

## RE: DEITY - THE BREATH OF CREATION

### 2.3 Here There Be Dragons

A party was being thrown. Confetti filled the air, streamers draped across the halls of my palace, while gods and other spiritual beings milled about, chatting happily. Balls of multicolored light drifted about the center of the grand foyer, circling the large fountain that sprayed water merrily into the air, a rainbow forming in the mist. Little spirits danced about in the air around it, looking like little faeries in the light of the Realm Sun and Lunar Star, their soft light filtering down from the glass dome above.

I, myself, sat near the large glass windows at the end of the entrance hall, watching the celebration with a bemused smile and sipping a piping hot cup of tea. Randus stood to my left, ready with a hot pot of said tea, while Alexander lounged to my right, an annoyed expression on the dragon's face. He huffed and scowled and shifted all at once, his expression softening only when the god of fire offered him a slice of cake, then wandered off to find the goddess of water. Alexander stared at the plate set before him, shrinking his size so the slice would be more than just a crumb to his great maw.

"I do wish Kei hadn't made such a big deal out of this." He complained, swallowing the slice in a single gulp.

"It is a big deal," I told him. "You're introducing your race into the Four Realms! This is cause to celebrate."

"No one else got a party for this. I told Kei in confidence that I was about to introduce my races to you. I didn't expect or want her to go shout it from the top of the Life-Giving tree, telling everyone far and wide." He argued, shaking his head and watching the god of fire and goddess of water as they danced to a lively tune Argent, the god of metal, played on a saxophone. Many other gods joined in as we watched, as well as a few angels and holy beasts. I even saw Keilan tapping his foot and bobbing his head from where he leaned against a pillar, watching the party from a distance. "Nor did I expect my siblings to go along with her plan."

“That’s because they all understood what this means.” I said comfortingly, patting him on the side. Normally each of his scales were twice the size of my hand, but shrunk as he was, he was much easier to pat. He turned to me quizzically and I smiled. For one touted for being so wise and great, he sure could be dense when it came to himself. “You said it yourself, son. That you would not introduce your People into a Realms filled with chaos and discord. It may have only been five millennia since the end of the War, but for you to have chosen now is a signal to the others that their work is bearing fruit; that the danger has well and truly passed, even if more needs doing. Is that not reason to celebrate?” I asked.

Alexander gaped at me, jaw working a bit as he took in that, quite simple, explanation.

In the five thousand years since Morgan, formerly the Shadow’s, defeat, the Four Realms had been a blur of activity. With the introduction of the Lunar Star, the Realms had grown by ten percent alone; which, in turn, prompted a number of immortals, angels, holy beasts, and other such things to rise up in the wake of the chaos. A few new gods had even appeared! Though, once again, they were all elemental gods. It wasn’t a big issue, but I was beginning to understand just how deities of justice or other such metaphysical domains would end up being a thing in the Four Realms.

I could see the potential for them, in the fate of the Realms, and I felt my gaze absently drifting toward the young goddess of light.

“In that case,” Alexander grumbled, breaking me out of my musings. “I had better get this over with.” And with that he rose to his full, impressive height, towering over the present gods, his horns nearly touching the ceiling. Members of the Heavenly Host, bedecked in their gleaming armor and standing guard near the entrances, straightened their shoulders and snapped their feet together, the assembled high-powered beings all simultaneously turning to look up at him. Kei herself dangled upside down from the rafters, a grin on her face and tails swishing.

“Fellow gods, spirits, and denizens of the Four Realms,” he boomed, voice echoing out across the entrance hall. “We have gathered here today to celebrate something a long time coming. The Four

Realms have stabilized. The Lunar Star circles the sky alongside the Realm Sun. The War is long since over. And though we do not celebrate the war or our victory, we *can*

celebrate how far we've come! Look at what we have built! Look at what has been made! And let us rejoice in the company of our fellows, the light of the realms, and the love of our Father!" he boomed.

A cheer rang out from the hundreds of present beings, each raising their glass, filled with various drinks and alcohols I'd brewed and broken out for this occasion, in a toast to Alexander's words. I smiled fondly at Alexander's words; leave it to him to turn the attention both onto, and away from himself in the same moment.

Once the cheers died down, Alexander spoke again. "In celebration of this, the five thousand year anniversary of the creation of the Lunar Star, I, myself, have an announcement to make. I have finished the creation of my People, and intend to ask Father's blessing for their introduction into the Realms." This brought up another round of cheers, which Alexander once more allowed to subside. Keilan watched with an amused smile, sharing a glance with Reika, who had moved to join him, as their brother leaned into his more dramatic side. "In the same vein as my siblings, I, too, have created both a mortal and immortal race. First, the mortals."

With a gentle shake of his head, Alexander's power washed out to create two new beings. They were, surprisingly, humanoid, but were far and above the most different from my Fae than any of my children's creations. They had two muscular arms and legs, and large, sweeping horns, but that was where the physical similarities ended. Their entire bodies were covered in scales, two large leathery wings stretching from their backs. Thick, draconic tails curled around their clawed feet, while their faces, draconic in appearance, stared out at us blankly. Elements of all kinds swirled in their throats and lungs, the light of Heaven filling their heads, while the dark of Karma filled their hearts. Long whiskers flowed from the muzzle of one of them, while a more feathery beard like thing drooped from the chin of the other.

"Draconians, I call them." Alexander said simply. I stood and made a bit of a show of walking around the two of them, looking them up and down and examining the two bodies.

