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**SYSTEM ADDENDUM ADDED BY USER NAME: [ERROR: REDACTED]**

**ADDENDUM NOTE:** Nine months after the disappearance of Fortune's Folly into Deijin's Descent

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Brae'ach guided his long, sharp fingers slowly over the monolith, creating delicate swirls of mana-rich color that etched into the stone's surface. Jakom had been watching his work over the past hour as the tall man's artistry created a spiraling weave of symbols and song that seemed to be written into the very fabric of the slab. The celestial language was beyond Jakom's understanding, but the process of writing it was mesmerizing to behold.

The others present were not so easily impressed, it seemed.

"Your ineptitude gnarls my patience," said Orexis. The lumbering entity frowned beneath his ragged cloak. His twin was tucked behind him like always, her empty face staring off into some distance only she could perceive.

If Brae'ach heard the avatar, he showed no sign. He continued his soft and gentle sweep of mana across the monolith's surface undeterred.

"Your haste erodes my goodwill," said Limbo.

The dark avatar stood opposite the room from Orexis, leaning against the wall of the dilapidated temple with some armored human hanging limply by its side. Jakom found all the avatars loathsome in their own way, but this one was especially unsettling. Being near Limbo felt like being removed from the world, each sensation and thought isolated in a never-ending spiral of self-doubt and loneliness. Looking at it was like looking at an island on a pitch-black sea, cut off from reality by some impenetrable barrier that cascaded into a fathomless abyss. Even Orexis kept his distance from the shadowy figure, and Anesis always kept her brother between them.

Only Brae'ach seemed unaffected by Limbo's presence, or at least he never let it show. For its part, Limbo was unusually supportive of Brae'ach, seeming warmer to the executor of Unity than the other avatars. Considering how much the god spawn all hated each other, it was miraculous that they even listened to Brae'ach at all, much less followed his direction, but Jakom knew that Brae'ach possessed an immaculate spirit of leadership that could bring together even the most disparate of peoples. Even the

avatars respected him, or at least tolerated him enough to work together, which Jakom had heard was nigh unprecedented.

“Goodwill,” said Orexis with a huffing snort. “You lack the capacity, singular one. Do not chide me with your hypocrisy.”

“I will chide you with your foolishness, ” said Limbo. “Mistake not Unity’s silence for tolerance. You draw undue attention far too quickly; your brash methods of spectacle and clamor are the envy of Hysteria.”

“We shall see if Unity abides truly in the herald or not,” said Orexis. “We wished for the mortals to leave. A mana eruption shatters their presence. This generation lacks the will to oppose us anyway; why should I care what they notice?”

“If you would pull your head out of your sister long enough to smell the air around you,” said Limbo, “you would notice the fires are burning far too quickly. Their escalation outpaces those before them. You ignore them at our peril.”

“I have tasted their might and am not impressed,” said Orexis.

“Your overconfidence is staggering. I will separate you two if that is what is required to grant you clarity.”

Orexis snarled, baring his teeth and spreading his many arms into a fighting stance.

“You wouldn’t *dare*,” said the avatar of Yearning, standing to tower over the shadow. Anesis woke from her trance at her brother’s rage, smoke curling at the edges of her hollow countenance.

“Please,” said Brae’ach, keeping his eyes on the monolith. “The past cannot be changed. I will request another prepare the next ritual site. You are efficient, Orexis, but lack the finesse to sow all the seeds we need later reap.”

Jakom watched as Orexis eyed Brae’ach. The contempt was clear in the squint of the avatar’s glare, but he said nothing. Instead, he lowered himself back into his hunched position and crossed his arms as the shadow lazily slumped against the wall once more. Anesis slipped back into her hypnotic state as Orexis calmed.

“There,” said Brae’ach, making one last swirl of his finger before lowering his hand to his side. “Now for the catalyst.”

Brae’ach motioned to Limbo, and the shadow pushed the armored human towards him. Brae’ach held out his hand, which the human mindlessly took as they stumbled forward.

