with uncertainty.

Both of them look down deep in thought. Loki enters his villa for a moment returning with a box with a letter attached to it. He opened it up revealing a few cases of what looked to be some sort of magic potion. “She told me only to use this if necessary. It's a cure-all of sorts, but the amount of time it takes to completely work depends on the severity of the wounds, she also says it's rather painful along with other drawbacks. If you would prefer this so be it but I warn you. You'll be out of the hunt for the aspects for a while.” He explained urging them to think carefully.

Both of them look at each other nodding. “I think we had gotten a little ahead of ourselves, to begin with on that front... I was being too reckless. Maybe slowing down for once is what we both need. They'll be waiting for us when we return.” Raleigh said reluctantly acknowledging it finally. Clyde just nodded in agreement. Loki clapped his hands together before reaching down to pull out two bottles. “Right well, she didn't specify how to apply this so I was thinking I poured half of it on you and you drank the rest.” He said laughing.

“Wait what gr...” Clyde started to say only to be drenched in the liquid ready to further protest only for Loki to shove it into his mouth. Raleigh tried to back away but was far too injured to make any meaningful ground. “I'll see you both in a couple of weeks. Or was it months?” Loki asked unsure himself. They both started to pass out feeling the pain start to spread out from their body.

Chapter Thirty Five

Clyde slowly awoke murmuring Raleigh's name under his breath, but she was not there. The pain suddenly hit him like a truck a he opened his eyes completely. A maid was in the room already looking nervous. “You... you're finally awake. I'll tell Master Loki at once.” She said rushing out of the room before he couldn't process what was happening the pain his main focus. He sat up even though it was difficult to look down at his bandaged body the wounds seemed to have closed up but were still far from being completely healed. Just how long had it been?

Loki rushed in with excitement. “You are up!” “Yeah... why are you so... has it been that long?” Clyde asked. “I'm afraid so. It's been two months. Raleigh well she hasn't woken either, but she did have to be worse than you. “Where is she take me to her,” Clyde said with concern. “Woah, woah calm

down. She is in the room over. I thought about putting you together, but well I didn't know how fragile you were. When you have recovered a bit more perhaps we can change that.” Loki explained.

Clyde looked down longing to see her more than he ever had, and two months? He knew it would take a while but not like this, and not for so long. “Of my has Clyde finally truly fallen for the Great Captain Raleigh? I must say it's about time. ” Loki said teasing him and seeing the emotions written all over his face. Clyde looked up blushing but not answering him right away. “I've never liked that term... Falling in love. It's like saying I made some sort of mistake.” Clyde finally spoke up.

Loki looked a little surprised he was admitting it. “Oh? Then what would you call it?” He asked. “I am in love with her, but I don't want to fall. I want to stand in love together with her.” He said. “That's an interesting way to look at it how romantic. You two must have had quite the moment down in the roots.” Loki coos. “We did,” Clyde said smiling explaining just what happened down there leaving out the parts he thought Raleigh wouldn't want him to share.

“I see that explains the weird signatures you were both giving off. Who knew that was what the girl truly wished for? As for this Future Foe how unsettling I'm afraid I have never heard of such a thing. I'll see if I can come up with something regarding that, for now, please rest and in a few days we will see if you're well enough to move.” Loki turns to leave seemingly uncomfortable with the idea of the Once and Future Foe and his lack of knowledge, only for Clyde to grab his arm stopping him. “You don't get it. I told her I wouldn't just vanish on her. I need to be there when she wakes up, otherwise...” He said more urgently.

Loki sighs taking a deep breath. “Ok, I understand.” He tries his best to lift him into his arms without hurting him. He tried not to cry out just wincing in the pain even with Loki being gentle. He slowly, and Carefully walked him to the other room Clyde was embarrassed and feeling a little humiliated, but knowing this was what he needed to do. As they enter the room she is sleepily their gracefully calmer then he ever sees her. Just as he is about to set him down she opens her eyes waking

up and causing them both to panic a bit. “Goo.... good morning Clyde.” She started to say seeming to be handling the pain better still not fully awake. “Wait what the fuck are you two doing! Your cheating on me already, and with Loki?” She said outraged.

Clyde's worry vanishes right away as his face drops. “That is not what happened.” “Well you are in my arms perhaps she is right was this your aim all along,” Loki said playing into it. Clyde pushed off of him in annoyance regretting it right away as his body dropped to the floor and he cried out in great pain. Both of them looked worried now, and yet despite lacking the strength he mustered the power to crawl to her bed and climb up on top of it. “After I had to do all that embarrassing stuff just to get over here you said that to me first thing.” He said face down into the mattress.

She weakly pulls him closer lifting his head so they can look at each other. “I appreciate it.” She said smiling. “So what are we calling this exactly are you dating or...” Loki asked only for Raleigh to glare. “You can leave now Loki,” she said with a frown. He pouts but does as she says shutting the door only to put his ear up to it giggling like a little girl. “Well, he does have a point. He might need to redefine our relationship a little.” Clyde reluctantly said.

Raleigh pauses to think about it. “I am yours, and you are mine how about that? No need for labels, though I probably will have to work my way up to the more embarrassing love stuff.” She explains with a blush. He sits up seeming to like that answer. “That sure sounds like something you would say. By embarrassing do you mean something like this?” He said leaning in and kissing her for the first time. She looks at him with fear as he grows closer but doesn't stop him from accepting the kiss that seems to last a lifetime. When it is finally broken she answers him. “Yes just like that.” Both of them Lay down in the bed together resting both of them were still in pain but they could embrace each other without too much of an issue slowly falling back to sleep in each other's arms.

Loki squealed on the other side of the door rushing off to his study with glee. He past his father who was kinda just in the hallway drinking like a hobo giving him dirty looks as he skipped to his

room. He quickly sat down spinning in his chair laughing as he turned on a holographic screen calling several people at the same time. “Hello all it's finally time.” He shouted. On the call was Marcell who seemed less interested in his antics at the moment along with the two assistants from before, and a few others.

“Loki honey. It seems like the two of them are going to be just fine on their own why don't you just let it progress naturally.” Marcell pleaded. “No, no, no that will not do. This isn't some sort of trashy rom-com where they are still afraid to even hold hands 5 seasons in. No, we will push them closer.” He laughs as his two assistants do the same. “This is the most important mission I will ever give you all. Operation push Clyde, and Raleigh closer into love is a go!” He said ending the call.

Chapter Thirty Six

Aion groans leaning back in his chair a mix of annoyance and nervousness. “Where did it all go wrong? At the start of the year, we had so much going on. Newsworthy stories out the wazoo, and now the conflicts have stagnated to a level they aren't even worth mentioning in a normal segment.” He pulled at his collar sweating nervously as Mia got closer to him.

“Isn't that a good thing? I know it's bad for business but it also means things are peaceful for once.” She rebuts. “Oh, Mia.” He said leaning forward. “If only it was that simple... I agree it is a good thing for things to be peaceful but this isn't it. This is... the calm before the impending storm. The chaos could come at any moment, and it may not end well for us depending on which aspect holders end up on top. I was hoping we could broker some sort of deal with those two, but then they had to go and die,

how tragic. Maybe we should throw our lots in with the Commander.” He explained. “Well fortunately for us we can check up on them whenever we want.” She reassured him. “Your right how about we do just that?” He said smiling in her direction but never giving eye contact. She nods as her eyes glow more intensely and his like she is sharing her vision.

The eyes open in the sky over Flamecrest seeing what is going on. Marcus and the others have returned licking their wounds seemingly ready to leave again. “What exactly are we waiting for Marcus?” Luna asked him. “Well to put simply, and opportunity. While I try to sort out this... issue with the head. Crow is looking high in low, and will inform us when they find the perfect one.” He explains in his usual cadence of speech.

She frowned. “It's a little more than just an issue. How many people were hurt, and killed...” She started to say in protest. “Enough. I understand the issue; there is no need to give me any more grief over it. It doesn't help that these recruits are so... useless compared to the Legion though.” He interjects. She growls at him. “While it's true they aren't on our level and we have always been strong, it's important to remember we forged that power on the battlefield over countless years you need to be more understanding of that.” She said defending them. It would seem ever since the indecent she hadn't left his side. He frowned nodding but not saying anything else.

Cindy flew by catching Mia's attention as she shifted her focus to her. She landed just outside the castle walls where The Hopper was parked Noir working diligently on the outsides finishing the paint job Clyde, and Raleigh had started. “Hey, you! We gotta talk.” She roars at the Clone. She looks unimpressed Sliding down from the top of it and crossing her arms. “About what?”

“The boss thinks you the key or something to winnin this war. I don't think so but. He set on it even with everythin that happen.” She said clenching her fist. “What's your point? I made no promises to go easy on that woman.” Noir said glaring. “Yeah well... Loyalty is you know... We got you this far, and you got yer fancy ship back. How bout you start showing some thanks.”

“You're right this ship is important to me and I am grateful for your part in helping me, but I think I help you all out enough given the circumstances. If you want to talk about loyalty why don't you fix your bosses before you try to question mine.” Noir said pressing her finger into the dragon's chest. “I don't like ya. I don't think I ever will ta be honest. I don't know how your gobbing goop works, and what you remember, but you and me fought once, and you were a lot funner then.” She said mocking her referring to the time she had Fought Raleigh unsure if she had that memory as a clone.

Noir did not have it as she was cloned before that occurred. “You seem eager to settle this. So how about it then let's have a little duel.” She said drawing her Multi-tool out ready to fight. “Yer so on the shit head,” Cindy said grinning ready to knock her lights out. Mia stops watching him letting Aion take it all in.

“Infighting is good for us... I think who knows that group still leaves me the most worried maybe we can slip a segment in on the late show about it. Let's see what the general is up to.” Aion said Mia nodded and showed them too. She is on the bridge getting chewed out by Medan yet again as they watch The Squad close in on Tristan yet again only for him to slip away at the last minute. “If it weren't for the new navigation units we would have lost him long ago why aren't you able to catch one man? You don't even have the accuse of him being powerful he's a weakling.” Medan grumbles.

“About those, how exactly do they work? I mean they have shortened down our travel time, and amount of jumps we have to make, almost to the level of the empires...” She started to say only to get cut off. “That is of no importance to you. It's strictly needed to know we don't want that information to leak to your enemies are lose the advantage.” He said quickly to push back on that. “Right.” Is all she said only growing more suspicious of them. She would get Marcy to investigate she thought.

Mia again ends the viewing giving Aion time to think. “They seemed to have stagnated in their search not much to report there. Those New Units though. Might want to keep our... Your eye on that.” he said correcting himself. “Thank you for the Insight Dear Mia, let's make one more check before we

call it a night does that sound good?" He asked she already knew who he means.

"Cyrus was at his desk a pile of papers stacked up both physical and digital. White constant phones ring. He answers one after the other seemingly swamped with work. Tess enters the room as the phone stops ringing for a moment giving him respite. "Well, I can't say I expected everything to happen this way. That recruitment ad you did help out, although I'm sure this is what you wanted." Tess said.

"Yes and no. I just have a lot of more administrative duties now instead of firefights." He answered filling out some of the paperwork in front of him. "About that. It seems it is not just people who want to join us anymore, it's entire worlds that are dissatisfied with how things are. Would you like to take a break to go visit some of them we don't know if all of them are the best fit?" She suggested.

"That would be a nice change of pace." He sighs standing up ready to abandon the work for now to do it. Tess seemed to have something else lingering in her mind he seemed to notice, but wasn't about to dig unless she brought it up. Just as he was about to exit she spoke up. "Sir, there is one thing that still bugs me. All these noble acts are one thing but... healing our enemies why would you think that is a good idea? Now they potentially have the chance to hurt us." She asked not understanding with her experience in the empire. Cyrus sighs. "You're looking at things wrong. There are good in bad people on every side even the ones that would oppose us, the situation called for it. Natasha... she's a good woman."

"Do you have feelings for her?" Tess asked abruptly causing him to drop his normal calm demeanor and Laugh like that was the silliest thing he had ever heard. "Out of the question, but I do respect her whether or not she is a foe in the future remains to be seen, but I am prepared for that if it is the case." He explains, that she doesn't seem to like that answer seeing it more as a dismissal but accepts it for now following him out.

"Well now it seems everything is going great for The Commander he'll have to thank me for sticking my neck out sometime," Aion said a little annoyed but also a hint of admiration. "Even still I think it

only cemented my fear. The stagnation has set in who knows when it will all go wrong, it could be tomorrow or 5 years from now.” He groans.

“As long as I'm with you, and can hear your wonderful voice everything will turn out just fine,” Mia said reassuring him with her still emotionless face as she cradled his head around her in comfort. “Right back at you.” He said as he returned her embrace.

Chapter Thirty Seven

Time has passed. Raleigh and Clyde have mostly recovered naturally with a few lingering issues, but none of that was important today. Out of the blue Loki shipped them off to some island to enjoy its renowned luxurious spa without asking for their input. While at first both of them seemed reluctant when the workers got their hands on them they quickly gave in needing the relaxing treatment more than they realized. Both of them lay on their stomachs as they dug into their backs with masterful hand movements that seemed to know just how to calm them both even Raleigh's more restless personality.

Loki watched in the corner looking a little frustrated. “It's been almost a month and they have barely progressed at all,” Loki said pacing back in forth trying to think about more ways to push them

together. “I mean they seem to be sharing a bed at the very least.” One of his assistants said. “What of it once they are all better they probably will stop doing that, and they have only kissed a handful of times since then. What to do what to do.” Loki said not convinced. “I think Marcell might be right about this one boss.” This other woman assistant said to him. “Nonsense tonight we will plan a fancy dinner date for them with romantic lighting, and music.” He declares sneaking away as both of them just look at each other not sure if they should keep going along with it.

“Raleigh sighs with great relief like she had never felt such pleasure. “I hate to admit it but this feels amazing did Loki have to search the ends of the Multiverse to find you guys?” She asked the ma-sues. “Something like that. The man has a way with words when he tries hard enough.” The woman answers pressing a bit harder on her lower back moving her hands slowly lower. The one with Clyde did the same. “You're getting kinda low there.” He said a little worried only for them to squeeze where he feared. “Relax it's all part of the massage.” She said both of them suddenly not feeling as enthused about it.

When the massage ends and they are freed to go off to the next place they walk together. “So I've been meaning to ask... I think it might be important to set some boundaries.” Clyde said. “What do you mean.” She asked curiously. “Well like what's ok for us to do to each other.” He started to say. “Hmm, I'm not sure I think you're already pretty respectful of that do you...” She said only for them to arrive at their next destination which seems to have been changed last minute. A sign half haphazardly covering the original with the words hot spring. “Well um... I guess like seeing you naked.” He said a bit nervously feeling pushed into saying it after seeing that.

She blushed looking unsure herself. “You won't look at me with disgust?” She asked. “Raleigh look at yourself...” He started to say referring to her being rather attractive. “That's not what I... never mind, Maybe it's OK but. Let's stay back to back.” She said faintly blushing. He nodded entering before her to remove his clothing and enter the bath. The water was heavenly seeming to remove any

remaining pain, and fatigue he forgot everything closing his eyes, and laying back. Raleigh entered a little after seeing his shirtless body and all the scars he had gained from their misadventures. Half of them are from The Reaper.

She blushes entering the water before he opens his eyes. Leaning her back against him like she said. “Your... your body is a testament to your hard work. Not just the scars.” She said acting much more timid than normal. “Oh? I thought we weren't looking at each other?” He said opening his eyes but still looking away like he promised. “Ok fine just a peak, but give me a moment to prepare mentally.” She said pushing away from him. “Ok, you can look now.” She said permitting him.

He turns around to see what she is hiding. She is facing his back to him still but looking towards him with a bit of fear one hand covering her breasts while the other one flails awkwardly seemingly torn on what to hide from him. Her back is rather slender and normal at first glance he doesn't quite get what she's so afraid of he moves a bit closer starting to see what the issue is. It would seem the ports on her head to use to plug into the hopper aren't the only ones she has there are many along her back.

She has many scars from battle, but also incisions from the evil doctor's modifications. He always knew she had cybernetics, but not like this. He didn't know if it was her choice but a lot of them while noticed where more subtle than the likes of Rebecca's robotic arms. “I think I get it now.” He said brushing his hand along her back causing her to yelp softy. “Why would you think something like this would repulse me? You're still stunning, though It does make me a bit angry that he did this to you.” He said to her.

She looked away tearing up. “It wasn't all him... but I guess it doesn't matter anymore. That man is gone, and you're with me now. So if I may. Would you hold me?” She asked only for him to nod embracing her from behind. They both stay like that for a while before getting up and leaving for the next thing. It seemed to have gotten later than they thought seeing the sky had grown dark and the hallway leading them out onto a huge patio is fancy décor and lighting as well as candles lit

everywhere. Loki was there wearing a fake mustache and a waiter uniform. “Evening you two sit, sit, and enjoy the meal we have prepared for you both!” He said enthusiastically. Both of their faces drop a little annoyed by him. “Loki we aren't stupid. The hot spring... this. It's pretty clear what you're trying to do.” Clyde said to him bluntly. “Oh um, who is Loki... I seem to get mistaken for him quite a lot. He must be very handsome and cool. Nevertheless, I hope that you both enjoy the meal.” Loki said still trying to act otherwise as he jumped off the side of the building to flee.

A band started to play overly romantic music as fireworks shot out in the sky both of them sat at the table feeling a lot more awkward than before they seemed unsure what to do like his efforts in pushing them closer just backfired. “Hey let's get out of here.” Clyde wisp-eared looking around for the nearest escape route. “I was afraid you'd never say that... or worse...” Raleigh said with a smirk as they snuck away climbing off the railing off the opposite side Loki did. “Wait come back,” Loki shouted popping his head from the other side, but it was too late. “Drat... Now what...” He pouted. “I told didn't I. let them figure things out for themselves,” Marcell said sitting on a platform near bye. Loki's ears droop. “Alright fine.

Raleigh leads the way holding Clyde's hand as they both laugh fireworks still shooting all over the sky. “That idiot why does he always have to be so weird about stuff like this,” Raleigh said with a grin. It would seem that despite his perverted antics, and meddling. She had grown to care for him in all this time. “He's a good friend,” Clyde said agreeing. They walk a bit more ending at the end of the beach. “Well even if it was pushed a little I enjoyed today. How about we end things off with a bang.” Clyde said leaning in as they kissed under the fireworks.

Chapter Thirty Eight

Rebbecca had done it. Both wings had finally transferred completely to her, and she was ready to test them right away. She smiled thinking of Porta Nexus and in an instant, she was there but one thing she didn't expect was to be in the sky at the exact point she was thinking about she started to fall, but the wings lifted her up. “Hmm, I see an extra bonus. They really are limitless with traversal.” She smiled experimenting more.

She teleported to places all over the multiverse she had visited faster than anyone even Raleigh with one limitation. She can't seem to go anywhere she can't see or hasn't been to before. “Hmm, this ability would compliment her a lot better huh.” She said rubbing her chin next to an alien-looking man who seemed to be still bewildered by her sudden appearance. She smiled and vanished once more this

time to the vault where she left off last.

She looked at the area with the core in the center pushing everything away with all the gravity, and force imaginable. She moves closer with the wings but is still pushed back so she teleports closer to get a better look however it is not close enough gravity violently pulls her down she only has a second to correct her mistake and teleport directly to the core. She took a deep breath now standing on the orb that had a small door welded shut no one was even meant to be able to get this far even the universal code of this world was modified to make sure of that yet here she was thanks to the power of the wings.

She started to cut out the door peering inside and seeing a glove floating there. She looks with glee trying to pull it out only for it to not budge seeming to be one final measure to ensure whatever it was stayed there by the world. She thought for a moment and decided to put on the glove and teleport wearing it. It worked vanishing with her. The world had a violent reaction. Like it couldn't fathom that someone she was able to take it with everything in place. It started to collapse in on itself.

None of this matters to the Cyborg now though she had gotten what she came for and returned to her Boss already with her new power. He was in the same position as before turning around to face her. “At last you have done it. I knew you could be most impressive. Now if you would hand it over.” He said holding his hand out. She took it off her wrist handing it to him. “Will you tell me what is so important about it now?” She asked a little wary of the answer.

The boss didn't answer attaching it to himself like it was always meant to be there. After a moment it finally did. “This my child is what is known as a Transcendent Class Item.” He raised it showing it to her. “Transcendent? Does that mean...” She started to ask. “Yes. Like our Universal Minds, and the Aspects of the Multiverse. Items like these transcend the laws of the universe they are on a Multiversal level. No god or troublesome code can interfere.” He goes on to explain.

“To think something like that can also be created. I thought such a power was only possible

through chance or The Caretaker's meddling.” Rebbecca said with interest. “You would be correct, unfortunately. As far as I'm aware they are the same and exceedingly rare.” He further explains. “And what is it that you needed it for?” She asked with fear and curiosity. He walked away from her. “You walk too close to the sun. We wouldn't want those new wings of yours to melt off.” He said causing her to shiver a bit. “Right, my mistake sir.” She said frowning.

“Good. I already have your next mission prepared. I have determined that The Wishing Door is something worth pursuing after all, it has a limited capacity of course. You will touch base with both Orion Vesper, and Raleigh once more, and help them, but when the time comes you will take the wish for us. As always you will make no mention of me or our operations acting as my Trojan understand.” He orders.

“It feels a bit weird correcting you like this considering well, you're you, but they kinda... died.” She said Crossing her arms seemingly more upset about that now that she had more time to think about it. “That's what the majority of the Multiverse believes yes. How Ironic I wasn't even looking for them, and yet they appear on one of my surveillance units in the Source world.” He said turning to face her again as he opened a holographic display showing footage of Raleigh, and Clyde leaving the Roots and meeting with Loki.

A wave of relief washed over her causing her to tear up, but as her boss's eye narrowed she remembered where she was calming down. “I see so they make it out ok after all. I'll begin searching for them right away. “Good. However, it seems I need to remind you of a few things. Your pain, and the pain of those who cross me. You asked what this item can do. Put simply.” He said opening a portal to another world. She can see a space station on the other side.

She recognized it right away as a rival hacker faction that had been a nuisance to them in the past, but because of their similar mastery over the code in their world fighting them at their home was nigh impossible. He stuck his hand out as the glove started to pulse a wave of energy shot out into the

world like a net, and before she could even fully process what was happening all of it was violently absorbed into the glove he winced in pain as part of the glove started to crack one of the three lights shattered. She saw now that there were initially five.

He held the ball of energy in his hand torn in their side was almost effortlessly destroyed in an instant. “But how... they had the code of that universe that's why we couldn't do anything to them...” Rebbecca asked distraught her fear greater than it had been for a long time. “That is the potential of every Transcendent Class power. Now go, and don't forget what you have seen.” He orders. She sheepishly nods and vanishes right away. She ducked into a random alley on a random world cradling herself and trying to come to terms with the power she handed him. What were its limitations?

But what bothered her more than anything was the fact that that glove wasn't even considered enough to beat the Once in Future Foe her boss was so worried about. After calming down she decided to fulfill her mission. Despite having misgivings she was still very loyal and believed in his mission. She followed the tracker to the hopper like she had before in hopes of finding them that way but it took a bit because she hadn't been to where it's at, but even after she reached Flamecrest she saw it was with Noir, and not Raleigh.

Noir is leaning against the outside of it resting seeming to know she has eyes on her even though Rebbecca is still very far away. She had no idea they had lost the ship to her, but it made sense to her, she had only one other idea of where they could be but she was guessing it was right vanishing before Noir could do anything else.

Chapter Thirty Nine

Clyde felt strange every morning now he felt overwhelmed with something like it was growing and consolidating. At first, it felt amazing, but now it feels like it's swelling and begging to be released. He sat up in bed as Raleigh slept soundly near him still holding onto him. He raised his arm as the familiar glow of the arm aspect showed did it have something to do with it? He decided to try to let some of that energy out a little bit couldn't hurt right?

As he did so his hand glowed brighter fulling covering his arm and shooting out destroying a big chunk of the wall. The ultra suit glove was now on his hand. He looked shocked not even thinking he could do such a thing in a world where Violence wasn't possible. Loki seemed just as surprised rushing in from the Balcony the second he noticed. “What in the bloody hell did you just do, how did

you...” He said getting uncomfortably close to his face.

“I'm more worried about why you noticed it so soon, to be honest.” Clyde retorts. “No, no, we aren't doing the Oh Loki's a silly perv stick right now. Just because I was peeking through the window doesn't mean... Listen the point is that light shot out pretty far and took a chunk of my house with it you shouldn't even be able to do that here.” He said calming down. Raleigh finally woke up. “Can you two shut up, I'm trying to get my beauty sleep. Ugh forget it I can't go back to sleep. What is so bad about that anyway? I think it's cool.” She goes on to say.

“You weren't joking when you said you unlocked something new huh? I felt a different aura around you. Let's take a day trip to War World there is something there I've been meaning to show you Raleigh.” He said calming down. “What about your house,” Clyde said confused by his sudden change. “Oh never mind that it will get fixed eventually.” Loki laughs only for his father to open the door it would seem he was passing by when he mentioned War World. “You've had a way back there this whole time shit stain?” He asked looking more sober, and more angry than he has in a while.

“Well yes,” Loki said in surprise. Dave looked like he wanted to say something but ended up turning away to return to his drinking. “Fucking prick I can't return looking like this now.” He said walking off. “Why do you even keep him around Loki,” Clyde asked with concern. “I can't just go and abandon my father now, can I? Nevertheless, let's get going.”

He leads them to the Giant door he uses to traverse worlds. Opening it to War World once more this time they seem more prepared both Clyde and Raleigh wearing more warm clothing already feeling the chilling air blow through. He leads them through to a location that haven't been before, yet somehow it feels familiar to them both. They look around seeing that it's the village Tristan, and others lived in yet somehow it's been moved some of them rush up to greet them. “The Good Pirates are back thank you so much your your help!” One of them said grateful.

“For the last time, we are not Pirates!” Raleigh yells. “How did they... Loki did you do this?”

She asked calming down. “Why yes. The thing was they didn't want to leave their home. Which is understandable so I decided well it might be a little bit of trouble, but how about we bring their home with them to a safer place.” He laughs. Raleigh hugs him tearing up a little. “Thank you so much, Loki.” Showing him gratitude she hardly affords him. “Oh come on now little miss you'll make me cry too.” He said look away embarrassed.

“Well I mean I'm sure this is better but why War World, and not Valhalla,” Clyde asked. “Well, simply a difference in values. While these people are far from warriors the No Violence rule was a bit much for them. And well War World matches their aesthetic more.” He explained. “Yes, so my dear brother shoved them off onto me,” Theron said annoyed approaching them from inside the village. Raleigh suddenly clung to Clyde giving him a look that scared him a bit. “Oh um hey Theron thanks for doing all this.” He said using his words carefully. I never thought Raleigh noticed his interest in her before now, but he wasn't about to break their bond over it.

“It is no matter no one in War World is allowed to touch this village and no one has sought to question why, but that's that why you're here is it. That power was so small last we met, and now I feel it overflowing within you.” The Lion woman said to him. “I was thinking it was about time he honed his power, and who better to help him with that than the Great War Master of War World,” Loki said trying to butter her up.

It seemed to work on her a little bit but she sighs. “You sure have been asking a lot of me as of late dear brother, and while I love battle I think it's about time you returned the favor.” She said remaining stoic. “Oh? And what is it that you want from me?” He asked curious. “A date.” She said shocking them all. “A date! I know I'm a sexual deviant, but I'm gonna have to draw the line at real-life blood relations.” He said in protest also shocking Clyde, and Raleigh. “What do you mean by real life?” He asked. “Oh well, you know role play. Not important.” Loki said. “What's wrong with asking for a date?” She asked pouting a little.

“Uh, Theron do you know what a date is?” Clyde asked remembering their conversation during the Tournament. “Of course, you go out with someone you really love and do things together.” She explains. “Well, I guess that's not technically wrong but well... They usually refer to someone you are romantically interested in.” Loki goes on to explain. Theron covers her face in embarrassment. “Curse our father for hiding all these things from me.” She said with shame. “It's quite alright I'd be happy to spend the day with you sometime I never knew you cared for such things in truth.” Theron smiles picking him up and hugging him despite his protest.

Both of them sit down just watching Theron, and Loki show both affection and aggression at the same time until they calm down. “Enough. Come let us go somewhere to see what we are working with. Theron walks away into the forest all of them follow her to a clearing.

“Now that power what do you know?” She asks him. He thinks about it not knowing as much as he would like. “Well, it has something to do with the Ultra Suit. The armor I wore that made me stronger. I wasn't able to use it much because it lacked the power needed for it to work, but something is different now. After our near-death, it's like something changed.” Theron thought for a moment. “Ah, near-death experiences often bring people to new heights.” She said. “Hmm, this power you still haven't told us everything that happened down in the roots. Perhaps something down there triggers the power.” Loki suggested.

Clyde looked at Raleigh unsure how much of it she wanted him to share that he had not already. “Well our aspects kinda went crazy trying to save our lives, and our blood mixed, we encountered another version of ourselves, and well The Roots seem to have a strange power in themselves all the power in the Multiverse might come from somewhere beyond them.” Raleigh goes on to explain. “I see the burden of choices. I think it's better to focus on harnessing that power than go on showing us what you can do Clyde.” Theron urges.

Clyde took a deep breath this time letting it all out. The energy exploded in every direction

destroying everything around as a huge beam of light shot into the air. He was in the suit once the light dispersed but soon after the armor disappeared, and he felt that most of the energy had vanished. “I'm guessing that wasn't the greatest Idea after all.” He said looking at all the destruction. Everyone was find strong enough to take the blow, but a little dazed. “Holy shit Clyde, your actually packing some power now,” Raleigh said amazed.

“Yet you lack control. It can be useful, yes, but I think until you better master this you'll have much to work on. Can you do that again?” Theron asked. He looked at his hands. “I don't think so, but I can feel the power building up again like I just dumped out all the water and it's filling up again.” He explained. “How about a smaller scale then? Try reaching out your hand like you did before.” Loki suggested. Clyde did as he said focusing all his energy on his hand. The light flashed briefly but faded quickly before even fully forming. “Look's like I can't.”

Before he could do anything else Theron lunched forward punching him. He only has seconds to dodge it both gauntlets suddenly form around him protecting him. “Hey, what's gives!” He said in protest. “Forgive me I wanted to confirm something you said earlier.” Theron started to say only for someone to cut her off clapping the distance. “Interesting. It seems you can only control this new power when you're in danger.” Rebbecca said all of them looked around not seeing her anywhere only for her to appear in front of Clyde way too close to his face with a smile. She quickly vanished again appearing onto a tree.

“Rebbecca? What are you doing here? I see you finally got the wings.” Raleigh asked. “That's right, and now I'm here to fulfill my promise to you, and drag you back into the fight. I knew you two wouldn't die so easy.” She lied. “I mean it's great you're going to do that but... well we aren't ready to go yet,” Clyde said only for Raleigh to look away like she didn't agree. “Time is short though I mean I suppose everyone has kinda been stuck in a stalemate since you died, but well it's been 3 months.” She said teleportation closer to Raleigh. She blushed afraid she was going to try and kiss her again. “I am

taken now woman don't touch me!" She said nervously admitting more than she wanted. "Oh is that so. So that's it suddenly you don't care about the door anymore?" She said appearing in front of Clyde.

"You were the one that said we had all the time in the world," Clyde said in protest. "I said you had all the time in the world. I didn't say the people caught in the crossfire did." She corrected him. "Dear, why the sudden interest last time I checked you didn't even care to go after the aspects for the wish," Loki asked. "Just doing what I promised to do." She said rubbing her body against the Lion's chest. "Careful I might get the wrong idea." He said seeming to understand her act more than you would expect. "Enough of this. I don't know who you are, but if they don't want to leave with you that's that. We will return to our training." Theron said acting as the voice of authority.

"You have a point what about Tristan we need to save him he is still running he promised the villagers we would. We have fully recovered." Clyde said admitting it. "Perhaps the only true way to refine such a power is on the battlefield. Good luck Clyde Moore, and Captain Raleigh." Theron said accepting the situation even though they haven't given her an answer. Loki sighs turning away as well. "Be safe alright I'll be in Valhalla in the event I'm needed."

"But we don't have The Hopper that stupid bitch stole it," Raleigh said with anger towards Noir. "I mean that bitch is also you at least a little don't worry she is taking good care of it. For now, my wings will be enough to take us where we need to go." Rebbecca explains. "Wait you saw her?" Raleigh said with anger Rebbecca just shrugged. "Well yeah, but she is just as attached to it as you are. It's not so easy to take something from her myself. So are you coming or not?" She asked bluntly.

Chapter Forty

Tristan caught his breath sitting outside a kind lady's shop. She invited him in out of the kindness of her heart, even though he had no money. He sipped his tea, thinking about everything that had happened. How did he get here exactly? It all started when he went to visit his father. He was out helping the other villagers with farming. He whipped sweat from his brow, noticing his son traveling down the road.

“Tristan your back. Good to see you, lad!” He said eagerly rushing over to give him a bear hug that he didn't appreciate. “What are you doing out here Dad? Don't you have Duties as Mayor?” He asked his father even though he already knew why. “This is one of them.” The power of the leg was glowing as he spoke. If I follow the path laid out for me the crops will do well, and everyone in town

will be better for it, but enough about that tell me about your adventures. Did you find what you're looking for?" he asked as they walked down the road together toward the village.

He didn't know how to answer. "I just. I don't know." That is all he said. "That's ok lad. No one has their life figured all out even at my age. I tell you what I'm pretty sure your mother said she was baking some cobbler how bout we forget everything for now, and chow down on it." He said with a smile. Tristan just nodded following him with less enthusiasm.

Upon returning home his mother greeted him with much of the same love. He mostly went through the motions of each cobbler which was quite good as they both happily chatted away in the middle of their conversation and stood up with rage. "How can you both just sit here like that? I left the village to find myself and didn't accomplish any of my goals I wasted my time traveling across this stupid country learning nothing of myself or the world. I abandoned you, I took your money and you're acting like nothing happened. Why?" He said with outrage.

"Oh dear it's because we love you, even if you haven't figured out what you want to do in life. That money was well spent." His mother while a first shocked smiled and said. "Listen, we didn't have things figured out at your age either it took us a long while to find our place here. You've always aspired for more, and I believe one day you'll find that lad." His father said reassuring him as he grabbed onto his shoulders. Tristan just shoved him away running off to his room.

He lays awake at night thinking about everything knowing he should apologize to him in the morning. He didn't know what to do this world all felt wrong like he longed to go somewhere drastically different but didn't know where or how, but before he could think about it more the ground shook as he heard screams from outside. He peaked his head out the window seeing Captain Dawnstaarr and her men pillaging the town looking for something. He quickly closed the window back up knowing the best place to hide would be the basement could tell already he stood no chance at beating any of them no one in the village did he expected that his father was already down there.

However, as he rushed down the stairs he froze his father was on the ground as she planted her foot on his neck. “Hand over that fancy leg power of yours or will just kill you, and take it ourselves.” She demanded with a little laugh. Both he and his father made eye contact. Even though he was terrified he wanted to try and save him but his face told him no, and to run before she noticed him. Frustrated he ended up respecting that sneaking down to the basement like he planned but not leaving just key hoping they would let him go.

“You'll have to kill me then. This power is too special for scum like you to get their hands on.” He said spitting out blood. “Well if you insist,” Dawnstaarr said sticking her tongue out like she preferred this option. She stabbed him in the chest as his father smiled transferring the Leg power to Tristan. “You fool if you kill the user the power transfers to a random location it could be on any person or thing in this world now.” He lied laughing at her as he took his final breaths.

