

We have entered this echoey cave. It's still ashy and dry, and we still have this same sense of nothingness pressing in from all directions. For those with spelunking experience this strikes as a cathedral dome cave. There are no stalagmites or stalactites and you can't see where the ceiling meets the ground for its vastness. The wheels are no longer among us.

We see no phoenixes (regrettably). Izar scoops up ash like he's making a snowman, since phoenixes come from ash. He's mounding it together. Wren tells that phoenixes being born is really, really, incredibly rare. Hrothulf is looking around to see whether there are orifices, but only sees the vastness above and all around. Hrothulf pulls out his sword and stabs the ash beneath. The sword just plunges into it.

Izar weeps on command onto the ash. The sounds of the weeping echo violently through the cave. His tears hit his ash pile and they are instantly succumbed by the ash. And about nine feet behind there is an eruption of flame, and in the midst of the flame stands Dorinda, and the flame disappears and she is standing behind us.

Carlos: "Where have you been?"

Dorinda: "Just so you know you're all still in the tent. Your bodies are lying in your cots, asleep. I was standing guard and thought I would get some trance time, and now I'm here again, so. I'm guessing that I'm standing in the tent right now as well."

Hrothulf: "Was in the trance that brought you here?"

Dorinda: "I can only surmise. I think we're in a dreamscape, but whether that means it's not real..."

Hrothulf goes over and pinches Carlos on the wenis. Carlos' wenis is reddened by this assault. Carlos lets out an "Eh!", and it echoes through the cave.

We start talking about the nature of this place and the sort of dimension it is.

Wren: "Don't dwell too much on what this is or how you got here because that'll mess it up. You think about it too much I'll probably start losing you. I'm only here on Terran, holding you in this place."

Hrothulf grits his teeth and pinches himself until he bleeds plagma. His grunt echos through the hall. It echoes and seems to bounce off the walls in the voice of his brother, then as soon as one ends another begins:

(Slenn) Big brother Hrothulf. Was it fear or weakness that drove you away?

(the Remembered) How will you remember me Izar? You promised before lopping off my head.

(Luna) Am I dead? I remember being eaten but... how am I NOT dead?

(Unknown Soldier) Petty Officer Cercada, what are we going to do? You're the senior ranking officer left now that everyone else is dead. What are we going to do?! How are we gonna get out of here?!

(Darnit's father, harshly) "If you take one step out that door don't you ever come back"

(and a softer voice, his mother) "Where are you going, Darnit?"

(Daryo's voice) Alright let's see if this works my little killing machine. Are you going to be like the assassin androids, or...better?

(Bruno) You gave my identikey to a hedonistic manipulative drug dealer?! Oh my lot, what have you done?

Hrothulf bleeds a couple more onto Izar's ash pile, but it just flattens out the pile.

Dorinda scans looking for anything at all. Through her scope it's hard to make out anything. It's like looking through a dark rain cloud. It's like she's looking at the same thing everywhere she turns.

Izar: Wren do you hear these voices usually when you bring people here?

Wren: I don't bring people here! So... no?

Dorinda suggests the Gliten's bracer might be helpful. Izar gets it out to see if it does anything.

Carlos: Izar who did you behead?

Izar, in Netherese: Um, he who will be remembered.

Carlos: That's... a weird name.

Izar: Indeed. I don't know why he showed up in the voices. We had an understanding. It was a mercy kill that he was asking for.

Darnit: What did you promise?

Izar: Do remember him? When he introduced himself he called himself the forgotten one.

Dorinda: Oh in the cave?

Izar: We met him first in the cave. We were fighting those kobolds and I told him in Netherese, "You will always be the remembered now." I don't know why he seemed angry.

Darnit asks Carlos who that was. "And, 'petty officer'?"

Carlos: "I'm... not sure. I'm not sure that *did* happen to me."

Dorinda likewise has so memory. She seemed to have done jobs for him that she has no memory of. Darnit seemed to have messed with his memory.

Hrothulf likewise says the words were in character, but that those specific words weren't said.

Darnit says similar. We think perhaps it's something trying to mess with us.

Izar: Was there a voice for you Wren?

Wren: No, I didn't recognize any of these.

Izar: Do you know Gliton?

Wren: I mean, I know of many deities. They... were all destroyed hundreds of years ago.

Izar: Yeah, fairy tales. No offense no offense.

Dorinda: You heard the voices?

Wren: Yeah, you're all messed up people.

Dorinda: Maybe we should call out to Gliton.

Dorinda: "Gliton, we are the branch. We seek you! We are the Branch of Teresias!"

We all are shouting out and our voices are echoing and there's cacophony. The dome above us cracks and fire comes down, lava dropping into the ash. A winding river forms with Darnit and Izar on one side, Dorinda and Hrothulf on the other, and Carlos and Wren on an island floating away. As the grounds all separate, from the middle of the lake erupts this massive flaming bird that flaps its lava wings and goes through the crack, and on the other side of the crack is this massive iron castle. Lava pours in and overwhelms us and we all gasp awake in the tent.

Cleveland pops his head in the tent: "The coolest thing! The Halls of Heorot are opened! You guys totally deserve to come. You want to come celebrate?"

Hrothulf: Did we sleep through the end of the war?

"No you know deserved some rest. We have our counter insurgency doing some cleanup. But you guys are done! But you know where the Halls are, right? Because I'm gonna head back."

Izar: "Yeah, thanks Cleve."

He runs off joyfully, shouting something about rigatoni.

We think maybe we should ask about the iron castle, like maybe it's a vision of where we need to go. Hrothulf says he hasn't seen anything like that, and it's really pretty nonsensical on Magmus. There are really only a couple of places where something like that *could* be built here, and he doesn't know anything about an iron castle built there. Izar suggests that it could be a temple that doesn't really obey normal laws, but Hrothulf still doesn't think that's likely.

We all put our heads together meditating on the matter

Dorinda: So it's an iron castle?

Darnit: Yeah but its stylings are modern. It isn't ancient at all. Its buttresses and all... neo-renaissance at best. And the geography wasn't helpful at all. Darnit tries to think about relevant contemporary battles. It's weird though, because people don't really make castles anymore.

Dorinda: From a religious perspective there was nothing particularly noteworthy about the structure itself that would lead him in one direction or another. It looked more like a fortress, but riddled with pomp and bravado. More devotion to a person who built it than devotion to a deity.

Hrothulf: The landscape was definitely Magmus, but it doesn't ring any bells.

Izar: Your brother though. Maybe he took the phoenixes.

Ego: Maybe he colluded with Whidmore and terraformed a space to build that castle.

We decide to head over to the Halls of Heorot to chat people up for information.

Hrothulf looks outside the tent and sees there are no guards. Cleveland was our midnight watchman. Hrothulf suggests that if we want to exercise some freedom around the base, now would be the time.

We may poke around the camp before we head over to the Halls, though it may not be worth jeopardizing our current status as unescorted.