

## **Zompiewolf 671**

### Chapter 671 Fear Me (1)

In the dimly lit alley, the stench of death hung heavy in the air. Piles of lifeless bodies, drained of their vital essence, littered the ground.

In the midst of it all, the twins and Anna were standing. They had some injuries, and exhaustion was camping on their faces, yet all of them had their attention on the one who raised the dead souls before them.

Before them was a woman, her features obscured by a hooded cloak, who stepped forward, a wicked smile curling her lips. Her dark eyes gleamed with murderous aura as she spoke, her voice dripping with a sinister allure.

"Ah, the infamous Anna and her delightful companions," the bloodmancer purred. "It seems the tales about you haven't been exaggerated at all. In fact, I think they have been downplayed a bit, or our little encounter would be long since over."

Anna, annoyed by the woman, couldn't hold back anymore. "Who are you, and what do you want?"

"What's the hurry, darling?" the woman smiled again. "We got all the time in the world to get acquainted, don't we? And as for what I want..."

"I have a keen interest in capturing you alive, Miss Succubus," she replied as her grin widened, revealing sharp, elongated canines. "As for your charming friends, they would make exquisite additions to my collection. Oh... I can almost feel the pleasure of draining their blood as we speak!"

"Great, another psycho lover!" Irina scoffed as she exchanged glances with her sister, who rolled her eyes. "If you think we're here to entertain you, you're sorely mistaken."

"Why do we always attract freaks! Come on!" Verina chimed in. "For once, bring us someone who asks us to coffee before revealing their damaged attitudes!"

"Oh, I can do that as well," the woman licked her lips. "Or how about we fight it out and decide everything later?"

"Stole the words right out of my mouth," Anna smirked, cracking her knuckles.

With swift and coordinated movements, Anna and the twins launched their assault on the woman. Fiery spells and strikes flew through the air as they sought to overpower the bloodmancer. Yet, to their surprise, she proved to be a formidable adversary.

Her control over blood magic was masterful, and she effortlessly deflected their attacks, weaving crimson tendrils of blood all around them to block their every move. With each passing moment, it became clear that they were at a disadvantage.

Besides the fact she was effortlessly holding her ground against three opponents, her psychotic laughter was more annoying.

The more it echoed through the alley, the more uncoordinated the trio got. as she began to subdue her opponents. The mysterious enemy revelled in their struggle, her dark powers steadily gaining the upper hand on them.

"Is that all you got?" the woman mumbled uninterestedly. "Meh, looks like I got excited for nothing then!"

The twins attacked the bloodmancer from both sides. But to their dismay, the woman summoned thick blood tentacles and slammed them against the wall. But that wasn't all. The tentacles seemed to actively drain them of their energy.

While the twins struggled on their own, Anna lashed out at the woman. The temporary shift in focus was enough for the twins to get the upper hand and free themselves.

However, Anna wasn't so lucky as the woman grabbed her by the neck, lifting the succubus off the ground.

"Tsk, tsk, tsk," the woman smiled as her blood-soaked fingers tightened around Anna's neck. "Did you really think you stood a chance against an Archbishop like me? How naive can you be?"

Anna's eyes widened when she heard the woman refer to herself as the Archbishop of the Cult.

"Oh, right. I never introduced myself properly to you," The woman said as she summoned other tendrils to keep the twins occupied. "The name's Molina; however, people also refer to me as the fourth Archbishop, and with you captured, my task here is complete."

"Like... hell, it is..." Anna gasped for breath, her struggles growing weaker by the second.

Irina and Verina fought desperately to free Anna, but Molina's power was overwhelming. With a cruel grin, Molina leaned in, her tongue darting out to lick Anna's cheek.

"You think so, darling. But you're already mine..."

Anna's eyes blazed with fury as she felt the Bloodmancer's tongue against her skin. And the next second, a powerful shockwave unleashed out of her that sent Molina stumbling back.

Irina and Verina seized the opportunity to turn into Yamauba forms and attack the cultist. Molina tried to dodge the attack, only to stumble into Anna's path.

Molina then tried controlling the blood within her opponents to knock them out. But somehow, she couldn't do it. Even when she tried summoning blood tendrils to protect her, she failed. It was like her powers had been sealed away after she got hit by the shockwave.

Without her powers, it wasn't difficult for the three of them to get rid of the mighty Archbishop.

Soon, Molina was on the ground, panting and defeated. Irina and Verina stood over her. Their demonic forms slowly faded as they regained their composure. However, Anna needed answers more than anything else.

"Why were you after me," she yelled at Molina before slapping her. "what do you know about the Whisperer's medallion?"

Molina's lips curled into a sinister grin, and she remained defiant despite her defeat. "I may be captured, but you'll get nothing from me. The Cardinal's plans are already in motion, and you can do nothing to stop it."

"Well, well, ladies. I must say, this catfight of yours was quite entertaining." Ashton's voice broke the tense silence as he casually strolled into the alley.

Anna shot him a withering glare, her irritation evident. "Ashton, this is hardly the time for your humour."

"Hey, hey, I come in peace!" Ashton raised his hands as if surrendering to the girls. "But in all seriousness, can I do anything to assist you?"

Anna and the twins exchanged quick glances, silently communicating their decision. Finally, Anna nodded.

"You can take the lead in interrogating her. Maybe she'll be more inclined to talk if it's you."

Molina, still restrained by the twins, sneered at Ashton. "You won't get anything out of me, no matter what you do."

"We'll see about that," Ashton said as he approached Molina calmly.

He then gestured for the girls to step back. As soon as the girls released Molina, Ashton pointed his palm towards Molina, and her body drifted towards him like iron to a magnet.

"I... won't talk... no matter what you do!" Molina shrieked as she struggled in Ashton's grasp.

"Who said anything about talking?" Ashton smirked, and before Molina could process what was happening, he sunk his canines into her neck.

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The blood from Molina's neck flowed into Ashton's mouth as he sank his fangs into her flesh. Her struggles grew weaker with each passing moment, and her eyes filled with terror as Ashton delved deep into her memories even before she could scramble them.

With Molina's memories now imprinted in his mind, Ashton withdrew his fangs from her neck, his eyes reflecting the crimson hue of his vampire genes. Weakened and defeated, Molina slumped to the ground, her breaths shallow and ragged.

"You... how did you-"

Molina was in the middle of saying something, but Ashton wasn't in the mood to listen to her nonsense and with a swift kick, he decapitated the Archbishop right then and there.

The girls were shocked to see him react like that, but so was Ashton. He had merely wanted to knock her out but instead popped her head off her shoulders.

"I guess... I'm not entirely used to my strength yet," Ashton said with a guilty expression.

