**Termination 21.14**

Tohu and Bohu had always confused me.

Tohu was more in line with a normal Endbringer. Clocking in at a mere eight feet tall, the Siamese-twin-esque creature had two torsos, joined at the waist, and three heads, its body seemingly made entirely out of compressed hair that grew *from* said heads. It had standard Endbringer durability and strength, but its real power was that it could copy any three power *sets*, like Eidolon only moreso, and it had to stick to its choices. That said, when it built its synergies they were *devastatingly* effective. . . up to a point.

Bohu, meanwhile, was a slow-moving living tower, which could be from anywhere to a quarter of a mile tall to *five,* just under Mt. *Everest* in height. *Its* power let it rearrange the terrain within a couple miles of itself into one giant deathtrap, ruining whatever city it popped up in, able to slowly travel underground to pop up at its next target.

They attacked in pairs, but, realistically speaking, they were *weak as all hell.*

Seriously, while power synergies were impressive, and as the walking embodiment of that concept *I would know,* even if you added in the unofficial powerset of having Endbringer Physiology, Tohu should be manageable, while anyone that could *fly* could no-sell Bohu with ease. Hell, give the Triumvirate free reign for five minutes and we could have ourselves one less Endbringer, and the other one, while strong, only had the power of *three* Parahumans while the PRT could bring *hundreds* to bear.

So. . . *why didn’t they?*

To be honest, the entire thing *reeked* of a Cauldron plot, possibly sandbagging *themselves* for fear of what the *next* Endbringer might be, which was *exactly* the kind of short-sighted knee-jerk fear reaction that *pretends* to be a long-term plan that those witches specialize in.

*Well, too bad that isn’t going to work,* I thought, shaking my head.

**Everyone ready?**

I asked, looking around at those gathered. This time we were bringing a *much* smaller team, everyone present either able to fly, or able to handle the world around them turning into a deathtrap. We’d made the announcement that the next Endbringer was going to be a ‘Shaker/Master’ with a single minion instead of teeming masses, purposefully getting a few details wrong, as ‘We’re fighting two Endbringers at once’ would’ve been a step too far, even for some of my people.

Looking to my left, as I floated above the crowd, Taylor, in her updated armor, nodded, the creation something that Amelia had put together, utilizing some of the stocks of Endbringer flesh we’d accrued, the crystalline material further pushed into ridiculousness by the biokinetic’s power. Beside her stood **The Morrigan**, clad in the same kind of armor ‘Dryad’ wore, the metal parts static but the wood subtly flexing under the demi-bringer’s powers.

To my right were Break and Gauge, the former full up on copied abilities, the latter in his newest power armor, access to Shard-created neo-materials pushing the chrome and neon suit to a new level. Looking at it, at the style, it reminded me a bit of Sheryl’s, the style one she’d grown into before she’d been killed, because I was an overly optimistic *moron*, which. . . was probably on purpose. To honor her, though, not to spite me. Either way, with integrity generators, and overlapping shields, unless things got *really* fucky he’d be fine.

And if they did, he had the means to pull out, as did *half* the others here, with the other half either partnering with them or on the shortlist to be recalled by Nick and, surprisingly, *Curtis,* who’d been an ass about it, but had slinked in at the last minute and offered to ‘give some kiddies a. . . *ride*, if they couldn’t handle the heat.’

Hearing the roar of approval from the Penumbral Defenders, and checking with the spy-drone overlooking the area, which dropped a Marked sphere down onto our landing zone, I concentrated, **Essence** redirecting, designating the various Hosts around me.