Tristan ran to hide with tears in his eyes evading their notices. Dawnstaarr left in a rage believing his story trying to salvage her mistake. Even after the rubble was cleared people didn't stop coming to the village most of them just asked questions, but a few attacked all wearing similar-looking outfits to the pirates. After Jacob showed up he had enough he was endangering everyone by being there. He thought hard thinking of a way out of it and like the leg was listening it started to glow and a way point of energy appeared in front of him.

“Is this... the path dad was always talking about?” He asked himself as he followed the line of light to the end. A portal natural to the world opened up shocking him, but it looked like it was going to close just as quickly as it appeared so he quickly followed the way point through only to appear in a world so much different than the one he knew it was wondrous he wants to explore every inch of it. Unfortunately, a group of thugs started chasing him right away seeing his glowing leg wishing to take the power for themselves.

A new way point appeared and he followed it to another natural portal, but everywhere he went

he seemed to have very little time to catch his breath before more people were after him for over 3 months that had been his life he wondered when it would end was this a punishment he thought? After all, it was sorta what he wanted. The woman broke him out of his trance. “Is the tea to your liking young man?” She asked. “Oh um yes it's very good thank you so much. I honestly haven't met anyone as kind as you in a long while.” He said feeling a little bad he was taking advantage.

“It's no trouble it looked like you needed a break from life. Everyone needs one ever so often.” She smiled at him. He did the same only for his attention to be drawn to Rebbecca, Clyde, and Raleigh's sudden appearance outside. “Well that is embarrassing do we have to hold hands like that every time we jump? Not sure I'm a fan of this way of traveling.” Raleigh said missing The Hopper already. “I gotta have contact with you to make the jump now let's find that boy Loki said he was around here somewhere. Of look he's right over there.” Rebbecca said pointing to him with amusement they found him so fast.

Without even thinking Tristan just started to run away. “Wait! Hold on we don't wanna hurt you Tristan come back!” Raleigh said running after him. He ran further into the more fantasy-like town. This world felt more familiar to him yet different there weren't any orcs roaming around like in this one. “ He thought as he passed me a huge lumbering one. “I need to stop running, and find someone who can help me.” He said with worry as a new Way point appeared that was leading him into some sort of school or college hoping he would lose them in there.

Chapter Forty One

Sophie Swallow held a textbook close to her chest rushing to her next class. She had yet again overslept and missed the start of her lecture. She had short blue hair with matching eyes that seemed to have a glimmer of fire in them. She was afraid that the teacher would scold her for not taking classes seriously. She hadn't been at the college of magic long but she had already done well for herself otherwise progressing in fire magic in a way people of this world had never seen before.

As she rounded the corner she ran into Tristan who was running the opposite way still following the path laid out for him. They both fall Tristan rubs his head as papers fly into the air. “I'm sorry I was following the... well I guess you won't know what any of that means.” He started to explain only to stop

himself knowing she wouldn't know. She looked at his leg curiously like she had seen it somewhere before, but couldn't quite place where.

Before she could think about it though it seemingly was pulled into her mind by an unseen force. Opening her eyes she looked ahead and saw a group of people all with blue hair, and eyes like hers. “It's started up again we can't just stand here we have to do something. This kid is probably in danger.” A muscular man argued. An older woman next to him shook her head. “That is not our place The Caretaker granted them to only those who desired them.” She said adjusting her glasses.

“Our place? That thing deceived us into doing all this why should we care what it wants?” A younger woman in a suit said. “What do you know of battle girl? Your life had no such things.” The Muscular man argued. “I fought different kinds of battles you know the kind that need your brain to win.” She said mocking him. “Who cares about that.” Another more flamboyant man started to say. “He's cute isn't that enough to help him?” More people started to argue further confusing Sophie “Um?” She tried to say but they didn't notice.

“Can you please tell me what is going on? Who are you people?” She said much louder. All of them paused turning their attention to her. “Well, we are you.” The Muscular man explained. “Your past lives to be more precise.” The older woman corrected. A man in the back who had stayed silent this whole time finally stood up walking between them all. They seemed to hold him with the most respect and didn't try to interrupt him. “I'm sorry to say this, but it's all my fault. You see there was this door and well... I made a wish, and well The Caretaker granted it, but they also warped it in a way that benefited them.” He explained.

“What is it that you... we wished for.” She asked still very lost. “Well, it was rather selfish, to be honest. I wished to experience everything this is the result. The wish is ongoing and will be far past our lifetimes, but well that's not important at the moment. That man out there in the real world has the Leg of the Multiverse if someone gets all of them they could wish for anything, and that could be disastrous

for everyone everywhere depending on who makes that wish. I say all this to say... You were never supposed to be pulled here that leg pulled us all out of your soul. Now you have to make a choice. You can forget everything and go back to this life or we can all combine, and stop the aspects from ending up in the wrong hands." He explained overwhelming her with information.

"You saying I'm some kinda immortal... soul... like a phoenix?" She asked more timidly. "Yes in fact in past lives we have been called that." He further explains. "I can't do any crazy stuff like that. I barely passed fifth-period refraction." He said unsure of her abilities. "That may be true in this lifetime, but you still have potential, and with all our knowledge, and skills combined we will be unstoppable. But like I said as the current life we are living it's your choice.

Back in the real world, Tristan looks at her concerned as she has sat there not responding for a while now. "Are you um..." He started to say standing up only for a massive outpour of energy to suddenly shoot out of her violently knocking him back down on his ass. Her skin breaks away showing black tattoos all over her body from her face to her legs, Her back shoots out with wings of fire and a ring of it does the same above her head. She leans her head back filled with an overwhelming mouth of feeling and information Some of pure pleasure while others more full of dread with the path she has chosen.

The hallway had been partly destroyed as she looked down at Tristan with a much more stoic face reaching out her hand. "Come boy I will keep you safe." She said calmly. He is frozen on the ground blushing red as a tomato. "Did this leg lead me to some sort of goddess?" He said still in awe neglecting to take her hand. She loses a bit of her composure blushing herself. "What did you... listen that leg of yours it attracts..." She started to warn him thinking it had just been caught up in it, but Raleigh and the others started shouting at the end of the hall trying to catch him.

"Go now I will protect you!" The Phoenix urged him. He reluctantly nods running off, but now that they are closer Rebbecca can use the wings to cut him off. "Hold on there dude we just wanna

talk.” She said smiling, but before he could even say anything Phoenix Appeared to her shoving her against the wall so hard she broke through and they both tumbled out into the courtyard together.

Rebbecca looked shocked not used to being caught off guard like this. “Did you just...” She asked her confused. “Yes. I never lost my version of the wings.” She said staying serious as she engulfed them both with fire so hot it started to melt the glass. All the students and teachers have noticed by now, and have started evacuating.

“What the hell is going on who is that?” Clyde asked. “I don't know but she is even giving Rebecca a run for her money we need to help out,” Raleigh said jumping out the window to join the fight. Clyde takes one look down the hallway seeing Tristan getting away again sighing knowing he can't just leave them to deal with something like this even if he isn't the strongest.

Rebbecca pulls out all her drones firing on her but they seem to only dissipate against her skin doing nothing. “I forgot the feeling the Hide of the Multiverse brings.” The Phoenix laughs as the personalities seems to take over briefly because she calms down again. The hacker frowns seeing that this isn't the type of person she can underestimate. She shoots out her cords wrapping both of them around her before she seems to understand once they are secured around her she slams her body into the wall.

The Phoenix is bound but still covered in fire and seems to be using the cords as a point of travel to reach her. Rebbecca detaches them before she can reach them. Running the opposite way as Raleigh arrives where they are. “Tag your it,” Rebbecca said highfiving the confused Raleigh before vanishing. The Phoenix breaks free of her binds forming a sword of fire and striking at her she barely has enough time to transform her weapon into a weapon and block it. “The Arms huh? That makes things a bit trickier, but well our own should chancel them out yes.” The Phoenix said with a smirk. It would seem the people inside her are still not fully integrated.

“Who the hell are you?” Raleigh said more confused than concerned at the point. “I am your

reckoning. All of you Aspect holders that seek ill intentions opening the door. It's a mistake.” She explained around when Clyde caught up. “We didn't ask for this power! We are just stuck with it now.” Raleigh said a bit angry at her perceived self-righteousness whacking her back into the wall with her hammer. She emerged from the fire barely damaged at all launching forward at her.

Clyde jumped in trying to transform his arm but the energy instead shot out seemingly doing more damage than anything else. “Well, that's an interesting power set you have there.” She said with interest. “Look we wanna help Tristan too it seemed like that's what you were trying to do. Hear us out.” Clyde pleaded. “Lies you are just waiting for the moment to strike.” She said convinced. “But what if they are telling the truth.” She said again more timidly another persona speaking she rubbed her head in pain stopping her attack.

Suddenly a huge burst of energy came out of her erupting like a volcano further damaging the school that thankfully has been mostly evacuated now. Rebbecca returned from whatever world she left to throwing all sorts of devices at her feel as they exploded with white pressurized air seeming to extinguish the fire. “I didn't have any on hand but I hoped they would help,” Rebbecca explained making most of their confusion and anger around her sudden flight vanish.

“I don't need mastery of fire to...” The Phoenix started to say only to stop herself. “No this isn't we aren't whole yet. I'll let you off today and take your word that you are the same as him, but I won't help you get him.” She said forming her wings once more and flying off. “What was that... it was almost like she knew all our aspects and had them herself,” Raleigh said taking a deep breath. “They seemed to be confused and struggling with something. Can we even fight something like that if they ever figure things out?” Clyde said wary. All of them looked down prepared to ask Loki where to go next since they most likely lost him in this world.

Tristan had gotten far away at this point but could still see the fire in the distance. He was worried and distracted. The first person he saw as wanting to help, and he just ran off. He thought

maybe he should go back, but before he could Remnant Soldiers had surrounded him. They knock him out while he is distracted. As the man claiming to be the Reaper steps out of the shadows. “Thank you whoever you are. This annoying worm was a hindrance to everyone your distraction was ever so fruitful.” He said turning away as his forces took him away leaving the world before anyone could see.

Chapter Forty Two

“I hate to say this, but it looks like things just got more complicated,” Loki said from his desk. Rebbecca had warped them straight back as soon as they lost him. “What do you mean?” Clyde asked confused. Loki leaned back in his chair. “Well he finally stopped moving, and he's surrounded by a group of people I don't know, but the vibe I get from them is former empire.” He further explains.

“That might work in our favor. If he is unable to move we can find him and talk to him before we free him, or take the leg if it comes to that.” Rebbecca said placing a hand on her chin thinking. “We are not doing that Tristan's innocent in all this. He doesn't know what he's gotten into.” Raleigh said in protest. “Right... this is purely speculation.” She reassured them. “Well, I don't see much point

in standing here talking about it then. Can you give us a location like always?" Clyde said refocusing everyone.

"I certainly can, but you should be prepared. There are countless souls all clustered in that location. It almost masked Tristan's prescience from me. I think it's safe to say it's of the remnants of the last major holdouts that no one has found out about yet." Loki said with his ears drooped knowing they would run straight into it otherwise. All of them look at Raleigh. "What?" She said not making the connection. "We need to be sneaky." Clyde pleaded.

"I can be super sneaky. I don't know why you're acting like I can't." She said in annoyance. "Well sure, but when it comes to that... your impatience usually wins out," Clyde said trying to be gentle with his words. "Fine, I get it. If I look like I'm going to rush off just pull on me a bit." She reluctantly said. "Hmmm let's do you all one better." Loki snapped as Marcell appeared. "It's time for a makeover. By the time I'm through with you. You will all look like the evilest sons of guns." He said winking whisking them away.

Marcell modified all their outfits to look somewhat like what they were used to but in the remnants style of uniform complete with skulls all over. Rebbecca seems the most uncomfortable by it. "Black is really not my color you two look great though. Ever considered playing for the other team." She said teasing them they both glared not even wanting to entertain that idea with all the stuff the empire had done.

"So how are we doing this?" Raleigh asked seeing as she wasn't allowed to run it like normal. I will warp us in and we will try our best to blend in and find out where he is while avoiding notice." Rebbecca explained. "And when that probably will fail?" She asked not convinced it won't. "Then you get to punch things," Clyde answered. This seemed to bring both joy and annoyance to her.

Without much fanfare they made their way just outside of the base on some random world full of forest. It was even bigger than they thought five massive ships flying above the sky as soldiers

marched on the ground below. “They still have a force like this? I thought we wiped them all out when we were still palling around with Tasha.” Raleigh said concerned, but before they could say more a squad of soldiers emerged from deeper in the forest. “Freeze, state your name rank, and purpose here.” One of them demanded brandishing a firearm at Raleigh.

They all raised their hands playing along. “Oh well, I'm Captain R... Riana kill...skull. And these are my forces or what's left of them anyway.” Raleigh blurted out hoping they'd buy it. The man seemed to accept that. “I see. Don't feel too bad most of us ended up barely making it here. Glad to see so many of us survived. Go to the main gate, they'll check your credentials might wanna hurry though. The Reaper is about to give some sort of speech from what I'm told.” The grunt explained.

“The Reaper? I thought that guy died during Project Deforestation.” Clyde asked. “Oh well I'm pretty sure he's some sort of immortal I heard he's been killed hundreds of times and he always comes back it's incredible I wish I could hear him speak but we have to keep up our patrol.” He said holding great admiration for him. It would seem the original Reaper's reputation had worked in this new one's favor. “Don't you guys... I mean he was kinda one of the people responsible for the Project and left you.. Us to die. I would've thought you wouldn't be ok with that?” Raleigh said not understanding.

The grunts all laugh. “Well, I take it you haven't had many interactions with the man. Listen to his words, and I think you'll understand.” One of them said before walking off and returning to their patrol. “So the biggest hiccup is the credentials. I think I can forge them at the gate if you distract them for a second or we could just skip that with the wings, the only issue is there might be multiple checkpoints.” Rebbecca explains as Raleigh sighs. “This would be so much simpler if we just started blasting.” “As strong as you are. You know you can't take everyone here on at once.” Clyde said knowing she already knew.

Elsewhere Tristan finally started to come to. His arms and legs are bound to a chair as he slowly awakens to the reaper sitting across from him. He cries out in shock thinking he has died and comes

face to face with death itself. “Calm down boy you aren't dead, but well... depending on your cooperation you might wish you were.” The Reaper stated. “Who... who are you?” He asked nervously. “I am many things. I could be a friend. Or your enemy. I understand you have been unfortunate. Dragged into a conflict you don't understand.” The Reaper said standing up to pace around the room. “Do you know why?” He said turning toward him and leaning closer. Tristan gulped sweating profusely. “This leg right?” He asked.

“Correct. Countless Nations, Countless worlds. All of them want that power for themselves it's a small piece to a much larger puzzle. They fail to see the value that the leg alone brings.” He goes on. Tristan looks down. “I don't think it's brought me anything but misery.” The young man said dejected. “Then allow me to help you. You have something I want, you have no desire to have it simply hand it over, and we can end this.” The Reaper urged. Tristan thought for a moment not wanting to keep running, but there wasn't an end in sight so long as he had it, but then he remembered his father's words.

“Even if I don't want it I can't give it to someone like you. You're... evil.” Tristan said defiantly. The Reaper pulls his hair tightly forcing him to look into the skull mask's dead eyes. “Do you even know what that word means? Our empire brought peace and stability to countless worlds until our founder squandered it all with his madness which is true evil. I wasn't asking. There is simply the easy less painful path, and well... I will give you time to decide I hope that upon my return you will be more open to the idea.” The Reaper said leaving him bound in the room.

Raleigh and the others had made it to the gate. “What do you mean you don't know who I am? I brought countless victories to the empire in my time. You should be bowing down at my very prescience.” Raleigh roars at the guards as Rebbecca sneaks a cord around to their terminal plug-in. “Look I understand your frustration. Even if you are a famous Captain of our former empire we have to be careful, and that means checking your IDs. “Well, we kinda lost them in the attack,” Clyde said

nervously pulling on his collar.

“That's fine it should be backed up to the terminal.” He said turning back to access it while Rebbecca was still plugged in. Seeing this Raleigh pulled him back. “Don't turn your back on me you should know better than to do that to your superior now stop all this nonsense and let us in already.” She demands surprising everyone with her acting. Rebbecca finally finishes just as the guard rips his hand away. “Rules are rules.” He said accessing the terminal.

“Looks like everything checks out. Here take these they will give you access to everything in the base you're authorized to, but you should go to the central building first to get sorted.” He explains handing them all ID cards. They nod and enter surprised that worked. “Who knew you could pull something like that off? Maybe you should consider a career in acting.” Clyde said with genuine words. “Shut up.” That is all she said walking ahead.

A huge crowd was ahead of them all swarming toward their direction heading for a stage that had been set up on a runway. They were pushed along with the excited crowd in confusion. “What the hell is going on,” Clyde asked one of the men. “The speech is about to start. Finally, we will learn everything!” He said overjoyed as they kept pushing them along with them making it hard to do otherwise. They all looked at each other thinking maybe listening to part of it might be a good idea.

The crowd settled in around the stage once the hired ranking officers got there the crowd became more recognized standing at attention in endless rows still roaring with voices waiting in anticipation for what was about to happen, but like everyone could hear his footsteps everything went dead silent once The Reaper started walking on stage. As he reached the platform everyone placed their fist to their chest spreading their legs. The Empire's version of a salute.

“Greetings loyal members of The Empire. No, I suppose it's about time we truly discard that label. We are the Crossbone Remnant. Abandoned by our former namesake, persecuted by the rest of the Multiverse, and for what? Yes, we were conquerors, but through our conquest, we brought

technology, and civility to barbaric worlds. I was a fool I thought our former Emperor Lucius Novastride understood this better than anyone that is why I chose to follow him at the time, but I too was abandoned for the sake of a nonsensical dream that would have doomed us all. Because of this, our power has dwindled the things we had to do just to survive were pathetic and beneath us." He shouted everyone still dead silent even looking around it was hard to gauge their feelings on his words.

"But through this turmoil, we have all become unfathomably stronger not just physically but mentally. We now understand what truly must be done to bring order to the world. The Multiverse has already forgotten the might of The Multiversal Empire like it was a blip in the wind. It's about time we remind them." He pauses for a moment as the crowd roars to life like a sleeping giant has just awoken for the first time in ages.

He raises his hand causing them all to go silent once more. "It's been decided. Leader Freya will take her forces, and keep focus on The Wishing Door while we... We will lay siege. But not just any place the most significant place we possibly could. Yes, Porta Nexus. We will show them our fangs our dedication, and by the end of our assault, there will be nothing but a smoldering pile of ash. The memory of our victory will be burned into every being in every world, and no one will ever forget who we are again. For too long we have been perceived as a joke, a threat we will show them just how wrong they are. Rest well my warriors for very shortly we rise!" He shouted raising his fist once more showing off his glowing middle finger as everyone in the crowd did the same roaring with excitement as he exited the stage. "This is... not good," Clyde said worried.

Chapter Forty Three

The Crowd started to disperse in an orderly fashion as the trio looked at each other not sure what to do with that information. “I'm not even sure they can. They have a lot of systems in place to prevent that. The Empire was only able to attempt the bombing that one time because they were already allowed on the world, but now everyone with affiliation shouldn't even be able to go through a portal to it.” Rebbecca said with intrigue. “Well, that doesn't seem to matter to this so-called Reaper. It's so strange they act nothing alike The Reaper wasn't a talker.” Raleigh said in frustration.

“I don't think the common soldier ever met the real one they probably don't know the difference.” Clyde buts in. “If there is even a modicum of a chance they have a way to do this we need

to find out so...” Rebbecca said disappearing before they could argue. “Ugh, I hate it when she does that. Whatever come on let's try to save Tristan while she is doing that.” Raleigh said accepting it for now he nodded as they both looked around for any obvious signs of where he might be held. “It doesn't seem like he has the leg yet, I assume he'd want to keep him close until he did,” Clyde suggested pointing to the central building they saw him enter.

Both of them walk normally toward the building, trying to avoid raising suspicion. No one bothers them until they enter, when a man stands up right away, ready to check their IDs. They hand them over to him right away as he looks up their information. “Wow, a captain and a commodore. It's been a while since we have gotten anyone that high of a rank here. We can assign you both a squad for the upcoming battle. I think 423 is still unassigned.

“Wait? Whos a... How are you a Commodore everyone knows I'm the boss.” Raleigh said in protest causing the man to raise an eyebrow. “You didn't know?” He asked looking a little more worried. Rebbecca must have made Clyde a higher rank just to fuck with Raleigh. “Well, we haven't had much time to talk about rank we were just worried about survival. It took forever to get The Union off our tail.” Clyde said nervously laughing.

The man seems to accept that answer. “I see well your days of running are over we will remind them all who we are soon enough Commodore Evillington. He said without blinking. Clyde did his best to try and avoid laughing at his given name. “right that sure is my name. Hey, do you think you could point us to the holding cells? I heard they were holding someone in there that... slighted me in the past. I'd like to teach them a lesson personally if I could.” He asked.

“Well they are down below us, but The Reaper said no one is authorized to go down there at the moment I'm afraid I can't make any exceptions.” The man said looking a bit over this conversation now. “Alright, that's fine another time. I suppose we should go say high to the...” He started to say only for Raleigh to suddenly punch him out cold. “What the hell Raleigh!” he said in protest. “What we

needed to get down there and he wasn't budging. Hurry let's throw him into a closet or something.” She said pulling out some rope to tie him up with. Clyde sighs but goes along with it happy she is at least trying to be sneaky still.

Up above Rebbecca had infiltrated the upper floors where The Reaper was sitting with a group of people she pulled out a drone so she could get a better look. Most of the figures in the room were hard to make out only The Reaper could be seen. A display appeared of their leader Freya. “I understand why you are doing this, and I respect it, and offer my blessing. However, what I don't understand is how. Don't you think our old Empire would have conquered it long ago if it was that easy? “ She asked skeptical of his plan.

“We are all wondering that too.” One of the people added. The Reaper just chuckled. “I'm a little afraid this message might be monitored by a third party so the details will be kept with me alone, and the fodder will be told only select parts of our plan. However, what I will say is their systems will be the reason for their downfall mark my words. They will won't be expecting it. I ask that you put your faith in me, Leader Freya.” He said not explaining further.

She paused for a moment reluctantly accepting it. “And what about the aspect holder I had gotten word of his capture.” She asked. “He is in our care, yes, and with every moment I leave in alone the more terrified he becomes. I will break him soon.” The Reaper said confidently. “Even if that's the case I don't think it's wise for us to bring both our aspects into that battle we risk too much. Have him brought to me.” She orders. The man doesn't answer for a while looking like he had gotten a bit angry from her words under that mask. “Very well it will be done.” He said ending the call. Rebbecca frowns recording the information with the drone, but knowing a lot of people won't be convinced by it.

Raleigh and Clyde made their way below looking at the countless rooms below with random people chained up in rooms alone some of them looked worse for wear like they hadn't eaten in days. “Who are these people,” Clyde said with concern. “They must have slighted the Remnant in some way

or have something they want like Tristan," Raleigh explains looking through a window herself. "Hey what are you doing down here?" a Guard said rushing over to them knowing they weren't allowed to be there. "You idiots don't you know who this is?" Clyde shouted catching them off guard. Both of them look at each other confused, but the other one speaks up. "Yeah of course we do right." He said nudging his fellow man to say something.

"Right, this is the great Captain Riana Killskull how could you not recognize her." Clyde kept going along with it as Raleigh crossed her arms looking away like she was insulted. Clyde leaned into them both. "Listen you don't wanna mess with her you have heard the stories right?" He whispers trying to act concerned for their well-being. "What stories?" One of the asks. "She once beat all her men to death with a coffee mug because her coffee was... too cold," he explained. Both of them looked terrified. "Wh... does she want down here." It would seem that something like that wasn't too far-fetched in The Remnant.

"The Reaper asked her personally to torture a prisoner. The Leg Aspect holder. Listen you better hurry and tell me it's too late to save me, but if you tell her fast enough maybe you can escape her wrath." He pleaded looking over at her as she glared causing both their spines to go cold. "Right um. He's right down the hall in Segregation cell 23." One of them said as both of them stood at attention afraid for their lives. "Hmp I suppose I will let you keep your spines this time get out of my sight," Raleigh said trying to act the part. Both of them ran away as soon as she said that.

She lets out a laugh. "You know Clyde this is kinda fun after all. Maybe Loki wasn't wrong about... Roleplay." She said surprising him. "I never expected that to come out from your mouth... but maybe one day... well you know." He said blushing running ahead out of embarrassment. Finally, they reached the cell realizing they didn't have a key. "Now what." He asked looking around for something to pick the lock, but well Raleigh was done with that game kicking the door off its hinges and flying into the wall. Tristan jolted to attention in his chair even more terrified than before.

“Please don't kill me!” He said pleading with them as they both entered the room. Raleigh sized him up looking unimpressed. “You're the dude that has been slipping past everyone for the past few months?” She said thinking they might have made some sort of mistake, but before they can comment on it alarms start to go off from her attack on the door. “Y... you are those pirates!” Tristan said freaking out now that he recognized them.

“Ugh enough with the pirate thing. Listen kid we are here to save you. Save you.” She shouts with anger which he isn't receptive to. “Look Tristan we have been trying to catch up with you and just talk for a while. Yeah, we want the aspect but we are also doing this for your mom, and everyone in the village.” Clyde said in a softer tone hoping he'd listen. “How do I... How can I trust you?” He asked not believing them.

“I'd love to give some speech about why we are the good guys and all that, but I'm guessing everyone in the base will be here soon so we don't have time for that.” Clyde groans. “What does your leg say? It tells you stuff like that right?” Raleigh asked tapping her foot. Tristan looks down sighing before looking up and seeing that the waypoint is currently pointing at them. “Alright, I believe you.” He reluctantly said. Raleigh rips off his binds pulling him up. “Good now use it to help us find the quickest way out of here!” She demands pushing him out into the hallway. He ducks his head fired on right away by the approaching guards. They follow him down the other hallway to another set of set of stairs but instead of leading to a way out it seems to be some sort of control room.

“This looks like a dead end to me,” Clyde said with a hint of panic. Tristan doesn't seem to get it either. “I don't... this is where it told me to go. Wait.” He said suddenly understanding the way point was directly on a control panel. He pointed to it. “Oh, I get it,” Raleigh said rushing over and swiping through the console until she found the master control releasing every prisoner. Some of them are too malnourished to fight back while others look thrilled to beat on their captors even if there was no real escape.

They were too distracted defending themselves from them as Tristan led them through this time the path ahead was visible like he was sharing it with them. They successfully made it out of the building only to be surrounded by everyone on base the Reaper standing in front of them with his hands on his hips. “It would seem we have little mice nipping at our heels. Dead mice.” He puts his hands behind his back starting to pace. “Did you think you could make it out of here alive? Even with your reputation, you can't take us all on alone. This seems to be only working in my favor even with all your tricks. So how about you hand over your aspects, and I might consider leaving you alive.” The Reaper threatened not seeing how they could get away now.

“Well, it's a good thing they aren't alone then,” Rebbecca said Appearing behind him just to freak him out a little before teleporting over to them and grabbing onto all of them. “You said it yourself, didn't you? “Never let everyone know every card you have to play.” She said mocking him revealing she knew everything he talked about with Freya. “Attack!” He said pointing his men to do so as they charged in but before they could Rebbecca pulled all of them in closer all of them looking uncomfortable with it as she stuck out her tongue warping away.

The Reaper screams in anger. “How could this happen? We had them what was that... ugh there is no use getting worked up about it. We already knew part of the reason for attacking the port was to get more aspects. I suppose we simply delayed getting theirs and added a few more as well.” He said laughing. “It's far too late to stop us, and they no nothing of how we will enact our plan how quaint.” He finally stops laughing looking over at the closest soldier. “Find out who was in charge of segregation, and hang them. He has no room for weaknesses such as this.” He said turning away back into the building as they all salute ready to do just that. Above the building, Crow was watching it all opening communications with Marcus. “Sir I believe that Opportunity you were waiting for has just arrived.”

Chapter Forty Four

Rebbecca releases them all from her grasp as they finish warping to a town square looking around they immediately know where they are. “Porta Nexus? I know we need to warn people, but I figured we should talk to Loki first I bet he has a lot of... Connections.” Raleigh said. “Don't worry about that I sent him all the information he would need while you two were rescuing mister scaredy cat. He wasn't confident it would be enough but he said he would start telling everyone he knew right away.” Rebbecca explained. “Who are you... calling scared?” Tristan said seemingly even too afraid to ask.

Rebbecca smirks moving closer to his face as he sheepishly backs away. “Oh? Is this an

inaccurate discretion of you? By all means, then tell us you are.” She said touching his chest and flustering him. He backed away again taking a deep breath. “My name is Tristan Torrent nice to meet you officially, and um. I don't fully trust you people yet but, sorry for running off before you could explain.” He said more confidently. “Well met, and all, but well we don't have the time to get into all that still. The Remnant's attack could be at any time.” Clyde said unsure himself looking at Rebbecca to see if she did.

She shrugged. “I'm just as in the dark as you. Say what you want about this new Reaper but at least he was smart enough to keep the details of his plan to himself makes our job hard. Now we need to find someone that will listen.” Rebbecca urges. All of them think for a moment everyone in the city going throughout their day normally. “I think our connections here are the same, that being the guild. With all the time we spent here, I never got to know anyone outside of it.” Raleigh said assuming it was the same for her.

“You're right I think that's the most logical place to start, but well. I don't know how receptive the old man will be.” She said in response. “The Old Man?” Clyde asks curious. “Oh, I guess you haven't met even though you are registered. She means the Guild Master he holds a lot of sway here.” Raleigh explains. Without another word, they started to head that way Clyde wondering what he was like. In their years working with The Union he had officially become a mercenary for them like Raleigh, but they didn't interact with The Guild much taking most of their jobs from Natasha directly.

They entered the Guildhall which was as rowdy as always this time Clyde didn't seem to mind it that much, but Tristan was looking around antsy. Clyde looked over at him feeling nostalgic. “You'll get used to it.” He said with a smile. Tristan didn't seem so sure. They approached the desk who recognized them right away, and looked shocked. “Raleigh, and Clyde? But your... You're dead!” She screamed causing other members of the guild to go silent attention drawn to them. “Yeah yeah well... he came back to life or whatever. Listen we need to speak with the big man it's really important, and don't tell

me he's busy.” Raleigh said banging her hands on the counter.

She is about to say something before a tall elf-like figure walks down the stairs interrupting. “That's enough of that. Some of us around here assumed you might still be out there given your feats, but well... Perhaps we should talk somewhere more private.” He said motioning for them to follow him back up them. “Is that him?” Clyde asked. “No that's like the vice guild master or hand. The official title escapes me.” Raleigh said with annoyance.

He leads them down hallways to the top floor of the Guild to The Guild Masters office. He looks up from the work he is doing in shock at first perceiving Raleigh as he first did when they met. He looked to be a strong, and gruff old man who had weathered many storms. “I see so your deaths were... exaggerated. Do you have any idea how foolish it was for you to come here at the moment? You each have a bounty of 1 billion central credits. If the Multiverse didn't think you were dead it would still be active.” He explains now seeing Tristan. “Well him on the other hand his bounty is very much still active.” He sighs causing the boy to start sweating bullets.

“Is that a lot of money?” Tristan asked. “It's enough for someone to retire several times over in luxury.” The guild master's right hand explains. “You say that like something has changed. Someone has always been after me for one reason or another, but that's not why we are here.” Raleigh said pushing aside everything not seemingly that worried about them trying to collect. “Well then out with it tell me why you're here.” The Guild Master said as Rebbecca pulled out a display showing him a video of The Reaper's conversation.

He leans back in his chair turning to face the window and looking at the bustling city outside go about its day. He seems very conflicted thinking back to the time he first met Raleigh. A young child stormed into the guild hall to the reception desk barely able to see over the counter she just stared at her not saying anything. The receptionist looked confused. “Can I help you?” She asked the girl worried. “I need a job.” The child Raleigh said bluntly with a still grim facial expression. “Well, you're still quite

young... I...” Before she could answer the Guild Master was already there seemingly walking by as she entered.

He lowers himself to her level. “Listen kid this isn't the place for a little one like you. Maybe when you are older you can come back and give it another go alright? So head on home to your parents.” He said giving her a little nudge. She looked down frowning even more. “My mentor said that this is the place to do if you need work.” She said not elaborating. He sighed reading between the lines. “And where is your mentor now?” He asked.

She takes a moment to answer. “He's... he's dead.” She struggled to push the words out. “I see so you're an orphan. Well... sorry about presuming too much kid, but I still can't let you join the guild that would be irresponsible. How about you come with me, and we can find a place for you.” He tried his best to explain holding out his hand to her. “Do you like Ramen?” He asked only for her not to answer like she didn't even know what it was. He sighed sitting her at one of the many tables in the hall and ordering her some.

When it finally arrived she looked at it curiously but cautiously but the smell overwhelmed her senses she took a little sip still wary, but once the taste hit her she scarfed it down like it was the best thing she had ever tasted because in a way it just might be her first proper meal. He smiled as she ate. “With an appetite like that, we might have to order you another one.” He laughed as someone's footsteps approached catching his attention he froze in place keeping the figure behind him completely focused on him like he could tell they were dangerous.

Raleigh looked up at the figure shocked frozen in fear it was the original white-haired Reaper here to bring her back to The Empire. The Guild Master didn't move keeping his back to him. “What business does the Empire's Dog have here?” He asked coldly. “That girl. She is the property of The Empire. Hand her over to me.” The Reaper said matching his tone. The Guild Master turned to face him ready to draw out his hammer and fight him.

“Stop before you do something you will regret.” The old Reaper said pulling out a multi-tool as Raleigh regained her will running away. “What is there possibly to regret about protecting an innocent girl!” He said outraged. “Everything. More than half of the jobs your Guild partakes in. Are for the empire correct?” The Reaper vaguely explained like he always does. The Guild Master seems to understand. “You would pull all of them for the sake of one girl? Just who is she?” He asked more distressed. “It's of no concern to you. Now go back to your office, and forget she was ever here.”

He stood there conflicted he had never been challenged with something that conflicted in his heart so much. He wanted to protect her but losing The Empire as a client was suicidal. He'd paint a target on the back of every member of his guild and they would lose their lively hoods at the same time. Reluctantly he did as he was told. He returned to his office unable to fully grasp what he had just done feeling like he couldn't be forgiven expecting he'd never truly know what the outcome was.

But a few years later she turned up again this time with his Vice Master. “Sorry for bothering you Garrick, but well this little one wouldn't leave me alone she claims to know you.” He said confused. “Well, I...” He said in disbelief struggling to find the words. “What are you doing here?” He asked. “I'm here for a job, and to learn how to fight.” She said just like before. He didn't know what to say did she not understand his betrayal or did she just not have any better options? “Out of the question. We won't rat you out to the empire but we will not associate with you. Caerith see this one out. Garrick said to his hand.

He started to do so only for her to resist. “I'm not leaving until you do!” She said defiantly. He sighed seeing this wasn't going to end well. “Sir forgive me if I don't know the full story. Can't we support her at least a little?” Caerith questioned this didn't help the man out he was trying so hard to close his heart but he just couldn't. “Alright fine, but the moment they catch on you have to leave.” He said bluntly.

