

Legends of Khampiohn

The Genesis Era

Chapter 8: A Gathering Storm

Main Cast

Ahnbiir: Andrew Lovato

Ahtreya: Melissa Kersh

Ahtreyu: Ghostwaffles

Chronotress: Andrew Lovato

Ckegdromas: Ashley C. Tyrell

Fthora: Maia Michelle

Infernos: Thomas Avinger

Isirithon: Scazza Scarletti

Jahrett: Ashley C. Tyrell

Old Archivist: Thomas Avinger

Thonor: Brad J Taylor

Vypus: TJ Crovo

Young Archivist: TJ Crovo

Supporting Cast

Dyani: Jaylin Dunn

Devourer: D.T. Prater

Kohbra:

Lexian:

Earth Primal/Gofannon:

Fell Titan (female):

Wild Earth Titan:

Wild Titan Chief/Mother Elk:

Script

We begin this episode with a memory from before the war, with the sounds of three young girls at play as Fthora, Dyani and Isirithon are playing a game of Tag.

The sounds of laughter and joy fill the air as they race across ground and sky in the early days of Khampiohn's creation.

Fthora: (laughing, out of breath) You're getting faster. I thought I'd gotten away that time.

Dyani (also laughing) You'll see. One day, you won't be able to catch me at all.

Isirithon: (out of breath) Bet I'd still be able to get you.

Dyani (chuckles) Not if Ahnbiir teaches me how to tree-step you won't.

Fthora: That would be awesome... if we were on the ground.

Isirithon: (to Dyani) I heard that you were learning to cloud step from Thonor?

Dyani: He keeps saying **(mocking Thonor's voice)** When you can outrun my hammer then you'll be ready to learn Cloud-stepping.

Fthora: (laughs) He's having you on. Even HE can't outrun his hammer. That's why he rigged it to return to his hand.

Isirithon: Rigged or not, I know Jahrett's outrun that hammer a few times.

Dyani: (impressed) Really!? Jahrett must be super fast!

Fthora: I think that Jahrett makes that hammer vanish through portals just so they can trick Thonor into thinking they're fast.

Isirithon: Whatever it is, it never ceases to make me laugh when Thonor has that face when Jahrett outpaces the hammer.

Dyani: Oh, that face when he goes red in the cheeks from embarrassment.

Fthora: It's when he tries to play it off **(also mocking Thonor's voice)** I didn't throw it hard enough, I'll double the distance next time.

Fthora: (laughs)

Isirithon: And he doubles it and Jahrett still outruns it.

Dyani: (laugh heartily)

Fthora: (laugh heartily)

Isirithon: (laugh heartily)

Isirithon: Apparently, there's a celebration happening later. Ckegdromas is hosting one of those dance parties.

Fthora: I love those parties! Ckegdromas always has new songs from their travels too.

Dyani: I'm going to try and convince Ahnbiir to come with me. He could do with letting his hair down a little. He's been so up-tight lately...

Isirithon: Wait, does Ahnbiir actually dance? This I've got to see.

Dyani: He can be quite graceful, you know. What about you, got your eye on anyone?

Fthora: (chuckles) Isirithon's got a thing for one of the Earth Titans.

Isirithon: (a little embarrassed) I do not have a 'thing!'

Dyani: Oh, are we talking about Ulric? To be fair, he is quite striking.

Fthora: And the son of a primal. Isirithon's got some standards!

Isirithon: (going slightly red) He's really sweet... And he's a student in the healing arts. It's got nothing to do with whether he's the son of a primal or not...

Isirithon: (deflecting back to Fthora) And anyway, YOU can talk about standards. You're betrothed to Infernos!

Dyani: (amazed) The young fire primal? Wow, when were you going to tell us about that?

Fthora: You never asked.

Dyani: How's your Father about that?

Fthora: He's not one to trust easily, but he wants me to be happy.

Isirithon: I can understand he's protective of you, especially when it comes to the Fire clan. He's always been wary of them...

Dyani: I still don't understand that...

Fthora: It's something to do with their duty of keeping the great enemy bound in his chains. He says they're more at risk of corruption than the rest of us because they have to venture into the enemy's domain.

Dyani: It's been generations since that task was given to them. Surely they've built up a resistance to the enemy's ways by now?

Isirithon: There's always a risk with that thing.

Fthora: That's true... But honestly, I don't think we'll ever have to worry whilst Infernos is in charge of the Fire clan.

Dyani: Alkai willing, we can finally enjoy the peace of this new world.

We fade out from the memory scene and enter into the present day with the archivists hard at work setting up for the exhibition.

Old Archivist: Just to the right a little... Ah! Perfect

Young Archivist: This looks absolutely amazing! Are these actual relics on the lead up to the centrepiece?

Old Archivist: (being coy) If these were real, I think the Empire might have put more security in place. These are merely replicas made by each of the Vassal Temples as visual representations.

Young Archivist: (a little disappointed) Ah, I see... Still, it looks fantastic.

Old Archivist: It does, doesn't it? A grand stage for one of the greatest tales that this world will ever know.

Young Archivist: Speaking of tales... You stopped half way through the last part.

