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PART - III

“**L**et me tell you the plan,” said Grey. “You, me, and Runa will be fighting this war. Let me put it this way: imagine this war as a game of chess. You are the king, so you absolutely need to survive this battle. I have created a machine that creates life, but it needs two things to work: one, at least one life form alive for it to work—you are that life form—and two, a very, very strong power source, so we will be using the Time Stone, a metal through which time flows. Runa is getting that.”

I asked him, “What about Eric? He’s alive; he can be helpful too.”

He shakes his head in denial. Eric appeared in the black void and saw the man who murdered his entire universe.

Me from the future said to me, “Do you know what comes with absolute knowledge? Pain. You know what is bound to occur, and you can’t put a stop to it.” He turned around and pulled his hand up and whispered, “Disappear,” and Eric just vanished from existence.

I asked him in fear, not of his powers, but of what he had

become, “Is he . . . dead?”

“Yes,” he answered.

I was expecting that, yet it came as a bigger shock than I would have felt if he were alive. I knew at that moment that a darkness had consumed him.

But the war, which is to come, needs him.

We were out of the time prison and in a place I haven’t ever seen either. It had a black marble floor with gold outlines of large and small circles cutting each other. The walls were golden; it wasn’t real gold, but it looked beautiful. The ceiling, however, didn’t exist; I could see the very small white stars shining in the black void called space.

There were three walls, and one of them didn’t exist. There was a lift at the end of the wall I’m facing. In the middle of the outlined golden circles was a hemisphere, golden in color with the same pattern, except it was descending in, rather than being a different color. The hemisphere was rotating on itself.

A spaceship, white in color, appeared out of thin air, next to me. Coming out of it, Runa said to me, “I’ve got it. What next?”

She had mistaken me for him, the other Alan; I’ll call him Grey for now. I replied to her, “Erm . . . I think you’ve mistaken me for him, the other me.”

She looked at me and said, “I should’ve realized; after all, his hair is white.”

I realized that she looked young, younger than she should be, according to their stories.

Grey came up the elevator and moved out; he said, “Oh, good, you’re back, so . . . the time stone.”

She handed him a stone, bright as if it was a sun, a really small

sun. She had worn a black glove like hand armor, but Grey just held it with his bare hands.

He moved to the hemisphere, and a hole opened in it. He put the stone in, and the hole closed. He said, while moving to its back, “I am no more a human, so I can hold this, but if you did, your body would burn to ashes; not even the bones would exist. It is a painful and somewhat long death, but the stone, it starts controlling you, stopping you from dropping it.” He was typing on a keyboard attached to the hemisphere during the whole dialogue.

I asked him, “So, how much time do we have before the Final War?”

He answered, “Around 6 hours. I’ve stuff to do; you all can just do whatever you want.”

I was not going to spend the hours, which may just be my last, worrying, so I decided to watch the final season of my favorite show.

THE FINAL WAR

I was asleep when he came to wake me up; he said, waking me up, “Hey, wake up, the battle’s about to begin, and I wouldn’t also want you missing something one only gets to see once in his life . . . *I really hope so.*”

I got on my feet and stretched the sleeves of the light gray t-shirt I was wearing. Runa was already awake, and unlike me, she had worn real armor, or I think it was that; I was never really sure.

The all-black hard clothes, which felt like metal, and a long coat with a hood attached; it was steel-gray in color, and she

had worn the hood over her head.

I was looking out the huge hole in the place in space we were in, which is called The Station. Man, I am cutting the immersion, okay.

So I looked out, and I saw something gold sparkling in the distance. It was forming a translucent sphere. It was at a uniform speed. Another golden sphere originated from the first, then another and another and another and another, until there were like a thousand of them. I could see something *build* inside the spheres; it wasn't human, but it had hands and legs like humans, and it was twice the size of a human.

The golden sphere blasted like a bubble. It was a pure black being, shaped like a human but twice the size; stars twinkled over his body. It was like a galaxy within that being.

Grey said to us, "There's our enemy, Dark."

I replied to him in confusion, "Which one is it?"

He answered, "All of them."

Runa said sarcastically, "This was not part of the deal."

Grey chuckled, and he walked out of the station, into the cold, soul-sucking void, without any effect, walking on nothing. I asked him, "Where are you going?"

Grey answered, "There's one more, the real deal. Stopping him is the only reason I needed to live till now. After this battle, I can finally sleep."

He knew that he was meant to die fighting *the real deal*. He is the most important person to ever live, and no one will be watching him; no one will know about him.

Someone once said to me, "*Everyone has a role to play, but what that role is . . . is up to you to decide*," so he chose this role.

Grey stood in front of a being made of pure darkness; he had

the figure of a man, but not quite. He had a whole universe making up his body; you could see the stars shining on his body like a bunch of fireworks. He had no eyes, ears, mouth, or face at that, but somehow it was still scary, cold, and unforgiving, as if it was suffering from a huge pain that couldn't end.

Grey could relate to him, but he knows what he has to do.

He pulled up his index finger towards '*the real deal*', and a huge beam of light struck the man of pure darkness, going past him towards a planet, and the planet burned down.

"Don't hold back; strike me with everything you've got! Alan," said the man made of darkness.

"I would be surprised to see you talk, but since I have to kill you either way, it seems like a waste of p—," said Grey, but he got interrupted by stopping '*the real deal*' strike with his leg. "Let me finish, at least."

"But that would be really impractical."