She didn't really do much in the way of work for them, but she did train with both of them

learning how to fight rather quickly. Garrick's affinity with hammers seemed to rub off on her but Caerith's swordplay was also very compelling to her, but soon enough The Empire did find her again this time Cyrus and Darrian chasing her off. But even still in a few years, she returned again.

He rubbed his hand almost expecting it this time. “What do you want now?” He sighs. “The same thing I've always wanted from you.” She said much more confident than when they first met. “Very well perhaps you are old enough to take on some jobs now.” He said exciting her. He holds out his finger stopping her celebration. “But keep in mind officially you aren't one of us.” He said reminding her that she can't just say she is part of the guild to just anyone. “Thank you.” She said with a smile. He frowned not thinking what he was doing was much of a kindness.

The circle seemed to continue. Every few years she would take on some jobs and earn some money enough to survive before being chased off again by the empire. People like Cyrus questioned his involvement but he denied it to keep everyone safe, but in truth, he didn't feel like he had done much to help her. Now she is here once again the empire is gone but not forgotten and she is warning of an incoming attack. He turns to face the current Raleigh as well as Clyde, and the others. “Answer me this why did you come back all those times? I was never that welcoming after the first time. I couldn't help you like I wanted... maybe I should've.” He said filled with regret.

“I sucked at explaining things back then didn't I sorry about that. Well, I guess for the reason I said. My mentor told me this was the best place for someone like me to learn how to fight, and make money, and well with all the running around I had to do there wasn't much else as simple as that. I get that your hands were tied, but the help you did give me... well it meant everything to me. I wouldn't have gotten this far without your help.” She explained. Clyde's eyes narrowed seemingly not as grateful knowing what she had to go through.

Garrick laughed. “You're a fool. Do you believe this Remnant of the Empire can do what they aim to?” He asked her. “Yes, I do.” She said not questioning it. “I see... well it might be too late for me

to say this but. I'm sorry for everything. I have regretted not taking you in that day for years even if it did cost me everything. I know it will never be enough of an apology but I can get a meeting with the Chancellor. I'm not convinced he will believe me, but let me at least try to convince him." He said bowing his head.

"That's all I ever asked of you," Raleigh said with a smile. "Good then I will go at once. What will you do in the meantime?" He asks them. "Well, we aren't sure when they will show up so I guess we will keep trying to warn whoever we can," Clyde said. "I see well good luck to you all. You will need it." He said getting him and placing his hand on Clyde's shoulder seemingly giving him a thank you for looking after her all this time without directly saying it before leaving.

Chapter Forty Five

All of them are back on the street looking for a direction to go. “I'm at a loss where should we go to, the station? What about Aion I know we aren't friends but live here right?” Clyde asked. “I think we are better off trying to tell the authorities,” Rebbecca says. “What are a bunch of grunts going to be able to do for us someone like Aion could turn the tide,” Raleigh said in protest. “We won't talk to grunts we will talk to their bosses,” she argues both of them glaring down looking like they are about to fight.

Clyde looks annoyed while Tristan looks nervous. “You seriously deal with this all the time it's terrifying,” Tristan said. “Well not all the time but yeah you get used to it... Hey, what about that leg of

yours? With how it works it might be better just to go along with it.” Clyde suggests and the two women keep fighting. Tristan thinks for a moment closing his eyes and thinking he needs to find someone who will believe them and like that, a waypoint appears pointing down an alley. “This way.” He said leading Clyde to the two girls only noticing after they were halfway down the alley. “Hey wait up where are you going?” Raleigh asked.

“We are about to find out,” Clyde answers unsure himself. Sure enough, they find a group of paramedics loading an injured man into a vehicle as none other than Lucy oversees them. They quickly catch her eye. After seeing the patient is fine she turns to face them. “Well if it isn't my two favorite daredevils. How have you been?” She asked with a smile. “Lucy, what are you doing here?” Clyde asked. “Hmm? Well, I work here now. It felt like the best place to fully utilize my talents boyo, well mostly This was just a simple injury, but enough about me what brings you here, and how's that handsome lion boy doing.” Lucy said happy.

Rebbecca wastes no time showing her the video and after it ends Lucy's demeanor shifts to be more serious. “And you're thinking they have a shot at breaking in huh?” She rubs her chin thinking for a moment as the paramedics leave without her to make sure the person is ok. “Come with me back to the hospital I'll call a couple of my buddies. I won't say I'm unpopular here but with how busy I am I haven't made many real connections other than a handful.” She said not wanting to get their hopes up walking away to lead them to the hospital.

On the way there Lucy gets out a communicator texting a few people. “I asked them to meet us there so sit tight.” She said casually as they made it to the lobby. “Hey, this is that one hospital. My first time getting stabbed it takes me back.” Clyde said referring to the start of their adventure weirdly looking fondly at that time. Raleigh raised an eyebrow and remembered some of the things she said to him in this same hospital. But their time of reminiscing was cut short by a shorter woman with white and red hair with a deadpan expression approaching them. “Welcome back Lucy Mendora. I must

inform you. They are fighting again.” She said robotically. Clyde looked closer wondering what the deal was only to see that she was a robot.

Lucy sighed. “Alight that you for telling me. Can you try to hold them off at least until I get up there?” The robot nodded walking away. “Sorry everyone I have to take care of this, well I guess you have to wait for the people to show up anyway. Come on I'll introduce you youngins to my team.” She said motioning for them to get into the elevator. Once they made it up to a higher floor they could hear shouting Tristan instinctively backed away only for Clyde to reassure him with his hand on his shoulder.

In the room a small girl with black hair and glasses was in a heated argument with a much larger man who appeared to be a robot while several robots that looked like the one they saw before were holding them back. “Your methods are barbaric and unnatural.” The woman said. “Yours are backward and outdated.” The man fired back.

“Enough. You're missing the point of why I brought you two together... again.” Lucy said with an announcement. “How can I he's.... he's...” The woman started to say. “Outrageous!” They both shouted at the same time. “What is going on here?” Raleigh said unimpressed. All of them finally calmed down as the robots released them. “Well this is my team well my attempt at one we are still working things out. The woman is Iris, she is the leading mind on healing magic, and well he is known as Crucible the leading mind on cybernetics. Oh and of course we can't forget AID-E she is the nurse droid that does the majority of the treatments around here with her multiple bodies.” She explained

“Greetings... Clyde Moore, Raleigh, Rebbecca, and unregistered users. You all look to be in great condition for those marked as dead in the database. Correcting incorrect information now.” AID-E says after scanning them. “Incorrect look at the short one's arm. It's been shottily welded back together. It's an insult to the otherwise marvelous craftsmanship of her cybernetics.” Crucible said correcting the robot lifting Raleigh's still damaged arm without asking her. She yanks it away in anger.

“I thought I did an alright job with it thank you very much.” She said In protest.

“If it was a biological body part it would have fixed itself by now,” Iris said confidently. “It may be true that with the current technology, it's not as complex as a human limb but it has another advantage such as being able to indicate what's wrong, and physical strength. A check engine light if you will, and it also won't fix itself incorrectly like organic material tends to do sometimes. This is why one day I will replace my body with superior machinery. Even this accursed brain of mine” He said causing her to turn up her nose. “Wait does that mean you like a brain in a jar?” Clyde said with interest. “In a technical sense yes.” The cyborg man says.

“They have trouble seeing each other's points but well I see that there are advantages, and disadvantages to both. I was more of a modern medicine type of person myself but I think all of the methods are valid, it's more of a personal preference sorta deal. I'm hoping with time they will see that.” Lucy explains. “You sell yourself too short ms Lucy with your universal mind you can heal people in ways we never thought of,” Iris said complimenting her. “I'm still limited by our resources, and my time that's why you both are integral to my operations I hope you learn to see that,” Lucy said a little more serious than normal.

AID-E's eyes seem to flash with information. “Lucy Mendora. Patient 349992 requires your abilities. Please report to room 335 on floor seven.” The robot asks. “My work is never over. My friend said they are ten minutes away stay tight and get along till then ok.” She said walking off. Crucible gets on one knee. “Please forgive me for my rudeness earlier your cybernetics fascinated me please allow me to repair and update them for you.” He pleads with her. Raleigh seems reluctant but seeing that Clyde has a worried face knowing that that particular thing is still an issue she relents.

“Alright, but you have ten minutes.” She said following him. “Wonderful, though a master such as myself will only need five.” The rest of them just kinda stood there awkwardly. “I um... I should be getting back to work now.” Iris said running towards the elevator as AID-E followed.

“Well now's as good of a time as any Clyde. How far have you gone with her.” Rebbecca said smirking. “Wha... what are you talking about?” Clyde said flustered. “Oh come on don't play dumb I've noticed the changes and the words she's spoken.” She teases getting closer Tristan stands there awkwardly. “We have done lots of things...” He said causing her to laugh. “So practically nothing. I'm not surprised. Whatever the case I'm not giving up on her so watch out.” She said winking at him. He just frowns not liking her competition but also not sure how serious she was he could never tell with her.

Crucible returns with Raleigh not long after feeling the difference in the air. “What happened when I was gone.” She asked confused. “Nothing.” All three of them said in unison. She shrugged moving her hand open and closed. “I have to admit it doesn't feel stiff anymore I can flex it better than I ever have thanks Roboble.” She said forgetting his real name. “It's Cru... I suppose it doesn't matter I'm getting notifications that I'm needed elsewhere so long for now.” He said leaving himself. When he enters the Elevator an AID-E walks out with Captain Darla who looks confused. “Where is Lucy?” The dog woman asked confused.

AID-E spoke up. “She was called away to help. Her intention was for you to meet with these individuals.” She explained. “I see well what is it I don't have all the time in the world you know,” Darla growled. “I do not have access to your exact schedule but according to records you often have lunch with Lucy around this time correct? They claim to have an urgent matter to discuss would this time not be applicable since she is busy.” The robot asked.

“You got me. Sorry about that I tend to be wary around outsiders, but if Lucy knows you I should be more polite. My Name is Captain Darla of House Dog and Driver of the Peace Division of Porta Nexus. How can I help you?” She said calmly. “House dog? Does Porta Nexus have a bunch of animal-themed houses?” Clyde asked amused. Darla frowned. “Well yes and no not all of the great houses are purely animal based. Now get to the point.” Her tail stopped moving entirely she seemed to

take that as more of an insult than he intended she didn't like her time being wasted.

“Sorry, I didn't realize it was such a soft spot please forgive me,” Clyde said awkwardly as Rebbecca showed her the video. After it finished she didn't look convinced. “Listen I appreciate your concern for the well-being of our city but this is nothing no one will believe this. You need more evidence if anyone is going to take this seriously. I know you aren't as involved in security and operations as I am but do you have any idea how outlandish an attack like this is? What makes you so sure?” She barked at them.

“The Aspects and the hunt for them have led to many unexpected things,” Raleigh said. “I know I never thought we'd be letting a war criminal talk to our most renowned figure either but here we are he seemed to have a lot of faith in the like of you don't see it though.” She said referring to Aion, and Cyrus's interview. She sighs picking up a radio. “All units switch to level three alert levels. It may be nothing but I've gotten a tip things are about to go bad.” She said to everyone on the radio even though her words were harsh and rejected most of what they said. It would seem even still she cared much for the safety of the town and even a slight danger worried her more than she says.

“That's about all I can do for you with that. If you want more you'll need more substantial evidence.” With that she turned to leave back down the elevator but not before an AID-E ran up to her. “Ms. Lucy told me to give you this she says they are your favorite. She hands her a bag full of peanut butter biscuits causing her tail to go crazy with excitement. She tried to act calm even still. “Make sure to tell her thank you.” She said eagerly taking them while trying to still look serious as she left.

“Well, she was interesting,” Clyde said unsure of how much that helped us. He assumed Level One was normal operations so they will at least be somewhat ready. “Captain Darla is well known for being a serious but very loyal and caring member of the Port Authorities some even say she does too much,” Rebbecca informs her seeming to know a little more about her than them.

Chapter Forty Six

Garrick sits down across from Chancellor Morvin who watches the video Rebbecca took with his full attention but the more he watches the less impressed he looks. “What is this? This is nothing? I agreed to meet with you because of your status and our past dealings, but why are you even bothering me with this? You know how tight our security is.” The man said mocking him as he adjusted his fine robes.

“I understand, but remember these are the same people that almost destroyed our world with a planet bomb.” He reminded him. Morvin sighed keeping a smug smile on his face as he leaned back

closing his eyes. “Yes, the blemish on my otherwise perfect record. Thanks for reminding me. This situation is not the same.” He said dismissing him. “All I'm asking is for you to prepare just in case and be on guard.” The Guild Master said insisting. Morvin takes a deep breath before leaning in and opening his eyes again. “Take a walk with me.” He said standing up to leave his office.

They both walk together down the giant ornate hallways of his home Port Authority guards positioned at every corner saluting him as he passed by. “Let me explain just how impossible something like what you're suggesting is. Something should already be aware of by the way.” He said walking toward a large room as Garrick just listened. “Firstly there is the shielding over the ground portals the system has a complex database that prevents anyone with overt hostile intentions from entering it will simply block them, on top of that we have the Multiverses large database that also blacklists certain people, certain uniforms, and associations from coming through.” He said confidently.

Elsewhere the Reaper had made it to one of the ground portals he was talking about with his Middle Finger of the Multiverse he flipped the portal off causing the shielding on the other side to malfunction and let him, and his army through without issues. They all started to march down the streets casually like they were always meant to be there.

“If this system somehow fails we have powerful men around every corner ready to defend our great home with everything they have. You should never discount your strength in that department.” Morvin keeps explaining with an air of superiority starting to get on Garrick's nerves. They reach the room they were walking towards and he opens it leading him in.

Some of the guards he was talking about noticed the Reaper's forces right away the people around looked frozen in shock in disbelief they were there. “Stop you shouldn't be here surrender now!” One of the Port Authority patrol shouts. They just keep marching Led by The Reaper. The Patrol pulls out their weapons attacking them now that they were given a warning but they were not a match for the numbers and strength. They may be strong it wasn't enough. They walked over their dead bodies

marching forward.

“If somehow they pass all this by the full force of our military will be employed right away with our communications even if they are a sizable force we will be able to push them back.” He explains walking to the end of the room to open a sunroof. “And lastly this marvel. The Port Air con system. A giant planetary shield and a supercomputer that makes any sky assault impossible. Two layers of shield that like the ground portal below keep everyone out but only after they are permitted by the aviation division. Our fleet of airships need I say more.” The Chancellor said spreading his arms across showcasing one of the massive space station-like things in the sky making a shielding link to the other ones it was faint enough to where you might not notice it blocking the sky portal entry.

Just as he said crowds of people watch as The Reaper and his forces look over the communications tower disabling it right away reclaiming it for himself. He walks up to the center array pulling the microphone to his face. “Foolish citizens of this wretched place. I am The Reaper back from the dead. Yes, I rose from the ashes to lead the Crossbone Remnant... no The Multiverse to a new age. You thought you were untouchable. That you could remain neutral as everyone around you fought over even a modicum of power. You mocked us seeing us as nothing but a threat of the past. A whisper in the wind.” He started to say to the entire city who all looked worried.

“Well, I'm here to remind you of who we are we are your executioners. We will reap all of your souls, and you will never forget who we are again. No mercy will be shown this day” With that he ended the Transmission walking out to a railing outside the tower as he looked up at the Air Con system. “One last obstacle,” he says raising his middle finger to it. Suddenly several systems on it started to malfunction and explode they were small but together they snowballed until the entire thing was engulfed in flames the shield flashed on and off before staying off as the massive thing started to fall from the sky.

Just as the Chancellor smirked feeling confident in his systems he heard the massive explosion

as it started to lumber down onto the city he looked in horror, and shock as it fell it would most likely cause countless deaths just from that alone. “I... I need to get out of here...” He said panicking losing all his conviction.

The Reaper raises his arms laughing as his fleet of ships descends from the sky through the vanishing shield but they aren't stopping. It would seem he ended up crashing all five of them onto the surface of the city. The Airships were quick to notice zooming in to try and shoot them out of the sky but they were far too massive to do some one of them even crashing into an airship.

Some of the cannons started to fire upon the Port's airships showing that despite this clear intention to crash into the city it was still maned with people inside shooting the airships out of the sky instead. The Reaper laughed as they all dropped first the Air con system causing a massive amount of devastation all around. Shaking the earth and destabilizing the planet's equilibrium. The ships did the same to a lesser effect yet this wasn't the end small fighters started to fall out of the sky like shooting stars doing the same.

Aion was with Mia it was a normal day for him nothing had happened in his perception is was still wary but growing used to the silence. “Mia, did you catch up with the leg holder?” He asked yawning pouring a cup of coffee for them both. Her eye glowed as she seemed to be looking around for him on random worlds. “No, It's hard to keep track of him with how often he moves around.” She said a little annoyed. Aion just sighed handing her a coffee. “It's alright we will...” He started to say as the ground shook making him drop it. “What in the blazes was that?” He asked no one in particular. Mia shifted her focus to the city. “Oh no...” That is all she said.

Captain Alister was at a restaurant eating his favorite meal drooling about to dig into the mouth-watering fish as the boom hit and countless alarms went off on his communicator. He hissed before looking out the window in shock at the devastation just outside of his grasp if he had been any closer He be dust right now. He dropped the fish quickly putting his game face on. He opens his

communicator only to see it has no signal. He groans but seems to have a workaround with another secret signal. “I need to know everything that's going on at once.”

At the hospital, all of them had rejoined each other for a bit of respite. “Who else can we possibly warn no one is taking us seriously, and we are running out of..” Clyde started to say and the boom hit them and one of the fighters crashed into the hospital destroying the top part completely thankfully that was mostly the administration part of the building so most people were fine just missing all of them by a hair. The roof of the room they are in is gone as well as part of the wall. They all look out with disbelief. “We were... too late.” Raleigh gasps.

Morvin is on the ground panicking completely losing any sense of bravado as the guards slowly enter. “Sir we are here to get you to a safe location please come with us. You can come too if you would like Guild Master.” One of the guards says to him. “Wait!” He said grabbing onto the collar of the chancellor with urgency both guards see this as an act of aggression and draw their swords. “You're just leaving what about the city our people?” He said worried.

“Have you seen the destruction outside what am I supposed to do I'm finished.” Morvin whines. “You're supposed to do your duty to this city and protect it,” Garrick said in a rage. “Morvin pushes him away. “If you want to do something so bad you do it.” He said walking away with the guards. “You know I don't have the authority or knowledge of all your operations.” He said in protest. “I don't care do what you want. He said handing something to one of the guards who looked in shock bringing it over to Garrick.

“He recognizes it right away as the insignia of the old king. Whoever possesses this has the highest authority in the world. “You can be acting Chancellor if you want to die so badly.” He said leaving with the guard. The other one that stayed behind looked at him with worry and fear Garrick knew he wasn't the best choice for this but he couldn't just abandon everyone in the city. He took a deep breath. “I'll need someone to help me with some of the interworkings I don't understand, but contact

everyone you can tell them to raise the alert levels to the highest possible no holds bard no weapon restrictions, and send a distress signal to anyone and everyone that will listen. We won't let them have this city. Prioritize the safety of the citizens of course." He said doing his best to think of what actions he should take.

While very different his years as guild master seemed to help. The guard looked down processing everything he said. "All of this is doable I think but first there are other communications towers but first we need to gain access." He explains knowing he doesn't know the intimacy of their forces like others. "I understand do what you need to do," Garrick said. "The guard nods turning to leave but stopping. "I will also try and get a superior officer here to help you out if I can." He said before running off.

The Reaper looks down at the devastation he had brought admiring it, relishing in it. And he hadn't even really fired a single shot yet. He returns to the communications Array. All forces spread out and destroy. Spar nothing from your wrath." As he said that countless Remnant Soldiers started to swarm the streets seemingly from nowhere overwhelming the patrols still around as citizens flee.

Chapter Forty Seven

The Port Authority reestablished communications using the other towers conveying Garrick's orders right away there was no time for arguments. “Attention any and all available personnel activating threat level five. Type catastrophic. Permissions are all unrestricted. All the forces on the ground looked down after hearing it their weapons on their hips making clicking noises like the full existent of their powers had just been unlocked for them to use.

The Force's already engaged with the enemy felt their normal sword springing to life. One of the men pushes a button on the grip causing the sword to billow with steam and turn red with heat. He

slashed through the Remnant soldier with no issue the sword seemingly hotter than imaginable. On a base outside of the devastation their forces started to load up into vehicles ready to mobilize these they seemed to wear more armor. “Military division moving out.” a bear man said boarding the vehicle with his subordinates as they moved to defend the city.

In the sky above another group was flying into the action some of them were harpies or other winged types of people while others simply had jet packs on. “Our airships may have been damaged but, The aviation Division is moving out as well.” A harpy woman said on the radio she looked a bit out of her depth. Her commanding officer died in the crash and she was now the highest-ranking officer. “Let's show them how much the air superiority they toss aside makes a difference for the captain.” She said with a few tears going down her face.

Darla emerged from the smoke already in the thick of it taking down a squad of Remnant Soldiers. “Peacekeeping division is mostly unscathed and ready to keep up the defense. The men rushed out of the smoke to join her against another wave of men coming their way. “We have protected this city for longer than anyone countless generations, and we do it with pride go forward and make me proud not just for the people but yourselves.” She said pointing her weapon forward as they all rushed toward them.

Alister stood on a roof more relaxed with a couple of his subordinates one of them used a cable to grapple onto the roof and an instant whispering in his ear. “Intelligence division has gained our footing we will be sending the enemy's key locations in due time as well as locating, and rescuing key figures. He grinned as they all jumped off the roof in different directions.

All the other divisions slowly answer the call sounding off even the logistics and less combative ones ready to fight and defend their city. All of them had seemingly shaken off the unexpected shock of the attack and regained their footing. Lucy looks at a monitor overwhelmed by all the injured people not even sure where to start with it all as the others look from the side. “Division of Health is ready to

begin efforts in search rescue, and healing everyone possible." Lucy said as they all said "Roger" in unison on the radio. She sighed unsure how to do it all. "There are so many places to go it is critical I make the right call or people will die." She takes a deep breath knowing she needs to calm down.

She turns to AID-E "Statistically is is better to expand out in every direction or target specific locations." She asked. AID-E took a second to process the information. "There is a 30 percent chance going in every direction will reach the most people it spreads us too thin in my calculations even with the devastation being so widespread. Targeting key locations that seem to be more greatly effective has a 67 percent higher chance of succeeding." She explains. "I see not the greatest odds, but well I suppose we have to work with what we have. I hate to ask this AID-E but we are going to need to rely on you for this heavily not just for here at the hospital Imagine you will be much better at calculating the best places to dispatch overall." Lucy said apologizing.

"You have nothing to apologize for my prime directive is to ensure the health and safety of all life. Overclocking is worth it to reach this end." AID-E said calmly. "Right well as for the rest of you. I need you both to promise me something. I cannot save all these people alone and my ability to fully heal someone is going to be limited with the resources we have so I think we should save them for the more dire cases. So I need you both to work together on this without fighting. People will die if you don't." Lucy said urging them to comply.

Both of them look down before nodding in reluctant agreement. "What about us?" Raleigh asked growing impatient. "Well, it would be a great help if you defended the paramedics when they-" She said before a giant explosion shook the building engulfing them all in a fire leaving their fates questionable for now.

All the forces were out on holding the line as Garrick oversaw it from the base he was brought to. "Greetings Guild Master I believe this is the first we have met." A man walks in I am the Commander, chief, and Administrator Brutus Stonehide of the Military Division. The other

administrators of relevance will be here shortly to help guide you. “Right, the administrators. Let me make sure I understand this right. The Captains focus as more of your face and driver of your divisions while you are more behind the scenes making sure everything runs smoothly.” He asked. “That is a fair description of us yes. They said you might be out of the loop but it seems you have done your homework more than you realize.” The man laughed. “You seem calm, and are you ok with an outsider calling the shots,” Garrick asked skeptically.

“Well in truth. No, I'm not ok with it per se, but in some ways, it's the best outcome. It leaves less room for... political distractions, but to call yourself an outsider isn't fair in my eyes even if you are a mercenary you are well known by the people and we all have great respect for you who better to lead us.” He said confidently. “I guess time will tell.” He said returning attention to the map.

The Port Authority was pushing them back letting citizens trapped in the fight flee away from the battle. It seemed like they were slowly regaining all the ground they lost. The Aviation division flew toward the tower unopposed with no air forces to stop them aiming to take The Reaper down right away, but upon entering the tower had already been abandoned like they expected it to happen.

“Lieutenant Lacy get out of there is a trap!” Alister said on the radio, but it was too late the tower exploded leaving them only seconds to leave they fell to the ground surrounded by the small army still on the ground. She struggled to stand as some of the members that didn't enter the tower descended using their guns to shoot down all the ones that came near her and the other fallen members long enough to regain strength and fly away but there were too many of them.

Darla was similarly starting to get overwhelmed with everyone she struck down more simply replaced them. They seemed to have no regard for their own lives and attacked with a wreck-less abandon that made them hard to read. “What is this do you have no self-preservation?” She asked not expecting an answer. “None of this is about that anymore. All that matters is sending a message to you fools. You took us lightly and now you'll pay for it.” One of them stops to explain but still gets quickly

cut down by one of her men.

The Military division's role in driving them back with shots from their armed vehicles but it's only a temporary help because they are already swarming them again soon after. The bear jumps out of the vehicle crashing down on the enemy soldiers with ferocity. Before pulling out a mini gun spraying them all down with a roar. But even that isn't enough they just keep coming. All the forces are fighting with everything they have barely making ground.

“That's it keep pushing keep making them think maybe theirs a chance.” The Reaper said laughing from an unknown location. He turns to a group of people “My honor guard it is time for you all to join the fray. There are already aspect holders lurking in the city but there are certain to be more on the way plague with the concept of empathy for the people's plight.” He said dramatically as they all listened. “Well unfortunately Daisy already ran ahead my lord I wasn't able to stop her.” A young man with pink hair said bowing.

“It hardly matters now. You will stay with me but the rest of you go on wreak havoc. Whoever can obtain an aspect is exempt from dying on this suicide mission.” He said bluntly as they all nodded ready to join the battle. “Sir forgive my question, but is it ok to phrase it that way even if it's not inaccurate?” The pink-haired man asked. “My boy everyone here knows the risk already and has accepted that they believe in our cause. To expect less is unacceptable.” The Reaper said not explaining further. “I see insightful as always my lord.”

Just as it seemed the Port Authority was gaining the upper hand and driving them all into a corner everything changed the Aviation units were suddenly surrounded by flying creatures overwhelming them. And even more men seemed to materialize in every direction to join the fight they were all growing exhausted, but what happened next really changed everything.

Some of the citizens fleeing the battle suddenly stopped running turning toward their saviors and and attacking them like mindless monsters biting into some of their necks causing them to scream

in pain. The victim's skin turned Grey their teen elongated, and joined them against their former allies. See this Made Garrick wary knowing what he had to do. “All forces... with this new development we have no choice but to retreat and regroup for now.”

Chapter Forty Eight

Night had fallen the Port Authority ran to different corners to lick their wounds scattered across the city. The chaos and fighting never stopped it just became more measured. Squads went out in shifts of sorts to fend off the waves of men holding them back just barely. It was creating a lull of sorts that maybe gave them all a chance at respite, but even still everyone was exhausted. Darla sat on the floor near the door of her division's base of operations resting, and keeping her ears up in case things went wrong she felt demoralized and beaten down. As did most of the forces they couldn't keep this up forever and it was unclear if their foe had the same problem with their fanatic suicidal attacks.

Garrick sighed over looking at the map seeing that this new method ultimately was the best choice. Most of the other administrators had decided to rest before things got bad again. Garrick thought it was a good time to contact his guild now. He figured they handle themselves but he still worried. Caerith answered right away. “I'm glad to see you alive Guild Master.” He said with a smile. “You as well. It seems I've been caught in a precarious situation.” He said laughing nervously taking some time to explain.

“I see that is strange, but I'm sure you of all people are up to the task,” Caerith says. “Thanks but right now I'm more worried about The Guild,” Garrick states. “Well I can't say everyone stuck around but the ones that did have mostly stayed here in the Guild they fend off attackers but it seems that beyond this building they are pretty apathetic to the going on.” The elf explained a little disappointed. “I see I was a little worried that would happen with the lack of monetary intensive. Can't say I blame them given some of them have families to look out for.” He said seeming to understand staying silent for a moment. “As acting Chancellor I'd like to post a job of the highest-ranking. Anyone who participates in the fight will be paid 1 thousand Central credits.” Garrick says.

“Oh, interesting are you sure your new administrator friends will like that? I think that amount may be a little too low to catch interest though.” Caerith says. “I will pay out of my pocket, but I'm not done 1k just for participating. Doing something significant 100 thousand. Taking the head of this Honor Guard the intelligence division mentioned 1 million, and of course The Reaper himself 1 billion.” Garrick further explains.

Caerith's eyes widen in surprise he normally keeps them closed relying on his other senses. “That while definitely turn heads, but well it might also bankrupt you, old friend,” he said with concern. “That's a price I'm willing to make.” He said confidently. “I will spread the word,” Caerith said ending the call. He returns to look at the status of all the divisions looking wary at the still unaccounted for Health division. “I pray you are all safe.”

The dust settles over the hospital as Eveyr one regains their footing unsure what just happened some of the cubes Lucy had used in the past had shielded them all leaving them mostly unhurt unfortunately Lucy was not so lucky Lying on the ground seemingly fatally injured. Everyone there started to rush in and assess the damage to her only to stop in their tracks when they heard the cackling of a woman standing on the half-destroyed wall above. “I was right so right. Yes, yes, Master Reaper will be so proud, yes proud.” She said laughing.

Raleigh pulls out Novabreaker narrowing her eyes not wanting to entertain this Remnant solider, but quickly stops when she realizes the woman is strapped to the gills with explosions of every kind. “Haha, I can't wait to explode you all, well except for the orange lady, and those other two pins.” She said twirling around overjoyed. All of them seemed confused about how to talk to someone like this Iris couldn't wait any longer she rushed toward Lucy trying to stabilize her with healing magic. Crucible transformed his hand into a gun ready to fire. “Wait don't!” Clyde said assuming he didn't notice the bombs all over her body but it was too late.

However, instead of a possibly deadly amount of ammunition, it was a syringe that shot into her side. “Woah woah, that's not fair we have to fight how was I supposed to explode you if you... you... I'm sleepy.” She said falling toward, and falling asleep. “Sedative for more rowdy patients. What I'm a medical practitioner, not a war machine.“ Crucible said seemingly insulted he thought differently. Now that the threat was over they all returned attention to Lucy to see if she was ok, AID-E started to scan her accessing the damage.

“It's dire if you had not started to heal her when you did she might have died from that. She isn't getting better your magic is just preventing it from getting worse. This is fatal if something doesn't change. 10 percent chance of survival.” AID-E explained. “This place isn't safe anymore does the hospital have precautions for this?” Clyde asked expecting that they did. “We were working on some experimental methods that could help with that issue. The problem is we don't know if they will work.

There is a 68 percent chance of failure.” The Robot explains.

“Ugh, we need to get our people out there before it's too late,” Iris yells in frustration. “I will start sending people out to search for people,” AID-E says. “That other method you mentioned what is it?” Clyde asked. “She's referring to the subspace device. It was an idea she had to reach more people. The hospital could be in more than one point in the Multiverse, alternatively, it could be tweaked to act more as a pocket dimension no one could get into easily other than allies. However it was still in testing phases, and unpredictable, plus we are medical professionals and lack knowledge of things like that.” Crucible explained.

“I can crack it. I think I'd at least be a better choice than some people here.” Rebbecca said volunteering. “As for its possible volatility.” She thinks for a moment before looking over at Tristan who is in the fetal position now overwhelmed. “Poor kid,” Raleigh said empathizing with him more than the rest of them. “Hey, how about you help me with it your leg could help me out,” Rebbecca said getting close to his face. He crawled away panicking with a flustered face not used to a pushy girl like her.

“Stop teasing him,” Clyde said annoyed. He lowers himself to Tristan's level. “Listen I get how you feel all of this can be too much sometimes, but we could use your help with this your leg might point us in the direction we need to go to save all the people here do you think you can do that?” Clyde asked trying to be gentle and understanding. He just nods Rebbecca warping him away before he has time to think. “They don't even know where it is,” Crucible said confused. “The Nurse Droid knows right I'm sure they will ask one of her if they can't find it,” Raleigh reassures them.

Iris takes a deep breath hesitating to say what she's about to say. “Crucible... I hate to say this but I need your help. My mana won't hold out forever I need you.” Iris said pleading for him to help save their leader. “Naturally. I wish to assist but we need to get her to an operating room can she move.” He asks. “If you are careful and Iris maintains her healing spell there is a 60 percent chance she

will make it," AID-E said most of them not liking the odds but accepting them doing their best to load her on a stretcher without harming her.

"Well, now that that is taken care of we can..." Raleigh said looking over at where the remnant soldier was only to see nothing there. "Haha did you pinheads think that would make me sleepy forever silly Billys? Master Reaper said not to explode you, but well you have such explosodable faces I might just have to do it anyway. Oh but where are my manners? I am Daaaaisy of Master Reapers exploders, no wait it was called something else. Oh yeah, the explody guard." She said twirling around again. "This lady is out of her mind," Clyde said at a loss for words.

"Enough of this?" Raleigh said charging forward to engage her now that everyone but them had fled the roof. Daisy gives a wicked grin as landmines she places around start to go off Raleigh is unable to avoid even causing someone like her to quickly get knocked out by the unexpected attack. "Ok, now you've gone too far. I don't know what your deal is but I don't care anymore." Clyde said rushing in towards her body to protect her staying clear of any bombs. "My deal? I made a deal with Master Reaper he said I could explode anyone I wanted as long as they looked cute and innocent no skull people allowed. This was great because everyone always got angry at Daisy for exploding them before." She laughed.

"That's probably because explosions kill people you crazy bitch." Clyde said forming a gauntlet around his arms as well as boots attempting to try something. They seemed to maintain their form but he didn't know how long they would. He used them to enhance his speed and jumping ability high in the air. She looked amazed starting to throw every bomb she had available at him through his careful manipulation of his armor he was able to form it right on impact but not long enough to drain all the energy. He landed near her grabbing onto her body.

"Oh ho ho you won the game congratulations. No one ever catches up to me. Wanna know what you win?" She smirks pulling all the pins off her chest as they explode killing her instantly leaving him

only seconds to form armor to project himself. He is shot into one of the still-standing walls knocked out cold. “Well... at least we don't... have to worry about her anymore. He said passing out.”

Aion is sitting in what looks like a panic room with Mia both of them looking unsure of what to do. “Is everything going to be alright,” Mia asked with concern but her unusual emotionless face. “Don't worry Mia I promise one way or another I'll find a way to keep you safe.” He reassured her, but even still he wasn't sure how he would keep that promise considering he isn't that strong himself. They both hear banging from outside as Mia nervously clings to Aion.

“St... stay calm I'll take care of this.” He said pulling out a gun he had with shaky hands and pointing it at the door. He didn't know if he was capable of pulling the trigger but her raised it at the door all the same ready to face whoever it was. It slowly opened as Alister entered the room. Aion took a huge sigh of Relief dropping his gun. “I've come to collect you. As you can see this panic room isn't going to be enough to save you. The Chancellors' bunker is much more secure though you will have to endure his annoying whining.” The cat said casually.

