

Legends of Khampiohn

The Genesis Era

Chapter 7: Nemesis Protocol

Main Cast

Addah: Sarah Rosina Winkler
Ahnbiir: Andrew Lovato
Ahtreya: Melissa Kersh
Ckegdromas: Ashley C. Tyrell
Shadow of Fthora: Maia Michelle
Isirithon: Scazza Scarletti
Jahrett: Ashley C. Tyrell
Shadow of Jahrett: Ashley C. Tyrell
Maelstrom: Raven Anderson
Shadow of Maelstrom: Raven Anderson
Old Archivist: Thomas Avinger
Thonor: Brad J Taylor
Vypus: TJ Crovo
Shadow of Vypus: TJ Crovo
Young Archivist: TJ Crovo

Supporting Cast

Skritch: Chris Highwell
Guardian: TBA
Centennial: TBA
Cherubim Guardian: TBA
Shadow of Odenar: TBA
Unfamiliar Voice/Host of Armies: TBA

We begin this chapter on the outskirts of Evergleam where Addah is facing off against the guardian and Thonor.

Addah: (smirking) What's this? No welcome? No warm embrace for such an old friend?

Guardian: You are no friend of ours, nor are you welcome here. Return to your pit, traitor!

Addah: Oh, I would love to. But, you see, my master would be very disappointed if I returned to him with my task undone.

Thonor: (readying his hammer) Well then, he's just gonna have to deal with that. You're not passing through here while I'm breathing!

Addah: (laughing hysterically) Such a brave choice of words. Clearly, you don't know who I am if you think that your breathing is going to cause me much of a problem.

Thonor: Oh I know who you are, but I just don't care.
You tread here, you'll be leaving in pieces! **(huge attack effort)**

Addah: (sinister chuckle as she dodges effortlessly) For the son of an Air Titan, you really are clueless... You cannot strike the wind.

Addah: (Aparates behind Thonor and Grabs him round the throat) Allow me to educate you as I take that breath you're so very proud of...

Thonor: (gasping as his lungs begin to collapse)

Sound - A well placed strike that knocks Addah back causing her to release Thonor.

Addah: (minor pain effort) How very rude of you, Guardian. I thought you'd want your allies to be educated.

Guardian: We often find that re-educating our enemies is just as beneficial.

Guardian: (huge attack efforts as guardian throws a flurry of blows at Addah)

Sound of several blows landing from kicks and punches.

Addah: (frustrated scoff) I'm done playing with you.

Addah: (huge spell casting effort as Addah conjures a razor-like blast of wind and hurls it at the guardian)

Guardian: (pain effort) That's just as well, because now we don't need to restrict ourselves.

Guardian: (Power-up effort) You had a warning, now we will force you out!

Guardian: (Mighty attack effort)

As the battle continues, we re-enter the tavern with the archivists

Old Archivist: (really animated as he continues the tale) Blow after blow the Guardian threw at Addah, and though she was swift, the guardian was much swifter, landing more hits than were missed.

Young Archivist: What of Thonor?

Old Archivist: Oh, he was a stubborn one. Even though he'd been knocked down and had his breath nearly dragged out of him, the storm warden continued the assault alongside the Guardian.

Thonor: (struggling to his feet/gasping) You know what? I may not be able to strike the wind, but I can definitely make it harder for you!

Thonor: (spell effort as he Conjures a lightning storm)

Sound - multiple bolts of lightning striking the ground all around Addah.

Addah: (heavy pain effort as a bolt hits her) You miserable insect!

Addah: (another pain effort as the guardian lands a heavy kick)

Old Archivist: Addah reeled from the blows, but she had more than just the power of air at her disposal. As she recovered, she conjured a whirlwind of dark fire and sent it spinning at full velocity towards the pair... but it never hit it's mark.

Young Archivist: (excited) Why? did they dodge it?

Old Archivist: Indeed such a thing would have been near impossible to dodge—the sheer scale would have been enough to scatter anyone. But it was at this moment when a second whirlwind collided with Addah's and dispersed it.

