

Volume 2 - Chapter 13 - Inheritance VII

Thea was still lost in thought, turning over the implications of the connection between *Permaneo* and the IgT-compound in her mind, when the Rune priest smoothly shifted gears, his voice pulling her attention back to the lesson at hand.

"Leading into the last few Inheritances," he began, "we come to my personal *Polarity*. Just as *Obscuritas* is yours, this one is mine."

The familiar Inheritance Star hovered between them once more, its array of colored gems gleaming under the simulated sunlight. The Rune priest extended a finger toward a particular gem—the one at the 9-o'clock position, sitting directly opposite his own *Radiant Gold*.

Its color, or rather, lack of color, stood out starkly against the others.

It wasn't just black. It was empty.

A deep, abyssal blackness that seemed to swallow light entirely, as if it refused to exist in the same space as the other gems.

Thea's eyes were drawn to it immediately, unable to look away.

There was something about its sheer emptiness that was mesmerizing in a way none of the others had been. It wasn't like a dark color—it was the complete lack of any light reflection at all.

"Universally represented by the color of *Abyss Black*, *Nihilus* occurs in roughly 7.22% of all Psykers," the Rune priest explained, his tone noticeably more measured than before. "It governs the Void's very nature of nothingness. The absence of existence itself. Where *Aurae* sees something in everything, *Nihilus* sees nothing in anything. It is the manifestation of the lack of all things, the rejection of presence, the erasure of what is and what can be."

He shifted his gaze, pointing toward an open area just off to Thea's right.

She followed his gesture and immediately saw what he was trying to show her—a small field where glowing auras flickered into sight, just as they had when she had been granted his *[Eyes of the Void]*. The rocks pulsed faintly with potential, the ground shimmered with muted hues, even the air itself carried a thin veil of coloured energy, much like she had seen earlier.

'*That's definitely an illusion,*' Thea mused, catching onto the Rune priest's teaching style.

She had started to notice a pattern—whenever he explained something abstract, he made sure to include a visual reference for her to process. He didn't just *tell*—he *showed*.

"*Nihilus* is one of the most polarizing Inheritances, as many Powers simply do not function well with it," the Rune priest continued. "[Eyes of the Void], for example, has very few practical applications when channeled through *Nihilus*. It will highlight the absence of things in your field of vision—nothing more, nothing less."

Before Thea could fully grasp what that meant, the illusion flickered.

The once vibrant, multi-colored auras she had seen moments ago with the *Aurae* representation abruptly inverted, as if reality itself had been flipped inside out.

The world no longer pulsed with hues of potential and energy; instead, what remained was a dark, oppressive overlay. Gray and black tones coated the entire scene, casting everything into a stark, almost lifeless state.

Thea's eyes tracked the changes with growing unease.

Where there had once been light, there was now only varying depths of darkness. The rocks were surrounded by a faint, lighter gray glow, the trees retained a dull haze near their trunks, and just slightly above the ground, a thin shimmer of something that wasn't quite black remained—remnants of what had once been presence, now seen only as an absence.

The sky, however? The air itself? It was utterly dark.

It wasn't a shadow, nor a trick of the light. It was simply nothing.

She swallowed.

"So... it's like looking at a negative imprint of the world... In a way?" she murmured, her voice quieter than she intended.

"In a sense, yes," the Rune priest acknowledged with a nod. "You could, *technically*, use this as an alternative way to evaluate a Psyker's strength. The greater their presence, the more stark their outline will appear in this vision—except rather than seeing what and where they are, you would see where they are *not*. It is an inverse reading of the same data."

Thea frowned, her mind already working through the implications. "But that sounds way less efficient than just using *Aurae*. If *Aurae* lets you directly see a Psyker's energy *and* Inheritance, then why would anyone even bother using *Nihilus* for this; just to get a worse reading?"

"Exactly," the Rune priest said with a knowing smirk. "Considering that *Aurae* Psykers are more than twice as common as *Nihilus* ones as well and can directly identify another Psyker's Inheritance at a glance, using *Nihilus* in this way is largely redundant. It's possible, but rarely practical."

Thea exhaled slowly, shifting her gaze between the inverted illusion and the *Nihilus* gem on the Inheritance Star. The more she learned about these Inheritances, the more she realized just how fundamentally different they were in function, not just in theme.

Some—like *Perditio* and *Fames*—were terrifying in their brute force.