“You think anywhere in this world is safe at this point? Listen let's give them my Aspect it will ruin me, but at least maybe then the city will be saved.” Aion pleaded seemingly trying to keep the fact that Mia had them too under wraps for some reason. “Well that's noble, and all, but well I can't agree to it. Giving that kinda power to a madman isn't the greatest idea even if it does spare us, and well while you are ok with parting with it Porta Nexus isn't so what will it be?” He asked holding out his hand. Aion swallowed hard seeing there wasn't a choice.

Chapter Forty Nine

Cyrus was out on another mission this one was a little different they had been asked to help a rebel group struggling to hold out against a remnant warlord. It was laughably easy to the point it unsettled him. He looked around at the government office they just took back all the enemies that seemed to have vanished. “Something is wrong. It's like they completely abandoned this place last minute for some reason. Not unlike when the empire started project deforestation.” He ponders. “This world holds little strategic value and has minimal resources they probably didn't have use for it anymore. We don't either.” Tess said still not fully understanding why he wasted his time on places like

this.

“Well, maybe that means these people won't be bothered anymore.” He said dusting himself off. Tess looked down it would seem she had something on her mind for a long time and was struggling to hold her tongue. "I can't stand this anymore!" Tess's voice cracked, echoing off the empty halls. "We are warriors, not caretakers for every weak world in the Multiverse! Healing our enemies, and helping people who have nothing to offer us—what good does it do? These people will just stay weak, and we'll bleed ourselves dry for them!" Her gaze swept the room, meeting the shocked eyes of Coalition soldiers and locals alike. "What are we even doing here?"

Cyrus frowns finding the words. “That's what the empire would say... Why are we doing this? Why am I doing this? Because I am not in the empire anymore, and I want to do this. I want to be something people can look up to a... I want to be a hero! And if that means wasting our time and resources I will do so every time. Not just for me but all the people I wronged while in the empire.” He explained walking off only to get stopped by a random soldier.

“Sir it's Porta Nexus...” He started to say gasping for air like he didn't believe it himself. “Well spit it out,” Cyrus said calmly. “The whole city... the Remnant they attack somehow and have a force unheard of.” He explained everyone looking in shock even Tess who was still trying to calm down from her outburst. “Well, that might explain the lack of resistance here. I want you to send a message to all of our forces anyone available and not already defending something mobilize to Porta Nexus immediately!” He said quickly rushing back to his ship to join them.

When he enters the flagship Tara runs up to him. “What's going on Cyrus everyone saying something major is going down.” She asked only for him to tightly grasp her shoulders. “Listen to me this fight is going to be like one you've never seen. I need you to stay out of it for real this time. No stowing away, no nothing go home and be safe.” He said competently and seriously.

“That's not fair all I wanna do is help you, and you always push me aside!” She said getting a

bit teary eyes. “We aren't talking about this right now. Hurry up and go.” He said not entertaining her antics this time. “Would you say the same to my sister?” She said with anger. He pauses for a moment but instead of responding, he keeps walking without a word. Tess joins him completely armored up as they shoot off toward Porta Nexus. “What is the plan?” She asked.

“It's hard to say without knowing the full situation but no doubt the Port Authorities forces are at their wit's end we will focus on defense and search and Rescue until we fully know what we are getting into. What about you? It seems you're ready to join the front lines yourself?” He asked worried. “I think I need to work some of my anger out is all.” She said making him sigh knowing they might need to have a real conversation later.

They finally make it seeing the damage. Even though night had fallen most of the fires still burned brightly as flashing lights from conflict appeared all over. These forces began to land on the ground surprising the struggling Port Authority forces at first they didn't know what to think about after it was clear they were helping they joined with them to fight back against them. “Sir we are being hailed.” One of the members of the bridge said.

He just nodded telling him to answer with his motions. Garrick's face appeared on his screen. “Guild Master Garrick what a strange twist. As you can see we have come to your aid.” Cyrus said calmly. “Thank you very much Porta Nexus greatly appreciates this.” He said but his tone hid some animosity it would seem they knew each other at least a little. “You are still wary of me,” Cyrus said understanding as he nodded.

“I understand, but is it for my past in the empire or...” He asked referring to his more personal interactions in the past trying to get him to give up Raleigh. “I think we both failed her in a way. I'd like to believe in the words you have spoken but...” He started to say only for Cyrus to cut him off. “Don't believe my words believe my actions, and I'm promising you we are here to help and will show you from one failure to another,” Cyrus reassured. “Very well I will make sure to keep you in the loop on

battle strategy.” That is all he said before ending the call.

He looked down at the battle below. “This is a force I haven't seen from the likes of them in a long time they are serious about this don't underestimate them.” He said to all his forces through coms. “The Battlefield is rather scattered now there aren't very many clear boundaries on who controls what.” He further said to himself unsure how to proceed.

Against his wishes, Tara had stayed and jumped into an unoccupied ship in the hangar. “Tara? Where did you go?” Darrian said walking in the hangar trying to find her before she did something stupid, but it was too late. She hooked herself up to the ship and flew down to the Surface. “Tara!” He shouted looking like he was about to have a heart attack. Without thinking he equipped his gauntlets and jumped out of the hanger after her.

The Coalition ground forces were just the thing the Port Authority needed to catch a true breather after the hours of combat many of them surrounded the exhausted men who were about to collapse making sure the Remnant would not harm them. Tess came in pulling out two Multi-cubes that transformed into twin blades slashing at a group ahead of her. More started to focus on her, but there were no matches she flipped a switch on the blade causing the form to shift to a laser whip cracking it at the ones farther away from her before they could get any closer.

On top of the hospital roof, Clyde and Raleigh started to come to, but Raleigh didn't get up just lay there looking at the destruction. “This is all our fault.” She said getting teary-eyed. “It is not we did everything we could it's not our fault they didn't believe us.” She finally sits up as he sits down next to her. “That's not what I mean... we treated them like a joke, an afterthought nothing compared to the former might of The Empire, and look what they have done.” She said motioning to all the chaos.

He leans against her not sure what the right action was. “Well it did start to feel more like clean-up duty after a while, but no we did take them seriously when we realized what they were doing don't sell yourself short. In the end, this happened for the same reason everything ever bad happens. Some

asshole decided to show up and ruin everything for everyone else.” He said as they both leaned against each other not saying anything else just taking the moment to recover.

Below Crucible, and Iris were trying to come up with the best way to save her. “She is missing vital organs she needs to survive,” Crucible explains after scanning her AID-E seemed to be there but distracted and unable to. “Can you synthesize new ones artificially and replace her current ones and use cybernetics to strengthen her damaged cells, while I keep her stable?” Iris asked. “I can, but I'm surprised you would suggest something like that.” He said curiously. “We can't lose her I am willing to try anything to save her, and well with her powers, she can easily replace them when she wakes up if she doesn't like them. Other patients can't do that.” She further explains

“AID-E what is the likelihood she will survive,” Crucible asked only to not receive an answer for a while. “Sorry, I am experiencing issues keeping up with the volume of all the patients we have right now. There is a 50 percent chance she will survive, however, I've gone through several scenarios already, and this is the one with the highest outcome at least in the realm of possibility. “Then let's get to work. So we can keep her to a safe level and take some of that workload off of you.” Crucible said turning one of his fingers into a tool for incisions.

In the basement, Rebbecca is tweaking the subspace device as she starts a call with Proxy and Mother. “Are you close my drones are holding the Remnant off from outside but I'm running low.” She said as she kept up her work. “It's a lot harder to keep up with you through the Multiverse when we are on the other side of it and don't have broken-wing powers like you,” Proxy said in protest. “But yes we will arrive shortly.”

“Noted.” She said ending the call. “Ok, now scaredy cat this part is important. If we get this part wrong the hospital is going to be destroyed, no pressure. Just point the way.” She said of course causing him a great deal of pressure. She hovers her hand over a wire grabbing it ready to plug it into an out lit he uses the leg to make another way point but because his emotions are high he can only think

about what not to do the way point reappears red saying this will lead to death. “No not that one!” He shouts as she calmly moves to the next one down the line. “NOT THAT ONE EITHER!”

Tess had taken down all the soldiers in the area panting heavily sweat dripping down her face as her ears perk up hearing what sounded like a crying child, and someone pleading for help within a burning building. She looks up with shock like she didn't expect it even though it is happening all over. She quickly breaks down the barricade blocking the entrance of the building but she still sees no one looking around following the cries.

A young girl with purple skin, and white hair is holding a human child who is crying she looks terrified and unsure of what to do. Tess looks equally terrified for the first time she seems to empathize with their situation. “Come on let's get you two out of here.” She said picking them both up and rushing out of the building. “No we we can't leave mommy is trapped.” The girl said crying. Tess clicked her tongue in frustration quickly taking them out of the danger for now and setting them down. “I will go find her. Stay here.” She said as she rushed back into the building.

“Is anyone here? Please answer me.” She shouted hearing nothing but the faint groans off in the distance. She broke through another blockage causing more of the building to collapse on top of her. She struggled to get out of the rubble finally making it to the mother who had the same purple-like skin as her daughter trapped under a beam. “Hold on I'm here to get you out.” She said lifting the beam. “My daughter. I need to save my...” She started to say.

“Your daughter is fine.” She said helping her to her feet as they both slowly walked out together they left the building just before it collapsed completely. Tess felt strange a feeling she had never quite felt before all of that really took it out of her, but seeing the girl embrace her mother crying, and happy she was alive felt good. She collapsed from the strain with a smile on her face.

Tara crashed on the ground because she was hooked up too long and it froze her brain the main reason why they were always so adamant she didn't do so but she didn't care she want to help them for

real. She pulled out her gauntlets attacking every person in sight seeming to hold her own against the unending wave of them. Darrian crashed elsewhere doing the same but desperately looking around for her.

“Well, shit look everyone it's a navigation unit wandering around.” A large blond man who towered over all of the other soldiers laughed as they surrounded her. “Don't call me that!” She said with anger. “You know bringing this to The Reaper might get us out of dying two they are still pretty valuable all things considered.” He said with a twisted grin. She got into a fighting stance but it was clear she had no chance of winning against so many people she was starting to realize just how big of a mistake this was.

“Well if it isn't Warren. I'm not surprised a shithead like you ended up with the Remnant.” Darrian said charging in punching every man in in his path to get to the giant man who he seemed to know. “Holy shit everyone it's Darrian the old empire's punching bag.” He laughed recognizing him too. “Let the girl go I'll be the one you're fighting.” He said clenching his fist. “Eh no that wont do. I know most of the soldiers around here are willing to die, but well I'm not one of them I just wanted a chance to punish some ingrates.” He smirked.

Seeing that there is no choice but to break through he does so grabbing Tara and running away once they make it to a somewhat safe distance he sets her down. “I'll hold them off. Go find our allies and stay with them.” He insists. “But... you'll...” She started to protest. “I can handle these punks. Warrens just some asshole Cyrus, and I knew from back in the academy I'm just gonna give him a quick pounding before I meet back up with you alright.” He said with a smile. As she turned to face them again. She reluctantly did as she was told now with tears in her eyes.

They approach him slowly without care. “That's how you see me huh? Don't underestimate me jackass I'm part of the Honor Guard now that ought to mean something even to your dim mind.” He said smirking once more. “The only thing you'll ever be is a bully ready to abuse the first power you're

handed. You've always been a punk.” Darrian punches him only for him to catch it with a frown. “Oh yeah. Lets do this then you and me one on one.” Warren said in answer wanting to prove he's better then him as he signals for his men to stand down.

Chapter Fifty

Marcy nervously sneaks through the hallways to the lower decks. Union ships are designed a little differently than The Empires any key systems like the new Navigation units are located in the engine room rather than the Bridge. “Why is she making me do this... there had to be a better choice.” She said slowly getting more afraid as her skin turned more red and tense. She peeked into the engine room all the engineers were inside performing maintenance like normal as an armed guard that Medan brought with him the new Navigation device.

One of them walks up to him. “Are you sure you don't want us to run a diagnostic on the new

Unit? It's sure to break down even if it's brand new.” The Engineer asked. “My orders are clear only Madan is allowed to authorize that anyone else will be detained.” The man explained. The Engineer sighs walking away. “Marcy, what are you doing?” Sara asked from behind her. She panics falling on her ass. “No...nothing please don't tell anyone...” She said sheepishly. Sara just tilts her head.

After a brief explanation, she speaks up. “So the boss lady wanted you to look into them because the overseer is being weird about people looking at them huh? I got it don't worry I'll help out.” She said entering the room without another word. Marcy peeked in again seeing her flirting with the Guard which seemed to take it well. “I've had my eye on you for a while big guy how about you and me forget about this boring guard duty and we can go someplace together.” She said dragging her finger along the chest plate he was wearing.

He fell for it following her away. She took a deep sigh of relief walking in to look at it. The machine was strange and unsettling to her she didn't know exactly what she was looking for it seemed you needed a code just to open it. One of the engineers walked up to get curious. “You wanna know what crazy kinda tech is inside this thing too don'tcha? Don't tell the brass but we have a few loopholes around codes like these. It um... sometimes we don't have time to ask permission to fix critical systems, and we take. Liberties.”

With that, he pulled a wire out of his sleeve shoving it into the side of the keypad. “It turns out there is a flaw in this type of board just give it the right voltage and.” He said as the lights turned green unlocking it. “Th... thank you. But... but... You probably shouldn't look... you could get court marshaled.” She said nervously causing him to look surprised. “What about you missy I know you're pretty good with the general but.” He said with concern. “Tasha asked for me to do this and... That's not important please just don't look.” She said panicking more. He sighed walking away.

She took a deep breath opening it up looking in horror right away after seeing the contents. She quickly took a ton of pictures shutting it back up. “Do.... do not open that, no matter what you do.” She

pleaded with the man as she rushed off to the command room. Medan was on his way out after giving her another lecture she rested her face into her hands long past tired of it. “Marcy your back what did you find.” She said not looking up. Marcy just sat next to her burying her face into her shoulder. “I'll summon The Squad.” She said understanding just how worrying it was.

When everyone arrived she finally showed everyone what they found on the holo table all of them looked in shock even Jacob. Inside the machine was a brain as well as other chopped-up body parts only connected by a nervous system that looked like it was painfully ripped off a body. The worst part is it seemed the system was keeping it alive possibly still enduring pain. “What is this? That is sick!” Jacob said in horror this was far worse in his eyes than anything he had done.

“Was this... one of Raleigh's sisters we helped save?” Tyler asked the question everyone was too afraid to ask. “I see so you disobeyed my direct order and found out,” Medan said entering the room. Jacob stands up right away stomping towards him lifting him up by the neck as he winds up his fist to punch him. “Jacob stop even if he did this we can't just take the law into our own hands!” Simon said in protest.

“Why can't we? In what world would this be ok? He said about to punch him before glancing at his wrist and seeing the stolen technology he had been using this whole time for the greater good. He punched the wall next to him instead of cracking it before storming off. “I guess I'm not so different after all.” He said as he did.

Medan dusted himself off adjusting his glasses. “This is why this information was strictly needed to know.” He said coldly. “Need to know, how about never attempted this is horrible, can they still feel pain?” Natasha said worried. “I don't know I didn't ask. You fail to see the bigger picture like always. The Empire's navigation units always gave them the edge. They let them travel much more quickly through the multiverse and with less chance of danger. We refined this technology and removed the human rebellion holding it back. I'm sure in time the Empire would have done the same.

“How can you say that who gives a shit if it gives us the edge if we have to do this to get there, and news flash The Empire isn't around anymore! We stopped them from using their units!” She screamed at him. “There will always be Empires to combat. One way or another. We need to stay on top. You're lucky if...” He said not caring what she thinks but gets cut off by a soldier coming in with urgent news. “Ma'am! We received a distress call from Porta Nexus, a large force of remnant soldiers have attacked the city and they need all the help they can get!” He said at attention.

“What? But it's Porta Nexus how could they...” She said in disbelief. “As I was saying there will always be more empires,” Medan said smiling like his methods had just been justified. She stands up right away. “Leave for Porta Nexus at once, but don't use the new Navigation we will arrive like we always have.” She orders puzzling the guard who at first questions it but accepts it. “Yes Ma'am!” He said rushing out. “Wait just a moment where do you think you're going you are in major trouble once I tell The Counsel your careers are finished!” Medan said threatening them.

She walks over to him staring him in the face. “No, your career is finished if you tell them. I have the information and if I share it with the rest of The Union they will be outraged. So step aside and let us do our jobs, or I'll let Jacob come back in here and finish the job.” She said breaking eye contact as they all left for the bridge.

It takes longer but they arrive later that night surprised to the the Coalition ships already there helping out. “Well, that complicates things.” She sighs. “Listen up men. We are here for one reason and one reason only. To answer the call, and drive off the Remnant. We may be foes elsewhere, but today the Coalition is our ally remember that and go forth.” She said on coms as her troops landed most of them were directed to places their temporary allies were not already deployed. “Marcy I want you to stay here and take command. I'm going to the ground. I'm much more useful on the front lines now with my aspect.” She said turning to leave.

“I can't...I... I...” Marcy said in protest “You'll do just fine I believe in you. Besides everyone

already knows what they need to do.” She left without another word jumping down directly Like Darrian without a ship. She crashed down on the ground immediately punching the first person she saw Show Strong they were knocked into one of the Remnant tanks destroying each other. A large force fired on her but did nothing with her incredible skin. She had become a little too reckless because of it.

She punched all of them with anger she hadn't had in a long time. Anger for letting everything happen the way it did. Her powerlessness despite being this strong. She was resolved to make a difference this time as her forces finally caught up with her backing her up even though she didn't need it.

The Reaper growled in frustration. “So many enemies they are making things hard for us now, but we still have plenty of cards to play. We aren't done yet. Crepuscure what are you doing it's about time you earned your keep.” The Reaper said on his radio. A pale girl with white hair, and bright red eyes was lounging on a roof yawning licking some blood off her lips from corpses nearby. She smiles showing off her fangs and looking at the chaos below as she finally answers. “Fine, fine I suppose I could offer some support, great leader.” She said seeming to mock him. “Mind your tone.” He said ending the call.

“My Children go forth and consume all we will all become one!” She said laughing as flying creatures swarmed out of the building as well as a few vampire thralls on the ground. Like before every side was taken off guard as some of their forces revealed themselves biting into their necks, and turning them. Walls of citizens turned into thralls form blocking The Ally's advancement as the Remnant laughed and sneered at them from behind the literal human shields Many of the Port Authority soldiers seemed frozen unsure what to do. The Coalition trying to harm the Thralls of their former allies in a non-lethal way. The Union chooses to shoot down their comrades but hesitates when the citizens attack them choosing to run away.

“What's causing this?” Cyrus asked on open coms to anyone who would listen. Alister is

leading Aion, and Mia down a back alley answering him. “They seem to be coming from the central shopping district around Unity Tower according to my men.” He said as he stabbed a Remnant soldier who found them but failed to notice that Crow was watching him from the sky. Cyrus thinks for a moment wondering just what they can do to a vampire like this would killing the source be enough? The sun was still a few hours away from rising if that was even a weakness for this kind of vampire. Ultimately he chose to leave his ship without telling anyone hoping he could do something with his Heart of the Multiverse.

In the hospital, Rebbecca finally finishes setting the subspace device up. “Eureka! Now for the fun part when I push this button are we all going to die?” She asked Tristan with a smile hovering over it. “No, but maybe you should be more worried about that!” He shouted at her. She quickly pushed the button and the device sprang to life energy pulsing through the hospital.

The base of the building sparked with power as all but the doors vanished leaving nothing in the spot it formerly was.“Great job little guy.” She said deciding to reward him by smothering him with her breasts despite having no interest in him whatsoever. He squirmed never being so close to a woman before getting greatly flustered. After she finally lets go he takes a deep breath. “How can you always remain so calm?” He asked her wanting to know.

“Oh well. Since you have been rather entertaining I'll tell you. There is no point in getting all worked up about inevitable things, and acting like this certainly throws people off and makes them easier to manipulate. And it's just amusing, give it a shot sometime.” She said with a smile as he just frowned.

“You've both done it she is stabilized. She has a 98 percent chance of surviving now though I am uncertain on when she will awaken.” AID-E informs them both. Both of them lean back in exhaustion. “You know what Crucible you're alright after all,” Iris said holding out her hand. He takes it nodding. “Likewise. Now you're drained because of your weak human body. Allow me to aid the

AID-E while you rest. I hope you will both join us shortly.” He said turning away she didn't seem to love that response but smiled passing out from mana depletion.

Clyde and Raleigh made their way down the elevator ready to Join the battle again now that they had recovered. They open the door a little surprised to see the hospital is gone other than the doors being guarded by both Proxy and Mother as the paramedics rush in and out with survivors. The hospital is well-protected now, and out of danger.

“Greetings Clyde so you aren't dead after all. I thought that might be the case. Allow us to defend the area while you...” Before he could finish six robots started to attack all with angry-looking faces. Proxy's emote turned shock seeming to recognize them. “Oh god, it's my past models how did they get a hold of them?” He asked bewildered. Clyde and Raleigh stood ready to fight. “No no this is personal now. Please proceed forward we got this.” He insisted.

They both looked at each other but knew they needed to help out elsewhere walking away. “Mother Proxy model seven is a filthy traitor and not good enough for the likes of you. I will defeat him, and show you that I am your true love!” One of the robots said. “No, it will be me!” Another one argues. Despite the lack of expression on the giant robot's face she seems to be swooning a little. “I will defend your honor, my love,” Proxy said firing bullets into them.

Darrian and Warren have forsaken conventional weapons and chosen to have a one-on-one fistfight both of them beating each other, but they are both able to take it. All his men just watch. Warren throws a right hook that Darrian dodges giving him the chance to upper-cut him and knock him to the ground. “You lost you little punk now while don't you scram from this world already and leave these people alone.

Warren sits up enraged at his loss as all his means start to hold him down. “I never promised to play fair!” He said laughing beating him as brutally as he could seeing Darrian's gauntlets on the ground he chuckles deciding to put them on himself and beat him with them. “Not so tough now huh!”

He said relishing every hit until Darrian's face was incredibly bruised. He leans in closer with confidence as Darrain's head butts him breaking free from the men and climbing on top of them.

He returned the beating as people tried to pull them off, but his punches were too far too raw. He pulled out a knife stabbing Warren in the chest ending his life. He slowly, but weakly started to rise. “Alright... who's... who's next? I'll take all you punks on.” He said smiling, but knowing he wasn't making it out of this one. “Take care of Tara for me Cyrus she's... an idiot, but shes strong.” He said as they charged him.

The Squad is surrounded by Thralls of allies and foes they already killed alike. They were completely overwhelmed no matter how many they brought down more just kept coming and they didn't even have to have their heads attached. “There is truly no end to them,” Simon said out of breath. Jacob looked around the area his Squad struggling even with the power suits, even with all they had been through ahead he saw a group of uninflicted civilians cowering in the corner unable to get away.

“Hey, kid I have a mission that only you can do. This... we aren't winning this one so easily, but The Union needs that leg of yours.” He said to Tyler as they fought. “What are you saying I'm not leaving you?” He speaks up. “Listen I've been thinking. About everything we have done, and the weather is was right. I don't know the answer. We have helped a lot of people... but we have hurt a lot too.” He started to say losing some of his resolve.

“And we did it for the Union,” Sara said in protest. “That's what we told ourselves, but instead we just ended up defending something else something twisted. When was the last time you felt good about our battles.” Jacob said none of them answered. “This is our chance to change that to fight for something worth fighting for, but Tyler those people need your help, and only your leg can do that. So get going already.” He said keeping up the fight.

Tyler hesitated but ultimately listened running over to the cowering people avoiding attacks

using the leg. “Everyone follow me.” He said as a path appeared before all of them. Jacob looked back at Tyler one last time. “We did good with that one. He's grown into his own. I'm glad we took him in.” Jacob said all of them looking back once more as well. “Well. It's a good day to die lets do so in style!” He said remaining his motivation taking on the waves of never-ending monsters.

Chapter Fifty One

Cyrus walks toward Unity Tower alone thralls run toward him he pulls out his cube, but stops himself instead he takes a deep breath as the symbol on his chest grows. “Remember who you are your convictions, your dreams, wake up and reclaim your heart!” He said hoping it would work. After seeing the original holder control the zombies with the heart he thought perhaps he could do something similar if not in reverse. The thralls froze grabbing at their heads as their skin slowly shifted back to its natural color freeing them from her control.

A Union soldier in turn comes up to him looking grateful as well as his men and the other

factions. “Thank you so much. I heard a lot of bad things about your Coalition sir, but in my book, you're a great guy.” The Union soldier said. “Then show your appreciation by helping others. Is the vampire in the tower?” He said turning to ask one of his men who nodded. “I'll take care of this. I may be the only one who can.” He said as he walked into it.

Every Thrall he encountered he freed from their control some were even Remnant Soldiers their thankfulness seemed to be fixed. Some ran off not wanting to admit they were saved while others continued the mission, and attacked him. All of which he pushed aside using his skills as a seasoned warrior to defeat them. He was now deep In the vampire's nest entering a large room where she kept lounging like before but in more luxury this time sipping from a wine glass most likely filled with blood instead of wine.

“Well look who it is. That ability is rather annoying. However, think about what I can do with it myself. If you think things are bad now imagine what I can do with that Heart of yours. Thank you for offering it to me.” She said laughing. “I will do no such thing. I will defeat you and return this conflict to reality.” He said pulling out the spear from his multi-cube. “Oh, how will you do that? Don't you know anything about Vampires It doesn't look like you have any of the means to kill one.”

“Tell me if the sun rises on the skin of your thralls will they go back to normal?” He asked ignoring her question. She frowned that he didn't answer but was intrigued by the question answering. “Of course not they will turn to ash. I bet you came in here thinking if you killed me they'd turn back to normal too, well unfortunately for you the only way that is going to happen is if I willingly give up my control.” She smirked.

His chest glowed as he used one of its powers to look into her heart seeing just how serious she was he didn't like to do this normally but the situation was dire. “I see good in you. I don't know what happened, and how it ended this way for you but please end this.” He begged. “Ha listen to yourself so naive. You're right I used to be incredibly foolish thinking all sorts of things like peace and harmony

blah blah blah. But in the end, it was all a sham everything I did was worthless, and don't think just because you have some special power that I don't that I can't read you too. Everyone in the empire knows about you. Your idealism is not your own you are a paper tiger.” She said standing up and walking closer to him as he got ready to fight.

“Your will is so fragile you want to believe in people but you just like me you've seen where they have failed, where you have failed.” She said facing him finally. “Shut up!” He said in anger striking at her as she easily dodges out of the way. “You're so desperate to prove things can be done a different way. A better way, but if you fail even one more time you will fall into a despair you'll never break out of.” She said mocking him more as he tried to slash at her.

“The only reason you got this far is because someone showed you another way. They got incredibly lucky with that arm power of theirs, didn't they? They inspired you. You had already given up.” She keeps mocking as he focuses on her more closely almost stabbing her only for her to form a blade out of blood blocking the strike.

Cyrus takes a deep breath taking in her words considering them was it true? Had he been lying to himself this whole time? “You're right he did inspire me. I did lose hope before then. I thought there was no way I could truly make a difference in this multiverse, but he showed me the way back, and that's not a bad thing.” He said engaging her once more as they both clashed once more. She connects her blade with him but smiles seeming to still be toying with him.

“Now I'm on my own again, but I'm not lost. I'm forging a new path. It may be dark, and untraveled, but I'm willing to walk it to the very end for myself and everyone that relies on me!” He said breaking the sword and piercing her in the heart. Her eyes widen not hurt from the attack but like the words hit her possibly with the help of the heart's power to influence emotions. He wasted no time cutting off her limbs in the free moment and making her fall to the floor not moving.

“Let me bring you back to the light? Just like he did for me. Release everyone from your

control.” He said holding out his hand despite her no longer having one. She was in a trance like she was thinking of the past. “As if. How dare you make me remember those memories.” She said as new limbs grew in the place of the old ones.

“You want to see where this talk gets you I'll show you.” With that four armored men busted into the room surrounding her. They looked to be strong warriors from the past, but now their bodies had decayed long past their prime. They all stuck at him leaving him very little time to move having to block one of them with his spear. “These are my friends they all betrayed me and foolishly died serving their own ends.” She explained.

All of them seemed to have more powerful vampire-like abilities one of them having a sword that seemed to absorb blood from its user but it had blacked and dried up with the user not being dead. He rushed up to that one raising his hand to its face as the heart glowed. “Rest now be free from your bonds.” He said as it turned to ask and the armor collapsed to the ground. “What are you doing stop?”Crepuscule said distressed. Despite her words, she seemed to care deeply for them.

Cyrus turned doing the same to the two next to him. “Nooo stop it!” She said rushing in with more desperation and ferocity as he did the final one. “I let them pass on,” Cyrus said unapologetically as she began to cry. The heart seemed to be influencing her more and more. He Dodges blocking her blows seeming to be toying with her now.

“Everyone in this world. Everyone in every world has the chance to be better. To be more than they are!” He said as she struck him so hard it broke the spear in half. He quickly recovers tossing one of the halves to the side and using the spear more like a dagger. “Everyone makes choices they regret. Wishing they had done better maybe if they had done something different everything would be alright, but what matters is the effort.” He said slashing at her chest and cutting her torso off.

He steps on her chest pinning her down and pointing his weapon at her chest. “So what if I fail again I would rather die doing the right thing than ever return to doing the wrong thing for the right

reasons.” He said full of conviction that seemed to touch her very heart. She stopped healing even though it seemed like she could if she wanted to. “What's the point in the end you'll end up like me just like I said, but you know what prove me wrong I'd love to be wrong. I've lived a long time you know. I'm so tired.” She said starting to cry.

She turned her eyes toward the ashes of her dead friends. Her eyes widened seeing them all standing there in astral forms motioning for her to follow with smiling faces. She smiled it was unclear what she saw but she smiled slowly turning to dusk. “Prove me wrong mister Hero I'm counting on you.” She said before finally fading away. Cyrus dropped to a knee panting heavily he didn't take much damage that fight was one of the most exhausting fights he had ever had most of the wounds felt internal. He pulled out his communicator. “I have defeated the one controlling the thralls how do things look outside?” He asked waiting for an answer.

All over the battlefield, the Thralls started to regain their normal skin color looking down and confused the citizens that were forming a shield quickly fled confusing the Remnant soldiers. The warrior turned were also back to normal embraced by their team who are happy they don't have to fight anymore. “Incredible I don't know how you did it Commander Cyrus, but everyone has gone back to normal,” Garrick said astounded.

“No, no, no. How is this happening? She would never—she *couldn't just* release them!” His voice cracked, raw with disbelief, as he turned to the Pink-Haired Man. “Why would she do this? There’s no logic to it. She had everything—control, power, immortality! Why throw it all away?”
The Pink-Haired Man adjusted his weapon, his expression guarded. “Maybe... she finally had enough. That Heart of the Multiverse messes with people, doesn’t it?”

The Reaper’s glowing eyes flared with anger. “Enough? Enough of what? Being alive? Being *strong*? I gave her purpose, a place in this world. She was *mine,* and she chose this—to weaken us in the middle of my masterpiece! No, no, no... This doesn’t make sense. She was broken, just like the rest

of us. She knew what this was about."

His frustration gave way to a sneer as he stared out into the chaos. The thralls, once his twisted advantage, were now fleeing or fighting alongside their former comrades. The tides of battle had shifted drastically. "Did he... that fool Cyrus... did he *do this* to her? Did he poison her mind with his delusions of hope?" The Reaper spat the words like venom. "No matter. She was a tool—useful, but replaceable. If she's gone, so be it. The final phase doesn't depend on her." "I hate to say it, sir, but all the Honor Guard have been defeated, save for Warrior 505 and myself," the Pink-Haired Man reported, his voice level but tinged with weariness.

The Reaper sighed, his shoulders rising and falling dramatically. "And so, the final curtain draws near. I was hoping for more chaos, more... devastation. But alas, this is all still within the realm of expectation." He straightened, addressing the forces below through his communicator. "All units, cease your scattered attacks! Focus your efforts on the Military Division's headquarters. It's time to drive the dagger home." he ordered as all the ground forces immediately did so. "Because most of the administrators and leadership is there?" The pink-haired man questions. "Precisely. Destroying their command center will shatter any hope of resistance," the Reaper replied.

He then turned his gaze toward the Union flagship hovering in the distance. "But before that..." With a theatrical flair, the Reaper raised his middle finger. Small bursts of light erupted across the ship's hull, followed by massive explosions tearing through its frame. Flames and debris rained down as the vessel began its catastrophic descent. It would seem he climbed to the top of this building to get closer to it otherwise it wasn't in range. "Marcy!" Natasha shouted seeing the ship start to go down hearing no response on the coms. With that, The Reaper and man turn away to join his forces below for the final assault.

Chapter Fifty Two

Raleigh and Clyde are moving through the battle fighting everyone they come across. In the distance, they see a couple of thugs fighting the Remnant soldiers off. They have a more Eastern gangster vibe. They jump in helping them fight them off. “Porta Nexus has Yakuza?” Clyde asked Raleigh confused. “Hey, you think just because we do some things under the table we don't wanna defend our home?” The man said in protest as they finished off everyone around. “That's fair sorry I guess.” He said awkwardly.

“No problem thanks for helping us out.” He said with a grin only to be suddenly get shot in the

face by a sniper. All the other gangsters duck in cover as Raleigh forms a shield for Clyde to get behind just in time to avoid getting shot. A fully armored woman drops down from the roof dropping the sniper now that it isn't as effective. She pulls out two swords not saying a word. “Hey shooting people like that isn't fair!” Raleigh said with anger.

The woman still didn't answer striking at her. “Look's like she isn't much of a talker,” Clyde said forming his gauntlet and punching her while she was fixated on Raleigh. “She acts more like The Reaper than the guy pretending to be him,” Raleigh commented. This seemed to trigger more of a reaction. “He is the real Reaper, and he is stronger than you all!” She shouted becoming more intense, and quick with her slashes.

Raleigh wasn't having much trouble keeping up with her forming a sword of her blocking every blow. “Looks like we found her weakness,” Clyde said forming boots to jump higher in the air and bring down his fist onto her. She was barely able to dodge it as it came down making a small crater in the ground. The fight kept up it was clear she was a more powerful foe than the average soldier but wasn't about to introduce herself. The only clue to her identity is the number 505 on her armor.

As the fight kept going out of the corner of Raleigh's eye she caught a glimpse of a red and white uniform. It drew her attention right away as she saw Noir there staring at her before walking out of sight down an alley. Filled with rage she immediately rushed off towards her leaving the fight puzzling Clyde. “Where are you going?” He asked barely managing to hold his own against her as he blocked her sword with his gauntlets. “I saw her!” She said rushing away from him not fully understanding what she meant.

He couldn't turn his back on her now that it was just him fighting her so he refocused his efforts hoping he could catch up with her after. Alone the fight was much more difficult he could barely keep up with her flurry of blows. He managed to grab of of the swords and yank it. He couldn't remove it from her grip but it put her off guard enough to give him the opening he needed to use his other fist to

punch her in the gut.

“I don't know what your deal is, but I don't have time to fight you anymore surrender, Truce, maybe delay this till later?” He asked but she shook her head slowly recovering, but that when the men from before charged in with a giant cannon that required multiple men to hold firing it at her before she could recover and obliterating her torso. She fell to the ground groaning in pain about to die. “Don't think you can beat him. He is... strong, and even if you kill him he will never truly die.” She said referring to The Reaper. “Well the real one was like that but this guy I doubt it,” Clyde said angering her more, but she quickly fell limp no longer alive.

