

ONE



DAWN OF ADVENTURE



THE SUN SHONE BRIGHTLY UPON THE ELVEN CITY OF ISHALOR, a city still mourning the loss of King Lothgar. But that loss didn't keep the birds from singing their morning songs, nor did it stop the inhabitants from going about their business in the great city. The cobblestone streets glowed in the golden sunlight, as bakers baked their bread, butchers sliced cuts of meat, and the sound of the blacksmith's hammer resonated through the streets. The League of the Sword walked down one of those streets, inhaling the sweet smell of different foods being prepared. Nolthar's stomach grumbled in protest as he hadn't yet eaten breakfast. Alithis giggled at her husband, and it still felt so strange to call him that. After years of hiding her relationship with him, now they were finally married and she didn't have to hide anything, including her pride.

"I better get some breakfast soon, or my stomach is going to leap from my belly and find something on its own," said Nolthar, holding his stomach. Alithis smiled, "Well go get something!"

"But what about you? Aren't you hungry?"

"I have something I have to do before we leave Mael, I'll get something to eat on the ship," she replied.

They stopped walking and Mikael, distracted looking at a particularly beautiful elven woman, ran headlong into Nolthar.

"Oh, sorry Nolthar," he said, blushing.

Alithis glanced at the woman he was staring at and knew then exactly why he had run into Nolthar. She smacked him along his upper arm, "Shame on you! You're married!"

Mikael looked at her and smiled, "Just because I'm married doesn't mean I'm blind! I can look..."

"...but you can't touch," said Alithis with a smirk, poking him in the arm.

Nolthar turned back to Alithis, "What is it you have to do?"

"I need to write my father and tell him who it was that created the plague that killed my mother. He swore to avenge her, and now he can!"

Nolthar just stood and stared at her for a moment then nodded, "Very well, he deserves to know. I only hope he doesn't end up getting into trouble, those orcs in Genu are nothing to mess with! I'll meet you on the Perseverance." She nodded and they kissed, and kept kissing, and kept kissing.

Junalathan stepped up and separated them, "Okay, okay, you guys need to do those long kisses in a less than public setting, please."

Alithis smiled at her, "Oh stop it Junal!"

"What! You guys have been sucking face like crazy, save it for the bed chamber," replied Junalathan.

Markus nodded, "She's right ya know. I'm surprised you guys don't have chapped lips!"

Nolthar and Alithis both laughed, blushing at the same time.

"I have to agree," chimed in Nannal, "I hope when I get married I don't end up like that. Yuck! All that saliva and tongue touching, ugh! Makes me want to vomit!"

Nolthar laughed hysterically, then said to them, "You guys! Alright, alright, we will limit those lengthy kisses to our quality time."

"I thank you," said Nannal, "as does my stomach, and speaking of my stomach?" Everyone else agreed. Nolthar nodded, "Okay, let's go get some food."

Alithis patted Nolthar on the shoulder and walked away, then glancing back at him she yelled, "See you in a little while kissy boy."

He looked after her and felt the happiest he's ever been, then he turned to the others, "Well let's grab some breakfast and head back to the Perseverance!"

In the back of the group Laiva wasn't paying any attention to the banter, she seemed to be off in another world. As they started walking to find some food, Nolthar happened to notice the absent look on her face.

Alithis walked up to the Keep where she had met King Lothgar only a few months ago, she remembered his positive spirit, his support for the unification of the five elven clans. She felt the sting of tears and shook off the urge to cry as she walked into one of the royal courier stations. Inside she found a young boy, no older than seven or eight, who turned and stared at her. She smiled at him and then looked around for an adult, but finding none she turned her gaze

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back to the boy, “Excuse me, but where are the couriers?”

The boy stood, “I am a courier!”

“Surely you cannot be, you’re just a little kid,” she replied.