Young Archivist: Another Guardian?

Old Archivist: No. As the power dissipated, the figure of Isirithon stood defiant, her eyes blazing with light.

Isirithon: (Defiant) You call that a threat Witch? I'll show you what true power looks like!!

Isirithon: (Spell effort as she sends a full force blast of wind carrying shards of light smashing into Addah)

Thonor: where is Ckegdromas?

Isirithon: They've been taken up to the temple. Looks like *you* needed a hand.

Guardian: Your presence is always a boost lady Isirithon. Now let's send this traitor back to where she came from.

Thonor: Looks like you're outnumbered. Surrender and your judgement will be swift!

Addah: (scoffs) again your powers of perception are sorely lacking.

Addah: (Commanding) RAOSHU (*Proun R-OW-SHOE*) ANNIHILATE THEM!!!

Sound - multiple bestial roars as thousands of shadow wraiths charge out of the ether.

Thonor: Now it's a party!!

Guardian: (commanding) ORDOS!!! TO ARMS!!!

Sound - multiple warriors charging with loud shouts of battle.

Young Archivist: What was happening with Ckegdromas at this time?

Old Archivist: They had found themselves in the presence of the host of spirits. Laying before the altar, the voice of Centennial spoke to them.

Centennial: (gentle but Authoritative) It's been a while, what brings you here to us?

Ckegdromas: (weakly) Something terrible has happened I'm afraid. Something has been taken from me and it's being used for a dark purpose.

Ckegdromas: (emotional) I tried so hard not to break, but...

Centennial: They used the crucible?

Ckegdromas: Yes, and made an artefact that rips the very soul out of a being, dead or alive it doesn't matter. They plan to use it to make an army for conquest.

We need your help. Alkai has directed us here through Chronotress.

Only *you* have the power to take back what is yours, but I fear it may be too late.

Even now, their army swells in number and power, and they're using the power of the punisher to make their creations stronger—a power I thought I would never be unable to control.

Centennial: (after a few seconds of contemplation) This artefact must be destroyed. As Alkai wills it, so shall we gift to you the secrets of the crucible so that you may counter this artefact and nullify it.

The Ordos will join your quest, once we have removed the enemy from our gates.

For now, we will give you healing.

Understand this: you will never be the same and the punisher aspect of your being will forever be in conflict with you.

Ckegdromas: Better for me to be in conflict than for our enemy to use my power against all of creation. How do I accomplish this task?

Centennial: All will be revealed as Alkai wills.

Young Archivist: That sounds rather ominous... But didn't Chronotress say that Fthora needed to take the dark heart from Vypus and then re-enter it into the crucible?

Old Archivist: He did indeed, but that was only part of the quest. Like the parts of a clever puzzle, everything needed to be in the right place at the right time.

Young Archivist: Before the resolution could be reached... So this was why Addah was sent—to stop that resolution from being reached.

Young Archivist: (Chuckles) I assume that was going poorly for her...?

Old Archivist: Well, she certainly wasn't gaining any ground. But she wasn't foolish enough to engage the Ordos for long.

Battle continues in the background.

Old Archivist: Realising that she was not going to be victorious in a long battle against the monks of Centennial, she decided to use a different strategy. Whilst fighting Isirithon, Addah sensed a fury within the healer—a darkness that had been fed by the sorrow and the anger of this seemingly endless war.

Young Archivist: Darkness? Like Ckegdromas had?

Old Archivist: Similar, albeit more obscured. Whilst Ckegdromas was aware of the darkness within them and learned—over many hundreds of years—to control and utilise it only for the will of Alkai, Isirithon had only a

fleeting knowledge of her darker self—a side she believed had been banished long ago by her dedication to healing and charity.

But war and death... if you are exposed to it long enough... chips away at your being. And this particular war had been afflicting Isirithon since the death of the first loyalists, causing doubt, sorrow and even anger to slowly seep their way into Isirithon's subconscious.

