

Volume 2 - Chapter 12 - Inheritance VI

Thea took a steadying breath, forcing herself to process what she had just witnessed.

The sheer scale of the *Creatio* Fireball's Power had left her reeling, but now that the initial shock was starting to wear off, the terrifying implications clawed their way into her thoughts.

She swallowed hard. "I can see why everyone would be envious of *Creatio*..." she muttered, her voice quieter than she intended.

The Rune priest let out a knowing chuckle, offering nothing but "It is the last and final Inheritance you will meet in your Delve, so look forward to that, as well."

But her mind was already racing ahead, trying to pick apart what she had seen.

There had to be *something* that could be done against this, right? Some countermeasure? Some defense? Because if there wasn't...

Her stomach twisted.

"How would anyone even defend against that?" she asked, finally tearing her gaze away from the still-smoking battlefield. "It seems straight-up impossible when the Fireballs are just *created* inside people's bodies. What are you even supposed to do to not just... die?"

The Rune priest didn't hesitate—he had clearly expected the question.

"You, as a Psyker—and one with exceptional Resolve—won't have to worry about that being a possibility at all," he assured her. "Much like all Psychic Powers are affected by Resolve, so are *Creatio*-influenced ones."

He gestured toward the ruined clearing, sweeping a hand over the grotesque remains of the test subjects. "They were all created with the equivalent of about 2.5 Resolve, which is around the average for a Tier 1 Marine or Soldier. Those unwilling to pursue the path of a Psyker often neglect their Resolve entirely, whether knowingly or not, and as a result, they make themselves easy targets for Powers like what you've just seen."

His finger then pointed toward her, then to himself. "For you and me, however, we won't have to worry about this. Our Resolve acts not only as a shield against the immediate *effects* of Psychic Powers, reducing their impact on us as a whole, but it also functions as an *interference field* as well—an invisible buffer that grows in size and intensity as our Resolve increases."

To illustrate his point, the Rune priest summoned a small illusion between his palms.

A tiny chibi-Thea flickered into existence, much like the one he had conjured in his earlier demonstration regarding the Inheritance-lens idea.

Thea blinked at it, momentarily thrown off by how utterly adorable it looked compared to the grim scene they had witnessed just moments earlier. The Rune priest smirked slightly at her reaction before continuing, "Let's break this down into something easier to grasp, shall we?"

"Assuming you have a Resolve of 2.5," he began, as an invisible force suddenly seized the chibi-Thea, making her stumble. The tiny figure clawed at her chest, struggling against something unseen. "This would give you just enough Resolve to prevent an average Psyker from simply ripping your heart out with their Telekinesis Powers."

Thea tensed at the blunt description, watching as the little illusion barely managed to resist the pressure squeezing down on her.

"But with a Resolve of 3," he continued, snapping his fingers, "you'd barely feel their attempts beyond an inconvenience anymore."

The scene changed.

The chibi-Thea straightened, brushing herself off. The unseen force was still there, but now she only looked mildly irritated, like someone had nudged her rather than tried to kill her.

"At a Resolve of 4, an enemy Psyker of equal Resolve wouldn't be able to touch you directly with their Powers at all."

Now, the chibi-Thea stood unbothered, casually kicking at imaginary dust on the Rune priest's palm, completely undisturbed by any external force.

"But once you reach a Resolve of 5..." The tiny illusion suddenly glowed, enveloped in a Luminous White aura that extended roughly ten centimeters from her body, like an invisible barrier. "You start emitting a field that prevents other Psykers from interacting with the space around you at all—unless they're able to completely overpower you."

Thea's eyes widened slightly as she took in the implications.

"And from there," the Rune priest continued, "that aura just keeps growing in size and intensity, the stronger your Resolve becomes."

The barrier around the tiny illusion expanded slowly, stretching outward until it encompassed both the Rune priest and real-Thea herself.

"This is why at higher Tiers, practically every squad has a Psyker," the Rune priest explained, finally dispelling the illusion and letting his hands return to their relaxed positions—his left tapping lightly on his knee, his right propping up his chin. "We're talking Tier 4 and 5 here, of course, so it's not something immediately relevant to you, but it's definitely something to keep in mind as you climb the ranks."

Thea nodded slowly, the knowledge settling into place.

