

Book IV

SOLAR WARS

THE DAWN OF TWO SUNS

A long time ago, in unmeasurable eons of time... not in some distant galaxy, far far away... but right here, in our own cosmic backyard... in our solar system... there was no earth!

Chapter I

The Two Suns



Kael'Ryn
MERCURY



Princess Lysara
VENUS



General
Vaelor Krynn
MARS



VX-17 (Vex)
Combat-Droid
JUPITER



The
Shallit'Biru



Xal'Zirath
MERCURY

DEE DOWNING

Chapter 1: The Two Suns

In the annals of Mer'Kuri's history, the birth of Kael'Ryn and Xal'Zirath marked a pivotal moment, heralding the onset of the Solar Wars. These twins, known as "The Two Suns," were born during the Age of Gemini; a period prophesied to bring forth champions destined to shape the balance between light and darkness. But before any of that happened....

In the heart of the domed city of Baiae, within the expansive estate of **Councilor Alaric Thalos** and his wife, **Seraphina**, the tranquil night concealed an impending peril. The twin moons cast a silvery glow over the meticulously maintained gardens, their light filtering softly through the transparent dome overhead.

Inside his study, Alaric sat at his proudly decorated desk; covered with trinkets made by his twin sons over the past few years, sporadically placed across the surface. The ambient lighting cast elongated shadows over the array of documents before him.

The weight of his responsibilities on the royal council bore heavily upon him. As he massaged his temples, the door creaked open, and Seraphina walked in; her presence offering a brief respite from his burdens.

Seraphina: *"Al, it's late. The twins are fast asleep. You should come to bed."*

Alaric: (sighing) *"There's much to prepare for tomorrow's council session. The debates over the off-world trade agreements are becoming increasingly contentious."*

Seraphina: (moving closer, placing a gentle hand on his shoulder) *"Your work will still be here in the morning. For now, let the night be ours."*

He looked up into her eyes, the depth of their shared years evident in the silent understanding that passed between them.

Alaric: (softening) *"Perhaps a midnight stroll in the garden before we retire?"*

Seraphina: (smiling) *"I'd like that."*

Hand in hand, they traversed the grand corridors of their mansion, the ambient glow of the city's dome casting a dreamlike quality over the interior. The vast garden awaited them; a sanctuary of

flora from across the solar system. Each plant meticulously cultivated to thrive under Baiae's protective dome.

As they stepped onto the garden path, Alaric's brow furrowed. The usual presence of their household guards was conspicuously absent.

Alaric: (whispering) *"Where are the guards?"*

Seraphina: (pausing) *"What's that smell?"*

A faint, unpleasant scent drifted through the air, tinged with the metallic hint of burnt ozone.

Alaric: (eyes widening in realization) *"That's... no. Seraphina, listen to me carefully. Go back inside. Take Kael and Xal to the panic room. Lock yourselves inside and don't open the door for anyone but me."*

Seraphina: (confused) *"Al, what's happening?"*

Alaric: (firmly) *"There's no time to explain. Please, do as I say. Now!"*

At that moment, a distant explosion shattered the night's tranquility, a plume of smoke rising from the far end of the garden. That pungent smell intensified; the air grew heavy with the scent of burning.

Seraphina: (alarmed) *"A!"*

Alaric: (urgent) *"Go! Protect our sons!"*

Torn between fear and trust, Seraphina hesitated for a heartbeat before turning and sprinting back into the mansion. Her thoughts solely on the safety of their children.

Alaric advanced toward the source of the explosion; his heart pounding. As he neared the smoldering remains of the garden's perimeter, the sight of two charred bodies, his loyal guards, filled his vision. Their lifeless forms, a grim testament to the night's horrors.

Emerging from the haze of smoke and flickering embers, a solitary figure materialized; a cloaked assassin. His presence exuding an aura of lethal intent.

Eclipse Assassin: (voice cold and devoid of emotion) *"Councilor Thalos, Time's up!"*

Alaric squared his shoulders, determination steeling his spine. He knew that confronting this intruder alone was a perilous effort, but the lives of his wife and sons hung in the balance.

