

# AN ECHO OF THINGS TO COME



AN  
ECHO OF  
THINGS  
TO COME

The Licanus Trilogy: Book Two

JAMES ISLINGTON

[orbitbooks.net](http://orbitbooks.net)  
[orbitshortfiction.com](http://orbitshortfiction.com)

## Copyright

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

Copyright © 2017 by James Islington

Cover design by Lauren Panepinto

Cover illustration by Dominick Saponaro

Map © 2016 by Tim Paul

Cover copyright © 2017 by Hachette Book Group, Inc.

Hachette Book Group supports the right to free expression and the value of copyright. The purpose of copyright is to encourage writers and artists to produce the creative works that enrich our culture.

The scanning, uploading, and distribution of this book without permission is a theft of the author's intellectual property. If you would like permission to use material from the book (other than for review purposes), please contact [permissions@hbgusa.com](mailto:permissions@hbgusa.com). Thank you for your support of the author's rights.

Orbit

Hachette Book Group

1290 Avenue of the Americas

New York, NY 10104

[orbitbooks.net](http://orbitbooks.net)

First Edition: June 2017

Orbit is an imprint of Hachette Book Group.

The Orbit name and logo are trademarks of Little, Brown Book Group Limited.

The publisher is not responsible for websites (or their content) that are not owned by the publisher.

The Hachette Speakers Bureau provides a wide range of authors for speaking events. To find out more, go to [www.hachettespeakersbureau.com](http://www.hachettespeakersbureau.com) or call (866) 376-6591.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Islington, James, 1981–author.

Title: An echo of things to come / James Islington.

Description: First edition. | New York : Orbit, 2017. | Series: The Licanius trilogy ; book 2

Identifiers: LCCN 2017010723 | ISBN 9780316274111 (hardcover) | ISBN 9780316274135 (softcover) | ISBN 9780316274128 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Imaginary wars and battles—Fiction. | Imaginary places—Fiction. | BISAC: FICTION / Fantasy / Epic. | FICTION / Action & Adventure. | FICTION / Fantasy / Historical. | GSAFD: Fantasy fiction.

Classification: LCC PR9619.4.I85 E28 2017 | DDC 823/.92—dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2017010723>

ISBNs: 978-0-316-27411-1 (hardcover), 978-0-316-27412-8 (ebook)

E3-20170621-JV-PC

# Contents

[Cover](#)

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Dedication](#)

[Epigraph](#)

[Prologue](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

[Chapter 14](#)

[Chapter 15](#)

[Chapter 16](#)

[Chapter 17](#)

[Chapter 18](#)

[Chapter 19](#)

[Chapter 20](#)

[Chapter 21](#)

[Chapter 22](#)

[Chapter 23](#)

[Chapter 24](#)

[Chapter 25](#)

[Chapter 26](#)

[Chapter 27](#)

[Chapter 28](#)

[Chapter 29](#)

[Chapter 30](#)

[Chapter 31](#)

[Chapter 32](#)

[Chapter 33](#)

[Chapter 34](#)

[Chapter 35](#)

[Chapter 36](#)

[Chapter 37](#)

[Chapter 38](#)

[Chapter 39](#)

[Chapter 40](#)

[Chapter 41](#)

[Chapter 42](#)

[Chapter 43](#)

[Chapter 44](#)

[Chapter 45](#)

[Chapter 46](#)

[Chapter 47](#)

[Chapter 48](#)

[Chapter 49](#)

[Epilogue](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[Glossary of Characters](#)

[Glossary](#)

[By James Islington](#)

[Orbit Newsletter](#)

*For Mum and Dad.  
Thank you so much for fostering my love of writing  
and for the love you've always shown me.*



**The following is meant only as a quick, high-level refresher of the events in *The Shadow of What Was Lost*, rather than a thorough synopsis. As such, many important occurrences and characters will be glossed over during this recap, and some—in a few cases—are not mentioned at all.**

### **THE PAST**

*Two thousand years ago, the **Boundary**—a barrier of energy that separates the land of **Andarra** from the northern wastelands of **Talan Gol**—was erected. Though many details surrounding this event have been lost, religion holds that the Boundary was created as a prison for **Aarkein Devaed**, a terrifyingly powerful invader who commanded twisted monsters and sought the destruction of the entire world. During the same tumultuous period in history, the **Darecians**—a powerful race of people who ruled Andarra at the time of the invasion—mysteriously vanished.*