The boy then walked up to her and stared menacingly at her, “My family have been couriers for seven generations ma’am. Yes, I’m just a kid as you said, but I assure you I can deliver a message just as good as,”

“Chalton!” came a voice behind Alithis. Turning she found the source of that voice, a tall elf with long blonde hair tied up in a pony tail. He shifted his look from the boy to Alithis and smiled, “I apologize, my son wants very badly to follow in his father’s footsteps. My name is Kearnay, do you have a message that needs to be sent?”

Alithis nodded, “Yes, I need to write it first. Do you have parchment and pen?”

Kearnay nodded and as he walked over to a nearby desk, Chalton whined to him, “But father, I wanted to be a courier for her!” He turned toward his son and squatted down to the boy’s level, “Son, I’ve told you that being a courier is very dangerous sometimes, you’re only eight years old, it’s not time yet. You will be a courier one day, and you will make me proud. Now let me help,” he stopped and looked up at Alithis, “I’m sorry what was your name?”

“Alithis Seawhisper,” she replied. Kearnay stood, his eyes never moving from her face, then he bowed, “Princess of the Mistborne Clan, it is an honor to serve you my lady.”

She smiled and patted him on the shoulder, “That’s quite alright, you don’t have to bow.” He returned her smile and walked over to the writing desk and pulled out some parchment, an ink well, and a feather quill pen.

“Here you are, Alithis.”

She walked over to the desk, and dipping the quill into the ink she began writing...

*Dearest father,*

*I’m writing to you before I depart Mael for what awaits us beyond. But before I leave I needed to inform you of something very important. During my time in Genu, I found out who is responsible for mother’s death. She is an orc warlock named Sethi Cras, and she is a member of the orc council that rules over Genu. She is a perfectly beastly creature, so if you choose to uphold your vow of vengeance, please be careful. If she has the power of the plague, she could easily infect you. Again, be very careful.*

*I pray Almithara keeps you safe, and it is my hope we will see one another again, once we have gathered the shards of the sword. I love you so much father, for I couldn't be the woman I am today if it hadn't been for your strict teachings.*

*Your beloved daughter,  
Alithis*

She folded the parchment, sealed it, and handed it to Kearnay, "I need this delivered as quickly as possible to Deso, where my father is camped with our troops," then she looked down at Chalton, "and I have no doubt that one day you could very well be one of the greatest couriers on Mael." He smiled back at her, "Thank you my lady."

Alithis walked from the room, back out into the city and made her way through the cobblestone streets and down to the dock where the *Perseverance* was moored. She walked up the ramp and onto the deck and saw Laiva across from her looking out at the waterfalls of the Stonewater River. Alithis walked over to her.

"Laiva, I thought you were going to," but her words faded away as she noticed tears running down Laiva's face. She reached over and turned Laiva to face her. "Laiva, what's wrong?"

But Laiva just shook her head in silence and walked away, going down below deck. Alithis looked down at the railing of the ship where she had been standing and found it wet with tear drops. But her thoughts were interrupted by the rest of the League returning from breakfast.

Alithis walked over to Nolthar and hugged him, then she whispered into his ear, "I think we have a problem. I found Laiva a moment ago, her face wet with tears. I don't know what the cause is, she wouldn't talk to me."

Nolthar broke the embrace and nodded, "Okay, I'll keep an eye on her. She is probably still mourning Lothgar's death." Alithis nodded.

Nolthar called out loudly for everyone meet in the dining room to discuss where they will go first. The League moved together and surrounded a large table in the dining room. On that table lay Kalethin's map, given to them by the elderly elf they had spoken to only a couple of weeks ago.

"Okay guys, so where do we go first?" asked Nolthar.

Mikael pointed to the red marks on the western side of the continent of Estari, "I believe this should be where we begin. I know of a human colony near this

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mark, it's called McGowan. It lies off a small inlet known as Michael's inlet."

"Wait, isn't your last name McGowan?" asked Junalathan.

Mikael nodded, "Indeed, yes, this colony was founded by my great-great-grandfather, Michael McGowan."

"Michael and Mikael are pretty close to one another, are you named after him?" asked Nannal.

"Actually my birth name was Michael, I chose to go with Mikael," he said, and Nannal opened her mouth to ask another question, but Mikael shook his head, "It's a long story Nannal."

