Near the area where the fight was taking place, the noise and commotion of the battle had already been noticed throughout all the surrounding area. More and more people unaware of the danger were getting closer, curious to see what was happening. Among those people was Ilene. Ilene came out with her armor on, knowing that something was not right. Despite lacking an innate sensory ability, Ilene could feel, even from the mansion, an overwhelming presence.

Ilene took a shortcut through a park, passing between the trees and people who were standing still, trying to catch a glimpse of what was transpiring. Halfway there, a person caught Ilene's attraction since this person was going in the opposite direction to where everyone was going. It didn't take long for Ilene to realize that this person was Amelia, running at full speed, looking distressed as if she were fleeing from something.

"AMELIA!" Ilene screamed, trying to get her attention, but Amelia got on a horse that was tied next to one of the trees and sped off into the streets.

Ilene knew that Amelia was missing, so the surprise of seeing her and even more in these circumstances left her even more confused. However, Ilene didn't have time to stay and dwell on it now since the noise of the fight returned her attention to her objective. Ilene continued running, feeling a sensation of danger that increased with each step she took closer to the guild building until she finally reached where everything was happening.

Ilene's heart clenched as she took in the chaotic scene unfolding before her eyes. A part of the guild building was destroyed, and enormous ice pillars were everywhere. She was shocked to see several of Oblivion's adventurers fighting against some creatures with the figure of a woman made of ice. Ilene gaze then darted upward, where she spotted two figures engaged in a fierce battle amidst the darkness. She managed to distinguish Agnes but failed to recognize the other person enveloped in dark energy, who Ilene assumed was the source of the suffocating presence she felt even from the mansion. Their movements were too fast for her to discern that it was her son. But it was the sight of Diva, a member of Oblivio, whom she only knew by sight decapitated body with her head a few steps away lying on the street, that truly jolted Ilene.

"W-What the hell is happening here?" Ilene expressed, not understanding anything she was witnessing.

Finally, Ilene turned to her left and caught sight of her husband, covered in blood, alongside Celeste, who was frantically trying to tend to his wounds.

"KASE!" Ilene screamed, running at full speed to her husband's side.

Barely conscious, Kase opened his eyes slightly, seeing the face of his wife kneeling next to him, distressed by the state he was in, "I-Ilene..."

Ilene's face reflected her anguish seeing the large amount of blood around Kase. His missing arm, the stab wounds in his back, and a burn on his face, "Y-You'll be fine, dear! Stay awake!

I'm by your side!" Ilene spoke with a trembling voice as she held Kase's remaining hand, "What's going on? Who did this to him?" Ilene asked Celeste, who looked pale and exhausted, barely able to generate a minimum of mana to finish stopping the bleeding from the stabbing in Kase's back.

Celeste managed to muster enough energy to respond, "Y-Your son..."

"...W-What?" Ilene responded in confusion. Ilene let go of Kase's hand and stood up, turning to see the two figures fighting in the distance, "...Darx...!?"

Ilene tried to focus her gaze on the person fighting Agnes, initially struggling to believe Celeste's words. After a moment of intense focus, recognition dawned upon her as she discerned her son's face amidst the chaos. Without hesitation, she left Kase behind and sprinted through the midst of the skirmish between Oblivion members and the icy summons, without caring about the danger in the direction of where her son was.

As Agnes' body crashed to the pavement, there was a moment of silence.

All the present members of Oblivion saw what happened. They all stopped their attacks for a few moments, witnessing the motionless body of their Guild Master in disbelief. Sorrow and sadness gripped their hearts while everyone, in a fit of desperation and fury, tried to reach Agnes to help her, but the ice summons blocked their way.

"Agnes!!"

"We must take on this monster head-on!"

"Agnes!"

The voices of those adventurers, desperate to aid their esteemed Guild Master, echoed through the surroundings. It was a scene none could fathom. For them, it was impossible for Agnes to lose. Their idealized image of her, built from years of serving under her command and hearing tales of her heroism since childhood, momentarily clouded their perception that Agnes was no longer who she once was. And more than that, for all the members of Oblivion, Agnes was someone they respected and admired. A leader they were proud to say was their Guild Master. Tears welled in the eyes of many as they frantically sought to reach and assist Agnes, their leader.

Syvis, observing the unfolding chaos on the battlefield, could only watch in stunned disbelief as the tragic conclusion played out before her eyes. Never in her wildest imaginings had she envisioned such a fate befalling Agnes. Syvis stood motionless, tears streaming down her cheeks, her eyes wide open with an expression of shock on her face.