Others—like *Concordia* and *Obscuritas*—were insidious in how they manipulated reality.

But *Nihilus*? It was tough to really say where it landed quite yet.

The Rune priest's expression remained grim as his eyes locked onto hers, catching her attention again. "As I mentioned earlier with *Fames*, *Nihilus* is the only other Inheritance that profoundly affects a Psyker's personality. The stronger a *Nihilus* Psyker becomes, the more they begin to crave the absence of everything—the quiet, the stillness, the end of all things. The pull toward entropy. It is a slow, insidious influence, one that gradually erodes their attachment to the physical world, to people, to purpose. They don't just accept nothingness; they want it. They long for the cold embrace of the Void."

His voice, though calm, carried an unsettling weight behind it, making Thea shiver despite herself.

"They quite literally become more and more *nihilistic*, as ironic or "obvious" as that may sound. Humanity has known about nihilism as a concept for millennia, debated it, philosophized about it... but only recently did we start to understand that it is not simply a school of thought born from *rational* contemplation. No, it is something deeper. Something inherently primal, that has existed far longer than rational thought. It is the Void's influence whispering at the edges of our existence, for as long as humanity has even been able to think—just like the Call of the Void."

He shook his head slightly, his lips pulling into something that wasn't quite a smile. It carried no warmth, no humor—just a quiet resignation. "We don't even know how much we don't know. It is humanity's eternal curse... and its greatest blessing."

Thea's brows furrowed.

'That phrase... Curse and blessing?'

She had no idea how to even begin unpacking the sheer weight of what he had just said, but she had spent too much of this lesson letting opportunities for clarity slip past her.

Not this time. She made a snap-second decision.

"What do you mean by that, Rune priest?" she asked quickly. "Curse and blessing?"

The Rune priest blinked, as if slightly surprised she had latched onto that so quickly, but then his expression softened. His usual smirk was absent now, replaced with something far more thoughtful.

"You remember what I told you earlier, Thea?" he asked, his voice quieter now, as if inviting her to lean into the weight of his words. "That knowledge is power? That understanding something—truly understanding it—grants you control over it? That much is obvious. But what I did not tell you is the second, *far* more insidious truth about knowledge."

His eyes darkened slightly, the usual glint of mischief now subdued by something heavier. "Knowledge is also a gateway. A door that only ever opens one way: The more you learn, the more you realize how much you don't know. It is not a comforting thing, Thea. It is not a reassuring realization. It is the most maddening thing in the universe—to know that no matter how much you uncover, there is always another layer beneath it, another truth hiding just out of reach. And some truths... some truths are not *meant* to be known."

Thea's breath hitched slightly at the way his voice dipped on those last words.

"Not because they are secret," he continued, "not because they are forbidden or dangerous in an InfoSec way, where the wrong person learning about them could compromise a battle plan or a military operation. No. These truths are dangerous because the very act of knowing them is catastrophic. Because the mere awareness of them is an attack on the mind itself. You *cannot* unknow something like this, once you've learned it, and there are things, Thea—things older than time itself, things that exist in the farthest reaches of the Void—that would shatter a person's sanity by the mere knowledge of their existence."

A shiver ran down Thea's spine.

"And before you think I am exaggerating, understand this, Thea," the Rune priest said, his tone as steady as a monolith. "Even I have limits. Even I—who have spent decades, centuries unraveling the depths of the Psyker world, who have walked closer to the abyss than nearly anyone alive—even I know that there are places I cannot go. There are layers I will not peel back. Not because I don't want to—because, trust me, I *really* do—but because simply getting close to them is enough to almost annihilate my very mind and Soul."

Thea swallowed, throat suddenly dry.

"That is the curse of humanity," he murmured. "That we know the danger is there, we feel the heat of the flames, we understand on a primal level that touching it will burn us—and yet we still reach out. We *need* to know. We *have* to know. No matter the cost."

The words settled over Thea like a lead weight, pressing against her chest.

"And it *will* be our undoing," the Rune priest finished, his voice barely more than a whisper now. "Not today, not tomorrow, perhaps not for another thousand or even ten-thousand years. But *one day*, we will go too far. We will pull back one layer too many. And when we do, when we see what was never meant to be seen—when we know—it will be too late."

A silence followed, heavier than anything Thea had ever experienced before.

The kind of silence that felt alive, as if something unseen was listening, waiting, just beyond the edges of reality itself.