However, Anna knew it wasn't the time to fool around. If the Cult got their hands on the medallion, only god knew what they'd do. As she said all that to Ashton, he calmed her down.

"Yes, the cultists are ahead of us in this regard, but that's because we're looking for the medallion in the wrong place!" he said.

"What?" the twins exclaimed.

Ashton raised his finger, gesturing for them to stay silent. Anna, Irina, and Verina watched silently; their expressions showed their concern. Ashton's voice broke the silence as he relayed what he had learned.

"The medallion we seek is hidden within the city of the First Seatholder," Ashton explained. "But we are not in that city. We're in a different one."

"Fuck!" Anna cursed loudly as soon as Ashton mentioned the First seat.

The history between the First Seat and Ashton wasn't good. Mainly because he rescued the guy who almost kidnapped and sold Anna to the Cultist when they first visited Euphoria.

The twins only remembered the details after watching Anna react to the news.

"Out of everywhere, why did it have to be him!" Anna cursed yet again.

Ashton silently watched as he wondered the same thing. If he were to step foot inside the First's territory, he wouldn't sit idly and engage Ashton, which the latter didn't want.

Not because Ashton was worried he would be weaker than him but because he didn't want to waste his time on a farce. Considering the time it would take to defeat the First, the Cult might as well fly off the planet with the medallion.

But that was only part of Ashton's discovery.

"But there has to be a reason for Molina or whatever to be here, right?" Verina asked Ashton, who nodded.



"There is. While the medallion might not be here, this city is hiding something else," Ashton replied. "There's a tomb of a precursor beneath this place, and Molina believed it contains some artefacts that could help the Cult take on powerful galactic civilisations all by itself."

"Is that even possible?" Irina was sceptical, but Ashton knew it was more than possible.

As his father's memory told him, Euphoria was supposed to be the 'Earth' and a place where humans would thrive. That said, it was also the place where most of the Precursors spent the last of their days.

As such, it wouldn't be weird if there were more than a few tombs of Precursors on the planet. However, there was something else Ashton was wondering about.

Since his father spent some time on Euphoria, it could be possible that the 'tomb' might be something other than a literal tomb. For all they knew, the Cult might have misinterpreted the information and called the place a tomb. Either way, there was only one way to find that out.

Just then, the rest of the team arrived there, followed by someone flanked by two mean-looking guards.

"What's going on here?" Vulcan inquired, to which Ashton pointed towards the Cultist. "These pesky bastards are everywhere!"

Vimur, on the other hand, couldn't hold it in and blabbered on, "You won't believe me-"

"The medallion isn't here." Verina interrupted, but Vimur paid no attention to her and continued.

"Yes! The medallion- wait, how did you know?" he said after his brain processed Verina's words. Verina shrugged and pointed at Molina's corpse.

"Right, so what do we do now?" ignoring the chaos, Laihud asked Ashton.

"You guys take the ship, leave for the First's city, and retrieve the medallion," Ashton replied.  
"Meanwhile, the girls and I will see if we can find something here or check if other Cultists are lurking about."

Hearing Ashton's words, the city's Mayor, flanked by his guards, stepped forward.

"I believe I can help you reach the First's city faster than any ship can," he said. "We have a hidden portal network that will expedite your journey."

"Thank you, it would mean a lot to us!" Ashton expressed his gratitude to the Mayor for his cooperation, to which he waved his hand dismissively.

"Had it not been for Mr Flintmace and all of you, our city would already be wiped out. This is the least I can do to pay you back."

With their plan in place, Flintmace's group departed for the portal network, guided by the Mayor himself. While Ashton and the girls got busy searching for the 'tomb'.

Ashton felt a certain tug as they went about the city as if an invisible force was pulling him. He tried ignoring it, but the subtle pull soon got his attention.

"Ashton, where are you going?" Anna called out, and Ashton just gestured for them to follow him.

As they ventured deeper into the city, the air around them grew colder. They were about to exit the town when Ashton felt the 'pull' change direction as if pointing him towards the ground.

Ashton didn't know what to do next, but on instinct, he unleashed some of his Precursor aura, and a massive cloud of dust kicked up from the ground. When the cloud dissipated, an enormous door was waiting in front of him.

"This is it... I guess?" Ashton mumbled.

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Having found the tomb, they stepped inside, their footsteps echoing in the silence. The walls were adorned with ancient symbols and glyphs, and the air was thick with an unnatural presence... It almost felt like someone or something was watching them.

As they ventured deeper, the darkness intensified, and the temperature dropped even further. So much so that even Anna, a pyromancer, couldn't maintain her body temperature.

In Ashton and the twins' case, they simply depended on their vampiric and undead genes to mitigate the cold. As such, Ashton took off his armoured jacket, wrapping it around Anna's shoulders.

"I don't like this place," Anna shivered. "It reeks of power, but it's not a welcoming power. It's like something is telling us to stay away."

"Be as it may, we don't have an option," Ashton reminded them. "The medallion might be one thing, but the tomb itself could hide unimaginable secrets."

"Oh, come on, this tomb must have existed for thousands of years," Irina shrugged. "If nothing happened till now, nothing should happen in the future either-"

"Your flawed logic is why humans didn't prepare for what happened in Egypt in 2780," Ashton stated. "Who could have imagined a swarm of never before seen insects would just burst out of hibernation and spread a disease that took more than a billion lives."

As Ashton said those words, it even shocked him. Not because he was unaware of the disaster that had struck humanity before the mutants but because he remembered the event in such detail as if he had lived through it all.

Even Anna was surprised because they were rarely taught about human-related things in school or otherwise. But since Ashton was born and lived as a human for most of his life, she chalked it up to the humans, sharing their knowledge to keep it alive.

However, the truth was much different. Ashton didn't know this, but the moment he stepped inside the tomb, the tomb began analysing him, interacting with his brain.

It was also the reason why Astaroth had gone silent. The tomb was suppressing his presence while it scanned Ashton's brain to know who the intruder was and what action the burial ground should take.

During the scanning process, memories that had been forgotten or thrown in some corner of Ashton's mind, reappeared. The same thing happened with the girls, but the tomb found Ashton's lineage more interesting than the rest and focused on him instead.

"Forget what I said and stay close," Ashton mumbled, shaking his head as he sensed something was off. "We don't know what we might encounter."

They soon came upon a grand chamber protected by a massive stone gate adorned with intricate patterns and guarded by two imposing statues.

The statues depicted giants, each wielding a pair of dual-bladed weapons. Their stony eyes seemed to follow them as they entered the room, but the figures remained stationary.

"Be careful... there's something off with these statues."

Following Ashton's warning, the group unveiled their weapons, ready to fight if necessary. Once they were prepared, they headed towards the massive doors blocking their path ahead.