"Ag..nes..." Syvis mutters, being a few steps away from her. Seeing with terror and sadness the body full of wounds and blood of her friend.

To Syvis's surprise, Agnes opened her eyes with difficulty and coughed slightly.

"AGNES!" Syvis shouted as she rushed to her side, kneeling next to her body, "Please hold on! I'll bring a healer!"

"F-Forget it... it's too late for me..." Agnes said in a barely audible voice.

"Don't say that! Please hold on! Didn't you say you wanted to retire to spend time with your grandchildren!?" Syvis pleaded, tears streaming down her cheeks, "I-I'm going to-"

Syvis was interrupted when she realized that Darx was behind her.

Syvis quickly stood up and looked back in fear at Darx, who was standing still a few steps away from her. Syvis saw that Darx was bleeding and seriously hurt from his fight against Agnes, but more than that, Darx's mere existence seemed to defy the laws of nature, a manifestation of an enormous raw demonic energy and untamed darkness. Syvis was so used to being with the kind and friendly Darx that seeing him now like this seemed incomprehensible to her.

"D-Darx..." Syvis spoke with a voice that carried her sadness.

As soon as Syvis laid eyes on Darx, her heart was flooded with great pain. She was aware that she was the root cause of all the suffering and turmoil that had befallen both Darx and Agnes. The weight of her actions bore down on her heavily, and she felt an overwhelming sense of regret for the choices she had made. Despite her deep remorse, Syvis knew that the damage had already been done, and she could never take back the pain she had inflicted on those she loved.

Only one thing occurred to her that may end all this chaos. Syvis stood up, spread her arms, and looked at Darx, "Darx... It's okay. You can do it..."

Syvis thought that since she was the root of everything, maybe if Darx ended her life, his anger would cease, and Darx would return to normal.
She understood that her own actions caused all this, and the weight of her mistakes bore heavily upon her conscience. Yet, Syvis also comprehends that even her sacrifice might not suffice to mend the pain she had wrought upon the two people she loved the most.

Darx created an ice spear and began a slow walk towards Syvis. Given Darx's state, it was impossible to know if his desire was to end Syvis's life or if his combat instincts simply guided his body, and his purpose
was to find someone to physically hurt so he could heal himself using [Harmonic Drain].
Whatever the case, it was clear that Darx intended to end Syvis's life.

As Darx approached her, Syvis could only resign herself to her fate, her mind drifting back to the fond memories she had with Darx. Recollections of their shared moments flashed before her eyes, a bittersweet reminder of the bond they once shared. Syvis had always struggled with remembering people, yet for some inexplicable reason, she recognized Darx when she first saw him in the castle. She couldn't help but marvel at the irony of fate—a crying boy she had once saved on her travels now stood before her, trying to become an adventurer. The more time Syvis spent with Darx, the more she realized that Darx was a genuinely good person. He never discriminated against her because of her race or tried to take advantage of her like most people do, and on the contrary, she was surprised to notice that they both had many similar tastes.

Syvis, who had spent her life trying not to get too involved with people for fear that they would try to take advantage of her weaknesses, found in Darx someone who made her feel calm and at peace. Her love for Darx grew little by little with each day, but it was only when she lost Darx that she truly realized that she loved him much more than she had thought. Even so, her mistakes were unforgivable, and she knew it.

As Darx stood before her, his gaze cold and unwavering, Syvis couldn't help but recall Darx's warm and gentle smile. With a heavy heart, she closed her eyes, silently praying that with her death, everything would end and asking the goddesses for a chance in the next life to reunite with Darx once more, but this time as a human, free from the burden of her dark heritage as a Dark Elf.

While waiting for Darx's spear to pass through her body, Syvis felt a push, which made her fall to the ground. When Syvis opened her eyes, she saw that Agnes, with her body already destroyed, managed to get up and push her, being she the one who received Darx's spear. Agne managed to stay standing for a couple of seconds, blood coming out of her mouth from having been pierced in the stomach by the ice spear.

"AGNES!" Syvis screamed.

Agnes slowly fell to the ground with the ice spear still piercing her stomach. Syvis rushed on her knees and approached Agnes while Darx, thanks to [Harmonic Drain], started healing his wounds.

For a moment, Agnes looked up at Syvis, her eyes filled with sadness and a hint of resignation, "P-Protect my guild... m-my dear friend...."

As Agnes closed her eyes, she offered a silent prayer for the future of her guild and the comrades she had fought so bravely to protect. Agnes knew that even in death, her legacy would live on. And with that thought, she surrendered herself to the silent darkness, her heart at peace, knowing that she had fought with all her strength and courage until the very end.

