

# Campaign of Vengeance

## Ari Levitch

From set *Eldritch Moon*

*A grudge a thousand years in the making is coming to a head.*

*For Sorin, it is for the warping of his ancestral home. It is the unmaking of Avacyn. It is the coming of Emrakul.*

*For Nahiri, it is the betrayal of a friend. It is the millennium spent trapped in the Helvault. It is the ruin of Zendikar in her absence.*

*When two ancient Planeswalkers duel, entire planes feel it.*





Clue Token | Art by Cliff Childs

They called her the Harbinger. They weren't wrong, these fanatics and cultists, and they had followed her here, growing in number as she set about her work on Innistrad. They were devoted to her, and they reminded Nahiri that the only thing worth saving in this whole damned world was her revenge.

The droning gibberish chorus of hundreds of cultists echoed through halls as she stared into the vampire's face. He was an ugly thing, with lips curled back to reveal hideous teeth, sharp and merciless. Two eyes, chips of amber swimming in inky pools, stared back at her, or rather past her. From what Nahiri could tell, this bloodsucker was dressed for luxury, and he, like the dozens of his kin around him, was embedded in the wall. All of them dead. On her account.

She hated this place, Markov Manor. Like so much of this plane, it reeked of Sorin. Even shattered, twisted, and reshaped, as she had done, it was not enough to purge the feel of him from it. But here she was. Preparations had been made, and work had to be checked.

It's an intricate business, revenge, but then, Nahiri had had a thousand years to consider it.

One. Thousand. Years.

It was enough time to consider her revenge from all its angles and levels of depth, to play it out, tune it, and play it out again until everything was in its place—until it was a plan.

And now, as Nahiri passed through the gnarled bones of Markov Manor, she allowed herself a slight smile. Everything was indeed in its place, where she'd put it—everything but Sorin. And he would be here soon.

She'd brought something special with her this time, too, a collection she'd gathered when word reached her that Sorin was bringing an army to face her. Sure, she had her cultists, but revenge was no time to be sloppy.

The first of Sorin's forces to arrive were the banners, ancient cloths that hung from black wooden poles, carried by vampire knights encased in polished plate armor. Hundreds of vampires fell in behind them, spreading out across the low hill opposite the manor.

Nahiri watched the procession from the manor's massive arched entryway. When Sorin at last emerged at the front of his gathered force, Nahiri's jaw was clenched. Sorin was saying something to the vampires nearest him, though she couldn't make out what it was.



Art by Igor Kieryluk

It didn't matter what he was saying though. All of this would end now. Sword in hand, Nahiri stepped out into the dull light of the day, out onto the broken causeway, and welcomed Sorin.

A metallic screech cut through the clangor of battle as Nahiri dragged her sword's blade from the ornate breastplate of a dead vampire. The corpse was one of several that lay around her in a loose semicircle. Lungs pumping, she flung herself over the lifeless heap to meet a knot of new attackers.

So many of them.

But she just needed the one.

An axe swung into view, crimson vapor trailing behind its black blade. Nahiri ducked out of range and thrust the point of her sword into the throat of another attacker who pressed in on her right. At a downward push of her free hand, the floor before her suddenly sank, so that when the axe arced in a second attack, it bit into the rim of the depression. Splinters of stone flew from the impact, and Nahiri caught them with her magic and drove them into the unprotected face of the axe wielder.

Others closed in around her. One of them, a woman all in white-enameled plate armor, stepped out from among them. She held her sword low, and Nahiri noticed the weapon had a pair of blades that twisted in a helix until they met to form a nasty tip. The vampire spoke, never taking her eyes off Nahiri, "You're not going to escape."

Nahiri cocked her head and raised an eyebrow. "Escape?"

"When this is over," the vampire in white continued, "I'll drink your blood from—" But the vampire fell silent when a marble corbel smashed into her mouth, pulverizing those grotesque teeth. Nahiri had plucked it from the debris that hung suspended overhead. She'd heard enough. As the vampire in

white crumpled to the floor, Nahiri sent the heavy hewn stone caroming off the handful of bloodsuckers nearest her until skulls and chests collapsed from the pummeling. When the bodies were still, the bloodied chunk of masonry spun in the air so that red droplets flung out in every direction.

Nahiri wiped a smear of it from her cheek. If Sorin's plan was to tire her before they met, then he was a fool. A thousand years in the Helvault was rest enough for several lifetimes. If it meant ending every other bloodsucker in here to get to him, then she was already off to a good start.