**Then let’s go kill us an Endbringer,**

I announced confidently, almost casually, as, with a single twisting howl, I took a single **Step** as I ***Strode*** us to the target, Pamela Park, the green area playing to our strengths while theoretically resisting Bohu’s structural warping effects, at least a little. More than that, though, was **The Morrigan**, whose power exploded outwards, designating all of the plant life within several miles as ***hers****,* the woman’s Flames exuding outwards, even as Taylor tossed out several circles of Emerald Oak wook, and started growing them, not out, but *down.*

I could **See** her handing over control over that aspect of her power to her friend, who accepted it and the demi-bringer further empowered **Tree Growth & Control**, just like I handed control over my own copy of the same power, as well as its twin of **Dicot Growth & Command** over to Taylor via **Arthropod Control**, who then passed it along as well. Meanwhile, she used our shared power to unlock the metal crates I’d brought with us, hardened, warp-protected Spy Flies pouring out and activating their defenses, seeming to evaporate into the air, but giving us coverage all over the city, the girl no longer needing relay bugs to reach out over the combat zone.

Flying high, on wings of plasma shot through with projected mithral, I slowly turned, **See**ing the battlefield, picking out the Hosts already present, the orange of the setting sun staining the city of Detroit, now evacuated, in rusty oranges. The place had actually gotten a second chance, economically, with the fact that overseas shipping was no longer safe revitalizing the American automobile industry. The Triumvirate were here, because they kind of *had* to be, but, either because of the warning of ‘hostile terrain’, or the *shitshow* that was Legion’s attack, there were less fighters present, which was perfectly fine with me.

Speaking of the Not-Roman, *his* people had set up in Kansas city for a full week, establishing a large base-camp, and absolutely *destroying* the team that’d tried to strike them down, all while Scion had just. . . *waited*. Even nuking them hadn’t done anything, the flagbearers having raised a shield while the detonation had raged, and then, when it cleared, they’d gone back to. . . *whatever* it was they’d been doing.

Then, after their time was up, they conducted a large ritual, and Kansas City was just *gone,* an enormous crater left behind, like someone had taken an ice-cream scoop to the landscape. The now *irradiated* landscape, but the PRT had realized that was on *them*, sending Eidolon, as well as a few others, in after checking that Legion was *truly* gone to clean up the area. All of this made it clear that, the longer Legion was in an area, the harder it would be to reclaim it, and, unlike when Leviathan or Behemoth strolled through town, there’d be *nothing* to recover.

Now though, instead of letting Bohu ‘poison’ the land by turning the architecture into one giant deathtrap, we were going to take *it* out, though, to be honest, it would *probably* have time to still create some serious hazards, but that was someone *else’s* problem.

*~****Found her!****~* Taylor communicated, directing my attention to a six-foot-tall head that was slowly emerging in an alley, like the world’s worst urban weed, Tohu, all three heads featuring blank masks, its hair body a uniform, matte black that blended into the shadows watching over Bohu’s growing form.

*~****Good job. Pass on location to set up a firing solution. The big one’s not gonna move,****~* I replied, already forming a sound bubble high above it, prepping my other powers. With a flick of will, silver fluid spread out over my armored chest, my new **Aquatic Armoring** playing well with **Fluid Strength**, giving me a flat improvement across the board.

Furthermore, I’d started stacking like abilities to enhance my Major powers, and as such **Air Canon** and **Air Bullets** both came online, the former creating an enormous silver construct which could fire compressed air from ‘amusingly knock someone back with minimal harm’ to ‘punch holes in steel’, depending on the setup time and diameter of the rounds used. The latter, meanwhile, let me fire compressed balls of possibly lethal air a la fingerguns, though that *did* make me want to slot the *actual* **Finger Guns** power I’d picked up. . . *somewhere*, but for all I knew that’d turn my fingers into *literal guns*, which, while useful, wouldn’t combine the same way the others powers I’d been slotting instead had.

It'd taken a bit to convince that Psuedo-Shard that it didn’t *have* to fire from my fingers, and that all parts of me, even my powers, were still ‘me’, but, once I had, it let me bootstrap **Air Canon** upwards to *starting* at artillery-shells and *go from there.* And then **Aerokinesis** had then increased the charging rate by a factor of about *fifty*, to the point I could machine gun the base bullets, causing them to get *stronger* the longer they flew, which, on its own, would allow me to completely level a city in about an hour.