Without warning, the statues sprang to life, their massive stone bodies moving before them, stopping their advance. Ashton and the girls braced for an attack, but instead, the statues bowed before Ashton, their movements regal and respectful, akin to the reverence his summons had for him.

"Ma'lai," one of the statues rumbled, its voice deep and calming.

Although none of them had ever heard the term \*Ma'lai\*, Ashton had no trouble understanding that the statues were welcoming them, or him in particular.

'Since they are welcoming me... I should step forward, right?'

As Ashton stepped closer to the gate, the statues gracefully moved aside, allowing him to pass. However, when Anna and the twins tried to follow, the figures blocked their way, their expressions tenacious.

"Wait! What's going on?" Anna demanded, frustration lacing her voice.

Ashton looked at the statues and knew their welcome was extended only to him, not the girls. That said, he was a stubborn bastard and wouldn't let some statues stop his teammates.

He summoned his loyal summons, who were stronger than ever thanks to his ascension. They appeared all around them, inside and outside the gate, ready to face the statues.

However, before they could make a move on the statues, a voice echoed inside Ashton's mind, clear and commanding.

"Fear not, Son of Jo'Han," the feminine voice echoed. "Your companions will be safe outside the sacred temple. Please, continue down the path, and you shall know all you've been wanting to..."

"Who are you?" Ashton asked, but there was no reply.

The lack of response made him feel like he had no choice in the matter. He glanced back at the gate, where Anna, Irina, and Verina watched him.

"We'll be fine," Anna called out. "We have the summons protecting us, so just do what you must, and we'll wait here for your return. Just be careful in there."

With a reluctant nod, Ashton turned away from his friends and stepped into the tomb's depth or, as the voice called it, the sacred temple. The statues closed the gate behind him with a heavy thud, leaving him in eerie silence.

The passage ahead led to a vast chamber illuminated by an ethereal, bluish glow emanating from intricate patterns etched into the walls.

At the centre of the room, atop a raised platform, stood a colossal statue of a figure that resembled Ashton, albeit in regal attire and with an air of authority.

Ashton didn't take long to recognise his father's face, at least the one he saw in his dreamlike state when he killed his morphed form. It made sense why Ashton was pulled towards the tomb, temple, or whatever... it was related to his father.

"Is this it?"

He reached out to touch the statue, and as his fingers made contact, a surge of energy coursed through him. Visions flashed before his eyes—memories of a time long past, of a people forgotten by history.

The feminine voice reappeared, but this time, it was followed by the silhouette of a woman. She wore similar attire to that of his father.

"Ma'lai, you have returned to us..." she mumbled, kneeling before Ashton. "As per the final request of Lord Jo'Han, the guardians are now yours to command."

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"Take the reigns and let them fulfil their oath," the lady smiled, and only then did Ashton realise the lady was nothing but a hologram.

"A recorded message? Is that it?" Ashton quizzed, but to his surprise, the holograph responded to his words.

"Not a hologram, but a memory," she said, getting back to her feet.



Even though that's all she said, Ashton didn't expect the girl to get all sassy with him.

"I never expected the humans to know about this 'technology' as you call it. So it isn't surprising that you thought I was merely a recorded message."

Ashton felt a bit awkward at that moment. He already had an encounter with his father's memories, and he was 'technically' alive then. If that wasn't enough, he had Astaroth living inside his head, which was possible even for the Xyrans to do themselves.

So yeah, he shouldn't have been surprised if the Precursors had some other technology that could imprint their persona to be used later, just like the lady in front.

"My apologies, miss...?"

"So Jo'Han didn't tell you anything about me, huh?" the lady crossed her arms before rolling her eyes. "Why am I even surprised... anyways, you can call me your stepmother or something. Before you ask, yes, I was once your father's wife."

Ashton's eyes widened in shock. He shouldn't have been surprised, considering the Precursors lived for hundreds of thousands of years, but still, it was news to him.

'To be honest, it should have been obvious,' Ashton shook his head before smiling.

"You're calmer than I thought you would be," the lady chuckled before shaking her head. "Either way, the name's Is'kai, and I'm here to give you your inheritance before I disappear for good. So let's not waste time, shall we?"

With that, Is'kai clapped twice, and the room they were standing in underwent unprecedented changes. The old and forgotten historical site changed to resemble a laboratory like no other Ashton had seen before.

He had seen many laboratories, whether on Earth, the Tower or Orion Prime, yet the one before him was more advanced than them all, even though it was probably millions of years old.

While Ashton was looking around the lab, several humanoid-shaped containers appeared before him. Each of them had a mark etched before them. Once again, it was in a language Ashton had never heard or read, yet he understood that the symbols represented numbers or codes.

"It'll take a while for them to activate, so why don't I give you the rest of your stuff? Now then, where is the key..." Is'kai said as she glided around the room. "This mess of a room... I kept telling him to arrange everything properly, but he never listened!"

"Well, from what I remember, Dad was always making a mess of his labs, even on Earth," Ashton mumbled, and he decided to lend Is'kai a hand. "Other than that... I don't remember much about him."

Is'kai stopped what she was doing and looked at Ashton with sympathetic eyes. Even though it was his destiny, she knew they were unfairly taking his youth away from him by wasting it on a matter that shouldn't have concerned him.

As she stared at him, Is'kai realised Ashton shouldn't have been over 20 years old, a life equivalent to that of cosmic dust, yet the entire galaxy's weight would soon rest on his shoulders.

At that moment, Is'kai wanted to tell him more about the prophecy and even warn him. But she knew she couldn't, as it could change the path of reclamation and make Jo'Han's efforts go to waste.

'Jo must have already said something about his future. But knowing him, it should be just a hint, nothing more.' Is'kai thought to herself. 'Should I be more direct... no, I can't mess up the future again. Handing him the guardians is more than enough.'

"So, what kind of guy was he?" Ashton's voice broke Is'kai's train of thought.

"Um... what? I didn't hear you."

"My father, how was he before, you know, before leaving to earth and what and the Xyran's betrayal."

"Xyrans? Why would they-" Is'kai immediately bit her tongue as she almost revealed something she shouldn't have.

"Is something wrong?" Ashton immediately picked up on Is'kai's hesitation. However, Is'kai immediately covered it up.

"No matter how complete I seem, I'm just a remnant of a fragmented memory," she said. "There are things I don't remember and a few that I remember but don't know if they're true. But, I can tell you what I know for sure-

As she was about to tell Ashton more about the Precursors, the capsules opened with a loud hissing sound. The shells fell apart, and Ashton saw the 'Guardians' for the first time. He was completely mesmerised.