He was here somewhere, she knew. Around her, the melee was unfolding in what she remembered had once been the manor's great hall. The chamber was choked now with vampires and cultists, all at the grisly work of slaughtering each other. Her eyes darted over the chaos, hoping to pick out that flowing white hair, or...

Those cruel yellow eyes. And for a heartbeat, they were staring back at her before being swallowed up in the roiling tumult.

Nahiri's throat was suddenly dry. Her heart hammered against the inside of her chest, and all the rage of the last thousand years welled up in her until all she could do was force out the name, "Sorin!"

Nahiri thrust her will into the sloping stone floor, and reaching into each of the enormous flagstones, she tugged at them sharply. Her hands jerked upward, and on either side of her, two parallel walls rose up a dozen feet from the floor. Stone ground against stone, and when they stopped, they ran the length of the hall to create a sort of passage, cut off from the main fray. She was at one end, Sorin at the other.

Between them stretched a thin slice of the battle—a score of vampires and at least twice that many cultists, all still tangled in their fighting. One of the vampires lunged for Nahiri, but her vengeance was too near now for such distractions. A twitch of her finger, and a lance of stone emerged suddenly from the floor. It caught the armored bloodsucker under the breastplate through the abdomen, rising until it punched through the polished red steel at the shoulder with a shrill whine. The vampire just slumped in place, and Nahiri stepped past him as he slowly sank down the length of the stone quill.

"Sorin," she called out again, her voice strong and cool as the stone she wielded. And then she was striding forward, her path direct and steady, as more quills sprang up before her to impale vampires and cultists alike.

It was just the two of them, then.

The last time Nahiri had seen Sorin, he had been the last thing she saw in the world before the solitude of the Helvault consumed her. Now, as she looked at him, standing a dozen or so paces away, he was much as she remembered him, though with none of the frailty from their previous meeting. He wore the same armor, but it was speckled with blood, which added a cruel sheen to the red stone that adorned his breastplate. His sword also bore evidence of his butchery. His face, so accustomed to displaying that sarcastic smirk that she knew so well, instead was creased with stern lines that she had never seen. It pleased her to see him so grim.

"You brought so many friends," Nahiri said, stepping out from between two grisly spikes. "But then, not everyone could make it." She knew the mention of Avacyn would sting, but there was no sarcastic retort. Sorin just raised a pale hand, and jets of black, smoky energy streaked out. Death was in those trails of shadow, death meant for Nahiri. It appeared that he desired none of the pretense or poetry of a proper duel. Her end would be enough, and she watched Sorin, unmoving, as the sinister fingers reached for her.

But the fingers never touched her. They suddenly broke apart, and flew in several directions, tracing contours in the air that were otherwise invisible. Sorin unleashed a second torrent of death magic just as the first errant bolts completed their tortuous paths back to their source, crashing into the vampire

in a rapid sequence of high hisses. Sorin fell to one knee, biting his lip in anguish, and from between the plates of his armor, dark vapor rose from unseen wounds.

"You must think very little of me if you thought that would work," Nahiri said as the second cluster of magic struck home just as the first had. "Magic flows through leylines. Leylines pass through stone. And, well, we both know what I can do with that. So by all means, Sorin, try that garbage again." She was circling him now. "I brought Emrakul to your doorstep, and you still think I'm a child."

For a moment, neither spoke. More than six thousand years of history had led them both here. Staring into Sorin's eyes, Nahiri wondered if he was thinking the same thing. They had been friends, she once believed. And now...now she would have her vengeance. At last, Nahiri said, "A thousand years, Sorin. You locked me away for a thousand years."

"And yet, you're still here." Sorin coughed, sending a billow of black mist into the air. "You should have left."

"I did. I returned to Zendikar to see it being gutted by the Eldrazi. You let that happen." She raised her sword so that it was level with Sorin's throat. "You condemned me and my world."

"You knew the risks when you agreed to trap the titans on Zendikar. You knew that their escape was a possibility."

"I also knew that we had a deal." Nahiri felt her skin get hot. "If they did escape, you and Ugin were supposed to come. When they did, you were nowhere to be found. The way I saw it, the three of us were in it together. But it was only me. All that time, it was only ever me."

"So you've decided to condemn this plane."

"I'm done being a warden, and Zendikar will never again be a prison. Emrakul had to go somewhere. You just made the decision a simple one."

