



THE LIGHT OF ALL THAT FALLS

JAMES
ISLINGTON

THE LIGHT OF ALL THAT FALLS

The Licanus Trilogy: Book Three

JAMES ISLINGTON



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For Eirielle and Taliesin.

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Series Recap

The following is meant only as a quick, high-level refresher of the events in ***The Shadow of What Was Lost*** and ***An Echo of Things to Come***, 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 ANCIENT PAST

*More than four thousand years ago, the wedding of **Tal'kamar Deshrel** ended with **Elliavia**, his new wife, being brutally and senselessly slain. Mad with grief, Tal'kamar drew for the first time on a dark power called **kan**, killing all those in attendance as he took their life force—their **Essence**—in a vain attempt to bring her back to life.*

*Burdened with sorrow and guilt over both Elliavia's death and his own actions, Tal'kamar soon found that he was unable to die: even when beheaded, he would simply wake up again in a different body and a different land. Worse, he eventually discovered that not only had he failed to save Elliavia, he had inadvertently allowed a creature from the **Darklands**—a place of unimaginable pain and suffering—to enter the world through her body. This creature was a shape-shifter named **Nethgalla**; having retained Elliavia's memories, she began pursuing Tal'kamar in an obsessive attempt to be with him once again.*

*Rejecting Nethgalla, Tal'kamar traveled for hundreds of years, eventually meeting other people who, like himself, could not die. One in particular, **Gassandrid**, claimed that their long-lived nature was a gift from **El**, the god who had created the world—but that*

contrary to most people's beliefs, El was currently imprisoned within the bounds of time, and it was in fact the great enemy **Shammaeloth** who had set into motion the inevitable chain of events that now shaped the world.

Gassandrid went on to explain that their immortality was an attempt by El to change the course of these events, using the last of His power to bend the path upon which Shammaeloth had set fate. Gassandrid also asserted that if they were able to change things enough, they would ultimately be able to go back in time, undoing all that had been done under Shammaeloth's rule and living in a world where true choice was possible.

As proof of his claims, Gassandrid provided Tal'kamar with detailed visions of the future: evidence of the predestined nature of the world, and therefore the invisible chains in which each and every person was enslaved.

Tal'kamar, eventually convinced by his inability to change the events that had been foreseen, became the final immortal to join the group who would become known as the **Venerate**. This group consisted of eleven men and women: Tal'kamar, Gassandrid, **Alaris**, **Andrael**, **Wereth**, **Tysis**, **Asar**, **Meldier**, **Isiliar**, **Diara**, and **Cyr**.

The Venerate worked together for hundreds of years, using the visions El provided them to enact justice and do great good in the world. After a time, though, their work became increasingly focused on what El said was necessary to bend fate toward their goal, finally culminating in Tal'kamar being asked by El to destroy the legendary city of **Dareci**. Though this act would kill millions of people, El assured Tal'kamar that it was an awful but necessary step toward freeing the world—one that would force the Darecians to flee to **Andarra** and begin working on the time-travel device known as the **Jha'vett**.

Tal'kamar, sickened but choosing to believe that everything he did would ultimately be undone, agreed. He changed his name to **Aarkein Devaed** and followed El's instructions to create the **Columns**, a weapon that ultimately leveled Dareci and killed everyone living there.

This horrific act split the Venerate, many of them refusing to

believe that El had truly asked Tal'kamar to perform it.

*Hundreds of years passed as the Darecians, despite their incredibly advanced weaponry, were slowly driven from the **Shining Lands**. Many of the Venerate returned to assist Tal'kamar, finally accepting that he had been acting at El's behest. However, Andrael in particular remained unconvinced, having suspected even before Dareci's destruction that the "El" the Venerate were serving had been lying all along—and was quite possibly Shammaeloth himself.*

As Andrael continued to research the consequences of what El was trying to achieve, he came to believe that it was the Venerate's unnatural ability to manipulate kan that was at the root of the Darklands' connection to their own world—a cause, as well as an effect, of the rift between realities. He eventually concluded that if that breach was widened by the Darecians as El wished, it could pose an extraordinary danger: one which, should El then be allowed to reach it, could potentially unleash the full misery of the Darklands upon the world.