He takes a brief breath looking back at them. “Bro you saved our necks thank you.” The man said to him. “No problem, but I have to go after her now. Are you guys going to be alright?” He said a little rushed, but still worried they might otherwise not be even if they are criminals. They were allies at the moment. “Don't worry about us we know how to protect our family. Even if the boss ain't with us anymore.” The man said.

Caerith jumps down from the roof with a group of mercenaries. “Their forces are dwindling we will push them back from here.” He said as the gangsters nodded further segmenting their ability to survive. Clyde quickly rushed the way Raleigh went. “I should be mad at her, but...” He started to say but in truth, he understood how she felt, even still he wanted to get there before she did something wreck-less as he still saw Noir as Raleigh too. He activated his Eye of the Multiverse above him to get a better look at where she might have gone.

All over the city, everyone had regained their strength rejoining the battle most all the Remnant forces had regrouped and congested on the street near the Military Division's base. Garrick looked down at them pulling out his hammer ready to fight even though they were still a little off. “This is the final push.” The bear man said with a grin. Garick nodded putting down the hammer lost in thought like he still wasn't so sure of their victory.

He clicked his ear activating the mic on his earpiece. “Everyone, thank you all for fighting so hard to defend our home, and the same goes for those who came to our aid. The enemy is on the ropes, but we can’t underestimate them. It was that kind of mistake that brought this chaos to our doorstep in the first place.”

“Porta Nexus is more than just our home. It’s a beacon. A place where people from across the multiverse come together—not just to survive, but to thrive. It’s a city of a thousand stories, a million dreams, and countless hopes. We are more than just soldiers. We are shopkeepers, we are wanderers, we are families. We are all here because this place means something to us because it is a city where anyone can find a place to belong.”

“And that’s why we fight. Because Porta Nexus is a melting pot of ideas and cultures greater than any other, and that is what makes us stronger than them. We have something worth protecting, something worth fighting for. I know it’s been a long and hard battle, and there’s still a little further to go. But we’ve already lost friends, comrades—people who believed in this city as much as we do. Let’s honor them by making sure their sacrifice wasn’t in vain. Let’s show the Remnant that they can’t break us, that they can’t take away what makes us who we are. This is our home. Let’s show them why we are Porta Nexus. Let’s show them why they should never underestimate us again! For Porta Nexus!”

Darla and the other Port Authorities arrived to cut off their path to the base holding the line. Garrick words spurred their tired souls to charge in with ferocity and newly rekindled fire. Coalition forces flanked them from the side while the Union closed off the rear. They were completely surrounded, but The Remnant forces showed no signs of surrender still fighting as they were mowed down.

Raleigh had rushed down every alley Noir just narrowly slipping out of her grasp something was wrong it was almost like she was leading her somewhere she knew she could have gotten away by this point. Even still she had so much to say, and do involving her she wasn't about to lose her even if

what she had to do would upset Clyde.

Marcy pulls herself out of the rubble all bulked up from the stress. She had shielded a few men saving their lives from the crash. All of them slowly recovered, but a few stranglers from the Remnant started to swarm the area. Medan somehow alive breathes heavily at first it looks as though he is fine but upon turning his head everyone around sees half his face is gone. He grabs the collar of one of the men. “Get me out of here!” He demands.

“Sir we are surrounded get behind us and-” He tried to explain. “I don't care do whatever it takes for you to get me out of here even if it means sacrificing yourself!” Medan demanded, but the aggression was taking a toll on his already heavily damaged body. The Soldier looks down at him with disdain. If anyone had respect for this man it had long faded. Before he could really say anything else

The Remnant forces got closer. Medan pushed the man he was just begging into them running the other way. The man unfortunately was murdered right away, but because of this, they broke through the line chasing after Medan and quickly putting an end to his life before anyone could stop them. Marcy reached out her hand rushing over she had no love for the man but it was their duty to protect one another. She punched them off of him as the rest of her forces shot them down The forces quickly recovered mopping up the last of them.

She looked down at his mangled body his face unrecognizable. A part of her was happy he was gone, but yet she was upset at herself for not being able to defend him. Natasha rushes in shortly after. “Marcy!” She shouts hugging her from behind as Marcy calms down her form slimming back to its normal size. “I'm so glad you're ok. I thought the ship would be the safest place for you.” She said clearly worried.

“I'm sorry general I failed my mission,” Marcy said in response still looking at his dead body. “No Marcy you did everything you could I'm sure. Some people just can't help themselves.” She said while still embracing her. Tyler appeared with a huge group of noncombatants much more than before.

“The leg led me here so this place must be safe now.” He said as he looked down reflecting on everything that happened.

Natasha and Marcy turn to him nodding. “Hey um, Tasha? One day... do you think we could...” Marcy started to say before stopping herself. “I don't know the answer to that, but if that day does come I will be happy to spend it with you,” Natasha answers even still as they look on at all the people.

Alister is leading Aion almost to safety the forces of the Remnant are far from sight but the city is still holding plenty of dangers mostly from collapsing buildings and fires. He and his fellow cats lead the way only for Cindy, and Wolf to show up out of nowhere slashing the two men with him into nothing. Crow appeared from the shadows stabbing the one in the back from behind. As Marcus walked out confidently sword drawn at the Cat.

“I'll give it to you. Your intelligence is top-notch, but compared to mine It's nothing, and all I need is a single person.” Marcus said mocking him. “Marcus of the Neo Empire? I'd ask why you were here, but well I think we both know why. You used the chaos for this opportunity.” Alister said almost like he was impressed, and respected him more now. Aion and Mia looked very nervous not seeing how they could get out of this.

“For your cunning, I will permit you to leave with your life,” Marcus said waving his hand as to shoo him off. “While I do value that I can't just let you take them. Besides I have nine more. Plus you insulted my division. That's a big no-no.” Alister said drawing his sword and engaging Marcus who met blades with him, but quickly parried knocking the Weapon from his hand and stabbing him in the Gut. He fell to his knees with a smile. “I see so this is how I die. At least it's interesting.” the cat said falling over.

“Now onto the main event,” Marcus said stepping over him towards Aion. “Give up your aspects to me.” He calmly demands. “Of course, I'll do anything if you promise not to harm Mia,” Aion said terrified. “Oh no not just the voice. Don't play me a fool. I know the girl has the eye and ears.” He

said pointing his rapier at him.

Aion's eyes widen in shock seeing theirs no way out of this he gets on his knees. “Please I'm begging. We can work something out. You see she... she is actually unable to see or hear. If you take them she'll...” He explained hoping to play on his empathy. Cindy and Luna's eyes widen more affected. “I care not for any of that you will hand them over or you will die,” Marcus demands. Aion gives him up right away. “Please don't just take mine and go. Eh... after you defeat everyone we can come around so you can still open the door. I'll do anything.” Aion said still pleading.

Marcus was having none of it. “Anything? If you had anything to offer me at all that time has passed.” He said sticking the tip of his sword into his chest drawing a bit of blood. “NO! Stop I'll give it to you. I don't care if I can see or hear just don't take Aion from me!” Mia said jumping in front. “Mia.. no..” Aion said with a few faint tears. “Give them to me, and I will spare you both,” Marcus said this time to Mia. She nods transferring her eyes, and ears to him.

Her eyes seem to fade in color as she holds out her hands trying to hold onto something. She frowns like she only now fully remembers what it was like. Aion takes hold of her showing her that he is still there looking up at Marcus unsure if he will keep his promise. Noir walks up just as he is deciding his fate. “Parties over your distraction have passed we need to get out of here,” Noir said Raleigh was running up almost to their location.

“I see so you were right after all she did live. How foreboding.” Marcus said seeing. “Just as I was about to decide his fate.” He said mocking Aion. Cindy, and Luna both seemed to be much more conflicted with his actions compared to normal. “I think you have done enough,” Noir said glaring at him. “This man may not have the aspects anymore but he still has power. A different kind of power this was a great triumph but...” He started to say only for Noir to cut him off and press a finger to his chest. “The only victory you had today was taking an innocent girl's sight. You've done enough!” She said with anger threatening to end it all right there and betray him if he didn't with her eyes.

“Very well.” He sighed relenting as Crow opened a portal. He looked back at her with a smug face as they all entered, and the portal closed behind them. Raleigh growled in anger as Clyde finally caught up. “Raleigh why did you just leave me like that?” He asked a little upset. “I'm sorry I just saw her, and I thought... I thought maybe we could end this already, but she got away.”

“Um... thank you for saving us,” Aion said before he got a better look. “Holy smokes it's you two your alive? Man, am I ever so happy I'll have to make a retraction?” Aion said with a sigh of relief holding onto Mia who looked lost as he walked over to Alister to see if he was still alive. “I think he'll make it Luckily he was smart enough to twist his body like he did and avoid vital organs just like a cat,” Aion said turning to face them once more still holding Mia's hand. “Thank you. Truly. How about that interview?” He said half joking with sad eyes trying to forget everything they had lost.

Chapter Fifty Three

The Sun Rises over Porta Nexus all the Remnant Forces have been defeated besides a handful of skirmishes. The Reaper stands alone in an open area not doing anything like he is waiting for someone. Two Coalition members see him looking at each other in shock. “That's him right? Let's take him out,” he says charging forward The Reaper calmly Raises his hand causing the soldier's organs to seemingly fail as he falls to the ground resuming his stand.

Clyde and Raleigh look at Aion and Mia. Aion is tapping on her hand like he is communicating something to her. It would seem that despite trying his best to hide it he planned for this. He was

reassuring her everything was alright. “I don't get it. Why put yourselves in so much danger by reporting it.” Clyde asked. Aion looks up with a smile sighing. “Because I am a reporter, but if I'm honest I never really thought all the aspects would end up being out there in my lifetime. I guess you could say I was torn between my ideals and my self-preservation.” Aion said smiling with sad eyes.

Clyde seemed to understand, but Raleigh just raised an eyebrow. “I think this is a conversation for later. There are still battles to fight. Can you make it to the hospital alone I'm not sure but Lucy might be able to do something about her sight, and hearing.” Raleigh asked. Aion looked away. “I think we can manage it. I'm honestly more worried about our friend here. At least at the moment” He said lifting up Alister's still unconscious body over his shoulder holding Mia's hand in the other. He bid them goodbye heading that way.

They started to walk down the street unsure where they were going most of the fighting had ended around the area they were in. “We found The Reaper. He's in the central plaza, but no one seems to be able to approach him because of that weird power he has.” Someone said on the radio. “Looks like we have our heading,” Raleigh said.

As they walk down the main road the forces still putting down the final Remnants attention is drawn to them The sun behind them brightly lighting their path forward. “Wait that's... Orion Vesper, and Captain Raleigh.” A Port Authority guard said in disbelief. “But they died.” the person next to them said just as in awe as they kept walking past them.

Clyde felt their stares a little embarrassed as they kept watching as did the ones up ahead too. Rebbecca warped next to him joining their walk along with Tristan who seemed a little more hesitant to be there. “One more guy huh.” She said smiling as they all walked together. “yeah but that guy is terrifying and he's got that power.” Tristan said nervously but still walking. All of them resolute.

Elsewhere everyone had regrouped and started to march toward The Reaper's location. Cyrus led his men with Tara whose face was darkened and still reeling from what happened. Garrick was

doing the same leading the bulk of Porta Nexus towards the man. Natasha, Marcy, and Tyler did the same with The Union. Tyler looked the most dejected among them.

All of them made it surrounded the lone survivor just outside of his range as Union soldiers shot a rocket launcher at The Reaper thinking it might work but like before he flipped it off dissembling it before it got close. He stood there defiantly seemingly with no words as all of them surrounded him just out of range no one wanting to approach with a power they didn't understand. “Reaper your army is defeated there is no one left only you. Surrender.” Garrick said using a device to project his voice.

The Reaper didn't respond like he was dedicated to making his stand till the end. Everyone just stood there awkwardly while they came up with a way to take him down. Clyde and the others approached Raleigh ready to rush in already, but upon seeing what he was doing he pulled her back. “What are you doing Clyde it just one more guy.” She said in protest. “You saw what he did I never thought the middle figure could wield that kinda of power alone.” He said thinking about how much more effective he was at using it than the Rival.

“So what I got this arm, Rebbeccas got her wings, and tr...” She started to explain. “And that might save us from the effects but, well my own middle finger is the one true counter.” He said raising his arm up and looking over at the man lost in thought. Eventually, she turned to her again. “But not just that. That man... let me be a little selfish and try to take him on myself ok.” Clyde said not wanting to explain fully not sure if she would accept his reasons.

She looks away like she really doesn't want to say yes but seeing the determination on his face makes it hard to. “Ok fine, but the moment you look like you're in trouble we are jumping in.” She said hugging him tight. With that, he walks toward the man drawing everyone's attention in shock in awe. “So they made it after all,” Natasha said smiling holding Marcy's hand. Cyrus started to tear up. “I'm so glad they are alive.” He said expecting nothing less from Clyde now that he sees what he is doing.

The Reaper's head rises as he focuses on him he starts to raise his finger only to see Clyde doing

the same he sighs seeing his trump card wasn't going to work as they canceled each other out. “It's you. It's always you.” The Reaper said confusing Clyde. “We may have not interacted much, but you tend to notice. You're nobody, and yet here you are. Here you always are when the empire fails.” He said with words that sounded both intrigued, and angry. “It's funny everything I said about The Remnant applies to you. Underestimated at every turn barely even noticed, and yet...” He started to lament.

“I'm just as weak as ever I didn't get this far because I was alone,” Clyde said seriously. “Weak huh? You and I aren't so different. I'm also weak.” The Reaper said making Clyde raise an eyebrow in surprise that he would admit that. “I don't think we are alike at all even if you are. You are the embodiment of everything wrong with the former empire. There were good people that made their way out of it, but you... your cruel, vindictive, and you care for nothing.” Clyde said getting a little angry.

“Ha, care for nothing? I did all this because of how much I care. They did this, and I want them to remember what they did. I will do anything to reach that end to my last breath!” He kept saying as they started to circle each other. “I will put an end to this, and then finally she can put all the pain you've given her in the past, and truly move forward,” Clyde said as he reached his hand to the side forming a gauntlet, but not only that. A sword began to form that looked like an amalgam of the ultra saber, and the sword with the Universal code embedded in it. He pointed it at him ready to begin with words.

The Reaper scoffed putting his hand on his waist undoing the lock on his sword that seemed to be special in some sort of way. It wasn't a multi-tool for some reason. He completely drew it as the sword seemed to cry out in pain, and thus their battle began. Both of their blades made contact right away most of them relying on swordsmen ship. The Reaper wasn't lying Clyde could already tell this wasn't near the strongest foe he had faced, but it was still a challenge.

The Reaper's skills showed themselves effectively as Clyde had to dodge out of the way and block a blow to his chest by forming armor. Clyde counterattacked with a swing of his own knocking

him off balance. They kept clashing like this for a while the sword The Reaper had seemed to grow stronger the more it was out, but compared to the complexity of some of the other fights it was rather simple.

Raleigh looked with worry as others started to cheer him on. “Get him Orion!” one of them shouted as others joined in. They both pushed each other to the limits Clyde using his boots to get the upper hand and stab into his side. He clutched it groaning in pain but shaking it off still resolved to fight. The sword was getting more powerful by the second but slower and he could barely swing it anymore. Clyde dodged the blow spinning around and cutting The Reaper's arm clean off aspect with it. He then kicks him in the face breaking the mask off as he falls to the ground defeated.

Everyone rushed in ready to secure him since Clyde stowed his blade not finishing him off. The Port Authority lifted him back up as one of them inspected his now revealed face half of it was burned off, but the other half would give plenty of indication of who he was. “It's time to find out who you really are,” Darla said as every faction looked through the database for his identity. As they looked no one seemed to find anything not even Cyrus who knew more.

“Even with all the records we have there is nothing this guy is no Reaper, but it seems like he's not really anyone of note.” They explain making Darla wary. The Reaper laughed coming to again. “You still don't get it, do you? The point of this. Yes, I was never the original Reaper that name was simply... a useful one to drive my men. Our empire can't truly die it's an idea. There will always be people who believe in our ideals, you should never forget that. In the future when you least expect it we will return just like today.” He chuckled choking up blood.

“An Idea huh? Porta Nexus has stood the test of time empires have risen, and fallen in that time. All that remains is us. If any idea is going to persist into the future it will be ours.” She said proudly, and Defiantly. Everyone seemed to agree with the sentiment. “I gave you the warning don't forget what happened here today. Now I simply pass the torch.” With that, a surge of energy surrounds him before

leaving him. The Symbol on his severed hand of Middle finger vanishes and Appears on the Pink-haired Man's hand who had been lurking in the shadows. He quickly escapes through a portal before anyone can stop it.

Darla growls angry he got away with it, but sinking her soldiers all of them clearly exhausted. They started to take The Fake Reaper away as Raleigh joined up with them. “What will you do with him?” Clyde asked as Raleigh clung to him. “Well I'm sure he will get a trial of some kind, but let's not kid ourselves he will most likely be executed,” Darla explained. “Thank you both for the warning it saved my team's lives even if it wasn't enough in the end,” Darla said walking away to escort their only prisoner.

Raleigh lets go of Clyde facing him. “So that's why you didn't wanna tell me. You just wanted do something stupid like that even though I could've handled it.” She said blushing but with a mix of anger. “I...” He started to say only to get cut off. “Thank you, it means a lot to me, but don't forget I am the strong one here, and I can fight my own battles.” Before he can say anything she leans in hesitating for a moment with all the people around but lifting her toes kissing him.

Chapter Fifty Four

The sun had finally risen over Porta Nexus, painting the city in muted shades of orange and gold. Smoke still curled into the sky from scattered fires, and the air was heavy with the scent of charred metal and rubble. People moved like ghosts, picking through debris, reuniting with loved ones, or collapsing from exhaustion.

Clyde stood in the middle of it all, looking up at the massive structures that had survived, the patches of blue sky, and portals visible through the ruined cityscape. It felt surreal to be alive, much less victorious. The Reaper's final words echoed in his mind, promising a future filled with more

conflict as if this was just the beginning. It didn't feel like the victory they'd imagined. A war that was supposed to be a statement—a stand against those clinging to old, destructive ideas—had turned out to be a grim reminder of what still lay ahead.

Other noncombatant Divisions of Porta Nexus started to rush in searching for survivors, putting out fires, and already beginning the process of rebuilding the damage. They lent their shoulders to the exhausted fighters as they did so. Even with all this suffering Porta Nexus was already moving on enduring it all. Natasha walked over to Garrick. "I hate to say this but what is your plan you're still weak with your systems down. Someone could easily swoop in, and take control of the world like this." She asked.

Garrick raised an eyebrow. "Someone like The Union?" He asked grateful for her help but still wary of the consequences. She looked away ashamed losing her nerve as she was eluding to that being a possibility. "Allow us to ensure that doesn't happen. At least until the shields are back up, this place's neutrality is important I think." Cyrus said joining the conversation. "Commander. Honestly, I think that would have been a lot harder of a sale before this battle. I think you've earned this city's respect finally." He said holding out his hand to shake. Cyrus took it as Natasha turned away. "Thank you Cyrus you did what I couldn't yet again." She frowned taking one glance at Raleigh, and Clyde before walking away knowing it was not the place to confront them about everything she learned.

"General hold on," Cyrus said making her stop in her tracks. "The next time we meet we will be enemies, but you're a good woman. I'd like to offer you the same hand you did earlier this year. Join me, make a real difference in this Multiverse." He pleaded. "I'm afraid I can't do that. Unfortunately, it is fated that we cross blades." She said with a sigh walking off he was puzzled by her loyalty but seemed to respect it not trying to stop her.

In the vortex the Phoenix uses her eye power to look through countless worlds still trying to find Tristan who she had lost track of a long time ago she seemed frustrated, but her eyes lit up as she

finally found him on Porta Nexus warping their right away. She landed on a roof about to approach before seeing that he was with Raleigh, and Clyde approaching them slowly, and nervously.

“Listen I'm sorry for running away all this time. I didn't know what else to do I should've given you some time to explain. The funny thing is... I wanted a life like this, but now that I'm living it I can see I'm out of my depth. I'll give you the leg it's probably better in your hand.... your legs?” He said somewhat confused about how to say it, but without another word, he transferred that power to Raleigh he seemed surprised. “What will you do now? Go back to the Village?” She asked him.

He looked down unsure. “If it's alright I would like to stay here. I'm not sure how to explain, but something about this town draws to me I'd like to see what it has to offer even if it's not in a warrior role. “We'll be sure to tell Loki so you can visit your village if you ever wish. He kinda... moved it to keep it safe.” Clyde explained nervously laughing. “Who... and he did what?” Thristan said confused. “Don't worry about it all that matters is that it's safe.” Raleigh groans.

“Alright alright, I get it. Thank you both.” Tristan said nodding. “You know. You kinda remind me of myself when I... well that doesn't matter anymore either. Don't give up just because things get rough sometimes alright, and be safe this place can be... interesting.” Raleigh said holding his hand out to shake Tristan took it agreeing to be careful with his eyes before walking off into the crowd. Both of them smiled.

The Phoenix watched on the roof with mixed emotions. The first version of her appears next to her as she rubs her head. “You may have failed to save him like you wished but what's important is that he is safe.” The man said reassuring her. She frowns not loving his answer looking around at the destroyed city. “Is this the result of this... war for the Aspects?” She asked him. “Indeed.” He answers. “This is unforgivable. I must... I have to do something about this” She said with anger as she warped out of the world.

Tara sits on some Rubble close by lost in thought. Raleigh catches her in her sight from the

corner of her eye in disbelief. “Tara... is that you. I thought you had died!” Raleigh said running over to her getting teary-eyed. Tara looks up her eyes briefly lighting up before darkening again less happy to see her. “Yeah, so what? They tried to tell you a long time ago, but you didn't answer any of their messages.” She said coldly.

Raleigh pauses realizing ignoring Cyrus ended up hurting her this way. “I um... well me and Cyrus...” She started to explain but did not have the words just who was he to her. “It's complicated.” She said. “Why do you even care!” Tara said standing up to face her in a rage. “Because we are sisters,” Raleigh said confused. “Sisters? I'm sorry I didn't know sisters abandoned each other to run off with some guy like you did. I stayed with them, and we fought hard together to fix everything you broke, and you dare tell me you care? If... if things were different... No, it's my fault Darrian is dead because of me.” Tara said running off still processing her emotions.

Cyrus takes notice walking toward Raleigh who had started to silently cry from the rejection, but also from the shock that Darrian had died. She didn't know what to think they had chased her for years, and yet. “Forgive her she took it pretty hard... she doesn't understand why you had to do what you did. That I was in the wrong. I'm barely holding it together myself. All he wanted to do was make delicious treats for people, and I dragged him back into it. If anyone is to blame it's me.” He said starting to shed a tear of his own.

Clyde thought about comforting her but wasn't sure if he should just yet letting them have a moment. Raleigh hugged Cyrus their conflicting emotions on each other clear. “I don't think we will ever be close like you want but...” She started to say to him. “It's ok you don't owe me a thing.” He said returning the hug even though he was unsure if he deserved it. After a short while, he lets go. “I think it's about time I go after her. I know we both have Aspects and that you won't join up with me but well. I won't fight you anymore if it comes to that...” He said stopping himself, but she seemed to understand he wasn't about to destroy everything for the pursuit of some wish. He walked away without another

word looking back as if he hoped they could talk more in the future.

“He brings up a valid point this isn't going to end without bloodshed. Maybe we need to find a way to push it along. Avoid any more prolonged fights.” Clyde suggested. Raleigh takes a deep breath. “Enough serious talk I'm exhausted Clyde we haven't slept in like 3 days.” She said falling into his arms. “All alright you got it, captain. I'll find us a place to stay. Rebbecca pops up. “I have a room at the guild I always have reserved for me. You can stay there.” She said with a smile.

Raleigh raised her head eye Narrowing. “What's your aim?” She said skeptical. “Just trying to help my teammates out. We can't go after the door if you two are all tuckered out. What's wrong with a little slumber party amongst friends.” She said getting uncomfortably close like she always does. “Alright, but Clyde you're gonna have to be my bodyguard slash pillow.” She said afraid Rebecca was going to try and put moves on her again. “Don't worry I'll have things to do so I won't be there right away anyway.” She said warping away without another word.

“Every time I think I can't trust her she does something like this and further complicates things,” Clyde said with a sigh. Rebbecca warped to a secure location starting a video call with her boss. “Ah, it's about time you checked in. Status report.” He said bluntly as she went over everything that happened. “I see. I was aware of most of the events with my methods, if all the factions destroy each other it makes things more simple for us. However, that man pretended to be the empire's assassin. His perception should not be overlooked.” The Boss explains confusing Rebbecca.

“What do you mean.” She asked curiously. “Do you know when Orion Vesper obtained the Arm of the Multiverse?” He asked. “I might be able to get that information out of him, but no I didn't find out until later.” She said not liking what he was getting at. “It may be that powers doing, but I become wary of them both. They do appear in significant events in the multiverse influencing their outcome. Everyone has underestimated him in particular, and look what his done defied every odd. Frankly, he and his captain are too dangerous to our plans. Keep using them, but once you can obtain all the aspects

without them, kill them. They are too much of a wildcard.” He said coldly.

Her eyes widen in shock. “Surely there is...” Rebbecca started to say in protest. “No, just think of the consequences of their interference if they are ever to learn of us, and decide they disprove. Too much is at stake to take that risk. Stop letting your feelings cloud your judgment I raised you to be above that. Remember your pain. If you don't I will remind you myself.” He said ending the call.

The Union Soldiers that were stationed to guard The Wishing Door after they took it from the Remnant at the start of the year looked bored they had held it for a while, and no one seemed to be attacking it now knowing they needed the aspects to open it. One of them sighed pacing around getting restless from all the waiting around.

Suddenly The Phoenix appeared from nowhere forming a bird out of blue fire that screeched at them as she slammed into the ground starting to attack everyone near. All of them jumped to action as she pummeled them to the ground not killing them, but taking them out. The Union forces started to unload all their firepower at her, but they bounced off of her like it was nothing as she walked towards the door everyone who tried to stop her was easily, and casually beaten by her with her fist or her fire.

She reached out to the door touching it. It flashed to life all of the symbols glowing red with repeating flashing before fading away again. “Well, we knew it was a long shot that would work.” The more Muscular version of her said laughing as he appeared. “Why didn't it do I not have all the aspects still from when I used the door long ago?” She asked her memory still not completely whole. “It seems you have misunderstood. The aspects were all taken back once we made our wish. What you have is the lingering power of the aspects. We had them so long that they left an impression on our bodies, and while not as powerful as the real thing we can use their power still. Particularly the power of the hide and wings, They were our preference.” He explained.

“I see how unfortunate. I suppose I will wait here as a gatekeeper for now.” She said to them as they nodded and returned to her mind. The Union Soldiers regained their senses seeing her there. “She's

just standing there...” One of them said confused as to why she stopped attacking. One of them still tried to approach her but she quickly subdued him resuming her pose. “Call it into the brass, but for now it seems we are safe as long as we don't go near her.” A higher ranking officer said.

Chapter Fifty Five

A day had passed, and Clyde and Raleigh had both returned to the hospital to see if everyone was alright. Strangely enough, Rebbecca didn't return that night and they still didn't know where she went. Something that was worrying Clyde. He put it behind him looking to see if the hospital was visible again and inside AID-E was all over the place with her multiple bodies one of them walked up to them both. “Welcome back have you come for care? Most of your ailments appear to be from exhaustion rather than injuries.” AID-E said scanning them both.

“No, we are just here to see how things are going, and check up on Aion Anderson, and his

friend.” Raleigh corrected her. “The Medical team is still hard at work with patients, though most of the world has slowed. Alister the cat was taken in right away and is fine now he sustains a few punctured organs but has a 90 percent chance of surviving. Aion barely had any...” AID-E started to list off.

“That's good, but well we mean like other than that. Where are they now.” Clyde asked. “My mistake. Aion Anderson and Mia Meridian's cases were seen as less of an immediate concern, and are only now being treated by Lucy. Would you like for me to take you to them?” AID-E asked as they both nodded.

Aion paced around the room nervously as Lucy accessed Mia looking into her eyes, and then her ears. “Before I give you the verdict, I'd like to ask what exactly are you hoping I can do for her?” Lucy asked. “Well to restore her sight and hearing of course that's something someone of your reputation can do yes?” He said worried. “Well, it's not so simple you see she was born without them I can't restore something that was never there to begin with. There are alternatives like cybernetics, but they aren't the same, and the process can be very painful. There is also one thing to consider.” Lucy stated.

“Well then we will do that I'm sure the pain is nothing compared to being trapped like she is.” He said growing more upset. “Aion Calm down,” Mia said almost like she could hear them. “Mia?” He said in shock getting closer. “Yes, but why are you talking to yourself are you ok what going on? All I can hear is you, and my voice.” She asked. “Hmm, interesting I thought this might be the cause I seem lingering trances of the aspect power within her, as well as in you Aion. It's not nearly close to the almost omnipresent level she was used to but it would seem she can still hear you because of your lingering voice, and her past possession of the ears.” Lucy speculated.

Aion moves closer to Mia's face taking her hand. “Can you see me Mia?” he asked hoping she could. Her eyes seemed to react to it. “Not exactly. It's more like the shape of you in the void.” She explained. “That's wonderful, but don't worry now we can communicate more effectively. Me, and this

doctor here are talking about how to return your sight with robot parts.” He said trying to reassure her it would be alright. “Aion stop it's OK we don't need to do anything like that.” She said not seeming to want it. “But why? Don't you want to be able to see, and hear again? You won't be able to do anything without me.”

“Would that be so bad? Aion do you remember how we first met?” He said. He looked down reflecting on his past. “How could I forget it all started when I came here? Journalism had long been my passion, but in my world, traditional news had long died out, and well I came here hoping I could find a new angle, however, things were much the same here. The Information Age had long affected this place as well as the broader Multiverse. I sought to separate the misinformation from the truth the only way I knew how.” He started to explain smiling looking back on it fondly.

He had traveled all over The Multiverse reporting things on a humble blog he had set up on the Multiversal Internet. Everything from local warlords to corrupt officials taking bribes. He started to gain a lot of traction, but also a lot of enemies. Earlier on one of the Administrators took notice of him It was a cat-like man who looked somewhat like Alister, but older. “I think what you are doing is valuable to everyone allow me to assist you in your efforts with funding, and protection.” He said as they both shook hands.

That didn't stop him from going out on the field to report things though he almost lost his head reporting about a notable Union General fraternizing with the Empire. He ran like hell managing to escape both of their forces, but was now deep on the summit of a mountain. Suddenly, and without warning The Caretaker appeared his power overwhelming him, and causing him to fall over unable to withstand it. “I like what you are doing it will further nurture my tree, and I would like to reward you for this.” The Caretaker explained waving his hand bestowing the power of the Voice, Eyes, and Ears.

“With this, you will be able to spread your message farther than ever, and see things you otherwise wouldn't be able to from the safety of your home.” The Caretaker said with a faint smile.

“But why me?” Aion asked confused. The Caretaker just kept smiling before disappearing. Unfortunately on his way back home, he was captured by pirates who only let him go, after giving up one of his eye Aspects not seeming to know he had the others. They dropped him off on some random world where keeping their word of sparing him but effectively marooning him on this random world.

Thankfully the natives while primitive welcome him in giving him safe harbor until someone could come get them. He was brought before the chief who as a woman will have long, and graceful purple hair. “Thank you so much for taking me in I promise I will do whatever I can to repay you,” Aion said to her. “It's quite alright it is our duty as a people to look out for each other it is part of our ways, but where is it that you come from your clothes are... strange.” She asked. “Oh well, it's a long story I'm not sure you would understand it fully,” Aion said nervously laughing.

His attention was drawn to the corner of the room where Mia sat she didn't seem to have an awareness of what was going on just looking forward without reacting much. “Who is that?” He asked. “That is my daughter. Unfortunately, she has been cursed and can't see or hear you.” The Chief said looking down in sorrow. “Do you have any way to interact with her at all?” Aion asked greatly sympathizing with her. “The only way we can is through touch, and well she hardly responds to that she might not even understand the concept, nevertheless we all still care for her greatly and make sure she is well.” The mother said.

“She's just like... no this is different. May I?” He asked approaching her to get a better look the Chief didn't stop him almost like in the back of her mind she hoped he could use his foreign ways to help her in a way she could not imagine. He moved from side to side seeing if her eyes followed, but they did not. Next, he tried using his voice to speak to her. “Can you hear me?” He asked. She reacted, but it seemed to be confusion not ever hearing anyone speak before.

Aion sighed knowing this may be a bad idea, but he just couldn't look past it now that he might be able to do something about it. He took a deep breath. “I'm not saying this is the same thing, but I

kinda understand how it feels to be in the dark trapped in a void, and lost. That's why I became a reporter you see. To shine a light on things, and let people know what is going on. I'm going to give you something I hope that's alright.” He said.

With that, he transferred the eye, and ears to her. She immediately reacted facing his face in shock looking at it closely. He blushed backing away. “You're a little too beautiful to come close to a guy like that.” He said nervously. She then looked around the room at all the things she could now see, She could hear the wind softly stirring outside everything. Her mother approached her. “My daughter, can you see me?” She asked tears in her eyes. Mia didn't understand the words but acknowledged them by trying to say her own words but as she had never learned how to before it was gibberish. Her mother started to cry embracing her. “Thank you so much Mr. Aion your magic is wonderful Reporters are amazing.” She said incredibly grateful.

Mia returned the hug seeming to understand this was the person who had been around her all this time helping her, and feeding her she was grateful to her as well even though it felt like this was the first time she was truly meeting her. Aion smiled glad he could do this for her even if it meant he lost most of that advantage he was just given.

Eventually, someone came to rescue him he started to walk towards the ship as Mia, and her mother sent him off as well as the rest of the tribe. Mia seemed conflicted but wasn't sure how to communicate it. She pulled on her sleeve and pointed at Aion. “You want to go with him?” She asked Mia not responding as she still didn't understand the words. Even still she smiled. “Alright you can go but, please come visit us sometime.” She said to Aion who was still shocked she wanted to. “We will.” He promised taking Mia's hand as she faintly blushed.

On the ship, he leaned down smiling at her. “I know you don't really understand what I'm saying. We will teach you, but I want you to know we are partners now. Now, and forever, or well at least until you can communicate otherwise. He said reaching out his hand. She looked curiously at it

seeming to understand as she took it. Aion finished explaining to everyone. Clyde and Raleigh are now at the doorway hearing most of the story.

“I've always been grateful for what you did for me that day. Before everything was so dark, and I didn't even really understand what was going on, but you showed me things I never imagined. I don't need to see to keep doing that. As long as I can still hear your voice nothing else matters to me.” She said as he grasped her hand. “Oh Mia I...” Aion started to say. “Or it that you don't think I will be able to help you anymore. If that's the case I...” She started to suddenly worry that was the reason. “No of course not. I just thought you wanted that, but if you are fine like this I am too. I'm sure we can find plenty of ways to keep our jobs, or if you would rather retire that's alright too.” Aion said reassuring her.