*The Darecians' role was eventually filled by the emergence of the **Augurs**: a new group of people able to use a power called **kan**, which (among other abilities) allowed them to see an immutable future. To assist in their governing of Andarra, the Augurs chose the **Gifted**—those able to manipulate a reserve of their own life force, called **Essence**, to physically affect the world around them.*

*This hierarchy, once established, remained virtually unchallenged for hundreds of years.*

*A generation ago, that changed.*

*After several embarrassing mistakes, it became apparent that the Augurs' visions had abruptly stopped coming to pass. Refusing to openly admit that there was a problem, the Augurs instead withdrew*

*from the public eye as they tried to determine what was happening, tasking the Gifted with controlling an increasingly nervous populace. Public unrest soon turned to anger as some of the Gifted began overstepping their new mandate, often violently. A schism in Andarran society quickly formed.*

*Eventually, things came to a head and a shocking, bloody rebellion overthrew the Augurs and the Gifted, with the uprising instigated by **Duke Elocien Andras**—a member of the previously token monarchy—and fueled by the mysterious proliferation of new weapons designed to target those with powers. The Augurs were summarily killed, and of the five original Gifted strongholds (called **Tols**), only two—**Tol Athian** and **Tol Shen**—held out against the initial attack.*

*After spending five years trapped behind their Essence-powered defenses, the Gifted finally signed the **Treaty** with Duke Andras and the monarchy, officially ending hostilities. The cost to the Gifted, however, was high. The **Tenets** were created: four magically enforced, unbreakable laws that heavily restricted the use of Gifted abilities. Commoners were also allowed to become **Administrators** of the Treaty, giving them even more legal and practical control over those who could wield Essence.*

*Furthermore, any Gifted who broke any terms of the Treaty not covered by the Tenets were forced to become **Shadows**, permanently stripped of their abilities and horribly disfigured in the process. This applied most often to the unfortunate Gifted students who lacked the skills to pass their graduation **Trials**, and who were therefore not vouched for by the Tols as able to adequately control their powers.*

*Thus the Gifted, while technically free again, remained heavily policed and despised by most. Meanwhile, the powers of the Augurs were condemned under the Treaty. For any who were discovered to have such capabilities, a death sentence at the hands of **Administration** awaited.*

#### **THE SHADOW OF WHAT WAS LOST**

Sixteen-year-old **Davian** is an intelligent, hardworking student at the Gifted school at **Caladel**—but as his Trials approach, he still cannot figure out how to wield his powers, despite having the **Mark** on his forearm that both binds him to the Tenets and indicates that he has previously used Essence. To make matters worse, Davian can unfailingly tell when someone is lying—something that only an Augur should be able to do. His closest friends, **Wirr** and **Asha**, are the only ones he has told about this unusual skill.

When **Elders** from Tol Athian arrive early to conduct the Trials, Davian is approached in the dead of night by one of the newcomers, a man called **Ilseth Tenvar**. Ilseth claims to have been a member of the **sig'nari**, the group of Gifted who served directly under the Augurs before the rebellion twenty years ago. He admits to knowing that Davian is an Augur, and urges him to leave before he fails his Trials and is turned into a Shadow. Ilseth also provides Davian with a mysterious bronze box, which he explains will guide Davian to somewhere he can be properly trained.

Confident the Elder is telling him the truth, Davian leaves the school that same night; Wirr, after discovering at the last second Davian's plan to flee, refuses to let him go alone and accompanies him.

Unaware of these events, Asha wakes the following morning to find that everyone in the school has been brutally killed. In shock and not knowing why she is the only one to have escaped the slaughter, she realizes that Davian and Wirr's bodies are not among the dead. However, when Ilseth discovers that Asha has been left untouched, he reveals himself to have been complicit in the assault. Assuming that Asha was deliberately left alive by his superiors (and being unwilling to kill her himself as a result), Ilseth instead turns her into a Shadow, thereby erasing her memory of everything she has seen that morning—including the knowledge that Davian and Wirr may still be alive.

Davian and Wirr head north, avoiding trouble until they are captured by two **Hunters**—the Andarran term for those who track down and kill the Gifted for profit. However, they are rescued by another Hunter, **Breshada**, who despite her profession mysteriously

lets them go again, saying only that they owe their thanks to someone called **Tal'kamar**.