The Rune priest leaned forward slightly, his tone shifting back to something more instructional. "As a Psyker, outside of whatever specific Paths you decide to focus on, your *primary* role in a squad is to prevent exactly what you just saw from happening to the rest of

your team. And the best way to do that is vigilance. Attentiveness. Just by being there—with a sufficient amount of Resolve, which you already have at this stage—you make it impossible for an enemy Psyker to conjure Fireballs directly inside your squadmates."

He chuckled to himself, shaking his head lightly.

"Now," he added, "if you weren't a Psyker? Well..." He let out a short laugh. "The answer would, unfortunately, be: *Find* a Psyker to add to your squad."

Thea blinked, unsure whether to laugh or grimace at the bluntness of it.

"While there *are* ways to work around the issue without one—such as Psychic-related Abilities granted by the Allbright System, both Passive and Active—the opportunity cost for those abilities is usually far greater than their benefit for most people. So unless you're truly dedicated to countering Psykers, the simplest and most effective countermeasure is..."

He smirked. "To have one of your own."

Thea exhaled slowly, processing everything.

Psykers weren't just tools or weapons to be wielded. They were *strategic necessities*.

She barely had time to let that realization settle before the Rune priest snapped his fingers, making the chibi-Thea illusion deflate like a popped balloon. The abrupt shift yanked her back to the present, pulling her away from the deeper spiral of thoughts threatening to take over.

"Now, back to the topic at hand," the Rune priest said smoothly. "*Creatio*. As you might have already guessed from the way I talked about it earlier—and from the demonstration itself—*Creatio* has no real downsides; only upsides."

He let the words hang in the air for a moment, letting the weight of that statement sink in.

'*Not having any downsides at all?*' Thea thought to herself. '*If this was a game at the Golden Age Arcade, players would be clamouring for a nerf, for sure...*'

"It is, quite frankly, an Inheritance that has no equal. While it might not always *outperform* another Inheritance in its specialized niche—such as *Perditio* when it comes to raw destruction, or *Obscuritas* when it comes to illusions—it is always *at least* second place. And sometimes, depending on how you judge it, it can even surpass them in their own domain as well."

He shrugged, though his expression soured slightly, as if the very idea left a bitter taste in his mouth.

"Ultimately, though, there's not much we can *do* about that. *Creatio* Psykers are incredibly rare—so rare, in fact, that you may never run into one during your entire career. But if you do, you need to understand one thing: They have access to practically every Path equally and can likely beat you in more ways than you can imagine. Fighting a *Creatio* Psyker effectively always comes down to thoroughly outthinking them because, in a direct

head-to-head battle? You *will* lose. Whether it's in terms of raw Energy or sheer versatility of options—*they* will always have the upper hand."

His golden eyes gleamed as he leaned in slightly, his expression morphing into something between amusement and a hard-edged certainty.

"But never forget, Thea," he continued, his voice taking on a mix of grim finality and something almost gleeful, "they are still human under all that versatility and power. They are *not* gods, no matter how much they like to imagine they are. They bleed just like everyone else."

A sharp, toothy grin spread across his face as he let his words sink in, his voice lowering slightly, as if imparting a personal truth—one earned through long experience.

"I've personally killed more than three dozen *Creatio* Psykers in my time," he said, his tone almost disturbingly casual. "And every single one of them has ultimately ended up like all the other human who've tried to fight me directly, be they Psykers, Anti-Psykers or normal Soldiers of various Factions—"

A brief pause.

Then, with a smirk, he finished, "*In pieces.*"

Thea swallowed, her throat suddenly dry.

There was no boast in his words, no arrogance. Just *fact*.

Before Thea had a chance to fully process the weight of the Rune priest's words about *Creatio*, he had already moved on, his mood shifting back to its usual, almost theatrical cadence.

With a practiced motion, he extended his right hand, palm-up, the familiar gesture he always used before conjuring a new Fireball.

"Now, enough about *Creatio*," he declared, his tone carrying a hint of distaste, as if simply discussing the Inheritance left an unpleasant, bitter taste in his mouth. "It's time for the most pleasant of all Inheritances: *Concordia*."

The moment he finished speaking, a soft, light-blue ball of fire manifested in his palm, its presence catching Thea's full attention. No matter how overwhelming this whole lesson had been in terms of raw amount of information, no matter how shocking the revelations, the anticipation of seeing another *Inheritance* in action always managed to ignite something inside her.