Young Archivist: How did Addah notice this, when even Isirithon didn't?

Old Archivist: Because Addah was a victim to it herself, and she saw in Isirithon the same traits of a conflicted soul.

Young Archivist: So, I imagine that she tried to capitalise on this?

Old Archivist: Oh, yes. And in a most despicable way. Whilst the fight was raging, Addah moved towards Isirithon with a singular purpose, and before she knew it, Isirithon had been removed from the battlefield into a dark and desolate place where Addah put her plan into action...

Isirithon: (defiant) This prison will not hold me for long, traitor.

Addah: (feigning gentleness) Prison? Oh, no my dear. This is not a prison. Just a quiet place where we can talk.

Isirithon: (angry) Why would I have anything to say to you? Your words are nothing but poison. But if you're looking for a place to die, away from the shame of failure, I'm more than happy to oblige.

Addah: (chuckles) There's that fury again... You know, we are more alike than you realise.

Isirithon: (Scoffs) I am NOTHING like you! I serve my creator without recourse... You are a traitor who turned to the Devourer the moment power dangled in front of you

Addah: You think this is about power? My, my... You are so strong willed, and yet so naive. You have seen enough of the multiverse to know that Alkai's precious mortal races are fundamentally flawed. I was blind like you once, until my eyes were opened. I saw what the mortals were doing to Terra Firma and approached Alkai, only to be told to let them be. "They'd learn eventually," he said. They never did. They turned their backs on him and instead took to worshipping false idols and temporary kingdoms, killing each other and destroying the world that was given to them all in the name of their own ego and avarice. I knew then that mortals could not be trusted and refused to be a part of it anymore. You know what happened to me!? I was cast out by Alkai. Left alone in the dark. All because I refused to protect his precious mortals. The "Devourer," as you call him, was the only one who took pity on me and gave me a new purpose. None of this is about power my dear, this is about justice.

Isirithon: (retorts with anger) how can you call any of this Justice?

Brother is killing brother over this foolish notion. And if that wasn't bad enough, you and Vypus are using the bodies and spirits of the dead to create these abominations to commit genocide. NONE of this is justice! It is just treason, corruption, and murder, and I will NOT permit it! You die first, then Vypus!!

Addah: (laughs) That's it. Let your anger flow. Take my life. End my suffering... Embrace your true power!

Old Archivist: It is said that Isirithon became so enraged that she formed a dagger out of the energy her pure anger unleashed and charged at Addah....though what happened next is speculation.

We do know that she somehow managed to come back to her senses.

Young Archivist: All of this was happening in her mind?
What was her body doing?

Old Archivist: Her body was still fighting, but she was unusually brutal.
Even when she came back to her senses, she was still merciless, which was very unlike her

Young Archivist: something changed in her somehow?

Old Archivist: not straight away, but when the battle was won and the Raoshu (**Proun R-OW-SHOE**) were sent fleeing from the battlefield, Isirithon continued to chase and cut them down with a fury that was almost unnatural

Young Archivist: Unnatural? In what way?

Old Archivist: Isirithon was never the kind of being to cut down a fleeing enemy, but this time she didn't hesitate.
She was enraged, and Thonor had to forcibly stop her...

Thonor: Isirithon, what are you doing!!?

Isirithon: (struggling to get out of Thonors grip/enraged) They are agents of the great enemy! Murderous fiends! They deserve no mercy.
Let. Me. Go...!

Thonor: (struggling to keep her bound) That is not for us to judge, Isirithon. They've fled.
The battle is won.

Isirithon: The battle is not won, not until every single one of those tainted scum draw breath!!

Thonor: (desperate) If you go after them now, you put yourself in grave danger. We have a task to accomplish. This isn't you—

Thonor: (pain effort as Isirithon elbows him in the jaw)

Isirithon: (dark/threatening) What would YOU know? You go to battle and I have to allow it. Then you all come to me for healing and stitches. Then you go right back to battle and I accept that. But suddenly you get defensive when I want to do my duty!? When I tell you that they need to be ended you suddenly lose your heart for it!? They are the enemy, they need to be eradicated!!