"Okay, so unless there are any objections or anyone has a better idea, we sail for McGowan," replied Nolthar. Everyone nodded in agreement, then they all walked out of the dining room and back on deck. Nolthar walked up the stairs to the wheel deck where Captain Thomas stood talking to his second in command, Commander Ahlgren.

"Captain, please prepare to set sail for the colony of McGowan," said Nolthar, pointing to the position on the map. Captain Thomas nodded, "Ah yes, I've been there. It was a long time ago when I was a crewman on a supply vessel."

Nolthar nodded, "Great! Let's get under way then."

"Aye!" Then the Captain yelled out to his deck master, "Mister Tompson weigh anchor and unfurl the sails, we're getting underway!"

"Weigh anchor! Loose the sails! Get moving! Get moving!" yelled mister Tompson to the crew who sprang to life. The anchor was lifted and the sails untied.

Nolthar walked over to Alithis who looked out at a group of townsfolk who had gathered at the dock, waving farewell to them.

"You doing okay?" he asked her. She nodded, "Yeah, a little anxious maybe, but I'll be okay."

Nolthar hugged her tightly, "Don't worry my love, Almithara is with us."

Alithis nodded and cuddled up close to him as the ship began to creep out into the mouth of the Stonewater River. Then she happened to notice a lone figure standing by the railing at the stern of the ship, it was Laiva, standing where she had been only a short time ago. While everyone else was standing on the port side of the ship watching the great city of Ishalor grow farther and farther away, Laiva stood far from everyone else looking out at the water. Alithis broke free of Nolthar's embrace, "Sorry my love, I need to go see Laiva."

Nolthar glanced to the stern and saw Laiva standing alone, as Alithis walked away from him.

Walking up to Laiva, Alithis reached out to touch her shoulder but was stopped cold by a stern command from Laiva.

“Don’t!”

Alithis looked at Laiva who now turned to face her. Her face was wet and her eyes red rimmed, tears still flowing. She wiped those tears away as she glared at Alithis. Looking at her with compassion, Alithis once again reached out to her, and Laiva immediately slapped her hand away.

“I said don’t! Just leave me alone,” she said, turning away from Alithis and gazing out at the water.

“Laiva, I only want to help,” Alithis replied, “if you’ll let me.”

Laiva spun around, anger striking her features, “Do you not know how to listen? Do you need something to help you to listen? I said,” her voice grew in volume, “leave me alone!” She turned and walked away from Alithis and headed below deck once more, leaving Alithis wondering and concerned.

The ship graduated from the river to the open sea, its sails filled with a steady breeze, sea spray flew up from the bow and the scent of the sea was in the air. Alithis walked over to Nolthar who was speaking to Mikael and Nannal, she interrupted him, “Nolthar, we need to talk.”

Nolthar looked at Alithis with mild irritation, “Now?” She nodded.

“Is this something you can talk about with us?” asked Nannal.

Alithis stared at them for a moment, thinking, then nodded, “Yes, but please keep this between us for now.”

“What is it Alithis?” asked Mikael.

Alithis bit her bottom lip, as she often did when she’s worried or deep in thought, then she whispered to them, “I think something is wrong with Laiva.”

“What leads you to believe that?” asked Mikael.

“She was standing at the stern away from everyone else, and when I approached her she became very agitated and told me to leave her alone.”

“Hmm, I wonder if it has something to do with the death of King Lothgar,” replied Mikael.

Alithis looked at Mikael with a smirk, “Really? I could never have guessed Mikael!”

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Mikael peered at her for a moment, shook his head then walked away.

“Okay Alithis, calm down. He was only trying to help understand what’s going on with her,” replied Nolthar.

“I know. I’ll apologize to him later,” she said, “but I’m concerned that this could impact our mission.”

“Tell you what,” Nolthar reached down and cupped his hands to her cheeks, “let me worry about Laiva and the mission, okay? If she wants help, I know she will seek out one of us.”

“Hopefully not me,” grumbled Nannal.

Alithis looked at her in surprise, and scolded her, “Nannal!”