Continuing to follow Ilseth's instructions, the boys cross the border into **Desriel**, a country governed by a religious organization called the **Gil'shar**, who believe that all human manipulation of Essence is an abomination. In Desriel, the punishment for even being born with such an ability is death.

Navigating several dangers, Wirr and Davian are led by Ilseth's bronze box to a young man named **Caeden**, a prisoner of the Gil'shar. They set him free, only to be attacked by a creature known as a **sha'teth**. Caeden saves them from the sha'teth in a display of astonishing power, despite being physically weakened from his captivity.

Meanwhile, Asha is brought to Andarra's capital **Ilin Illan** by Ilseth, who continues to pretend that he had nothing to do with the slaughter at Caladel. The **Athian Council**—the group of Elders who lead Tol Athian—come to believe that Asha may hold the key to finding out more about the attack, but do not wish to share this information with Administration, who are also looking into the incident. The Athian Council decides to keep her at the Tol, hiding her true identity from everyone else.

After a traumatic encounter with a sha'teth that mysteriously refuses to attack her, Asha meets **Scyner**, the man in charge of a secret underground refuge for Shadows known as the **Sanctuary**. Scyner recruits Asha to find out why Duke Elocien Andras—head of Administration, and enemy to those in the Sanctuary—is showing such great interest in the attack on her school.

When Elocien hears that Asha is a survivor of the attack, he uses Tol Athian's need of a new political **Representative** in the ruling body of the **Assembly** to have Asha assigned to the palace. Asha soon learns that Wirr is Elocien's son; he may not only still be alive, but thanks to his birthright will one day be able to single-handedly change the Tenets. Despite Elocien's reputation as the driving force behind the rebellion twenty years ago, Asha also discovers that he has secretly been working with three young Augurs for the past few years—**Kol**, **Fessi**, and **Erran**. Knowing this, she realizes that she

cannot betray Elocien's trust to Scyner, despite the deal she had previously agreed to.

In Desriel, Davian, Wirr, and Caeden meet **Taeris Sarr**, a Gifted in hiding who believes that Caeden is somehow tied to the recent, worrying degradation of the Boundary. Taeris also reveals that Ilseth Tenvar lied to Davian during their encounter at the school, and so exactly why Davian was sent to Caeden remains a mystery. Concerned that Ilseth's motives are untoward and that his bronze box may trigger something undesirable upon contact with Caeden, Taeris recommends that the box be kept away from him until they know more.

Davian and Wirr soon discover that Caeden has been charged with murder by the Gil'shar—but has no memories of his past, and does not even know himself whether the accusations are true. Taeris determines that they need to head back to Andarra, to Ilin Illan, where Tol Athian has a **Vessel** (an Augur-made device created to use Essence in a specific way) that may be able to restore Caeden's memories. However, with the Desrielite borders so carefully guarded, they decide that their best course of action is to enlist the help of **Princess Karaliene Andras**—Wirr's cousin—in order to get home.

When they finally meet with Karaliene, she recognizes Caeden as an accused murderer and refuses to risk a major diplomatic incident by smuggling him out of the country, despite Wirr's involvement. Their best hope dashed, Taeris determines that their only other option is to leave Desriel through the ancient, mysteriously abandoned border city of **Deilannis**.

In Ilin Illan, Asha forges new friendships with the Augurs, soon discovering that they have had unsettling visions of a devastating attack on the capital. Not long after, rumors begin to circulate of an invading force—christened “the **Blind**” due to their strange eye-covering helmets—approaching from the direction of the Boundary.

As she and Elocien try to determine how best to defend the city without exposing the Augurs, Asha makes the astonishing discovery that the Shadows are still able to access Essence, if they do so by using Vessels. This, she realizes, means that their abilities are only repressed when they are made into a Shadow, and not completely

eliminated as was previously assumed.

After an abrupt, strange message from a seemingly older Davian, Asha becomes suspicious of Ilseth's version of events surrounding the attack on the school at Caladel, and has one of the Augurs restore her lost memory. When she finds out that Ilseth was complicit in the slaughter, she fools him into revealing his lies to the Athian Council, who subsequently imprison him.

As Davian and Wirr travel through the eerie, mist-covered city of Deilannis, they are attacked and Davian is separated from the rest of the group. He is caught in a strange rift, barely surviving his journey through the void; when he emerges back into Deilannis he meets **Malshash**, an Augur who tells him that he has traveled almost a century backward in time.