The Young Archivist puts a huge book on a nearby table with a heavy thud.

Old Archivist (looking at the huge book the young Archivist holds) That is quite the tome you have there, I trust you're managing its content well?

Young Archivist: I've had to get new ink and quills about a hundred times. It's going to be quite the treasure.

Old Archivist: Well then, let's continue to add to that treasure, shall we? Now, where were we?

The Young Archivist opens the pages of his book.

Young Archivist: (reciting) So... The Alvairn passed their trials, Isirithon got a shiny trinket and the Angels agreed to help them against Vypus.

Old Archivist: Excellent! Well then, let us begin...

We enter the scene with Chronotress and Ahtreyu moving towards the North of Galhart.

Old Archivist: Knowing that time was of the essence and numbers were low, Chronotress and Ahtreyu moved quickly to the northern fringes of Galhart to attempt to rally any remaining Loyalists to their cause. It so happened that there was a small tribe of Earth Titans that had been surviving in the northernmost forest and had—so far—avoided Infernos's Renegades and the terrible shadow-beasts that had recently been ransacking the area.

Ahtreyu: (walking uphill effort) I forgot how far out they were...

Chronotress: True, but if Alkai has guided us here, then it's worth the journey.

Ahtreyu: I hope we make it back to the rendezvous in time.

Chronotress: We will, but I fear that there is a possibility that Infernos will have already moved on Vypus by the time we are gathered.

Ahtreyu: Well, if he wants to be an idiot, that's on him!

Chronotress: Yes, but if that possible occurrence happens, then something far worse will follow...

Ahtreyu: You think the great enemy will be unleashed again?

Chronotress: That's already beginning. It's just a matter of how powerful he will be. There are thousands if not millions of possible outcomes to each situation. It simply depends on which happens first. For example: I have seen this occurrence before we even decided to take this path, but the outcome is not yet set in stone.

Ahtreyu: What of our tasks? Can they be changed?

Chronotress: No. Those are things that **MUST** be in order for this world to be saved.

Ahtreyu: I am willing to die for Alkai, but I confess I am still fearful.

Chronotress: I must admit I am also, but trust in Alkai; He will not abandon us.

Ahtreyu: I know...

Ahtreyu: (realisation) Ah, I think we're here.

Sounds of a quiet forest.

Ahtreyu: (nervous) This is... too quiet...

Sound of a spear flying past and hitting the ground at Chronotress's feet.

Chronotress: (unphased) I see we've happened across our potential allies.

Ahtreyu: See, normally they'd answer to my father... But I feel they may need a bit more persuading...

Old Archivist: At that moment, several earth titans emerged, dressed in furs and armed with make-shift spears and axes with the look of the wild in their eyes.

Wild Earth Titan: You... Who are you that comes to our land?

Chronotress: Friends. My name is Chronotress, I come seeking your aid.

Wild Earth Titan: You are son of Alkai?

Wild Earth Titan: (to Ahtreyu) Who is this one?

Ahtreyu: (authoritative) I am Ahtreyu Sun-Wolf, son of Ahnbiir First-Wolf and born of your blood. We need your help, loyal ones of the creator. We are—all of us—in danger by the one called Vypus. He seeks to destroy this world and all who dwell upon it as a sacrifice to the great enemy. We are too few to stop him. We need your help.

Old Archivist: Upon finishing this sentence, an Earth Titan of immense size approached, adorned in white furs and standing taller than the rest.

Young Archivist: A leader then?

Old Archivist: It certainly seemed so. She carried herself with great authority and stature.

Wild Titan Chief: (recognizing Ahtreyu) Ahtreyu? You've certainly grown. I remember you in swaddling.

Wild Titan Chief: (To the other titans) This is our young prince who travels with our saviour. Lower your arms and prepare a feast!

Ahtreyu: Mother Elk? You haven't changed at all.

Chronotress: It took us quite a while to find you. How have you avoided our detection for so long?

Mother Elk: We have been surviving in the Wyld [**proun: Wild**] Realm. Time is... different there...

Ahtreyu: The Wyld Realm? I didn't realise we could travel there.

Chronotress: That would explain why I couldn't sense any of you before.

Mother Elk: It was never our intention to hide from our duty...

Sounds of nature play in the background as Mother Elk continues.

Mother Elk: Before the rebellion, my tribe was working to create the Wyld Realm as a place where all of the surplus creative energies from the world's creation could grow untamed. It was our gift from Alkai. It was to be a home for the titans who wanted to remain on Khampiohn when the mortal races were born. From there, they could help the mortals tap into the creative powers as they built their homes without needing to directly interfere. Alkai had willed it so, and through us, he could help the races that would live upon the Ark World to find peace away from the prying eyes of the great enemy. Death would never be a factor anymore, nor illness or taint. It was an ever-flowing power of life and joy. The mortals would never be without fuel for their warmth or food for their hunters. All they would ever need to do was pray to Alkai and, through prayer, gain everlasting harvest. Then... The rebellion happened...

Sounds of battle begin in the background.

Chronotress: A sorrowful time indeed.