"Are these-?"

"Automatons," Is'kai replied. "Each has enough strength to take on a Type-2 civilisation alone. Remember, we were a type-5 civilisation, so this isn't much for us. However, a group of these should be enough to handle anything or anyone who would threaten you."

Doubts immediately crept into Ashton's mind. Not because he didn't believe Is'kai but because he had a hard time believing that despite having such technology, the Precursors were essentially wiped out.

Thankfully, Is'kai knew what was happening inside Ashton's head and immediately quelled her queries.

"I'm sure you already know this, but Precursors didn't go down because we were weak. It was quite the opposite," she said. "There's a reason why we had a pact of non-violence. Whether you believe me or not, the reason is quite hilarious."

She continued, "We were scared that if we let go of ourselves, we might get addicted to using our strength and lose our way. We were afraid that we might end up destroying the entire universe.

That's why the council decided that our time was up, and it was the time for our children to take their rightful place."

"What? So you died because-" Ashton shook his head. "I can't even wrap my head around that reasoning. But if that was the reason, then why do all this? What's the meaning behind anything!?"

"I'm afraid... you'll have to figure it out yourself," Is'kai mumbled, smiling wanly.

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Deep within the labyrinthine caves under the First's city, the echoes of spells colliding and the clash of weapons against shields filled the air.

Vulcan, Flintmace, Laihud, and Vimur were locked in a fierce battle against the relentless Cultists who had gathered there to steal the mysterious medallion.

However, despite their fierce battle, no one above the ground seemed to notice their presence. It seemed like the cavern walls were absorbing the sounds, creating an eerie, stifling atmosphere.

The Cultists weren't anything extraordinary in terms of strength, but there were just too many of them in that space. It was clear that they weren't there to defeat the enemy but to delay their advance and buy time for the others to locate the medallion.

No one knew their reasons for seeking the medallion, but one thing was clear—they would stop at nothing to seize its power.

"Remind me why can't I just blow them up!" Vulcan roared at the top of his lungs as more Cultists poured out of a crevix.

"Because we don't want to blow up the city above!" Flintmace roared as he slashed yet another Cultist.

"It's a shame, but at this pace, we can forget about taking the medallion," Vimur shook his head before smashing a cultist's head with his shield.

"Wait... do you sense that?" Vulcan mumbled, and he turned around.

"Yes, I do!" Amidst the swirling swords, Flintmace, always vigilant, sensed an unsettling presence.

These Cultists were not acting alone. The ground beneath them trembled, and a deafening roar reverberated through the cave, shaking the walls.

If the Cultists managed to sandwich them inside the cave, it wouldn't be good for them, no matter how strong they were. However, the reality of the situation wasn't as grim as he thought.

Out of the shadows, creatures resembling massive tigers emerged, their silver fur shimmering in the dim light. Their eyes glowed with an unnatural shine.

"Tigorans!" Flintmace smiled.

Tigorans were the pet of choice for the fiercest Xyrans as they complimented their strength and were known as a sign of nobility.

Flintmace wasn't smiling because of his history with the creatures but because he knew only one guy on Euphoria could have tamed the beasts.

As the Tigorans charged into the fray, it became evident that these were not ordinary beasts. They were the personal guardians of the First Seatholder—a rare sight, as the First seldom ventured beyond the confines of his comfort.

"Tigorans? That's the first time I've heard about them?" Vimur mumbled as he saw the creatures in action.

Flintmace's sharp eyes traced the movement of the beasts. He knew these creatures well, having crossed paths with the First Seatholder during their Xyran days.

The First's Tigorans were renowned for their ferocity and loyalty and stood as a formidable force under the Xyran's command.

"I did not expect to see you here," Flintmace mumbled as the First appeared before him.

The First Seatholder, a stoic figure in his imposing modified Xyran armour, observed the skirmish without a hint of emotion. When Flintmace turned to acknowledge him, the First merely nodded, acknowledging the presence of his former comrade.

However, when the First's gaze landed upon Vulcan, his expression darkened. Memories of a bitter past resurfaced—a time when the Xyran waged war against the Precursors, and the Dwarves had defended the latter.

Back then, Vulcan had been a relentless force on the battlefield, responsible for decimating a significant portion of the First's squad. The animosity between them was palpable, a tension that hung heavily in the cave's damp air.

Flintmace was half expecting the First to order his Tigorans to attack Vulcan, knowing the history between the two. However, the First didn't do it, choosing the path of indifference instead.

In his cold, measured voice, the First Seatholder addressed the intruders, "What brings you to my territory?"

Flintmace stepped forward, his posture respectful yet resolute. He explained their mission—the medallion, the Cultists, and their mission to prevent the artefact from falling into the wrong hands.

But Flintmace didn't forget to emphasise that they were here as allies, striving to protect the Euphoria from a potentially catastrophic threat of the Cultists.



The First rolled his eyes, pointing at the countless corpses his Tigorans had laid before him. It was as if the First was mocking them and their 'catastrophic threat'. But Besides that, he stayed silent and listened to what Flintmace had to say.

When Flintmace concluded his explanation, the First nodded once more. "Very well. I get it, but first step outside the cave, all of you."

As they complied with his command. However, as soon as they stepped out of the cave, the guards restrained them, their grip firm and unyielding.

"What are you doing!?" Flintmace, always the diplomat, attempted to reason with the First to convince him they were allies in this crucial time. "I told you, we're the good guys here! It's the Cult you want to-"

"I don't care what you have to say, traitor," The First scoffed. "I can make my own decisions here."

At that moment, Flintmace remembered what Ashton had informed them about the First's possible allegiance to the Cult. But that shouldn't have been the case, as he had slaughtered some cultists moments ago.

'Was it a mere show?' Flintmace thought before requesting the First to let go of his team.

Yet, the First Seatholder remained resolute, unwilling to yield. That was until a distant, ominous whirring sound filled the cavern, growing louder with each passing moment. The Xyran leader turned his gaze skyward, his eyes widening in recognition and astonishment.

"How could this be..." The First and Flintmace both had their eyes and mouths left open as they recognised the new entrants.

However, none of them were as shocked as Vulcan, who couldn't believe his eyes. No one had ever seen the dwarf tear up, but upon seeing the creation of his forefathers, even Vulcan couldn't hold back his tears.

Descending from the sky were several formidable automatons, their metallic forms gleaming menacingly in the dim light. Accompanying this mechanical army was a figure encased in an advanced battlesuit.

It was someone they all knew, and yet he felt like a stranger to them. The boy no longer had the slightest look of naivety and had become an imposing presence that exuded authority and power.

It was none other than Ashton... dressed in his father's jet-black battlesuit.

