

Epilogue 3: To Save All Worlds

Ten years have passed since the death of Legacy.

It's today. The day I'm writing all of this down.

My name is Fiona Bellum. You all know me as Fio. And I've come here to tell you about the effort it was to move beyond Eden and properly make this whole multiverse a better place.

Despite everything, the fight isn't over. It never has been over, and I doubt it ever will be, and I'm okay with that. There is always something to improve, small-scale and large.

The keepers are bastards. They are all selfish, power-hungry idiots, but they also follow rules. Structure. They are easy to work with because they are creatures of regulations, and so, I have not had to execute any more of them beyond the four that sought to steal my gateway.

These days, however, my gateway has grown stronger. Much, much stronger. I've eaten through multiple worlds' worth of portals. And that is the truth of the saving of the worlds. With a few deals with the keepers, we staged a counter-offensive.

Eight of us fought in this, the eternal battles still ongoing. Myself, and all my copies. Ann, my brilliant girlfriend, and the greatest mage this universe has ever seen. Matt, the most talented swordsman in existence. Liam, whose shadow loomed so large it could swallow worlds. Emilia, breaker of mountains and reshaper of continents. Marie, whose sight enveloped planets, and whose arrows could strike anywhere she saw. Reya, the first divinity of Neamhan, the saintess of healing. And Chris, triz-adu, wearer of different shells, the ultimate multi-element user.

My [Transference] had grown enormously. The network spanned thousands of capable individuals, lending us their talents, their skills, their growth. And the gateways I'd absorbed had made my mirror abilities grow even now.

These days my gateway is a towering thing, a massive source of power roaring with the ability to link worlds, find new ones, and duplicate thousands of people across the cosmos. The eight of us piloted bodies across multiple worlds.

In one body, I am living a simple life on Neamhan. I work in environmental conservation. I plant trees and rehabilitate animals for a living. I am a sister to Beth and Ivan, I am a friend to my friends, and I am a pseudo-mom to Cass. But that is not all I am.

Because, despite everything, I am still a fighter. There is no one, no person or creature in the universe, who deserves to be oppressed. So someone has to fight for change, against the endless stagnation that has set in across so many worlds. Against the usurper's song of conquering.

And that's what we do. Across hundreds of bodies, our minds split and controlling them with the help of a lot of practice and consistent improvements to our skills, we fight. We battle. We war.

We win.

There is no doubt about that last part. We win. The usurpers are strong. They always have been. They have hundreds of divines among their ranks. They have world-conquerors who've laid low dozens of planets. Their songs are so loud they could drown out stars.

Yet still, we win. My gateway burns with power as an incarnation of mine arrives on a new world. Another body, another *me*, on a world that has been infested with Echo. I step through a mirror, the glass rippling across my face, and arrive on fetid grass.

It is a rotten world, brown and deep red, with air that tastes of iron. It would have once been vibrant, but now, it has been consumed by the bloodsong. The rippling spread of fear that the usurpers seed wherever they go. The parasitic infections that siphons life from a planet to feed themselves.

I breathe in. I breathe out. And I unleash my Qi, first.

Within my chest, there is no longer a maelstrom. I advanced. I stepped forward, further, stronger, free-er. And now, what burns in my chest is a thing of gold and glass that shines as brightly as the sun.

After maelstrom came *downpour*. An internal realm where Qi was so thick, it fell like rain. My maelstrom filled the sky with golden clouds, and golden rain constantly fed it. I could project it out of my body like a tide, and it would suppress all other types of power.

My maelstrom had let me consume the Qi around me. My downpour let me cleanse the world of anything that wasn't golden glass, making it even easier to consume.

The rain washes away the sinister song. It is a domain so vast, it spans an entire continent. It's a little like Ru's field of blood was, except that I do not use blood at all. Instead, golden rain falls on the land, and the browns and reds wash away, the song sloughing into the dirt, and being consumed by the violent tide of Qi that poured out.

Everything is dragged into my core, reprocessed, and absorbed. Energy pours into me, and I breathe.

After downpour there comes *abyss*.

That is the realm I'm currently at. The seventh, and final, realm of cultivation. The abyss. Deep, unending. A delve into the very nature of an aspect, where you find the truth of who you are, of what you are, of what your path is.

I've not reached the bottom of the abyss. I never will. There is no step beyond it, because it contains infinite growth.

The golden rain burns bright. Each drop of it contains enough Qi to wipe out mountains, to flatten entire cities. Each raindrop is filled with the abyss, like a little world in and of itself. It consumes and strips this land of its curse.