She honestly kind of hated how much she enjoyed it.

Watching these powers unfold before her eyes—seeing the rules of reality twist and reshape with each new demonstration—was nothing short of exhilarating. As much as she tried to maintain an air of discipline, of measured control, she couldn't deny that she was utterly *hooked*.

'He's definitely taught more than one person before me—that's a given,' she mused, a small grin creeping onto her face. It was refreshing, beyond words, to finally get clear answers to the hundreds of questions that had been gnawing at her since Integration. And the Rune priest had an undeniable talent for explaining things in a way that *stuck*.

'At least I won't need to rely entirely on Kara to break all of this down for me afterward,' she thought with some amusement.

Her focus returned to the Fireball.

Much like the others, yet thoroughly unlike them at the same time, something about this one felt distinctly off—not in an unsettling way, which was very different from all the previous ones, but in a way that made her instincts tingle regardless.

The flames flickered and swayed like any ordinary fire, yet there was an uncanny precision to it. Each tongue of flame curled with flawless rhythm, its motion *too* smooth, *too* symmetrical, as though it weren't fire at all, but rather a perfect impression of it.

It was like looking at a simulation rather than something real.

"Concordia is the aspect of harmony within the Void, and the *Polarity to Discordia*," the Rune priest explained. "It is universally represented by the color *Cerulean Blue* and governs the concepts of conformity, natural order, and reparation."

A sly grin tugged at the corners of his lips as he added, "Though, for most people, it's simply known by something else entirely."

With that cryptic remark, he nudged the Fireball forward, sending it on its inevitable path toward the target area.

It was only then that Thea realized something strange.

For the first time since these demonstrations had begun, the clearing hadn't been reset.

The scorched, blackened remnants left behind by the previous *Creatio* Fireball still marred the landscape—the burned-out husks of trees, the melted and exploded armors, the torn apart remnants of the Stellar Republic targets.

She knew the Rune priest well enough by now to understand that this wasn't an oversight.

Her heart pounded with anticipation as the *Concordia* Fireball arrived at its destination—and exploded. It erupted in a burst of cerulean light, but unlike every other explosion Thea had seen so far, this one didn't expand outward with destruction—it *pulled*.

She instinctively leaned forward in her seat as the flames sucked in loose debris from the ruined landscape, the charred remains of bark and splintered wood lifting from the ground as if drawn by an unseen force. Blackened soot, scorched dirt, and crumbling embers—all of it was dragged toward the epicenter of the explosion.

And then, just as suddenly, the flames spread; just like one would normally expect.

But unlike normal convention, they did not burn.

The bright cerulean fire crept across the ruined clearing like a wave, but instead of consuming everything in its path, it *restored* it.

The ashen husks of trees straightened as the blue fire climbed up their trunks, pulling them back into their rightful positions, their bark regaining a hint of its original color as the charred remains sloughed off like dead skin.

The ground, hardened and blackened from the *Obscuritas* Fireball's devastation, softened, its surface smoothing as the flames passed over it, revealing patches of rich brown soil beneath.

Thea barely breathed as she watched.

But nothing stunned her more than what the flames did to the targets.

The *Concordia* fire flickered over the lifeless remains of the Stellar Republic Soldiers, licking at the twisted, melted armor and the fragmented, burned flesh that had once been living bodies. Slowly, painstakingly, the flames mended whatever they could—the armor unwelding from the fused flesh, cooling and losing its warped, molten edges.

Where the bodies had been torn apart, muscle and skin began knitting back together, but the damage had been *far* too extensive for anything resembling actual revival.

The mangled limbs, though *less* mangled, remained separate from their owners.

In the grand scheme of things, the flames could only do so much.

*'This is still a Fireball. This is still a **Fireball** Power,'* she repeated in her head, making sure that this was something she consciously kept in mind. *'There are **so many** options to keep in mind, even with just a single Power...'*

While all of the Inheritances so far had been thoroughly strange and otherworldly, *Concordia* completely upended the very idea of *Fireball* being an offensive, destructive Power. It rewrote the fundamental assumption that fire meant ruin—that an explosion was always an end rather than a beginning.

"The *healing* Inheritance," the Rune priest abruptly finished his earlier cryptic sentence, catching Thea off guard. Her gaze snapped to his, eyes wide with renewed focus.