“I mean that gives more context to your actions, but not why you decided to broadcast it all the Multiverse. If you kept it under wraps she would still have that power Raleigh said not getting it despite his brief interaction before. “Ah, Orion, and Raleigh how nice of you to check up on us.” He said a little annoyed they are interrupting now. “I just wanted to spread the truth to people, and poor Mia got caught up in the crossfire. I was foolish to think it wouldn't come back to bite me truly.” He further explains.

“Aion enough I don't care about any of that it's fine,” Mia said reaching out trying to find his shape as she clung to him still with her deadpan expression away. “Raleigh is just mad at you for bringing so much attention to us,” Clyde explained. “Your damn right I am!” She said with anger. “Sorry about that, but that's just my way of life.” He said someone apologetic, but mostly stayed firm with his beliefs. “But like I said before I like to be fair I would love to get your sides of the story. I'm dying for an interview.” He said with a smile.

“Eh I'm gonna say that's a pass for now, but maybe in the future. I'll at least admit your broadcasting has also helped us in a way.” Clyde said Raleigh shaking her head in disagreement. “Very

well Orion, no I think It's about time I got your real name," Aion asked. "Clyde Moore." He said as they both shook hands. "Well Clyde, in any case, you are still my pick to win this crazy war good luck to you both." With that, Aion helped Mia out of bed and guided her out of the room to go home.

Lucy looked a little annoyed. "AID-E I know these are my friends but we are supposed to have a discussion with the patients why did you let them in?" She frowned. "I'm sorry I thought considering the circumstance that rule wasn't relevant. I will not make this mistake again." the robot apologized. "It's alright I need to talk to them anyway. I didn't have the time to tell you earlier, but I think it's about time we address all the crazy stuff going through both of your bodies.

Chapter Fifty Six

As the reconstruction efforts continue all over the city monitors begin to activate with the words breaking news. “Good morning Multiverse forgive my delay in bringing updates a lot has happened, and I feel like you all need to know,” Aion said much more seriously than his normal bravado. “First I'll address why I'm using this method of broadcast instead of the normal one I use. I'm afraid that power was stolen from me by the Neo Empire.” He pauses taking a deep breath.

“So let's get into it because there is much to review. Earlier this week what was thought to be impossible was done. The Remnant of the Empire using the Middle Finger of the Multiverse broke

through the systems of Porta Nexus, and Laid Siege. Not for strategic reasons, or their gain, but for a twisted sense of revenge it was horrible truly horrible, their devastation has not been seen by the likes of the Multiverse in a while, but that's not what I want to highlight. Everyone in Porta Nexus fought bravely to defend their home in a way that made everyone proud.” He said taking a quick breath.

“The Port Authority did their duty as everyone expected them to, but even others, such as The Guild's Garrick, stepped up to lead the charge when our chancellor forsook his duty. The Chancellor will be removed from his position, and many people are calling for Garrick to be his replacement because of how well he handled the Crisis. Here is a comment, " he said as a video played of Garrick.

“Become the next Chancellor I'm not so sure. I did what I had to do because no one else stepped up. After all, I cared for this place, and its people, but those kinds of politics are not my thing.” Garrick explains dismissing it. “And this is exactly why he would be perfect for the job. He didn't step up for power or recognition—he stepped up because no one else would. After all, he genuinely cares for this city and its people. It's the kind of leadership we need in these times, not someone who’s just looking for a title. ” Aion said confidently. “But it wasn't just the Port Authority that stepped up to defend our town everyone did from the criminals to other factions like the Union, and Coalition. But in my opinion, no one quite helped us as much as these two legends.” Aion said as a video of Raleigh, and Clyde walking towards The Fake Reaper and the fight with him.

“Yes, I know. The two figures thought to be dead returned from hell to save us all isn't that incredible!” Aion said with a little more excitement. “Now the noncombatant divisions of Porta Nexus diligently work to restore the city and let's remember that these guys are heroes too putting out fires, saving survivors, and healing them is just as important, but often overlooked. The Coalition has agreed to guard the skies while we regain our baring and repair the shield. Once that is up, and this War for the wishing door is over the Likelihood of an attack to this magnitude should be close to impossible.” He further explained.

“And that brings me to our final topic the Recap on the Aspect's. During the battle, it was discovered that the Middle finger aspect is not attached to Captain Raleigh's arm, and is still in the possession of the Remnant.” He said not seeming to fully feel the weight of that until he said it bringing chills down his spine. “Orion and Raleigh were both given the Leg aspect making them have the majority of them so far, and still my favorite to win I mean come on they came back to life to keep fighting.” He said playing them up.

“And my aspects were taken by Fleet Admiral Marcus making my job much harder, but I promise you I'm not going to quit it just may take some time to adjust. So here is the Tally. Captain Raleigh's Crew has 4 aspects, The Union has 2, The Coalition has 1 still, The Neo Empire also has 4, and the Remnant has 1. Hopefully, now that all the holders are actively going for the door we can put this all behind us soon. I like to again thank everyone who fought so hard to defend our home against these cowards. Aion Anderson signing out.”

On the Empire home world, the Pink-haired man finally makes it to where Freya is. She is sitting there looking dejected sipping a glass of wine. “So you made it as planned.” She said sounding done with it all. The Pink-haired man sighed. “Yes indeed.” She finally turned to face him. “Tell me what you think of that man the one who took The Reaper's name.” She asked. “He was a fool, wasting all our troops on a message that left us without power. I only question why you allowed him to do so.” The man said showing that while he was fainting loyalty to him he had a low opinion of the man.

She took another sip of her wine groaning. “It seems our forces are filled with madness. First my beloved.... the Emperor, and now this. I may be the one in charge, but my hands were tied he fantasized them all in a way I couldn't control anymore. I only hope this message he was sending will be enough to strike fear and get people off our backs, but I suspect it will only hurt us. At least now most of those madmen have been culled from their stupidity.” She said sighing sounding cynical.

“what will you do now my lady?” He asked. “Go after the door, what other choice do we have

now our power has dwindled to pathetic levels, All my choices have been stolen from me, and now all that remains is the road he left us.” She said seemingly now forced to be dragged into the same methods, and ideals of The Fake Reaper against her will.

“How unfortunate. However, the odds I remain loyal. You are sensible and have honor something The Reaper forsook for vengeance, and destruction.” The Pink-haired man said. He held out his hands and read to transfer the middle finger to her. “Ha, honor huh? "No, you keep it. I will not wield the power that led us here—not unless there's no other choice. His obsession with revenge put us in this situation, and I'm forced to see it through, but I refuse to use the same tools that twisted his mind." She said waving his hand to dismiss him. “As you wish my lady.” With that, he turned to leave.

Back on Porta Nexus The Union has packed everything up and started to leave. Marcy and Natasha look down at the city not sure what to do now. “Do you think The Counsel will send someone else now that we reported his death?” She asked Natasha. “I don't know Marcy it's very possible, but we have dirt on them now I'd like to show it off to everyone, but for now we will hold onto it until the time is right, maybe then we can prevent anything that terrible from happening again. “I hope you're right,” Marcy said looking down.

Tyler enters the bridge his face still darkened like he was completely lost unsure what to do. They both look at him unsure what to say. The Squad was his family he never had a real one, and now they were all gone. “Hey Tyler there is something I have been wanting to tell you,” Natasha said. He barely registered her voice. “Listen The Squad... it's true most of them fought bravely and well didn't make it, but one of them survived.” Natasha explained making him perk up right away grabbing onto her.

“What who, where are they!” He said in desperation. She looked away trying to use her words carefully. “It was Sara... but well she lost both her legs, and was put in a medical coma, we thought it was best if she stayed here till she recovered. She may never be the same if she wakes up at all.” She

said calmly trying to be respectful. “Why didn't you tell me!” He shouted with more anger than he ever showed. “This is the first chance I've had to.” She takes a deep breath pulling his arms away from herself and closing her eyes.

“This is your choice, and you don't have to make it right away, but you need to decide what it is you want from life it is likely that even if the hunt for the aspects ends we will have a long road ahead of us, one against some of our own. I'm not saying I want it to be this way, but this corruption, this rot can't keep persisting. You saw the navigation units that shouldn't be replicated by anyone. Whatever it is I will respect it.” She said turning away from him as his head lowered once more not sure what he wanted to do.

Cyrus looked up at the departing Union ships, the low hum of their engines fading into the morning air. He took a sip from a cheap beer, the bitterness of the drink barely masking the ache gnawing at him inside. Now that the urgency of battle had subsided, the weight of Darrian's loss was beginning to settle in, heavier with each passing moment. Tara sat beside him, her gaze distant, her eyes rimmed with the same weariness he felt.

"You know," he began, voice low, almost swallowed by the wind, "when I kept you out of the fight, it wasn't because I didn't think you were capable. I didn't want that life for you. Maybe I was scared—scared of losing you the way I lost Inari. But more than that... I think I just didn't consider what *you* wanted. I was selfish." He sighed, running a tired hand through his hair. "I didn't ask for this either, being dragged back into the fight. But I let that cloud my judgment, and... I'm sorry."
Tara's head dipped, her shoulders trembling. "You're wrong," she whispered, her voice tight and choked. "I was wrong. If I had listened to you... Darrian would still be here." Tears rolled down her cheeks, and she didn't bother wiping them away, her pain raw and open.

Cyrus closed his eyes for a moment, feeling the sting of her words, the truth that lay behind them. He took another sip of beer as if the alcohol could numb the gnawing regret. "No," he said

finally, his voice hoarse. "I should have tried harder—explained better just what we were getting into. I knew the stakes, but I was so caught up in everything else. I failed you both."

He hesitated, then turned to face her. "I don't know what you're feeling right now. But if you still want to fight... if you still want to help, I won't stop you. There are battles left to fight, but it has to be on my terms. I know you wanted to make a difference—just like Darrian did. But I need you to remember what happened, every single part of it, and use that to build something better tomorrow."

He could see the uncertainty in her eyes, a mixture of grief and determination. And in his heart, he still wished he could shield her from all of it. But he knew better now—Tara wasn't someone to be shielded; she was someone who deserved to choose her path, even if that meant stepping into the fire again. She stands up hugging him. “Thank you. I'm not so sure what I want anymore after everything that has happened. I need some time to think about it.” She said before running off.

Cyrus lightly smiles sipping more of the beer still greatly saddened. “How long are you going to hide like this I know you're there.” He sighs as Tess emerges from the shadows. “I'm sorry I just. I could see what you were going through I wasn't sure the time was right after our disagreement.” She nervously said. He doesn't answer just handing her a beer and motioning for her to sit.

She sat down beside him and they both sat there silently drinking. The moment was extremely awkward for them both. Eventually, she finally spoke up. “You know when I met you on that world trying to recruit you I lied about that being the first time meeting you.” She said drawing his attention as he kept listening. “Do you remember the battle of Maine?” She asked. Cyrus thought for a moment.

“Yes, I believe we were pulled away from our mission briefly to assist. Though our involvement was minimal.” He said not fully understanding what she was getting at just yet. “Well you see I was there on the ground fresh out of the academy we were quickly thrown to the wolves like cannon fodder, but you came in at the last minute and saved us. It might be a vague memory to you, but that is the reason I sought you out. To me, you were the ideal Soldier. Pragmatic for sure, but loyal to your

comrades to the end, but well you're different than I thought.” She started to explain looking down as he kept silent.

“But I suppose that's not my point. I think my perception of you was different than who you were, and I wanted you to be something you weren't I didn't get why you were acting the way you did. It seemed so wrong something our empire would call weak, but after the battle I finally got it. In the battle, I saved so many lives, and it was... a feeling I never knew. It felt amazing. What I'm getting at is you were right. I want to be a hero too even if it's hopelessly idealistic.” She said looking in his eye hoping for some kind of acknowledgment.

“I can't say you were wrong about me I wasn't like this before, but someone inspired me to be better that's why I want to be a Hero I want to do that for everyone,” Cyrus said with a smile. “But perhaps a little more realism is a good thing after my most recent battles I see that now. Tess Varden, would you please keep me grounded.” He asked almost like a proposal. She blushed knowing it wasn't but nodding all the same. “Of course, I might not ever be able to take the place of Darrian, but I will always be by your side from now on.” She said with a smile as they both pushed their beer cans together and drank.

Chapter Fifty Six

Raleigh, and Clyde both sit down ready to hear what Lucy has to say. “Well to put it simply both of you are some sort of crazy concoction of energy now. It is honestly a miracle you haven't been overwhelmed by it or exploded or something. Thought that might be because of the Arm Aspects. What exactly happened to you in the past year?” She asked. They briefly explain everything that had happened since the Hunt for the aspect started from their defeating Dawnstarr, and their defeat of Noir, to the current day.

“Well by golly you two have been through the wringer lately, haven't you? Lion boy ended up using those potions on you huh? I'm glad I left them for him, but well it might have been better if you

just reset like he suggested you gained power, and it's stable now but it might be your undoing.” She said concerned. “Ms Lucy, what is the energy you are Referring to? My scanners indicate that they are both in retentively perfect health.” AID-E questioned.

“Well that aspect power has combined with several other powers you have encountered, and it seems their little blood pact triggered something else as well it's hard to make sense of it all. Look at it this way. You are still struggling to fully measure things like Iris's Mana supplies yes?” Lucy explains to the robot. “Indeed I am slowly learning through data, but my ability to scan for magic is much more limited at this time. My mistake I will simply observe.” AID-E said.

“So what exactly are you suggesting we do about it,” Clyde asked hesitant to part with the power. “Are you saying we should get rid of it?" Raleigh asked. Lucy shook her head. "I honestly don't know if that's even possible at this point. The energy's intertwined with you now—it’s part of who you are. But it’s unpredictable. If you push yourselves too far, or if something else disturbs that balance, it could... well, it could be bad. Very bad. Like explosion bad."

Clyde frowned. "But without this power, we wouldn't have made it this far. We need every advantage we can get to finish what we started and stop the others from misusing the Aspects." Lucy nodded. "I get it. Trust me, I do. I’m not saying you should give up this power. I just want you to be cautious. You need to learn how to control it better or find ways to stabilize it. Otherwise, it could end up tearing you apart from the inside out. You need to understand the limits of what you're working with."

“We don't have that option right now this War for the Door. Until we finish it we won't be left alone not now that everyone knows we are alive.” Raleigh explained. “I know, all I'm saying is be careful especially you boyo.” She said knowing that Raleigh didn't rely on the power are much as he did. “I know you're ready to move on though I wish you both luck, thank you for all your help we saved a lot of lives because of you don't forget it, but lastly if you see Lion Boy make sure to tell him I

miss him. She said with a faint smile before getting up and Waving as her and the nurse droid left.

They walked out of the hospital unsure what to do as the broadcast from Aion played on all the displays. They both watched it making Raleigh angry again. “I don't get it why do you get so upset I get that you are afraid it gets more eyes on you, but normally you seem to relish any kind of praise or attention given to you,” Clyde asked meaning to ask for a while now knowing how she is. “It is the type of attention. We aren't getting admirers we are getting more enemies to fight.” She growled.

“I wouldn't be so sure of that look around.” He said motioning for her to do so. People all over were staring at them looking away when they noticed. A boy came up to her. “Wow, are you that Captain? Mister Aion has been talking about!” He said with excitement. “I sure am.” She said smugly putting her hands on her hips. “I saw you two on the TV you're so amazing!” The boy started to say as his mom scolded him. “Leave them alone hunny. Thank you for everything you've done for us I'm sorry my son bothered you.” She said quickly pulling him away.

“I guess you're right at least a little,” Raleigh said both happy she was wrong and upset kicking him in the shins. “That still doesn't give us a direction though everyone who has an aspect is tied to a huge army now and well...” She started to say only for Rebbecca to appear between them draping her arms around their shoulders. “Don't worry I have already taken care of that.” Both of them step away from her annoyed. “You gotta stop doing that.” Clyde scolded her.

“Oh? Are you afraid I'm going to make you a little homewrecker? Or perhaps you're afraid I'll take her from you instead. “Enough Rebbecca. Just tell us your dumb plan already.” Raleigh said not wanting to deal with her teasing at the moment. “Well I thought about what Clyde said about pushing things along, and I think I've come up with a solution. A meeting of Aspect holders.” She said smiling.

Slightly in the past, Rebbecca had Warped aboard the Bridge of Marcus's ship the tension was higher than it had ever been. “Hey um, boss. Was what we did ok? I mean we do plenty of murderin', and all that cause we are warriors, but taking a girl's sight, and hearin' is that...” Cindy said greatly

conflicted Luna seemed to feel the same way. “It is a new type of battlefield we have to walk they would have done the same in our position. Don't let their manipulation play on your empathy who knows if he was even telling the truth.” Marcus said, but before anyone else could say anything Rebbecca spoke up. “Trouble in paradise?” She said amused.

“What?” Marcus turned his head in shock not understanding how she was able to be there as Crow leaped out of the shadows stabbing at her right away but she warped to the other side of the bridge right away. “Relax I'm not here to fight I'm here to invite you to a little chat,” Rebbecca said. “Who are you how did you get aboard my ship,” Marcus said not entertaining her teasing as they all got ready to fight. “A third party. Who I am doesn't matter just take this.” She said pulling out a letter warping closer to him to hand it over before vanishing again.

Marcus out of curiosity opened it up reading it allowed. “Dear aspect holder. This conflict has run its course as a third party I would like to facilitate a meeting at the time stated below using the communication link below. Together we can plan our next steps, and possibly when we can all meet up to kill each other?” He said raising an eyebrow. “Ugh that Rebbecca alright,” Noir said knowing her from Raleigh's memories.

“You know this woman?” Marcus said still very confused. “I don't know what that new power she has is but yes I do she's a hacker,” Noir explained. “And she thought I would go along with this nonsense.” He said laughing before giving it thought. “Although... Can she be trusted?” He asked Noir. “No not at all, but whatever this is it will be secure with no chance of anyone attacking each other through the call at least,” Noir explained. “Perhaps we will join the call after all if not just to mock the others.” He said smirking.

Rebbecca similarly does so to Natasha. “Hey Tasha been a while here take this.” She said shoving a letter in her hand confusing her as well as how she got there, but before she could speak up Rebbecca leans into her ear. “So I'm dying to know just how far have you two gone?” She said causing

Natasha to get more flustered than normal. “I don't know how you got here, but get out!” She demanded. “Aw you no fun, but alright.” She said winking as she vanished Natasha looked down at the letter curious.

She did the same with Cyrus but stopped herself from doing anything too pushy when she saw they were all gathered there for a memorial for Darrian and the other Soldiers that died she frowned handing the Letter to a random soldier who seemed vaguely know who she was. “Just make sure Cyrus gets this when things calm down a bit.” She said vanishing again.

Lastly, she visited the Empire's old home world she had only been there once for a job so she didn't know exactly where they would be, but after a bit of searching, She found their leader on the same Balcony The Emperor's wife died seemingly lost in thought. “Freya right? Take this, and if you ever wanna work out those issues I'll comfort you anytime.” Rebbecca said flirting placing the letter in her hand and making a kissing face, before she could fully register what happened.

“And then I came to you guys,” Rebbecca said to Raleigh and Clyde. “A meeting? I can't say that's a terrible idea, but how are you going to get them all to show up, and prevent each other from being at each other's throats.” He asked not so sure this would go well. “If you could surprise them like that why not just finish the job,” Raleigh said annoyed. “Don't play dumb Raleigh you are smart enough to know how impossible that would be for just me, but thanks for the confidence boost. As for the safety. I have set it up to be remote. No one will be there, just able to talk to each other.” She explained.

“Well, I think it's worth a shot assuming everyone agrees to it.” He said starting to come around to the idea. “Great well we have until tomorrow so how about it? There is this great sushi place around the corner that is still open. Barley was touched by the battle and the use of all sorts of out-there fish. Wanna go?” She asked. Clyde was Hesitant, but Raleigh was all ready to go. “Lead the way I'm starving.”

Chapter Fifty Eight

The next day Rebbeca led them to another world with a small space station where Proxy and Mother were already at. The room was rather large, and circular with a middle platform perfect for a meeting. Proxy sat in the center of the circle while mother squatted down barely able to fit in the room with her size. “And this is where the magic will happen I whipped it up after forming this plan just for this.” She explained spreading her arms out wanting them to behold her work.

“More like we had to rush in and build it will almost no time or notice,” Proxy said annoyed. “Why didn't you choose a Universe you could hack into, and just make it instantly.” He asked using a

frowning emote on his pixelated face. “I was in a rush, and this might end up being more secure in the long run with the randomness of the location,” Rebbecca explained, but he didn't look convinced.

“So will you be participating in the meeting with your aspect?” Clyde asked. “Hmm well, I'd like to keep it under wraps still a trump card if you will. Though with my recent actions, some of them may have figured it out.” She sighs admitting it. “Proxy was literally built for talks like these he insisted he play mediator. So I will remain in the background for now.” Rebbecca explained. “Oh right, I kinda forgot you were evil,” Raleigh said.

“I was not evil. Neither was the empire, but let's not get into that what's important is that I now have to autonomy to make my own choices.” Proxy said mother gave him a thumbs up agreeing. “Both of you stand on that glowing platform the Meeting is about to start,” Rebbecca said mostly dismissing him. “Hey don't ignore me!” He said in protest but seeing that the meeting was about to begin he sighed letting it go as Clyde, and Raleigh stepped on the platform, and Rebbecca slunk into the shadows.

One by one the other platforms started to glow as holographic displays appeared first was Cyrus standing with Tess, Followed by Marcus and Cindy. Natasha answered the call with Marcy, and Lastly, Freya answered alone. Both Marcus and Freya looked in shock at Proxy before they could say a word. “Proxy what are you doing here I wondered what happened to you?” Marcus said interested. “Well, you see I am my own man now, and I'm here to facilitate this meeting.”

“So another traitor. Wonderful I'm sure this meeting will prove to be fruitful, and beneficial to me.” Freya said sarcastically. “Need I remind you? You were the one who betrayed us.” Marcus said with a glare looking like he was about to attack her even though he wasn't physically there. “Calm yourselves. If you want to kill each other that's fine the purpose of this meeting is not to find common ground. It is to set up a date to do just that.” Proxy explained as they both took a deep breath.

“Right so. Welcome everyone. As you are already aware this past year has been quite the

journey for all of us this hunt for the aspects has run its course, and it's about time we brought it to an end. I am proposing on the 1st day of the 13th month of the year every one of you meet up at the door and finish this. Does this sound agreeable?" Proxy asked. "Wait the 13th month of the year?" Clyde asked whispering to Raleigh. "Yeah, what of it? Wait are you from one of those weird worlds that only has 12 months in a year?" She tried to hold the laughter and stay serious as the others were starting to notice.

"And what if I have no interest in pursuing a wish?" Cyrus interjects. Marcus laughs. "Listen to me, Cyrus. Whether or not you want the wish doesn't matter. I'm going to come for that Heart in your chest. You talk about saving lives, about being a hero? This is your chance. Show up and fight, or I'll make you regret it." His threat was clear, his words laden with menace.

"Why do things have to end this way are you all so desperate to use the wishing door you could go to any lengths!" Cyrus said defiantly. "How can we even trust that everyone will show up to this... blood bath," Natasha said speaking up. "All of you have a vested interest in taking me down because of things beyond my control joining you for this battle is suicide," Freya said crossing her arms. "It's more than someone like you deserves," Marcus said mocking her as it devolves into shouting between them all. Marcy, and Tess both look at each other with sympathy, as Cindy joins the argument. "Marcus will clobber all of ya just you wait!"

Raleigh, and Clyde both look at each other. "I mean we have beef with them too, but man this is a disaster," Clyde said unsure where to go from here. "Enough!" Raleigh said drawing all their attention. "What's the alternative? You want to keep this up for potentially years. I'm long past tired of all you bastards and some of us will never get along, but we don't have to so how about it will you all show up to get your ass whooped by us or are you too much of a coward." Raleigh yelled panting out of breath after that outburst.

Everyone paused for a moment thinking deeply. "I will agree to these terms," Natasha said

seeming to agree with the sentiment Raleigh was talking about. “I will again state how idiotic and stupid this is, and advocate for other plans, but well I also agree,” Cyrus said reluctantly. “There was never any doubt for me I have the power to destroy you all easily I am no coward,” Marcus said confidently. All of them look at Freya for an answer. “Alright, I'll show.” She said ending the call right after.

“I will see you all at the door then good luck,” Natasha said also ending the call. “Marcus points at Raleigh. “Don't think I've forgotten about you just because my other grudges are stronger. Your time will come just as the idiotic commander over here will perish by my hand.” He said confidently ending the call. “I understand why you chose this path Rebbecca, but I wish we could've come to a better conclusion. I wish you all luck.” He said to Rebbecca who he knew was lurking even if he couldn't see her before ending the call himself.

“Well, that was... productive,” Clyde said with a sigh unsure himself if it was. “Wait so let me get this straight. There are thirteen months in the Multiversal calendar?” He asked confused. “Well yeah, it's more accurate to the cycle of most worlds' rotation around the sun that actively participate in larger Multiversal affairs,” Raleigh explained. “It honestly has more to do with the fact Porta Nexus works that way they laid the standard as well as the new standard timeline.” Rebbecca further explains.

“Well crap now I'm all jumbled up. I thought I had the right dates for anniversaries in stuff in my head but now I'm not so sure.” He said confused. “I didn't think you cared about that sorta thing Clyde. I mean it's not like I am. I don't even know simple things like when I was born.” Raleigh laughed at the absurdity. Clyde frowned but kept that in the back of his mind for now.

“Hey the fact that you even tried is sweet, and I appreciate it.” She said softly hugging him. “Quick Mother take notes. It would seem they are no longer pretending to hate each other, and now are openly...” Proxy started to say. “Cut it out you can't just copy us. Find your own way of doing lovey-dovey stuff.” Raleigh said in protest blushing deeply.

“Oh come on embrace it you are being cute, and everyone thinks so,” Rebbecca said elbowing her in the side. “Our love or lack of love isn't something made to entertain you,” Raleigh said, in protest. “Oh yeah well we have a bit of time before the battle you know. How about I put your love to the test, and see how strong it is.” Rebbecca taunts them. “We have nothing to prove to you, Rebbecca.” Clyde said annoyed. “Well no you don't, but what about yourselves?” She asked.

“We will take the test,” Proxy said raising his hand eager to prove his love. “Don't bother Proxy your already perfect.” She said dismissing it. At first, his emote changed to an angry face, but quickly turned to a happy one. “We are?” He asked raising his hands in the air in celebration even if her words were mostly to get him off the topic for a bit. “Wooo!” He said.

“Fine we will take this stupid test of yours, but then you can never question it again,” Raleigh said taking Clyde's hand confident they would pass. Rebbecca smirked. “Perfect. It will take time to set it up but you'll love it I guarantee.” She said with a twisted smile. “I think she means she will love it,” Clyde said sighing.

Chapter Fifty Nine

Marcus ends the call with the others laughing to himself confusing his subordinate. “Are we gonna show up and beat their... Challenge them to a fight.” Cindy asked. “Well no not exactly. We will be there for sure, but well I think I'll let them destroy each other before I make a proper appearance.” He said with a grin. “I was afraid you were gonna say that. I miss the old days when we didn't do all this sneaking around we just pummeled everyone in our way.” Cindy said looking down.

Marcus frowned he had always done that even in The Empire. “Only because I had the luxury

of keeping you where you're better suited.” He said seemingly more annoyed with her than normal like she was dismissing everything he had done for them. “Well yeah, I get that but. Everything is just so different now sorry if I made you feel a way about it.” She said nervous she upset him. “It's nothing I'm just tired of my actions being questioned so often as of late.” He said with a sigh.

Cindy looked away. “Yer right things have been tense, but it ain't you, its that head power of you making you crazy. Once we make a wish that won't be a problem anymore right?” She said that she wanted it to be the truth but didn't know for certain. “Yes, Whatever let's just get back to the castle.” He said dismissing her. She frowned following him back down.

The Castle was buzzing with activity much more than normal as maids, and other people they didn't recognize were in a rush setting up things for a party as Emberon oversaw everything. “Ah, you have returned.” The king said with a smile. “What's all this?” Cindy asked. “Well, it... something I wished I could have discussed with you sooner. You see I doubt you knew, but tomorrow is your 30th birthday. Every year we have a little service to remember you, and your mother, but well now that I know you live I was hoping we could do something happier.” He said a little nervous she would reject it.

“It is? I had no idea. Me and the lady that raised me didn't know so we celebrated on a different day at least until... Well, that don't matter. I'd love to have a celebration Da. It would be straight Bangin.” She said with a grin. “I would be happy to make it Straight Bangin' for you.” He said with a smile but clearly didn't understand what that meant. They are happy to keep talking as Marcus sighs walking off. “Crow.” He said more tired than normal.

Crow quickly appeared like always as they walked down the hall together. “Your little excursion to salvage things from Helix's lab did it bear any fruit?” He asked. “Indeed I will lead you to our findings,” Crow said leading the way.

In a temporary base they had set up outside the castle Crow showed him to a massive room with

all sorts of technology. Mostly prototypes Helix had been working on that they had recovered. Crow pulled a covering off of one of the machines as it sprung to life. A white and red robot seems to be awaiting some sort of input. “It's an Adaptoid of sorts,” Crow explained. “Meaning what it can copy other's abilities?” Marcus questioned as Crow nodded. “What is the limit could it copy someone as strong as Cindy?” He asked as Crow walked over to a console seeming to already be expecting that question.

The robot slimmed down until it was shaped very similar to Cindy. “Helix claims for them to be superior to the ones they copy, but I'm not convinced it could stand up to the real one,” they explain. “How many of them are there?” He asked. “only five.” They answer. “I see. We will test them in secret for now It seems far more useful than some of the recruits I've gained they are practically useless. Don't tell anyone about this not even Cindy, and the others.” He said getting closer to the bird. They just nod forever loyal to him even if it sounds strange.

The next day the party arrived it was a more grand ball-like event something most of the Chimera legion was not used to. Luna, was in a formal-looking dress with a few of the other wolfkin embarrassed, and looking uncomfortable even though she looked stunning to many. Perhaps thought looks added to his discomfort. Most of the Legion was the same even Crow but their mask stayed on their face. The Only one who didn't seem to dress up was Noir who was lounging in the corner with a tray of horderves she had stolen from one of the servants.

They may have dressed the part but they were still the Chimera Legion their behavior was a little out of place for a fancy event like this. Marcus entered in an all-white suit joining the festivities seeing no sign of Cindy. He approaches her father thinking it's about time he played a little more politics and kept him happy. “He certainly knows how to throw a party,” Marcus said with a smile taking two glasses of wine from a tray and handing one to him. “Thank you,” Emberon said saying nothing else like we lost in thought regarding him.

But before he could say more the music changed as to announce the Maiden of the hour. “It's almost time for the dances,” Emberon said nervously like there was some sort of traditional weight behind them. Cindy descended the stairs in a beautiful blue dress that flowed brilliantly. It would seem the maids had worked hard to make her look as amazing as possible so much that even Marcus couldn't help but blush. Like he was seeing a different side of her for the first time.

She smiled, but it was clear she was out of her depth not knowing this world like the battlefield it reminded him this was indeed the Loyal right hand that had always been by his side, and not just some pretty princess. She stood there in the middle of the room waiting for something with a faint blush but no one approached. Marcus seemed to understand what was happening He started to walk toward her only to be stopped by Emberon his face filled with worry. “Do you understand what it means to do this?” He asked him. “I think I do,” Marcus said as he let go walking towards her.

He got on one knee before her and reached out his hand to her. “Princess Celestria Flamecrest, would you give me the honor of your first dance?” He said with a smile. She blushed taking his hand but something was different they were still scaly and sharp like always, but they had significantly slimmed down like she had trained all this time just so she could touch him without hurting him with her massive hands. She had learned control. “Of course.” She said with eyes of longing.

The lights dimmed as the song changed once more they did a slow dance together around the room while everyone watched. They both smile at each other. “You did well I never thought we would be able to touch like this.” He said. “I tried my best. This was... important to me.” She said nervously. “I'm glad you accepted it.” She said implying this was a bigger deal than she may have realized. Even still they danced together.

When the song ended everyone else joined in with their partners Emberon had a chance to dance with her as well. As it ended others joined in now that the ice was broken it seemed it wasn't as important if someone else danced with her. Emberon walked over to Marcus his demeanor changing.

“We need to have a conversation in private.” He said walking past him towards his chambers.

Marcus takes one last look at his men feeling strange it wasn't until now that he noticed. They were all laughing, and happy for one they had found a home in Flamecrest. He frowned walking toward Emberon's chambers to have a talk. “Sit,” Emberon said wasting no time. He waited for him to sit before he began speaking.

“There is something I must confront you about.” He said. “That being?” Marcus said sighing already thinking he knew where this was going. “I'm not a fool I know what you have been doing around the Multiverse, and I know what you have done in the past. I have overlooked it until now because you brought my daughter back to be, and I greatly appreciate that, but this cannot be any longer.” The king said.

“And who is it that you think I am?” Marcus asked not convinced he knew him. “A warmonger. Someone who manipulates everyone around you to get what you want, you use all your men.” He started to say as Marcus's eyes narrowed. “But that is not all I see. On some level, I can see you care deeply for your men and their well-being. You care for my daughter. You have helped this world avoid bloodshed.” He further explains surprising Marcus expecting it all to be negative.

Marcus reshifts his position choosing to keep listening. “That's why I need you to make a choice. I know not of your past and your struggles, but even if it wasn't intentional your Legion has found a place here, and that dance in our culture you more or less just purposed to my daughter. You can have a place here too, stay here and live in peace, and unity with her live out happy lives. Or you can keep with your warmongering ways, but I will not harbor you any longer if you choose that path.” Emberon said with a hint of anger.

Marcus finally speaks up. “What do you know of me or your daughter for that matter? How do you know she will choose to stay here with you in the event I refuse.” He asked with a smug grin. “I do not, but I will not manipulate her if she chooses to stay with you... I will unfortunately have to accept

that. I will give you a week to decide.” He said standing up. “I don't think that will be necessary,” Marcus said calmly like he was expecting something like this.

“I knew you would eventually get in my way, and well I know you are powerful. This is what I came up with.” Marcus said as one of the Adaptoids broke through the wall slamming him into another. “I know there is no chance of beating you in combat myself.” He said smiling as he stayed sitting down. “Such treachery have you no honor at all. Do you think a machine like this will be enough to take me down?” Emberon said disappointed growling his words with venom and defiance. Even still the unexpected attack seemed to do damage. “No, I don't,” Marcus said as Crow appeared stabbing him in the wound made by the Adaptoid.

“I've poisoned you so even in the event it's not enough for you you will die,” Marcus said with a smile. Emberon roars with rage but Crow quickly covers the room with a shroud seeming to dampen the sound to everyone outside. He charges at the robot. “I will destroy this contraption, and then take the antidote from a dead body,” Emberon said in a rage he had done all this for Marcus, and even though he didn't fully trust him he tried to help him still, now he couldn't take it anymore.

They engaged each other in a fight but the poison was starting to take effect giving the robot an advantage. Crow assisted by slashing all of his body the thick scales made the cuts mostly superficial but it was at least something. Emberon was on the ropes caught off guard and put in a position he couldn't get out of now. Marcus sighs standing up and finally drawing his weapon. He waved the crow away as the robot and vanished confusing Emberon.

Emberon didn't seem to understand, but rushed at him trying to take him out while he still could, Marcus took a few hits seemingly on purpose when his face was banged up to a certain level he finally fought back stabbing into the wound already created as deep as possible as he smiled. “Thank you for the cover story,” Marcus said mocking the man. “Curse you,” Emberon said as he slowly fell to the floor and the light disappeared from his eyes. Marcus smirks leaving the room. He groans in pain

feeling like he may leaned a little too hard into attack and damaged himself more than he meant to.

