

They say that a fire only blooms once, that a fire can burn and burn and burn that one time, then be nothing more ever again. What a person never understands is the fact that given time, the same conditions can occur to the point that things are as they were prior. Life regrows following the dancing cinders, the ash enriching the land to bloom again, a never ending cycle repeated many a time ensuring constant reruns. History is kept in mind so one may look back upon such a catastrophe and plan in advance so such a thing never befalls the land again.

The problem arises when greed and arrogance step in the way as one of many new conditions. Where is the profit in preventing a fire when you can rake in as much power and wealth as you want when it finally happens? The people never wise up enough to put a stop to it, they wait and wait in believing such will never come to pass in their life time, a mindset that we only know as natural. So few ever wish to put themselves out to stop it. This is history as we know it, an endless loop that can never be broken... though what if it were? What if people could actually break the cycle? Such a story would then be a truly great one.

~The Dancing Queen, 20xx

Ravenlight

Embers of the Past



Alexander Stormsong

A novel from Frost Storm Productions

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Second Edition.

*Dedicated to my brothers and sisters who continue to battle depression.
Though we face our own demons, we are not alone. Together we are strong, together we
are one!! May Elise's story bring you a form of relief, entertainment, inspiration, and
maybe even hope for the future...*

The Forgotten War

‘I remember the day it all began again. The second war of Tribe and Hive, of Lightonians and Dharkanians, just as I remember that quote of hers. Really a good quote though, a fire that blooms constantly. Sounds like an arsonist’s dream now that I think about it. Really that’s the truth of it though; war over things like eating the last slice of pizza or music choice, really a- oh, guess I’m getting off track aren’t I brain?

Ramble ramble, heh heh; though in all fairness I’m up against death’s door facing the single greatest mistake of my life. Where did it all begin anyway? The beginning, the rancid middle? Yeah definitely the beginning and not that middle stuff.

A hundred and forty thousands years ago our war had begun on Sillith, when it was still a planet divided by a wall of fire. To the northern hemisphere were we who founded the Tribe, the Lightonians who could command light and help life blossom in our own way. Then there was the Hive, the Dharkanians who commanded the dark to enhance the mineral structure of the ground for industrial reasons. Heh, kinda wish that our powers hadn’t given us eternal youth, might’ve died off a lot sooner and the reason for that battle would have been forgotten.

Sigh sigh sigh.

Every battle ended in just more destruction. We continued to replenish the land and they kept on making new weapons. With our powers we pushed harder and harder against one another until the final battle of Sillith itself when

Space-Time was fractured. It was at that point that our fighting spread to other worlds, most notably Earth.

They had their own problems back then, the humans. Slaves to the supernatural of their own world: Vampires, Werewolves, Witches, damn soul stealing Leprechauns. Then of course the Hive had to recruit them to their cause to fight us back. Fortunate for us though, we had the humans which were just as determined. That determination is what allowed us to push for as long as we did.

The stalemate continued though up until a certain event transpired. I remember the news, I intercepted it personally with my squad. William Axis, the Hive leader, had fallen victim to a coup de 'tat and had his powers stolen by five of his best commanders. Serves the slughorning dastard right. That shift in command and power gave us the opening to fix things. Thanks to the human alchemists and our best warriors, we made The Dimensional Mirror and sealed the time-space rips. Lost us our world but saved many others.

I suppose the better years came first after we divided the mirror's power. Once protected it gave us all the opportunity to hunt the remaining Dharkanians and allowed us to help the mortals overthrow their inhuman masters. Yes sir those were better years weren't they, at least until the rogues unified. I remember the beginning of that well though because that's when I met *her* for the first actual time. What a spark of joy it was to see her in an area of utter cold and darkness, shining bright after events we indirectly caused.

Man I wish I could have a drink right now with some popcorn and continue to reflect, but I suppose I'll have time eventually to do that either way.

Let's see, where did the second act really begin anyway? Ah yes, yes I suppose
it would've been *that* day...'

“Son of a-!” came the bellowing yell a man followed by the sound of glass shattering.

A glass full of milk, half bubbling, flew through the air and struck down. It shattered sending white and glass all along a tiled floor, straight up the side of a desk, and along the walls. White flowed down the floor going from gap to gap between the tiles until it ran flat.

“I am so sick of stories starting with dialogue or backstories or stupid quotes or things not even relating to the protagonist, usually all of the above. Why can’t they just drop me straight into the middle of a war or something, I want to see some bloody action!”

The voice echoed off many a wall in a room with only two individuals present. The ceiling white with yellow lights, the walls paneled with the same color as the ceiling, as was the tiled flooring. A wooden desk stood to the back of the room, a man standing with hands pressed down atop an open book now pinned to the desk. Behind him stood filing cabinets and shelves lined with documents, folders, other books, and a fish tank with a variety of fish on the move.

Upon the desk itself in addition to the novel were several monitors, a laptop, a desktop, an ink well and pen, and various other documents. Away from the desk near one of several doors was another man placed in a chair reading a book of his own. The man looked up, chuckling a tad, “Dude, you broke my drink.”

