

Prologue of the Second Daughter's Darkness.

The earsplitting shriek, which drowns out the roaring thunder, has Fjin reeling back to the edge of the inner wall. It is to his regret that he looks down the three hundred feet drop. He leaps forth and to his father's side. A roar in the distance draws his sky-blue eyes to the shadow, who rises from below the horizon of the outer wall.

Its mere size is a violation of nature itself. The night sky, bursting with lightning, is virtually hidden behind the all-destroying monster. She spreads her wings, dominating the horizon entirely. "We have angered the gods." Fjin's voice shakes as he speaks; all hope seems lost.

"NO!" Says Ferio, the man of great stature with his well-kept black beard; the king of humankind, the elven kingdom, and dwarven three courts of order. "Not a god. A mother." His jaw tightens under his beard.

The shadow's eyelids slide back horizontally and sideways to reveal yellow orbs with two black elongated slits for pupils. They are large as a house and bursting with odious hatred.

The wind gusts in their faces like a wet towel; the merciless downpour begins. They are soaked to the bone all but immediately, but Ferio calls out: "Hold fast, my son!" His voice shines above the torrential rain. "It is far from over!"

The black dragon snarls, which shakes the mountains raw. She bursts into a furious roar, which falters father and son to their knees. Its foul breath wafts over them in a lukewarm draught. The essence of sulfur is overpowering, and fright spreads like wildfire among the people huddled in the heart of the capital: Leif.

"Do not panic!" Ferio stands tall. "She will not pass me, and the city can rebuild!" He proudly puts a hand squarely on his son's chest. "Today, we fight for our birthright; this world is ours! We shall rid these unwanted beasts from our land!" The People explodes in cheering roars. The dragon roars too, beating its wings upward.

The heaven splits open a square mile across. The light of Ardor casts a spotlight on the beast. The second and smaller moon: Rancor, is just now beginning to drift behind its stargazing sibling. "We accept your challenge profane creature!" Ferio draws his sword with a flicker of moonlight reflecting off the spearpoint of the blade. Fjin lets out his best war cry and pulls his sword from the sheath. His dark hair falters wet into his eyes, when by his command, the air reconstructs into solid steel, carrying them into the fray.

"Forget about the city, don't hold back!" Ferio swings his sword, and the sky lights up with an infectious orange glow. The cloud-cyst concaves downwards with the sun's ferocity, scorching the dragon queen across her back and sending her howling with pain into the streets below.

"You did it." Fjin swallows his words, upon the queen rising unharmed. In a surreal demonstration of might, she swipes her wing across the horizon. The shockwave moves across the city in an all-destroying tsunami of brown dust and debris, tearing houses down to their foundation. Fjin thrusts his blade into the ground by his feet, throwing his hands into the air, ready to catch the towering wave of destruction.

She clears the entire west section of the outer ring, a million homes obliterated beyond recognition in an instant by a lazy swing of her wing.

The city crust whirls into the air and drops like meteorites back to Luxia's surface. "What have we done?" Fjin drops to his knees, gasping for breath. Their make-shift defense of stainless-steel crumbles around him. Barely did he managed to shelter them from her wrath. The west-wing he could do nothing to save.

"Have faith!" Ferio remains unfaced in the pounding storm of rain and deadly chunks of glass, cement, and steel beams snapped in half, all of which whirls around him. "The tides are about to turn in our favor! I just know it."

Sarithar's jaws spring open in a sonic boom, a raging inferno floods across her lips and washes over the rubble of the formerly beautiful city.

"I just know it's true!" Ferio readies his blade, glowing white with heat. The same heat cast onto Fjin's drenched body from the hellscape of flames rolling over them.

"I do too! I have to," Fjin whispers, his mind goes out to his beautiful Eldrin.

The heatwave is over them, an obliterating force which leaves nothing in its wake. Fjin pommels both palms into the ground, the rough of the debris drills in and strikes blood from his palms. The land gives and indents under them. The excess of the trench he digs is pushed up on the sides for further protection.

The inferno rages above them; it casts unbearable warmth and still-burning embers into the crater. "Good Fjin!" Ferio hollers as the flames die out. His blade has taken on a far-reaching divine glow of pure white. "Stay down; close your eyes!"

The world stops, then implodes on itself in a blinding burst of light that sends Sarithar flying into the outer wall. The collision is colossal with the sound reverberating around the planet twice.