Mother Elk: Indeed, my Lord Warden. And as you know, the earth titans were among the first to begin turning on each other. Some, like the Jackal Tribe and the Snake Tribe, began to tell of all of the destruction that mortals would bring, echoing the misguided words of the Fire Primal. They argued that the Wyld Realm should be for titans and titans alone. Mortals would only desecrate it for their own selfish ambitions. Alas, many of us fell victim to this belief, and so began the war of the Wylds.

Ahtreyu: My mother told me of this war... She said that the loss of life was incalculable. She also said it led to the creation of the Shadow Realm.

Mother Elk: Indeed, the blood of Loyalists and Renegades fell as rivers in that season. Facing the utter destruction of not only our kin but also the realm itself—which would have led to the Ark World being nothing more than an ashen husk—Alkai gave myself and the few remaining Wardens of the Glade the single objective of sealing the realm away.

Ahtreyu: How was it opened again?

Chronotress: Your mother was gifted with the key.

Mother Elk: Yes. Dyani had been given a singular gift by Alkai. He knew the time was fast approaching when the Wyld Realm's power would be needed once more to restore the world. Then the leader of the Snake Tribe, Vypus, discovered what she had. And in a move to further his ambition, he sought to take the key, break open the Wyld Realm, and imbibe its power to create his Alpha race. Anything that was left, he would offer as sacrifice to the great enemy.

Ahtreyu: (confused) I don't understand. You knew about this, Chronotress?

Chronotress: (hint of regret) Yes...

Ahtreyu: (slight anger) Why did you not intervene when he came for her? Where were you!?

Chronotress: I did intervene. I sent the Raven to her that warned of his coming.

Ahtreyu: (confused/angry) Then why didn't you get her to flee with us? Why didn't you use your powers to stop him!? Why did my father take so long to get to her!?

Chronotress: (slight anger) I tried...!

Ahtreyu: (boiling with anger) You should have tried harder! You could have stopped all of this!!

Chronotress: (understanding, though slightly angered) I CAN NOT contradict free will!!

Chronotress: (Calming down) Such a thing would be against everything I am. I tried to persuade her many times, but she refused to flee. She knew that if she had tried, Vypus would have killed all of you. She CHOSE to stay behind and fight for the same reason she begged me to use my gifts to get you away. I tried to get your father back to her as fast as I could but—

Ahtreyu: BUT WHAT!!? WHAT PREVENTED YOU!!?

Chronotress: (sighs with regret) When the rebellion began, my strength began to ebb away. My abilities were weakened. I had to conserve as much as I could so that I may do what

needs to be done. I have known for a long time that this is my last mission. All the losses I have seen... The heartbreaks... Do you not think that I have felt them too?

Chronotress: (Pained emotion) I have felt every single one from the moment they all became possibilities. I have cried, screamed, became enraged over every one of them... I have endured heartbreak beyond measure again and again and AGAIN!!! But I knew then, just as I know now, that if this world is to be reborn—if Alkai's will is to be done—then I need to prepare for what is to come.

Chronotress: (Sighs) I have seen my own ends... And of all the ends I have seen, the only one that truly saves this world and many others is this road that I am on now. I am sorry for your mother, but she knew how important all of this was. How important YOU are, and your Sister. That's why she stayed: not for me, but for you.

Ahtreyu: (calming down though still confused) I know that I must be the one to kill Vypus... But beyond that, why am I so important?

Mother Elk: Because you and your sister together are the key to reopen the Wyld Realm. When this world ends, we can rebuild it according to Alkai's will with your help.

Ahtreyu: (gasps/calm sigh) I don't even know how to do that.

Chronotress: It will become clear when the time comes.

Ahtreyu: I'm sorry Chronotress. All of this... I just feel... overwhelmed by it all.

Chronotress: (parental/understanding) I felt like that the first time I discovered what needed to be done. Trust in Alkai. He will help you through it all, I promise you.

Mother Elk: In the meantime, I must rally the remaining tribes.

Mother Elk hands Ahtreyu a horn.

Mother Elk: Take this horn. When you sound it, we will come.

Ahtreyu: Thank you.

Young Archivist: I don't understand... I thought Vypus wanted to kill Dyani because he got beaten. I thought it was some form of revenge.

Old Archivist: It was. But it was also because he wanted to access the Wyld [**Proun:Wild**] Realm. You see, the Wyld Realm does not just exist as a plane of our world but it also links worlds across the multiverse. From there, you can pretty much get to anywhere in creation.

Young Archivist: And all that power at Vypus's fingertips... I see... So he didn't realise that the key was Dyani's bloodline. He thought it was some sort of artefact?

Old Archivist: Indeed.

Young Archivist: And he never figured it out?

Old Archivist: Not at first. But towards the end, he began to realise the connection between the Wyld Realm and Dyani's children.

Young Archivist: He was at a disadvantage at last?

Old Archivist: Oh, yes. But it wasn't enough to halt his plans. With enough power absorbed into the dark heart, he was hoping to break the chains of the Devourer and if he could do that, he could follow the Devourer through the multiverse without needing to use the Wyld Realm.