"*Concordia*, being the Inheritance of roughly 8.49% of all Psykers, and located at the 7-o'clock position on the Star, although the fifth Inheritance you will meet inside your Delves, is often referred to as the healing, mending, or—much to the chagrin of non-Psykers in that branch—the Medic Inheritance," he explained, his voice carrying an amused lilt at that last bit. "It fundamentally alters the nature of the Powers it's applied to, shifting them towards promoting harmony and restoring the natural order of things. It repairs what is broken, mends flesh, and undoes the damage inflicted by other Inheritances on the universe as a whole."

He gestured toward the target area, where the cerulean flames still danced along the landscape, weaving their way through the ruined clearing, trying to mend whatever they could.

“It is a highly efficient Inheritance, but not necessarily a powerful one,” the Rune priest continued. “It excels at *what* it does, but not necessarily *how fast* it does it—unless you’re willing to pour an absurd amount of Energy into any given Power. Most Psykers who inherit *Concordia* find themselves naturally inclined toward supportive roles, as the Inheritance simply does not lend itself well to offense.”

He turned his head slightly, a thoughtful look flickering across his face before he added, “That said, I have seen a few... *creative* uses of *Concordia* in a more aggressive capacity. Though, rather than direct attacks, they tend to focus on counteracting enemy Psykers the moment their Powers are used.”

To illustrate, he raised both of his hands, conjuring two small illusions in his palms.

One burned in the deep, furious crimson of *Perditio*.

The other shimmered in the perfect, cerulean glow of *Concordia*.

He let them drift toward each other in the space between his hands, and the moment they met—

Boom.

The tiny illusions collided in a burst of light, but rather than the crimson flame engulfing the blue, or the cerulean fire smothering the red, they simply... canceled each other out. The explosion was brief, almost muted, the two forces snuffing each other out like waves crashing into one another, dispersing into nothingness.

Thea blinked, momentarily stunned.

“That,” the Rune priest said, lowering his hands, “is what makes *Concordia* particularly unique. While its *direct Polarity* is *Discordia*, it is often considered a *soft-Polarity* to all other Inheritances. Unlike the others, which fully stem from the Void’s various aspects, *Concordia* actively resists its influence in our universe. It is the only Inheritance that prioritizes preserving and reinforcing the natural laws of the universe it resides in at the time rather than shaping reality through the Void’s lens; bringing a part of *it* into our universe.”

His eyes met Thea’s once more, gleaming with an almost unreadable intensity.

“When directly clashing with another Inheritance, *Concordia* doesn’t attempt to overpower it. It doesn’t seek to *win*—it simply throws its full weight behind cancelling it out entirely.”

The target area flickered in the corner of Thea’s eye, signaling that the Sovereign had just finished resetting the field. She barely had a moment to process that before her attention snapped back to the Rune priest, who was already holding up another Fireball in his right hand.

But this one... this one was very odd.

The flames weren't vibrant like the others had been. They weren't licking at the air with an aggressive hunger, nor twisting unnaturally like some of the more esoteric ones had. Instead, the Fireball was gray—drained of all color, as if the very concept of hue had been stripped away, leaving only a bleak, dull existence behind. It wasn't just colorless; it was still.

Completely, unnervingly still.

The flames did not flicker, did not move, did not even sway with the subtle air currents drifting through the clearing. It was as if time itself had paused within its form.

Thea felt a strange sensation crawl up her spine as she stared at it.

The Rune priest's voice cut through her thoughts. "I'd like to get through the rest of these Inheritances rather quickly, so I'll speed it up a bit. Throw in questions if you have any," he said with a wink, but there was an unmistakable undercurrent of seriousness beneath his usual playfulness.

He gestured to the gray Fireball. "This one's *Permaneo*. Located at the 8-o'clock position on the Star, and also the eighth Inheritance you will meet inside your Delves. It is the Inheritance of persistence, unchanging ways, and stability; universally represented by the colour of *Steel Grey*. Naturally, it is the *Polarity* to *Mutatio*, as it directly opposes the fundamental concept of change. Roughly 9.12% of Psykers hold this Inheritance, and they primarily focus on long-lasting Powers, as well as defensive ones, since *Permaneo* is exceptionally good at reinforcing and bolstering those."

He lifted his left hand and gave a small, casual wave in the direction of the target area.

"However, when applied to an offensive Power, it is no slouch either."

With that, he gently nudged the Fireball forward.

