

Verdatia

The continuation of the biggest conspiracy ever to rock the very infrastructure of Arian society. The end of the Verdatia storyline, and a new beginning for the galaxy.

| Journal Entry 23

Damn! The Hicondae have decided to attack today! The plan is half-finished, but intelligence reports seem to imply that the humanoids are going to stage their attack much sooner than expected. We'll have to rush in half-blind and hope for the best.

The plan is this: The Hicondae are bringing all their remaining city-destroyers out of hibernation, and coordinate a strike with all the forces they can muster from the surrounding area. I will spearhead the assault with the Ceklak, and keep the Protector busy while the remaining forces demolish the city. Without their goddess or their capital city, and the resurgence of the city-destroyers, plus the concept of the "evil demon" winning out over the "good goddess" when I destroy the Protector will be simply moral-shattering. It all hinges on me.

If I fail to destroy her, she will kill all the remaining city-destroyers. The Hicondae will be left without their most powerful ally if I die. The Protector will likely take the offensive again against the Hicondae, and the war will be all but over. Either way, this war will be decided tomorrow. Centuries of conflict are finally coming to an end. The fate of the Hicondae is intertwined with my own, just as the fate of the humanoids lies with their goddess.

I have wasted too much time. I must finish preparations for the assault. I will keep a sharp eye out and a cautious ear listening, and if I survive, chronicle the entire battle tomorrow. If I do not, the point is moot. This entire journal will probably be destroyed in the aftermath if we lose. But I must win. I will win for myself, for revenge against the Protector, for the injustice heaped on the Hicondae ever since the humanoids first arrived, and most of all I must win because I have survived this long, and I will not have Kayne to see me dead after all.

| Journal Entry 24

By virtue of the fact that there is a journal entry 24, it should be obvious that WE WON!! As I promised in the last entry, I will start from the beginning and relate the entire battle.

I found out today that the main humanoid city is very close to the coast of a major ocean. I've been so busy lately I never noticed before how close we were. Naval power has never been a concern in this war.

The city-destroyers waited there, hundreds of feet below the surface, hibernating for more than a year. It was time for them to come back to life, back into the war. They were genetically programmed to wake up under the influence of a weak electrical shock, and for this purpose the Hicondae had several eels genetically programmed to seek out the city destroyers, even under the layers of sediment that they hid underneath.

Even as the Hicondae forces gathered around the central humanoid city, preparing for the battle to end all battles, we waited for the eels to do their job. Minutes seemed to stretch into infinity as we waited. And then I saw the first ripples and bubbles of something immense beyond anything else in the galaxy begin to stir under the water.

Its head broke through the surface of the water causing waves that would have capsized small ships. Water cascaded off its scales with such force that the crashing was almost deafening even the hundreds of feet away on shore that we were. Its shoulders, chest, arms, and waist one by one came into view; each new addition seemed to double its apparent size in my mind. Finally, it was no more than ankle deep in the water, even though it was still very far out, and approaching shore.

The thing was huge beyond any expectations I had. I was under the impression that it was maybe 50 feet tall when I had heard the descriptions before, but now I realize I was far off. Its head challenged the tops of huge buildings at nearly 300 feet! A 30 story creature, frighteningly reptilian, powerful beyond anything else on this planet save for the Protector and myself. Scales so thick that the humanoids weapons were useless against it. I realized then that this was the Hicondae equivalent of the nuclear bomb.

One then one more arose from the water to follow. Each one nearly 300 feet tall, their powerful arms looked like they could tear a skyscraper from its foundation, their thick tails could wipe out a city block by accident, and their enormous mouths were well over 15 feet wide, able to open a full story tall. Humans were like bugs to it, we would seem maybe two inches tall to it, if that. I have no wonders about why the humans feared them so much. They were truly capable of destroying a city with no support of any kind.

Everything was ready. The time to strike was now.

The city-destroyers spearheaded the attack. The three giants ignored the perimeter guards with their puny weapons, and initially sent the humans scattering in panic. The Hicondae and nearly every kind of creature they had followed closely behind, cleaning up what they left behind.

Then the Protector flew up from the cathedral and a great cheer spread out among all the humans. They need not fear, their goddess was here to protect them. Of course that was my cue.

Before the Protector could begin to attack the first of the gargantuan beasts, I flew up to meet her. Strange how quickly I got used to flying. It must be a genetic throwback from when the Arions and Velorians were one race. "It is over, Protector! This invasion is the beginning of the end for the humans!" Then, before she could even react, I folded my wings directly behind me and let myself fall through the roof of the cathedral. That was where I was humiliated, that was where she lived, and that was where I wanted the final battle.