For fighting Endbringers, though, it was merely *adequate*, and, once battle had been joined, would be *another* combo I’d be handing off to Taylor, the two of us having practiced so that she could create-point-shoot by prodding me with her power in a way that I’d instantly greenlight, turning her hidden spybugs into targeting systems for an omnipresent weapon system, though one that got weaker the more simultaneous instances that were created, the process requiring too much of my attention to use effectively while fighting normally, but that kind of overwatch was *right* up her alley.

With another mental arm I picked up the Orichalcum shell, twice as big as I was, spiraled through with the momentum enhancement pattern, and oriented it, starting to pour **Unidirectional Telekinesis** into it, causing it glow with an inner silver light, slowly at first, but gaining in intensity.

Running mental fingers over my other powers, the ones that’d been ***ripped*** from me were almost usable, while **Hard Light Weaponry** had just finished reforming this week, but It’d another couple before it was whole enough to implant in someone else. **ABSOlute TERRitory**, meanwhile, was a little tender, but, focusing on it, my hand glimmered with ***intent***, unformed for now, but I knew I could instill it with a **Concept** if need be.

Others had risen up, charging their own attacks, Break himself working on something *surprisingly* complex, at least for him. We had a good five minutes of charging up, before Eidolon, the *fucking moron*, noticed where we were pointing our weapons, and investigated instead of just *asking.*

Using **Acoustokinesis,** I tried to warn him, “*You’re heading towards the Endbringer. Back off, we’re preparing an alpha strike,”* but the retard just flew *faster,* glowing with a kinetic blast power that I could *tell* wouldn’t be enough, and not bothering to use one of his three ‘slots’ to que up a Stranger power.

I glanced over at the charging orichalcum shell, now glowing like a small sun, as Taylor told me, *~****No, Lee. You can’t shoot Eidolon.****~*

*~****You can’t say he doesn’t deserve it,***~ I pointed out, even as I called out to my people,

**Eidolon’s about to upset the Endbringer!**

**Prepare to fire!**

*~****He does, but do you want to start fighting Cauldron today?***~ she asked. ~***If you say to, I will.***~

And, communicating like this, I *Knew* she would too, which helped stay my hand. With every passing week our position strengthened while Cauldron, just like they had for *years*, remained stagnant. Give us another six months, and we’d be able to clear them from the board, another *year* and we could likely do so without losses.

Riding Taylor’s connection to the spybugs, knowing Quinn was capturing this with one of his observer drones high-above us, I watched as Eidolon flew high, saw the Twins, and started to hurl his attack downwards. However, at the same moment, they saw *him,* the enormous head whipping about surprisingly fast, before Bohu *Grew.*

From one moment to the next, the Endbringer shot up from a six-foot-tall head into a *thousand*-foot-tall *tower*, then kept going higher and higher, piercing the clouds, until it was several *miles* tall, bits of the city she’d uprooted forming a kind of gown as the inhumanly thin, willowy ‘woman’ spread her power of **Infrastructure** out in a wave miles around, soaking into the ground in every direction.

The attack David had sent at it blasted into the creature’s rapidly expanding base, doing some damage, but barely any before the Endbringer slammed into him and sent the green-clad moron flying away, bodychecked by what was essentially *several city blocks*.

***FIRE!***

I commanded, the second Bohu finished forming, opening two vacuum corridors in front of my *own* shots to make them hit harder. On one side, the air canon *roared*, firing the hyper-compressed gasses, the bullet now near *solid*, out in instant, slamming into the Endbringer’s head, detonating outwards and carving off a third of Bohu’s enormous, elongated skull. On the other, the Orichalcum shell blasted forward, crossing the distance in a flash, slamming into the chest of the mountain-sized Endbringer, striking and detonating with a muted, *thump* that **Acoustokinesis** worked to keep from blasting back at us, as a *battleship-sized* section of the towering creature *ceased to be*, the shockwave clearing the skies behind it.

Going three for three, I set off the prepped Hypersonic Detonator, taking the vibrations from the *first* two attacks and ramping them up, *hard*, as a sphere of the Endbringer’s flesh, part of its ‘skirt’ turned to dust, though it wasn’t perfect, Bohu’s central ‘stem’ holding firm despite the force I was exerting.