Thonor (holding his jaw) I share your distaste for the enemy, but this battle is done. Alkai will judge them. They will be dealt with....

Isirithon: (enraged) WHEN!? When the multiverse slips into darkness? After the Devourer has feasted on existence? Or will it be after every renegade and loyalist has killed each other in this pointless damn war? Tell me, oh mighty battle master, when is it going to be enough!?

Thonor: None of us can know the mind of our father, but we know that he will not allow this to continue for long.

Isirithon: I'm tired of all of this. It's pointless...

Thonor: If we don't follow his will, we're just as bad as the renegades. Have faith.

Isirithon: (calming down though still angry) My faith is waning, Thonor. This needs to end.

Young Archivist: She's starting to sound like Fthora...

Old Archivist: Isirithon was at breaking point. Whatever had occurred between her and Addah started to leave its mark; she was losing control.

Young Archivist: The darkness was taking over, you mean?

Old Archivist: Yes, and it was only a matter of time before she lost herself completely. As if sensing this, the guardian approached...

Guardian: Your presence has been requested at the temple. You must both come with me. Now.

Old Archivist: As the two headed for the temple, Ahnbiir, Ahtreya and Jahrett were traversing the Deliverance Road—a road which was daunting and difficult to say the least.

Young Archivist: Why was that?

Old Archivist: It is said that the Deliverance Road is full of hazards that test the worthiness of those travelling upon it.

Young Archivist: What kind of hazards?

Old Archivist: Reflections of self... Tests of fortitude... Things that question your faithfulness... That sort of thing.

We enter the scene with Ahnbiir, Ahtreya and Jahrett walking a fairly echoed path.

Ahnbiir: (takes a deep breath) So... Here we go...

Jahrett: Is it just me or does anyone else feel... jittery?

Ahtreya: Jittery?

Jahrett: Listen, I know shadows and dark corners but this feels somewhat more... unnerving.

Ahnbiir: (chuckles) That's because you're not dead. You're still attached to your thoughts and feelings. When the dead take this path, they move with singular purpose to their final rest.

Jahrett: So... What delights can we look forward to on this... erm... whatever this is?

Ahtreya: Well, as I have said, I've not taken this road before. I have read that as they walk the Deliverance Road, the dead have their true character tested...

Jahrett: But... we're not dead.

Ahnbiir: (dry/sarcastic) So glad we have a Spymaster with such astonishing powers of observation. It's almost like I didn't say that five minutes ago.

Jahrett: Riiight... So, anyway... back to my question... as living folk... what can we expect?

Ahtreya: And as I have said, I do not know for certain.

Jahrett: Has anyone living taken this road before?

Ahnbiir (a slight sorrow in his voice) I have... once...

This road tests you. The only difference is that the living can return, albeit forever changed. The basic principle is the same: if you are true in intent and faithful to Alkai, this road will show it.

Jahrett: Well... that certainly, completely, and utterly DIDN'T answer my question but... sure... I'll roll with it...

Ahtreya: Just stay to the narrow path and hold true to your faith in Alkai, no matter how daunting this could be...

Ahtreya: (Pauses briefly as she looks down the empty, echoing road and sighs remorsefully) The road is so... Empty... We're the only ones here.

Ahtreya: (with dreadful realisation) All those souls.... The Crucible really is feeding them into the dark heart...

Old Archivist: The three continued down the path for what felt like an age, the ever haunting silence making them more and more uneasy until eventually they came to a set of ancient gates guarded by the towering figure of a warrior angel, a flaming sword in each hand.

Cherubim Guardian: So... you're not dead... What brings you here?

Ahnbiir: We come on behalf of Chronotress. We seek the host of Armies.

Cherubim Guardian: For what purpose does the son of Alkai seek the host?

Ahnbiir: We invoke the Nemesis Protocol.

Cherubim Guardian: Very well. Pass through the gates. Take the narrow path forward but be aware, you will be tested. Alkai guide your steps.