Determining that the only solution was to close the rift entirely—and that the only way to do so was to eliminate the aberrant connections to the Darklands that were holding it open—Andrael reluctantly set about creating a weapon that could kill the Venerate.

*To this end, he finally succeeded in making the blade **Licanius**.*

*Despite Andrael's warnings and the new threat that Licanius posed, the remaining Venerate continued to follow El's instructions to push the Darecians to Andarra; there, the surviving descendants of Tal'kamar's near genocide created **Deilannis**, a great city with the Jha'vett at its heart.*

Tal'kamar, upon hearing that the Jha'vett was complete, forged ahead of the Venerate's army in order to sneak into Deilannis and travel back in time, believing that his doing so could end the war quickly and prevent further bloodshed. However, this only caused the Darecians, forewarned of his approach, to panic and attempt to use the Jha'vett themselves.

*The result was a dire miscalculation by the Darecians, their use of **Shackles** reacting with the Jha'vett to strip them of their natural resistance to kan, turning them into beings of nearly pure Essence.*

*Only Tal'kamar's decision to save them by sending them to **Res Kartha** allowed them to survive; effectively imprisoned there, they would eventually become known as the **Lyth**.*

*Tal'kamar himself then attempted to activate the Jha'vett, discovering too late that it had been damaged. After the ensuing explosion, a young man calling himself **Davian** appeared, claiming to be a friend of Tal'kamar's from an inevitable future. Davian accused Tal'kamar of willfully ignoring the evils he had perpetrated and avoiding taking responsibility for his actions, warning him that nothing in the past could ever be changed—including the death of Elliavia.*

Enraged, Tal'kamar killed Davian.

*Davian's words lingered as El and the Venerate's army drew closer to reaching Deilannis, though, and doubts began to fester in Tal'kamar's mind. Frustrated in his attempts to convince the other Venerate to investigate further, he was ultimately forced to ally with Andrael to help him complete and activate the **ilshara**: a massive wall of energy that surrounded the entire northern third of Andarra, separating it into a new area that would eventually become known as **Talan Gol**.*

Though Andrael had been working on the ilshara for centuries, Tal'kamar only ever meant it to be a temporary measure, a way of delaying the invasion until he could be certain of El's intentions.

In the end, it would stand for more than two thousand years.

THE RECENT PAST

*A generation ago, the **Augurs**—men and women with the ability to wield kan and see an unchangeable future—ruled Andarra, as they had for almost two thousand years since the creation of the **Boundary**. Assisting them were the **Gifted**: people able to manipulate a reserve of their own Essence to physically affect the world around them.*

*Although outwardly everything appeared to be well, one of the Augurs—a man named **Jakarris**—became increasingly concerned*

about the worsening state of the Boundary, and worried that the traditionally warned-against uses of kan that his peers had recently been experimenting with were responsible for its decay. He spent many years attempting to prove this theory, coming close to finding conclusive answers, only for his research to one day be completely destroyed.

*Suspecting his fellow Augurs of sabotage but not having any proof, a disgruntled and disheartened Jakarris was eventually recruited by Nethgalla, who convinced him that the only way to delay the imminent collapse of the Boundary was to overthrow the current generation of Augurs. Nethgalla also explained that their downfall would enable her to introduce **Vessels** (Augur-made devices, created to use Essence in specific ways) into Andarran society, which, ultimately, could prove decisive in resisting the forces beyond the Boundary.*