A usurper appears before me. It wears the crown of a world-conqueror. Of someone who brutally beat a planet into submission. I turn my eyes on it, and it shivers. Astraeus hums in my hand, and I smile thinly, pointing the spear at the usurper. The *Herald of the Golden Tide*, now flowing across this land in ripples.

"You've heard of me," I say. There is no doubt in my voice. The usurpers know, by now. They know who I am. What I do. And that is why they must speak with me.

"Yes," they admit. A thing woven from grass and vines. Its song choking on its tongue as the world it infected is being cleaned of its influence. "I would... negotiate."

The thin smile spreads on my lips, and I lower my spear. That's what I thought, and it's the most annoying part of reclaiming these worlds. *Negotiation*. Just slaughtering everyone in our path is not exactly a viable strategy for making sure that worlds turn out healthy. So, to minimize the damage, we talk.

"Good," I say. "Do you have seed banks? Any kind of storage of the things that lived here before you corrupted them? Which worlds did you draw your usurpers from?"

In front of me, the wine-woven usurper pulls out a notebook and a pair of glasses, placing them on a face that distinctly lacks eyes. Still, it flips it open with a small sigh. And begins to read it to me. "No seed banks," it says, "but records of the original energy distribution before consumption, as well as logs of habitats, and I prepared a detailed breakdown of where the invading usurpers came from. You've reclaimed some of those worlds, though, so you may need to trace them back from there."

The words come out bitterly but professionally, and I almost laugh at the absurdity of it all. As its power is being carved away, they do what they always do. Try to maintain whatever scraps they hold onto. They know they've lost, so they must negotiate. They prepare the best data they can.

We don't plan to kill all usurpers, or "reclaim" all words. At the end of the day, the usurpers, and the various species they employ, have a right to live as well. So there is a delicate effort in it - to cleanse the world of the infectious Echo and yet thread that energy into their baseline. To try and reintroduce species that were outcompeted in order to bring back a reasonable balance and ecological network.

I sieve through the notes presented to me, humming faintly and passing them on to Cass, who quickly passes them through the other channels of [Transference], giving a couple orders to locals from other worlds to arrange gateway networks - all connected and powered by my central node.

"Alright, this is good documentation. Solid work," I say, nodding in approval. "Which world would you like to be relocated to? Do you wish to switch cultivation tracks? I can give you a cleanse, or simply put you on a world that allows infectious Echo."

And yes, those do exist. A few more barren worlds, where restoration was impossible, as well as previously uninhabited ones were seeded for it. For the usurpers who refused to give up their 'eternal war', who need the bloodshed. We simply quarantine them in places where they harm no one but each other, allow anyone who wishes to stop off the planet, and carry on.

In front of me, the vine-thing nods. "A cleanse, please. Could you provide me with a selection of nature-aligned techniques across the spectrum? I want to create a song of growth, if I can, but I don't want to solely be a resonator."

Nodding slightly, I thread through my mental library, then grab a few notes. Marie and Ann worked extensively to document, reproduce and spread paths that are easily walkable and possible to adjust to the individual, especially in terms of nature-aligned power.

"This might sting a bit," I say, though I doubt it will be bad.

A raindrop hits their forehead, and the abyss within me thrums hungrily. The drop of gold expands, and a thousand atom-thin needles pierce the usurper. They let out a small gasp, but their pain, too, is swallowed by the golden tide. There is nothing that can exist in the abyss without my permission.

Their Echo disappears. Their song is subsumed, washed away. Their resonance quiets, then dies down to nothing, as the noise grown by conquering and death is snuffed out like a faint fire in a rainstorm.

Then, I pass them a few books and notes. "Any wishes for world destination?"

"Neamhan," they say quietly.

I eye them up and down, then nod slowly. "Alright. Neamhan, then. Do good w-"

"**You!!**" someone interrupts, just as I was about to teleport the vine-thing.

A new usurper, brimming with horrid power. Cloaked in fire and brimstone and horrid hatred, it flies at me like a comet. Sixth realm of resonance, a medium divinity, with the power to wipe out a continent or two at full power. Hurtling at someone whose powers I just consumed, breaking them down to mundanity.

Softly, I sigh, then flip Astraeus around, and smack the god on the head with the shaft of my spear.

He crashes into the ground, but there's no crater. He slams down on a sheet of golden glass, manifested by me, and the shockwaves are consumed by the abyss. Otherwise, the planet might have fractured.

"Yes?" I ask, exasperatedly.