Of course we could still easily see each other with Tachyon vision, and she flew down in front of me. The sounds of battle were horrible around us, but separate from us. In the cathedral, we were in our own miniature battlefield and nothing around us mattered.

"Are you insane?" She asked of me. "I destroyed you last time. The only reason you're still alive is because I let you live. It was the last mistake I'm going to make with you. This time you will die. Then I will kill these last few the city-destroyers, and once I know they're gone I can leave this city again and join the fight against the Hicondae. It will only be a matter of time before they finally fall. You've just signed their death certificate."

I figured at this point that I should keep her talking. The more time we waste here, the more damage will be done to the city. Then, even if I lost, the Hicondae would have some small advantage. They'd stay alive for a few more years maybe, perhaps long enough to engineer a weapon that can kill the Protector. Like the Ceklak. I knew that even now it was rushing to help me. If I kept her attention focused on me, she might not notice it until it was too late.

"The Hicondae have made some improvements, if you haven't noticed." I smirked at her, and flared my mighty wings. "And my heat vision is now ten times your superior. You are destined to lose this battle. Then the humans will fall, not the Hicondae. But I have one question. Why did you side with the humans? The Hicondae were here first. The Elder Ones dropped the humans off like some kind of an infestation. They don't belong here."

"I am a Protector! I protect the humans where I am assigned to. It's in my blood. If the Elder Ones dropped the humans off on this planet, they had a reason to do it. But Verdatia isn't big enough for both races. The Hicondae must be destroyed if the humans are to survive here. The war is too far gone for there to ever be peace, and everyone knows it. Now I want to know one thing. Why were you sent alone to kill me? That's suicide and every Arion knows it."

"Someone wants me dead. I don't know who, I don't know why. There will be time to find out later. After you die. You humiliated me. You took away everything I ever wanted to have and everything I ever wanted to be. All I have left now is the Hicondae. They have proven themselves to be valuable allies." Then I heard the tell-tale golden footsteps of the Ceklak, and hoped the Protector was too focused on me to notice the sound or look through the walls. "And you're about to find out why." I smirked.

The Protector moved first. Just like last time, she used her heat vision from a distance. I moved a wing in the way to block it, I still remember the pain it caused me. That pain fueled my own heat, and I unleashed my new power for the first time on a living being.

The Protector was thrown back against the wall from the shear heat expanding the air. Tapestries spontaneously burst into flames up to 30 feet away and the carpet melted into black sludge in a 15 foot radius around me.

The Protector got back up, the Velorian fabric of her costume less damaged than she was herself. She was about to rush me when the Ceklak burst through a stained glass window, growling at the being who was threatening its master. I saw the Velorian's eyes widen and she stammered, "No... no you're not real! There's no such thing as the Ceklak! It's a story to frighten children!" It had the exact effect I had planned. Psychology is a powerful weapon.

The Ceklak could smell her fear and sprang to action. I joined it, careful not to touch the gold shell. I knew my allergy to gold would hurt me more than the Protector. The Protector was too frightened to fight back at first, the Ceklak made a few grabs for her, and finally managed to get a death grip around her neck. I could see the effect immediately. I got around behind them where the Ceklak wouldn't be as likely to hit me, and managed to get one arm around her waist and my other holding her arm back.

She panicked. Before the Ceklak could get a better, more weakening grip, she broke free from our hold and tried to fly away. I tackled her from behind but, back to her original strength already, threw me off. Then the enraged Ceklak leapt into action and tried to get a hold of her again. She backed off time and time again, it looked like the Ceklak would actually be the end of the mighty Protector, terrified of a children's fairy tale!

I saw her grab a hold of a steel support for a balcony and tear it off the wall. Too late, the Ceklak made one final lunge and embraced her. At this point I finally got to my feet and was rushing to help. I unleashed my heat vision on the remaining balcony support and the weakened structure toppled on the two of them. I knew the Ceklak could survive that, and the Protector would not be harmed, but it might distract her.

When they rose from the rubble I saw that the Protector had somehow gotten free of the bear hug the Ceklak had on her, but now her head was completely engulfed in its huge mouth! I saw her muscles tense with the fear of death, and summoning the last of her strength she swung the support rod she snapped off again and again into the side of the Ceklak, first denting its metal shell and then, finally, breaking through! One more swing and she cleaved the monster in half at the waist. She threw the pieces on the floor, exhausted from the effort. I had to act fast, before she got her strength back.