Jakarris proceeded to assist Nethgalla in undermining the Augurs' rule, using his position to create a series of embarrassing public mistakes that cast serious doubt on the Andarran leaders' ability to see the future. Refusing to openly admit that there was a problem, the Augurs 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, the uprising instigated by **Duke Elocien Andras**—a member of the previously token monarchy—and fueled by the proliferation of new weapons provided by Nethgalla that were designed to target those with powers. Jakarris slew the other twelve Augurs, 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. One of the Vessels Nethgalla had provided was*

*used to create the **Tenets**: 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 happened 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.*

*This was another of Nethgalla's contributions to the rebellion; unbeknownst to the Andarrans, every Gifted who became a Shadow was in fact being linked to a Vessel called the **Siphon**, which allowed Nethgalla to use that Gifted's Essence as if it were her own.*

*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 a place where 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 else 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's 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 for 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; not only may he still be alive, but if he is, thanks to his birthright he 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 for the past few years with three young Augurs—**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 sinister 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** 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 Shadows, and not (as commonly believed) completely eliminated.

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 she 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, Wirr, Taeris, and Caeden 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 they are 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 Elliavia 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 to 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 **Andrael**. This bargain now allows Caeden to take the sword **Licanus**—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 Licanus 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 **Asar**, another former member of the Venerate.

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.

AN ECHO OF THINGS TO COME

Caeden, after weeks of wrestling with the knowledge that he was once Aarkein Devaed, reluctantly accepts the truth of his identity. Asar assures Caeden that he switched sides and in fact renounced the name Aarkein Devaed long ago; despite this, Caeden continues to struggle as Asar tries to help him restore his memories, catching only glimpses of his former life.

Their efforts are interrupted when Nethgalla, in the body of Elliavia, arrives in Mor Aruil and mortally wounds Asar, claiming that she is Caeden's wife and is there to help him. Confused, Caeden heeds Asar's dying warning about Nethgalla and flees using the Portal Box. In doing so, he remembers to his horror that his plan is to seal the rift in Deilannis—which will necessitate the killing of each and every one of both the Venerate and the Augurs.

Meanwhile, near the major southern city of **Prythe**, Davian and Ishelle train in Tol Shen, protected by the newly declared **Augur Amnesty** but also unable to leave because of it. Davian becomes increasingly frustrated as the Shen Council continue to disregard the threat of the Boundary collapsing, seemingly content to keep the Augurs at the Tol and showing no desire to properly prepare them to fix it.

In Ilin Illan, Asha, continuing in her role as Representative, risks reprisals as she makes multiple secret trips back to the Sanctuary—despite the orders of both the Athian Council and the Assembly—in

order to investigate the mysterious disappearance of the Shadows. At the same time, Wirr grapples with his new position as Northwarden, navigating the fraught political consequences of the new world he has created by changing the Tenets. He also attempts to help Asha by looking into the mysterious origins of the Vessels used to create Shadows, trying to determine where his father obtained the weapons that facilitated the overthrow of the Augurs twenty years ago.

Rumors of a threat to Wirr's life prove true when, during dinner with the **Tel'Rath** family, an assassination attempt is made upon him. Only the intervention of Scyner, who has been watching Wirr and Controls the assassins before they can do him any harm, enables him to survive. After saving him, Scyner tells Wirr that the information he has been looking for is in his father's journal, hidden at Wirr's family's estate in **Daren Tel**.

After burying Asar, Caeden finds himself in the **Plains of Decay** and inadvertently frees Meldier from his imprisonment in a **Tributary**: a device that has been draining his Essence for centuries in order to supply energy to the Boundary. Meldier, unable to take action against Caeden for fear that it will result in the bargain with the Lyth remaining unfulfilled, shows Caeden that he was responsible for the destruction of Dareci—insisting that Caeden is on the wrong side of the fight, and pleading with him to reconsider his current course.

Asha, during one of her secret trips into the Sanctuary, stumbles across a meeting between a clearly disturbed Isiliar, the sha'teth named **Vhalire**, and an **Echo**. Believing that she might be able to uncover important information, she risks following the Echo into the catacombs beneath Tol Athian. However, the Echo realizes that it is being followed, leaving Asha lost underground.