"King of the dark, always so practical," and Grey spins around, kicks him on the turn, and sends him flying into a planet's surface.

Grey reached the lower sky of the planet in mere seconds due to his speed being as fast as that of light.

"You could've easily dodged that ... why didn't you?" asked Grey.

"To gain distance between us," said the king of the dark.

"Shit," whispered Grey as he tried to move forward but was stopped by the hundreds of beams of fire coming from all around the king.

Grey speeds back to dodge all the beams, then he's kicked back even further by the King, who was there in a blink of an eye.

Grey balances on the meteor and whispered to himself, "Gotta

get serious or I won't last an hour, let alone three."

On the spaceship dodging all the darks attacking them, I, on the pilot's ship, cried, "THREE HOURS!?!? We're not lasting 10 minutes against them."

"Have to; the core doesn't charge till three more hours." said Runa, shooting the dark from the cockpit.

"Is there no way to hurry?" he asked me.

Runa replied, "I don't think so."

I grunt as I dodge all the darks just crashing themselves onto the spaceship. But I was wrong; Grey is the smartest man to be born in this universe. Not surprising, after all, he is just me. His plan was foolproof—the core is actually hidden at the other end of the universe, and this is just a decoy, '*olfactory disguising paint.*' He painted our ship with it. Makes them think that this is the core. "We might just last 3 hours." I thought out loud.

I thought too soon. A pure dark beam suddenly cuts our spaceship in two. I barely caught the handles, stopping me from falling out. However, Runa was not so lucky; she got sucked out into the cold, soul-sucking space and died.

Grey appeared soon after and, looking at me and snapping his fingers, teleported me to a random place.

Grey looked straight at the king of the Darks, and they both disappeared, moving at the speed of light. They clashed against each other, moving back and forth. The king stroked his stomach at the speed of light, blood spilled all around, and the real deal spin-kicked Grey from the side. Meteors after meteors, Grey crashed into all of them one after another.

He balanced on one of them and looked up only to see Dark kicking him down, crushing the meteor beneath. Blood was coming from his mouth.

Grey landed on the planet, and the King of the Dark appeared there as if he had just teleported there. Grey is looking at King as he stands straight. The king pulled up his hands and made fists. Pure black liquid came out of the king, from his hands. Grey speeds up; the ground below shattered in large pieces. Grey picked one of them and slammed it against the Dark King, throwing him down. Black beams shoot at Grey, but he dodges them.

Appeared in front of the king and kicked him into the ground. Dust covers the whole area, and Grey is thrown out of the dust, crashing again and again on the sandy ground.

Grey stands up again. King appears at the left, a long white sword appears in his right hand, and he clashes it against the long black sword held by the king. Grey smiled, again and again; their blades clashed at light speed, moving a little forward each time. Flames of opposite colors appeared at their blades; the next clash cut the world in two.

Grey disappeared to several planets and slashed his sword in the air. All the planets between them blew up in flames. Grey formed a fist. All the flames formed a sun with the Dark King as its center.

“Am I *enjoying* this?! The fate of life itself depends on me; I should be terrified, not having goosebumps!” thought Grey as he saw the sun cut in two.

Two Hours Later

I was there, at the other end of the universe; next to me was the core. Darks were about to come here, and this time I would have to face them on my own.

Speak of the devil, all the darks were here and swarming

down towards the core. But I wasn't going to let them touch it. I pulled out the blaster and started shooting them one after another, but I wasn't fast enough; it seemed like I took one down and two more appeared.

Eventually they made it through my blockade. I rushed around and shot the dark, but more and more were appearing; half an hour was still left. This was it; another one made it through. Two separate beams of light killed all the dark behind and in front of me.

I looked at where the beams came from, and I saw Grey standing in the sky.

He said to himself, "Looks like we traveled across the universe while fighting; it took me only two hours."

The king kicked him from behind and sent him flying into the ground. "You talk too much," said the king of the Darks.

Grey stood back up; he said out loud, "Just 30 minutes more."

"No," said the real deal, "This is it. This is the end."

He pointed towards the core, and a pure black beam cut open the core. The time stone fell out. "Nooooo!!" screamed Grey.

The King of the Darks appeared in front of the machine before the stone could fall to the ground, and he caught it, only if I didn't catch it first.

To stop the King from having the time stone, I caught it; my whole body started rusting away. It was way beyond painful; only the rusted skeleton of my left hand, by which I had held the stone, was left. It was reaching my skull and legs, but I could feel unlimited power flowing through whatever was left of my body, and it was still going on.

I hit the king with a white beam of pure power, causing him to fall on his knees. I could strike him again, but Grey cut my left hand, the stone fell from my already cut hand, and he caught

it.

He looked at me; all of my body turned back to normal, with no wound left. And he snapped his fingers, and I was back at the space station.

Grey looked at the king and said, "This is the end ... Kaboom!"

A huge explosion: all stars, all moons, all asteroids, and all planets exploded. Wiping out everything, nothing left but me, this space station, and the void.

I found a video message on a computer from Grey—"If you're seeing this, then everything went as planned ... Alan, there's something I want to talk about regarding the conclusion of this battle ... there were only 2 scenarios where we would win: either you live or I live. ... I have lived a very long life; I'm 500 years old. It took me 300 years to learn all the secrets of this universe; it's kind of small if you think about it. But I decided that it's time for me... but you, Alan, you have just begun your life. Alan, remember, you can time travel. ... The rest of the mysteries are for you to solve on your own."

So, this is it; this is the Linear Apocalypse." -Alan