She swung the rod at me this time, but I blocked easily with a motion of my arm. I grabbed her throat and brought her face to face with me. I did not see the impossibly beautiful and powerful creature that she was genetically raised to be. I saw twisted purpose, corruption, fear, and weakness in her eyes. And finally, desperation.

"Even if you kill me," she said, "It is still over for you. At the same time the Hicondae created the city-destroyers, the humans created the atomic bomb. It has been this way since the beginning of the war, neither side ever really had the advantage. They would have used it if I didn't show up, but I stopped them. I knew they would irradiate the planet with it and do as much damage to themselves as to the Hicondae. But we still have the bombs. I was ready for this.

"If I die, my last acolyte is waiting downstairs for his final act in my service. He will set off the bomb, destroying me, you, and those last three city-destroyers. The humans will have the Bomb, and the Hicondae will have nothing to combat it. It will be worth the sacrifice of atomic warfare to destroy the Hicondae once and for all. The war would have eventually destroyed the planet anyway, the weapons on both sides just keep getting stronger and stronger. So you see, you can not win. If I lose, so will you, and so will the Hicondae. I can die knowing that I protected these people to my last breath."

Just then, who should run into the room but Shill! He had a small, shiny key in his mouth and was being chased by a tall blond woman. "Goddess! It has the key! I can't set off the Bomb without it!" Shill! My savior twice now! He must have seen the shiny key and wanted to bring it to me like all the other shinies lately, ever since he became jealous of the Ceklak. But I had no idea he followed me here!

I saw the Protector's eyes glow violet out of the corner of my eye. If I had not been taking these journals and become more aware of what was going on around me I probably never would have seen it in time. I dove for Shill, shielding his tiny body with my own. The Protector's heat vision drilled into my back mercilessly. "SHILL!! RUN!!!" I shouted, taking the key from him. Then I grabbed the confused acolyte and used her body as a human shield. The Protector instantly shut off her beams. Throwing the acolyte to the floor I swallowed the key. "If you want this key back now, you will have to tear it from my lifeless stomach. We finish it now!"

The Protector and I clashed once more, the time that all took was enough to her to get most of her strength back. Last time I shattered my fists on her invulnerable body. This time I was more careful because I could feel the pain. When she landed both fists across my face, sending me sprawling, I knew that she had the upper hand. I would not be able to win this fight.

The sounds of the war were still all around us. The screams of the humans for their goddess were stronger than ever. Their forces were being destroyed. The city-destroyers were too much for them. "Damn you Arion! I've wasted too much time talking to you! My people need me! Keep him busy, Clairon. I'll be back to help as soon as I've killed the city destroyers!" Then she left.

Clairon lunged for me obediently, but she was no fighter. The Protector made a fatal mistake in not finishing me off when she had the chance. I spun around her swing and grabbed her from behind. I wrapped my left arm around her tiny waist and held her arms with my wings' claws. That left my right arm free. Slowly, I leaned forward to her ear. "Your goddess deserted you, Clairon. And now you are going to die." I could not reach around to stop her heart from the position I was in, so I decided to try something else.

I dug my fingers into the back of her neck and took a good, firm grip on her spine. Quickly I twisted my hand, snapping the cartilage between the vertebrae and severing the spinal cord. Suffice to say the result was unexpected.

When her spinal cord was interrupted, her body lost control of the chemical energy stored in her breasts. Her skin quickly became too hot to touch, even for me, and as I threw her to the ground I saw her burn away to ashes, immolated from the inside out by her own stored energy reserves.

I needed a weapon against the Protector. Already I could hear the pain-filled, ear shattering shrieks of a 300 foot giant that just suffered a mortal blow of some kind. Two left. I looked around. There was nothing but the body of the Ceklak. I knew I couldn't touch that, my unusually strong allergy to gold prevented it. It would feel like my skin was on fire to hold it, but I came to the realization that there was no time left. I had to destroy the Protector, now, and the Ceklak's shell was the only weapon I had available.

I braced myself against the searing pain in my hands and tore the arm off the dead monster. All I wanted to do was throw it back down and make my hands stop hurting, but I knew that I couldn't do that. I had to win this battle, shut out the pain. I clenched my teeth and flew off after the Protector.

My flight was awkward because of the pain and weakness, but it was also silent. Once more I found myself determined not to cry out in pain, or the Velorian would hear me. In my current state surprise was the only weapon I had. I found her flying toward the second city-destroyer and headed straight for her. Twice I nearly dropped the Ceklak's arm, the pain was so bad. As fast as I could I swooped silently at her, her progress slowed by the slow but mighty giant trying to swat her away like a bug.

