Prologue

They would remember this night for centuries. Long after the citadels crumbled and the rivers carved new paths through broken earth, long after the last witness turned to dust, the world would whisper one name with fear and reverence.

Aurelan.

The Veilweaver. The Light, Bearer. The Worldbreaker.

The sky above the ancient citadel churned like a wounded beast, clouds

spiraling in unnatural patterns. The air trembled with a low, resonant hum—the sound of the Veil straining, stretching, thinning. At the heart of the storm stood Aurelan, cloak whipping around them as threads of light and shadow twisted together in impossible harmony. Their eyes glowed with a brilliance no longer wholly human. Veil, marks pulsed along their arms, bright as molten gold one moment, black as void the next.

They were losing control.

"Please," Aurelan whispered into the wind, voice cracking. "Not yet. Not like this." The Veil did not answer with words. It answered with power.

A surge of energy tore through them, forcing them to their knees. Light burst from their chest, then collapsed inward, devoured by a darkness that clawed at their ribs. The world around them flickered—stone bending, air warping, reality fraying at the edges. Aurelan pressed a trembling hand to the ground, trying to anchor themselves, but the earth shuddered beneath their touch.

They could still feel the echo of the moment that shattered them. A voice they loved, silenced forever. A betrayal they never saw coming. A grief so deep it cracked their soul open.

And the Veil—ancient, alive, merciless—had rushed in to fill the void.

"Stop," Aurelan begged, tears streaking down their face. "I can't hold it. I can't—"

The Veil surged again.

Light exploded outward, blinding and pure. Shadow followed, hungry and cold. The two forces collided inside Aurelan's body, tearing them apart from within. A scream ripped from their throat—not human, not Hollowed, something in between. The sound echoed across the citadel, across the mountains, across the world.

The Sundering had begun.

The ground split open beneath them, fissures glowing with raw Veil energy. Towers crumbled like sand. Forests withered in an instant. Rivers boiled. The sky cracked with veins of violet lightning. People fled, but there was nowhere to run.

Aurelan staggered to their feet, clutching their head as visions flooded their mind—memories, nightmares, futures that were not yet written. They saw themselves as savior and destroyer, healer and monster, light and shadow intertwined.

"No," they gasped. "This isn't what I wanted. This isn't—"

The Veil roared through them, drowning out their thoughts.

Their body arched, light pouring from their eyes, their mouth, their fingertips. Shadow coiled around their legs, rising like smoke, binding them in place. The gem at their throat shattered, releasing a shockwave that flattened everything within miles. The world screamed with them.

When the storm finally broke, silence fell.

The citadel was gone. The land was scarred. The Veil hung thin and trembling, like a wound that would never fully heal. And Aurelan—the greatest of the Lumenborn, the first of the Veilweavers—lay at the center of the devastation, their body cracked with light and shadow, their eyes empty.

Not dead. Not alive. Something else.

Something the world would fear forever.

In the centuries that followed, the story twisted. Some said Aurelan was a monster. Some said they were a martyr. Some said they were a warning from the Veil itself. But all agreed on one thing: No Veilweaver must ever rise again.

Far in the future, beneath a quiet sky untouched by storms, a girl named Thaliora Nyssara would awaken to a familiar glow beneath her skin.

And the world would tremble once more.