“Seriously Bill, just- seriously, you keep recommending me crap books that have this old trope of starting with some form of backlog load whatever you call it that explains things from the get go. You know I’m not into that yet you still do it.”

“Marty my dude, chill bruh. It’s just a story, it can’t bite.”

“Yeah a story written by a nimrod and read by gullible ass kissers.”

“Dude, I’m pretty sure I could post the security log of what you just said to the internet and get you a bunch of hate mail for that nonsense mate, totally get you fired if this were a normal job.”

“I’m just sick of buying things that repeat the same things, just like how I’m sick of the same crap happening around here every damn day. I want something new, something that’ll excite me. Give me a book that doesn’t give away what’s going on right away. I miss the old days where things just opened with random violence, ya know?”

“How about a fairy tale instead that has the plot in the title? Ooo, ooo, Ponies On A Boat. My sister loved that growing up.”

“Bill I swear to god-”

“Ahem,” came a crackled voice, “Am I interrupting anything?”

Chairs flew, boots hitting the floor in seconds. Both men had at once stood at attention as a third individual entered the room through an open doorway. He stood there, arms crossed, towering above the both of them by a good foot and a half.

“General Wesley sir!” both called.

“At ease at ease,” the man replied, “Now I get it, really I do. You guys are in charge of check-ins and you really have nothing to do except for the shift changes every few weeks, or the occasional transfer of a prisoner or anything of that sort. Still though you must be on guard and sharp.”

“Understood sir, sorry sir,” Marty sighed, his eyes closing, “It won’t happen again.”

“Forget about it, just try not to be too lax on the job. You’re not the only ones bored out of your mind, trust me,” the man concluded turning back out the doorway he had come in from, “Nospheross looks to you to be its keepers.”

“Ooof, man, Wes is scary sometimes and completely decent the rest,” Bill mumbled following the parting, “I can never read that guy.”

“I think he overdoes it, way too defensive about protocol.”

“How so?”

“Like I get it, this is a top notch security prison for supernatural bullshit funded by the Swiss so you’re really not going to want to leak anything. Still though, nothing goes on here anymore. Those light guys haven’t caught any new shadow men in forever.”

“Did- did you seriously just call them light guys and shadow men? You racist ass.”

“Whatever. So where do you think he’s going?”

“Probably to inform that prisoner of their decision.”

The halls echoed with personnel at various turns and corners, several in white lab coats and others in standard military camou battle armament. Wesley in particular walked with a white trench coat splotted with sky-blue stars all over it, the middle unzipped to reveal a Bulletproof Vest with a black shirt on underneath. His travel brought him passed three people, quick to salute before carrying on their way as well. He continued, down a new hallway left, right into a hall network.

Another left was taken right down Hall Thirteen. Few doors dotted the walls of this hall though there were several standing with guns all dressed in

combative gear, a sky-blue star dressed on the chest plate of each as well as on the front of their helmets. Visors covered their eyes though it was clear that they were observing Wesley as he approached, their turning heads. A branching of paths lay before him as the hall split into two though without hesitation he walked immediately down the right hall. Down he went another number of meters, eyes darting round.

Onward he pushed, up until the end of the passage. Before him massive iron doors with several guards armed heavily standing ready. One approached, "General Wesley, how may we assist you?"

"I'm here to deliver the good word to a certain man. Code Omega Blue Seventeen."

"Clearance code accepted. You may enter. If you're here for that one then have fun."

The man stepped aside as the iron doors echoed, creaking slowly open by spreading left and right inch by inch, the sound of clanking heard from the cogs slowly pulling it open. Wesley walked forward between the doors once the gap was big enough, the doors being left open while two armed guards followed momentarily. Inside multiple bars on various sides, a cell block for prisoners. To the right and left were several humanoids all quick to look out and glare as Wesley and the guards moved forward.

Five stories of cells, all multiple down with at least twenty per side per story; totaling close to two hundred total cells, all with armed guards patrolling them on the outside. It was at the fifth one Wesley stopped suddenly, turning to the right. Staring into the cell he quickly viewed a man in a black robe with red stars scattered across it, a man with silver mid-back length hair, a man who had eyes of amber.

His arms and legs sat strapped against the back wall, clamped at the hands and feet by metal machine components. Three thick metal clamps held his torso in place with one clamped around the top of his head and throat as well. The restraints in place allowed for only his mouth and eyes to move around which is exactly what they did as soon as Wesley came into his view, “Ah, well if it isn’t the Great Warden of Nospheross, to what do I owe the pleasure?”

“You know me Cortez, just checking to make sure my favorite prisoner is enjoying himself,” came the chuckled reply.

“Oh, well, you know, I’m doing fine. Hanging out chained to a wall with devices that are sucking the life out of me as we speak is my idea of a great time. Totally. How about you?”

“Enjoying my freedom, thanks.”

“Riveting. Well General Ezdorth you’re clearly here for something other than the usual smack talk, might I inquire as to what that might be?”