Young Archivist: So the only way to stop that would be to banish the Devourer before any of this happened?

Old Archivist: If only it were that simple. True, the Loyalists had more of a chance with their current advantage but whilst the dark heart was in play, Vypus could absorb the powers of any who stood against him with very little effort.

Young Archivist: So they needed to destroy that first; take away his ability to take their power and then he'd be easier to defeat?

Old Archivist: In an ideal situation it would be as straightforward as that, but as you will find out, this was never an easy task. Whilst Chronotress and Ahtreyu were rallying allies, so too was Vypus. He had already sent in his spy Kohbra [**Proun: cobra**] to gather information from among the Renegades, and Addah had already begun to corrupt Isirithon. But he was also nearing completion of one of the greatest threats that the Alvairn would ever face...

Enter scene with Vypus in his tower.

Vypus: Just a few more alterations...

Sounds of tinkering with energy

Enter Kohbra.

Kohbra: My lord. Forgive the intrusion but I have further news.

Vypus: (continuing with his work) Yes, I expect you do. Why else would you enter without being summoned...

Kohbra: Forgive me, my lord, but this couldn't wait for a summon...

Vypus (puts down his work and sighs) Well then... Don't just stand there gawking like a fool. Spit it out! I do not have the patience for guessing games!

Kohbra: Infernos has decided not to wait for the Alvairn. He is planning to strike without them.

Vypus: (chuckles) That is so very typical of him. Well, things seem to be progressing as planned then. Let us prepare for his arrival.

Kohbra: Fthora is summoning more of the dead titans as we speak to bolster his forces.

Vypus: Fantastic! Little do they know that those she has conjured will ultimately turn upon her once I bring the full force of the Dark Heart to bear upon them. Any news on our other concerns?

Kohbra: No, Lord, but I will report as soon as that changes.

Vypus: Well then... Why are you still here? It's time to put our plan into action. You are aware of the coordinates you shall lead the renegades to I trust?

Kohbra: Yes, my lord. Of course. They shall follow my lead into your grasp.

Vypus: Good. Soon I shall have Infernos's power as well as Fthora's. Our time is near... Go now! Complete your duty and I shall see you richly rewarded.

Kohbra: By your command, lord.

Exit Kohbra.

Enter a Fell Titan (female).

Fell Titan: (triumphantly) Lord Vypus, we have the Earth Primal as you ordered.

Enter several Fell titans dragging a heavily wounded male titan in heavy chains.

Vypus (excitedly) That is excellent news. I trust he didn't give you too much trouble?

Earth Primal: (low and gruff) I should have known you were behind this, coward. Hiding behind your creations, fearful of the knowledge that in single combat any one of my kin could crush you...

Vypus: (taunting/chuckling) My, my... Such poor manners in the presence of your new master, Gofannon.

Gofannon: (spits) Only Alkai may command me. You have no authority, snakeling.

Vypus: (produces the dark heart) Oh, you misunderstand me, Ancient One. I don't need to command you. I don't need you to comply in the slightest... I merely need your power and thereby the control of your artefact.

Gofannon: You will never get my power whilst the breath of Alkai is within me!

Vypus (whispers sinisterly) It's just as well I don't need that either.

Sound of a curved knife being stabbed into Gofannons throat.

Gofannon chokes and gargles.

Vypus: All I need is for you to die. And then I drain your power into this delightful little artefact. You see, normally, I'd drain it from you whilst you're alive. But I find myself in need of expediency, so you'll forgive my rudeness but I just don't have time to drag this out. Fear not, we shall find a new use for your body, just as we did the Water primal.

Vypus: (Smirking) Take comfort in the knowledge that your death will be a part of a great destiny.

Vypus: (slices the knife outwards spilling the titans blood) MY destiny.

Body slumps to the floor as the dark hearts sickening power drags the blood within it.

Vypus: (gasps as the power enters him) Yes... It is almost complete. Soon, I will break open your prison, master, and then we shall rule over everything.

Vypus: (Turns to the Fell titans) Send a detachment to hunt down the Air Primal. Once you have them, bring them to me. As for the rest of the army... prepare our little welcome for Infernos and his fools.

Female Fell Titan: At once lord. What of our allies in the mountains, the Jackal tribe?

Vypus: Oh yes. I'd almost forgotten about them... Tell them their True Lord awaits their prompt arrival.

Female Fell Titan: By your command.

Exit the Fell titans.

Enter the dark whispers/devourer.

Devourer: I have received word from Addah [**Proun. ADD-ah**]. She has failed to stop the Alvairn [**proun. El-va-HEAR-un**] from enlisting the Angels, but she assured me that she has an even greater gift for our conquest.

Vypus: Truly? What is this gift, master?

Devourer: The healer Isirithon. She is being corrupted from within. Her darkness is growing stronger. Once she is broken, she will be useless to her allies.

Vypus: And then we can capitalise by taking that darkness to use against them... This is going to be fun!

Vypus: (laughs sinisterly)

Returning to the Archivists.

Young Archivist: So Vypus had this trap already set for the Renegades? How did Infernos not realise he had a spy among his army?

