

Had the realization dawned on King Titus a moment sooner, the likelihood of queen being lost to the mountainous beast would have been imminent. One arm stood fast, hand wrapped around the trident tight enough to cause the color to drain from his knuckles, the other outstretched and ready to grasp at any part of the queen he could latch onto. As the bronze-colored pod struggled to regain her composure against the currents, Titus quickly threw his arm around the waist of his lover, refusing to let her succumb to the vacuum of space even if it meant sacrificing himself. The kingdom would soon fall apart if they lost both their leaders, let alone just one. Taking Titus' lead, the queen summoned her own trident weapon, hoping, praying, between their combined strengths they would make it out of this alive.

As the water whipped around them, a sudden pocket of air came hurdling down the channel they had been sucked into, the pair making a split-second decision to launch themselves up through the bubble which provided zero resistance as they finally crawled their way from the earth's wound. While out of the large crack that had appeared along the planet's surface the two were not out of harm's way just yet. The water continued to rush around them, being drawn down into the vacuums of space, endlessly drinking the ocean of its contents. One wrong move and they could easily find themselves hurdling back towards that same crack at the slip of the hand. Luckily, between their combined strength and their intense willpower, the two managed to slowly make their way from the massive geological anomaly, bodies bruised and shaking as they finally found safety behind a series of large boulders acting as a buffer against the powerful currents.

King Titus carefully settled himself down onto the sand, brow furrowed into one of concern as the thoughts of what he had witnessed played on repeat in his mind. The queen could sense her lover's unease, carefully kneeling to meet his gaze as she gently cupped his face once more.

"Titus, darling, what is it? Are you hurt? What did you see down there?"

The king swallowed, silently attempting to regain his breath before speaking.

"The ocean—there is no bottom, not anymore." He mumbled, still visibly in shock.

".. no bottom? What do you mean no bottom? Like... no bottom of the ocean"

King Titus gave a single nod, eyes swimming with concern, the king had paled by several shades, looking sickly.

“Dearest, that makes no sense. What do you mean the bottom of the ocean is gone? That is not possible! Are you sure you were not just seeing an underground cave or even the ichor playing tricks on you? You were in close contact with them...” She trailed off,

silently praying for her husband to speak up and agree with her. When he did not, she felt a large pit begin to grow within her stomach, a silent affirmation that he was telling the truth.

“We must get to the surface, with all this rushing water it is not safe here, especially if you are wounded.”

The king nodded in agreement, using his trident the massive red pod carefully pushed himself up from the sandy floor, hoof-like feet digging into the surface as the water whipped violently around them.

With the deep chasm sucking the ocean's waters in only to spit them out into space, putting any amount of distance between them and the crack along the planet's surface gave them hope of surviving. The currents were not as violent the further away they swam, silently dreading the eventual resurfacing they would eventually need to do. Gods only knew what awaited them once they finally broke the water's surface.

As the King and Queen finally made landfall the world was in a state of decay, the sky containing several hues of deep purple that faded into the morning amber sun, the ball of gas slowly creeping over the edge of the planet as it brought morning to the remaining inhabitants. Unbeknownst to Titus and Vette, the planet had been shattered into pieces by the monstrous ichor beast, various sized chunks floating slowly around the core of the planet left hundreds of thousands of skireians stranded, displaced from both their family and their homes. Some could have been considered lucky, the ichor and its' beasts taking out entire families in favor of witnessing their entire planet nearly collapsing on top of them. Oceans poured endlessly into the vacuum of space, the water bubbling up in thick pockets, silently carried away by the lack of gravity. Both the lives of animal and skirerian alike had been lost in the scuffle as the ocean slowly emptied itself, the lack of gravity giving them nothing to work against as they struggled to free themselves. Others stood on the edges of the now floating planet chunks, crying out for their loved ones while silently praying for help. Those who could fly, like the gravents and some cccats worked tirelessly as they flitted between the upturned worlds, carrying out a multitude of requests for aid, begging to keep an eye out for those lost amid the ichor. They agreed to do what they could, their own hearts heavy with the thought of what was to become of their own loved ones.

