Legion Divided I: Queen Takes Rook



“You sound like Mother!” Otu laughed uproariously, filling the elevator with his mechanical voice. The other residents riding up to their homes were being very polite as the big LGN carried on a conversation with the voice in his ear.

From the other end of the call, Elle’s sigh was audible to everyone on the elevator. *“Have I mentioned you’re obnoxious lately?”*

“Ha! Repeatedly!”

The elevator pinged, and Otu thundered through the hallway with a little spring in his step. Six was talking to Alice. This was certainly good, regardless of how much effort it took to maintain.

“Nevertheless, I am grateful you have reached out to her! I will reward you with a four-minute embrace next we meet!”

“Please don’t. Take care, Otu.”

02 chuckled as the line clicked close, and his suite door scanned his signature, opening obediently. The rewards of good hero work had allowed Otu an expansive eighth-floor suite, with broad windows that looked out over Skyway down below. It was comfortable for him, decorated with trophies and gifts from his years trying to be a role model for the rest of the Legion. On the center wall, a gleaming ‘Hero of the City’ medal sat in a beautiful shadowbox, and he smiled inwardly as he saw it.



It took several moments for him to realize he was not alone, and every piston suddenly surged to life as his peripheral scan detected two figures at the main window. Otu turned, snapping his shield out with a loud crack, illuminating the room in green light from his abruptly-charged reactor.

The bigger figure, in orange-grey armor, was standing to the side in deferential posture, clearly subservient to the other. This leader wore a royal purple cape, ostentatiously but carefully arranged around a slender metal frame. It swirled around her as she turned to face Otu: her body was a metal frame instantly familiar to him,

despite several modifications from the original design and a series of metal spikes that formed a delicate crown.

Though he had never seen the mechanical woman in front of him, he knew instantly who she was, and Otu's reactor heart leaped in his chest. "01!"

LGN-01 tilted her head towards him, clasping her hands behind herself and stalking towards him slowly, the other figure falling in behind her.

"You *are* alive. And well, I see."

"I-...Yes! Please, sit down!" Otu snapped off his shield, grabbing a nearby couch with one hand and lifting it over his shoulder. He turned to see the taller figure aiming a palm at him, its face invisible behind a visor. LGN-01 set her hand on her companion's arm, lowering it, and nodding at Otu to set the couch down.



"03 has had a difficult time adjusting. You understand."

"03! Of course, brother, wonderful to see you!"

The visitor remained silent, stepping in behind LGN-01 as she took a seat on the couch.

"I understand you've found some of the others, 02."

"Yes, yes!" Otu thudded down onto another chair, rubbing his hands together in excitement. After years of tending to the surviving Legion, the unit designed for that function had returned. The relief was almost palpable in his throat. He could relinquish his 'command' of the Legion, lift that weight from his shoulders, and simply worry about being a good hero. "05, 06, and 08, all very healthy, very happy. We've done very well here!"

"That does save me time, thankfully." She spoke slowly, as if irritated to be putting her thoughts into words rather than transmitting them directly. "I trust no one has been modified too far from their original design."

"Well, 06 has become a little-" He stopped, a faint crawling sensation in his mind. LGN-01 was searching his glyphs through the Lexicon, she already knew whatever he was going to explain. "You...you have been gone some time, 01, but to view glyphs without asking is-"

“Rude.” LGN-01 sat back on the couch, folding her fingers. “I haven’t time for courtesy. Reforming the Legion is going to be a painful process for all of us, and there’s no sense in delaying it.”

“I-..Reforming?”

“Mm.” She extended a delicate finger towards him, but it immediately read as threatening, despite her being less than half his mass. “We were made for a purpose, 02. Have you truly forgotten it so quickly? Even without our creators, we have a function to fulfill.”

A cold, creeping feeling swam around Otu’s core. “We grew beyond that, 01, long ago! We are a family now, not weapons!”

From behind LGN-01, 03 closed his fists, white light illuminating from between his fingers. 03 was a walking siege engine, and those hands could bring down the entire building in a matter of minutes. Otu hesitated, doubt entering his mind if his shield could hold against that power.

He didn’t have time to think about it too long, as LGN-01 leaned forward, resting her elbows on her knees in a nearly-playful posture. It was just the way that 08 would sit when she was pleased.

“The Legion is mine, 02. By right and by doctrine, it is mine. And I will have it.”

“You...you cannot! We are individuals now, we have made lives for ourselves! “ From beneath his armored visor, his eyes softened, and he spread his arms openly. “Please. Do not do this.”

“A plea. How shameful.” LGN-01 tilted her head, as if listening, and her eyes flickered once.

The Lexicon screamed.

Otu’s head was filled with a chaotic storm of misinformation and bad data: his vision flickered with ghost images, inverted colors, and flashes of blindness. His ears heard nothing but distorted songs, wild animals, and pitches or squeals in every octave. His limbs couldn’t recall how to move correctly, trying to raise his shield arm only made his left knee buckle, and moving his head made him fall backwards on a tide of vertigo.

Otu was helpless to stop the blinding flash of white light that picked him up off the floor and threw him effortlessly him out into open air with a sizzle of raw firepower.

He slammed into the road below like a meteor, throwing chunks of asphalt and dirt into the air as cracks spread out from around him. He rolled over, grabbing at the road and struggling to rise. He had to move, had to get away from them.

She was in the Lexicon. She was in his head.

The link to the Lexicon was an unending roar of mismatched code and noise, flooding his system with lies and confusion. Otu squeezed his eyes shut and pushed a single broadcast back against the flood.

++EMERGENCY DISCONNECT//DISCONNECT FROM THE LEXICON++

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In her workshop, LGN-08 unplugged with a click of focus, shutting off her computing unit and letting the glyphs fade into black silhouettes. It was suddenly quiet in her head, incredibly quiet. She could hear every squeak of machinery, creak of the building, and scurrying of the rodents along the outside of the wall.

She drummed her fingers on the workshop table, already tired of the silence but afraid to reconnect. 02 had shouted. 02 never shouted.

“Umm...02?” She said to no one in particular.

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LGN-05 cut the feed almost reflexively, discipline making him act without question. Soaring down an alley, cape fluttering behind him, he scowled and drew the energy sword from his back. Otu had never demanded they cut the link, to do so separated all of the Legion from each other. They were weak now, without mental access to their shared pool of knowledge. They were little better than ordinary combat models without the Lexicon.

He gained altitude, switching the sword to life. He had other sources of information: the police scanner built into his central unit was already alive with chatter, and he swung wide around a skyscraper to change direction.

“Incident: 741 Winchester Plaza. Incarnate level threat.”

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Elle sat up in her chair, instantly ignoring the cadre of Bane Spiders reporting their findings and feeling the Lexicon grow dark in her mind, her connection to her private database a smaller beacon in her mind. She raised a hand, silencing the underlings, and Lt Charron stepped forward to escort them away from her.

She mentally switched to a dial tone in her ear, queuing up Otu’s contact number. The line was there, but there was no sound.

“Otu. Otu, come in.”

Silence. Not static, nothing that might reassure her there was interference or a technical glitch. Just nothing.

“Otu.”

Silence. Something bitter rose in her throat, and she fought it down.

“...Otu...”

She would keep trying for another hour before the flyer was ready to take her to the City.