Young Archivist: What is the Nemesis Protocol?

Old Archivist: It is a call to arms whereby the assistance of the Angels of the Haven may be requested. The Host of Spirits and the Host of Armies may be approached by the faithful in the event of an apocalyptic event.

Young Archivist: Oh, so like what happened ten years ago?

Old Archivist: Yes, except the angels could get more physically involved then, whereas now they have Avatars.

Young Archivist: So, this was why Chronotress sent them?

Old Archivist: Indeed. And despite the realisation of the sheer scale of the task ahead, onwards they strode through the gates.

Young Archivist: I mean, the angel alone seemed... intimidating... But what do you mean by “the scale of the task ahead?”

Old Archivist: The narrow road is long and dimly lit. Add to that the fact that they all knew they were about to be tested in a most rigorous way.

Young Archivist: But I imagine their faith kept them going forward?

Old Archivist: It was an overwhelming experience to say the least... As they moved on along the road, they found themselves separated from each other as their trials began. First was Ahnbiir...

Sound - a dull echo and a heavy atmosphere

Ahnbiir: (takes a deep breath) I'm ready Father. Your will be done.

The echoed voice of Vypus hisses into the scene.

Shadow of Vypus: (sinisterly/mockingly) Ready, are you...? I don't think you have the guts for what is to come.

Ahnbiir: I will serve, no matter what comes.

Shadow of Vypus: Ha! Is that what you told yourself when you fled from your duty to save your wife?

Ahnbiir: (slight anger) Alkai knew well that I would never have quit the field if *YOU* hadn't done what you did...

Shadow of Vypus: Surely Alkai should come before anything? You failed your duty to him only to fail to save her.

Ahnbiir: (rising anger) He gave me leave to do what I needed to do...

Ahnbiir (sorrow) Even so... I failed her.

Shadow of Vypus: And you will continue to fail. You couldn't save her. You won't save *them* either... You should have killed me but you didn't have the stomach for it, and now everything and everyone you know will become my prey.

Ahnbiir: (Furious) You will die this time!

Shadow of Vypus: (scoffs) tch tch tch... Such anger. Such... rage. Yes... this is all you are, Wolf Lord. I wonder how many tenets you will break to see me fall...

Shadow of Vypus: (ominous laughter)

Ahnbiir: (calming his rage) No... I will not let you corrupt me. I am a servant of the creator, not my anger. However much it hurts, I do not wish for revenge... only justice... And I trust in Alkai.

Shadow of Vypus: (taunting) Even though he didn't save her?
Even though he took you away from her, leaving her to die to me?
Even though he has commanded your son to die to destroy me?

Ahnbiir (resigned) I know that no matter what I lose in his service, he will return it ten-fold. I will grieve, but I will also give it all to him and when your justice has been visited upon you I will pray that he gives me the strength to forgive you.
Justice is not mine to give, nor vengeance. Only according to *HIS* will shall it be done.
Be gone from my shade! I belong only to Alkai.

Sound of Vypus' hissing petering out as the atmosphere clears.

Voice of the Cherubim Guardian: Ahnbiir, you have passed your test, and you have honoured your creator. You may enter the temple of the host. Spend this time to pray. I feel you need it.

Young Archivist: That can't have been easy for Ahnbiir

Old Archivist: It was. But his faith was enough to overcome his anger.

Young Archivist: I wonder how the others fared.

Return to the scene with Ahtreya, and the figure of Fthora standing in front of her.

Shadow of Fthora: Dear Ahtreya, why so sad?
Is it because you no longer have agency over the dead?
I saved you from a task that would have taken over your life.

Ahtreya: (solemn) You saved nothing. You denied the dead their rightful rest. You had no rights to do such a heinous thing.

Shadow of Fthora: Don't you see? You can go and live.
You don't have to spend your life among the dead anymore.
There is no death. I have seen to that.

Nothing has to die whilst I hold the crucible. They can be reborn!