Deep below a series of large planet remnants sat the monstrous beast, the cause of such much loss and destruction. Like the water that now floated aimlessly through space, the ichor pouring off the beasts back began to overflow over the edges of what remained of the planet, bubbling up only to slowly drift away. The beast let out a terrifying cry, one of loneliness or approval at the destruction it had caused one could not be certain at this point. It had nowhere to go, nowhere to hide and not a single person knew where it had come from. Only that it had literally torn the fabric of this planet apart, leaving thousands dead and even more stranded amongst the wreckage. The ones who managed to make it out of this alive would continue to fight for the next several years as they worked to rebuild what was lost, but first they would need to do something about that beast below. With the planet literally blown to pieces, they would need to start from scratch if they had any hope in defeating this thing. It would require every last one of the remaining Skirerians to pitch in.

Months had passed since the planet's upheaval, the world below the King and Queens feet quite literally blown apart. The beast that had caused the citizens of Skire to flee from their homes, fighting monsters of many sizes along with the flood of ichor that came with it left the people broken and bruised, some beyond repair. With this came an even bigger flood of ones will to live, the natural inhabitants of the planet fighting with everything they had to prevent them from losing anything more. In time, they began to understand how the smaller ichor beasts worked, mapping out the spawning points as the mountain clambered from one island to the next. It would only take twenty-four hours for a heard of ichor beasts to spawn from the puddles left behind by the mountain, the people quickly attempting to corral the space in hopes of getting the jump on the monsters as they appeared. This tactic worked if they could keep their eyes on the mountain, its slimy body trailing ooze as it continued to wreak havoc across the planet's remnants.

One particular cccat well versed in the magic of both water and ice, discovered that one could freeze segments of the ichor that remained attached to the mountain, effectively stalling the beast if one focused their power on its' extremities. Cain was called upon to draft a battle plan, those around with magic tied to water were encouraged to come forth in an attempt to immobilize the creature. If they could prevent it from moving, they could effectively stop any additional ichor beasts from forming out of the

trail of ooze that it left behind. This knowledge gave the remaining citizens of skire one less thing to worry about and another fighting chance at making it out of this mess alive.

Those with various magical abilities were drafted in assisting those who had been less fortunate in their encounters with the ichor beasts, assisting them in growing valuable resources at an increased rate. Those with plant magic assisted in the fertilization and gathering of various forms of crops, feeding the displaced citizens of skire. Others with rock, metal and wood were evenly split between repairing the various castles across the land while others aimed to build as many small houses for the people as possible.

It took months to get everyone back under a single roof, their combined efforts between the species a godsend as they expedited the repair process. Had they not silently agreed to work together, who knows just how long it would have taken to repair the damage the mountain had caused.

While the citizens of Skire continued to slowly heal not only themselves but the lands around them, the battle against the mountain continued to rage on. Cain had grown tired, magical powers straining as the blue and gold cccat continued to push on despite the edges of his vision growling blurry. Large collum's of ice terraformed beneath the ichor mountain's body, wrapping themselves up the length of its' arms and legs in any attempt to slow it down. Shards of crystalline water floated amongst the air around the cliffside they had managed to chase it to, a half circle of magic users cornering beast. Despite their efforts, the mountain of ichor seemed aloof to their efforts at driving it away from their shattered home. When attacked it did not respond in a way one could interpret as defending itself, it simply continued to move in one direction, arms and legs straining against the ice that slowly crept up the length of its' body. Not once did it cry out in pain as the magic users continued to barrel down on its' sludge covered body, large chunks of frozen ichor cracking and falling to the ground below only to shatter into thousands of pieces. Some of the earth users created large spikes of rock pointed directly at the beasts' chest cavity, using its' weight against it as it impaled itself against the points. Despite it all, the beast never cried out in pain as its body slowly succumbed to the ice, its' body freezing over until nothing remained but a massive block of ice on the edge of one of the newly made cliff sides.

Those who had made it out alive were overjoyed at the announcement that the mountain had been stopped, though not confirmed dead it was enough for the citizens to feel as if they could truly breathe for the first time in months. No longer were they concerned

that the beast would eventually make its way back across the remnants of the planet, dragging their infectious ooze with it as smaller beasts materialized out of the remains. That all the pain and suffering they had been through had truly come to an end as nothing remained to rip up their newly built homes once more. The King and Queen declared an oath to those who had faced the beast head on, potentially sacrificing themselves in the name of others that once the world had been repaired, they would see to it that they were well taken care of, both them and their families. They very well could have lost everything had they not discovered a way to halt the beasts' rampage, it was the very least they could do. However, the world still had plenty of damage that needed to be attended to, the hardest part of their journey having ended.