It moved with a deliberate slowness, unlike the other Fireballs that had shot out like missiles.

It wasn't sluggish, but it lacked urgency. There was no acceleration, no sudden burst of speed to propel it forward like with the others.

It simply traveled forward with the same steady momentum, like an object set in motion that would *never* stop until it reached its target.

Thea's eyes followed the slow-moving *Permaneo* Fireball with rapt attention, expecting—*waiting*—for the moment when it would erupt in a burst of flame like all the others had.

But when it finally reached the target area, it did not explode.

Instead, it... *opened*.

It was the only way she could describe it.

Like the petals of some strange, alien flower slowly unfurling, the Fireball simply *expanded*, peeling apart in layers to reveal a core of deep gray flame.

Then, with an eerie stillness, the fire spread outward.

The gray flames rolled forward like a slow-moving tide, pouring across the ground, blanketing trees, seeping into cracks in the earth.

It did not consume with the sheer, blistering speed of crimson fire, but it *did* consume.

Leaves, bark, soil, metal—all were taken by the creeping flames, swallowed piece by piece in its quiet, merciless advance.

It was as if the entire target area was simply being rewritten, every part of it inevitably claimed by the unchanging inferno.

A full minute passed.

Thea frowned, watching the fire as it continued its slow but inexorable spread.

Usually, fire weakened after a while, fading once it had burned through its fuel or at least moving to find new sources of fuel when the area where it had been burning ran out.

But this—this wasn't behaving like any normal flame.

The first patches of gray fire that had landed on the ground, the ones that had been burning for a full sixty seconds already, had not changed at all. They were not dwindling, not flickering, nor looking anything more to consume than where they had initially touched.

They simply existed, exactly as they had been when they first landed.

Still burning. Still spreading.

Utterly unchanging.

The realization sent a chill through her.

Even if a soldier avoided the initial surge of *Permaneo* fire, they would still be trapped by the aftermath. There would be no safe place to step, no clear path to escape.

The battlefield would become a maze of flames that refused to die.

What only underscored this feeling, was her observations of the living targets in the area.

The Stellar Republic Soldiers had fought desperately against the encroaching tide, their training dictating their every move. Some frantically shoveled dirt onto the flames, attempting to smother them beneath layers of earth, while others tried to remove any potential fuel sources from getting in contact with the fire.

But nothing worked.

The dirt was consumed, vanishing into the flames as though it had never existed. The fire didn't flicker, didn't weaken, didn't react.

Where the flames had already consumed everything there was to consume at a given spot, it simply persisted, unwavering and patient, as if it had no need for fuel at all.

Then, one soldier made a fatal mistake.

In a last-ditch effort, they brought their boot down hard on the fire.

For a second, nothing changed.

Then, they brought their foot back up and realised in horror that part of the flames were now clinging to their boots. And unlike normal fire, which might sputter, recoil, or react to its fuel source, these flames behaved with absolute certainty.

They did not flicker, did not waver. They simply burned.

The protective layers of the soldier's boot held—at first.

The specialized heat-resistant plating, designed to withstand laser rifles and incendiary blasts, bought them seconds at best. But *Permaneo* flames did not burn quickly. They did not consume in an instant, nor rage in a furious burst of destruction like *Perditio*'s fire.

They simply *outlasted*.

The outer layer of the boot blackened, cracked, and then peeled away. The inner lining followed, glowing red-hot as the heat bled through. The fire crept higher, eating away at the armour's defenses inch by inch, layer by layer, reducing the once-protective material to smoldering ash.

By the time it reached the flesh beneath, the soldier had already begun to falter after they had tried everything to extinguish them. From throwing dirt on them, to rolling on the ground and even smothering them entirely with their gloved hands—only to realise that now their hands were burning too.

Their movements became sluggish, their panicked attempts to pry off the armor weakening as the fire consumed everything it touched. The flames slowly wrapped around their legs, their torso—devouring methodically, persistently—creeping up their body with every second that passed without fail.

There was no sudden explosion, no dramatic final scream.

Only the slow, unstoppable march of destruction.

And when the fire finally reached the soldier's chest, when the last of their armor had given way, they collapsed—silent, unmoving, and utterly lifeless.

Two minutes.

That was how long it had taken.

Two minutes of slow, creeping inevitability.

Two minutes of a death that could not be fought, could not be outrun, could not be undone.