She sat frozen, her mind struggling to wrap around the implications of the Rune priest's words. The very idea that there were things out there—beings, forces, concepts—that even he refused to approach, that even *he* feared, was simply too much to comprehend.

The Rune priest was on such an unfathomable level compared to her, his strength, knowledge, and sheer presence towering over anything she had ever known. He was a being of power beyond reckoning, someone who could undoubtedly burn battlefields to ash with a flick of his wrist and unravel the fabric of existence with nothing but a thought.

And yet... there was something that could undo him *simply by existing*.

It didn't compute. It didn't make sense.

But the weight in his voice, the certainty in his eyes, told her that it was undeniably, horrifyingly real.

A deep, primal fear settled into her bones, a terror that felt like it had been passed down through generations of humanity itself.

A fear not of battle, not of war, not of death—but of the unknown.

The vast, incomprehensible unknown that loomed just beyond the thin veil of what humanity considered knowable. The kind that whispered in the dark corners of existence, that called to the curious with promises of knowledge, and then consumed them utterly the moment they stepped too close.

It was a terror so deep and primal that, for a moment, Thea wondered if she would ever feel warm again. But then, just as abruptly as always, the Rune priest's mood shifted.

"Well, enough of *that*," he said, voice suddenly light, casual, as if he hadn't just uttered the most chilling revelation Thea had ever heard.

The whiplash left her momentarily stunned as he dusted off his hands and leaned back slightly. "We were talking about *Nihilus*, which—now that I think about it—was a very fitting segue into that whole conversation. But it's also probably a bit too much for someone who's only just beginning to get their feet wet in the Psychic world. So let's take a massive leap back and focus on the Inheritances again, shall we?"

He extended his right hand and, as if reality itself had been waiting for the cue—because the Sovereign very likely *had* been—something appeared, hovering just slightly above his palm.

The Fireball that appeared above the Rune priest's palm was unlike anything Thea had seen before.

It was black—but not in the way that shadows were black, not like something darkened by the absence of light. This was a depthless void, a perfect sphere of Abyss Black so completely devoid of reflection that it looked flat, like a hole had been punched straight through the air itself.

There was no flicker, no shifting flames licking at the edges. It didn't dance or waver in the air like the others had. It simply *was*.

A perfect, unmoving contradiction of fire that neither burned nor illuminated.

But what unsettled Thea the most wasn't just how it looked—it was how it felt.

Her entire body tensed instinctively as her eyes locked onto it, a deep, unexplainable discomfort crawling up her spine like icy fingers tracing her vertebrae. It was a sensation she couldn't name, but knew—a feeling like she had just witnessed something that shouldn't exist.

It wasn't like looking at fire, or even like looking at darkness.

It was like looking at the absence of existence itself.

And the longer she stared, the worse it got.

A dull ache settled between her brows, a pressure she could feel just behind her eyes, as though her brain itself was struggling to process what it was seeing. As though something deep in her psyche, something fundamental to her very being, was screaming at her to stop looking.

Then, suddenly, the Fireball *moved*.

It didn't float, or drift, or even shift in the air. It simply displaced.

One instant, it was above the Rune priest's palm, centered perfectly.

The very next, it was an inch to the left—without crossing the space between.

Like reality itself had simply forgotten where it had been a moment ago and placed it somewhere else instead.

Thea sucked in a sharp breath.

She had seen destructive flames, illusions that bent reality, fire that hungered like a living thing, but this... this was something else.

But one thing was immediately obvious: This wasn't a Fireball. This was a wound in reality itself.

The Rune priest exhaled slowly next to her, as if savoring the moment, then gave the slightest flick of his wrist.

The Nihilus Fireball vanished. Or rather—it *skipped*.

One moment, it was hovering just above his palm.

The next, it had displaced itself several meters forward, flickering through the air in a staggered, jittering motion that made Thea's skin crawl.

It moved like a corrupted video file back in the Golden Age Arcade—frames of movement simply missing, as if reality itself had failed to render them properly. Each time it skipped, it reappeared in a slightly different position, like a simulation struggling to process an object that wasn't supposed to exist in the first place.

Thea barely had time to track its erratic motion before—It arrived.

There was no explosion. No impact. No thunderous detonation of force.

Instead, there was *a* void.

A great, sucking silence swallowed the clearing, like the world itself had drawn in a breath—and then came the sound.

