

The Unleashed: Echoes of Sorrow, Part 1

Written by Melissa Flores / © 2021

ONE

Panel 1. EXTERIOR: A thick layer of swirling fog sits close on the dark pink ocean that envelops the alien water planet of Lumeria, almost black with no light able to penetrate it. But we can see the tinted waves glisten as they break to reveal the giant luminescent wing of a ROSTWRAITH, a bigger-than-massive bioluminescent sting-ray-like alien animal, as it breaches. It's a gorgeous sight, this beautiful bright being illuminating the dark water.

Let's color-code the Narrator's word bubble as purple.

NARRATOR (VO): I have been transported to another place... a magical world.

NARRATOR (VO): Riftside was built specifically for people like me – for **the Unleashed**.

NARRATOR (VO): Here, they promised I would belong.

Panel 2. We're in the water now, gliding through it, keeping pace with the gentle giant, its wings spread out as it sinks deeper and deeper into the ocean depths. But as we look closer, we see neon veins along the muzzle of the animal, pulsing with sickness; dull heavy eyes half-blink in exhaustion. This animal is dying.

NARRATOR (VO): I would finally feel safe.

Panel 3. We're looking at another angle now, straight on at the beast, and reveal a CRYSTAL DOME that's strapped to its belly. Inside is the bioluminescent city of ORAKAI, with beautiful skyscrapers that point up toward the belly and incredibly high-tech infrastructure. But these are details we can barely see as the beast CAREENS against a massive SHELLFISH-type creature, the sea floor a looming sight.

NARRATOR (VO): They were **wrong**.

Panel 4. CLOSE UP in a small panel: A FRACTURE, cracked open as water rushes through it, ready to drown and consume the city.

Panel 5. INSIDE THE DOME: The city is FLOODED. On the deck of the tallest peak of a skyscraper a pretty girl in a flowy, ethereal regal gown who looks about fourteen with short-cropped pink hair has scrambled up, eyes furrowed with concentration and hands spread wide above her, using her impressive water-power to redirect and push back the waves as they rush at her. This is PHEE, a scrappy Lumerian princess who is giving up everything she has in order to give her people time to escape their death trap. In the distance behind her is a platform that leads to a dock, with the last of the escape space ships anchored to it. What's left of her citizens scramble to board. The neon streak veins of the rostwaith's belly shine down at her, crackling like lightning in the night sky.

SFX: **SWOOOSH!**

TWO

Panel 1. The weight of the water weighs down on her and it's pushed Phee to her knees. It's a losing battle, and she knows it, but she's not giving up. Her teeth grit in concentration – water droplets sting her face. The wall of water looms ever closer.

PHEE: Ngggh!

Panel 2. CLOSE UP of her hands as they stay up – her resolve without measure, even as they shake.

Panel 3: Another set of hands appear beside her own, larger and much more powerful, holding back the tide.

Panel 4: Reveal MAE, a beautiful royal matriarch with long, flowing pink hair and graying temples, who pleads with her daughter as she throws out her fists to hold back the cascade. Can we add asterisks in the dialogue in this exchange? They are speaking Lumerian, not English.

MAE: Pheorakai, you have to get on the ship. The rostwaith is going to crash any minute!

PHEE: I'm not leaving without you, mother!

MAE: You have no choice!

PHEE: Yes, I do! We can do this together.

Panel 05: CLOSE UP of the fracture, splintering into a wide hole as the wall of pink water rushes in, cementing their death.

MAE: No, Phee. We can't.

Panel 06: Phee is jolted by a crash of water that flings her off her feet, Mae's face regretful but resolute as she pushes out her hand, directing the flow at her.

MAE (O.S.): We won't.

THREE

Panel 1. What may have been reality has melded with a nightmare, and Phee is lost to it. She is no longer the young teenager who stood for her city and lost everything, but a young woman, the picture of her mother, hair now long and curling around her. Her royal outfit has changed to her normal super-hero outfit – this is now Phee as we know her, per the reference. She has been pushed away - away from the city, out of the dome. She floats now in an endless abyss of pink ocean. Far below her, the Rostwaith groans its last breath of life, impacting with the sea floor, crushing her city and her mother along with it.

MAE (O.S.): Our destiny is fated. My role has run its course.

MAE (O.S.): But as long as you survive, we will thrive. It is your burden to lead our people with conviction, wisdom and love.

Panel 2. It's nearly impossible to distinguish Phee's tears from the water around her. She cries in silent anguish, drowning as much from her emotion as the inevitability of her fate in the water around her.

MAE (O.S.): Lumeria is no more... but your journey has just begun.