Head, chest, and *kind* of one leg, a good portion of each gone in an instant, the other attacks going off a moment later.

*Everyone* unleashed hell, Herbert forming an *enormous* roaring vortex of fire, that formed a long sinuous dragon that *slammed* into Bohu, seeming small compared to that monster but still of an appreciable size, as it clawed at the Endbringer, shoving itself into the gaping hole in the creature’s chest, ripping into its flesh as hundreds of spikes shot from Bohu’s body, tearing into the construct in turn.

The ‘Dragon’ was slowly ripped to shreds, but that wasn’t the end, as more and more attacks poured in at it, Tohu nowhere to be seen, Bohu’s power once more rippling outwards, **Stone & Metal** Flames sweeping out like a tsunami, and the city, and *all* of its outlying suburbs, started to *compact,* drawing in and down, the buildings all around the park coming inwards to crush those inside, only for shining gem-like roots to burst out in every direction around the park, holding back the city as the dirt started to lift up, revealing *thousands* of enormous branches had formed beneath my people’s feet, practically *glowing* with **The Morrigan**’s power.

Herb took off like a shot, heading for Bohu, and I started to charge *myself* with telekinesis, even as my canon started compressing another shot, waiting for. . . *there!*

Tohu, a blazing comet of **Mimicry** made of **Fibers & Void**, blasted up from below on flaming steps, its left head no longer blank, features white, but bearing the visage of someone I recognized. Opening another vacuum corridor, I fired *myself* at the smaller Endbringer, fist cocked back, charged with my *other* combo.

**Sound Striking** did exactly what it sounded like, giving me a sonic punch that was *many* times stronger, essentially a ‘detonation fist’ ability, but one that could do funny things with harmonics and resonances, as evidenced by what its original user got up to. Pairing it with **Sonic Flight** at first did nothing, but when I slotted in Triumph’s **Personal Sound Manipulation**, shifting the Psuedo-Shards around in my Sea of Flame until I could bridge them, not as I’d done to **ANGEL Creation**, but to allow better communication, things got *fun*, allowing me to take the propulsion’s power and channel it *into* my strikes.

Which, when combined with the Major power of **Acoustokinesis**, got downright *stupid.*

I slammed into Tohu a moment before he reached Herbert, driving my fist *directly* into one of its two chests, unloading with all of my sound-based powers in a ringing burst that caused the world to seem to flex for a moment, Assault’s **Kinetic Redirection** taking the backblast from my own blow and feeding *that* into the Endbringer as well, in the moment of impact, its fibrous body trying to absorb the blow, and succeeding in all the *worst* ways.

Then it was *gone*, turned into yet another projectile fired against its twin, slamming into Bohu so hard it carved off half of a Wendy’s from the city-warper’s ‘dress’, the creature also hit by the fire that was still pouring in, Taylor and **The Morrigan** creating a weapons platform and actively fending off the hostile architecture that was trying to close in on my people.

An explosion of flame heralded it launching back out at us, the fibers where I’d struck it ragged, but reweaving themselves as it came back, faster then sound, *right* for me, each step it took a streak of bright blue flame.

***Skywalker, take notes!***

***An Endbringer liked your power enough to copy it,***

I ordered, having made this power *myself*, or at least pathed the Vial, and seeing it scaled up into a Major version of itself was actually quite interesting, but I *knew* what it could do.

As such, when the Endbringer sped up even *more,* leading with a flying, flaming kick it was easy to lightning-dodge, then dodge *again* when Tohu pushed off its first attack, leaving one streak, which still shot forward, to form another. I combined **Pyrokinetic Weaponry** with **Stellar Creation** to create a blade made of starstuff to slam into my attacker’s stomach, it’s claws going wide, popping one malleable shield to *power* the hit, my body straining under the force, but that was enough to send it flying out over the city like a home run, *away* from its twin, now that others had taken the initiative and were starting to close on the immobile Endbringer. Bohu could take swipes at them with its enormous hands, but, while it was fast, it was so *big* that it massively telegraphed *every* movement, the others chipping away at it.

