

The Metal Mage

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chapter*

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Prologue

Lok Tor peered out on an alien landscape. Strange lights without the familiar flicker of fire burned all across the landscape. With a minor exercise of his will the bottom of his flying craft became opaque. It had worked. The rift drive had worked — just as the prophet had said it would. On this side of the veil lay salvation for all of Eden.

Now was not the time for celebration however. This victory had come at a great cost. The wounds from the battle would not heal easily (if at all) and he still needed to find the Source — the one who had drawn him here. He had felt the pull as soon as he had accepted the prophet's words as true. At first it had no direction it was just a yearning for some nebulous future. As time went on and the prophet had revealed this other world to him he had known this was where he needed to go.

The fire of magic was fading from Eden, and with it many races that depended on it would die, but he knew the Source would be able to fix it, even though he didn't know how it such a thing was possible. If the prophet was right (and he had yet to be mistaken) this land had no magic.

No matter, I must have faith, he thought as his body ached. *I must find a safe place to land.*

The craft settled into a large field a bit more loudly than Tor would have liked. He began running system diagnostics as well as setting his *ferrovitae* to heal his many wounds. Once he was feeling better he would explore this new world. He just had to...

i knock, knock i

A light wrapping on the outer hull of his craft drew the Femian's attention. There was no way someone could have found his ship so quickly. He had been camouflaged... but no, the stealth drive had failed, but even still it was the dead of night, everyone should be sleeping.

He focused to open a small view-port in a *ferrovitae* portion of the ship. He could see a small human child cautiously walking around the ship and tapping on the outer hull. This was not good. Nothing was frightened so easily as a human child, and if the people of this realm thought him malevolent, he would not be able to search as he desired.

As the child turned to go (possibly getting an adult), Lok Tor decided, on a whim, to extend an invitation to this child. It would be more likely to get a friendly response to a one-on-one visit than from the mob that would inevitably accost it later.

So it was that, just as the boy was turning away, motion caught his eye and he saw an opening in the previously smooth metal surface. Just before the boy entered Lok Tor attempted to cast a minor illusion to appear as a human himself, however to his shock it didn't work.