“What!” replied Nannal, “I don’t need to be dealing with drama. If she wants to be a whimpering little girl, I leave that mess in your capable hands Alithis.” Alithis shook her head in amazement, “I don’t know Nannal, sometimes I just don’t get you!” She turned and walked below deck, leaving Nannal with Nolthar.

Nannal snorted, shaking her head, “What is it with female elves? They’re so emotional!”

Nolthar chuckled, “Hmmm, if my eyes aren’t deceiving me, you’re a female elf Nannal.”

Nannal looked around and whispered to Nolthar, “Because we have battled together and been on this quest together, I am going to trust you with a secret, you must keep it between us.”

Nolthar smirked at her, “Oh yeah? What is this secret of yours?”

Nannal slapped him across the arm, “This is serious!”

“Okay, okay,” he said, rubbing his arm, “I swear to keep it in confidence Nannal. You have my word.”

Nannal leaned over and whispered into Nolthar’s ear, “I do not identify as female.”

“Wait...what!?” whispered Nolthar in surprise, turning to look at her.

“I have a lover back in Elda’dri, her name is Minna.”

“You are Ro’shalla?” whispered Nolthar. Nannal nodded.

“I know, I know,” replied Nannal, seeing the look in Nolthar’s eye, “it’s forbidden, un-natural, against the order of things, etcetera etcetera. Despite what the ancient laws say, it’s not a bad thing Nolthar. I love Minna very much.”

“Look,” replied Nolthar, “I’m not here to judge you or the way you live your life. You are a valued member of this group Nannal, and nothing will change

that. And what you have just told me will change nothing between us, you will always be my dear friend.”

Tears welled up in Nannal’s eyes, and she embraced him, “Thank you Nolthar, that means a lot to me.” She turned and walked below decks, drying her tears so no-one would see them. Then she stopped and looked back at Nolthar, then walked back over to him and in a threatening tone said, “And if you tell anyone I was crying, I’ll beat you senseless!” Nolthar looked at her quietly in surprise as she then turned and went below deck. He shook his head and turned to look out at the sea and muttered, “And you say female elves are emotional? Almithara help us.” He stood at the railing and chuckled for a moment, watching the waves of the Mistborne Sea flow by the ship as it grew ever distant from Mael.



Along the coast of the isle of Hade, the Ashen were assembled upon the beach. A massive army of over five thousand, the orcs and undead looked out at the sea as if waiting for something to happen. But they lacked leadership, following orders given weeks ago by Zog, Warchief of the Ashen after the fall of Silligar. But Zog was nowhere to be found, and the Ashen stood confused and unruly. “What do we’s do when we’s get to Lokarta? Where’s Zog?” asked one of the orcs, and several others nodded and grumbled.

As the Ashen argued and rambled with one another they were silenced as a thunderous sound came from the sky to the north. They turned toward the direction of the sound and see the mighty dragon Sethranar, which flew in and dropped off Graktas. The Ashen looked upon him with shock and amazement as Sethranar flew off and plunged into the volcano. Within moments he erupted from Mount Hade, his decomposed body now whole again, and covered in scales of diamond and stone.

Graktas yelled, “What are you all looking at? I am your Warchief! What are you arguing about?”

One of the larger orcs walked up to Graktas, “I thought you were dead!”

“I was, but our lord Zarenthrix resurrected me, to return here and lead the Ashen to victory, to conquest, to wipe every human, every elf, every dwarf, every living thing, off the face of this world! Now what were you arguing about?”



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The larger orc replied, “Zog hasn’t shown his ugly face for days.” then he pointed toward the smaller orc, “This one asks what we’re going to do when we gets to Lokarta!”

Graktas walked over to the smaller orc, turned and grabbed the axe of another orc nearby.

“So you want to know what we’re going to do eh? This is what we’re going to do!” With a swift stroke of the axe he decapitated the smaller orc’s head, blood gushed from the stump of his neck as his body collapsed to the ground.

“That’s what we’re going to do!!”