District sized chunks of wall crumble onto Sarithar. The lingering coalition of hell-spawned spitfire and Ferio's solar flare sends out thick black smoke, which consumes the ground from view. Fjin breathes through his sleeve, but still taste the sod billowing into his lungs, stinging his eyes to tears. Even with his eyes closed, his vision is imprinted with an afterimage of the sun's valor.

The drenching rain evaporates directly off his steaming clothes.

"Why do you insects squirm!" Sarithar's tail whips around. Even the mountains bend at her whim; no barrier can stop her. Making a snap decision, Fjin does the only thing, which he can think of.

The whirlpool that he creates from the very ground swallows them whole and cradles them safely from the might of the dragon queen's tail. Safely, but ice cold.

Gasping and coughing up his lungs, Fjin grasps for the ashy shores of Leif. He swallows a mouthful of smoke and coughs on the edge of consciousness.

Desperately exhausted to the bone, he grasps at the edge of the sheer wall of his newly created body of water. His fingers close around a still smoldering ember. With an agonized scream he drops the rock into the water in a burst of steam. Fighting to tread water, he clasps his severely scorched hand to his chest.

"What is wrong, ant?" Sarithar's massive eye opens out of the night to watch how her prey thrashes in the sod infused mud with unbearable pain throbbing in the palm of his hand.

"He has taken nothing from you. I killed her! I watched as her life bled out." Ferio struggles to his feet.

Her eye grows reflectively moist before they narrow to angry slits again. She shifts back in a cloud of ash, nothing more than a backdrop from a lightning strike.

"Ferio!". Sarithar's voice is full of sorrow and heartache. In vain, Fjin struggles against the pain and weariness. His knees falter, and he collapses back into the grime with an audible splash.

He wants to win. He wants it so badly. He cannot muster the iron will of his father, who stands unfazed by the giant. He once more draws his blade, as two more dragons leap onto the outer wall with more beating wings following them. They are not quite as massive, but still incredibly huge.

We are the last line of defense, the last hope of the people, and we cannot win. It is hopeless; Fjin gives up.

The inside of his palm is bloodshot raw, with yellow blisters blooming sooner than expected, like dandelions on a sunny day. "Then I will have your son first!" She stands back on her hind legs, towering almost a mile tall and growing. The black dragon stands as a shadow of doubt for a second, her eyes raging with rightful wrath against the sky.

The sky which pulsates with life, like an ocean, they flow. Waves of red, like northern lights, dance behind her from north to south and from east to west.

A black comet, she shoots toward Luxia. Ferio raises his blade, which protected them all against the wrath of the dragons for so long. As a telltale sign, it shatters to the hilt in thousands of pieces. Without thinking, Fjin draws his own blade for his father to wield. His forthright power, which rests in his heart, flows into his sword and shatters it in thousands of pieces. He drops the hilt and sees that the palm of his hand is whole.

"Not my son!" Ferio flares up in blistering white.

Again, the sky splits open in a holy smite of the sun itself, striking down with its force on the queen. The flare lasts only a second but casts daylight to the far reaches of the elven forest: Qirus and the dwarven mines of mount Alareas and Ignis. To the few lasting tribes of Beastians on the planes, and to the mysterious meies secluded on the Marnni Island North of Qirus.

The outer wall shatters, as Ferio again repel the evil that threatens his land. "The tides have turned; we must act now!" Ferio calls out for his only son to follow him into the air.

To Fjin's bewilderment, he can fly. He can soar into the sky, raving with a bloody radiance. The clouds disburse on Ferio's touch, ending the downfall instantly and recasting day onto the night fallen kingdom.

Sarithar shoots back up, now reaching into the atmosphere. Her eyes are the size of cities. Her outburst of flames, now jet-black, stretches miles across.

“No,” Says Fjin. By his will, the flames bend into iron feathers, which gently spiral towards Luxia’s surface. Fires have no mass, but it does not matter, he changed them anyway. He can do anything; he can feel the magic cruising through his every vein.

Rancor is barely visible, and from it, the same radiance of red flows into the night sky.

No matter how forever blinding the sun is this close, Fjin finds himself perfectly able to gaze into the life giving and life taking orb. His eyes are burning out of his head and mending back together all at the same time.

“Why- you little!” Sarithar’s tail erases the Hindur mountain range directly below the highlands: the country-sized island suspended far into the atmosphere. It has been the home of the dragons, since forever, and a force of terror for as long as humankind can remember. Fjin shudders as if part of himself has been broken. His soul no longer seems to fit in his tiny human vessel, and it bleeds out into the land itself.