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The ground shook from the weight of Ashton's armour once he landed, but nobody paid attention to the ground as they were too focused on the armour he wore.

The Precursor battlesuit was the peak of dwarven engineering, a fusion of ancient power and cutting-edge technology. Nothing like those armours was ever created again, and even if Vulcan tried, he knew he would fail to make a battlesuit half as decent as the original one.

Ashton's sudden arrival had left the First Seatholder, Flintmace, Vulcan, and the surrounding guards spellbound. For a moment, they forgot what they were discussing before as Ashton's presence completely overwhelmed them.

Before they knew it, they were surrounded by the guardians created by the Precursors and bound to Ashton by lineage. Just one of them was enough to take on half a dozen S-grade beings.

But since the First was the only S-grader on his side, the guards found it wise to stand down before their master did something that would put their lives at risk.

Meanwhile, the First Seatholder, renowned for his unshakable composure, momentarily faltered before the sight unfolding before him. Just the presence of the Guardians was enough to give him PTSD.

After all, what little resistance the Xyrans had faced from the Precursors' side during the war came from the Dwarves and the Guardians. But the dwarves were only responsible for wiping out 10% of the Xyran soldiers, while the guardians wiped out 70%.

If the Precursors had not stopped the Guardians, there would have been no Xyran left in the galaxy. This part often gave the First nightmares. He also wondered why the Precursors let the Xyrans win the war when they had victory in the bag.

Regardless of what the First thought, he was content with not having the misfortune to meet the Guardians again. Yet there he was, surrounded by the automatons that almost wiped out the Xyran populous.

Flintmace was having a similar reaction after seeing Ashton in a Precursor battlesuit. He was no stranger to the Xyrans' might, advanced technology, and formidable powers.

Yet, they had never succeeded in unlocking the immeasurable potential concealed within the Precursor armour. It was widely believed that only a true Precursor could don the formidable armour without being consumed by its overwhelming might.

It was a fact that the Xyrans had learned the hard way by sacrificing countless souls. In the end, they decided to destroy the armour as it was of no use to them, and they were afraid that some other species, in other words, humans, might unlock the battlesuit's true potential and use them for revenge.

'How the turn tables...!' Flintmace smiled wanly as he realised their predictions had turned true.

After all, Ashton was a 'human' who was deadset on destroying the Xyrans, and now he also had the armour to help him achieve his goal.

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Ashton's appearance in the Precursor battlesuit had tilted the balance of power within the city, leaving even the battle-hardened warriors in awe.

Amid Ashton's stunning arrival, no one had noticed Anna and the twins as they landed behind Ashton and the Automatons. Everyone was quiet there, as if speaking up was a sin.

However, when Anna saw Flintmace, Vulcan and the rest in restraints, she couldn't hold back and yelled at the First.

"The hell you think you're doing?" She questioned him. "Explain yourself! Why are they in restraints, and where are the cultists?"

"Isn't it obvious?" Irina scoffed. "The fucker must be a cultist himself. Let's not waste time on him and look for the Medallion."

"Before that, we should free them-" Verina said but trailed off. "These cuffs... they are grav-cuffs. Once locked, it's impossible to open them without the key."

At that moment, Ashton, who had been eerily quiet after learning more about the Precursors from Is'kai, turned to face his masters before doing something that shocked everyone.

With a mere snap of his fingers, he shattered the unbreakable restraints that had confined his companions. The indomitable cuffs, designed to immobilise even the most formidable beings, couldn't last against a Precursor's aura.

The crowd gasped, but they got quiet as soon as Ashton looked at them. No one wanted to cross him with the strength that he possessed.

"The fuck you think you are?"

The First Seatholder, his patience dwindling, raised his hand against Ashton. Even if Ashton was a precursor, the First had an image to maintain, and he could no longer let someone like Ashton make fun of him.

However, his intentions were swiftly thwarted as Ashton raised an imperious hand, cautioning him to maintain silence. The gesture was powered by Precursor's aura, forcing the First to stand down or face the consequences.

"Stay quiet... I'm not in the mood to play with ants." Ashton warned the First before recalling his aura.

The ominous undertone of the warning left no room for doubt—

Ashton was prepared to take action if necessary. After that, Ashton turned towards his automatons, issuing a stern command to them.

They were to incapacitate anyone attempting to enter the cave without his permission. Obeying his command, the automatons formed a barrier that discouraged any from following their master.

However, it looked like the First didn't get the memo, as he made one final, ill-fated attempt to defy Ashton's instructions. Believing that as the first seat holder, he had more authority than Ashton, he charged at him.

"Thank you for giving me a reason to do this," Ashton smirked before hitting the First with the sheer force of a backhand.

The First Seatholder tried to block the attack but was sent hurtling through the air, followed by a resounding crash as he collided with a nearby structure.

Despite the First's valiant effort to defend himself, Ashton's devastating attack had reduced the bones in the Seatholder's forearm to dust, reminding him of the strength possessed by a Xyran.

Everyone was shaken as the once-confident First Seatholder lay sprawled amidst the wreckage, an unprecedented pain coursing through his body.

"Anyone else wants to prove they're braindead? If so, you're welcome to come at me!" Ashton announced before walking inside the cave.

Chapter 677 Unwanted Meeting (1)

As Ashton traversed inside the cave system, Is'kai's parting words echoed in his ears.

"Watch your back..." Ashton sighed. "The meaning is straightforward: someone will betray me, but who?"

As he thought about it, Ashton realised his father had told him something along the same lines by telling him not to trust anyone. Besides that, Astaroth's silence was awkward.

After all, he had a habit of talking shit and making fun of him in these situations. But ever since Ashton stepped inside the tomb or laboratory, whatever it was, the resident Xyran had been super quiet.

So much so that Ashton wondered if Astaroth was the one his father and Is'kai were trying to warn him about. After all, he was the closest to him in a sense. Hence, betrayal from him would be the most unexpected.

"Besides, we live in the same body; harming me would also kill him..." Ashton tried to shake the thought out of his head but couldn't. "Until it doesn't. He tried to take over my body once and could do it again."

Initially, Ashton had managed to throw Astaroth into a corner in his brain with his willpower. But since then, they had come to an agreement, and hence, there hadn't been any reason for Ashton to lock Astaroth out of his 'mind'.

Ashton was confident in his ability to push back Astaroth if the need arose. But he was sure the need would never come in the first place. At least, he hoped so.

But his fate wasn't the only thing he got to know from the meeting with Is'kai. Once Ashton was all suited up in his father's relic of a battlesuit, Is'kai dropped another bomb on him, stating that he wasn't the last surviving Precursor as she had imagined.