“I’ve come by to give my condolences because they’re finally going to execute you after all this time. Took them a little too long to come to this conclusion in my opinion but whatever.”

“Capital punishment? That goes against the Lightonian way or whatever that nonsense is that you people preach. I’m surprised, truly.”

“Well everyone finally decided it might be for the best for you Cortez. I’m sure you can understand why we might feel this way, right? Your kin did damage but you in particular were one of the Tribe’s greatest threats.”

“That I was. Well I can only say that you’re all fools for not having done it any sooner.”

“Fools? Big talk coming from you buddy. You’ve been locked up for several millennia at this point. You should be grateful that we’re finally going to put you out of our misery.”

“My my, your commentary still bores me. Keep that up and I won’t even need an actual executioner. I guess ignorance comes naturally to mindless lapdogs.”

Wesley’s eyes narrowed, his hands now tight fists with his teeth slowly becoming visible with a grind against themselves, “You’re one to talk, you bastard. Look around you Cortez, you’re locked up air tight with dozens of your own pet blood suckers and flea bags that once supported the mighty Hive. We even have some of your Dharkanian comrades locked up on top of that or did you forget?”

“No, that fact has not been lost to me.”

“Then you should zip it Cortez and face facts. Your era ended twenty thousand years ago with our victory. A victory for us Lightonians and the Tribe as a whole. There is no victory left for The Hive, especially not for you Dharkanian filth!”

“Nothing is ever truly decided. I taught you that years ago, didn’t I? Heh, had the Tribe actually learned that, they might not have lost Sillith.”

Wesley glared, sweeping away immediately to begin his walk away, “I’ll be sure to tell the executioner to drag things on for as long as possible. Say hello to your daughter for me, especially if she still has that hole in her head.”

“And I’ll be sure to tell your ex-wife you said hi then when I get to Hell. I wonder if she’s still in pieces, hmm? From what I remember, the blast left so little of her whole that it was hard to mourn, right?”

“Piss off already,” he growled leaving the cell block, his steps ceasing to echo once far enough away.

“So bored, eh? Well don’t worry General, your life will be livened up soon enough.”

A vast chain of rocky mountains littered the region. Snow covered much of the land, much of the trees, leaving few patches of grass visible near heat release ducts. Beyond the typical sounds of nature there came the sound of a roaring truck moving up along a trail. The trail arched into the deeper section of the mountains, where there sat a large wooden shack. Stationed outside with guns in arms were several soldiers, all dressed combat ready, “Ugh finally man. Been waiting for my shift to be over.”

“I hear that. Time to go hit up the joint and get my buzz on. What about you Daniel?”

“Eh, sorry Mac. Heading home to check on my wife.”

“Man we have got to get you a hobby.”

“I collect stamps Mac, that good enough for ya?”

“Boy hell nah.”

The truck pulled to a stop before them, the glass tinted too dark to see inside. It sat there unmoving as the group of eight men stood together looking right at it. Before long though their attention went back to one another, then back to the truck after several of the exchanges. One approached, “Hey Jackel, that you driving man? What’s the hold up?” he called out.

Still nothing as all eight readied their rifles, taking aim at the truck with eyes sharp, visors dropping down in front of their faces from their helmets. One stepped ahead, “Not funny. Jackel or whoever is in there, you

have exactly ten seconds before we open fire and fill you full of holes. That's policy! This silence violates our security code. One, two,"

Nothing.

"-three, four, five."

As they moved the rifles forward, the door was heard creaking. Three of the men sighed, lowering their weapons as others simply backed off a bit. Stepping out into half view was a man dressed just as they were, his own visor down. A soldier approached the truck yet again, "Jackel you jack wagon you had us-"

Immediately the man dropped to his knees, then forward. Down he went collapsing to reveal several massive holes in his back. All of the men stumbled, some choked up, others breathing out heavy in one burst, two gulping with one shouting, "Jackel!"

The sound of fabric blowing and whipping in the wind was heard behind, a sound that quickly caused all to turn, "What is this!?"

"Jackel!"

"Are we being punked?"

"Stand ready!"

The sound of slicing, leather being torn, the sound of liquid spraying out across the ground and some thuds, then the blood curdling screaming. Black shards flew through the air, quickly slicing through each of the men sending them flying back with a variety of stabs, cuts, and with the black shards of unknown origin sticking out of them. Only two stood, cut, one yelling in pain with the other shaking and wheezing.

Before them a man in a black robe with a red star pattern, a man who quickly flew forward into the screaming one slamming through his chest a

single black rod, right through the heart and out the man's back. The last man quickly held up his com device, thumb held to the button when there was another sound of fabric ripping.

The man dropped the device, stumbling back as a cut appeared down the middle of his body, blood quickly spraying out as he fell back splitting in half. Behind where he stood was another man in the same attire as the first. The truck doors opened then as more figures stepped out, some jumping out of the back of the truck landing on the ground. All looked ahead to the outpost, some grinning, others still, two masked, with the one at the head of the group simply nodding, his mouth opening as seven others leaped down behind him, joining the group.

“The time has come.”