"AGNES!!!!"

Syvis screamed, tears streaming down her face.

Syvis cried over her friend's body, grieving for her death. But amidst her sorrow, Syvis was jolted back to the present by the sound of movement behind her. She turned to behold Darx, now completely healed, shrouded in darkness, his gaze fixed upon her with a chilling intensity. At that moment, Darx seemed like a stranger, a mere vessel for the raw, untamed power that coursed through him.

"D-Darx..." Syvis's voice quivered as she scrambled to her feet, her heart pounding.

Darx raised his arm, a dark aura emanating from his palm, ready to unleash a devastating attack. But before Darx could unleash his wrath upon Syvis, a voice pierced through the tension-filled air.

"Darx!"

The sound of his name, spoken with urgency and concern, caused Darx to stop and turn around. His face remained expressionless, looking at his mother approaching with a mixture of confusion and distress etched upon her features. Ilene's heart clenched with despair as she beheld her son, his once gentle countenance now wrapped by darkness.

Ilene looked at Darx from head to toe as she approached him with caution and anguish, not knowing what had happened to her son, "D-Darx, it's me. Your mother! I'm here!" Ilene's voice trembled as she pleaded with her son, her eyes brimming with tears, "T-This isn't you! I'll help you!"

However, her words were swallowed by the oppressive atmosphere, disappearing into the void that Darx had become. Darx seemed beyond reason, consumed by the overwhelming darkness. Without prior warning, Darx launched himself at his mother, ice spear in hand. Ilene's heart raced as she braced herself for the impact, her shield trembling in her grasp.

"Darx, stop!" Syvis's scream was heard behind him.

With every ounce of strength Ilene possessed, she defended herself against Darx's onslaught, who attacked her without mercy. Ilene mind racing with thoughts of how she could reach him and save Darx from the darkness that was consuming him. Nevertheless, Darx was relentless in his attacks. It didn't take long for Ilene to fall to the ground with blood running down her forehead.

Syvis tried to intervene by fusing her fire and stone summons, creating her golem. The golem attacked Darx, giving Ilene the opportunity to stand up. The towering golem surged forward, unleashing a barrage of attacks. Even so, the golem was no match, and shortly afterward, it was frozen, becoming an ice statue. Ilene and Syvis surrounded Darx. Neither of them wanted to

attack or hurt Darx, but he was out of control. They both knew that if they didn't think of something quickly, Darx would kill them both. Syvis was prepared to die, but she wanted to prevent Darx from killing Ilene at all costs since she knew it would be something Darx would never forgive himself for.

"Darx, please!" Ilene's voice quivered with emotion as she pleaded, her eyes shining with unshed tears, "You have to stop this!"

But it wasn't the words of Ilene or Syvis that were about to end the fight. Darx, as well as Ilene and Syvis, suddenly felt a strange sensation pass through them, unsettling them deeply. At that moment, a murky, ominous fog started to form around the guild building.

Shortly afterward, a high-pitched scream was heard, forcing several to cover their ears. Darx's ice summons began to squirm, almost as if they were in pain. But it wasn't the summons who were in pain. The summons were reflecting what was happening to Darx. As Agnes deduced, Darx was reaching his limit, and that murky fog was speeding up the process.

As Ilene and Syvis looked on in horror, the dark energy surrounding Darx began to warp and twist. Darx's expression, which had remained static throughout the fight, now reflected pain. This dark energy was contracting and expanding, launching waves that pushed everything around. Something that seemed to cause Darx a lot of pain. Ilene and Syvis wanted to help Darx, but it was impossible to get closer due to the uncontrolled demonic energy that prevented them from getting closer.

All of a sudden, the sky above them shifted to a reddish color. Their gaze rose skyward just in time to witness a barrage of fiery orbs hurtling earthward with unstoppable force. Each impact reverberated with a thunderous roar as the fireballs collided with Darx's ice summons, obliterating them one after another.

Darx also looked up, and above, he saw the figure of a person dressed in a dark robe floating in the sky. Despite his struggles to contain his erratic demonic energy, Darx attempted to retaliate by summoning his dark power, raising his arm with the intent to unleash a beam of shadowy energy. Yet, before Darx could fully execute his attack, the figure in the sky did something, and abruptly, Darx felt like all his power was starting to feed away. Ignoring the drain on his power, Darx discharged the weakened beam, only to watch it dissipate mere moments after its release.