Old Archivist: Oh, he definitely knew. But Infernos had a plan of his own...

Enter the scene with Infernos and Fthora.

Fthora: My love, are we truly going to march without Chronotress?

Infernos: Fear not my love. If there's one thing I know about Chronotress, he's probably already aware of this decision.

Fthora: Vypus will have set a trap for us...

Infernos: No trap concocted by that snake will stop us.

Fthora: He already has his spy running to him with our movements. Maybe we should wait?

Infernos: I'm already aware of his little spy, and I have a plan. We won't need Chronotress.

Fthora: I trust in your judgement, my love, but it can't hurt to take advantage of the loyalists?

Infernos: (grimaces) We don't need them...

Fthora: Very well, my love. So what is your plan?

Infernos: You summon our dead. Then we send them with Kohbra ahead of the main force. Whilst Kohbra leads them into the trap, our main vanguard will travel around to the south of the tower. And whilst they assault it, we take our strongest warriors and infiltrate the tower right into the heart of Vypus's nest. We kill him, take the Dark Heart, and use it to repurpose his creations for the reclaiming of this world.

Fthora: And the Loyalists?

Infernos: Once their numbers have dwindled, we press our advantage and finally take this place as our own.

Fthora: What of Chronotress?

Infernos: I will defeat him, finally showing who is the strongest, and take his power for us. We shall remake this world and protect it from the mortal races once and for all.

Fthora: A world of our own... No masters but ourselves.

Infernos: As I promised you long ago.

Fthora: What about what Chronotress said about the Devourer? How do we stop him?

Infernos: With the power of the Dark Heart and the Crucible that you carry, we shall destroy him! He thinks I am working for him, but I AM INFERNOS and I serve NO-ONE!!

Returning to the Archivists.

Young Archivist: What was Infernos so desperate to prove?

Old Archivist: He believed that there was no hope for this world if the mortals took it and wanted to prove that he was right.

Young Archivist: Even if it meant destroying everything in the process? Seems to me that he was doing the exact thing he claimed to be fighting against.

Old Archivist: Such is the way when a misguided notion turns to bitterness and hate.

Young Archivist: That's one thing that's never changed. What of the rest of the Alvairn?

Old Archivist: With the host of Armies and the Host of Spirit agreeing to assist them, the Alvairn each made their way back to rendezvous with Chronotress, Ahtreyu and the few remaining loyalists. There was a sense of trepidation as they neared their destination, but each of them knew that this would be the turning point of the entire war. They knew, however, that

even with the Angelic armies of the Haven, the greatest weapons they had would be their Faith and their Determination.

Enter the scene with the Alvairn arriving at their destination.

Sounds of nature at night split apart by the sound of a great portal opening and the marching of many heavy armoured warriors as they assemble and then halt before Chronotress and Ahtreyu.

Chronotress: Welcome back, my friends. And to my father's hosts I bid you a fond welcome and give thanks to my Father for your assistance.

Thonor: We were not unhindered... Evergleam was attacked at the gates.

Ahtreyu: Attacked!? By who?

Thonor: Addah. And a sizable force of Raoshu.

Ahnbiir: Wait... The Raoshu got to Evergleam? How did they manage to get there? Only the Chosen of the Ordos or specific agents of Alkai know that path...

Ckegdromas: From what the guardian was saying, it seems that Addah somehow managed to pick up our trail.

Ahtreyu: That does not bode well...

Isirithon: (slightly snappy) Addah is no longer a problem. I defeated her in single combat. She's gone!

Chronotress: (concerned) You're certain of this? Addah is not easily defeated.

Isirithon: (snaps in anger) What!? You question my ability to fight? Just because I dedicated my power to healing, you think I can't defend myself!?

Ahtreya: (extremely Concerned) Calm yourself, Lady Isirithon. No-one was suggesting—

Isirithon: (snaps at Ahtreya) Oh, and I suppose you think that I'm incapable as well?!

Jahrett: Hmmmmm...

Isirithon: WHAT!!!?

Jahrett: (enquiringly) When you fought... Sorry, defeated Addah... How did the battle take place?

Thonor: What are you getting at, Jahrett?

Jahrett: Just a theory. Brother, you said you fought them too... Did you see Isirithon and Addah fighting?

Thonor: I saw them charge each other, then... they vanished...

Jahrett: Hmmmm... That makes sense...

Chronotress: What is your theory, Jahrett?

Isirithon: Why has there always got to be something untoward happening when I tell you I've defeated something in single combat?

Jahrett: (correctively) Firstly, nobody has EVER denied Isirithon's capability in combat, so you can stop trying to use that against her. Secondly, you're not as clever as you think, ADDAH!!!

Isirithon: What are you babbling about, Spymaster?

Jahrett: (laughs) Now you show yourself.

Ahtreyu: (confused) I had wondered why you had a wild look in your eyes, Lady Isirithon.

Thonor: I am so confused right now...

Ahnbiir: That is Isirithon, but also... Addah. How is this even possible?

Addah: (laughing and speaking through Isirithon) How delightfully clueless you all are. The creator's finest indeed... Aren't you meant to be as wise as you are powerful?