Ahtreya: (angrily) Into what? Abominations for Vypus? You have not heard their torture as I have. So what if I spend my life ensuring they get their peace? I give it willingly to Alkai. Only *he* has the power to bring them back, or give them eternal peace. You do not. And to even think that you do is an abomination in itself.

Shadow of Fthora: But you shouldn't need to shoulder this burden alone. You deserve to live like your allies. Let the dead be in *MY* care. You don't need them anymore.

Ahtreya: (calming down) I shoulder only what Alkai puts upon me, and he will *NEVER* put more on me than I can handle. So you see, I am never alone. And as much as I feel anger towards you, I will still pray for you when your time comes. I accept my creator's will. Maybe you should try it. Until then, I have work to do. You may leave now.

Sound of Fthora's laughter fading as the voice of the guardian speaks once more.

Voice of the Cherubim Guardian: Ahtreya, daughter of Ahnbiir. You have passed your test. You have shown faith beyond question. Enter the temple of the host with favour.

Young Archivist: These tests seem easy for them. They have such faith.

Old Archivist: Absolutely. But the most difficult of the tests was Jahrett's. Carrying around so many secrets has a knack for coming back to haunt you...

Enter the scene with Jahrett in a room void of surrounding sound, Jahrett's voice echoes around the area.

Jahrett: (nervous breath) Well... here goes...

Sound of a damp floor, water drips from the ceiling and into a lake, the sound of waves parting as the shadow of Odenar appears.

Shadow of Odenar: My child, you are burdened so greatly... Sit with me for a while. Ease your suffering...

Jahrett: (in disbelief) Father... I really want to believe it's you but I know you have already moved on...

Shadow of Odenar: I am always with you. Come... rest your weary head. Tell me all your problems.

Jahrett: (scoffs) Well... now I know you're fake because my father was always too busy to sit and talk with us.

Shadow of Odenar: (Trying to convince) I am sorry I wasn't there for you more but I'm here now...

Jahrett: (shakes head) No. You're not... You never were then, and you're not here now.

Shadow of Odenar: (switches into a more sinister tone) Well... maybe if you'd have done your job properly, I would have been. How long did you know of Maelstrom's plan?

Jahrett (agitated): If I'd have known, it WOULDN'T have happened...

The shadow shifts and changes into Maelstrom.

Shadow of Maelstrom: (Sinister laughing) You honestly think you'd have had the power, little Spy? All those secrets, and what good have they done? You still couldn't convince your dearest friend to change the timelines to save your father.

Jahrett: (Defiant) We may not have been able to change what happened but rest assured you'll still get yours.

Shadow of Maelstrom: (scoffs) You had your chance to do that when you crossed my ocean to get to your friends and you *STILL* failed then too. And for what? So that you could avoid displeasing your friends? Your Leader? Your... Creator...? Whilst I live, you will always be haunted by the countless times that you have failed.

Jahrett: (seething) You know... You're right... I will always be haunted by the death of my father, your treachery against the Primal Council, your treachery against me and Thonor... Your refusal to stand up for what was right because all you cared about was keeping hold of your precious Power.

Jahrett: (Smirks) But you know what I think? I think it's you that's truly haunted... Haunted by the fact that you had to resort to cheap tactics and cowardice to take over from my father. Haunted by your inability to face him in straight up combat because you knew all along that you would always be second to him. That's why you relied on Infernos to strip his power, because you knew that it was the only way to even get close to him without being annihilated. And you know what else I think haunts you? The knowledge that—in spite of all of your dominion and stolen power—you will still face Judgement... And I would be all too happy to send you to it. And you *KNOW* that I have the ability...

The Sound of Maelstrom laughing as the shadow morphs once again, this time, into Jahrett.

Shadow of Jahrett: (Chuckles) That's if those secrets of yours don't kill you first. I wonder how your allies will be able to trust you ever again when they finally discover—all too late—that you have known what was happening to their dearly beloved Chronotress the whole time... And you said nothing.