Although she did not tell him about the other precursors wandering the galaxy, she warned him not to reveal his identity to any of them.

Is'kai also told him that giving up on their lives to stop the war wasn't a unanimous decision made by the Precursor council. A relatively small group was deadset on destroying the Xyrans for their 'crimes'.



Seeing no other way, Jo'Han, Ashton's father and then-council leader, trapped those who weren't in favour of the decision in an 'Infinite' prison with the help of the guardians.

Is'kai explained the concept of 'Infinite' prison in detail, but the gist was that it was a parallel plane to reality, where time wasn't a construct. In other words, it was like a black hole where time didn't exist.

Since time was also something a select few Precursors had control over, Jo'Han decided to imprison the rebels in a timeless space as he was afraid someone might reverse the time and wreak havoc in the universe.

While Ashton wanted to know about the location of these 'prisons', Is'kai said they could be anywhere as the system Jo'Han had set up to execute those commands had been destroyed during the Xyran invasion.

"For someone who the Xyrans killed, she was being too protective over them," Ashton mumbled as she came across the spot where his masters Vimur and Laihud were stuck. "I can feel like she wanted to tell me more about the Xyrans, but for some reason, she couldn't."

That was why Ashton wanted to chat with Astaroth, but it felt like that fucker had gone into hibernation or something.

"Mah, whatever, I'll think about it later..." Ashton sighed as he crossed an area littered with cultist corpses. "First, gotta deal with the problem at hand and get that Medallion before the cultists- what are these? Claw marks?"

He knelt to get a better look at the marks, but the inbuilt AI of his suit was much more proficient in recognising the patterns than he was, and it identified the claw marks as belonging to creatures known as 'Tigorans.'

Before Ashton could even ask what these so-called Tigorans were, the stillness of the cave was interrupted. Penetrating the cave's darkness, the Tigorans appeared—six of them.

The majestic-looking creatures reminded Ashton of the tigers his mother used to talk about. However, as the Tigorans locked their feral gaze on Ashton, the feeling of nostalgia faded.

One creature, eager to display its ferocity, lunged at Ashton. The creature's attack was backed by its primal urge to kill the prey before itself.

As the creature got closer, Ashton recoiled his fist. His muscles bulged, and his armour quickly adjusted to strengthen Ashton's attack. As the Tigoran got closer, Ashton unleashed a punch that shook the cave in its entirety.

As for the Tigoran, its splattered blood and mangled bones were the only things left behind on the cave's wall.

"Never mind," he mused aloud, addressing the AI within his armour. "I found the kitties."

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In the depths of the cave system, a group of hooded cultists gathered around a massive, ancient door carved into the rugged rock. The door was the final obstruction standing between them and the Medallion.

The only problem was, no matter what trick they tried, the door didn't even budge. At one time, they contemplated blowing open the door but quickly realised that doing so might lead to a roof collapse, trapping them inside the cave forever.

The Archbishop, distinguished by his ornate attire and a brooding aura, stood behind a group of engineers tasked with opening the door.

The engineers were hunched over in front of the door, trying various methods from arcane to scientific to open the doors, but were failing time and time again.

As the Archbishop was about to reprimand them again, something took his attention away from the engineers. The roof and the ground trembled beneath their feet, and the torches lining the cave walls flickered wildly as if an earthquake was approaching.

But it was soon apparent that the violent shaking wasn't the result of an earthquake but man-made chaos.

"Hurry, decipher the incantations! Something is amiss; the cave should not be shaking like this!" The Archbishop's eyes widened with alarm as he realised the possibility of Ashton's arrival. "The rest of you, go and check what's happening above!"

Chapter 678 Unwanted Meeting (2)

The cultists rushed to execute the Archbishop's will. However, they had barely taken a step when the ceiling came crashing down on them, killing most while injuring a lucky few who jumped out of harm's way.

Dust and debris blocked their vision, making the Archbishop anxious about the stranger's arrival. He was sure he had fooled the first seatholder and doubted he knew about their arrival. Therefore, the intruder couldn't be him.

"But if it isn't him, then who?" Archbishop mumbled as the cultists rushed to surround him in an attempt to protect him from harm.

However, no sooner did they get into battle formation than an invisible force pulled them apart, slamming them into the cave's walls. Those who could blindly fire their weapons into the cloud of smoke and dust, hoping their bullets would hit the stranger.

But their attempt ended in vain as the bullets didn't even pass through the dust cloud. It looked like the dust cloud was a barrier protecting whoever was inside.

Archbishop's mind raced as he struggled to devise a solution to the strange situation they found themselves in. However, while thinking about a scenario, he sensed something move behind the dust.

He turned to warn his soldiers, but it was too late. Ashton's shadow soldiers charged out of shadow, straight towards the cultists, dragging the duct behind them, and it was then the Archbishop got a close look at the invader.

Ashton was standing there, staring at the Archbishop. His face was marred by the blood of those who wasted their lives trying to stop him from getting to the final chamber of the cave.

While the summons dealt with the cultists, he calmly approached the Archbishop, who subconsciously moved out of Ashton's way.

'What is happening to me?' the Archbishop struggled to get the situation in control, but no matter what, his body didn't move. At first, he thought it must be Ashton's doing, but in reality, his own fear and survival instincts were stopping him from interfering with Ashton.

"Move aside," Ashton calmly spoke to the engineers busy drilling holes into the door, but to no avail.

Fearing for their lives, the engineers immediately moved away. If their famed Archbishop was scared shitless, what could they do other than follow Ashton's command?

Even though they had moved, their eyes were fixed on Ashton as they wondered what he could do to open the doors they couldn't. But to their shock and surprise, Ashton did not have to do anything.

He just placed his hand on the door, and it disappeared as if it never existed in the first place. The cultists were left with their mouths wide open, but the Archbishop finally snapped out of his fear as he knew what was at stake.

He mindlessly charged behind Ashton, hoping to enter the room before Ashton could. However, when he reached the door, the latter grabbed him by the nape and threw him backwards.

The Archbishop went through half a dozen natural pillars spread across the cave before coming to an abrupt halt as someone grabbed him.

"Thank you-"

The Archbishop barely saw his benefactor's face when he realised the one who had thrown him and the one who caught him were the same people.

His eyes frantically darted towards the gate and saw no one there. Even the engineers standing there roughly a moment ago had disappeared. The Archbishop took a deep breath, realising all his men had been dealt with. He was the sole survivor there, but at that moment, surviving was the last thing on his mind.

"Who are you?" he asked Ashton.

"Does it even matter?" Ashton shrugged before slamming the Archbishop's head into the floor.

The force wasn't enough to kill the cultists, but it was enough to make him aware of their difference in strength. Upon impact, the Archbishop's vision turned hazy. Still, he did not lose sight of his objective and removed a needle from his back pocket before stabbing Ashton with it.