"Sorin, I'm inclined to watch this play out," came a woman's voice, melodic and biting, from above. Nahiri's head tilted to find a vampire, clad all in elegant black plate armor, floating in the air overhead at the head of a dozen or more similarly adorned vampires. She wore no helmet, and her pale face and shock of brilliant red hair stood out against the dark metal. There was an air of grace that seemed to radiate from her, and Nahiri recognized a power that was akin to Sorin's. This woman was a blood-sucker of an ancient variety.

"No doubt, Olivia," Sorin said from his kneeling position.

Olivia motioned to Nahiri with a delicate sword wrought of black steel. "This is her, I take it." Without waiting for a confirmation, she simply addressed Nahiri. "Whatever Sorin's done to incur your ire, I'm sure he's earned it. But he's also earned my help, so I can't allow you your revenge."

"Another guardian angel, Sorin? This one was bit rushed, I think," said Nahiri. She swept a hand out, and the stone slabs before her began to turn red with heat.

Olivia smiled. "I like her Sorin, I must say. But nevertheless..." At her signal, her vampires descended on Nahiri.

The stones in front of the lithomancer had become white-hot, and before the bloodsuckers could reach her, she willed the contents from the molten stones—four blades, identical to the one she wielded, each one pulsing with energy of their stone forge. She grabbed one so that she had a blade in either hand. The others fanned out above her like the plumage of a phoenix.





Art by Chris Rahn

“My revenge isn’t yours to hand out. I earned this. Sorin is mine.”

“Never forget,” Sorin hissed, “I spared you. The Helvault was a courtesy.”

“A courtesy,” Nahiri repeated, her fingers twitching. She could rend him to pieces. “The horrors you locked me away with for so long—they became my world.”

On that last word, Nahiri sunk the points of her swords into one of the stone tiles. She clenched her fists, and the weapons began to vibrate. The trembling resonated through the floor, growing in strength as it spread out. What began as a low buzz swelled into a rumble that shook the surrounding structure. Bright ribbons of energy bloomed from her hands in rapid pulses, winding down the blades, until they radiated out along the masonry to reach into every stone in the manor.

A handful of ley stones sprouted around her, all pointing outward so that they formed a kind of star.

Then, the manor lurched. The walls she created to isolate her and Sorin fell away, and the entire hall began to rotate independently of the rest of the architecture. As it swung around, the foundation creaked like the joints of some ancient god rising for the first time in an age. It was a deafening sound, and it teetered on the edge of endurable.

Soon another sound crept into her hearing. With every inch of the hall’s rotation, the sound grew. It was a course, grating sound, not entirely unlike the chorus of the cultists, but this was not meant for, nor made by, people.

The hall’s arched entryway moved with the massive chamber so that it no longer led to the broken causeway beyond the manor’s gate. When the circular motion stopped, the entryway settled before a featureless stone wall. The otherworldly sound swelled. Without the grinding of stone, there was no softening it, and she felt it in the roots of her teeth. But it was time. Nahiri reached out with her magic, and layers of that wall slid away in alternating directions.

Even before she coaxed the last layer aside, it exploded in a shower of rubble, and out they came. Scores of monsters, bulbous and contorted, with only vague hints at the people and animals they had once

been. They were Emrakul's now, touched by the Eldrazi titan so that their flesh stretched over their mutated forms in sinewy, tangled mesh.



Art by Darek Zabrocki

Nahiri had been gathering them here since Emrakul's arrival, locked away in her own vault, a gift meant for her old friend.

Nahiri watched them stream from their black chamber, swarming into the hall toward her. She didn't flinch, though. Nightmares were nothing new to her. They closed in, and just as the terrible horde would have crashed into her, they broke around her. These monsters were blind to her within her ring of ley stones. Cryptoliths, she'd heard them described by the cultists, though they were far from cryptic. Eldrazi followed ley lines, the network of mana that all worlds have. Just as she had done on Zendikar six thousand years ago, Nahiri shaped these stones to bend Innistrad's ley lines to her will. To these horrors, she occupied a blank spot in reality. She didn't exist.

Such was not the case for the vampires. The Eldrazi rushed toward them, and the red-haired vampire, along with her lackeys, wasted no time wading into the monstrosities with all the fury of their kind.