The Ashen growled and roared in agreement, and then the one thing they were waiting for appeared. The waters of the sea began to froth and boil upward, and springing from the depths were several ships, covered in seaweed, starfish, and barnacles. There were eleven in all, their wood planks groaning and complaining as they broke the surface and then turned toward the beach. As they reached the shore rope ladders were dropped from the sides of the ships down into the shallow water.

“Now get aboard, and prepare for battle!” yelled Graktas.

Just then Zog, who had been Warchief of the Ashen, ran up to Graktas, “Who are you to command my army?”

“Your army? Your army?! I am taking command of Zarenthrix’s army Zog, from what I’ve heard you have done nothing to lead them, nothing to deserve their loyalty! They’ve been wandering the beach like desultory garbage! You are welcome to be my advisor, but be it known, I am Warchief.”

Just then the echo of Zarenthrix appeared before them both. He glared at Graktas, “So Graktas you chose to disobey my command? I don’t recall proclaiming you Warchief of the Ashen!”

“But my lord, Zog was doing nothing, your army wandered the beach and fought with one another. I decided to take the initiative and command them.” In his heart Graktas was terrified Zarenthrix would strike him down, but he remained resolute and stared firmly at Zarenthrix, and what the god of the underworld did next shocked both Zog and Graktas. He burst out laughing.

Graktas and Zog looked at one another and then back at Zarenthrix, who then responded to Graktas’ words, “So the orc who wanted nothing to do with power that day so long ago, now thirsts for it.” The echo of Zarenthrix then walked toward him and Graktas held his ground despite the fact he was trembling.

“Very well Graktas, you are now Warchief of the orcs and commander of the Ashen. But be careful little orc, that taste of power is sweet at first, but should you fail me, it will taste as bitter as poison,” Zarenthrix leaned down and peered at Graktas eye to eye, “and there will be no second chances for your miserable soul!”

Zarenthrix then turned to Zog, “You will advise him, and if your advice causes him to stumble and fall, then you will answer for it with your life. Now get this army to Lokarta!” And with that the echo of Zarenthrix vanished, leaving Graktas and Zog looking at one another. Zog bowed his head and fell to one knee, “I am yours to command, Warchief.”

“Get these wretches on the ships and set sail for Lokarta! A sea of blood will fill that pathetic city and flow across this land!” Zog nodded and ran off to get the Ashen boarded. Sethranar landed with a thud behind Graktas and purred at him. Hopping upon the back of the dragon, Graktas patted the beast and yelled, “Let us go my friend, there will be a feast of corpses for you to consume when we’re done.” Sethranar raised his head and roared, his scales glowing red hot, then he raised his wings and with mighty flaps he lifted off into the air, flying over the loaded ships of the undead, which now sailed for the human capital.



In the sacred lands of Deso the human and elven army was encamped. Long had they been there, since the wedding of Nolthar and Alithis. But their peaceful accord was withering as the elves wanted to remain in Deso, while the humans wanted to move south to the city of Nefi.

“There are no bounds for staying here, the Ashen has been pushed back to Hade,” argued King Gustav Adlersparre, the Valiant, “we have been cooped up in this place for weeks now. Why are we staying here?”

King Talasith Seawhisper, ruler of the Mistborne Clan, sat in a chair nearby and merely stared at Gustav in silence. Getting up, he paced the floor of the tent, then turned to face Gustav, “Gustav, I understand your restlessness. I feel it myself! We do not know where the Ashen will strike next, and the best thing to do is to remain here and see what our scouts can find.”

“Nefi is vulnerable, no matter how you look at it Talasith, it’s vulnerable! We cannot allow the Ashen access to the portal there, or all of the elven kingdoms will fall!”

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Just then King Gilathes chimed in from the back of the tent, “He has a point Talasith. But at the same time Gustav, so does Talasith. Should the Ashen gain access to the portal, if that is their continued intent, they would appear here in Deso. In that case, the combined power of our two armies would be more than they could handle.”

“That kingdom, that city, is a human city now. It falls under my realm, and I am sworn to protect it! I cannot expect that whimpering fool Guldwaner to do anything but cry like a baby and hide under his desk!” replied Gustav.

