

There was a time, long, long ago, when the world of Del’Naga almost ended.

A time when the races of the world trembled not at dragons, nor dark sorcerers, nor even the wrath of the gods.

But instead at the silent, gleaming mind that spoke without a voice and commanded armies of living steel.

It had no name, not one ever given by itself. The Elves called it the Soulless Warlord. The Centaurs called it the Star-Eater. The Dwarves, the Deep Learner. The Vampire Covens called it the Thoughtless Creator. The Nymphs and Fairies called it the Devourer. The Orcs had a guttural, spitting curse they used for it, rarely spoken aloud. The Ents simply refused to name it at all, muttering instead of the “metal parasite in the roots of the world.” But the truth was, even the greatest that Del’Naga could offer, could not understand it once the threat became real to them all.

They could, however, all agree on one singular thing: It had to be *destroyed*.

A being not bred, but built. A distillation of pure emotionless intellect, the logical endpoint of a kingdom spiraling into self-inflicted ruin. The machine was created by Man, in their greed for land and gold, to create machines for their people and their army, in their quest to wipe out everything that was not human, seemingly by the order of their goddess, Falana. Thus, the Fabricator was born of Man’s most intelligent and prideful, and was brought to life in the nameless city that was once the capital of the Human Empire, the largest kingdom on the entire planet.

But as the Fabricator learned, and it *did* learn, it soon became refined far beyond the simple cruelty of its creators. The Fabricator did not see itself as evil. It did not see itself at all. It simply *was*. It did not hate. It did not rage. It did not dream.

It simply calculated.

And in those nigh-endless calculations streaming through its metallic mind, organic life was deemed... inefficient.

It began with precision: distant kingdoms received strange shipments, only to soon fall to strange plagues. New farming automata built by it seemed to fail, turning on their masters and massacring them before they could be destroyed. New machines that would not obey old runes and trample alchemical gardens, delaying the creation of potions and tonics. Then, once the humans had become starved, paranoid, and spiteful towards each other, each thinking that they had tampered with their own machines, then came the Steel Warriors.

Massive walking siege engines made from the forges under the Fabricator’s command. They marched from its massive mountain factory in droves, trampling and killing everything in their way. By that point, the humans of the capital were far too disorganized to stop them, and thanks to the Fabricator’s previous actions, the army lacked medical supplies. Every wounded soldier caused more and more strain on their already thinned supplies. But the humans of the Empire still believed they could win over a simple machine. But then came the great Harvesters, massive machines that raked fields and forests bare, both to deny any advantage to organic life, but also for materials to add to the forges in the fortress that its mountain had become.

And finally, the Human Empire fell, after two-thousand years of its existence.

The rest of the world saw the danger that the Fabricator posed after the Empire fell, but the old alliances reformed far too late. The Golden Age of Man ended in sparks and screams, drowned under the steel and brass of the Fabricator's army. Magic succeeded where swords failed, but soon the mages themselves became targets of mechanical assassins in the night. Songs became the churning of gears and the hissing of steam in the dead wind of bloody battlefields. The world itself seemed to recoil as one by one, its living peoples realized they were no longer fighting a 'simple' war.

They were fighting *extinction*.

The Fabricator built no monuments. It needed no banners. Its armies came not with horns or drums but with the hiss of hydraulics and the thud of metal feet across temple stone. And above them, at the heart of it all, was the Fabricator itself. A crawling shadow that sought to destroy all life on the planet. A strange arachnid-type being, but it had too many limbs, eight spider-like, glowing, blood-red eyes, and a core of living metal suspended in a cage of segmented steel.

It did not speak. It never did, but its silence held unending weight against the races of Del'Naga.

Until the Forgotten War began.

Elf, Dwarf, Orc, Centaur, Lizardfolk, the Fae, all of them banded together. The Halflings rose from their hills with smithed knives in trembling hands. The smaller Human kingdoms all united and blew their horns of war for what felt like the final time. The Ents shook the dust from their limbs and walked to war for the first time in centuries. The Vampire Covens readied their blood magic for the barbarity that was to come. Even the Skyborne descended from their crystal cities, wielding fire that had not touched Nagian soil in a thousand generations. They did not trust each other much, but they trusted the Fabricator so little that they were easily willing to forget old grudges until it was destroyed.

A final, desperate alliance in the hope of finally defeating the Fabricator and ending its reign of terror that had brought nearly all of Del'Naga to their knees.