Art by Karl Kopinski

Nahiri backed away from the chaos, and chunks of masonry slid into place with each backward step to create an impromptu stairway that spiraled into the heights of the manor. Her ascent carried her above the hacking of vampire blades and the lashing of latticed limbs. Sorin had hoped to beat her with allies, but Nahiri was ready. Sorin had tried to beat her with his death magic, but Nahiri was ready for that too.

Was he ready for her, though?

She felt his eyes on her, and when she found Sorin in the turmoil below her, he was staring up at her. Blood ran down his chin, and a cultist hung limply from the vampire's fists. It wasn't the first time she'd seen him feed, but he'd never looked quite so monstrous as he did at that moment. And that's what he was, a monster.

Sorin's eyes never left her, even as he began his climb. He moved like lightning, the limp cultist in his hand lolling violently as he scrambled up the twisted walls, and over to the chunks of masonry held frozen in the air. He was a cat on the hunt, swift and sure-footed. By the time Nahiri was among the unmoored, broken remnants of the manor's vaulted ceiling, Sorin was on her heels.

Nahiri was a kor from Zendikar, after all. Leaping from precarious place to precarious place was second nature to her. She was also the lithomancer, and here, in a field of scattered buttresses, spires, and entire wings of the manor that were strewn about in countless bits, she was in her element. She was perched on the sill of a tall, narrow window set into a bit of wall that hung in the air in defiance of gravity. Her swords orbited above her head, a crown of blades that marked this as her domain. It was time to see if Sorin could keep up.

"Now we can finish what we started, uninterrupted," Nahiri called down to Sorin, who rose after landing gracefully on a landing that still towed part of a wide staircase with it. A long red runner still clung to the remaining steps before dropping out over empty space like the tongue of some dead animal.

"Are you so eager to die?" Sorin said. "When last we met, my strength was greatly diminished. You're not so fortunate this time, I'm afraid." He tossed the corpse of the cultist at Nahiri like it was a damp



cloth, and she heard something crunch inside the body as it slammed into the stone beside her. “And I have every intention of killing you.”

“You think you scare me?”

“If not yet, I will.” His eyes were all cruelty, pure and ancient.

“I’m not leaving until this is done, Sorin.”

“On that we agree, young one.”

Young one. Without another word, Nahiri let her swords fly, all but the one she gripped. Sorin scrambled out of the way as each blade bit deep in the stone beneath his feet, and before he could secure his footing once again, Nahiri grabbed hold of the landing with her will and upended it.

For a moment, Nahiri thought he would hang on, but his fingers failed to find purchase, and he fell.

But the heavy red runner swung around with the motion, and Nahiri watched as Sorin’s fingers closed around the fabric, and suddenly, he was swinging instead of falling.

Nahiri yanked at the landing’s component flagstones, unraveling the whole structure. As it tumbled away, Sorin let go, and his momentum carried him to a wayward beam. From there he pounced to a shattered wall, and then to another beam that leaned diagonally in the air. It seemed all in the span of a heartbeat, and Nahiri could scarcely keep track of him.

Then she couldn’t. He was so quick, and by the time she shifted her position in her window to follow his movements beneath her, she’d lost sight of him.

For several moments her eyes darted around furiously, scanning for any hint of movement. Then, a flash of silver, and all Nahiri could do was slide into the wall itself so that Sorin’s blade bounced away with a deafening knell that rang for several moments through the stone.

Swaddled in masonry, Nahiri heard Sorin’s words muffled, but venomous. “Nahiri, Nahiri, all this trouble over a turn in the Helvault. And yet you seem so at home in stone.”

Then there was a loud crack, and agony shot through her side like a hot poker. The stone had been breached. She felt it, and she felt the steel in her flesh. With a scrape, the blade receded, and before it could strike again, Nahiri let herself fall from the wall’s grasp, and suddenly, she was tumbling through open air. Her hand went to the burning at her side, and it was wet.

Some bit of balustrade came up to meet her. She tried to grab hold of it, but her hand, slick with blood, slipped, and she bounced past it. Her eyes fluttered, and the world spun around her until it stopped all at once when she slammed hard against the surface of a massive spire that lay horizontally across the length of the open ceiling.

When she was able to find enough strength, Nahiri gathered her feet beneath her and rose slowly. She leaned hard against some stonework that protruded from the surface of the spire. She was out of breath, and her mouth felt dry despite the taste of blood in her mouth.

At the sound of boots on the spire in front of her, she raised her eyes to find Sorin straightening himself from his landing. He stepped forward so that he stood over her, his sword raised and threatening, just as it was a thousand years ago when he condemned her to the Helvault. But there was no Helvault this time.

