

# Prologue

It happens suddenly.

The air fills with a cacophonous shriek, as if the sky itself were in pain. Then, it happened. The sky splits open. A jagged rift fractures the sky as if a deity had taken a dull knife and slashed the heavens. Violent violet mist pours from the rift, coalescing around the edges. The inside of the rift is dark, with only the faint outlines of a ruined civilization amidst a battle. Arcane energy ripples through the mist, snapping like a whip. Vivid sparks burst from the clouds, dancing along the edges like a dying star. The sky starts to tremble. Though it doesn't just tremble, the smell of the air changes. It smells like sulfur and ozone, or perhaps something long dead. A sharp crack fills the air as water instantaneously turns to ice. Plants begin to wither and die. Liquid pours from the sky, not quite water, not quite anything ever before seen. Quakes shake the earth, collapsing buildings, causing roads to undulate and shift. Where sidewalks once stood, now stand deep chasms, as if the earth were gutted.

Flicker stands in the ruins of the town square, collapsed buildings jutting from the ground. His eyes are filled with shock and terror. His armor thrums with forest green glyphs, glowing with power. His daggers glow with a pattern of glyphs, pulsating in shades of turquoise.

The pulsating of Flicker's daggers quickens into a frantic beat, releasing a high pitched hum, almost as if the daggers themselves were afraid. The mist begins to boil, not dissipating into gas, but coalescing, pulling the violet light into it. The violent

quaking ceases, replaced by a heavy silence, as if the world itself were holding its breath. And then, emerging from the fracture, a figure descends. It was immense, formed of dagger-like obsidian shards that seemed to weep the archaic liquid. Its eyes were like twin vibrant blue supernovas.

The figure descends from the heavens, the earth trembling and cracking from its presence. The entity hovers above the ruins, the archaic liquid seeping from it, dripping in long, viscous ribbons. When it hit the ruins, it didn't splash; it sizzled, boring deep holes into the earth.

High above, the twin supernovas glow through the violet haze. Flicker feels the gaze like a physical heat against his face. His daggers scream now, the vibration traveling up his arm, rattling his teeth. The entity didn't move a muscle, yet Flicker felt a feeling of being hunted by something that didn't even consider him alive. It speaks, its voice echoing in the square, "You stand against the inevitable".

The figure raises his palm, and a storm of razor-sharp arrows rocket out in a flurry of howling wind, hovering, glowing with an inner violent violet fire. They freeze midair, hovering around him like a chaotic aura, their tips twitching as they lock onto Flicker.

Flicker shifted his weight, boots grinding against the ruins. The turquoise glyphs of his daggers pulsate stronger, the force of it carving grooves in the air. Every instinct screams at him to run, flee into the dying forest, but the glyphs on his armor burn with a cold, ancient power. They had been forged with a specific duty, and he couldn't just abandon that duty. They had been forged to combat this foe. He could feel the history of

his people, and of this land thrumming through the glyphs, converging into the hilt of his daggers. He wasn't just a man, he was the last barrier standing against chaos.

The violet arrows didn't just fly, they tore through the distance like a predator chasing a scent, leaving trails of fractured reality in their wake. Flicker moved, he didn't just roll, he vanished and reappeared in a flash of light. His daggers twirl in his hands in a defensive dance, clashing in a strident clang with the arrows. Each impact felt like he was deflecting a mountain.

The glyphs in his armor flare in defiance as he deflects arrows. But for every arrow he parries, three more rush at him. The glow of his daggers starts to stutter the more he deflects the arrows, the once powerful hum slowly weakening, turning into a desperate cry.

Flicker gasped for air, but the atmosphere was thinning, filled with the crushing weight of his foe. "Is this the height of your defiance?", the entity mused. The voice wasn't coming from the figure itself, but from the air itself. "A flickering candle against the coming night?"

Flicker drops to one knee, his daggers crossed over his head. The arrows were no longer rocketing towards him. Instead, they were circling him, like wolves trapping their prey. He looked up through a haze of his own sweat and the shimmering mist. High above, the rift continues to bleed. Other figures, obsidian and jagged, glowing with an innate light begin to descend from the slash in the heavens, fanning out across the horizon like a flurry of dark stars.

He wasn't just fighting for the square, he was witnessing the end of an era.

Flicker forces himself to stand, his legs trembling as he defies the deity before him. He looked at the descending army of dark stars before staring into the supernova eyes of the deity before him.

"This isn't the end", Flicker spat. "It's a beacon."

He did not raise his daggers to strike, instead, he crossed them over his chest before slamming the blades deep into his chestplate. The daggers didn't just hum, they shrieked a loud strident warning. A blinding pulse of emerald light erupted from his heart, expanding outward with the force of a thousand suns. The sound was not a roar, but of a world refusing to go quiet.

The blast tore through the square, incinerating the obsidian arrows and slamming into the entity with such force that it seemed like its obsidian form disintegrated into a million glass shards. For a single heartbeat, the emerald light reaches the rift, before sealing the rift in a blinding flash.

When the light finally faded, the silence that followed was absolute.

The entity was gone. The square was a crater of scorched glass like stone. Flicker was nowhere to be found, leaving behind nothing but a faint outline of his final stand etched into the crater. But buried deep in that crater, beneath the ash and ruins, a single turquoise shard remained, faint, pulsing, waiting for the age where it would be needed again.