The objective was clear: if he couldn't take out the intruder through conventional means, he would do so through cheap tricks.

Unfortunately for him, the potent concoction of poison he tried injecting Ashton didn't penetrate through his new amour. Ashton's <Poison Immunity> would have saved him even if it had.

"This seems useful," Ashton mumbled as he snatched the injection from the cultist's hand before injecting the unfortunate bastard with the same.

The look of horror on the Archbishop's face was enough to shake anyone as his skin turned a dark shade of blue. The man began fidgeting, trying to find the antidote. All the while, Ashton watched him without any expressions on his face.

Ten seconds was all the Archbishop had to inject himself with the antidote. It took him a few seconds, but he finally found the cure and prepared to inject himself.

The Archbishop took another look at Ashton as if he wanted to ensure he wouldn't interfere. But just when he was about to push the needle through his skin, an invisible force seemed to take hold of his hands.

The Archbishop struggled with all his might, trying to inject himself, but he couldn't. He looked up to Ashton, whose eyes kept watching him without a shred of emotion. At that moment, the Archbishop knew it was Ashton's doing.

Having no other way to live, he thought pleading with Ashton would save him. After all, he was the Archbishop of the cult! The information he had would undoubtedly help Ashton in his fight against the cult.

However, Ashton interrupted him before he could speak his mind, shattering his fantasy of life.

"You know nothing that I don't," he said as he squatted down to Archbishop's level. "Maybe I should rephrase my words. There's nothing you can say or do that'll save you now. Not even the gods you want to resurrect can save you now."

With that, Ashton left the Archbishop to live his final moments as he entered the chamber where the Medallion awaited his arrival.

### Chapter 679 Unwanted Meeting (3)

Deep within the labyrinthine recesses of the ancient cave, Ashton's footsteps echoed softly against the stone floor. The air was thick with the scent of time as the old place had been taken over by nature.

Even then, Ashton could hear the faint hum of dormant machinery lying around him. Is'kai had told him about the 'storehouse' or, as she called it, the 'Treasury'.

In fact, the technology stored there was the main reason Ashton was visiting the place, as he had long lost any interest in the Medallion. The tech left behind by the Precursors was more important than a 'key' that was the Medallion.

"It'll take a while to move all this stuff," Ashton mumbled as his eyes scanned the rows upon rows of priceless treasure around him.

Strangely, his presence felt small and insignificant amidst the towering shelves and elaborate machinery that lined the chamber's walls, each one a testament to the technological prowess of the Precursors.



Ashton knew he had stumbled upon something extraordinary—treasures that had remained untouched for millennia. It was a trove of knowledge and power that could potentially reshape the fate of worlds.

For a moment, Ashton marvelled at the endless possibilities that lay before him. The power he could wield... just that thought made Ashton think about ruling the galaxy. But he shook that thought immediately from his head.

The Precursors didn't want to rule the galaxy or the universe, nor should he. After all, Precursors formed humans for them to act as guardians, to protect and guide the civilisations on the path of prosperity.

However, Ashton couldn't deny that the possibility of ruling the galaxy seemed quite lucrative.

"Let's focus on important things first."

With a snap of his fingers, he summoned his skeletal soldiers. Their silent, bony forms materialised at his command. They stood before him, awaiting their master's orders.

Ashton's crimson eyes swept over the collection of ancient machinery and artefacts before instructing the skeletons to get to work.

"Retrieve everything here," Ashton instructed his skeletal legion. "and take it to Earth through the portal I've created."

His skeletal soldiers nodded in eerie unison, their bony fingers grasping the priceless artefacts with care as if understanding their significance.

Without a word, they began transporting the Precursors' technology back to Earth, the glow of Ashton's summoned portal beckoning them like a shimmering gateway to the unknown.

Amidst the preparations for the transfer, Ashton summoned Celeste as he would need someone to explain what the skeletons were doing to his mother.

"Celeste," he addressed the creature, "accompany the skeletons. Explain the situation to my mother. Have her store these items discreetly and stress that no one is to touch or even lay eyes upon them."

Celeste, always trying to score points with Ashton, saluted him with a cheeky wink as she said, "You got it, boss!"

She joined the skeletal procession with a swift leap, ready to deliver Ashton's message and oversee the operation. As the skeletal horde and Celeste worked diligently to transport the treasures, Ashton casually walked deeper inside the cave.

It was then that he felt it—a presence, a consciousness that seemed to linger within the chamber he was approaching. His senses sharpened, and every muscle in his body tensed with vigilance.

"Is'kai said no one else but a precursor can access the chamber... then how is someone else here?" Ashton mumbled as he slowly headed towards the chamber.

As Ashton cautiously opened the door, he saw an astonishing sight. There, amidst the dark, sat a grand and ancient throne—a solemn, ebony monolith that commanded reverence.

But that wasn't all. Upon that imposing seat of power rested a figure, a man, draped in regal attire, similar to that of his father's statue, baring the unmistakable mark of the Precursors.

The man regarded Ashton with a knowing gaze, and his voice reverberated through the chamber like an echo from an era long past.

"Nephew," he began, his tone rich with familiarity and authority, "what took you so long?"

Ashton's brow furrowed with confusion and scepticism. He regarded the man before him with guarded distrust.

"Who are you?" he demanded, refusing to acknowledge any relation to this enigmatic figure.

A wry smile curled upon the man's lips, his eyes shimmering with an otherworldly luminescence. In a gesture, he summoned the power of the Precursors' aura. It enveloped him like a shroud of cosmic energy, undeniable proof of his heritage.

"I am a Precursor, much like yourself," the man declared, his voice resonating with a profound authority that left no room for doubt. "And as your father's brother, I am your uncle."

Ashton's eyes widened with surprise. The revelation was shocking. After all, his father, Jo'Han, had never mentioned a brother, neither did Is'kai.

"You need not acknowledge me, for I know I have been absent from your father's tales," The man on the throne continued, his words rolling with a dark amusement. "You see, I am not someone he would readily speak of. Not after I nearly destroyed the galaxy just to 'preserve' the Precursor bloodline."

A chilling silence hung in the air. Ever since Ashton returned to Euphoria, it had been one revelation after another. So much so that Ashton didn't know what he should believe was right and what wasn't.

"Still don't believe me, huh?" The man leaned forward, his obsidian aura swirling around him. "Your father, Jo'Han, imprisoned me for that reason. He knew he made the right call. But I am here, alive, while Jo'Han has met his demise. So you tell me, who was wrong?"

"Dying makes a man wrong?" Ashton scoffed. "Don't make me laugh."

