

only 8 inches in diameter, in front of himself. Able to cover most of Luke's body, he is forced to stop. Pieces of his skin begin to chip and break off of his body. The soft red hardness that covered his body falls off in chunks, leaving his bare skin exposed to the attack.

Lander could not have known the miscalculation this was. He had no way to know that his Phantom Azoth was actually protecting him from a much more horrible force. When he created a smaller condensed one for Luke, he had left himself vulnerable to Richer's attack which was shredding the entire games to nothing. Lander's entire body instantly sprouts millions of cuts on every inch of his body. He shrieks in terrible pain. He does not have enough time to close the current Phantom Azoth and open a larger one so he is forced to pour all of mana into the existing one to extend its' range to protect himself. Normally this would allow him to continue the attack with the same intensity, but as fate would have it, this used up all of his mana leaving him with none to continue the attack.

The two men barely stand, looking into each other's eyes with deep, short breaths, dripping in blood. Lander reaches into his pocket and pulls out the last of his mana potions. He watches for Luke's attempt to stop him, but he too is out of mana and strength to stop him. Lander chuckles, "your pitiful reason to fight was nothing compared to my hatred" he starts to drink the potion, but Luke pushes himself beyond his limits. He uses the last of his mana to turn only his disintegrated finger into a soft red glow, he snaps off his finger from his hand and throws it at Lander. The finger shoots through the potion, shattering it into pieces, then through Lander's head, instantly turning him into a cloud of mana that flows away in the breeze.

Luke lets out a laugh of pure joy as the Phantom Azoth breaks around him, and a staircase leading to the doors appears in front of him. Winning was not what brought Luke such joy, as he still had no hope of making up the stairs before someone stopped him, but rather it was the thrill of the fight itself which brought him joy. The excitement of living on the edge and creating a way to victory even when none previously existed.

The shockwave attack that Richer was producing vanishes, due to the man himself appearing on the staircase in front of him, "if I let you pass, what would be your wish?". "I don't care about the wish! I just want to fight!" Luke growls in a demonic excitement. "I see. Then I was always right to deem you a failure of a child" Richer laments. Luke charges at Richer, but the latter does not even need to activate his stone, he ducks under Luke's punch, and returns a stronger one to his stomach, sending him flat on his back, with not enough strength to get back up. Richer raises his fist ready to strike through his son, "I've seen what my family's hatred has created, and it needs to end, maybe the next Brackenstein will be brave enough to wish for our end".

Richer is restrained by Daniel's angels who arrives on the scene holding a bleeding Julius, "I cannot trust that you will kill your son, I will end this game myself instead". Then a flash of light appears, pushing both Daniel and Richer away, "I heard this man's answer, and I believe him and I have much in common. I wish to see his resolve to its' fullest" Nebuchadnezzar calls out, "say it again! Speak your words! What is your wish?!". Luke pushes himself to a stand, "I don't care about the wish! I just want this to last forever!". Julius, while hanging from Daniel's arms, throws his sword to Luke. The sword lands next to Luke and breaks into many small pieces around him.

"I believe in you, my friend" Julius speaks in a soft voice. Richer becomes enraged and uses the stone to send a lightning bolt straight through Julius' heart and his body slowly begins to break into mana. Luke closes his eyes and pours all of his focus into his next move. He needed to reach to the heights that his only friend believed he could reach. Using the broken pieces of the sword, Luke is