Not an explosion. Not a roar. But a vacuum.

A deep, terrible pull as the air itself rushed inward, collapsing into the space where the Fireball had detonated. The sound wasn't the crackling of flames or the shockwave of destruction, but the absence of both.

It was the undoing of sound itself—a horrid, endless *gasp* as if the world were trying to fill the hole in itself. And then, the abyssal flames spread.

They did not surge. They did not consume. They did not grow.

They simply erased.

Wherever they touched, things ceased to be.

The trees in their path did not ignite or splinter or collapse in burning ruin. They simply... stopped existing.

Their trunks did not blacken, did not smolder, did not crumble into ash—they were just gone, as if someone had taken an eraser and casually removed them from reality, causing the rest of the tree to crumple and fall onto the ground. The very ground itself suffered the same fate, bearing clean, featureless holes where grass, dirt, and stone had once been.

Thea's breath caught in her throat as the flames reached the human targets.

One of the Stellar Republic Soldiers had barely a second to react before a flicker of abyssal flame kissed his left shoulder. There was no resistance. No force. No heat.

One moment, he had an arm.

The next, there was simply *nothing* where his shoulder had once been.

He staggered, looking down in sheer disbelief—until another flicker of black licked across his torso, deleting the entire upper half of his body in a single instant. His legs remained standing for a breath, as if the laws of physics themselves had failed to catch up with the sheer impossibility of what had just happened.

Then, they crumpled.

More of the targets fell in quick succession.

The abyssal flames did not spread like a normal fire, simply moving in their strange, erratically skipping ways. And anything they simply touched—they erased.

One soldier, clad in Ultra-Heavy armor, was hit dead-center in the chest. For a split second, his plating held, his reinforced alloys meeting the abyssal flames head-on.

Then, with a whispering *hiss*, a perfect hole bored straight through the armor—and the man inside.

He didn't even scream. Didn't even move. He simply dropped.

Not all of the targets were erased entirely, or even killed.

Many had survived the fireball's impact, but the marks it left behind were undeniable.

Some had limbs missing, entire sections of their bodies carved away by the abyss. Others had chunks of their armor simply gone, their protective plating turned into nothingness as if it had never existed at all.

Then, as suddenly as they had appeared, the last flickers of abyssal flame simply disappeared—mutually annihilating anything they touched, leaving only emptiness in their wake.

Thea finally exhaled the breath she hadn't realized she was holding.

The target area before her was not burned, not shattered, not scorched—it was *hollowed*.

It was missing pieces of itself, as if reality had momentarily glitched, deleting chunks of existence without rhyme or reason.

Thea's attention almost immediately snapped back to the Rune priest as he continued his lecture, his tone as casual as if he were explaining the weather.

It was a jarring contrast to the absolute devastation they had just witnessed, but by now, she was starting to understand—this was simply how he was. No matter how horrific the demonstration, he always carried on with the lesson like it was just another day in the classroom.

"*Nihilus* Psykers have exceptional penetrative capabilities when it comes to their Powers," he explained, his eyes flicking toward her to ensure she was still paying attention.

"There are very few things that can stand up to a direct head-to-head with a *Nihilus*-empowered offensive Power, which is why they typically specialize in them. They aren't used for brute-force assaults like *Perditio* Psykers, nor for wide-scale destruction. Their strength lies in precision."

With a flick of his wrist, he conjured a set of small illusions between his hands—two *Abyss Black* Fireballs hovered in the air, along with a single *Radiant Gold* and a *Cerulean Blue* one. Thea recognized them immediately—*Aurae* and *Concordia*.

"They are most commonly deployed as assassins or surgical-strike specialists," he continued. "They lack the raw area-of-effect potential to dominate an entire battlefield, but in terms of sheer, unstoppable, targeted force? Very few can match them."

He brought one of the *Nihilus* spheres toward the *Radiant Gold* one. "When facing an *Aurae* Fireball, *Polarity* rules dictate that the stronger one will win. But if they are equal in Energy value, then they will simply delete each other."

As he spoke, the two spheres made contact—and, just as he had predicted, both blinked out of existence instantly, as if they had never been there at all.

Thea's fingers curled slightly at her sides. Watching them vanish was eerily unsettling in a way she couldn't quite put into words, even though she knew they were simply illusions.