Leaving six long streaks of azure flame, one from the end of each of its limbs, the Endbringer brought itself to a stop a mile away, its enhanced physiology letting it pull off moves that member of my Penumbral Defenders *couldn’t*, before it cocked its arms back, *just* like *he* did, and I pulled on my own powers, facing it down as the **Air Cannon** behind me fired again, taking off another chunk of Bohu’s skull.

Inhumanly fast, it started throwing forward crescents of blue fire, streaking like missiles, hot enough to melt stone, and strong enough to kill *any* non-brute that was even *near* the impact zone. Dozens upon dozens of projectiles were spat out, until they numbered in the *hundreds*, that were directed not just for me, but for those still on the ground, and those around Bohu as well.

In return, I set my mental feet and opened up my *own* powers, **Essence** flowing freely, firing off blades from **Aerokinesis**, spikes from **Ice Projectile Projection**, lightning from **Stunning Bolts**, plasma daggers from my previously combined power, streams of **Diamond Dust Wind**, and beams from **Kinetic Force Fields**, the Endbringer’s attacks damaging, but *easy* to ignite, the air between us filling with blue eruptions of incandescence as I met the Endbringer, power for power, *and started to press it back.*

Realizing it couldn’t win this way, it took off, charging at me, concentrating its projectile attacks in a blast wave that cut through my own projectiles, creating a shockwave that would’ve *pulped* me in an instant.

*If such things worked on me.*

I let it get close, before reaching in with **Acoustokinesis** and opening a hole in its solid wall of kinetic force, and blasted forward *myself*, hands at the ready, all four of the Endbringer’s clawed arms reaching for me, before I used **Lightning Blink** to hit it, shocking it a little, but really making sure I put myself *right* between its two torsos when I reformed, armor pulled back on my palms as I slammed a hand into its left and right faces, and *pulled.*

***Biokinesis***strained as I tried to rip it apart from the inside, the multidimensional nature of Endbringers making this a *lot* harder, while I Marked both heads, **Sound Striking** again, popping four more shields as I stamped on the Endbringer’s joined hips while I pulled upwards on its outside skulls, the *third* head growing out of both shoulders behind me, and, while I could *feel* parts of it snap, strands breaking from the tension, it *wasn’t enough*, and I dropped into Shadowform as all four taloned endbringer hands came arrowing in for me, letting them pass through my insubstantial flesh as I moved, becoming real and blasting my opponent point-blank with *more* diamond dust, which sawed at the strands, but, while *deadly* against most Hosts, it only *somewhat* scoured the Endbringer.

Because while Bohu went big, Tohu went *dense*.

It slammed down once more with all four arms, and I caught the nearest two with my hands, my wings blocking the other two, the Endbringer releasing Skywalker’s power at me point blank, but the blast waves meant nothing, and the flames died the second the reached **Stellar Negation**’s range.

**Face it,**

**You’re not going to win.**

**Now will you play nice?**

I questioned the Endbringer, not *really* expecting it to work, but always willing to accept new allies for the cause of *not having everyone die to an insane Entity.*

I was a bit surprised when Skywalker’s mask twisted into a hateful glare, the response coming from all three faces at once.

**You Die, Corruptor!**

It redoubled its attempts to kill me, but, chaining powers like I was, with the mithral in my body working as an internal power armor, **Hard Light Weaponry** *over* my form as a matching exterior set, so much **Cryo-Telekinesis** pulling at its limbs that it was only the raging fire that stopped blocks of ice from forming, **Injury Empowerment** meaning every strained muscle and fracturing bone made me *stronger* as **Healing Blood** repaired the damage as fast as it was being made, and the entire ***Sky*** pressing against my back, the kinetic force redistributed to my limbs, I was *pound for pound,* ***matching this Endbringer****.*

More than that, I opened up with *my* other powers at point blank range, **Water Pressure Streams** that could slice steel starting to cut into its strands, rivers of **Diamond Dust Wind** continuing to wear them away, finger-sized **Kinetic Force Fields** blasting into it, searching for its core, as I sank *more* plasma blades into it, sawing away at its stringy body, doing *far* more damage to it then it was to *me*.