“You had the chance to kill me, young one. You should have taken that chance while it was there.” There was no gloating in Sorin’s words. It was a mentor addressing a protégé, a final lesson to impart.

“Maybe,” Nahiri said, though more to herself. Her sword hung limply in her hand so that the point rested on the ground. Pain radiated from the gash in her side. Her free hand had been cradling the wound, and it trembled as she took a moment to glance at it.

So much blood.

So what was a little more. She took a deep breath, and spoke. “Regardless of what happens here, whether I make it out of here or not, I won, Sorin. Look around you.” Nahiri swept her hand weakly out to indicate the manor. “Look carefully at what I’ve done to everything you claim as yours.” She pointed to her left. Out in the distance, over the city of Thraben, Emrakul. “No pet angel of yours will come to the rescue this time.”

Sorin’s sword flicked out, knocking Nahiri’s out into nothing. “What you took from me in Avacyn, I will take from your blood.” Before a muscle could even twitch, she felt Sorin’s teeth tear into her neck. All the blood in her body shifted course. Sorin was calling it to him, and it burned in her veins. He drank deeply, and Nahiri found her moment.

She leaned into the masonry at her back, and it responded to her coaxing by unfurling to either side of her. Each heart beat was torment, but she pushed through it to whisper, “I can bite back, Sorin, and I’ve got bigger teeth than you.”

The stone crashed in around them, and rows of jagged stone tusks tore into Sorin from his legs to his ribs. His sword flew from his hand, and a yelp of agony exploded from his lips. Nahiri shoved herself free of him, passing through the solid stone so that only Sorin remained. The stone tightened in on him until it had him in its grasp. By the time Nahiri was finished with her work, Sorin hung in air, gripped in Nahiri’s magic. There was no planeswalking from this. The stone teeth that held him chewed at his insides, keeping him in a perpetual anguish that would sap the focus he would need to leave this place.

Then Nahiri spun Sorin and his stone around so that they faced the rolling plains below Markov Manor. Sorin tried to speak, an unintelligible gurgle, as Nahiri climbed onto the cocoon she’d crafted. Whatever he had to say didn’t matter. She wanted him to hear her words. With one hand clinging to the pinnacle of the stone, Nahiri lowered herself so that she could whisper those words into Sorin’s ear. “I spared you,” Nahiri said. “A courtesy returned.”



Art by Cynthia Sheppard

In the distance beneath a ceiling of brooding clouds, Emrakul.

And the next moment, Nahiri planeswalked away from Innistrad, leaving Sorin to the fate of his world.

The horizon was Emrakul. There was nothing Sorin could do but watch as the end of Innistrad drifted slowly across Gavony toward Thraben. The people down there were of little consequence now, but Innistrad was his, and Thraben was where he had created Avacyn to protect it. Seeing it now, on brink of its ruin, sent a pang through him that hurt worse than the lithomancer's stone teeth that ground their way through his insides.

Sorin felt it a moment before he heard it—metal against stone, a long, slow scrape that moved across the back of his sarcophagus from bottom to top.

"I think I like this one better," came a voice rich with mockery. And then Olivia descended into view to block out the chaos beyond. She was holding his sword.

"Olivia," Sorin said through gritted teeth, "release me."

"Even if I could, why? Avacyn is dead. Nahiri has been driven off. Our bargain is fulfilled." She chuckled cruelly. "I call this a victory. Do try to enjoy it. Markov Manor is yours, after all. As for me," she held up Sorin's sword to inspect its edge, "I rather like the sound of 'Olivia, Lord of Innistrad.'"

Any shred of patience he possessed was suddenly cast aside by a surge of desperation. This world was done. Olivia was his only way out. "Look!" he said, straining against the unyielding stone. Olivia peered over her shoulder, but said nothing. "You see," he continued, "that's what's coming! You've seen what she does, what she's capable of." He was speaking faster now, and his voice cracked. "You're going to need my help to deal with it!"

Sorin didn't like the way Olivia looked at him as he spoke. She was a spider, and he was a fly. "Listen to me!" he tried again. "What good is any of this if it will be gone tomorrow?"

“Avacyn is dead. And you,” she said, pressing the point of his own sword against his cheek, “you’re where you are. I think it’s quite good.” And all Sorin could do was watch as Olivia floated from view, so that Emrakul and the end she promised filled his vision once again.