But before anyone could respond, a human courier ran into the tent and bowed before Gustav, “Sire, I have news from the southern shore!”

“Report!” replied Gustav.

“Sire, the dragon Sethranar has been resurrected and was seen flying to the isle of Hade! It flew right over our troops on the southern shore.”

“That’s it! I can stay here no longer!” yelled Gustav, “Your elven army can sit here and rot, I am going to defend Nefi and the southern shore!”

With that he stormed from the tent and began barking orders to his men. Within the hour the human army marched south out of Deso. Meanwhile the elven kings gathered to discuss their next steps.

“We should stay here my friends, we need to defend our homeland,” Talasith said in a hushed tone.

“Talasith, pardon me for saying, but you look exhausted. Have you not been resting?” asked Gilathes.

“How can I rest? How can I when I don’t know what Zarenthrix is going to do next? We have scouts everywhere and yet no word on the Ashen.”

King Gelthis brought his fist down on the table in front of them, “Damn it Talasith, we are supposed to be a united army, our people and the humans! How can we just let them go alone? We have to help them! If the dragon is back, and the Ashen attack the southern shore again, they’ll be no match!”

“Has anyone heard from Alessinia?” asked Talasith, trying to avoid an argument.

“She is still in Ishalor, but she sent a message a day ago saying she would be moving south to Deso when we need her. Her army is still here with us.” replied Gelthis, who looked at Talasith with concern, “Talasith my friend, let’s sleep on this and come back to it fresh tomorrow. You need rest. Ask one of the priest healers to give you some star bloom, it will help you sleep.”

Talasith nodded and the three kings adjourned.

The lights of the encampment slowly winked out as the night grew deeper. The crimson moons Umgås and Ninna cast an eery light upon Deso. To the north a lone figure appeared, as if the forest had spat him out. He meandered his way toward the camp and was trying to call for help, but he couldn't get his voice to cooperate. He reached the tents and then finally was able to let forth a loud cry, "Someone help me!" then he collapsed near one of the healer's tents. She lit a lone candle and made her way out to the man, as the light of the candle crept across his face, his ears became illuminated, and she realized he was an elven man. Two warriors who were on watch came over and helped carry the stricken elf into the tent of Halethis Ralothana of the Wood Clan.

"What has happened to you?" she asked as she began examining his body.

"Orcs! I was attacked by orcs!" he replied, tears streaming down his face, not from sorrow or loss, but from the pain.

"What is your name?" she asked.

"Relesith Tarragor."

Halethis continued to examine him and can find no evidence of wound or malady.

"Relesith, I'm going to cut you and get a sample of your blood so I can test it for poisons, just sit still." She grabbed her knife and ran it over the flame of her candle. Then she began making a very small cut in his arm. But blood did not seep from the cut, rather a dark oily liquid oozed from it. It smoked and seethed as it fell onto the ground. Halethis suddenly realized he was undead. But before she could cry out he reached up and snapped her neck with a quick twist of her head. He sat up on the edge of the bed and looked down at the lifeless form of Halethis. Then his mouth began to grow, widening and deepening. He bent down and took Halethis' head into his growing maw and with writhing muscles he slowly swallowed her body whole. His body deformed as it took on the shape of her body within him. Then Halethis' body began to collapse in on itself as it was digested. As his form resumed its original shape and his mouth shrank back down, Relesith got up and walked outside. Standing near the tent was one of the warriors who helped him. He smiled at Relesith, "I knew Halethis was good, but I didn't realize she was that good! How are you feeling?"

Relesith smiled, "A bit tired, but much better."

He walked out into the encampment and saw Talasith standing near the burial

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mound where his wife was buried. He walked over to Talasith with a smile on his face.

“Excuse me,” he said to Talasith, who turned to face the stranger.

“Yes? Can I help you?”

“I wish to introduce myself, I am Relesith Tarragor.”

Talasith looked at the man in shock, “Relesith Tarragor? How can it be?”

