

On the site of the former military base, the ogres erected a sphere in a matter of days that closed the area around the ring. A'as conducted his research without being distracted by what was happening around him. Even when war with the Truth was declared, he ignored the call to join. All he cared about were the anomalies. The more he studied them, the less he understood. He even managed to regret letting that man from the world of anomalies go.

From the first days, extraordinary phenomena began to occur inside the sphere. The ogres reported incredibly long corridors, rooms that appeared and disappeared, doors that led to unknown places, regular disappearances of ogres and equipment. A'as did not pay attention to this, devoting time to collecting anomalous objects and studying them. While his kind was waging war with the Truth, A'as finally achieved worthy results. A special metal called Prismarine, created by the Broken Space, is able to resist it. People made weapons and defensive structures from it. The Ring was created from the same material, but there was too little of it.

A'as immediately sent all his forces to study the nearest territories of the anomaly world. The ultraphite who commanded the guards tried to convince his master, but quickly felt Arpron's anger on himself and was sent along with the others. A'as, confident in his abilities after the battle with the anomalies, did not see any threats to his life.

After days of work, Apron reached a new dead end. Conducting research and calculations in his mind, he was always one step away from completing the research. One detail constantly eluded him, and this began to anger Arpron. He did not even know when he experienced something like this.

“Greetings.” A strange voice appeared in Arpron’s mind.

“Introduce yourself.” Arpron said.

“Don’t you recognize me? This is O’lo, I learned that you were conducting your research outside the city and decided to contact you.”

“You shouldn’t distract me if you want to talk.”

“In Subterranea, everyone is worried about you engaging in open combat.”

“I wouldn’t call it a battle. More like cleaning up outsiders.” - A’as clenched his fist for a second, feeling its weight, but quickly returned to the dialogue.

“I have a lot of work to do. I’ll contact the city when I have the results ready.”

“I can keep you company.”

“That would be unnecessary, end of communication.” - A’as severed the connection with the outsider, quickly forgetting this dialogue.

Passing by the collection of anomalies, he tried to find at least some patterns in their structure. Living furniture, a living pile of animal meat, a vending machine selling items of unknown origin, a monkey with a jetpack. No logic could explain such a variety of forms. If only A’as could witness the effects of the Broken Space on living beings, but satellites exploring the entire surface of the planet could not detect the source of the anomalies.

While disassembling one of the anomalies, A’as felt something strange. His body periodically became heavy, his uberreaction slowed down, and he spent whole seconds making decisions. This could not be called fatigue. Perhaps he was infected with something when he was outside his home, where he spent entire centuries. The reports spoke of diseases from other worlds, but the alien's body was not comparable to a human’s. Surely it was fatigue from work.

The next day, A’as returned to work when he was disturbed again.

"I think you were too busy with your research." - O'lo decided to break up his brother's monotonous work again.

"I'm almost done." - A'as tried to end the conversation early, but was interrupted.

"I have one request."

"And what is it?"

"Can you send one of the anomalies to us?"

"You are making this request for your collection, aren't you?"

"You Caught Me. My collection has many new exhibits."

"Aren't you tired of doing this?"

"What are you talking about. This is the best. New creatures are more interesting than people."

"I hope others lock you up in your gallery. You are sometimes a threat to yourself."

"Don't worry, I send ogres to capture targets of interest to me. Of course, I have to hand them over for dissection first, but everything that's left gets to me."

"Yeah, I've studied the research reports. I think they're too superficial."

"What are you talking about?"

"Never mind, I have to prepare the results and issue orders."

"Okay, don't forget to leave me a couple of anomalies."

"What makes you think I'm the first person to come to?"

"Have you forgotten? You've helped me in the past. It was about 8,000 years ago, I think. You brought me a collection of thinkers and philosophers."

"You didn't vivisect them? I sent them because their intelligence could cause problems."

"Well, you know, that was a big loss for a historian like me. So I filled them with metal and put them in my display cases. Technically, we've eliminated the problem."

"Over."

A'as was once again alone with himself. Each thought dragged on for an impossible long time. He did not immediately realize that he had been standing in one place for an hour. Having come to his senses, he headed to the Sphere command center. To his surprise and displeasure, no one met him. The ogres that were watching the base through the monitors

were absent, having tried to telepathically detect at least someone inside; only silence awaited him. The surveillance monitors showed places that were not related to the complex.

The head of security and the orgres that A's sent have not yet returned. Perhaps it is worth checking their reports.

[Report # 567478588]

Location: A large metropolis from the world of Anomalies.

Report content: A group of 113 ogres arrived in the metropolis in camouflaged trucks. No resistance was encountered along the way. No people or other new species were found in the city.

Place of arrival - a forty-five-story skyscraper in the city center. Previously, the building served as an archive for the ADT company. Arrival was without outside interference.

Addition #1: The group of ogres sent inside did not respond to the command post's messages.

Addition #2: Strange astronomical phenomena observed in the sky.

Addition #3: Air support required.

Last Update Report #567478588 received 46 hours ago.

[Report #567679780]

Location: Airport from the Anomaly World.

Report Contents: A group of 70 ogres arrived at the civilian airport where the ADT company's base of operations was located. No resistance was encountered along the way. An unknown species of humans was detected.

Addition #1: The group of ogres came too close and were attacked by unknown humans.

Addition #2: Audio recording received.

“Requiring support at our coordinates.” - sounds of gunshots could be heard in the background.

"In the name of the Subterranea, these creatures have too many limbs; we require support." - sounds of one of the ogres being torn apart could be heard in the background.