Everyone below is still happy and congregating as Marcus returns pretending to be out of breath. Cindy notices him right away rushing over in shock. “Marcus, what happened to you?” She asked deeply concerned. “Your father went mad and attacked me out of nowhere saying he'd never give you up to me. I told him you don't belong to him, but he... didn't give up.” He said cuffing up some blood.

Her eyes widened. “My Da did this?” She asked as her heart stopped the little peace she had gained in her life seemed to be slipping before her eyes as her arms grew larger again she was struggling to keep them small after hearing of this. “Where is he now?” Luna asked unconvinced. “I had no choice, I wasn't going to let him kill me. After all we did for him I can't believe he would do this.” Marcus said with a few tears.

Inside he was smiling as more of his men got closer some of them helping him stand up as others started to patch him up. “What are we gonna do,” Cindy said fully believing as much as it clearly distressed her. Noir watched him in the background seeing through it all, but not saying anything. Marcus laughed in his head his plan had succeeded all he had to do was push them back into a direction, and he would have gotten away with it, but Emberon's words lingered in the back of his mind, and he remembered how they all looked before he walked into his chambers.

He paused for a moment full of confliction on his face looking at Cindy finally acknowledging for the first time he cared for her, she was more than just a tool they all were and he made a mistake he couldn't go back on. The Ghost of Lucius leaned over him whispering in his ear. “You aren't weak are you.” He asked hardening his heart once more. Marcus sighed not ready for what he had to do pushing her way.

“I can't trust you. What if you, I can't trust any of you! All you have done is criticize my actions as of late how do I know you will not do the same thing to me!” Marcus lied. “Marcus wait I would

never.” She said reaching out to him only to have her hand slapped away breaking her heart. “No, get away from me. You can do whatever you wish, but me and my Empire are leaving without you.” with that he turns his back to her as some of the Legion keep helping him leave choosing to stay with him while others look conflicted unsure what to do Cindy drops to her kneels crying as Wolf comforts her. Marcus cries as well as he walks away.

When he returns to his ship and prepares to leave he looks over the data to see who stayed, and who is still with him. It would seem most of the grunts came with him, but pretty much all his officers had stayed. “No matter these new Adaptoids will pick up the slack,” Marcus said to himself not really convinced.

He looks over at Noir, and Crow the only significant people who choose to come with him. “I understand Crow, but why you?” He asked her. “I have no love for you I never have, frankly I see your actions as disgusting, I'm here because you can get me where I need to be that is all.” She said turning around. “But at least you were merciful enough to let them go, and maybe find real happiness,” Noir said before completely disappearing from sight.

“Real happiness huh?” He said reflecting on his actions as he looked at Crow. “I don't think I will need your help anymore either.” He said to Crow even with the mask they had on he could feel their shock. Crow lowers themselves in desperation. “What do you mean am I no longer of use?” They asked their voice wavering. “I said you are no longer needed now get out of my sight.” He said coldly. Crow got closer grabbing onto his leg as he sat. “Father please...” Crow begged.

“I told you not to call me that. I am not your father!” Marcus shouted before calming down and taking a deep breath. “Even with all your amazing skills gathering information you never looked into your own past? You're an astral Raven. In the past, I butchered all your people because they refused to surrender to the empire, but they were quite skilled.” Marcus said as Crow still clung to him in desperation. “I killed your mother and took you as an egg so you would imprint on me and never

question a word I said. Don't you get it I am your ultimate enemy I always have been, and you still followed me like some dump mutt.” Marcus said making it unclear if that story was even true. Kicking him away.

Crow just lays there not wanting to believe it before finally leaving his side. Marcus folded his head into his hands crying deeper than he ever had. “Am I strong now uncle?” He asked Lucius even though he knew he was long dead.

Chapter Sixty

The gang sits at the space station with Proxy, and Mother in an awkward silence. “What exactly is she doing she's been gone for a minute.” Clyde said annoyed, but shortly after he said that she reappeared. “Sorry for the delay?” She said grabbing onto them and warping them to a strange world. “Good luck.” She said waving, and leaving no elaboration. They both look around seeing that the world is fragmented and falling apart, but the sections that were still normal were that of a snowy forest.

Clyde looked down at the void below confused on why she sent them here. “A dying world?”

He asked Raleigh. “Hmm no I'd say it's more accurate to say its a fragment of a world. Some or something divided this world in a strange way.” Raleigh explained. “Why would she send us here what exactly is this test?” Clyde asked confused. “I don't know I guess we will have to keep exploring until we figure that out.” Raleigh said just as confused.

Rebbecca sits on a floating rock above them watching their progress. A tiny hologram of mother appears. “Proxy Model Seven is curious on what exactly the test is.” She asked. “Well you'll just have to watch. I told them its a love test, and that wasn't technically a lie but... well you'll see.” She said content just watching.

Below they keep walking nod seeming to understand still why they are here when they see someone in the distance its an older man with a gray beard, but black jumpsuit, and white scarf like Clyde though his clothes are a lot more worn. He turns to them eyes widening. “Raleigh your back!” He said happily hugging her. “Hey get the hell of me you creepy old guy!” She said peeling him off. “You don't recognize me anymore?” He asked looking said and away?

“Wait you wouldn't happen to be... me?” Clyde asked drawing his attention. The old man sighs. “I see so your not my Raleigh I'm sorry. So did you two get stranded here as well?” He asked them both. Raleigh didn't answer lifting his face to get a better look as he averted his eyes in shame. “You really are Clyde I'm sorry I didn't notice.” She said upset with herself for not seeing him for who he is.

“It's alright I get it I look different, and besides our stories are exactly the same anyway.” He said turned away starting to walk towards something. “So what is that story?” Clyde asked. The older one paused for a second wondering of to phrase it even though he had all this isolation, and had thought of this exact scenario before because of that he seemed to be at a lost for words.

“You know its ironic in a way. Just after we both finally admitted our feeling we got stuck here.” He said leading them to an uncertain location. “How did you get stuck here? What happened to your Raleigh?” Clyde asked getting a little anxious. They finaly arived at their location a version of the

hopper that had been ripped in half, and turned into a makeshift home. Half of it was the ship and the other was a cosy looking log cabin. “I don't have anything fancy like hot coco, but would you like to come in for a while, and talk.” The Older Clyde asked. Both of them agreed following him in to is humble homes.

He looked down lost in thought. “As you can see The Hopper was beyond repair, and in a place like this there wasn't anywhere we could go to escape. We were trapped here for so long I honestly lost track of time. The lack of a sun doesn't help with that.” He further explains. “That's sad, and all, but what about me what happened to me?” Raleigh said like her heart was going to explode if she didn't find out the answer Clyde thought he was anxious but compared to how she looked right now it was nothing.

“Well to put simply she couldn't take it. I couldn't mend her Restless Heart. When we got here I tried my best to make sure she was ok, but the helplessness, feeling like she was in a box, and her inablitly to do anything about it really got to her. I tried my best to make the most of it, but she just couldn't accept it and ran off. It's been a while since I have seen her, but her night terrors had gotten much worst.” he said sadly at a lost on how to help her.

Clyde looked at Raleigh out of concern asking with his eyes if she also suffered from that. “Well.. yeah, but lately I've been ok. You just being their seemed to prevent them.” Raleigh explained. “What about all the time before that?” Clyde said with worry. She frowned clearly not ready to explain this, but found the courage. “Well yeah I have had them many times since we have known each other.” She said reluctantly. “And what did you do. Does that mean I was sleeping soundly while you where suffering like that?” He said feeling guilty.

“Well I've found ways to cope, but yeah sometimes its hard to get pass it, and sometimes I end up not sleeping at all.” She said with a frown. “I wasn't sure if you would be ok with it all the time yet, but how about we share a bed from now on?” He asked. “I... think I would like that.” She said softly.

The Old Man Clyde watched with mixed emotions.

“Oh I'm sorry I didn't mean to interrupt like that.” Raleigh said nervously a little conflicted on how to talk to him. “It's fine I'm happy to see us getting along.” He said with a smile. “So what your saying is she is still out there running around?” Clyde asked his older self. “Yes unfortunately I used to try and follow her, but well my old age has made it hard to keep up with her. I tried to make this place a home for her that she can come back to. But well I'm starting to think she realized that's not what she truly wanted.”

Raleigh looks down. “I think we all know I'm not the best at sharing thing's like this, but well it's kinda easier to explain with this... degree of separation between us. I wouldn't say this is exactly what I had in mind when I wished for a home.” Raleigh admitted. The Older Clyde looked in shock but then dimmed his eyes again. “Had no clue, I suppose I tend to immediately jump to looking for solutions rather then communicating too. I never really asked her to elaborate I just tried to fix her. I guess I wasn't right for doing that.” He explained.

“I'm sorry I made things so difficult for you Clyde.” Raleigh said truly apologetic to the older version. Clyde takes a deep breath. “What exactly could he have done differently given the limitations of the place.” Clyde asked. “I... don't know.” Raleigh said just as conflicted. The older Clyde sighs. “I'd like to believe I tried hard to make things right for her, that my love was strong enough, but I think I finally get it after all this time. What good is love without understanding.” He said looking like he has made a break through after a very long time. “I think it might be too late for us two, but you. You've just begun.” He said to them both urging them not to give up.

“Don't resign yourself just yet. I'm gonna go kick the other me's ass, and explain to her just what she is neglecting. She has so much in you if you both would just communicate and admit that.” Raleigh said as a sudden relaxation. “That's how Noir has felt this whole time.” Raleigh said understanding now most of her anger towards her softening. “She is just up the way well somewhere she doesn't really stay

still.” He explains. “Let's get going then.” She said grabbing Clyde before he can protest rushing to find her.

As they wander looking around for the other her they hold each others hand. “So Raleigh what is a home to you then?” Clyde said the thought still lingering in his mind. “Well you know I've never had one so I'm not really sure, but its not just a building. If it was The Hopper would be more then a enough right?” She asked. “I think I get it. A place, but also somewhere where your free to grow with the support you need?” Clyde asked. “That definitely more of the idea.” Raleigh said still unsure.

Before they can talk more they see something moving in the tree's something with a hostile aura. Raleigh pauses pulling out her tool forming it into a chainsaw ready to cut down the tree. The figure pauses their hostility vanishing as they drop down. It's the older Raleigh. While she definitely has shown signs of aging it would seem it's much slower then Clyde causing fears he didn't even think about until now.

She was a Cyborg so her life span maybe significantly longer then his would he end up leaving her alone for a large portion of his life when he died? Raleigh wasn't giving her time to breath though. “Hey I don't like what your doing to your Clyde!” She said pointing her weapon at her. The other Raleigh much more calmly forms a shotgun with her own tool. “Your just a kid even if you are me. Don't act like you know everything. We both know you don't even if you like to pretend to.” The Older version of her said.

“You know he cares about you, we talked to him if you two just talk..” Raleigh insisted. “Your starting to get on my nerves. Its not about that.” The Older one said getting annoyed with them. “You don't think I know that... He's always trying his best for me and I just close myself off to him even still. He doesn't deserve that.” She said looking down. “But if I find a way out of here it wont be a issue anymore. He can find a place that really matters to him.” She further explained.

Clyde gets closer to her as she seems to back away out of fear. “Listen. I know you struggle

with these thoughts, but they are unfounded. If the older Clyde is as alike as he seems. He already understands this about you. You are enough, you are what he want, what you chooses. Not some idea of who you are, but you. Your flaws, and all.” He said remember back to their conversation in The Roots thinking it would help this version. The older one got incredibly flustered from how close he got even though she was much older she was.

“You stupid brats, making me feeling things, and stuff.” She said shedding a tear. “What if your wrong though, what if I am not enough.” She said pushing back against his words. “Well I can't fully speak for him, but I don't see that being an issue. Your incredible just like you are. I was a mistake to try and fix you. Relationships aren't something get in to try and fix each other. You stand together and grow together. I think I full understand that now.” Clyde said doubling down.

“But this place. It probably ruined any chance of that for us.” She said. “I'd like to believe even with that being the case you two will be alright, but whatever the case.” He started to say as the Older Clyde appeared it seemed like he struggled to get there with his old body, but it was worth it to him. The Older Raleigh looked away in shock not sure what to say to him. “Hey...” He said said hoping she would reply. “Hey.” She said back.

“These two made me think about somethings. I needed to understand you better.” He said nervously. The Older Raleigh's heart seemed to race as she finaly turned to look him in the eye taking his hand. “No it was me. I just I never thought I'd be right for you.” She said nervously. “Your always right for me. Now what do you say, how about we go back to the cabin and have a real conversation.” He suggest. She smiled nodding taking his hand, and walking away with her helping him walk when it looked like he was struggling more.

Clyde, and Raleigh looked at them with a smile as they also held hands. “Man Raleigh your looking fine great for an old lady. Or maybe I should say milf. Gilf?” Rebbecca said appearing behind them with her usual jokes. They both turn to face her. “So did we past this little test of yours?” Clyde

asked. “Hmm. I don't know honestly I think that's for you to decide, but you do have clearer heads now don't you. Think that's important for the battle we are about to walk into.” Rebbecca said.

“Yeah I suppose your right.” Raleigh said hating to admit it. “Well lets get going then we don't have that much time before the date.” She said urging for them to grab her hand. “Wait what about them? Couldn't you... you know help them get out of here?” Clyde asked.

“Well yeah, but I don't know they looked pretty happy to me. I guess I can come back later, and ask. I don't think you two understand how hard it was to find another you in this multiverse as is after your little stunt with The Emperor most of them exist in other multiverses now.” Rebbecca further explains. “Alright fine, but you better do that.” Raleigh demands taking her hand as Clyde does the same. They warp away reaffirmed, and ready for the final battle.

Chapter Sixty One

The day of convergence had begun. Cyrus walks the streets of Porta Nexus. The city is far from fully healed but the shield is back up, and they must leave now. The wind blows a flyer through the arm that is caught by his feet. He lifts it up curiously seeing his own face pointing forward with the words I want you to join the Reformation Coalition. He didn't know what to think he hadn't asked for it to be made, and yet someone out there did just who did they think he was now?

He sighs walking towards a shuttle and to his Flagship as they shoot off into the sky towards the

door. Garrick and other notable members of the city look on with shaky optimism hoping everything will work out. On the bridge of his ship, both Tess and Tara are waiting. “I see so you decided to join us. Stay close to me alright.” He said to Tara as she nodded.

“Sir. There is one more thing I'd like to ask before we head to the door. What exactly is the wish you are planning to make.” Tess asked. Cyrus walked forward looking out at the vortex. “The Multiverse's largest cup of coffee. I'm damned tired.” He said with a sigh. Tara snickered holding in a laugh while Tess seemed much less impressed.

“I will wish that every sign in the Multiverse has perfect signage.” Cyrus again said clearly annoying her more. He paused finally ready to give her a real answer. “I do not think we should rely on a wish to realize our goals. Sure it's easier, but no... I reject the concept. Can we really say we fought for something handed to us? No, what I wish for can not be granted by the door we have to fight for it every day even after it is achieved.” He said raising a fist. “So when we get to the door...” He started to think about what he actually wanted to wish for.

Marcus had arrived just outside the door's world but with cloaked ships. “It's time for the final wrench in everyone's plans. He takes a deep breath using the Voice of the Multiverse to appear before everyone other the the parties already involved similar to how Aion did his broadcast.

“People of this Multiverse. I fleet admiral Marcus am in my greatest moment of Triumph. You see all of the aspect holders agreed to meet at the door to settle things once and for all. I invite you all to do the same, Both your support and your challenge. Let's see if you have a chance to stop me.” He said smirking ending the message. Random uninvolved parties started to freak out all preparing to head for the door as Marcus just stayed put waiting for his moment just out of range. This was their chance to succeed even without having an aspect they thought.

Natasha's ship arrived at the door first surprised to see The Phoenix standing in front of it. “An officer gets on a call with her right away looking nervous. “I assume you are going to explain her

presence?" She asked him. "Yes you see we still have control in a sense but even if anyone approaches her she easily defeats them... I'm sorry general we failed." He said looking down defeated. "Did she introduce herself? It's fine we will confront her in time but for now focus on defending from the forces about to arrive." She asked.

"She claims to be The Phoenix from legend, wait what do you mean the forces about to arrive." He said in shock. "Hmm is that so we might have our work cut out for us then? Yes, we have arrived at the climax be prepared for anything." She explains as he sighs saluting before ending the call as well.

She turns to Marcy. "Are you ready this might be even harder than the battle at the source world." She asks Marcy. She nodded as Tyler entered with seemingly newfound determination. "So have you decided?" She asked him. "Yes I will join you, but can I ask what it is you are going to wish for." He asked. She looked down lost in thought unsure how to answer.

Rebbecca had found one final place to talk to her boss before they left for the final battle. "The wish what is it that you want from the door." She asked him not so sure herself. "The Future Foe we face. The door's wish is not enough alone to challenge it, but it can give us a powerful edge. I will leave that to your judgment so long as you remember your pain and your mission. Do not falter." He said ending the call.

The Coalition had reached the door all of them faced each other, but none were willing to make the first attack. The door began to light up with all the aspects present slowly as they appeared even Marcus's though he remained hidden somewhere. Freya finally arrived looking at the battle with Resignation. All of them stared each other down frozen in the moment it felt like ages had passed as they stood still. Then out of nowhere, someone fired into a Coalition ship it was unclear who did and from where but it spurred them all into action attacking each other with heavy laser fire as the Phoenix just watched below.

"Ah, the shot heard around the Multiverse," Marcus said with a grin still staying in the shadows

hoping that he could just watch all his enemy's destruction without being seen at all. His message finally bore fruit as random people started to appear in the sky and on the ground attacking everyone else there.

Clyde and Raleigh stand there ready to go as Rebbecca reappears. “Let's get going then.” She said grabbing onto them and warping to the door. “We do this for ourselves, and for each other,” Clyde said looking at Raleigh as they traveled through space. “For our wish. For a home.” Rebbecca sighs. “For an edge against that thing.” She said under her breath. Cyrus finally answers Tess as the battle rages on. “To prevent others from making a wish,” Natasha turns to Tyler, as well. “To purge the Corruption of our Union.”

The Phoenix stands strong below ready to take on anyone who approaches. “I will take all your aspects and wish for the door's destruction.” She said confidently. “For multiversal Domination,” Marcus said from his flagship. “For the restoration, and honor of our people,” Freya said to the Pink-haired man. “For the future of the Multiverse.” Everyone says in unison despite being in different locations.

The battle rages on in complete chaos as every faction attacks in every direction completely surrounded by each other, but as soon as Raleigh, Clyde, and Rebbecca enter the battle something strange happens. The rest of the symbols of the door light up as it makes clicking noises like it is slowly being unlocked already. Slowly the door began to creek open confusing everyone who noticed as light spewed out of it. As soon as it fully opened the light flashed on the entire world and everyone there was sucked inside without their ships.

All the massive vessels started to fall out of the sky it reached Marcus last who had enough time to react being farther away from it. “What no you won't take my advantage from me!” He shouts but just like everyone else the light takes him causing his ship too to crash down below.

Marcus opened his eyes looking around in confusion he was surrounded by most of his forces in

some sort of ruin Noir was nowhere in sight. Directly behind him was a massive pillar with stairs leading up to it in every direction. He was still lost and unsure where they were choosing to climb up them to get a better look at his surroundings and at the entrance to the pillar. Inside was a seemingly endless space of white sand, and more ruins. The sky was that of what looked like entire universes.

He then looked out to the surroundings around the pillar it would seem he was in the center of it all, and this was clearly going to be everyone's destination. He kicked the side of the pillar in frustration looking upwards. “Is this some sort of sick joke to you? Taking every edge I had and making me the target instead!” He said in anger at the Caretaker even though he knew he wouldn't get an answer even if they were listening.

His men all looked at him worried and for guidance on their next steps. He sighed taking a breath to answer them. “This is most likely the place where the wish will be granted, but being here now is a death sentence. We are leaving to let some other faction try, and approach first. Crow, I need a report of...” He started to say before remember that they weren't there anymore. He looked down clenching his fist.

Just like he expected someone already started to attack them it was the very people he called to take him on with the message. They were easily defeated, but still greatly angered him that his own plan backfired on him. He slowly approached one of the men as he lay there defeated. “Did you seriously think that a nobody like you had a chance in this fight? You weren't even smart enough to realize I used you to sow chaos with the other aspect holders You pathetic worm.” He said kicking him in the stomach.

“All of the new recruits stay here, and hold this position.” He said walking away as some of them did that. “Um, sir are you sure they will survive.” One of the more seasoned men asked. “No they most likely won't but they don't need to know that. They were never useful to begin with maybe at least they can be useful now but making others think I'm still in this location.” He said leaving as the veteran

reluctantly followed him knowing they were in too deep to say otherwise now. They left in the direction of an icy region to the south.

Natasha comes in a similar way the heat hits her face as she looks around seeing they are in the middle of a sandy desert. The Pillar is in the distance crying to draw them towards it. Marcy is already panicking she had bulked up significantly to the point she might be mistaken for a completely different person. Even still all her men other than Tyler seem to be there ready to finish this fight.

“What are we going to do Tasha? Where are we what's going on?” Marcy said with worry. “What we always do. Endure, and march forward. To that pillar.” She said pointing the way as they all nodded doing as she said. The desert was nothing they hadn't faced before.

Tess woke up in the mountains. With the high vantage, she could more easily see what was surrounding her. She was on the edge of the world that seemed to just drop off beyond this point, but she could see everything from the desert, the icy region. A grassy field in the center, and of course the giant pillar that couldn't be avoided.

She looked around distraught realizing that while pretty much all of the Coalition was there Cyrus, and Tara were not. “What are we going to do the commander is nowhere to be seen, and coms aren't working.” One of them said panicking to another member of their forces. All of them seemed to devolve into worry and chaos without Cyrus's guidance.

Tess looked at them all with uncertainty feeling the same but knowing she needed to step up. “Hey! Listen. While it's true Cyrus isn't here right now we need to stay focused and remember why we are fighting, and what we learned from him. He is not fighting for borders or power we are fighting for tomorrow. To be heroes remember. This is the moment to test our resolve. To go the distance even though he isn't here to guide us.”

“So what do you say? How about us former war criminals get out there, and show everyone what makes us strong.” She said raising her first. There is a pause while everyone thinks it over but

after a while, someone begins to cheer motivated to keep going as the other's do the same accepting the situation and walking down towards the desert.

Rebbecca floats in the air with her wing powers looking around curiously. “How interesting. It would seem this place is meant to level the playing field of sorts. Randomly placing people throughout a map of what looks like worlds pieced together.” She said fascinated with the concept. Looking down below at random people fighting each other. “Now to find out what happened to those two.” She started to say before someone below caught her attention.

Tyler had just woken up alone next to none other than the Noir. “I'm sorry I have to do this kid, but I'll be taking your aspect one way or another.” She said attacking him before he could even react. “Wait your that Clone right? What is it you are after.” Tyler said pleading for her to talk with him as he barely is able to dodge out of the way with the help of the leg aspect. “I'm not just some clone you jerk, and my goals are none of your business.” She growls.

Tyler managed to transform into his power suit before she could attack him again. “Fine then I need to vent out my aggression anyway.” He said starting to sound more like Jacob. They both started to fight, as Rebbecca watched. “Poor kid I think we all know he isn't going to win aspect or not.” She said sighing watching anyway.

Freya wakes up with all her forces in an icy field the Pink-haired man next to her. “I think this might work out better for us actually this Chaos ironically gave us an advantage over them all.” She said. “So what shall we do then my lady?” He asked. “We will wait, and see what happens for now.” She said still unsure what would happen next.

In the field, Cyrus awakes next to Tara looking around to see they are in the center region, but also surrounded by the random people that are chomping at the bit to get his aspect. “How unlucky we will take your power for ourselves, and your forces won't even be able to help you.” One of them said mocking. Tara puts on her gauntlet ready to fight as Cyrus draws out his tool showing off his new and

more powerful spear that he now has after the other one broke.

“I'll show you my conviction all the same, and if this is where I end up dying so be it,” Cyrus said the heart aspect glowing seeming to be tugging on all the hearts of his attackers like they were opening their hearts to him. Even still they charged forward really to kill him and take the heart for themselves.

Lastly, Clyde and Raleigh woke deep in a cave looking around confused. Clyde looked to Raleigh right away for answers like normal. “This place... it's inside the door. We are deep in a cave system, though it's all kinda hazy to me. Kinda like when we were in the roots.” She said rubbing her head. “It's alright that's all we need to know right? Get out of the cave fight our foes, and make a wish as simple as that.” Clyde said.

“Hey simple...” Raleigh said laughing at the absurdity. “Looks like Rebbecca ends up elsewhere. Or she just left us to do her own thing... like she does. Do you really think everything will work out today?” She said unsure. He softly lifts her chin smiling at her. “What's that thing you always say about never giving up, and even if we fail another version of us will succeed? Let's do this thing.” He said confidently as she smiled back at him ready to take on the Multiverse.

Chapter Sixty Two

Aion spun in his chair feeling restless. “Ugh,” He said as Mia sat near him. Both of them looked defeated. Even if they promised to keep reporting the news they were unsure how to do so with this conflict. After a moment he stood up. “You know what I don't care if I die in the progress. My job is to report the news, and that's what I'm gonna do.” He said as he headed toward a closet fishing out an old TV camera and strapping it to his back. “I'm guessing you going to be your own cameraman, but who's going to actually report it? You need me for that so I'll be going as well.” Mia asked unable to see what he was doing but knowing him well enough to figure it out.

“But Mia it's dangerous.” He said trying to convince her otherwise. “Of course it is, but like you said we are reporters, and it's our job.” She said with a smile. “Are you sure you want to do this?” Aion asked one last time. She just nods looking in the direction she thinks he is in. “Alright but you'll need to be careful alright, maybe we should bring someone else just in case,” Aion said thinking for a moment. “I'll be right back.” He said running out the door.

On the street below Tristan was wandering the streets a little lost he said he wanted to stay here, but he didn't know where to begin and the little money he was given was about to run off he walked near Aion's news tower as he slammed the doors open looking around. “Hey kid you want a job?” Aion said not seeming to recognize him. “A job?” He asked the man. “Yes yes it'll be a little dangerous, but you'll be fine,” Aion said pushing him inside.

Without a second thought, they all loaded up into what looked like a flying News van shoving a camera in Tristan's hand. “All you need to do is point the camera at us alright.” He said reassuring the nervous boy who relented to their demands. “To the wishing door!” Aion declares driving them away. “Wait what?” He said in shock as they flew away.

They reach the door quickly flying directly into the door but the door doesn't seem to stop them Once they get inside they look down at the chaos below. “Holy Molly if only you could see what is going on down there Mia. It's complete chaos.” He said putting the van in a park in the air and pulling a latch that makes a small platform stretch out below them. They leave the van as Aion looks down at the battle they are safe enough away where they won't get attacked, and have the advantage of being in the air.

“Alright kid all you gotta do is point that over at us and when we finish talking down there at... let's say events you think look significant. Sound like a plan?” Aion asked as he nodded. Aion adjusted his tie leading Mia to the right position. “We are live in three, two, one. Good morning Multiverse we are here live at the site of the battle.” He said before pausing seeing that Mia is looking away from the

camera because she doesn't actually know where it is. He quickly readjusts her position before keeping up his speech.

“Down below everyone you can think of is fighting for one wish. A wish with restrictionless possibilities. Some wish for noble things, while others wish for power, and we are here to bring it to you. Isn't that right Mia.” He asked as she put on her happy cheery reporter persona. “That's right. It's a gamble who will win, and we definitely have our preferences, even still we will keep you informed.” She said with a smile. “Let's go to the conflict now.” Aion said backing out of frame as Tristan inched closer and zoomed it in.”

He seems to have found Marcus who has calmed down, and started to march toward the icy region he moves the Camera to see Freya who has taken an icy structure as a base. “It looks like we are about to witness a battle of tyrants. How Ironic the most evil among them now race to end each other, perhaps without even realizing.” Aion speculated.

Below Marcus indeed didn't know but he saw black dots sprinkled across the white landscape he grinned deeply. “Finally I get a chance to destroy her. The one who has angered me over all others.” He said laughing as they entered the colder area. They seemed to reach the base of the structure without opposition worrying him. “Did you think we didn't see you coming? I have heard great things about you. I was almost tempted to join your side even, but this? Pathetic.” The Pink-haired man said from the cliff-side above.

“You're the one from the Siege that took the finger,” Marcus said curiously. “Adaptoids.” He said as the one shaped like Cindy flew into the area trying to attack him. The Pink-haired man flipped it off causing its systems to malfunction. He wasn't as effective at it as The Reaper but he was still able to use it quite well. “Thank you for confirming my theory. Why don't you come down here and hand that power over to me.” Marcus said calmly.

“Surely you have noticed you are in my trap, yes?” The Pink-haired man asked as he pushed a

button. “Marcus looked around him as countless bombs started to beep exploding around him before he could do anything. The Pink-haired man flees back to the structure not taking any chances. As the smoke cleared most of his forces were taken out from that besides the truly seasoned ones. The Adaptoids shielded him from the blast, but it still damaged him. “How could I be outdone by a subordinate.” He growls as his men struggle to recover.

They quickly recover climbing up the cliff-side to follow him. He passes the fallen Adaptoid who has the shape of Cindy looking back with longing before moving on. They enter the structure that is seemingly empty despite them clearly lurking somewhere. They walk around the hallways made of ice with caution. Even still a random times Remnant forces appear ambushing them just when they put their guard down slowly picking them off.

“Where is your legendary Chimera legion? Why have you chosen to hide them away? What could possibly be more important to you right now.” The pink-haired man asked, but he was nowhere to be seen. Marcus clicked his tongue in anger. “Oh, my can it be. They abandoned you. They said your bonds were unbreakable, and that they were unstoppable, and yet.” The Pink-haired man mocked from the shadows as Marcus rushed towards the sound in anger. He was losing more, and more men by the moment.

They entered a larger room the Adaptoids the only survivors. The Pink-haired man stood there finally confronting him. “who are you? You are no Fleet Admiral of the Great Multiversal Empire. You used to have honor and power. You're no different from that man.” He said referring to The Fake Reaper. “Another madman.” The man said frowning. “I am the greatest soldier our former Empire produced The Emperor himself made sure of that! I will not be lectured by a nameless weakling.”

“My name is Keal or that's what I told them all. Say what you want about The Reaper but he did inspire me to try and do things without titles.” He said as he pulled out his sword ready to end this. “You call gorilla tactics honorable and fitting of an empire,” Marcus said mocking him and pulling out

his own Rapier. “Please such things are only honorable if you have the luxury of it. I'll show you want true honor is.” He said charging forward as they both clashed.

“Where is Freya!” He demanded as they kept it up. It was nothing special as far as fights go just a more simple fight where they both made contact with their blades. “She is long gone, but she left you a gift.” He said smile swiping at him. “Do it!” Marcus said as one of the Adaptoids interrupted stabbing into Keal's side. “I respect your request at a fair fight, and you do this how disappointing, but not unexpected. If you survive I suppose that means you will have won your prize. How dare you make me resort to tactics like you, and him.” He said raising his finger in the air as the whole structure started to shake and crumble apart.

“In these last moments, I will act as my true self. I am Aurelius Cato Novastride, and I will take you down, and end all the blemishes to our families name!” He said smirking as Marcus looked in shocked. He knew not who he was but the reveal that they were related shocked him. Everything collapsed down on them leaving their survival up in the air for now. Freya watched from outside the collapsing structure with her forces she didn't know if that would finish him off, but she knew it would weaken him greatly. “If only it didn't come at such a high cost.” She sighs walking off to a safer location.

Noir stood over Tyler's body as the suit vanished. “Now hand over your...” She started to say only to be surprised it was already on her leg. “I guess the rules on that work differently here. She then turns her attention to Rebbecca who is still watching above. “Of course you noticed me,” Rebbecca said dropping down with a knowing smile. “What do you want?” Noir said not wanting to entertain her anymore.

“Oh well since you asked so nicely.” She said getting uncomfortably close. “How about you and me run away together? You're more or less the Raleigh I know.” She said licking her lips. “No games Rebbecca get to the point,” Noir demanded. Rebbecca frowns getting serious for once. “Maybe I wasn't

joking, but if you insist," Rebbecca said as she transferred one of her wings to her. "I'm sure you figured out by now I had an aspect no one knew about." She explains with a softer smile.

"After that stunt you pulled yeah. I had my suspicions, but why are you giving it to me?" She asked confused. "That's a secret." She said as she disappeared from sight still able to easily move around even with just one wing. "Well, whatever the case I'll be coming for the other one soon enough. Thanks for the advantage my old rival." Noir said picking up Tyler and using the power to warp away with him.

Cyrus used his new spear to defend himself from the mass. As he slashes it seems to shoot out a blade of light at them incapacitating them. Tara takes a much simpler approach of just punching them, but her punches have gotten so strong through her training that they send someone flying landing on others as they all fall over like bowling pins.

They keep attacking. Even without his forces, they are both holding their own against them the attackers are starting to lose motivation. "Stop this! Don't you want to fight for something more the petty wishes? Join us, and we can move forward together." Cyrus urges his heart power seems to have opened the idea up to them. Some of them put away their weapons standing behind him while other's look in confusion.

"Is this some sorta mind control?" One of them asked in fear. "Not quite. I've simply touched their heart. They don't have to listen to me. I'd like to believe they made this choice because they want the same thing as I do. So how about it will you join us as well." Cyrus explained. "You're crazy." The man said as the rest of them kept attacking Cyrus sighed quickly subduing him.

Finally, all the ones around were defeated other than the ones who chose to join him. "So what should we do now?" Tara said looking around "We head for the center." Cyrus said walking toward the Pillar right away knowing that everyone would have to go there eventually.

Chapter Sixty Three

On Flamecrest all of the Chimera Legion is lost walking through the castle without direction. Cindy watched her father's body be carried through the streets in a casket walking behind it with confusion. She still wasn't sure what happened, but what she did not know was that all of the citizens looked upset at his departure from life. Because she was now considered the Crown princess they were mostly left alone, but some had already called them out and expressed their desire for them to go.

She watched as they finished taking the body to the family plot lowering it into the ground next to her mother's likely empty grave. She stood there even after everyone else had left even when it

started to rain. All this time she had deeply admired Marcus. Regardless of the reasons he gave them all a home and a place to belong it was only questioned when they came here.

She wished she could go back to before when she didn't think about it he just pointed in a direction and she and Legion destroyed whatever it was, but now she couldn't help but wonder if she was wrong for that. Their bonds seemed to be unbreakable they had greater cemeteries than every faction, and yet here they were broken and fractured. She stayed there still trying to figure out what she was going to do.

Wolf walked around the forest alone it was her way of coping with everything. She Howled at the moon in anger. She had always been a member of the Legion to challenge things more than others, and yet it got to this point. Should she have pushed more, or less? She didn't know how to keep her endless wandering going until she reached the Area the Fleet was before. Seeing Crow there in the fetal position slowly being covered in snow from the mountain. It looked like they had been there for days. She rushed over to them in shock. “Crow what are you doing I thought you went with him,” she said concerned taking off one of their coverings to feel their skin. It was ice cold. “You're freezing let's get you back to the castle.” She said trying to get them to move, but they didn't react. “Why won't you move.” She growled. “Father abandoned me,” Crow said distraught. At first, she was confused but eventually understood.