Alaric: (defiant) *"You will not touch my family!"*

The assassin advanced, movements fluid and predatory. Alaric braced himself, ready to defend his legacy against the encroaching darkness.

Inside the Mansion

Seraphina, driven by maternal instinct and urgency, raced up the grand staircase to the second floor, her heart pounding with fear for her twin sons.

Bursting into the twins' bedroom, she found 6-years-old **Kael** and **Xal** nestled under their blankets; their faces serene in slumber. She hurried to their beds, gently shaking them awake.

Seraphina: *"Kael, Xal, wake up! We need to go... Hurry!"*

The boys stirred, their eyes fluttering open, confusion clouding their expressions.

Kael: (rubbing his eyes) *"Mama? What's happening?"*

Xal: (yawning) *"I need to use the bathroom."*

Kael: *"And I'm thirsty. Can I have some water?"*

Seraphina: (firmly) *"All of that can wait. We need to get out of here, My Loves... There's no more time."*

Suddenly, a powerful explosion resonated from downstairs, shaking the mansion's very foundation. The walls trembled, and the floor beneath them quivered. The boys, now fully awake, clung to their mother, eyes wide with fear.

Kael: (alarmed) *"Mama, What's going on?"*

Xal: (breaking free) *"I want to see!"*

As Xal darted towards the bedroom door, Seraphina lunged, grabbing his arm and pulling him back into her embrace.

Seraphina: *"No! We have to stay together... We must hurry to the safe room."*

Gathering both boys by their hands, she led them out of the bedroom. As they stepped into the dimly lit hallway, Seraphina's breath caught in her throat. At the far end stood a figure cloaked in shadows; a female assassin of the Eclipse. Her presence exuded menace, and her voice was chillingly calm.

Eclipse Assassin: *"Don't run. You might as well make this easy."*

Seraphina positioned herself protectively in front of her sons. Her eyes narrowing as she confronted the intruder.

Seraphina: *"Who are you?... Why are you doing this?"*

Eclipse Assassin: (stepping closer) *"I am Nyssa Veylin of the Eclipse. I'm here for your children."*

Seraphina's heart raced. Misinterpreting Nyssa's intent, she believed her sons' lives were in immediate danger.

Seraphina: (defiantly) *"You'll harm them over my dead body!"*

Nyssa Veylin: (smirking) *"You should be trembling with fear. Why aren't you?"*

Seraphina: (steadfast) *"First, I'm a mother. Second, you threatened my children. And third, the door was open... You didn't have to blast your way in."*

Without waiting for a response, Seraphina tightened her grip on Kael and Xal's hands and turned, sprinting towards the staircase leading to the third floor, where the panic room awaited. The assassin's footsteps echoed behind them, a haunting reminder of the peril they faced. Determined, Seraphina pressed on, her only focus; ensuring the safety of her sons.

Back in the Garden

Alaric hesitated, his sharp eyes narrowing as he studied the lone assassin standing amidst the smoke and embers. His jaw tightened. He had expected threats. He had even expected retaliation. But not this. Not an attack on his home, on his family.

The assassin took a step forward, his voice smooth and venomous.

Eclipse Assassin: *"We told you how to vote tomorrow, Chancellor. You never gave us your reply."*

Alaric exhaled sharply, tilting his head slightly.

Alaric: *"If my only duty is to obey your commands, then I don't want the damn job. Why don't **you** run for council, yourself?"*

The assassin chuckled, low and sinister.

Eclipse Assassin: *"Very funny. But we both know democracy is an illusion. Either you do as we say, or I make tonight your last."*

Alaric's expression darkened. His voice turned cold, unyielding.

Alaric: *"I will vote my conscience. Unfortunately for you, that does not align with your cowardice."*

A flicker of anger flashed in the assassin's eyes.

Eclipse Assassin: *(growling) "Cowardice?! My job is to keep people like you in line!"*

The assassin suddenly thrust his hand forward, conjuring a swirling mass of fire. The flames roared to life, illuminating the garden in a demonic glow. Without hesitation, he hurled the fireball at Alaric with deadly precision.

Instinct took over. Alaric's hands moved in a fluid motion, channeling energy through his fingertips. A shimmering force surrounded him, redirecting the fiery attack. The fireball arced back toward its caster.