"They are emerging from underground. Freeze the passages." - screams of one of the ogres could be heard on the recording.

"These are not humans. This swarm acts together with the anomalies." – the recording abruptly ended.

Last updated Report #567679780 was received 50 hours ago.

[Report #567135690]

Location: Sports stadium from the world of Anomalies.

Report content: A group of 140 ogres led by the head of the Sphere security arrived at the sports stadium, where a medical center for people affected by anomalies was located. No resistance was encountered along the way. No people or other new species were found in the city.

Addition #1: A group of ogres entered the stadium without resistance. ADT servers were found. All information was confiscated.

Addition #2: Containers containing Prismarine samples were found. All samples were confiscated.

Addition #3: The group left the stadium without resistance. Return to the Sphere is expected within 10 hours.

Last updated Report #567679780 was received 47 hours ago.

A'as checked the surveillance footage. Ultraphite and his squad returned to their base, but were unable to get inside. They had to cut out the front door. All the ogres and ultraphite that went inside were missing. All the ogres that remained inside were also lost in the corridors of the scientific base.

Heading towards the exit of the alien's cage, they sensed danger. Ahead, at the exit from the complex, there was impenetrable darkness. A'as tore a metal sheet from the wall and crumpled it into a ball, and threw it forward, expecting to hear a thud from the fall, but this did not happen. Repeating the experiment one more time, the result was repeated. The main entrance is blocked. All personnel are missing.

Perhaps now is a good time to request help?

Or is it possible to study the unknown phenomenon better?

A'as has never known defeat; he has already managed to overcome two anomalies. Another one will not be able to harm him. While exploring the rooms of the complex, he discovered new oddities: the rooms periodically changed their position in space or the floor and ceiling inside them. At some point, Arpron came across a strange liquid that flowed from the walls. Having removed the metal covering, he discovered the remains of the ogres that serviced the complex.

It seems that this place was doomed from the very beginning. The very land on which it was built is cursed. Anomalous energy permeated it; no one and nothing can live on it anymore. This poison slowly poisoned everything, maybe even A'as himself suffers from it.

Arriving at the medical complex, he entered the scanning chamber, and the machine began to study every cell of his body. The device quickly discovered foreign cells that had settled inside the alien's body. They skillfully disguised themselves as Wild cells and slowly absorbed substances and spread like a tumor.

A'as had never been sick in his life, and such a feeling caused him fear and indescribable scientific interest, but he could not so easily cut it out of his body. The power required to harm Arpron could be calculated in atomic bombs, but there was another way.

Living beings usually do not attach importance to the work of their organism. A'as knew himself well. He took a deep breath, drawing in all the air in the room, then closed his eyes. Every cell in his body stopped for a moment; from a living organism, he turned into a statue. The cells that made up and supported him as a single organism began to separate,

acting in isolation from each other. He slowly and painfully peeled off foreign parts, collecting them in a heap all over his body. The parasitic cells tried to resist and fight back, but there was little they could do. Having gathered them in one place, A'as collected his organism back together. The alien biological organism was spat out onto the floor of the medical center.

The red pulsating substance was constantly changing its shape. At some point a mouth appeared on it, but it was unable to say anything. A'as telepathically placed the organism in a sealed vessel to study it better.

The substance gradually grew, and Arpron immediately remembered the creature he had fought earlier. The Red Corruption anomaly that tried to attack him. It could absorb living organisms, but also adopt their abilities. The anomaly absorbed ultraphite, which allowed it to survive the blow of Arpron and penetrate his body with drops of blood, disguised, slowly recovering.

The nature of the anomalies did not cease to amaze A'as and began to cause concern. And he planned to use this power to advance his species. It was not worth it; the radiation of the Broken Space attracted people like moths, and they began to use it. But this was not the fire of progress granted by Prometheus. But a destructive flame that turned the world into a wasteland.

A'as came out to the Ring. The ogres managed not only to restore it but also to improve it with the help of the remains of the alien ship. A'as reached for the control panel to activate it; all the power from the Sphere was directed to the Ring, and when the light in the complex went out, the Arpron activated the device. A powerful emission of blue energy absorbed all the anomalous energy in the area. The rooms of the complex returned to normal, and the anomalies imprisoned in the chamber lost their properties, returning to an unchanged state or simply dying.

The Ring was able to show its potential, but this was not enough to completely eliminate the threat of anomalies. It seems that this cannot be done without outside help. A'as contacted O'lo.

"It's not often that you contact me first."

"Yes, I think now is the best time for this. I have a favor to ask of you."

"You never ask for anything. You know, I'm busy right now."

"Are you blowing every speck of dust off your exhibits?"

"You know me well. What do you need?"

"Contact Atlantis and send me ultraphites from the Cerber guard and ogre pilots."

"Are you planning to move to another secret lab?"

"No, I want to take a walk. I heard that we are at war. I think no one will pay attention if I visit a few places."

"I don't quite understand what you have in mind, but I'm in."

"What?"

"Of course, I don't plan to go out into the world on my own, but my mind is with you. You will bring me an anomaly for the collection, right?"

A'as examined the flask with the remains of the Red Corruption, which continued to grow - "I'll think of something."

A'as telepathically bent the roof of the Sphere, opening a passage for the new ship. Having left another laboratory, Arpron looked back before leaving. As soon as the power of the Ring disappeared, the anomalous energy was absorbed into the complex again. Stone pillars began to emerge from the ground, which clenched into a fist, crushing the complex into a metal lump.

An unknown force continues its attempts to destroy the Ring. Perhaps the time has finally come to meet the mysterious Enemy.

The End.