Thea's breath came in shallow, controlled draws, her fingers clenching into fists at her sides as she fought to steady herself.

The sight before her was too familiar. Too visceral.

The relentless flames. The suffocating heat. The feeling of helplessness as fire consumed everything in its path.

Memories of the IgT-compound bombardment surged forward, unbidden and unwelcome.

She could still hear the harrowing screams of burning Marines, their desperate cries piercing through the chaos as the System-fire devoured them whole. The sight of the Heavies who had shielded her, their armor turning into molten slag as they succumbed to the inferno. The acrid stench of burning flesh, of scorched metal, of ozone—so thick in the air that every breath had felt like swallowing embers.

The only difference was that the IgT-compound had burned violently—fast, chaotic, spreading like a wildfire unleashed from hell itself. The *Permaneo* flames, in contrast, were patient.

They didn't need to rage or devour in a frenzy.

They simply *lasted*, consuming their targets with quiet certainty.

As if sensing her thoughts, the Rune priest's voice broke the silence, surprisingly gentle in her ears.

"Yes, Thea," he said, his tone carrying an understanding that sent a chill down her spine. "The IgT-compound you encountered during the Assessment was directly modeled after the *Permaneo* Inheritance and the fire-based Paths of its Psykers. That's often how new technology is created—by taking inspiration from what already exists and attempting to replicate it."

Thea's breath hitched slightly.

"The IgT-compound," the Rune priest continued, "does not possess the same persistence, but it burns far hotter and spreads more aggressively. It was designed to *kill*, rather than to *endure*—a weapon of extermination, not control."

A heavy silence followed his words, thick with unspoken implications.

Thea barely registered it.

Her thoughts were reeling, looping endlessly over the same, terrifying revelation.

'The IgT-compound was nothing but a cheap imitation...?'

The very thing that had carved itself into her nightmares, the most horrifying, merciless force she had ever witnessed, had only been an attempt—an approximation—of what *true* Psykers could achieve?

The flames that had turned the entire eastern front into nothing but a smoldering graveyard, the fire that had reduced even the toughest of Marines into nothing but charred husks in minutes... *wasn't even the real thing?*

Her chest tightened as another realization settled in, one even more unsettling than the last.

'If the Factions' most terrifying weapons are mere imitations... then just how far does the influence of Psykers and their Inheritances go?'

She had always assumed that Psykers were important, strategically speaking.

But this?

This was something else entirely.

And it slowly started to form a more solid picture in her head, as to why the UHF was so keen on learning about the Psychic Classes that she would have access to at Tier 1.

If the IgT-compound was what they had come up with to mirror a basic *Permaneo* Fireball, then what would they come up with, to meet whatever the Allbright System had in store to bolster Psykers as a whole, at Tier 1?

Another minute passed in silence, the weight of her thoughts pressing down like a vice.

Then, finally, the Rune priest's voice cut through the quiet once more—this time tinged with a faint, amused lilt.

"The flames will burn like this for at least another ten, maybe fifteen minutes without interference," he remarked, as if discussing nothing more significant than a simple training exercise. "And that's only because I set the Sovereign's simulation to limit the burn time."

Thea's stomach churned, '*A limit?*'

She turned back to the still-burning battlefield, watching as the gray flames continued their patient, methodical destruction, unchanged, unyielding.

"A *true Permaneo* Psyker," the Rune priest continued, his tone carrying the weight of experience, "fully utilizing their Inheritance, could make something like this last for hours or days."

A pause.

"Maybe even *weeks*... with enough Energy."

Thea swallowed hard, staring at the fire that refused to die.

She believed him.

He snapped his fingers, and the Sovereign reset the area once more, the lingering flames vanishing as though they had never existed.

As the last embers winked out, the Rune priest turned back to her, a smirk on his face. “This is why *Permaneo* is often considered one of the best Inheritances for battlefield control. Unlike the more explosive or immediate Inheritances, this one doesn’t need to overpower its target in an instant. Instead, it simply *waits*. Blankets an area with something that does not fade, does not break, and does not change. Whether it’s defensive barriers, reinforcement fields, or traps laid long before the battle even begins, *Permaneo* excels at turning any environment into its own domain.”

He leaned forward slightly, tapping his temple with a knowing look. “It doesn’t matter how strong your enemy is, Thea. If they can’t even *reach* you, then they can’t do anything at all...”