The high chief removed the human's helm, revealing a light-skinned man with short white hair and grizzled stubble about his jawline. His eyes were open but unfocused, as though he were blind, but he followed Brae'ach's instruction and stood in front of the monolith.

"Hm," said Brae'ach, examining the man. "Yes, a dense and well-organized matrix, attuned strongly to the Physical."

"A level 31," said Limbo, "mostly platinum. It should suffice."

Jakom knew little of the delver vernacular, and he knew Brae'ach cared not for it. Whatever Limbo's words meant, Brae'ach seemed pleased, so Jakom presumed the man was adequate.

"I wish you were more aware of the impact you will have," said Brae'ach to the man, "and how much you will aid the rest of your kind."

Brae'ach laid his hand upon the man's cheek and smiled sadly, then began carving burning symbols into the person's face with his sharp finger. The man said nothing and did not cry out, but Jakom noticed tears begin to trickle down his nose.

"If nothing else, it might allow you to bear the pain more easily, but alas you are so alone. A shame, really."

"You needed a living catalyst," said Limbo. "They need not be an altruist."

"I appreciate your contribution, lone one," said Brae'ach. "I merely lament the man's inability to appreciate it himself."

Jakom watched as Brae'ach continued to scribe the swirling script of celestial upon the man's countenance, blood trickling down his cheeks and collecting in an increasing pool atop his gorget. Jakom moved next to Brae'ach and took the man's gauntleted hand, observing his distant and pained expression.

"I know, Jakom," said Brae'ach, "It may not be fair for him to be so oblivious to his purpose, but we must proceed. I fear you can offer him little comfort; he cannot distinguish you from his imagination now and can find no solace in the grasp of another."

"Perhaps not," said Jakom, "but I can offer it nonetheless."

Brae'ach smiled, which was rare in recent months. Jakom had seen the stress of the ritual taking its toll, in addition to the never-ending bray of the avatars and their

grievances. How Brae'ach had the strength to bear such burden was beyond Jakom's understanding.

As frightening as the avatars could be, Jakom never felt fear when Brae'ach was around. The tall man had made duly sure that the avatars knew not to harass Jakom, and it was one of the rare circumstances where Brae'ach made no compromise and brooked no dispute. Quintessence had learned that the hard way, which served a dual purpose of demonstrating Brae'ach's strength. The doubt of many of the avatars was quickly abated then.

Brae'ach made one last etching upon the man's forehead and placed his palm atop the man's scalp. Bright red light began to snake through the carvings, flashing as it met the larger runes before continuing across the man's face.

The white-haired man began to tremble, starting at his head, then to his torso, then his whole body erupted in violent tremors as he floated above the ground. The light on his face bloomed outward and rivulets of blood spiraled out of it, dancing through the air in an intricate weave, creating true celestial writing in the space surrounding the monolith. Blue specks of dust sparked throughout the fluid as it floated in its twisting pattern. Finally, the man's body slowly wisped away like dust in a swirling wind, and his now empty armor clanged to the floor.

The blood completed its dance and hovered neatly around the stone, a complex tapestry of symbols and spheres woven around the monolith. Brae'ach spread his arms and drew a deep breath.

**“GyeTsinRoQiVeThum,”** said Brae'ach, The avatars looked away as though pained by the word. **“Bring this message to the ones above.”**

The Holy Word was as mesmerizing as it ever was, speaking a Truth so real it drove to the very core of existence. The writing in the air responded to Brae'ach's command, and spun rapidly about the monolith until filling the myriad symbols and weaves throughout the stone's surface. When the last drop had found its home amidst the rock, the monolith erupted in a brilliant white light that pierced Jakom's eyelids despite quickly shutting them. Jakom felt the ground recede from beneath his feet as though the world were falling away. For the briefest moment, he thought he heard someone talking, but it was so distant and muddled he could not comprehend it.

