

The Fall of Haven

5/18/23

Sondra

Sondra walked through Haven, making her way to the trade center. Her brother Benedict was going to accompany her to visit the people of Bastion. She really enjoyed the Night Market they held and wanted to share it with Benedict.

As she gathered the goods she wanted to trade, a Pastiche man came in. She smiled at him and reviewed the items she had chosen. "What do you think, Benedict?" The warm day had caused his skin to look pink from sunburn. "Don't you think you're bringing a little too much?" Benedict asked from next to her. "I don't think so. They need all the help they can get. Besides, these are items from our surplus. It will help them and us, depending on the trade." Sondra began packing the items into two bags for the trip.

Before she could finish, the alarm bell sounded. She glanced at Benedict as he walked to the door. She set the bags down and walked out of the trade center, Benedict close behind. Sondra saw Cassius as she moved towards the meeting area and nodded to him. What is going on? The bell only rings for emergencies. Then she heard the sounds of marching, of shields being hit with swords, and the low rumble of voices... "The Protectorate is marching on our home! We must all defend it!" Elder Talia's voice rang through the din.

Sefondre and Pastiche alike looked around at one another. Sondra could see that everyone knew what their job was. Hers was to climb the wall and cast spells down upon the enemy; Benedict's as well. They linked arms and began moving towards the walls.

Upon the walls she saw them, a black mass in the distance, moving ever closer. As she glanced back she saw the Mistress of Storms, Forge Father and Roc gathering children and the elderly together before rifiting them to the other two Havens. She sighed in relief as the evacuation continued. But where is Marcus? He should be somewhere around here. She knew he'd be at his station, defending the village, just as she was. Still, she wished her twin were near. They always had a way of knowing exactly what the other was going to do in a fight.

With a sigh, she turned back to the army in front of her and by now, she could clearly see individual bodies. They were so close. She could feel her heart pound in her chest as she took a deep breath and readied herself. She knew her entire reserve of spellpower would go into this fight. She only wished she hadn't memorized the Ward; there were so many other spells that could have been more useful!

The Protectorate surged forward, but the advance force was all Pastiche and Sefondre! Many Havenites hesitated. No one here wanted to attack their own people. As reluctant archers handled the first wave, Sondra and Benedict held their spells. Tears ran down her face as she watched the Pastiche and Sefondre slaves die in front of the walls.

Then the real army came, and from that moment, everything was a haze of light, color, and noise. She threw her entire memory down at the forces. All her spells and channeling seemed to make no difference. The moment she had nothing else to throw she turned to her brother. He nodded, out of spells too. Per the defensive protocol, they turned and left the wall, ready to evacuate.

As she reached the ground, there was a large crashing noise. She looked back to see the gates broken in. Benedict grabbed her hand and pulled her to the back gate to escape.

The army surged in as Sondra looked back. Her brothers and sisters were being slaughtered before her eyes. Many were leaving their posts too, spells exhausted, shields Disarmed, and quivers empty. Cassius was there, fighting against the soldiers in black. She wanted to call out to him but she knew better.

Suddenly the back gates crashed inward, and more Protectorate forces poured in. She and Benedict quickly dashed into a side alley, but as she turned back to look, Forge Father appeared! He began to use his magic to bring down Protectorate forces all around him. A large group of mages assembled behind the fighters engaging Forge Father. They began to throw Subjugates at him. Sondra saw his power as he shrugged off spell after spell, but she knew eventually one would slip past his defenses.

A Subjugate finally landed. Sondra knew it was over. Tears running down her face, she and Benedict slipped away from the main keep and fled towards the outpost. There, perhaps, her Ward would be useful after all. There, perhaps, they would be able to regroup and fight back.

Cassius

Cassius sat in the council room with Elder Talia. They were going over the inventory of the winter stores, to determine how much the foragers needed to gather for everyone to have meals. Any residual supplies could be traded with the people of Bastion, who not only needed food, but also instruction in how to gather food.

One of the guard runners came in, breathing heavily. Elder Talia and Cassius looked up at the young man and motioned for him to come closer. He moved quickly to them and took a deep breath.

“The Protectorate is near. It looks like they will be here in minutes. We need to get everyone ready to defend. The captain told me that the alarms need to be sounded.”

Cassius stood quickly, moved to the alarm bell, and pulled the rope hard. After ringing the bell a few times he moved with Elder Talia and the boy outside. Already, there was commotion in the square as the Havenites gathered.

Cassius stood with Talia and waited. He met Sondra’s eyes and they shared a nod as she moved to her post with one of their brothers. People stood muttering and talking to each other. The alarm bell didn’t ring all the time; hearing it meant something was wrong.

"The Protectorate is marching on our home! We must all defend it!" Elder Tialia's voice rang through the din.

All at once everyone went to their posts. Cassius began to collect all the children and elderly together. The Mistress of Storms, Forge Father, and Roc appeared in the square and began rifiting them all out to the other Havens.

The sounds of fighting rose over everything else. He heard the ram hitting the gates. He knew that things were going to get dicey soon. He moved to the triage area and started to administer healing to the wounded.

Once his healing was exhausted and he was reduced to binding and Celestial magic, Cassius ascended the wall to begin his assault against the enemy. He looked out, and he was horrified. There were bodies everywhere. Most were Sefondre and Pastiche. He glanced over and saw many of his brothers and sisters along the wall bleeding out and dying, and he administered first aid as he was able.

A Pastiche ran into him with a gash from an arrow on his arm. Cassius pointed him down the stairs before he realized it was Marcus, Sondra's twin. He hoped that they both would make it through this as he turned back to cast what he had left into the chaos. It was not enough, and the assault continued.

The walls shook with each bash of the ram on the gates. He almost fell over when it finally gave way. He moved to the opposite side of the wall as the back gate came crashing in as well. Thankfully, there were smaller alternate routes out of Haven and to outer hidden outposts. In the square below, his Father suddenly rifted into the fight.

Cassius could do nothing as the Protectorate casters surrounded Forge Father. He could do nothing as they cast Subjugate after Subjugate, relentlessly. He could do nothing as he watched his father's defenses give way and the Protectorate gained control. He could do nothing as an Inquisitor walked forward and held a crystal towards Forge Father.

Then, the fires began. Though most buildings were made of stone by Roc there were still fabrics, wood, and so many other flammable things. Everything that could burn did. Cassius turned and fled. There's nothing else I can do. I've used all my magic. All I can do now is try to get as many people out as I can. He hoped that most would survive, but he knew many would not.