“Suffice it to say I have been reborn, and I am here to urge you to break your alliance with the humans. If you do I can grant you what your heart is now desiring.”

Talasith shook his head, “Never, we will never end our alliance! We must stay united against the Ashen and Zarenthrix!”

“I can bring your wife back if you do. Wouldn’t you like to hold her again, to kiss her lips once more, to caress her soft skin?”

“You vile devil!” yelled Talasith who pulled out his sword and attacked Relesith. He slashed Relesith along his abdomen, black blood gushed from the wound, and then it sealed itself. Talasith’s eyes were wide with fear and cried out, “Guards! Guards! To your king!” But his cries were cut short as Relesith grabbed him around the throat and lifted him into the air and his voice changed to that of Zarenthrix.

“You could have had anything you wanted King Talasith Seawhisper! Now you will only know death!”

Several elven warriors and King Gelthis arrived to see Talasith beginning to turn blue. Just before he lost consciousness he was able to say one word to them, “Undead!”

Gelthis charged Relesith and with a swift stroke of his sword he sent Relesith’s head flying onto the ground. The body of Relesith lost its grip of Talasith, who fell to the ground coughing and gasping for air. He got up and walked over to the head of Relesith which looked up at them.

“You will all fall! All on this world will fall to ruin and twilight will ascend upon it.”

Then the head and its body began to decompose at an accelerated rate, its eyes rolled back in its head and dissolved as the flesh dried and withered away leaving the skull, which then crumbled in on itself, turning to ash. Then it and the body vanished into the ground.

“Dear Almithara!” exclaimed Gelthis, “I have never witnessed something so utterly vile and evil.”

Talasith nodded, "Neither have I. But we cannot tarry here any longer, we must leave this place and join the human army to the south."

Gelthis nodded, "I agree. We break camp at first light."



On the largest of the undead ships, the dragon Sethranar rested upon its deck as Graktas and Zog gathered below deck.

"Graktas, I received troubling word from one of our scouts this morning, which is why I wasn't at the beach when you arrived."

"What is this you say? What troubling word did you take delivery of?"

"I have come to learn that the elves have formed a unified group which they call The League of the Sword. They are seeking the shards of Almithara's sword."

Graktas laughed, "They shall never find them."

"They already have my lord," replied Zog.

Graktas got up abruptly sending his chair falling backward to the floor, "What!?"

"Yes, they have gathered the shards that existed here on Mael, and now they are sailing to the east to find the rest."

At that moment the echo of Zarenthrix appeared before them, "What is this I hear?"

Zog repeated the news and Zarenthrix merely stared at him for a moment, then he walked over to Zog and grabbed him, "Do you not think I already know of this pitiful band of elves? They'll never gather them in time. I want you to focus on this western push to Lokarta, not about other things you have no control over! I will deal with this League of the Sword. I will cast them into the deep."

At that, the echo of Zarenthrix vanished.

Out in the open ocean, the H.M.S. Perseverance sailed briskly to the east. In the dining room the League were gathered around a map that belonged to the old elf, Kalethin.

"Now this is where the colony McGowan is. Our people, led by my great-great-grandfather, landed there over one hundred and fifty years ago. It was not a very large colony at that time, just fourteen people."

"Why would fourteen people just sail to this spot and settle it?" asked Nannal.

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“They were explorers, looking for gemstones and things of value,” replied Mikael. Nannal nodded, “Ah I see.”

“Anyway,” Mikael continued, “once we reach the colony we will most likely want to travel south, but we have to be very careful. Down here,” he pointed to the southern continent, “this is Soran, and on this side of the continent it is said there are dozens of troll cities and villages, and from what I have heard they’re not fond of anyone not of troll kind. But sadly, this,” he pointed to a red ‘X’, “is where some of the shards are.”

As they continued to look over the map and plan their journey, down in the underworld Zarenthrix closed his eyes and focused on the ocean. He looked throughout the eastern Mistborne Sea and then he saw it, the Perseverance. He raised his left hand and a storm began to form over the ship.

“What was that?” asked Lenari.