Caught off guard, the assassin barely managed to deflect it. The fireball veered sideways, smashing into a nearby tree. The explosion sent burning embers into the air, setting the tree ablaze.

The assassin's smirk faltered, replaced by something close to surprise. He regarded Alaric with a newfound caution.

Eclipse Assassin: *(intrigued) "Hmmm. You're full of surprises."*

Alaric squared his stance, his breathing measured.

Alaric: *"I'm sure you thought this would be easy. Who are you?"*

The assassin straightened and cracked his neck before offering a small, mocking bow.

Eclipse Assassin: "

Ruvan flexed his hands, rolling his shoulders as he assumed a martial stance. His movements were precise, deliberate; those of a trained warrior. In like manner, Alaric takes his stance.

Ruvan: *(grinning) "I see your stance. I recognize you now. You once trained with the Solari." (chuckles darkly) "I was there too. It's a shame you abandoned your training to be a politician."*

Alaric's gaze remained locked on Ruvan. He steadied his breathing, exhaling slowly as he shifted his weight slightly, preparing for the inevitable clash.

Ruvan: (taunting) *"You're old. You're rusty. And I'm going to kill you now!"*

With a sudden burst of speed, Ruvan lunged. Alaric surged forward to meet him...

BOOM!

A fireball streaked across the garden and slammed into Ruvan's side, sending him flying across the courtyard. He twisted midair, using the momentum to regain his footing as he skidded to a halt. Smoke rose from his scorched tunic, but he remained upright, teeth bared in frustration.

Alaric turned his head sharply, eyes scanning the darkness. From the shadows, two armored figures emerged; Solari warriors. Their radiant cloaks shimmered faintly in the firelight, their presence commanding.

Solari Warrior #1: (calm, but firm) *"Are you alright, Chancellor?"*

Ruvan, now outnumbered, slowly backed away, his gaze flickering between the three of them. He flexed his fingers, calculating his odds.

Solari Warrior #2: (smirking, stepping forward, to the assassin) *"Going somewhere?"*

Ruvan takes a measured step back, his stance cautious, his eyes darting between the two Solari warriors who have just arrived. He does not move to flee just yet. His fingers twitch as if readying another strike. Then suddenly, piercing through the night air, a scream erupts from the mansion.

A woman's scream.

Alaric's blood runs cold. *"Seraphina!"* he gasps, his body tensing.

Ruvan, hearing it too, exhales slowly through his nose. A sinister grin spreads across his face. *"Ah... sounds like my partner is making progress."* His confidence returns, the shift in the battle turning in his favor once more.

Alaric's heart pounds. The realization slams into him; his wife and children are still in danger. Without hesitation, he turns to the Solari warriors. *"Quick! Get inside!"*

The **first Solari** steps forward, eyes still locked on Ruvan. *"And what about him?"*

Ruvan stands tall, rolling his shoulders as if preparing for round two. He is not running. Not anymore.

Fire crackles in his palms as he takes his stance once more.

Before Alaric and the Solari reach the house, Nyssa is slowly exiting into the garden towards them. Ruvan watches her advance, his eyes narrowed in anticipation. His stance is braced for the battle ahead.

Nyssa's sinister grin only grows as she moves closer and closer; the air around her is thick with an unnatural tension.

The Solari warriors glance at one another. They can feel it; a strange energy building. The air grows heavy, like a storm is about to break.

Alaric stands tense, ready to protect his family at all costs. Nyssa stops, standing in the moonlit garden. Her body begins to glow, an eerie, radiant light emanating from her skin, casting strange, shifting shadows on the ground.

The **first Solari** whispers to his companion, *"What is this new trick?"*

Just then, a wave of blinding light erupts from Nyssa. She detonates in an explosion of raw, scorching energy, leaving only a fine ash where she once stood. The garden goes quiet.

The **Solari warriors** stand frozen for a moment, wide-eyed and stunned.

"Did... Did she just...?" the second warrior murmurs, still processing the unnatural power they just witnessed.

Suddenly, Seraphina arrives at the doorway. She looks bushed. Ruvan was ready to attack Alaric and the two Solari from behind... but Nyssa exploded.