Asha keeps her nerve, waiting until she is eventually able to follow Isiliar and Vhalire again. She witnesses Isiliar's attack on Vhalire with the blade **Knowing**; when Isiliar leaves Vhalire severely wounded, Asha speaks briefly with the sha'teth before killing it. She escapes and hides Knowing elsewhere in the catacombs, having been warned by Vhalire that Isiliar will be able to track her

otherwise.

Davian, believing that he is being followed by an Augur in Prythe, discovers that Erran and Fessi have been tailing him in the hopes that Scyner—whom they wish to bring to justice for Kol's death in Ilin Illan—would eventually approach him. The two newcomers are reluctant to submit themselves to the Augur Amnesty; not only do they mistrust the Shen Council, but they are concerned about the existence of what appears to be an Augur-proof area at the center of the Tol.

Davian agrees to ask the Council about this mysterious area, but returns to find that **Rohin**—a newly arrived Augur—has achieved instant popularity within the Tol. It quickly becomes apparent that Rohin's talent is a form of Control, causing everyone who hears him to be convinced of the truth of his words. Davian alone, his natural ability to see lies directly conflicting with Rohin's power, is able to resist.

Rohin imprisons Davian in a kan-proof cell within Tol Shen; Davian, needing kan to be able to draw Essence from his surroundings to survive, desperately manages to create an artificial **Reserve** of Essence within himself before being sealed in. Despite the dangers supposedly inherent in using kan within his own body, Davian does not appear to suffer any ill effects from the act.

Wirr, advised by the king to leave the city for a few days after the assassination attempt, travels to his family estate in Daren Tel in the hope of finding his father's journal. There he receives a cold welcome from his mother, **Geladra Andras**, who informs him that everything from his father's study has already been handed over to Administration. Not bothering to temper any of her strongly anti-Gifted sentiment, it is immediately apparent that Geladra does not believe Wirr should be Northwarden, showing both suspicion of and disdain for her son's recent decisions.

Later, at Daren Tel, Wirr is approached by Breshada, the Hunter who helped him and Davian in Desriel. She has been following him since recognizing him in Ilin Illan, desperate for assistance after discovering that she has somehow become Gifted herself, and having been branded an Andarran spy by her own people as a

result. Wirr reluctantly agrees to find someone to help her control her new ability.

That evening, Wirr's sister **Deldri** reveals that their mother lied to him, and that the contents of his father's study have in fact not yet left the property. Deldri assists him, and he eventually finds both his father's old journal and an **Oathstone**: a small Vessel used by Administration to bind Administrators to the Tenets. Furious at how Geladra has been treating both of them, Deldri asks Wirr to take her back to the capital; Wirr is reluctant but, after Geladra forcibly attempts to stop them from leaving, agrees.

Fessi and Erran rescue Davian from his cell in Tol Shen, having become aware that something is wrong after Davian failed to show up at a scheduled meeting. Davian explains what Rohin has done; the three then intercept Driscin Throll as he returns to the Tol from traveling, warning him of Rohin's ability and enlisting his help in stopping the Augur.

Driscin tells them of an amulet in Tol Shen's vault that will prevent Rohin from being able to touch kan; the four of them break into the Tol, retrieving the amulet and ultimately imprisoning Rohin.

When Davian questions him, Rohin says that he has foreseen the utter destruction of northern Andarra; he also claims that the leadership of Tol Shen knew of the Blind's devastating attack on Ilin Illan well before it happened. After **Reading** him, the Augurs discover that he was sent to the Tol by Scyner, though for what purpose is unclear.

Caeden, continuing to trust the Portal Box to take him where he needs to go, arrives at the snow-covered city of **Alkathronen**. He soon discovers Isiliar's destroyed Tributary; Isiliar, who has evidently been driven mad by her time in the device, has been lying in wait and viciously attacks him.

