

They move as one through the crowd, the bodies of panicking strangers jostling them as they go, pressed and panicked in their attempt to leave town. Distantly, Izumi thinks it strange that Coma can just keep his head down and press onward without a glance back, but once she thinks about it, she starts to notice the way his ears twitch every time that titanic roar sounds overhead.

Izumi is grateful for his drive nonetheless, because she can't stop looking back. It feels like she's floating outside her body, tethered only by a thin cord in Coma's grip, dragged along with her corporeal self as he steers them down streets and alleyways.

"We have to *go*," Coma mutters again, uselessly. She suspects he does it more for himself than anything, but she nods dumbly anyway as another world-shaking screech sounds behind them. Numbly, some trembling corner of her mind thinks, *where? Where could we possibly go?*

Around them, the world continues to end. Coma pulls her onward.

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Life after the Titan breaches is...surprisingly mundane, given the circumstances. Izumi supposes it really is in the nature of living things to adapt to anything, as over the next few days their life begins to settle back into something approaching routine.

They find other people, groups driven together by the ichor washing the land. She can tell that being around others makes Coma's solitary nature bristle and growl, but he accepts their makeshift camp without any persuasion from her. Perhaps he does it for her. She thinks so, at least partially, but she also knows that Coma simply isn't an idiot—this is not a threat he can defend them against, not on his own.

He's gone for now, off with the latest hunting party to drive the ichor beasts back from their borders and try to find any supplies they can. Izumi busies herself by packing what she can away for easy evacuation, in case they need to run again. The ichor laps closer to their little camp day after day; the beasts' howls sound closer and closer.

It itches for her to be left alone, idle. Her nature is to *go*, to *fly*; her wings itch to be out there with them, providing an eye in the sky, doing *something*. But she knows, with a somewhat bitter twist in her heart, that all she would be doing is slowing them down. If the way she'd frozen up and nearly dropped right out of the sky the first time one of the beasts had flopped out onto the trail is any indication, she'd probably get them all killed.

It's getting dark, and they're still not back. Izumi tries to quell the pang of worry in her stomach by telling herself that it's normal, and they've done this before, and they're probably just camping somewhere overnight. There are reasons for it—they'd chased a lead a little too far to make it back before the morning, they'd found a stash of supplies larger than they'd anticipated and they need the morning to assess, they're injured somewhere and can't be reached...

Ah, there she goes worrying again for no reason. They don't need her fretting, they need her focused and competent. She won't be helping anyone by losing herself in her own thoughts and—

A sharp tremor shakes her out of her thoughts, and on terrified reflex she turns her head sharply towards the Titan on the horizon. It is, of course, still there, its sickly luminescence adding an unnatural glow to the night sky, but she can't help but think that its movement seem a little more frantic now.

Another tremor. Izumi finally snaps her vents open and takes to the sky as the ground lurches up beneath her, and from the wider campsite she can hear alarmed cries as the rest of their ragtag group attempts to salvage what they can. Fractures are opening up again as she zips through the camp; they'll have to relocate again, and she thanks the stars that they'd been preparing for such an occurrence anyways.

The earth quakes again, and even from the air she can feel the heavy pull of ichor seeping from the new veins carved into it. But when another tremor ruptures the ground, she can tell something is wrong. They aren't settling, they aren't dying down this time.

Like a cord, something slams her back down to earth. Disoriented, she pulls herself up as best as she can just in time for another tremor to knock her onto her side again. Distantly, she registers a strange feeling of vertigo, as though floating away again, but she can still feel the earth beneath her claws and fur. She lifts her head to the impossible sight of the campsite floating away from her, buoyed by a torn up island of soil and the grasping trails of ichor.

*Ah*, she thinks numbly, before unconsciousness takes her at last. *So this is the end of the world.*