The man raised an eyebrow, probably because he hadn't expected such a response from Ashton. But he quickly grasped the situation and made a final attempt before doing something that would sever all ties between them.

"Do not follow in your father's footsteps, dear nephew," he said. "Join me, embrace your heritage, and together, we'll be unstoppable."

"I was taught never to trust strangers," Ashton stated, his voice firm and unshaken.

The man's cold and unsettling laughter echoed through the cavern, and his features contorted with malicious glee.

"Strangers, hm... if that's how you see me, then so be it," he said as the confrontation teetered on the brink of violence.

Chapter 680 Final Gift (1)

As Ashton took position to fight his uncle, Kro'Han, the latter couldn't help but shake his head in dismay.

"Like father, like son," he said. "Both all too eager to die by my hands. The only difference is that other Precursors saved your father while you're alone."

"Guess what, uncle? I'm more than enough for the likes of you," Ashton retorted, which made Kro'Han laugh.

"You have your father's confidence, but I can't say that about the skills."

Ashton knew they had talked enough, and it was time to end the words and speak with fists.

The cavern quivered under the explosive force unleashed by the clash of god-like beings. Ashton engulfed himself in Precursor's aura, just like Kro'Han, as he charged towards his uncle.

As their fists met, the ground shook beneath their feet, echoing the fury of their battle. Ashton even managed to push Kro'Han back for a moment, but the latter was only testing his nephew and quickly regained his footing. But Ashton's had more tricks up his sleeve.

Using the Precursor's aura, Ashton catapulted himself towards his target, his body blurring as he closed the distance between him and Kro'Han.

His fists struck out like meteorites, each blow carrying the might of a cosmic storm. Kro'Han might be a more experienced Precursor than Ashton, but the latter had one thing Kro'hhan didn't... his wild imagination, and he was deadset on using everything to get rid of his uncle.

He aimed to overwhelm his adversary from the very beginning with a relentless storm of punches and kicks that threatened to shatter the fabric of reality.

However, to Ashton's surprise, Kro'Han met Ashton's assault with chilling composure. Instead of confronting Ashton head-on, Kro'Han similarly used Precursor's aura to dodge the attack by moving sideways.

"You wield your power like a child with a toy," Kro'Han remarked before hitting Ashton from behind, sending him tumbling out of the room, where Celeste and the skeletons were hard at work.

Seeing their master in danger, they rushed towards Kro'Han, but their attempts were futile. In a wave of his hands, he effortlessly destroyed the skeletons while knocking out Celeste.

"A weak leader with weak followers," Kro'Han shook his head in disappointment. "Just like your father."

"You talk a lot for someone who was locked up for thousands of years," Ashton replied after stopping his summons from intervening anymore.

It was Kro'Han's turn to attack first and strike he did. He performed the same move as Ashton before. But his speed and accuracy were on a different level.

However, unlike his uncle, Ashton didn't dodge the attack. Instead, he created a wall of flames backed by his aura to stop the attack.

Their clash sent shockwaves rippling through the cavern's subsurface depths. The ground fractured and churned beneath them, tremors radiating outward like ripples in a pond.

With their collision deep within the planet, geothermal pressures shifted ominously. Unbeknownst to them, earthquakes struck the entire world. Even though they were controlled, it was enough for the fighting above the surface to stop as everyone rushed to the safety of their spaceships.

"Impressive, but ultimately futile," Kro'Han commented as he used his aura to extinguish the flames. "Where is he-"

He was expecting Ashton to be behind the wall of flames, but he was wrong. Ashton emerged from the ground as soon as the flames were extinguished, sinking his werewolf claws deep within Kro'Han's thighs.

"Argh!" Kro'Han groaned in pain before kicking Ashton away.

Ashton's aura burned fiercely as he landed on his feet. He hoped he would weaken the Precursor using [Aggravate] skill, but his hopes were squashed as Kro'Han's wounds healed instantly.

"You fight with determination, but determination alone won't save you." Kro'Han groaned.

"Tough words for someone who is yet to land a single hit on me," Ashton scoffed. "Maybe your bones got rusted while you were sitting on that throne of yours."

"Interesting, I found something you have that your father didn't..." Kro'Han replied as he charged at Ashton yet again. "That yapping tongue of yours!"

Ashton once again prepared to confront him head-on. He knew that this was a battle of unimaginable consequence, one that held the fate of not only his life but the entire galaxy, as it would be impossible to stop Kro'Han if he succeeded in defeating him.

Kro'Han's strikes landed with the explosive force of supernovas, creating bursts of incandescent light and echoing thunder whenever they came in contact with Ashton's fists.

Kro'Han, however, was not easily bested. With every move, he demonstrated the precise control of a master of martial arts, deflecting Ashton's blows with effortless finesse while retaliating with his own.



The strikes were measured and lethal. Each was a precise strike at the heart of Ashton's defences. Slowly but surely, Kro'Han began pushing Ashton back while maintaining a calm expression.

Ashton, sweat mingling with the radiance of his aura, knew that he was fighting a foe unlike any other he had encountered. Kro'Han possessed an eerie calmness, a cold calculation that seemed to guide his every move.

Their battle delved deeper into the Earth's core, and the planet became a canvas for their cataclysmic encounter.

Earthquakes rumbled through the labyrinth while shockwaves rippled across the surface of Planet Euphoria, causing natural disturbances that left the inhabitants awestruck and terrified.

Despite Ashton's best efforts to defend himself, it became evident that Kro'Han had not yet revealed the full extent of his power. It was then one of Kro'Han's attacks struck true, flinging Ashton towards the planet's surface.

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"Where is he!?" Anna slammed her fists on the control panel in frustration.

They were worried about Ashton when he entered the cave, but they began panicking when they lost contact with Ashton and the next moment, the earthquakes hit them.

Vulcan and Flintmace forced everyone to retreat, including the First, who was now on their side after Flintmace and Vulcan ran him through everything they knew about the Cult.

As soon as they were back on the ship, they began locating Ashton. But they were having difficulty finding him since the Precursor tech buried underground was interfering with their signals.

"Relax! You know how strong he is," Verina tried consoling Anna. "He'll come out any moment now-"

True to Verina's words, Ashton did come out of the cave, but not in the way they were expecting as he ripped through the planet's surface.

"We need to get down there," Flintmace said as Vulcan and the First readily agreed with him.

However, they froze to their spot when they saw someone else flying out of the reverse crater formed by Ashton's ejection.

"Kro'Han...? How is he alive!?"

Vulcan immediately recognised the most hated Precursor from his young days, and the look of fear on his face said everything the rest needed to know. Ashton was in trouble... real trouble and could lose his life at any moment.