The figure in the sky began to descend, revealing the face of Aelbrecht the Taciturn, the Archmage S-Rank, Guild Master of Dark Dragons. Aelbrecht had his arm outstretched, pointing at Darx as he descended. He was using nether magic. A type of magic that deals with the dark arts and that very few can use. With his skill, Aelbrecht was draining Darx's power, gradually sapping away his demonic energy.

This didn't escape the notice of the other adventurers, who, now free from the ice summons' restraint, surged forward to attack Darx. But Darx wasn't about to sit idly by. Summoning every

last ounce of his strength, he invoked his summoning skill. With the dwindling remnants of his demonic energy, a black owl began to materialize, radiating a malevolent aura as ominous as Darx's own presence.

Even on his skull-like Aelbrecht face, his surprise was evident. Somehow, it felt like it was not the first time Aelbrecht saw that same summon.

The owl flew high and then stopped mid-air. The owl wasn't flapping its wings but also didn't fall to the ground, seeming as if time had stopped for him. Seconds later, Ilene and Syvis fell to the ground, and a kind of faint blue energy began to come out of their bodies, making them scream in pain. But it wasn't just them. The same thing happened to all the adventurers as well as the people who were still nearby. The desperate screams of hundreds of people could be heard while all that mana was being absorbed by the owl in the sky. It was especially excruciating for ordinary people with low mana or adventurers like Celeste, who no longer had mana, but the owl kept trying to absorb more.

It appeared to affect everyone except Aelbrecht, whose mana reserves seemed boundless, impervious to the draining effects. Descending to the ground before Darx, Aelbrecht amplified the skill he had been employing, intensifying its effect on Darx. With each passing moment, Darx weakened further until, at last, the remnants of his demonic energy dissipated entirely, leaving him drained, and with that, the owl also vanished. Darx then fell to his knees on the ground with his head bowed.

It's strange. I'm in a dark place. I'm sitting across from Zaine, who is across from me. I can't feel anything. I can't hear anything. I can't speak, but I feel that even if I did, she wouldn't respond to me. Zaine looks much more deteriorated than the last time I saw her. ...Is this our end? Will Zaine and I die in this place? I never managed to find out who she was.

I have no control over my body, but I have momentary flashes of what is happening. All the blood. All the destruction. All the death.

I close my eyes, and when I open them, I see light for the first time in what feels like an eternity. I went from not feeling anything to feeling excruciating pain throughout my body. With difficulty, I raised my face, and in front of me was a person in dark cloaks and a skull-like face. I know who he is.

"What is..." I tried to speak, but my body was too weak.

"Darx...?"

I heard my mother's voice. With difficulty, I managed to turn my head to the right side, where I saw her lying on the ground, covered in wounds and blood. Behind her was Syvis in the same state, looking at me.

"W-What just...?"

I looked around and saw all the destruction; at that moment, a wave of memories came to me. All this time, I had felt like a sleepwalker watching everything happen without any control, but now I remember everything. I did all this. I caused this destruction. I killed Agnes and several of the Oblivion members. I harm the dozens of people lying on the ground. I did that to my mother. It was all me.

My gaze returned to Aelbrecht when I noticed he began walking in my direction. I can't do anything. I don't have a drop of energy in my body. Is he going to kill me?

"Darx, you can't die here. This is just the beginning," Aelbrecht said in a spectral voice, "Your path will be full of obstacles and pain, but you need to be strong to endure it all."

W-What is he saying? Isn't he going to kill me?

At that exact moment, a person jumped from one of the nearby buildings. This person grew wings and transformed in mid-air into the demon that showed up in my room the other night. I saw all this, but Aelbrecht, for some reason, didn't seem to care.

Aelbrecht only continued speaking, "You need to find Zaine. She is the only one who can give you all the answers."

...How does he know about Zaine?

The demon flew towards me, making a strange movement in the air, worried in case Aelbrecht attacked her, but he didn't move. Namy tried to attack Aelbrecht with earth magic as a distraction, but he didn't even have to lift a finger or turn to look at her as those attacks were destroyed before they even reached his body.

"I won't let you die here!" Namy said, grabbing me in her arms and beginning to lift me up with her.

Aelbrecht at no time tried to stop Namy and just continued talking, "Darx, once you discover everything, if you decide to fight, I will be waiting for you," He said without taking his eyes off me, "Our enemy is the person behind all the bad things that are happening. He already took everything from us once. We can't let him do the same thing again." Those were Aelbrecht's last words before Namy flew high away from this place, taking me with her.

Namy was escaping the city as fast as she could, carrying me in her arms. Although I came out alive, I feel like something inside me died. I can't go back to being the person I once was.