Disbelieving at first but eventually convinced of Malshash's claims, Davian spends time in Deilannis's **Great Library**, a massive storehouse of ancient knowledge. Under Malshash's guidance, he quickly learns to use and control his Augur abilities. Though Malshash's exact motivations for helping him remain unclear, Davian realizes that his teacher has been studying the rift in the hope that he can change something that has already happened.

Back in the present a devastated Wirr, believing Davian is dead, continues on to Ilin Illan with Taeris and Caeden. As they travel, they come across horrific evidence of the invading force from beyond the Boundary—strengthening their belief that they need to find a way to prevent it from collapsing entirely. Concerned that Caeden's memories may hold the key to exactly how to do that, they hurry to Ilin Illan before the Blind can reach the city.

Once in Ilin Illan, Taeris attempts to convince the Athian Council to help them, but the Council—having heard the accusations of murder leveled against Caeden and also influenced by their combative past with Taeris—refuse. With nowhere else to turn, Taeris and Caeden take refuge in the palace, where Wirr is able to convince Karaliene that Caeden is a central figure in what is happening.

In Deilannis, a training accident results in Davian experiencing Malshash's most traumatic memory: the death of his wife **Ellavia** at

their wedding, and Malshash's desperate, failed attempt to save her afterward. Malshash, after conceding that this is one of the main reasons he wants to alter the past, sends Davian back to the present.

Davian heads for Ilin Illan but is briefly waylaid by another Augur, **Ishelle**, and an Elder from Tol Shen, **Driscin Throll**. The two attempt to convince Davian to join Tol Shen, but Davian has heard about the invasion by the Blind and is intent on reaching the capital in time to help.

Davian arrives in Ilin Illan, enjoying an all-too-brief reunion with Asha and Wirr before the Blind finally attack. Meanwhile Caeden and Taeris, understanding that the Athian Council is never going to help them restore Caeden's memory, plan to sneak into Tol Athian and do so without their permission. However, before they can use the Vessel that will restore Caeden's memories, Caeden instead activates Ilseth's mysterious bronze box, a flash of recognition leading him to leave through the fiery portal it subsequently creates.

As Wirr and Davian help with the city's defenses, Asha convinces Elocien to give Vessels from Administration's stockpile to the Shadows, as they are not bound by the Tenets and thus can freely use them against the invaders. After Asha and the Shadows join the fight, the Blind's first attack is successfully thwarted.

Despite this initial victory, Ilin Illan is soon breached and the Blind gain the upper hand in the battle. Elocien is killed as the Andarran forces desperately retreat, and Asha realizes to her horror that he has been under the control of one of the Augurs all along. She decides not tell a grieving Wirr, who, with Davian's help, hurries to Tol Athian and changes the Tenets so that all Gifted can fight. Even so, it appears that this new advantage may come too late.

Caeden finds himself in **Res Kartha**, where a man seemingly made of fire—**Garadis ru Dagen**, one of the **Lyth**—reveals that Caeden wiped his own memory, setting this series of events into motion in order to fulfill the terms of a bargain between the Lyth and someone called **Andrael**. This bargain now allows Caeden to take the sword **Licanius**, a powerful Vessel—but it also stipulates that he may keep the sword for only a year and a day, unless he devises a

way to free the Lyth from Res Kartha.

Concerned about what he has agreed to but even more concerned for his friends, Caeden returns to Ilin Illan, utilizing the astonishing power of Licanius to destroy the invading army just as defeat for the Andarran forces seems inevitable.

In the aftermath of the battle—having revealed himself as an Augur during the fighting—Davian decides to take Ishelle up on her offer and head south to Tol Shen, where he believes he will be able to continue looking for a way to strengthen the Boundary against the dark forces beyond. Asha chooses to remain in Ilin Illan as Representative, while Wirr inherits the role of **Northwarden**, head of Administration.

Still searching for answers about his past, and determined to help his friends fight whatever is beyond the Boundary, Caeden uses the bronze **Portal Box** again. He this time finds himself in the **Wells of Mor Aruil** and meets an Augur named **Asar Shenelac**, who appears to recognize him.

To Caeden's horror, Asar restores a memory that indicates not only that Caeden was responsible for the murders in Desriel of which he was accused—but that he is in fact Aarkein Devaed.

*For I did not know which was harder to bear:  
The echo of her passing, or the long silence that followed.*