

“We have arrived at our destination: Three – One.” The Train Conductor announced as the train came to an abrupt stop.

Cool air seeped through the crevices of their scuttle as the sound of mechanical shuffling from outside roused interest in the Moons. It was a sound that lacked the clumsiness of the living. The footsteps eventually subsided just outside of the train doors as the Conductor turned his back to them all, bidding them farewell.

“This is your last chance to leave.” He warned, but the Moons only rose to their feet with adamant drive. “Wear the marking of your loyalty to the Head with pride then.”

The Missionary was the first to depart into the frozen landscape that stretched as far as the eye could see. Snow shavings fell from the sky as the groan of pipework reverberated throughout the world.

She was greeted by beings neither living nor dead. Enlarged mechanical hands stood proudly like spiders on their fingertips. Their bodies were a steel mesh and various liquids could be seen running through their hollowed lattice.

They were easily larger than an Octanid, and the Missionary grinned in response to their obvious inspiration.

“And I believed Act X was the first that took after the Anids. This is not the Inflow Direct we have come to know.” The Moons were far more surprised by the revelation of the giant hands that scuttled to make room for them.

Smaller hands of mechanical make magically floated behind their backs, scribing bloodied words from a crimson quill. The book dripped with blood that soon evaporated into a red mist before it reached the ground despite the arctic environment.

Several figures approached them from far ahead. Behind them was an industrial complex that was frozen all over. But little by little, the reverberations caused more shavings from the world around them to release what was once buried.

Each figure was draped in a red ritualistic garb. Rime and frost were shed from their cloth like the skin of a snake. Each of them had a singular red, glowing eye within the darkness of their hoods. They were androgynous with an identical body shape, and they seemed to float as they moved for their robes concealed their legs.

Attached to their bodies were loose scrolls and charms that were written all over with blood.

It was not until they were only meters away when the Vermillion Moons realized that their cloaks were not naturally red. Like the Scarlet Healers, their coats were red because of an endlessly bleeding wound.

“New arrivals come forth.” Despite their appearance, it was clear now that they were women.

No, more than that – they were Healers.

They exuded an aura completely different from the others, but unlike the Scarlet Healers they were not driven by a crazed compulsion to heal. Instead, something else governed them as a pair of bloodied wings formed behind them, and at once, the books that wrote down the body compositions of the Vermillion Moons closed shut. A shockwave blasted throughout the frozen wasteland, causing a tremor to travel beneath their feet as the Moons stepped forward as ordered.

For a brief moment some of their faces flashed pale as if afflicted by sudden anemia.

“Chapter: Three – One. I’ve never seen such beings before.” The leader of the Healers reached out towards the base of the floating book and ran the droplets of blood between her fingertips, assessing its quality.

“High quality blood. The Letters can be written with such complexity.” Another spoke. Their voices were made artificially deep by an unknown instrument, and they spoke with perpetual reverence.

“The beings called the ‘Moons’... blood of an Incandescent.”

A pair of crimson eyes stared back at the Moons unwaveringly as the centermost Healer took the book from the floating, mechanical hand and opened it, revealing an arrangement of letters that only her kind could interpret.

Their hoods flew back as another shockwave was emitted by the book, revealing the faces of the healers. The ‘eye’ was in fact an orb that glowed in the middle of what appeared to be a gas mask that only covered their mouths. Red fluids flooded through a glass chamber where their mouth was.

The Expositionist’s eyes widened in utter disbelief as the Healers began reciting what sounded like a prayer from the book of blood.

“Blood Angels... That means – You are...!”

The book sealed shut, and the Librarian’s illuminous eyes trembled as they gazed deeply into their red irises.

“From the rise of the First Advent.” One ‘Blood Angel’ responded as the others turned their backs and began to march towards the frozen industrial complex.

As more of the frost thawed away, the silhouette of a gothic-styled castle revealed itself. Brown banners collapsed over its battlements, and they were all smeared with bloodied words.

“Impressive that you recognize us. We thought we were long lost to time, and for good reason. No matter. Moons. Recite to us your names one by one. They shall be written, and one elsewhere shall bear the burden of the curse.”

“Why... why are you... how...? You were alive during the book burnings of the fifth year after the First Advent. I thought our Hearts consisted of you too...?” The Expositionist was in a state of total shock. This entire time she believed that people from the era of the First

Advent had made up the entirety of the Librarians and were the source of the woes of her Heart.

But to her shock, the very victims of that dark time were still alive.