"With *Concordia*, however, things are different," the Rune priest continued, bringing the remaining *Nihilus* sphere toward the soft glow of the *Cerulean Blue* one. "*Concordia* is the great equalizer—it doesn't follow *Polarity* rules here. Because of this, *Nihilus* Powers cannot consume *Concordia* the same way they do *Aurae*, if they overpower it. Even if *Concordia* has a lower Energy value, it will still rip a massive chunk of Energy from the *Nihilus* Power before being erased."

As if to prove his point, the two spheres touched.

The moment they did, the Abyss Black sphere shrunk—where before it had been a solid mass of unmaking, it was now a tiny, pebble-sized speck, barely clinging to existence before the Rune priest snapped his fingers and erased it entirely.

"This," he said, gesturing toward the spot where the illusion had been, "is one of the reasons why *Concordia* Anti-Psykers are so invaluable. Even if they're significantly weaker than their opponent, they can still diminish a *Nihilus* Psyker's attacks, making them one of the few direct counters to *Nihilus* offensives."

He turned slightly, nodding toward the target area—which the Sovereign had already reset—before continuing.

"Without *Concordia* or *Aurae* in play, with the exception of *Permaneo* being able to hold its own to some degree, any battlefield facing a *Nihilus* Psyker will end up looking just as hollowed out as what you saw earlier. If you ever find yourself up against one, avoid their Powers at all costs. Your *Veritas* Inheritance, unfortunately, won't be able to contest it in a direct clash."

Thea swallowed, nodding gravely.

She could tell immediately that this wasn't just theoretical knowledge. This was serious advice for survival.

'Stay away from *Nihilus*. Got it.'

The Inheritance Star hovered between them once more, its familiar glow catching Thea's attention as the Rune priest prepared to delve into the next Inheritance.

But just before he did, he casually threw in, "Oh, that reminds me. *Nihilus* is the ninth Inheritance you will encounter inside your Delve. It's one of the rare cases where the Star position and its actual order within the Void overlap perfectly."

He gave a small nod to himself, as if pleased that he had remembered to include that detail, before shifting his focus to the last remaining gem before the *Luminous White* one that represented *Veritas*. Thea's gaze followed his movement, landing on a gem of a vibrant orange—distinctly different from the *Deep Amber* glow of *Fames*, which sat opposite to it.

“At the 10-o’clock position, we find the *Polarity* to *Fames*,” the Rune priest began, confirming Thea’s suspicions. “Namely: *Comedo*. Universally represented by the colour *Molten Orange*, and appearing in roughly 7.66% of all Psykers, it governs the aspect of consumption and greed.

“Where *Fames* is drive and ambition, *Comedo* is complacency and sloth. Where *Fames* hungers to obtain something, *Comedo* simply consumes anything it can reach, with no regard for what that anything is.”

His eyes locked onto hers once more, his tone turning slightly more weighty, emphasizing the contrast.

“Many people mistakenly assume that *Fames* and *Comedo* are conceptually similar,” he continued. “Hunger and consumption... They sound alike at first glance. But if you truly think about it—if you break them down to their core ideas, you’ll see that they are completely opposite forces: You cannot hunger if you are consuming, because the very act of consumption stills any hunger. And you cannot consume if you are hungering, because the very act of hungering means you have not yet consumed.”

He paused, allowing the words to sink in before adding, “Think beyond the literal meaning of those words, beyond simple food-related ideas they usually represent, Thea. This isn’t about simple physical appetite. This is about the very nature of drive versus acceptance—wanting versus taking.”

Thea’s brows furrowed slightly, her mind working through the distinction as the Rune priest continued.

“*Fames* is the unrelenting drive to obtain something specific—a singular, all-consuming goal that defines its existence. It is always searching, always pursuing. *Comedo*, on the other hand, is the opposite—it does not search, it does not chase. It simply takes. Anything, everything, whatever happens to be around. It doesn’t care *what* it consumes—only that it does. It is non-discerning. Indiscriminate. It is the antithesis to ambition, because it needs nothing specific—and that is why it is so dangerous.”

Thea nodded slowly, the pieces clicking into place in her head.

*‘If looked at like that, they really **do** seem like complete opposites...’*

She thought back to *Fames*, with its singular, obsessive focus—how the fire had lunged toward its chosen targets with almost terrifying precision and purpose. It needed something specific, and it would hunt for it relentlessly.

But *Comedo*... if it truly had no preference, if it just devoured whatever was in its path with no concern for what it was taking in...