Then its right mask started to darken, the second of its three powers coming online, and until I knew what I was dealing with I wanted *no* part of that, so poured on the **Stunning Bolts** and **Antigrav Sparks**, neither of which did that much to it.

But they created one *hell* of a light show.

Which, a moment later, was completely subsumed by my **Photon Conversion Beam**, the pillar of energy *blasting* into the endbringer with the force of a small *nuke*, a pillar of energy that ripped it free of my grip, leaving handfuls of fibers behind, which I Strode back to Eclipse for study, twisting air blades, blasts of fire, and more to following, as I let myself glance backwards.

Bohu was in *tatters,* a frankly *behemoth* Dryad, two-thirds the height of the Endbringer, beating the *shit* out of it, while a dragon with a wingspan measured in miles, coruscating with the Inferno of Herbert’s powers, rained hell down on it from above.

*. . . Yeah, we got this,* I thought, turning back as *my* opponent came blasting forward, through my attacks like they didn’t even exist, declaring,

***You Die, Corruptor!***

For a second, I was worried, until I realized I recognized *this* mask too.

And then I ***Laughed****.*

Knowing I’d need the increased strength and defense, I grabbed two Shards I’d been iffy on, **Tactile Telekinesis** and **Kinetic Buffer**, and slotted them right in, burning through Minor Slots, but I had nine left. The first was superman-style strength and durability, though not to *those* levels, while the latter let me absorb kinetic energy and pour it out, though *not* at the same time, the power likely forked from the same True Crystal that the **Kinetic Redirection** Shard was an aspect of.

Blasting forward myself, building up a head of steam, I met the charging Endbringer with so much force that, even *trying* to stop the ensuing shockwave, it created a line of destruction below us where we met, my **Temporal Protection** flaring to negate Bohu’s newly acquired **Personal Temporal Stasis**, leaving us *exactly as we were a moment ago.*

Bohu could now strike harder, able to get more speed in on its blows, but, in turn, the *second* it touched me I could start to push back, absorb more of the damaging force, and then use *that* to fuel my own counterattacks, slamming a fist into its third, middle head to Mark that one too, once more resulting in a stalemate, as the rest of my team continued to tear apart the mountain of an Endbringer behind me.

Seeing its twin in distress, the Endbringer tried to break off from our fight, but I’d stabbed tendrils of mithral into its body, and I was dragged along, able to get free hits in on it, Hard Light claws allowing me to rip into its body, but only on the surface, the deeper strands so tough that I could only *start* to work on them, and, when Bohu closed on my teammates, I reached deep, took hold of it, and *Strode.*

The power *caught*, and it was like trying to move the *entire* Penumbral Defenders at once, but, with a howling, twisting, warp, I dragged it *back* to the outskirts of Detroit, that being as far as I could go, Herbert’s Dragon, Bohu, and **The Morrigan**’s Dryad all still easily visible, as, with a *scream* of frustration, it turned on me in earnest, but, once again, I was holding my own, no longer damaging the Endbringer as much as I was before, any attack that wasn’t part of ‘me’ rendered completely ineffective, but I *still* had Slots to burn.

Grabbing Clockblocker’s **Temporal Stasis**, I slammed it into a waiting slot, my focus narrowing to match the four-armed menace in front of me, the power coming online as I added it to my strikes. It didn’t effect the *full* Endbringer, like it had Leviathan, as that apparently would just be too easy, instead tearing off small patches of strands wherever I hit, the obstructions hanging in the air as both Tohu and I drifted across the sky, **Acoustokinesis** and **Aerokinesis** the only things keeping us from tearing up the landscape with the shockwaves of our attacks.

Slamming a fist into the mask, a thin layer of material was ripped away, but it didn’t disrupt its power, the Endbringer healing *that* too, though not quite as fast as the rest of its fibrous body, and I kept up the pressure, *feeling* my body break and be rebuilt as I did the exact same to Tohu. However, with each blow, I was burning through its reserves of flesh, its healing *nothing* of the sort, only the replacement from *finite* stores that’d take *months* to rebuild.