“I'm not going to let you die. You're my family.” She said lifting them up and over her back. “Now tell me everything,” Luna asked as they traveled. She listened to every word they said calmly waiting for them to get it all out even though their words were short like always. “I see he told you that huh.” She put them down looking into their eyes. “I don't know the full story because I wasn't there but... I was curious why he had a child with him when I first joined.” She said trying to think back on the moment.

“You don't remember do you.” She asked as they shook their head. “He was... always very

protective of you. He never elaborated on by, only that you were the last of your kind, and he had promised to safeguard you. I have never heard of any Astral Ravens before. I think he said that so you wouldn't go with him." She speculated. Crow perks up regaining a bit of will. "Let's go back to the Castle and tell Cindy." She said taking their hand hoping they would follow willingly now.

They take her hand but look down. "There is something else you should know," Crow said deciding to tell them everything about Marcus's plan. Once they reach the Castle they see Cindy just sitting there on the balcony even though it is raining still. "Go on let's tell her what you said," Luna said as they both got closer. Explaining everything as she just sat there.

"So he... he did kill my Da..." She said feeling like she had no real answers still. She was still so conflicted with anger, and love. She slammed her hands down on the railing destroying it. "Why!" She screamed out finally turning to face them both of them looked just as conflicted. "Why do I feel this way? He killed him, and yet... I still... I still love him. I wanna know why he did this. Was it the only way?" She asked them both.

"I think the only real way to know that is to ask him ourselves," Luna said. Cindy's eyes lit up like she didn't realize that was a choice somehow. "Let's suit up then. This will be the Chimera Legion's last battle." She said walking back inside to put on a uniform. They followed her doing the same or at least a uniform that wasn't soaking wet. Luna went to grab Bear who was also morning in her own way mostly by resting.

Crow opened a portal as they walked through several worlds, and made it to the door. They saw all the crashed ships and opportunists all about looting from them, They ignored them and kept moving going through the door. They blinked and suddenly were in a free fall to the ground below. "This is it. We are here to make a stand and ask him why nothing else until we know got it." Cindy said as they descended. "Right!" They all said.

Marcus rises out of rubble the glowing middle finger on his hand. He laughs beaten but not

defeated. “ Aurelius Cato Novastride I underestimated you. Who thought that the family bastard would return in such an ironic way no wonder I didn't recognize you. Not that it matters now because you're dead.” He said laughing even harder. Three of the Remaining Adaptoids rise from the rubble as well the last of his forces become the ones at the door. He chokes up blood looking at them.

He stammers over. “Armor mode.” He said as they wrapped around him giving him the wings and other features of his legion. He smirks flying off towards Freya who quickly catches up to crashing down in front of her. “Freeeeyaaaaa!” He said with venom. “None of this had to happen. We could've ruled the Multiverse together but you rejected me!” He said stabbing through her chest shocking all the forces surrounding her.

Freya's eyes started to roll back as a single tear fell down her face. She thought back to the past it all started when her Husband another version of Lucius Novastride died in front of her bursting into flames. Just like her in the other timeline. She vowed revenge on the multiverse but things changed. Other versions of her were doing the same, and they all ended up clashing for dominance in a war Called the Great Doppelganger War.

She had killed countless versions of herself in that war all for the same goal of revenge, but during one of the Chaotic battles she expected to meet another her like always resigned to kill her like always, but when she reached that point no one was there, but Lucius Novastride himself. He looked at her in shock dropping everything as tears flowed down his face. “Selene my beloved?” He asked as she nodded they both embraced making them think maybe everything would be alright.

Later that night they had dinner together smiling for the first time in ages it was looking up for once. “Are you enjoying the steak, my dear? Medium well like you prefer.” Lucius asked her. “Well I think I'm more of a well-done gal, but yes it is quite wonderful.” She said with a smile. He dropped his fork standing up all emotion had drained from his face. “You're not her.” He said walking away. “Wait! I know there are bound to be differences between me and her, as there are probably differences between

you and my Lucius, but please. I... I need you.” She said embracing him from behind as he didn't respond. She sobbed into his back begging for him to reconsider.

“I cannot bear to see your face a moment longer, but I will not abandon you. You will have a place in my empire. Out of my sight.” He said pushing her off and walking away. Years later he finally enacted Project Deforestation taking most of their now Huge empire forces with him. She looked on as the ships left the world she was in charge of with shaky optimism that his plan would go well.

A man next to her smiled. “I'm sure it will be fine my lady the people here are grateful for all the advancements and prosperity we have brought to them as conquerors.” He said walking away much more confident. But soon after those same people stormed the building rebelling right away when they learned what happened. They tied them both up in the building and set it on fire the building collapsed on top of them both as they screamed.

They both managed to survive somehow but were horrifically scarred the man's face was half burnt off. “Unforgivable. After everything we have done for them, they dare do this to us. Those ungrateful savages. This ungrateful multiverse!” He ranted as she covered her eye which had been destroyed in the fire. “They won't listen to a nobody like me I need a symbol to rally them behind. Ah, The Reaper. He won't be needing that name anymore.” He said laughing.

That is what brought her to this point being killed by her nephew who she had rejected for taking part in Project Deforestation. “My beloved I'm sorry I could not avenge you. I couldn't do... anything.” She said as she died Marcus still laughing.

Chapter Sixty Four

Natasha and her Forces had made it out of the desert with little to no fighting other than the random people out for their interest. They looked ahead seeing the Neo Empire at the base of the pillar pausing knowing that they were at the end of a real conversation now. “Marcus must be right there,” Marcy said nervously. “Something is off,” Natasha said studying them more closely. Before they really can though Noir appears before them dropping Tyler at their feet. All of the men aim their weapons at her, but she doesn't look intimidated.

“You're the Clone of Raleigh,” Natasha said asking with her eyes if she killed him. “I'm tired of people calling me that. It's Noir, no he's not dead. She sighed as her leg glowed showing she took the

aspect. “I guess you're more like her after all,” Natasha said shifting her weight and crossing her arms. “So are you going to fight me or what?” She asked. “Not yet,” Noir said vanishing. A few men rushed over to Tyler to see if he was ok. He groaned waking up. “I'm sorry general. She beat me.” He said defeated.

“We'll get it back. Are you good to walk? We don't really have a good place to protect you otherwise.” She said with concern. “I'm fine I think she pulled her punches on me.” He said climbing to his feet. Natasha looked down confused by her what was her goal why would she do this?

Tess had made it down the mountain just as she was thinking drawing all their attention. “Ah hell. I prepare for battle.” the general said as they did so. “Wait wait. Cyrus isn't with us. We were separated.” Tess said. “And that means what exactly.” She asked in confusion. Tess looked over at the Neo Empire forces. “A temporary alliance. We help you take down their sheer numbers, and we can fight after” She suggested. “Hmm, I suppose they are more of a concern considering it's Marcus. Alright as you wish.” She said agreeing.

“So what is your plan,” Tess asked looking at the enemy. “In a battle like this. There isn't much to plan other than pummeling each other. Oh gods I'm starting to sound like Raleigh.” Natasha said. “This Raleigh no matter where I go I hear her name whispered. She means something to a lot of people doesn't she.” She asked her. “Well, it's complicated. Let's get going,” she answered not wanting to get into it.

In the cave system below Clyde, and Raleigh reached a more volcanic area. The very few people down there were already fighting and accidentally pushed each other into the lava. They both screamed as it slowly melted their bodies. “That was... unsettling. How much further do we have to go?” He asked her. “It's not much farther the place we need to be is right above us, well very far above us, but you get it.” She said as they kept walking.

Cyrus and Tara kept walking toward the center as Noir appeared before them. They both draw

their weapons right away. She just glares at them both. “Still playing pretend family huh,” she said with resentment. “What do you want from us,” Tara yells out. Noir looks a little surprised second guessing her actions before doubling down. “I'm here to make you suffer for everything you did to me.” She said transforming her tool into a spear just like his. “I refuse to fight you. I told Raleigh I wouldn't fight her anymore.” Cyrus said bluntly

“What do you mean you refuse? You can't just do that. Raleigh may have forgiven you, but I never will.” She said not knowing what happened, but knowing through her memories as Raleigh she still held a lot of resentment some of which Raleigh might be hesitant to lash out for. “He may not fight, but I will sister,” Tara said in a mocking tone which seemed to hurt Noir more than she wanted to admit. “Is it so wrong to want retribution?” She asked looking down.

“No, it's not. There is a part of me that wants to let you kill me, but well. There are too many people counting on me now. I know I've wronged you and Raleigh, and I'm sorry no words will ever be enough to make it right, and I know that.” Cyrus said to Tara's annoyance. Noir seemed to have lost a lot of her drive to fight stowing her blade. “That damn heart power is the worst one.” She said disappearing. “I didn't even use it on her,” Cyrus said sighing.

Tess and Natasha rush into battle. The General leads the way being the most durable taking all the hits like it's nothing from the soldiers that are still very new to battle. They throw everything they have at her but she is still left unscathed. “What is the limit to such powers,” Tess said with wonder stabbing into a nearby soldier with the Rest of the Coalition, and Union. “I honestly don't know.”

Marcy charged in lifting someone in the air and throwing them so hard they disappeared into the sky. “That's also an interesting power you have,” Tess said more nervously. “Oh um... you think so.” Marcy asked timidly despite looking like a muscular monster right now. They defeat the force putting an end to the Neo Empire at least as a people. “They both take a deep breath all of them feeling weird like it shouldn't be over yet Marcus is nowhere in sight.

They sit down together resting for the moment even still. “You fight well,” Natasha said with a smile before frowning again. “It's a shame we are going to have to fight.” She said with sadness. Just as she is saying that Marcus finally makes his appearance falling more into his insanity. As he lands harshly on the ground from above. “You fools. I've come to take your heads just as I said I would.” He laughs as they both stand back up ready to take him on.

“What happened to you? You are not the man I fought for years on the battlefield.” Natasha said to her rival. “I removed any need for others. All that's left is me, and I will take your aspect.” He said charging in and clawing at her. She takes the hit expecting it not to do damage but he activates the middle finger which seems to cancel it out. Her eyes widen in shock as she spits out blood briefly passing out. Marcy jumps in ripping him off her in anger he backhands her using the middle finger to revert her to her normal frail form.

Tess stands there nervously not sure she can take him down like this but stands her ground with her newfound resolve. Cyrus finally appears jumping in and stabbing him through of of the gaps in the armor as he cries out in pain. “Cyrus. How wonderful for you to join us. You were the next on my list.” He said laughing. Cyrus and Tara stand next to Tess resolute as Natasha gets back on her feet ready to take him down. “Pathetic, even united with this power I'm unstoppable.” He gloated flying toward Cyrus trying to stab him.

“Then we will remove your advantage.” He said dodging out of the way giving Tara a chance to punch him in the gut and break off some of the armor. Tess did the same turning her swords into laser whips that wrapped around him holding him in place. “No! Let me go not like this.” He said as Natasha jumped into the air slamming her fist down on him and breaking him out of the armor. He fell to the ground getting up surrounded by them.

“No, you can't defeat me Fleet Admiral Marcus Novastride Leader of the Chimera Legion.” He said knowing how meaningless those words were now. “There is no hope for you. Give up already.”

Natasha said hoping he might surrender out of fear for his own life. “No, I won't.” He said running away into the pillar before they could stop him. Natasha started to give chase only to hold her side in pain. “Are you alright?” Cyrus asked. “Yes... it's just been a while since I felt pain like this. I'll walk it off.” All of them looked ahead ready to follow him into the pillar. Cindy, and the other members of the Legion rush in Wolf, Crow, and Bear drop down blocking their path, and Cindy rushes in after Marcus. “You'll have to take us all on first if you want our boss,” Luna growled. “So you're here after all.” Natasha said almost like it was a relief they were.”

Inside Marcus walks through the astral sands it seems bigger on the inside than it appears. He walks toward a platform in the center but he doesn't have all the keys, and he is losing a lot of blood. Eventually, it is too much for him to take anymore, and he falls to the ground. Cindy rushes in like a rocket, finding him from the sky and crashing near him. “Marcus!” She said slimming her hands down so she could cradle his head in her lap without hurting him.

“Cindy... is that you... no, I must be seeing things.” He said weakly. “It's me boss it's me. We are gonna get you outta here.” She said ready to do just that tearing up a bit. “That... won't be necessary. Why are you even trying to do that, after what I did.” He said assuming she knew everything now. “Because I can't accept it. I need to know why.” She said her heart breaking.

He sighed not answering right away. “Because I'm a fool. All my life I thought I needed to be strong... to survive. I never thought there was another path.” He said as he choked up some more blood. “I used all of you, you were nothing to me I didn't take you in for a sense of belonging or care. That was just the lies I told you all to manipulate you into doing it to be strong... You should despise me.” He said resigned to his fate now.

She kept listening to him unsure what to say or feel. “I was wrong. I should've listened to him. I should have left it all behind when he gave me the chance. To be with the Legion, to be with you, but I was blinded.” He said his voice getting weaker and weaker. “No, you cared about all of us I know ya

did! Even if you say differently. We wouldn't have followed ya for all this time if we didn't.” She said starting to ball her eyes out. “You know... I'm glad you think so, but in truth, I don't know if I'll ever really believe that. Just don't make the same mistake I did. One thing that I... that I know for sure... Is that in the end I did love you.” He said as the light faded from his eyes, and he died.

Cindy looked in shock not wanting to accept it she roared out into the sky in anger he finally admitted feelings to her, and now he was gone. “NO NOT LIKE THIS!” She screamed her heart old broken, and confused. After calming down a bit and crying over his dead body she leaned in giving him her first and final kiss, as she picked him up and carried him away. Noir appeared looking at her with little care for his death considering all he had done but blocking her path. “You want the Aspects huh? Take them then. I don't care.” She said as they appeared on Noir's body she disappeared without another word. Outside she took his body seeing the others of her Legion still fighting blocking the path everyone stopped once they saw him in her arms.

“We are going home.” She said walking past them all. All of them looked in disbelief all of the legions starting to cry despite their current misgiving with them. They all joined her walking away as they watched. “Wait where are you going,” Natasha asked. “It doesn't matter to you anymore. We are leaving, and you'll never see us again.” Cindy said as they walked away disappearing from their sight.

Chapter Sixty Five

Clyde and Raleigh leave the cave finally making it out to the ruined area near the center everything seemed strangely calm all the fighting had stopped. All around them, they see bodies and evidence of such battle but they are all over. “How could we have missed it all,” Raleigh said concerned if they were earning their victory.

“We clearly don't have all the aspects so there must be others out there still. Besides this entire year has been us working toward it.” Clyde reassured her. She sighed appreciating that. In a way, she was happy all of it was so close to finally being over for real. “Alright let's get to that pillar everything

leads to that.” She said running ahead of Clyde struggling to keep up. Noir watches them both from a tree with longing.”

Cyrus, and Natasha both made their way inside walking together. “So we've reached the end of the line huh.” She laughed at Marcus doing the same. “It's a shame things have to end like this. Are you sure you need that wish?” He asked her. “The corruption of the Union. I can't stand it anymore, and well... I don't think it's something I can just get rid of the normal way.” She explains.

“And you think a wish can do something that complicated?” He asked. “I need it to,” Natasha said unsure herself. He stops in his tracks. “You and me we might never see eye to eye, but I respect you. Is that injury going to give me too much of an advantage I want a fair fight. She turns to face him. “This injury makes it a fair fight for you,” Natasha said smirking. “Very well let's end things then just you, and me. No one else.” He said pulling out his spear she nodded getting into a fighting stance.

The Phoenix watches from the platform as The Caretaker appears. “I never expected you to come here like this. I'm thrilled to see you again” they said with a smile seeming to be more enthusiastic than normal. “You talk as though we are friends, even when I'm here disrupting a tool in your game.” She said back to him. “Yes you are, but in a way, this also benefits me,” he said confusing her. The Original version of him chimes in. “I believe he is referring to the paradox that will be created with events about to play out. In this Multiverse you aim to destroy the door, but in others.”

“That is correct. More trees will be created thanks to your intervention. You should be proud.” He answered further confusing her because only she should be able to hear her other selves. “So even still we are a pawn in your game.” She said looking down with anger. “No, you are so much more. Your wish while selfish was perfect. Not only did you bring the cycle of reincarnation to all worlds, but you created yourself. One day once you have had enough experiences. You will be on my level, and that is what truly makes your wish incredible to me.” He explained. “Is that so, and you aren't afraid that it does happen? I might still be resentful.” She asked. He just smiles disappearing.

Cyrus and Natasha start their fight below giving everything they have as both their forces watch with nervous faces unsure of the outcome. Cyrus Jabs forward hitting her in the side causing her to wince in pain, but mostly leaving her unbothered. It is clear the power isn't working as well as normal but she was still almost impossible to pierce even still.

She took the chance to strike a powerful blow into his gut he struggled to recover but did so backing away to regain his barring completely. He swung his spear in slashing motion letting out another blade of light which she couldn't dodge out of the way in time forcing her to take the hit. It seemed to affect her more she was weak, but so was Cyrus. He again tried to stab at her with his reach, but this time she managed to grab the end of the spear and use her knee to break it apart.

Cyrus threw the broken weapon to the side putting his fist up and smiling, She did the same. He punched her in the gut as he did the same. They resorted to a fist fight slowly running out of energy but kept it up not wanting to give up for anything. Both of them fell to their knees but even still they began wrestling with each other until they finally collapsed completely too tired to move. They lay next to each other out of breath looking up at the starry sky. Noir appeared before them before they could talk anymore.

It would seem inside the door being near someone who had been defeated was enough to transfer it over She obtained both the Heart and the Hide without a word vanishing as quickly as they appeared. “That could be bad,” Natasha said groaning. Cyrus didn't say anything silently agreeing. “There is one thing I still don't understand. Why do you stay what do you have to gain.” Cyrus asked it would seem the question was still burning in his mind. “I have been there and it didn't work out so well for me, it's partly why I'm on this path now.” He further explained.

She doesn't answer for a while silently resting thinking about what he said. “Don't take this the wrong way but, The Union is not the Empire. I love the Union, I love its people I won't just abandon it like that. Not for the people in the Union, and not for all my men you rely on me.” She said bluntly. “I

see,” Cyrus said as they both passed out from exhaustion.

Clyde and Raleigh had made it to the area right before the platform where the Phoenix was waiting, but Noir was blocking their path. “All of it was leading up to this. Nothing before this matters. I'm going to take him from you, and make you see just what you're neglecting.” Noir said in answer still resolved to fight. “Wait Noir... You were right.” Raleigh said reluctantly pausing to listen.

“I did take everything for granted. To you, it probably seems like I took everything from you. The things you didn't fully appreciate until they were gone. That's why you want revenge right?” Raleigh asked trying to be more understanding now. “So what where does that leave me I'm still removed from the life I long for.” She said pushing back. “You don't have to be. Come with us we can figure something out!” Clyde pleads.

Noir glares at Raleigh, her expression unreadable, but there's a burning intensity behind her eyes. It isn't just hate—it's something more complex, something deeper. As she stands there, she feels every ounce of her resentment, every pain that being a clone has inflicted on her. Her longing is overwhelming, her heart twisted by the desire to claim what she believes should be hers.

Noir raises her weapon slowly, her eyes not leaving Raleigh. "Do you think any of this is fair?" she begins, her voice trembling with anger. "Do you know what it's like to look in the mirror every day and see someone else staring back at you? To know that the life you want is just within reach but forever out of your grasp?" Her voice cracks slightly. "You are me, and yet... you're not. You got everything I was supposed to have: a home, love, freedom. And I got stuck as your shadow."

Raleigh takes a step forward, her eyes softening. "Noir, I never wanted you to be just a shadow. I know you think I took everything from you, but—" "Don’t!" Noir snaps, her anger flaring. "Don't you dare pity me! I don’t want your sympathy. I want what you have—your life, your love, all of it. I want to be you. And if I can't take it... maybe there's another way."

She grips her weapon tighter, her knuckles turning white. "The Wishing Door. If I take you

down and gather what I need, I can wish to become you. I can rewrite all of this." Her voice is strained as if she's trying to convince herself that this plan is even possible. Clyde steps in between them, raising a hand. "Noir, listen to yourself. You can't erase who you are—you're not Raleigh at least not anymore, but you can be something else, someone worthwhile, without trying to take what she has."

Noir's eyes flicker to Clyde, her expression darkening with a mixture of jealousy and pain. "You don't get it, do you? I don't *want* to be something else. I want to be her. I want to be the one who gets you, who gets this life." She points her weapon directly at Raleigh, her body tensing. "And if that means fighting until one of us is gone, then so be it."

Raleigh sighs deeply, her heart heavy. She's always known this fight was inevitable, but it doesn't make it any easier. "If that's really what you want, Noir... then I'll fight you. But know this: I'm not fighting you because I hate you or because I want to prove I'm better. I'm fighting because I want you to see that who you are is enough. Even if you can't see it yet."

Noir's eyes blaze, and she rushes forward, swinging her weapon. "Shut up! Just shut up!" she yells, their weapons clashing with an explosion of sparks. The battle begins a clash of mirrored forms —two versions of the same person, each fighting for something the other can never truly understand.

Rebbecca looks down at the fight frowning just out of sight not liking that it ended like this, and accepting this was for the best. In one last act, she transfers the remaining wing to Raleigh. She looked around for her seeing her up above watching before she got up leaving through a portal. "Both of you survive for me ok." She said to herself leaving.

Clyde looks on nervously as they both clash insensly with their blades filled with different emotions. It would seem the Hide was giving Noir a slight edge already. Clyde Transfered his arm, and eye to Raleigh too hoping it would make a difference, but also unable to shake the fact that Rebbecca clearly gave one of the wings to Noir.

Both of them seemed to vanish and Re appeared all over them using the wings which

complemented their abilities more than the rest as well as the power of the legs showing them a path forward. It was hard for Clyde to keep up with the fight it was so fast a fierce and they hardly stayed in one place for long.

As the battle unfolds, the sparks from their clashing weapons light up the battlefield, and the noise of steel meeting steel echoes around them. Noir's expression is twisted with a mixture of rage, desperation, and something almost like hope—a twisted hope that maybe, just maybe, winning this fight will fill the void inside her.

Raleigh, on the other hand, fights with a different emotion—a blend of guilt, resolve, and an undeniable love for the life she's building, the people she's protecting, and, in a way, even for Noir. She sees the pain in Noir's eyes, the depth of longing that drives her, and it makes Raleigh's strikes heavy—her heart aching even as she brings her weapon to bear against her mirror image.

Clyde watches from below, his heart pounding. He can barely keep up with their movements as they vanish and reappear, the glow of the Wings illuminating them both as they dance across the battlefield, leaving trails of light in their wake. The speed at which they move, the precision, the raw power—it's beyond anything he's ever seen. He can feel the tension in the air, the way every strike Noir lands, every block Raleigh makes, carries the weight of a thousand emotions unspoken.

Through the power of both arms, Raleigh can break through the skin of Noir's now Durable body slashing into her chest and causing significant damage, but it gives her an opening allowing her to do the same. They both crash to the ground but quickly get back up attacking even still. Noir stabbed into her leg making it harder for her to use the Leg power while managed to stab into her shoulder.

Both of them cry out in pain pulling their weapons free from the flesh of the other. They strike once more with some much strength that even their legendary-like weapons begin to crack from the pressure. They keep up the attack not resting for a second until they both shatter from impact. Raleigh doesn't let up punching her in the face right away trying to transform Novabreaker one last time into

something else.

It fails but leaves her with part of a blade enough to finish this, and so she stabs into Noir trying to hit a spot that would get her out of the fight but not kill her. Noir's eyes widen in shock as she struggles to breathe. “I wasn't strong enough.” She said falling to her knees, and then the floor. Clyde rushes over seeing her potential death as the same as if Raleigh died assessing her wounds.

Raleigh she watches catching her breath barely winning out over her. He managed to patch her up at least so she would not bleed out unsure if she would make it. “What are you still doing here? Get going already.” Noir said weakly. “I don't want you to die,” Clyde said. “What is it you said to me we you fell into that void? Don't think for a second this will be enough to kill me. I'll be back so watch your backs both of you.” Noir declares with no energy left.

Clyde smiled trying not to tear up. “Alright I'm counting on it, but if you ever change your mind. I will be there to help you out, Raleigh too.” He said as he stood up leaving her there to rest. Raleigh still looked a little jealous. “Don't go signing me up for something like that. You belong to me, and always will from now on.” She said defiantly. “But if she needs our help. Yeah, I'll help her.”As she said all of the aspects transferred to her body making her feel both incredible and overwhelmed with power.

“I think we should hurry up, and make that wish.” She said nervously as they took each other's hand walking up to the platform the Phoenix was already waiting at. “Oh crap this girl,” Clyde said nervously forgetting about her until now. Both of them got ready to fight unsure if they stood a chance or not. “Tell me, what is it that you wish for?” She asked them both. They walked closer looking at each other with determination. “A true home, and place to belong.” They said together. The Phoenix looked down conflicted she was expecting a more evil wish it seemed.

After a moment of thought she finally spoke up. “I will not get in your way.” She said stepping aside so they could make their wish. They walked toward the final threshold to another door that seemed to have all sorts of swirling energy around it the door reacted to their presence much like the big one they

were inside as it slowly started to open. “All you have to do is think about your wish, and simply walk through.” The Phoenix explained.

They took each other's hand taking a deep breath as they slowly walked toward it thinking about all they had done in the past year they were finally going to have their place of belonging not just because of some wish, but because they fought for it. They understood that's what they wanted. They disappeared through the door as the whole thing shook. Everywhere in every universe shook in reaction. Nothing broke or was damaged it was more of an acknowledgment that a wish had been made in the Multiverse.

Epilogue

Aion rushed into the middle of the pillar with his van looking panicked. Below Cyrus and Natasha were sitting there having a calmer conversation seemingly aware Clyde and Raleigh got the wish, and ok with that outcome. “Oh, crap of crap we waited too long and missed the main event. Oh hey, look is The legendary Phoenix some of my contacts were talking about.” Aion said driving closer parking right where Noir was defeated she was nowhere to be seen. Aion quickly jumps out with Mia. “Quickly we need to try and score an interview with her before she runs off,” Aion said urging them forward.

But once Tristan sees who it is he blushes remembering his statement to her before. “Hmm, what's this do you know her boy?” He asked. “Well, only a little,” Tristan said laughing nervously not wanting to admit his crush. “Well that's perfect maybe she'll open up to you more. Congratulations kid you're getting a promotion.” Aion said taking the camera from him and pushing for him to get closer.

“Hey um...” He started to say. She was looking down unsure what to do with her life now she couldn't just go back to being who she was before, but she didn't completely succeed in her mission. He

looked at Aion with uncertainty as both he and Mia gave him a thumbs up but she was facing the wrong way Aion quickly corrected her. “So um... would you... like to get some coffee sometime?” He asked nervously. “You're that boy. I um. I don't know how you got here but. You know what sure Name the time and place.” She said to him deciding to be a little spontaneous.

“Well I don't know a ton about the city yet, but there is this place in Porta Nexus that has pretty good coffee.” He said nervously. “Very well it's a date.” She said smiling as the door shook again. Everyone around the battlefield still alive looked around confused as the door started to pulse, it seemed like it was about to kick everyone out. “I didn't catch your name.” She asked. “Oh um well it's Tristan.” He said nervously not thinking he would get this far. “I'm looking forward to it Tristan.” She said with a smile as the door pulsed one last time shooting out a wave of light.

When everyone inside opened their eyes again they were outside the door once more the door tightly sealed for the next time The Caretaker distributed all the aspects. Cyrus and Natasha both look in shock at their ships that had been picked apart some of them were even flat-out missing. After taking a deep breath they looked at each other once more. “I wish you luck on your mission,” Cyrus said as they both shook hands away. “The same to you.” She said as they let go and went their separate ways. Everyone around began to fly home once they got everything working again leaving the door void of life once more. The Caretaker's eyes were the only thing that remained on it.

As the new Year began there was a sense of hope in everyone's eyes. The Empires of the past were gone. The scattered factions were eradicated. Everyone felt a sense of hope especially on Porta Nexus after the attack. “What do you mean regulations are regulations? You can't do favors for merchants just because they gave you some money.” Darla barked arguing with Alister as they walked down the street. “You fail to see the bigger picture as always you stupid mutt. I'm taking their money, yes but to get to the root of the problem.” He started to explain as they both kept arguing in the street. It catches the attention of Garrick who is back just running his guild for now even though there are

countless letters on his desk thanking him for his part, and asking for him to the the position of Chancellor.

He sighed looking over all of it but smiling glad everything turned out well. Down an alley in the shadows someone wearing a black jacket with a skull on it looks out at the Port Authority with scorn, but then a smile. On the other side of the street was Noir. She had cut her hair shorter seeming to be trying to embrace being a new person finally.

Natasha walked into the Counsel hall with Marcy as they both took a deep breath it was time for their long road to begin they stood in the middle of the room awaiting judgment. “You have a lot to answer for General. Medan death, looking into things you aren't supposed to.” One of them said within the shadows. “Oh, so you do know about that.” She said cocking her hips.

“Of course we do We needed an edge against...” They started to say as she interrupted them. “I've heard enough excuses. Let me ask you this. If that information was to go public would you be ok with your names being on it?” Natasha asked. All of them murmured amongst themselves before answering. “Are you threatening us?” One of them asked. “I'm promising you. I have given that information to a certain influential News Reporter. He will expose all of this and more.” She said confidently seeming to change their tune.

“What do you want from us? Money? A higher rank?” Another one asks. “You still don't get it. I'm not extorting you. I'm telling you what is going to happen. Natasha said a man ran in along with another officer who seemed to be very high-ranking. “You are all being put under investigation. You will be forced to step down from your position effective immediately.” The man said as the soldiers came over to them putting them in cuffs.

“On what charges?” One of them demands to know. “The list is so extensive I can't list them all in one sitting.“ The man said in disgust. “You think this is over. Even if you prove any of this people will be outraged at your choice here. This isn't the end Natasha Starcrafter!” One of them said as they

were all dragged away. “I know it's not. Not even close.” She said sighing knowing that this may very well lead to a civil war.

Tyler returned to the hospital to see Lucy but she had not woken up. He looks down defeated still lost for what to do. “Hey I don't know if you can hear me but. I miss you all of you. I know we did some questionable things in our time but things are different now. I'm fighting for what's right with Natasha. All of those units... well we found them and we were able to prevent them from doing it to any of the others.” He said smiling taking her hand even though she wasn't responding.

The Chimera legion returned to Flamecrest burying their leader in a grave under a tree not in a fancy plot like Emberon. All of them still have conflicting feelings as they look down at the marker. “Marcus was allota things, but well. In the end, he did want what was best for us even if his way of showing it sucked ass, but his final words to me. I wanna remember, and never forget.” Cindy started to take on more of a leadership position than she ever had before.

She turned to face them all. Flamecrest is my home now, and it can be all or yours too. If that's what you want, and if not well that's good too.” She said looking at Crow and smiling seeing that they felt a lot more uncomfortable, and lost being there than the rest of them. With that, they all got closer with a group hug even if their paths diverged their bonds with one another were still not broken Marcus had made them that way whether he meant to or not.

Loki frowned lonely once more now that the conflict was over no one was bothering him anymore asking for help. He suddenly got a call which he answered expecting it to be nothing special. He looked seeing it was Lucy looking at him with a smile. “Hey, Lion boy sorry I haven't gotten back to you in a while I've been real busy. I'm held up at Porta Nexus at the moment, and well Clyde told me how lonely you have gotten. I got a little free time at the moment how bout you head on over.” She said with a smile. “Of course, I'll be right over. He said with excitement, but we do need to check up on them eventually their soul cards are fine, but well...” He started to go on. “They'll be fine give me a

little time first.

Cyrus sat with Tess, and Tara eating a meal together like a family. “In the end, it all worked out. People are starting to recognize us as a real nation.” Tess said with a smile. Tara was pigging out while Cyrus was using a knife, and fork nodding. “It's more than I ever could have asked for.” He said proud of himself. “If only Darrian could have seen it.” He said sighing.

“Hey Cyrus, I'm not saying it will happen overnight, but what if as we go along, we start to have some of the same issues the Union does.” She asked. “I will fight to make sure that doesn't happen, and well if it does, or happens after my lifetime. I'll hope that someone with the same ideals as me does the same.” He explains. “Of course, that's your answer.” She said with a smile going back to eating.

Rebbecca's boss holds her up by the head furious with her. “You defied my order you know better. You let your emotions get the better of you for the last time.” He growled throwing her against the wall. “No, I... I did what you said... you left it at my discretion on what to wish for.” Rebbecca said groaning weakly. He doesn't seem to buy it. “You you expect me to believe that. Not only did you fail to make a wish they are still out there possibly a threat to our plans.” He said with anger.

“The home they wished for. I did some investigating once I found out where it is.” Rebbecca said sitting up and staying on the floor as she sent information to him. “Look at the specs.” She said as he looked them over his eyes slowly widening as he realized what they were getting at. “My child, this is everything. No this is more than everything, it's the key to defeating The Once, and Future Foe once, and for all.” He said more joyfully as he wrapped his hands around the holographic depiction of the home. “I don't appreciate you going behind my back, but I will overlook it given this revelation. We must take it for ourselves.”

Rebecca back up, her posture rigid, her eyes cast downward. He didn’t move to strike her—he didn’t have to. His mere presence in the room was enough to make the air feel colder.

“Even still... You disobeyed me, Rebecca,” he said, his voice dangerously even. He clasped his hands behind his back, stepping closer but maintaining his distance. His face betrayed no emotion—only the faint glint in his eyes suggested his displeasure. “And you thought you could deceive me. That you could take matters into your own hands.”

Rebecca swallowed, struggling to find her words. “I... I thought it would be for the best, considering” “Enough,” he interrupted. He looked past her, almost as if he were considering the weight of her actions not on her but on their entire mission. “What you uncovered may be more important than anything we have done so far, but it doesn't change the fact that you acted out of line.” He paused, glancing back at her. “You need to remember that every action, every choice, is a reflection on me. On us. You jeopardize everything with reckless decisions.”

Rebecca nodded, her head still low. She was ready for the punishment, whatever form it took. But instead of harsh words or dismissal, there was something unexpected. “I’ll give you one chance,” he said, his tone softening slightly, but the steel behind it unmistakable. “One more chance to prove to me that you can be the weapon we need against the ‘Once and Future Foe.’ You brought me valuable information, a key that changes everything.” He turned away from her, the holographic depiction of

Clyde and Raleigh’s home still hovering before him, glowing faintly. “We will take that place for ourselves, and when we do, the entire multiverse will finally understand.” He glanced back at her, his eyes meeting hers, intense but not without a hint of something that resembled belief in her capability. “Don't fail me again, Rebbecca. We have too much to lose.” Rebbecca stood there, swallowing down the rush of mixed emotions. Fear, yes—but also a glimmer of hope. He was still giving her a place, a purpose. She took a deep breath, and then she nodded. “I understand.”

Clyde and Raleigh walk through the strange world they wished for. It was somehow both Foreign and strange and still grounded in worlds they were used to at the same time. “It's perfect, and

it's all really ours?" Raleigh asked like she didn't believe it was true. "Yes, a real home just like you wanted," Clyde said with a smile. "Even still you think it would have come with like already built house or something," Clyde said with a sigh. Raleigh smiled at him taking his hand and leaning in for a kiss happy everything finally worked out for them. An end of another story