Addah: (indicating to thonor) Clearly this bonehead is all hammer and no nail.

Addah: (laughs maniacally) He couldn't even tell I was inside his own dear friend.

Thonor: (Deeply Angry) You will release her or so help me I'll—

Addah: (unphased) You'll... what, Storm Warden? You can't touch me without hurting her. From what I can tell from her mind... That's not something you're willing to do... Is it?

Ahtreya: I don't know how you managed to possess Lady Isirithon, but it won't last! She will eject you! She's more powerful than you can ever know.

Addah: Oh, I'm sure she's absolutely amazing... at healing. But take that away and all you have is an angry little girl still trying to make sense of a war that should never have happened. She gives a good scrap, I'll admit, but she's no warrior.

Ckegdromas: That just goes to show how little you know. Whilst you were turning your back on your duty, she was learning to embrace hers. She saved more lives than you have ever taken, throwing herself into the frontlines of battle to heal warriors even whilst they are still fighting... That is the mark of a true warrior.

Addah: (uninterested) I really don't care, Jester—

Ahnbiir: We do! So, get lost!!

Addah: Oh, don't worry. I got everything I need already. Be seeing you! **(laughs as she exits Isirithon and vanishes)**

Ahtreyu: (stumped) Well... That was... Cryptic...

Sound of Isirithon collapsing.

Thonor: (effort as he catches her) Alright, lass, take it easy... We've got you...

Isirithon: (recovering) What just happened?

Jahrett: What was the last thing you remember?

Isirithon: (thinking) Centennial gave me this... Amulet... We were leaving Evergleam... Now I'm here...

Chronotress: It seems you were possessed, but you seem okay now.

Isirithon: I'm sorry, Lord Chronotress. I didn't realise...

Thonor: (comforting) Addah's a sneaky one. Not your fault, lass.

Ahtreya: What did she mean when she said "I've got everything I need?"

Ckegdromas: I dread to think...

Chronotress: We will deal with that in due course. Right now, we must prepare for our march—

Sound of a nearby twig snapping.

Jahrett: (cautiously) A moment, my lord...

Jahrett: (Listens closely) We are not alone...

Ahnbiir: (growls) Renegade?

Jahrett: Feels familiar... Give me a moment.

Jahrett walks into the thicket nearby, sounds of an exchange of blows as Kohbra is dragged out in front of the party.

Kohbra (gasps in pain/chuckles) Jahrett... I should have known I couldn't evade you, old master...

Jahrett: (punches Kohbra) What are you hoping to achieve here, traitor?

Kohbra: (laughs in pain) Wouldn't you like to know?

Ahnbiir grabs Kohbra by the throat.

Ahnbiir: (intimidating) You'd better start loosening your mouth and maybe you'll be spared my fangs.

Kohbra: (choking/laughing): So clueless...

Isirithon: (rips Kohbra's head back/intimidating) I am not in the mood for this. Start talking.

Chronotress: Easy, Isirithon. Don't let anger cloud your mind...

Kohbra: (chuckles) Oh, yes... Can't have your designated healer losing her cool. What would her master say?

Ahnbiir throws Kohbra to the floor and slams his foot onto his chest.

Ahnbiir: There's two ways we can do this: you talk and be shown mercy or you keep your forked tongue behind your teeth and we expedite your final journey to judgement.

Jahrett: No need for all of that. We can find things out another way...

Chronotress: (warning) Tread carefully, Jahrett... That is a dangerous tactic of which you speak.

Jahrett: (reassuring) Do not fear, Lord Warden. I won't need to break any tenets.

Kohbra: (ominously) You think you can use your little mind trick on me, do you? Those days are long gone. Nobody can pierce my mind. Lord Vypus saw to that. You may as well kill me! I'm giving you nothing.

Ahtreyu: (chuckles) On the contrary. You've just given us one of the answers we were seeking. Now we just need to find out what prize he's offered you to make you his little spy.

Kohbra: (cocky) Try as you may, your efforts are for naught. I will never tell you of my lord's plans.

Ckegdromas: (smirks) That's absolutely fine. We already know of his scheme. Taunt Infernos and the Renegades into a trap and wipe them out... Sound about right?

Kohbra: (shocked) How could you possibly know?

Ckegdromas: (laughs) Oh, we know a lot more than you and your master think. But here's the kicker: we're not the only ones who know. So really, your attempts at deception and concealment are absolutely pointless, just like your master's plans.

Kohbra: (scoffs) You're bluffing! You could not begin to conceive the grandeur of my lord's plans!

Ahtreyu: (mocking) Seems pretty straightforward to me...

Ahnbiir: Bluffing is an act of deception. We are Alvairn—we do not NEED such things.

Thonor: Let's make this easy for you to understand, We stand with and for Alkai, so nothing can stand against us. No scheme, no enemy, no weapon that your ilk forge against us will prosper.

Ahtreya: Like every plan that came before, this plan will also amount to ash.

Ahtreyu: You can tell your master that we are coming for him, and he WILL face the Creator's justice.