Her stomach twisted slightly at the thought.

‘That somehow sounds even worse than Fames, in a way...’

As if confirming her thoughts, the Rune priest directed his next words toward the Sovereign, his voice carrying an air of caution that hadn't been present in the previous demonstrations.

"Move the target area a hundred meters further out, but keep the relative distances inside the area the same."

In an instant, the clearing that had served as the testing ground for each of the Rune priest's demonstrations so far vanished—only to reappear 130 meters away in the blink of an eye.

Her attention snapped back to the Rune priest, expecting to see him conjure the *Comedo* Fireball immediately. But instead, he simply continued speaking.

"*Comedo* Psykers are the most devastating when it comes to raw area of effect," he explained. "The consumption-based nature of their Inheritance causes their Powers to absorb more and more nearby energy—allowing them to grow larger, stronger, and more volatile with every passing second. This leads to a runaway effect—the bigger the Power gets, the faster it expands, consuming everything in its radius without distinction."

He gestured toward the now much further-away training area, Thea's gaze flickering towards it, "I moved it back this far because otherwise, we'd be standing inside the absorption radius of the Fireball—which would be very uncomfortable for us."

He smirked slightly, but there was no real humor behind it. "I hope I don't need to specify why."

Thea nodded immediately.

She didn't exactly know what "*being inside the absorption radius*" would do to her, but she did know that "*consuming energy*" wasn't something she ever wanted her body to be involved with.

The Rune priest must have noticed her lingering unease because he added, "Make sure to pay close attention to the fireball mid-flight. I can't hold it near us for long; it would simply start absorbing our energies and begin expanding exponentially the moment it's created."

Thea was more than ready.

When he held out his right palm once more, she focused down, locking her gaze on the empty space above his hand, readying herself to burn the image of the *Comedo* Fireball into her brain.

For a brief moment, she considered activating [Sensory Overdrive], just to ensure she caught everything—but then remembered the way her Focus had almost overdrawn earlier in the lesson.

Instead, she simply narrowed her eyes, steeled her mind, and gave a short, terse nod, signaling that she was ready.

Without hesitation, the *Molten Orange* flames ignited into existence.

Unlike the previous Fireballs, this one was almost unnervingly perfect in its shape—a perfect sphere, as if sculpted from pure lava and light, with no wild flickering tongues of flame, no uncontrolled movement.

And yet—The moment it appeared, Thea felt something tugging at her.

Not her body—but something deeper. Like something was reaching into her very essence, pulling at the fabric of her aura, her sense of being. It wasn't pain, nor was it physical in any way—it was a pull so alien that it sent a deep, visceral unease down her spine.

For the briefest of moments, she felt like she was being drawn into it—like some part of her was meant to belong inside that Fireball, as if it was trying to absorb her into itself.

And then—

The Rune priest pushed the Fireball away, sending it hurtling toward the distant clearing.

The moment it left his palm and moved around fifty metres away from them, the sensation vanished, like a door had suddenly been slammed shut.

Thea exhaled sharply, only now realizing that she had been holding her breath.

The *Comedo* Fireball streaked through the air like a comet, but unlike any other Fireball she had seen before, it did not fade, flicker or at the very least, stay the exact same way.

Instead, it grew mid-flight.

The instant it reached the target area, it erupted, but rather than a traditional explosion, the blast looked more like a newborn star igniting—a *Molten Orange* inferno expanding outward in a perfect, unnatural sphere.

And then it kept expanding. The flames did not just burn. They devoured.

Wherever they touched—whether it was bark, leaves, dirt, rock, or flesh—they did not consume in the way normal flames would.

Instead, the fire absorbed.

The massive trees that stood in its way were not felled or shattered—they were simply peeled apart, their bark and inner fibers stripped away layer by layer, sucked into the growing inferno, like a hungry swarm of nanobots programmed to carefully strip apart everything in its path.

The ground did not explode outward in debris—it was simply scooped up into the flame as if it had never belonged there to begin with.

And the targets? Thea saw them struggle.

She saw one of the Ultra-Heavy Armoured soldiers attempt to move out of the Fireball's radius—but his body didn't make it. His armor, his limbs, his very flesh were pulled into the Molten Orange blaze as if gravity itself had reversed its purpose.

He disintegrated, layer by layer, until he was nothing more than a silhouette swallowed whole by the growing, churning mass of fire.