The pain had been growing geometrically ever since I first touched the gold, but it was finally almost over. I thrust the arm in front of me and finally collided with her. I took her by surprise and was able to bend the arm around her tiny waist. I hoped beyond hope that the hard-wired nervous system of the Ceklak did not require it to be alive to work, and when the palm of the hand came into contact with what was its own shoulder joint, the hand closed! The Protector was now encircled around the waist by the Ceklak's golden arm, but I was in too much pain to do anything about it just yet. We both crashed to the ground, she from weakness and I from pain.

My hands were on fire. I just wanted to wipe any gold residue off of them and crawl into a hole and try to heal. But there was no time for that. She was already trying to peel the fingers away from the upper arm that held her. I crawled toward her on my knees, and brought my fist down on her again and again, trying to beat her into submission. I could see bruises beginning to form on her face and arms, my arms felt like lead weights but I couldn't stop. Not until she was ready to die.

Finally, with no strength left in me, I think I knocked her unconscious from the pain. I collapsed next to her for a moment, trying to get my strength back, trying to catch my breath, trying to stop my hands from hurting. It was not over yet. I had one more thing to do.

Leaving the gold around her waist, I scooped the Protector up in my arms and flew high over the city, clearly in the view of nearly everyone in the battle. It was obvious that the Protector was unconscious or dead to all of them. I straightened my fist into a knifehand, and brought it down on the back of the Velorian's neck as hard as I could three times before I cracked the spinal cartilage. One more, and the spinal cord broke. I threw the Velorian straight up into the air, and her body burned with the intensity of a dozen suns as the chemical energy in her huge breasts was all released at once on herself. She fell to the ground like a fiery comet, nothing left of her but bone and ash.

Now it was over. The humans saw their goddess destroyed at my hands. They lost their will to fight. Their will to live. The Hicondae quickly finished the battle against the sorrow-ridden humans, and that day the human capital city finally fell. It would not be long before the rest of the human civilization followed suit.

Now that the is was over, I have to ask myself something. Who won? Obviously we, the Hicondae, won. But who are they? Are they the "good guys?" Defending the planet against the human invasion, taking back what is theirs? Were the humans wrong, trying to survive where the Elder Ones carelessly dropped them? I cannot resolve the question. Both sides took their needs to extremes, and both paid the price with war, death, and decay.

All I know is that the Elder Ones are now, more than ever, to be hated. They had no business creating the supremis. They had no right to seed the galaxy with human life. They were irresponsible in overlooking the Hicondae as intelligent life. I am no longer an Arion, but I was raised with Arion values and I will continue to hold true to the ones I believe in. The Elder Ones must pay for their crimes against the galaxy. And that means the Velorians and the Arions must be destroyed. And anywhere else there are humans on alien worlds with other intelligent life I will work to undo the damage the Elder Ones had done.

Some day, with the help of the Hicondae, I may even be able to challenge the Elder Ones themselves.

| Journal Entry 25

Wow. It has been months since I touched this dusty journal. I've been so busy lately I haven't had time to keep it updated. I was reading over my old entries when I decided to write again. In fact, now that things have calmed down a bit, I'm going to continue my writings. However, this book-sized journal is best laid to rest as a remembrance of how I got where I am today.

I am now the Majordomo-Kal of the Hicondae. I am the power behind the throne of the Hicondae Empire. The Hicondae rely on me for information about the stars, now that humans have been exterminated, even the Welsage were killed, the Hicondae have turned their attention toward the final frontier.

I have told the ruling body of the Hicondae about every alien race I know of. They have begun work on huge living ships capable of traveling between the stars, now that I have told them about warp drive theory. This race's knowledge and power is growing by leaps and bounds. Soon, very soon, we will be the heart of a vast interplanetary Hicondae Empire. And soon, we will have the power to stand up to the Arions, and destroy them. The Velorians will follow. And then the Elder Ones will pay for what they did to this galaxy. Every race has their unique advantages and technology; somewhere in this galaxy, there must be a being with either the knowledge or the power to stop the Elder ones. That is our advantage over the Arions. They destroy other cultures, we will learn from them, let them join us, grow stronger for knowing them.

When I leave this planet to begin pulling other races into the Empire, I will leave this journal here. If something happens to the ship I am on, I do not want this book destroyed. So ends the story of my rebirth, and so begins a new era for the entire galaxy.

The End

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