While me?

***I could do this all day.***

The world blurred, my limbs moving as fast as thought, wings flaring as I formed a *second* pair of limbs to match my opponent, identical except for the lack of flesh, but still undeniably *me.* More lines of mithral were attached to my foe, anchoring me further, and every moment it broke one, was a moment *I* could strike more deeply into it, the bright blue flame of the Endbringer’s first copied power splattering against the silver flames of my own, the world narrowing to only include us as just I kept on giving it my all, and finding that, *for once,* that was enough.

And, despite the downright *irate* snarl on Tohu’s faces, I was having an [*amazing time*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1oQCh8seeU&ab_channel=JonathanYoung)*.*

***OraOraOraOraOraOra!***

I called, bones breaking, blood pumping, as I *kept grinding this stupid motherfucker down!*

*“Get Away!”* I heard Herb called, *“It’s warping!”*

I spared a glance away, and **Saw** Bohu, **Saw *Infrastructure***, for what it *truly* was, taking a copy of the Major power for myself, its core, 3/4ths up the giant’s body, now exposed, and cracked, large portions missing, as the cityscape of it’s body twisted, shifted, compacted, and grew erratically. The Mega-Dryad was missing an arm that was visibly dragged into the expanding effect, but was getting away, Herbert missing a wing but fleeing as well, as the effect grew.

Tohu, taking the opportunity, severed the links between us before lashing out two hands grasping each of my fleshy arms, and, with a mighty *yank*, broke them, before flying for the others.

I just had to chuckle, **Healing Flames** raging under my armor, **Injury Empowerment** just kicking my powers into *overdrive*, my mithral skeleton righted in an instant, and, focusing on its *numerous* Marks, flew forward, building momentum, before suddenly appearing *over* the fleeing Endbringer, as it headed for the others, slamming four fists empowered with **Sound Striking** down into its heads, blasting it down into the city below, its own flight unable to stop it before it struck the ground, rebounding up as I tackled it, continuing to pound it into the dust with a long stream of punches.

Before me, the effect of Bohu’s death spread out, pulling, shifting, twisting, until with a *flash* of power it was gone, leaving behind a twisted, nonsensical Tower of Babble that’d give MC Esher a headache.

*~****Lee, we did it!***~ Taylor communicated, ecstatic. *~****Do you need help?****~*

The central mask of the Endbringer below me started to form, metallic surfaces expanding as glowing orange eyes opened, yet *another* familiar face joining the area, and, I shook my head, as *Lung’s* power of **Predator** joined the other two.

**Nah, I got this.**

**But clear everyone out.**

**This fight is gonna get *messy.***

I replied, as the Endbringer started to shift and bulk up, orange flames sprouting from its body and mixing with the blue, as it started to push against me and my overwhelming strength, the new powers of mine only increasing as they settled in, and I fed them **Essence**, but that gap was starting to close once more.

Taylor’s hesitance was clear through our shared power, as Tohu bucked me off, flying into the air, metallic-threaded wings spreading as it ramped up *far* faster than the original user did, but that was the difference between a Minor and Major slot’s worth of power.

The endbringer *roared*, and took off for the Mega-Dryad, only for me, growing as well, my metallic body forming outwards into the same form I’d used to kick the Vatican’s shit it, using the Marks it still bore to appear above it and feed it a flaming sword. With Alexandria’s power, the blade did *nothing* to stop it, but its copied instincts, or maybe its own arrogance, directed it *into* the blade, as if to show how useless it was, meaning my clenched fist around the ‘handle’ smacked it *right* in its middle rapidly-forming jaw, knocking it backwards with **Sonic Striking**, as I slid in front of it, and continued *beating the shit out of it.*

*~****We’re pulling out!****~* Taylor announced, and I could feel the Marks I’d left on my own people shifting away rapidly, as I traded blows with the every-strengthening Endbringer, wishing I could slot the same power *it* was using, but, like all of the ‘transform into something inhuman’ abilities I had, it was locked away, so I had to make due instead.