Alaric rushes to Seraphina.

Alaric: *"Are the boys ok?"*

Ruvan: *"Great family moment."* He slips off into the darkness.

The two Solari reach the door. Kael and Xal run up behind their mother and smother her with hugs.

Seraphina: *"I don't know what happened. We were running to the panic room; We never made it. The assassin caught up to us. Before I knew it, Xal attacked her..."*

"... She never knew what hit her. Immediately, Kael followed suit. Both boys completely destroyed her. She never had a chance. Who are these kids?"

The **first Solari warrior** steps forward, eyes wide, incredulous. *"Yeah... Who are these kids?"*

Seraphina's gaze flickers toward the Solari as they speak, and then she looks back to Alaric, as if still trying to piece together what happened.

The **second Solari warrior** steps into the house, glancing toward the two boys who are now standing behind their parents, their small hands clenched in fists, eyes wide and alert.

"Then it's true... these are the..." He hesitates for a moment, looking at the boys with something akin to awe. *"The Chosen Ones."*

The **first Solari** nods in agreement. *"Their power is unlike anything I've ever seen. The Eclipse... had no idea that they didn't stand a chance."* His tone is both admiring and cautious. *"We've heard the legends. Could it really be...?"*

Seraphina looks at them, still holding Kael and Xal close. *"I don't know what's happening. But I know they're my children, and I'll protect them with my life."*

Alaric takes a deep breath. He feels the weight of the moment. The whole night had changed in an instant. The fate of their family, their world, may now hinge on these two young boys.

The Solari warriors exchange a brief glance. It's clear. The legend was no longer a myth. The twins; far more than they appeared.

The Eclipse Domain

The chamber was vast and suffocatingly dark, save for the unholy glow of the sunbeam that pierced through the void. It was no ordinary light; it pulsed unnaturally, shifting in hue as if alive, a direct manifestation of the Shallit'Biru's will.

The Eclipse master stepped forward, his boots echoing against the cooled and polished lava floor. He did not flinch as he passed the scorched remains of one of his predecessors, a grim monument to failure. The air reeked of charred flesh and final screams.

The lesson was clear; disappointment was not tolerated.

The beam of light began to distort, bending and crackling as an immense figure emerged within it. Though merely a projection, the **Shallit'Biru** carried such overwhelming presence that it felt as if he were physically towering over the chamber.

His form flickered, an indistinct silhouette with burning eyes that held all the fury of a dying star.

"*You failed!*" The words were simple, but each syllable carried the weight of an emperor's wrath. The master knelt immediately, pressing his forehead to the cold floor.

"*My Shallit, I beg forgiveness. The twins... My disciples failed to take them!*"

The voice thundered through the chamber, rattling the very walls. The Shallit'Biru's burning gaze bore down upon the kneeling assassin. "*Your failure has set my plans back, **Master Veydris**...*"

"*... The Solari grows stronger by the day, and now Mer'Kuri strengthens its defenses. Do you know what that means?*"

Veydris swallowed hard, keeping his head low. "*It means... conquest will be more difficult.*"

The Shallit'Biru sneered. "*It means, fool, that the window for absolute dominion closes while the Solari strengthen their grip. The moment the twins were revealed, we had one chance to start their Eclipse training early. Now they will begin training as Solari and become more than a threat to us!*"

The projection's form crackled as he extended a shimmering hand. A lance of golden light struck the floor inches from Veydris' head, searing the stone with raw energy. The assassin remained rigid, knowing better than to move.

"*Tell me, Veydris,*" the overlord continued, his voice quieter now, but no less menacing. "*Do you have even the slightest plan to rectify your disgrace?*"

Veydris lifted his head just enough to meet the burning gaze of the Shallit'Biru. "*I do, my Shallit. I will not fail again.*"

A dark chuckle reverberated through *You won't. Because if you do, you will not have the luxury of becoming ash. I will make certain your suffering transcends time itself.* the chamber. ""

The sunbeam pulsed one final time before shattering into a thousand embers, casting the chamber into consuming darkness. Veydris remained on his knees, the weight of his master's fury pressing upon him.

He did not intend to fail again.