Alaris saves Caeden from Isiliar; after Caeden heals from his extensive injuries and wakes, Alaris does his best to convince him that he is fighting for the wrong side. Caeden learns that he needs to find Nethgalla again, as it appears that she has taken the final Vessel he needs to satisfy Andrael's agreement with the Lyth. Alaris tells Caeden that he will most likely find Nethgalla in Deilannis.

Caeden returns to Ilin Illan, briefly reuniting with Karaliene before heading to Deilannis to confront Nethgalla.

After turning Rohin over to the Shen Council, Davian, Ishelle, Fessi, and Erran head north for the Boundary, defying the Council's wish to keep them in the Tol.

In Ilin Illan, Wirr begins reading his father's journal, gradually uncovering the truth behind the origins of the rebellion against the Augurs. **Aelric** approaches Wirr and asks for an excuse to be sent south, wishing to deal with a personal matter that he doesn't want anyone else—including **Dezia**—to know about. Wirr reluctantly agrees.

As a group is organized to travel to Deilannis, Asha volunteers to go, hoping to uncover more information in the Great Library about the origin of the Shadows. At Karaliene's urging, Wirr sends Breshada as well, with Asha agreeing to try to teach the former Hunter how to control Essence.

Not long after they leave, Isiliar violently attacks the palace, believing Caeden to be hiding there. Many are killed in the mad rampage, and Deldri, among several others, is injured. Only Alaris's appearance and subsequent subduing of Isiliar eventually puts a stop to the unchecked violence.

After the attack, Dezia inquires after Aelric, and she and Wirr realize that he has gone to deal with his financial backers for the **Song of Swords**, who were angered after he deliberately lost the final match of the tournament. Dezia, deeply concerned for her brother, leaves to go after him.

On the road to the Boundary, Ishelle is ambushed by flying **Banes** called **eletai**, which leave her all but dead until Davian arrives and is able to revive her. Though she is quickly healed and able to continue on their journey north, it is clear that the severe injuries she suffered during the attack have taken a toll.

Asha and Breshada, along with the rest of their party, arrive at Deilannis to discover that the bridge is guarded by snakelike Banes known as **dar'gaithin**. They attempt to enter the city, but in the ensuing fight Asha falls from the bridge into the river **Lantarche**. She is miraculously saved by Breshada; together they find a way

back up into the city and then to the Great Library, where Asha discovers an ancient account describing the Siphon and its connection to the Shadows.

As Wirr prepares for Geladra to officially challenge him for the position of Northwarden, he discovers that while holding an Oathstone, he is able to force anyone who has a Mark—either Gifted or Administrator—to follow his instructions. Despite Taeris's urging him to use this newfound ability to consolidate his position, Wirr resists doing so, determined to find a way to remain the leader of Administration without resorting to such objectionable measures.

Davian, Ishelle, Fessi, and Erran reach the Boundary, dismayed to discover not only that it is steadily weakening, but also that the kan mechanisms governing it are complex beyond anything they could have imagined. To their surprise, they also find what appears to be a potential way through the massive barrier of energy and into Talan Gol.

Caeden arrives at Deilannis, reaching the Great Library and finding Asha and Breshada already there. Breshada immediately reveals herself to be Nethgalla; after handing Caeden the Siphon in order for him to bind the Lyth, she tricks Asha into using the sword **Whisper** on her, effectively transferring the power of the Siphon—and thus the responsibility of powering a Tributary—over to her.

Healed of being a Shadow but now condemned to a worse fate, Asha returns to Ilin Illan, intending to immediately use the **Travel Stones** to go north and find the Tributary that Caeden had once intended to use himself. Wirr, upon learning of this and seeing an opportunity to prove the threat of the failing Boundary to Administration, persuades Geladra to come north as well—agreeing that if she returns to Ilin Illan unconvinced, he will step down from his position voluntarily.