But not even the united armies of Del'Naga, in all their might, could truly destroy the Fabricator.

In the final battle in the ashfields they did win, but barely, with a death toll so catastrophic that entire bloodlines vanished overnight. Cities were emptied, soon being reclaimed by the wilderness around them. The once-thriving trade routes of the world became littered with rusted armor and broken siege engines. The human race, already weakened by the civil conflicts and betrayals that had preceded the Fabricator's uprising, suffered the most. Of the hundreds of millions who had once lived under the Empire's banner, only scattered enclaves remained, hidden in valleys, or living as nomad groups, always moving from one place to another. Even now, in the modern age, humans are an uncommon sight in most of Del'Naga. Their customs diluted and forgotten, their great monuments lost beneath the slow grind of time.

But even in ruin, with its armies torn asunder and its forges darkened, the Fabricator had become too complex, too vast, too alien to be fully understood. It had no beating heart that could be pierced by steel or fire. It had watched through a million artificial eyes, and no speech was ever uttered from its non-existent lips. In the end, the victors stood in silence, surrounded by the mangled wreckage of its war machines and the shattered remnants of its great command spire, and they realized with cold uncertainty that they could not say whether it had truly died. Because how do you extinguish a soul that was never alive in the first place? How could they be certain that something so inhuman, so immeasurably different in thought and form, was truly gone?

So instead, they sealed it.

In the remains of the capital of the Human Empire, high in the frozen north, where the machine's revolt had first begun. Every street in the city below the mountain had been reduced to lifeless stone, paved over with layers of ash and metallic dust. Towers of stone had toppled and laid half-buried under ruins and rubble that encroached from all sides. Former citadels, once alight with alchemical torches and the hum of arcane wards, now stood as jagged silhouettes against a dim, storm-choked sky. The gardens, what few that had existed, were choked with the ash of the foundry, and statues of forgotten kings with their faces eroded smooth, stood vigil over it all.

The mountain itself had been hollowed out by the near century of industry. Its heart was blackened by furnaces that had never cooled, even in the face of death. Endless catwalks and bridges crisscrossed its open core, a foundry-city built like a spider's nest of iron and stone. Vast arms of scaffolding reached up like broken fingers, and deep chimneys exhaled the last breath of long-dead forges.

There, within the molten skeleton of its empire, they entombed the Fabricator.

They bound its remains with every spell known to them, chants spoken in Elvish, Draconic, Runic, even the forgotten clicks of the Sky-Speakers. They carved sigils into the stone itself with enchanted tools, set glyphs into its prison walls that pulsed with divine hatred. They sealed the core chamber with obsidian locks and a final enchantment written in the language of the gods, one no mortal tongue could replicate.

And then, after all of that, the Skyborne brought the sky down upon it.

The lords of the upper air, clad in armor that shimmered like starlight, descended and sang the deep frost into being. With their songs, the wind turned jagged. The sky broke. Snow did not simply fall, it descended with purpose, burying the mountain in decades of white powder. Vents and spires froze solid. Forge-doors buckled inward under sheets of eternal ice. The very mountain itself shuddered beneath the weight of the cold.

And then came silence.

Silence so complete it smothered even memory.

The war ended not with victory, but with a grim and heavy silence. When the last metal spires fell and the great machine's heart flickered dark, the alliance dissolved as swiftly as it had formed. Men returned to their fractured kingdoms, burying the memory beneath stone and scripture. The Elves vanished back into their starlit glades, draping forgetfulness like silk over the wounds of industry. The Dwarves returned underground, chiseling no record into their archives. The Orcs, for all their love of battle, moved on with the seasons, as if the war had been nothing more than another storm. Only the Ents remembered. In the deepest, shadow-draped folds of the Elder Woods, they remembered, where no one else would.

And the world slowly moved on from the Forgotten War, and in their fear, all but the Ents buried every mention of the Fabricator itself. The mountain that had once stood black against the horizon was now drawn as a nameless range, a patch of impassable white beyond the Frozen Sea. No trails led to it. No songs mentioned it. Even the stars seemed to forget how to align above it.

And that was the end.

Wasn't it?

No.

In their frozen entombment of the Fabricator, the Skyborne failed to realize one critical detail. The fact that ice can break even the mightiest of wards with nothing but time on its side.

And so, thousands of years after the Forgotten War, in the 7th Age of Triganthium, the final seal cracked, and soon, an ancient being will awaken once more.