Jahrett: (Solemn) I made a promise, in the sight of Alkai, if Chronotress wishes me to reveal that secret then I will. But whilst I am bound by oath, I shall not betray my friend...

Shadow of Jahrett: (sinister laughter) You speak of betrayal? It's not just their secrets you hold is it? You have your own secret... don't you? I wonder what your friends would say if they found out about your crime...

Jahrett: (after a few moments hesitation) I'm aware of my crime, and I have paid my penance for it. I pay for it every day.

Shadow of Jahrett: (sinister) Then why keep it secret?

Jahrett: (Stoic) Because Alkai will decide what happens to me after this duty ends. I threw myself on his mercy then, I do so now, and I will continue to do so even unto my final moments.

I *WILL* undo what was done, because that is what I am charged to do. And if I tell of this to others, it will put them in danger. Things are as Alkai wills, no matter what that is. I will honour it and uphold my duty and my oath.

Now, if you don't mind, phantom, I have my duty to attend to. Away with you.

Shadow fades away and the voice of the Cherubim Guardian resounds one last time.

Cherubim Guardian: Jahrett. Pass now into the temple of Hosts. You have proven your loyalty and you have faced your darkness.

Sound of a deep Gong as Jahrett enters the temple, followed by an ambient fire.

Jahrett: I assume this is where I meet the Host?

Re-enter Ahnbiir and Ahtreya.

Ahnbiir: Well done Jahrett. Alkai is pleased.

Jahrett: Hmmm... I truly hope so.

Ahtreya: (smiling) I'm glad you both got here. Those tests were... intense.

Unfamiliar Voice: (powerful/authoritative) They wouldn't be tests of faith if they were not...

Old Archivist: As the unfamiliar voice filled the chamber, the fires blazed with ferocity, and through them stepped a figure that towered above them all—taller and mightier even than the guardian at the gates. Tall as a mountain, broad as the plains, four wings wrapped around the figure, and four heads: one of an eagle, one that was an ox, one of a lion, and one that looked much like the Alvairn themselves. They now stood in the presence of the Host of Armies....

Young Archivist: Were they not afraid? I know I would be...

Old Archivist: They were very much afraid. They knew they stood before one of the most powerful beings under Alkai, but they knew that this was what they were sent to do and were confident that this was to be a turning point for everything.

Host of Armies: (gentle but Authoritative) Be not afraid, warriors of Alkai. I bring tidings and counsel. We are aware why you have come and each of you has proven your faith. Now we must convene together to share the word of our Creator.

Old Archivist: With a thunderous sound, the chamber around them changed. Within moments, the hosts of Armies and Spirit were before them, and there stood the six friends once more in the same place.

There was much rejoicing between them all, though Isirithon was somewhat withdrawn.

Ahbniir: (rejoicing small talk)

Ahtreya: (rejoicing small talk)

Ckegdromas: (rejoicing small talk)

Isirithon: (withdrawn greetings)

Jahrett: (rejoicing small talk)

Thonor: (rejoicing small talk)

Young Archivist: I imagine she was feeling rather upset because of the realisation of what she had done?

Old Archivist: She was beginning to realise that things were becoming more difficult to control but she was overjoyed to see her friends nonetheless.

Young Archivist: And Ckegdromas? Were they healed?

Old Archivist: Not entirely, no. But they were definitely healthier than they were. Seeing their friends brought a smile to their face, despite their troubles.

Centennial: You have all become aware of what is about to happen, and all of you will be changed by this knowledge. But you are implored to see it through.

Host of Armies: You will not be alone. You never have been and you never will be. Remember that Alkai is with you all, and so too are we.

Centennial: The Nemesis Protocol has been invoked and Alkai knows of its necessity, therefore the Angels of the Haven will join your fight against Vypus and his master the Devourer.

Host of Armies: But understand that the task given to you all must be accomplished by *YOU*. We will give you the assistance on the battlefield and reinforce your armies so that you will be given the chance to carry out Alkai's will.

Old Archivist: Each one of the Alvairn took a heavy breath as they realised the enormity of everything that lay ahead...