Jahrett: You chose your allegiance. And you, like your allies, have been found wanting.

Kohbra: (menacing chuckle) You think you actually have a chance?

Ckegdromas: (whispers) Lord Chronotress, this one knows very little of our plan. He knows only that we plan to march on Vypus.

Chronotress: (whispers) I trust you have a plan in mind?

Ckegdromas: (whispers and smiles) Let him tell a tale that WE write for him to tell...

Chronotress: (whispers) Deception is not our way. You know this.

Ckegdromas: (whispers) It's not deception if he reports exactly what he knows. All we need to do is change the script, so to speak.

Chronotress: (whispers in understanding) Let him go with what he already knows... Gain advantage with what he doesn't.

Ckegdromas: Precisely. That way, we are not deceptive because he is only reporting what he has seen so far.

Chronotress: (whispers and thoughtful) Hmm... There is wisdom in what you say... Very well.

Chronotress: (to Jahrett) Release him, Jahrett! There is no sense in a pointless death...

Kohbra: (chuckles) You will live only to regret this decision, Warden. When my master learns of how your pitiful band is planning to march on his stronghold, he will laugh.

Thonor: No disrespect, Lord Warden but... Are you certain this is the right course of action?

Isirithon: If we let him go, we lose our advantage.

Jahrett: (realising but playing along) What advantage? He knows how few we are... It won't make a difference if Vypus knows or not.

Ahnbiir: We don't even know how vast Vypus's army is.

Isirithon: I don't advocate the death of anyone generally, but if we let him go...

Chronotress: (Authoritive) WE ARE ALVAIRN!!! WHETHER WE MARCH AGAINST TEN OR TEN THOUSAND ABOMINATIONS, WE ARE ALKAI'S WARRIORS!!

Chronotress: (to Kohbra) And you can tell your master that we WILL meet him on the battlefield, and we WILL be victorious.

Kohbra: (laughing as he wanders into the shadows) We shall see... soon enough...

Young Archivist: So they just let him go? Knowing that they may be put at a disadvantage?

Old Archivist: As Ckegdromas observed, Kohbra only knew half of their plan. He wasn't aware that the Wyld Clans were preparing to answer Ahtreyu's call, nor did he know of the Angels that would be joining the fray.

Young Archivist: Ah, so they maintained their advantage then?

Old Archivist: (smiles) Absolutely. And soon enough they would capitalise on Vypus's folly.

Young Archivist: No such luck for the Renegades, I imagine?

Old Archivist: Infernos had put his plan in motion but he underestimated Vypus. And it would be this miscalculation that would lead the Renegades to their difficulties.

Young Archivist: (chuckles) I bet Infernos was regretting his decision eventually.

Old Archivist: Indeed. Little did he know that his mistake would lead to much more than the defeat of his armies.

Young Archivist: What do you mean?

Old Archivist: His error would cause Infernos to feel the greatest loss he would ever know...

Returning to the story.

Sounds of the Renegades preparing to march.

Infernos: (commanding) Lexian [**Proun LEX-ee-un**] are the preparations made?

Lexian: Yes, lord. Though Kohbra still cannot be located...

Infernos: I'm sure he'll show his face when offered the chance to lead the task force.

Lexian: I still don't believe he can be trusted, my lord.

Infernos: Which is why he doesn't need to know about our plans.

Lexian: Understood, my lord. I will go and prepare the portal.

Infernos: Excellent.

Enter Kohbra.

Kohbra: My lord, forgive my delay but I have information. The Alvairn are preparing to march, though their numbers are pitiful.

Infernos: (smirks) of course they are... But they are not my concern at the moment. I have entrusted the leading of our vanguard to you, Kohbra, as a reward for your... Loyalty. You will be leading the ranks of our risen in the first wave. I trust you will not disappoint.

Kohbra: (feigning gratitude) You honour me, lord. I shall certainly prove my quality. What of you, my lord. To where shall we look for your coming...

Infernos: (smartly) I will be leading the second wave once Vypus's minions have been bloodied.

Kohbra: (feigning flattery) A most masterful plan, my lord. Your enemies are sure to know your power the moment they see you.

Infernos: (smirks knowingly) Oh, I'm counting on it.

Kohbra leaves to prepare, Fthora enters.

Fthora: The risen are ready my love. Your 'second wave' awaits with Lexian. The army awaits. Perhaps it would do well to offer a few words to the assembled warriors, just to keep certain prying eyes from thinking anything contrary is occurring?

Infernos: A wise decision, my love.

Sounds of a crowd of warriors sounding out for Infernos.

ALL CAST MEMBERS (as Renegades): HOO! HOO! HOO! HOO! HOO!

This sounds continues in tandem with chest beats and stomping feet for about six seconds then erupts into a cheer as Infernos stands in front of the assembled Renegades.