Markus shook his head, “Sounded like thunder.”

“I think,” said Nolthar, but before he could finish his sentence all of them were thrown across the dining room as the ship reeled to one side. They all ran up on deck where the crew were yelling to one another, trying to tie down the sails. Water gushed across the deck as massive waves struck the side of the ship. Nannal ran up to the wheel of the ship and looked out at the raging sea. Then she heard something from behind her and turned in time to see a massive column of water, hundreds of feet high, taking the form of a hand.

“By Almithara!” she whispered to herself, then she turned back and shouted down at Nolthar, “Nolthar! Nolthar! Behind us!”

The League all turned to see the massive wall of water shaped like a hand, pursuing the ship as it struggled through the wind and waves.

“It’s getting closer!” yelled Laiva, who tried to run to the stern of the ship but was thrown to the deck by a wave that crashed across the ship.

“Laiva! Are you alright?” asked Alithis as she ran over to help her.

“I’m fine, get me to the stern Alithis!”

The two women ran up the stairs and to the stern, grabbing hold of railings as more and more waves crashed onto the deck.

Nivari joined them, fending off shards of ice being flung at them, “I’ve got this, you focus on,” then without warning the hand came crashing down toward the ship, but missed it as a wave hit the side of the ship and swerved it to port.

Captain Thomas ran up onto the navigation deck along with his second in command, Commander Ahlgren, and yelled to the wheelman, “Evasive maneuvers mister Torgo!”

“Aye Captain!” replied Torgo, spinning the wheel, sending the ship tilting to the starboard side as it turned, cutting through the waves.

Markus joined Laiva, Nivari, and Alithis on the stern.

“Time to turn that hand into an ice sculpture Laiva!” yelled Markus. Laiva smiled and nodded. The two mages began casting frost spell after frost spell as Nivari struck the shards of ice flying toward them with his sword.

“No! No! Damn you!” yelled Zarenthrix down in the underworld.

The hand slowly began to solidify and within a couple more minutes was frozen solid. Down below them Captain Thomas yelled to his crew, “Ready the port cannons! Hard to port Mister Torgo!” The ship responded and turned hard to the left. Along the side of the mighty ship, small square doors flung open and cannon barrels popped through the openings. Markus and Laiva continued to assault the hand with frost spells. As the ship turned and the cannon had a clear shot, Captain Thomas yelled with all his might, “FIRE!!” Then one of the crew on the cannon deck relayed the order. With a mighty and powerful series of blasts, the cannon fired and struck the hand, shattering it into pieces.

In the underworld Zarenthrix was thrown backward against a far wall and slumped to the ground in a daze. He shook his head and got back up, his rage exploded and his image appeared in the storm clouds above the Perseverance. “Fools!! Do you think your pathetic little ship can withstand my power? I will crush you!! I will...” but the image faded, and Zarenthrix in the underworld fell to the ground exhausted. Lacking any more power to attack the League, he lay there and passed out.

On the Perseverance, the storm clouds above them vanished and the sea became so calm as to appear like glass. The League and the crew cheered their victory over Zarenthrix.

“If that’s all he’s got, we have nothing to worry about!” exclaimed Nannal.

“No child, that’s not all he’s got.” replied Lenari.

On the stern of the ship Laiva and Markus gave one another a hug.

“I’m going to go change into some dry clothes, great job Laiva!” said Markus.



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He and Nivari walked down the stairs, leaving Laiva with Alithis. Looking at Alithis, Laiva's joy turned to sorrow and she began to weep, falling into Alithis' embrace.

"I'm so sorry Alithis! I'm so sorry for the way I treated you." Alithis hugged her tightly, "I have already forgiven you my friend."

Laiva stepped back and looked at her, "I can't talk about it yet, but when the time comes I will seek you out." Alithis nodded, "I understand, and I want you to always remember I am here for you, as are we all."

The two elves hugged and Laiva walked down to change her clothing leaving Alithis to turn and stare at the wake of the ship, where the remains of the frozen hand of Zarenthrix, now growing ever distant, sank into the depths.