Ahnbiir: (takes heavy breath) As Alkai wills, so shall it be done. No matter what comes, we will do what is needed.

Jahrett: (takes heavy breath) As He wills, it shall be.

Ahtreya: (takes heavy breath) As He wills, no matter the cost, it shall be so.

Thonor: (takes heavy breath) By my life or by my death, His will be done.

Ckegdromas: (sombrely, with heavy breath) His will be done...

Isirithon: (hesitantly/reflectively) This has gone too far... This war must end...

Isirithon: (prayerfully) Father, I am sorry for questioning. I will do your will but I beg of you to give me the strength to reject this darkness that has sprouted within me...

Old Archivist: At that moment, a sudden thunder shook the area around them and in the hands of Centennial there appeared a small gem. They looked up and then, after a while, nodded in acknowledgement, giving thanks to Alkai and turned to Isirithon.

Centennial: Our creator has heard your prayer and offered you a way to keep that darkness locked away in this. 'Tis but a humble quartz stone—much like the ones the mountains are made of—but Alkai has blessed it for you.

Isirithon: (confused) What do I do with this?

Centennial: Bind it in cloth and hang it around your neck so that it is in line with your heart. When the darkness that Addah has planted in you grows uncontrollable, this gem will absorb it and lock it therein.

Be warned though: we have seen you take this path long ago when you were born.

If you accept this gift, it will only delay your struggle, not end it, for those who have darkness planted within them must face and defeat it at some point, or be consumed by it.

You may take this and delay that time so as to complete the task ahead or you may face it now. And if you do so, you must remain upon Evergleam until such time as you have exorcised the dark, which means you will not be able to join your allies in this final fight against Vypus.

What is your choice?

Young Archivist: Master... you're pulling one of those cliffhanger faces again... What did she choose?

Old Archivist: (chuckled/confused) I don't have a cliffhanger face... What are you talking about?

Old Archivist: (finishes drink)

Young Archivist: You do... It's right there! The eyebrow and the smirk with just a hint of distance in the eyes... The same face you pull every time you're about to cut the tale in the middle of something good.

Old Archivist: (chuckles): That's how you build suspense.

A bell rings from the bar.

Skritch: The tavern is closing for the night, everyone! Thank you for your custom.

Young Archivist: (sighs) Is it that time already...?

Old Archivist: (smiling) Yes, it is. But you are—as always—welcome to stay at my home for the night, if you wish. We will continue this on the morrow. For now, let us retire.

The two leave a bag of talents on the table for Skritch and exit into the night as we fade into the final scene.

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Beginning of the end credit scene with Vypus preparing the dark heart with new energy.

Vypus: (energising the Dark Heart) Soon everything will be in place... We couldn't have managed this without you, you know...

Maelstrom: (Bound in an energy cage/enraged) YOU MISERABLE LITTLE INGRATE!
HOW DARE YOU IMPRISON ME!? DO YOU NOT KNOW WHO I AM!?

Sound - warping as the dark heart activates.

Vypus (sinister laughter) Oh, I know very well who you are, Maelstrom. Which makes this so deliciously perfect.

Maelstrom: (pain effort as the dark heart starts to drain them) AAAARGGHH...!
You pathetic little worm... When I get out of here, I'm going to drown you in your own body fluids...

Maelstrom: (extreme pain effort)

Vypus: (proud/cocksure) Oh my dear Maelstrom, Lord of the Tide, why so aggressive? Rejoice, because you are going to be awarded great honours. Once your power has been taken by this delightful little trinket, It shall be instrumental in empowering my master. Once the Cold One is released from his prison on the cold sun, he will lead us to conquest! We shall annihilate mortals from the multiverse, take the Haven and we will be GODS!! Alas, your current body is... somewhat of a hindrance. But do not fret. I'll make sure I turn it into something... useful...

Vypus: (Maniacal laughter)

Sound of the artefacts power at full strength as we fade into the end of the episode.

-End of Chapter 7-