Panel 3. Fingers reach out, grabbing hold of Phee, catching her before she floats away.

MAE (O.S.): Go, my love.

Panel 4. Phee discovers herself looking into the violet, brilliant eyes of MARA, her gothy-witch Riftside girlfriend, out of place as she suspends in the water with her, a buoy and

distraction from the horrific memories that overwhelmed her. Mara's body glows with green energy, but her look is loving, concerned and just enough.

MAE (O.S.): And live your life.

Panel 5. The green flow has enveloped Phee, shielding her from the water around her as Mara threads her fingers through Phee's hair and KISSES her, soft, gorgeous and grounding.

FOUR

Panel 01. Eyes closed, Phee and Mara press their foreheads together, sucking in their breath as Phee comes back to herself. We're close in on their shoulders, and we should barely notice that though they are soaked, they are no longer in water.

MARA: There you are.

PHEE: There *you* are. Mara, what are you doing here?

MARA: About that...

Panel 02. We pull far back and discover we're no longer on the Lumeria water planet, but instead a desolate desert planet. Green, dry dust powders everything, looking almost rusty and moldy in its lifelessness. It's everything that Lumeria is not, and that's not a good thing. A rickety city is off in the distance, but for now they're alone on an isolated plain littered with sand dunes and ancient ruins that remind us of life that has abandoned this place.

MARA: Where **is** here? I don't remember Riftside being this... dusty.

PHEE: Mirth's Key, where my people took refuge after Lumeria. But... how? Weren't we just sitting outside the Dean's office?

MARA: Wait that was Lumeria?

PHEE: Yes... before it was destroyed and I lost my mother.

MARA: I'm so sorry, Phee.

Panel 03: Phee and Mara, holding hands, scope out the unfamiliar desert plain.

PHEE: It's terrible, but I didn't think I'd ever get the chance to show it to you.

MARA: It was wetter and pinker than I'm used to, but... it was beautiful. I'm glad I got to see it.

PHEE: ... me too.

Panel 04: We pull back from the intimate moment as Mara lovingly plucks a piece of coral out of Phee's hair as someone LANDS with a harsh thud some distance away behind Mara seemingly out of nowhere. The figure is obscured, but Phee sees it.

MARA: Now, I guess we should figure out how we got here. And how we get back.

PHEE: ... what was that?!

Panel 05: JAI, a beautiful African-American teen girl with long purple-tined braids and a top bun (see reference – her face is based on Aabria Iyengar, our GM). She's as drenched as they are as she scrambles to pick herself up, absolutely out of place in this alien world. This is also our NARRATOR from Page 01.

JAI: (Pant)

JAI: This is wrong.

Panel 06: Jai stares at our couple, eyes and fearful, clearly panicking. Let's overwhelm her with word balloons as she mutters to herself in her shock.

JAI: I'm not supposed to be here.

JAI: It isn't safe.

JAI: It's wrong.

JAI: It's **wrong**.

MARA: Looks like we're not the only ones who don't belong here.

Panel 07: Phee and Mara start toward her. Phee's expression is gentle, but Mara, protective as ever, is wary. We see them as Jai would as they start to power up in preemptive defense: Phee's eyes glitter with power as she floats water in her hands as Mara's eyes glow green, projecting a SHIELD OF RUNES in front of them. They're quite a sight – a literal supercouple.

MARA: Tell us who you are. Now.

JAI: Stay away.

FIVE

Panel 01: She THROWS OUT HER HANDS, eyes rolling back in her head as suddenly around her, the desert goes WHITE, enveloping Phee and Mara with it.

JAI: LEAVE ME ALONE!

Panel 02: Nothing but white – we're lost in it.

Panel 03: Phee and Mara emerge from the white, but they are the only thing. Behind them, we start to see the world continue to form – panels of the wall coming in – an outline of an old-timey detective door with letters on it that says, 'KING INVESTIGATIONS.' We just see their shoulders. And oddly enough... they're not in all color. Only their hair, pink and green, respectively, stand out from the black and white.

MARA: What the hell just happened?

PHEE: Mara... where are we?

CHARLIE (O.S.): I got a better question.

Panel 04: Wide pull back: The girls are standing in a 1940's Private Investigator's office – the entire thing is black and white except for their colorful profiles. Jai is gone; in her place is their friend CHARLIE KING, but not as they know her. Charlie is also in black and white, and dressed to kill noir-style in a 40's fancy pin-stripe suit. She is leveling a pistol straight at them.

CHARLIE: How the heck did you two dames manage to break into my office?

CAPTION: To Be Continued...

END