As Sarithar lunges like a cat at speeds unfairly wielded by a creature her size, she does so directly into mountains erected in her path. The collision is a worldwide earthquake, unlike anything experienced by the hind-legged.

Luckily every intelligent being has taken shelter in the heart of Leif, but everything else manmade is cast to ruin. “Buy me some time!” Ferio puts his hand on the shoulder of the empty shell of his son.

Forest emerges and slitters forth to latch shut around the black dragon’s neck and forepaws. “Who do you think you are? You are just ants!” She effortlessly tears free in a hail of tree trunks.

Before the world can try to contain her again, she wraps her enormous wings around Fjin. Nothingness surrounds him and cuts him off from the rest of the world. Only nothing can come from nothingness. Her darkness is somber and suffocating. It snares around him, squishing his newfound will from his soul.

Enormous disembodied yellow eyes open out of the nothing, digging daggers into his state of mind. *Give in, give back what you stole from us.* Her voice is everywhere. “O...okay.” He distantly hears himself say.

“Not my son!” Ferio echoes as the darkness eradicates. Sarithar tumbles back to the edge of Qirus. Another tumble and the last magical forest would have been wiped off the side of the planet. “Hold her down!” Ferio clasps his hands together and closes his eyes shut again.

The ground melts for her to sink into and harden to solid obsidian before she can hope to fight it. Her flames vanish as the oxygen around her drains to zero.

Remember, Fjin tells himself. This is what you studied for, do, or die.

Sarithar thrashes to free herself, no longer buzzing with confidence. Just as she finally tears loose her upper body, she again is encapsulated in the world’s largest pillory of snaring roots.

At this insult, she gives pause to meet his gaze with those impossibly large eyes. Black smoke bursts from her nostrils. She whips with all her might in three snakish twists and torts of her lengthened body.

With his soul torn at, Fjin grimaces. But seeing the panicked surprise in Sarithar fills him with determination. She slings, and tugs and fights for her life with growing Desperation. Bonds of gargantuan magnitude snap tight over her and pins her wings to her sides. She squirms, growls, and batters with such force that Fjin fears that she will soon tear Luxia in two. While the land’s endurance is endless, the ruling queen for three thousand years’ strength slips up, and she falls still.

Only her breath rattles the crust. “Why...you,” she whimpers weakly. “Listen-” Rancor is now gone, and the night is thoroughly bloodshot. Fjin let some of himself flow into Sarithar like bad blood. Her sheer will pushes back against him, but now he is stronger, and her jaws transmute shut.

Ferio reaches slowly, from Fjin’s perspective, his father’s fingers close around the sun, like a gloriously red apple on the planetary tree. He plucks it ripe from the stem, holding it in his hand.

Sarithar watches with a million words for Ferio and his offspring burning on her tongue, which has been fused to the roof of her mouth permanently; her lips fretted together seamlessly without a single scar.

The king of kings commands the sun upon Sarithar in a glorious wipeout. Everything between the two is a write-off. A solar obliteration, which would put Ra to shame.

Bathed in the core of the sun, Sarithar howls are muffled. With a final billow of blackened flames, she collapses to a dragyn. With every inch cinched, she shivers, feverishly.

His father, in all his wisdom, grabs the upper arm of his son and says: “Let her go; You’ve already killed her!” He points to the highlands, and Fjin understands.

Thousands of upset dragons circle the island, trying to gather their young and escape the slaughter at hand, largely in vain.

The majority of the ones, which escapes the instant death of the highlands being violently torn out of the sky by the sun, are snared by the air materializing around them, doomed to fall to their deaths. Those fleeing on the ground only prolong the unavoidable, grabbed into the field and held still to be cleaned up afterward.

Rancor peeks out from behind Ardor, shocked Fjin gasps with an unwilling yelp, as he is torn back to his body. A green male to an unusually large pink xian breaks from his halfway bonds. As the pink xian is freed, two eggs appear in her wing: one green, the other blue with black spots.

“Let them go.” Says Ferio with absolute urgency, as the sun in his hand burns out. With a heavy Heart, Fjin does.

Gravity once again calls for them to obey.

The air hisses in his ears and tears at his clothes as the ground zooms up toward them. With some radiance lingering in his fingertips, Fjin creates Lake Malow.

The water is shockingly cold, and he barely musters the effort to save himself. With his last burst of energy from the blood moon, Ferio creates the eternal summer.

Fjin puts will into beings, forming twenty-seven women, and twenty-seven men out of Malos surface. His perfect dragon hunters; the Insignis.