

A Declaration

The sun hangs dryly above a vast desert plain resting in the cradle of mountains as a ship glides over water. A young man is making pilgrimage to the Divine Arcology, a 10,000 year old monastery devoted to the science of the Trinity. The gods: Hel'ac of the Confluence, Gelg'ac of the Influence, and Drüş'ac of the Affluence, stand hundreds of feet tall in the plain. Scattered. Temples springing from their many feet. The man is to become an Arcologist, a steward of the God's Heirarch, Shemshagh the Wise. He is escorted by the Trivium. Holy warriors of the Haelian Empire. The escort is grand and beautiful as it coasts above the river that splits the plain.

This is no small matter. Upon arrival he is escorted to the Highest Chambers where he bows before the Council of Nine and recites his Vows of Defamation, submitting his free will to the will of the Trinity. The Vows are a relinquishment of all one can possess. Home, love, family, materials.

But before his vows are complete the ceiling of the high chamber is torn open by a great blast and a hellish force descends into the High Chamber, laying waste to the Trivium. This force suffers no casualty. They are an unholy hybrid of flesh and machine. They do not wound the Council, the man, or the God's Heirarch.

Then from the gaping hole above them a swarm of black chitinous nanobots floods onto the floor. Encased in this swarm, and emerging as the small machines part, is a being of immeasurable dread. He is tall, broad, and cloaked by a fabric so black the light in the room dims as he walks to the Heirarch.

He says nothing, ignoring the Heirarch's demands for genuflection. He hoists him off the floor by his throat, plunges his steel sheathed hand into the Heirarch's stomach, reaches up into his chest from within, and in one brutal motion pulls his heart from its cage. The lifeless man of the Gods is thrown aside in a heap.

The dark one turns, with this heart, and addresses the Council, but focuses on the young man, trembling on his knees, his robes soaking the blood of the fallen.

The dark one speaks, and the voice of The Legion speaks, "The Trinity has controlled the will of the universe long enough." The nanobots surround him, creating a pedestal in front of him. "The Machine God, Archon, has grown tired of their..." he turns to the Council, "...posturing."

He sets the heart into the pedestal of machines and they spin to life around the heart. They penetrate it, stretch it, and form it into something new. Something horrible. The figure reaches into the swarm and retrieves the heart, now a form fabled. A piece of the God's Dynasty. A device of universe shaping power.

The figure turns once more, the object levitating from his hand, to the young man. "Tell them Vahldrik the Mind has returned. Tell them..." The swarm begins to encase him once more, "...the Archon lives."

He shoots up out of the hole in the High Chambers, his forces, The Legion, follows closely. War has been declared.