Grabbing **Personal Hardening**, It, *yes*, did *exactly* what I expected it to, layering myself with an almost Endbringer-like toughness, though, as a *Minor* Shard, it wasn’t quite *that* strong. Combined with the others, however, it once more tipped things in my favor, as Tohu kept growing, and *so did I,* the city coming apart around us, structures melting beneath our feet as we both took to the air, like twin pugilistic suns, and it was only when the field was clear of friendlies that I *really* upped my game.

*I used* ***ABSOlute TERRitory.***

It was like stretching one’s legs after sitting too long, a little unsteady at first, but, as I focused on it, the energy spreading out and filling the cracks of my form, it strengthened, weak, anemic, but workable.

And, hey, what do you know?

I had a source of energy *right in front of me.*

***Monstrous Meddler!******Corruptor!***

The now draconic Endbringer cried, enraged seemingly beyond reason, tearing into me with all it could.

***Perish! Expire! Die!***

And it *did* tear pieces away, but now that *all* of this was me, **Injury Empowerment**, having been *talked to* in the intervening months, dutifully paid out it’s stored stockpile of **Essence**, empowering me further, as I instilled my territory with the twin concepts of golden **Resilience**, and azure ***Consume****.*

The first strengthened me, and, while it made me no *stronger*, it let me take the blows that had constantly broken my body, while the other? I extended all four arms, clamping onto Tohu, and it began to *scream.*

Energy filled me, surging down channels I barely understood, the Stolen **Essence** helping the weakened **ABSOlute TERRitory** as my prey struggled with all its might, able to overpower me, but not *overcome* me, as I grasped it tighter, *impossibly* strong metal threads weaking and coming apart under my enervating touch.

I was no longer growing, but I no longer *needed* to.

Tohu tore at me, metallic claws gouging furrows into my AT field, but barely finding any true purchase, any damage quickly repaired. It slammed me into the ground, pulling, *trying* to dislodge me, but I just held on *tighter*, legs shifting into a long, sinuous tail that wrapped around its waist as I tore through *both* of its torsos, looking for its core.

It was nowhere to be found, the deep gashes it tore out of my back, my arms, even my *head* only strengthening every part of me, including my drain *on* it, and my own defenses, a dozen Shards singing in harmony in my Sea of Flame forming a chorus of *power* that this *Minion* could not overcome.

But I *could not find its Core.*

And then I paused, realizing I’d missed something important.

A dozen arms formed and reached out, four hands for each head, two to hold them steady and two to *peel,* removing layers of masks through **Stasis** and **Consume**, Skywalkers and Alexandria’s empty, but, as Tohu thrashed under my grip, I split apart Lung’s skull, and I came upon a pearl of condensed power.

And I **Saw *Mimicry*.**

***Freeze! Regret! Surrender!***

It cried, and I paused, lowering but not eliminating the drain, as I could *feel* the terror emanating from the Endbringer. I stared at the Core, feeling a deep *hunger*, but I repressed it, mastering it, as I considered what to do.

Finally, I asked it,

**What did you mean,**

**when you call me ‘Corruptor’?**

I watched its power flux, waiting, interested, until, with a pulse, Tohu’s core pulsed, the masks all starting to glow, as it declared,

***Die Antediluvian Entity!***

*Well, that settles things,* I thought darkly, following my instincts, as the Core started to destabilize, cascading into an detonation that would destroy everything for miles, and I opened my jaws wide, Prismatic Flame dripping from my lips, and *lunged,* biting deep into Tohu’s metallic flesh, twisting with my entire body as, *pulling*, I *ripped* the Core free from its mooring, feeling myself stretch to accommodate it, as, with a titanic effort, I *swallowed it whole.*

**Essence *poured*** through me, and I sighed, scales flickering for a moment in contentment before I. . . *wait, what?*

My body shifted, and I was once again in angelic form, stretching out, looking around. And. . . yeah, I was standing in a volcano.

*Whups?*

Either way, Not-Babel was still standing just fine, and looking over, I could see the gathered Hosts of the PRT, so I offered them a jaunty wave, and Strode home, *fully* satisfied with today’s little outing.