Caeden, now finally in possession of the Siphon, returns to Res Kartha and explains his plan for freeing the Lyth to Garadis. Though furious that they will be forced to give up their extraordinary strength, the Lyth reluctantly accept that Caeden's proposal still upholds Andrael's deal. They allow themselves to be bound, transferring their collective power to the Siphon, and thus to Asha.

As part of the deal, now that they are able to once again leave Res Kartha safely, Caeden agrees to send them to their ancestral homeland of the Shining Lands.

At the Boundary, Davian, Asha, and Wirr are briefly reunited. Despite Geladra's insistence that the Augurs remain under Gifted supervision, Ishelle, temporarily not in control of her own actions, uses the gateway they previously discovered in the Boundary to enter Talan Gol. Davian and Fessi follow her in an attempt to bring her back, only to have the entrance seal shut behind them, trapping them in enemy territory.

Asha and Erran also defy Geladra and leave to find the final Tributary, which Asha is able to locate thanks to her ability to sense the whereabouts of the Shadows. They find their way to an island that has been completely hidden by kan, just off the coast and within sight of the Boundary itself. There she and Erran again meet Scyner, who has been waiting for Asha to arrive. Erran recognizes that the amulet Scyner now possesses is the one they used in Tol Shen to subdue Rohin. Scyner admits to killing Rohin and taking the amulet from him.

An attack on the island by a group of **tek'ryl**—massive, scorpion-like Banes—is repelled when Asha intervenes, unleashing her full power for the first time and annihilating the threat. Meanwhile Erran returns to where they last saw Ishelle, Davian, and Fessi, hoping to uncover what happened to them before Asha uses the Tributary and potentially seals them in Talan Gol.

The three Augurs in Talan Gol find themselves in a nest of eletai, Ishelle's strange behavior clearly driven by a link to the creatures resulting from the Banes' previous attack on her. Discovering a set of **Telesthaesia** armor and realizing that one of them might be able to make it back to Andarra while wearing it, they return to the Boundary, reaching it just ahead of a large army.

Wirr, Geladra, and Karaliene witness the Boundary beginning to fail, a terrifying horde of Banes breaking through. The three of them take shelter, assisted by Erran, as a devastating surprise attack by the eletai crushes the insufficient Andarran defenses. As they hide from the Banes, Geladra and Wirr realize that Erran is the one who

had been Controlling Elocien over the past few years.

Through Erran, Asha is able to see that the Boundary needs reinforcing immediately, despite her now knowing that Davian will be trapped on the other side as a result. Ishelle is able to make it through the weakened wall of energy thanks to the protection of Telesthaesia, but Davian and Fessi are sealed in Talan Gol as Asha is forced to enter the Tributary and restore the full strength of the Boundary.

Despite having survived the initial attack by the Banes, Geladra is shockingly killed when the corpses left by the eletai eventually mutate and revive, becoming eletai themselves. Horrified and heartbroken, Wirr and Karaliene burn the remainder of the bodies, ensuring that no more eletai are created.

Caeden finally travels to **Ilshan Gathdel Teth** to confront the Venerate; a fight with Meldier and Isiliar results in Isiliar's death, but Caeden is ultimately captured.

Davian and Fessi are brought to Ilshan Gathdel Teth as prisoners, having been seized after the Boundary was sealed. Fessi, panicking as she recognizes her surroundings, flees; Davian, forced to run as well, discovers that Caeden is being held nearby and is being tortured for information about Asha's location by Meldier.

When Davian intervenes, Meldier tells him that Caeden was once Aarkein Devaед, which Caeden himself ashamedly confirms. Despite his shock at this news, Davian chooses to stand by Caeden; when Meldier attacks, Davian takes him by surprise and kills him with Licanus. Caeden then convinces Davian to behead him with a regular sword—the only way to guarantee his escape from Talan Gol. Caeden promises that he will return soon to set Davian free.

Having woken up in a new body and shape-shifted back into his preferred form, Caeden then relives a final, devastating memory—discovering that, in a fit of rage, he killed a time-traveling Davian almost two thousand years ago.