After several disorienting moments, the light receded and Jakom found his feet once again upon solid ground. He opened his eyes to see Brae'ach kneeling before the monolith, which was now floating in the air and spinning slowly in place. The tall man

drew quick and deep breaths, struggling to find his balance. Jakom rushed to Brae'ach and grasped his shoulders.

"Brae'ach," said Jakom, examining the man for any injury. "Are you alright?"

Brae'ach took Jakom's arm and steadied himself. His breathing calmed over the next few minutes, until he finally looked up and caught Jakom's eyes.

"I'm okay," said Brae'ach. "I'm okay."

Orexis' empty eyes were wide and Jakom could see him reappraising the herald of Unity. Jakom knew Orexis had long held reservations against Brae'ach, but it seemed they were melting away under the display he had just performed.

"You really can," said Limbo, standing straight. "Finally. Finally I can transcend this wretched existence."

"We can finally be one," said Orexis, turning his gaze to his sister, who was fully transfixed upon the floating monolith. "We can finally unite. We can mend this broken state!"

Anesis turned to face Orexis and placed her hands within his. Jakom saw something he recognized as a smile, which he had never seen either of the siblings do. The two hugged fiercely, which slowly turned into caressing, and then heavy breathing.

Jakom looked away. He had seen them embrace before, having no sense of propriety or care for the stares of others. He saw Limbo look upward in an expression Jakom took to be rolling his eyes.

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Brae'ach rested within the halls of the ancient temple for many days, with several of his most capable United standing guard. They were nearly as tall as he, featuring long dripping arms that ended in fierce talons. They could no longer speak human language and their faces held little resemblance to human features, but their steadfast stance and unshakable vigilance spoke more about their loyalty than any words could muster.

They allowed no one through save for Jakom, who would bring food and water to the sleeping giant. For the first few days, he never saw Brae'ach eat or drink, but the bowls would be empty upon his return nonetheless. After nearly a week, Brae'ach finally

stirred on Jakom's arrival, and smiled seeing his most trusted comrade. Jakom returned the expression, taking Brae'ach's hand in his own.

"You did it," said Jakom. "It actually worked. They answered your call."

Brae'ach slowly rose to a sitting position, placing his head in his free hand as he oriented himself to the room.

"Yes," said Brae'ach, with a grin. "You doubted me?"

"No, of course not," said Jakom. "But I doubted the intelligence provided by the avatars. They are capricious and self-centered at the best of times, always playing games against each other."

Brae'ach grunted as he shifted in his bed, swinging his legs over the massive slab of mossy stone and onto the floor.

"True," said Brae'ach, "but they are capable when properly motivated."

"I imagine any resistance they had to your leadership will be truly abated now," said Jakom.

"Yes, and no," said Brae'ach. "Those who desire the Unification will have their doubts quelled, but there are those who desire it not. They will be galvanized to oppose us directly, when word spreads that we can truly achieve it."

The large man stood slowly, before losing his balance and falling back to his seated position with a groan.

"Easy," said Jakom. "You have been asleep for many days. Allow yourself to fully wake."

Brae'ach leaned his back against the wall, taking a deep breath that swirled around the stone room.

"In many ways, I am more awake now than I ever have been," said Brae'ach. "More than any man has ever been. I saw the heavens, but for a brief moment. It is staggering to behold."

"Then be sure your feet are firmly placed," said Jakom. "There is ample time, and you must be ready for whatever the ritual requires next."

Brae'ach placed his hand gently on Jakom's shoulders.

“I do not think I can be truly ready,” he said, “but I must proceed regardless. The Physical monolith has been activated, and it required much of me physically. The next monolith is the Spiritual, and I worry what it shall require.”

“Your spirit is the strongest of any,” said Jakom. Brae’ach chuckled.

“Perhaps,” he said. “But this ritual was not meant for any. I can only hope I will be enough.”

“It may help if the next site is prepared less... catastrophically,” said Jakom.

“Catastrophe was well suited for Canotha, though I regret its excess,” said Brae’ach. “But yes, I believe I will ask Hysteria to prepare the Spiritual site. They are uniquely suited to compel the spirits of others.”