Infernos: (booming/commanding) MY WARRIORS, MY LOYAL ALLIES, MY FOLLOWERS. WE STARTED THIS JOURNEY MERELY WANTING A WORLD OF OUR OWN AND SINCE HAVE MET WITH RESISTANCE. FIRST FROM OUR OWN KIN WHO CALLED US RENEGADES, THEN FROM THE ALVAIRN WHO WERE SENT TO QUELL US. NOW BY VYPUS, THE SNAKE WHO CLAIMED TO BE ONE OF US WHILST TAKING OUR WARRIORS AND TURNING THEM INTO HIS DISGUSTING CREATIONS. THIS DAY, WE TEAR VYPUS'S PLANS TO SHREDS AND THEN WE SHOW THE ALVAIRN WHY WE ARE SUPERIOR AS WE TAKE THIS WORLD THAT **WE** HAVE MADE FOR OUR OWN AND FOREVER BANISH THE VERY IDEA OF THE MORTAL RACES BEING GIVEN YET ANOTHER WORLD TO DESTROY!!! WARRIORS OF THE NEW ORDER, STRIKE HARD AND REMIND OUR ENEMIES WHY THEY SHOULD FEAR US!!!!

ALL CAST MEMBERS (as Renegades): HOO! HOO! HOO! HOO! HOO! (*fades out as the march begins*)

Young Archivist: Wow... Infernos REALLY didn't like folk that were against him, huh?

Old Archivist: He just didn't like the idea of anyone or anything being stronger than him.

Old Archivist: (chuckles) That's ego for you.

Old Archivist: (takes a swig from his flask) At any rate, the Emperor is due the day after tomorrow for the exhibition, so we should get more supplies.

Young Archivist: We've already got supplies, haven't we?

Old Archivist: Well, yes... But unless you plan on hosting for an extremely drunk audience in front of our tee-total Emperor, we might need to get some actual food for the banquet.

Young Archivist: Oh I... see what you mean... (**nervous laugh**)

Old Archivist: Also, we will need to get some rest. Tomorrow, we are going on another excursion.

Young Archivist: I only just recovered from the last one...

Old Archivist: Think of it as one last voyage with your master to tie up these loose ends. Also, there is a question that I have yet to find the answer to and, until now, I have been... putting the trip off somewhat...

Young Archivist: Why?

Old Archivist: Because I have not had the courage to face it before... At least, not alone...

Young Archivist: (supportive) Well, in that case I'd be honoured to support you master.

Old Archivist: (smiles) Well then, we'd better get some of Skritch's finest Liquor too.

Sound of the pair leaving the Exhibition hall.

Old Archivist: (sighs to himself) This is going to be the hardest part...

Fade into flash/after-credits scene with Ckegdromas approaching Chronotress.

Ckegdromas: My lord, I wonder if I might speak freely whilst the others are making preparations.

Chronotress: Of course. What's on your mind?

Ckegdromas: (hesitant) You know I'm not usually the kind to throw shade on a good thing but... During my time with Centennial, I... saw... some things... Things that are coming. Events perhaps... And I am ashamed to say they filled me with doubt... About all of this...

Chronotress: You have been given the vision of the Host then? What is it you saw that raised doubt in you?

Ckegdromas: I saw so much. Perhaps too much... Chronotress, I know what you are going to have to do to save the Ark World, and it is a noble thing for which I am thankful beyond measure, but I feel I must tell you... What Infernos saw, with the mortals destroying this world... I fear it will come to pass.

Chronotress: I know of that. I had hoped it would not happen but—

Ckegdromas: Forgive me, there's more.

Chronotress: Go on...

Ckegdromas: I saw three hundred years of peace. The Alvairn and the titan working together. I saw the Alvairn becoming two nations: one in the skies, the seas and the forests, and the other in the mountains and the deep places of the world.

I saw the mortal races at war as darkness begins to enter the world from the shadow realm once more.

I saw us, fighting... ourselves... split in two between our natures, the balance on a tipping point.

I saw great cities falling from the sky, kingdoms and empires ablaze. Even if you cause the world to be remade, I fear these things will happen.

Chronotress: (comforting) I have seen these things too... But rest assured, it is not all darkness. I know that the darkness will return, and you will have the most difficult of times. But I have also seen the races of multiple worlds coming together to defend the Ark World. I have seen lost children forge a new future, an empire born out of the necessity to protect what is sacred to our Father, and I see the heart of a mortal child, filled with courage and power like thunder, and that child will unite the mortal races with bonds stronger than desperation for survival.

I know well of what will come, but do not be blind like Infernos. Have faith that Alkai will always find a way to banish the darkness, no matter how strong it is.

Ckegdromas: I assume the others aren't aware of your task?

Chronotress: Only Alkai, myself, you, and Jahrett know. So do not let your heart be troubled. The others will understand once my task is done, but until then—

Ckegdromas: (rolls eyes) Of COURSE Jahrett would know... I will think on all you have said and pray on all I have seen. It's not going to be the same without you, you know?

Chronotress: After this, nothing will be the same. Such is the way of things; always changing, like water.

Ckegdromas: Well, at least after you, there'll be free reign on anecdotes, which I intend fully to claim, just so you know.

Chronotress: (laughs) I will remember your humour my friend...

The pair laugh.

Ckegdromas: (trying to feign seriousness) Who said I was joking?

A brief silence then both burst into laughter as the episode ends.

-End of Chapter 8-