The other targets fared no better.

Some tried to run. Some tried to shield themselves. But none of it mattered.

The flames latched onto them, their energy hungrily pulled into the growing sphere, melting through armor and flesh alike. The high-density plating meant to protect them only served to prolong the inevitable—as the flames simply grew to fully engulf and outlast the material's durability, slowly eroding it down until there was nothing left to resist.

Even the ground beneath the Fireball darkened and sank, as if the sheer weight of the inferno had begun pressing into the earth itself, swallowing the very terrain into its all-consuming nature.

Thea could only watch in stunned silence as the inferno grew larger and larger, expanding far beyond what she had assumed would be its limit.

Fifty meters.

Sixty meters.

Seventy.

Eighty.

The fire had engulfed everything in the clearing, painting the world in its color, a swirling, molten storm of ever-growing heat and pressure, like a newly born star.

And then—It collapsed.

Not in an explosion. Not in a wave of energy or destruction.

The Fireball simply pulled inward—implosion on itself like a star reaching the end of its life.

The massive sphere of fire shrank down in an instant, consuming itself entirely, until nothing remained but an eerie, unnatural silence.

Thea's breathing was shallow as she took in the aftermath.

The scorched earth was still smoldering, the ground darkened and burned, but...

She blinked, her brows furrowing slightly.

It wasn't nearly as bad as she had initially assumed, based on the raw size of the ball of flame that she had witnessed. Yes, the trees were blackened husks, their bark eaten away, their roots charred—but a lot of them still stood.

Yes, the targets had been melted through, their armor breached, their bodies charred beyond recognition—but not to the extent of total annihilation like she had seen with *Perditio* or *Nihilus*.

Their bodies were still in one piece, more often than not. Not the piles of ashes that *Perditio* left behind, or the utter nothingness that *Nihilus* had created.

The devastation was frighteningly widespread—but not absolute.

It was clear now. *Comedo* wasn't about raw, immediate destruction.

It consumed—slowly, inevitably, unstoppably. But its power wasn't in sheer intensity.

It was in its reach, in its ability to draw from everything around it, absorbing energy to fuel its relentless expansion.

The Rune priest's voice cut through Thea's thoughts, pulling her attention back to him. "And *that* is why we stayed all the way back here. That sphere would have spiraled out of control if it had been anywhere near us. The more people—especially Psykers or Psy-Sensitive ones—inside the area of effect, the faster and more powerful a *Comedo* Power becomes."

He gestured toward the now-empty target area, his tone measured but firm. "Where *Concordia* acts as a universal counter, *Comedo* is a universal absorber. If a *Comedo* Power overpowers yours in Energy, it won't just neutralize it—it will consume it; much like a *Polarity* would. That makes fighting a *Comedo* Psyker a dangerous gamble, as it's effectively a *Polarity* to every other Inheritance. It's the seventh Inheritance you'll meet in your Delve, and it's one of the most important to remember. Losing a head-to-head against them is often far worse than against most other Inheritances."

Thea swallowed, absorbing every word.

She had seen firsthand what *Comedo* could do—how it spread, how it devoured.

A battle against a Psyker like that wasn't about overpowering them bit by bit. It was about making sure they never got the upper hand in the first place.

Then, the Rune priest's gaze met hers again, and a familiar smirk tugged at his lips. "But that doesn't mean your Inheritance is useless, Thea. Not in the least. While it's not as outright destructive as *Perditio*, as unpredictable as *Discordia*, as universally applicable as *Creatio*, or as overwhelming as *Comedo*, *Veritas* has its own place. And it's not just for Fireballs, either—your Inheritance opens doors that others can't even see."

He chuckled, tilting his head slightly. "That's not to say a *Veritas* Fireball is useless, of course. Every Inheritance can shape the humble Fireball in its own way, after all."

The Inheritance Star hovered between them once more, the last gem now glowing faintly with its turn. The Rune priest raised a hand and pointed at the white crystal at the 11-o'clock position.

“I think it’s time we take a deep dive into your own Inheritance, Thea,” he said, voice turning more focused. “So you know what to expect going forward—and maybe get a better sense of what it is you’re actually doing. Universally represented by the colour of *Luminous White*, the fourth rarest Inheritance at roughly 5.90%, and the eleventh you will meet within your Delve: *Veritas*, the ultimate Truth of the Void...”