With hatred and a line of blood dripping down from his forehead, the warrior-usurper glares at me. He's a god, and a wrathful one at that. "You disgusting witch. How dare you strip our power from us!? I'll tear you limb from fucking limb and feed you to the hounds. I will!"

Once more, I sigh, pinching my brows and shaking my head. "Sorry, this'll only take a second," I tell the vine-creature, who nods slowly. With a good bit of fear in the mix. Which is unfortunate, but, well, it happens. I turn back at the war-divinity. "You want to go on a colosseum planet?" I ask, very politely.

"I would rather fucking die than be touched by you!" it roars, getting up and blasting tides of black flames at me, which I parry with a few spins of Astraeus and a couple raindrops.

"Are you... sure about that?" I ask, tilting my head lazily.

"Kill me if you must," he says through gritted teeth, and I shake my head at the antics, whacking him again, causing yet another minor shockwave as he crashes into the ground at about 20 times the speed of sound.

I look at him, then poke him with the blunt end of my spear. "Hey, do you want to reevaluate this? I can just break your path, and you'll keep living. If this is some elaborate suicide attempt, then I'm against it, but I can't leave you in a place where you'll hurt people, you know?"

"Then *kill me*. Stain your hands in more blood," he spits.

"Right, okay, so here's what's gonna happen. I'll wash away your path, first, since that's the least destructive. Layer by layer." The golden glass touches his skin, and I wash aside the sixth realm of resonance, reducing him from a god down to someone at the equivalent of mid-maelstrom. "Would you like to re-evaluate?" I ask, politely.

He still threatens to kill me and throws curses my way. So I strip another layer of resonance. And then a third. And a fourth.

By then, he's reduced to the second major realm, and the madness of a war-path is mostly washed away. He looked at me, eyes wide. "Oh," he says. Then he looks at his hand. "Oh no."

"Yeah, it's like that sometimes. Have you reconsidered?" I ask, politely.

He swallows drily, blood caking on his forehead. "Y-yes," he stammers. "I'd like to... pursue a different element, maybe."

With a nod, I wash away the rest of his path, returning him to zero. Mundaneity. He ages, a little, but that's fine. A common consequence. Less bad than losing a life. He'll be able to rebuild, and perhaps, atone for the blood he spilled. But, before that, I turn to viney.

"So, Neamhan?" I ask again, with a faint smile, and when it nods, I reach out, and transport it. Now it's someone else's business.

A few more minutes, and I've sorted through the once-god as well. Their powers are being consumed in my abyss, and after a few minutes, they're simply tiny building blocks, adding to my cultivation base.

I breathe in, then out, refreshing myself with a touch of Mana and Divinity - more paths that I've slowly begun to explore since I've had more time. And then, I take a step, teleporting to another continent, to continue the downpour. Astraeus hums in my hands, snickering at the ease of the fight as golden rain pours down across us.

Saving the world takes... about twenty minutes. Reallocating resources, dealing with the people and where they need to go, and beginning the restoration projects for biodiversity

takes much, much longer. But I put my degree to good use, and after about a month, everything is mostly sorted with this world, and I dismiss the avatar.

There are a thousand more versions of me doing the same thing on different planets, in different worlds. And even more versions of me spreading through the other realities, parallel ones that glow brightly.

On Neamhan, I let out a soft sigh, reactivating my powers, splitting off into another avatar for yet another planet.

All across the universe, golden rain falls. So do pink flower petals and harmless rainbow fires. They don't break or shatter things anymore. They change, they heal, they move.

There are infinite worlds out there. An amount greater than I can ever count. But, well, it's not like I'm running out of time or interest, so...

With all the power I've claimed, breaking a few more cages is the least I can do.

So, that's me. Fio. I am someone who works on rewilding Neamhan. I have a master's in Ecology. I am also a multi-bodies world-traveller at the absolute peak of strength across the universe, who can kill gods with a flick of her wrist. I am a pacifist, to the best of my ability. I loathe bureaucracy and still engage with it, I am obsessed with freedom and fairness, and I care deeply about those I'm familiar with.

I am the originator of the [Transference] network that spans a million worlds. I hold the Herald of the Golden Tide. I like watching romcoms, I like reading yuri and kissing my lovely wife, my favourite ice cream flavour is cherry, and I've recently become a vegetarian.

The universe is big, and there is much to do. But I am a person, I have time and effort to give, so I do my best. To make things better. To help people become better versions of themselves. To be kind to others, and to be kind to myself.

Because that's what it means to save a world.