“They are amazing, Alexander,” I said honestly. The way the spiritual energy flowed through their veins was a work of art, clearly designed to make them more attuned to spirits and the spiritual than any of the other races. “You have my blessing.” Another cheer went up from the assembled group of beings, making me smile.

“And lastly,” he said, pausing dramatically as the two Draconians vanished in a flash of silver light. I looked up at him, a smile dancing on my lips and anticipation swelling in my heart.

“*Dragons!*” he *roared*.

The sound shook the very walls of my palaces, the sound echoed by two great dragons that rose up out of the spirit realm beside Alexander in a flash of silver and gold. Their scales glittered, their auras radiating might and majesty, streams of orange fire spilling from their maws and leaving trails of light in their wake. Happy cheers rang out from the assembled crowd and I clapped my hands together, laughing as the two dragons, long sinuous beasts a mirror image to Alexander’s own form, albeit not nearly as powerful, swirled about Alexander’s head. He smirked a little and breathed out a small puff of his own, golden flames, creating rings that the other two dragons swam through.

“Who doesn’t love dragons?” I asked rhetorically, laughing as the silver and gold dragons floated down to sit before me, holding their heads up proudly. “Of course they are welcome in the Four Realms! Go now, explore your home! And welcome to the universe!” And once again, more cheering. I couldn’t fault the gods for their excitement – not least because I, too, was excited Alexander finally made his People – because this was certainly an event worth celebrating.

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The dragons, of course, did not immediately go flying off to go explore the four realms. Even for dragons the false void my palace resided in, just outside the Realms, was a dangerous and difficult thing to traverse – as such, they were stuck in my palace for a time until the celebration wound down, or Alexander decided it was time to leave. That left the gold and silver dragons at the mercy of curious beings; the god of fire and goddess of water were first to them, inspecting the dragons and chattering away happily. I chuckled as Alexander was swarmed by other gods and spiritual beings, inspecting the new creations and chattering away happily, myself moving off to begin mingling a bit.

It was hard.

The older gods were, of course, as friendly and happy as ever. Argent bragged about his saxophone skills to me, having taken up the instrument after Kei introduced it to him. Aeriel giggled as she floated about above me, as silent as ever as she drifted through the crowds. The angels and holy beasts who existed Pre-War greeted me genially as well, though they were far more respectful and deferential than any of the gods were. And generally I had a pleasant time talking with them. It was the younger generation I had trouble connecting with.

Not because I didn't understand them, far from it. They just seemed...intimidated by me.

Which was how I found myself stepping up to stand beside Gilles, the shadow god leaning against a pillar, his gaze flitting between two different groups of people. One was Elvira, who was talking with a few of her new angels, Reika standing beside her with her own, first angel hovering just over her shoulder. The other group was a group of five young deities; all of whom had been born after the War. There was a god of the tides, the goddess of the skies, the god of lava, and even the god of wood. But the one whom I knew Gilles had his eyes on was the fifth goddess.

The goddess of light, born from the light of the Sun and Star not but a few hundred years ago.

“How is she doing?” I asked, startling Gilles. The pale-skinned deity let out a sigh, absently touching the burn scar that marred the back of his right hand. He could heal it, I knew. I had even offered to heal it for him. But he kept it, I think as a reminder of his brother. I didn’t ask. This was one of those things I would not pry on, for I could see how closely to his heart he kept the reason, wrapping it beneath layers of karmic strings to keep it hidden from prying eyes. It would take no effort at all for me to see through it. I respectfully did not.

“The goddess of light,” Gilles rasped, shaking his head. “She is well. Far different than Sol ever was. Softer.” His voice was steady when he said his brother’s name, but I knew it still hurt him. I laid a hand on his shoulder.

“Thank you for keeping an eye on her. It is very kind of you.” I told him. He waved me off, gaze flicking toward Elvira for a brief moment. I saw the hesitation in him welling up like a grey cloud, though the hesitation was not directed toward her. It was directed toward me, even if I knew Elvira was involved. “Do you have something else you want to say, or ask?” I inquired with no small amount of amusement in my tone. Gilles jumped a little at that, clearly out of it, flushed, then shook his head.

“No, Sir.” He said, a little too quickly. I chuckled and shook my head, stepping forward with the intention to approach the goddess of light.

“Go, then. Enjoy the festivities as much as you can. I know these kinds of things aren’t your typical style.” I said with a knowing wink, turning away. I didn’t need to see his face to know his expression, striding across the hall.

It took no time at all to reach the goddess.

For her, I am certain it seemed like an eternity.

She turned to me the moment I started walking forward, clearly feeling my attention, and all blood fled from her face. In truth, she was not what I expected a goddess of light to look like, as bad as that may sound coming from someone like me. Stereotypically one expects a goddess of light to have golden hair, shining eyes, the works.

Inesa, Goddess of Light, did not have any of that. Her hair was a rich brown color, falling about her head in gentle waves, two curling horns twisting about the top of her head. They were not gaudy or grand but simple, yet no less pretty for it. Her eyes were likewise a soft brown, kind and filled with warmth – though right now they were filled with surprise and no small amount of fear. I resisted the urge to frown, forcing the warm smile I had plastered on my face to stay there.

The young ones feared me. Why must they fear me?

Mentally shaking my head, but physically allowing no such sign of disapproval to show, I stopped just before the small group, greeting each of them by name in turn.

“...and Inesa.” I said, nodding to the young goddess. There was something interesting about her. A flavor to her deific domain that was not just Light. It spoke of...warmth. Kindness. A certain...scent, that was yet unfinished but I was excited to see the end of. She trembled a little as my attention was placed upon her once more, her head bowed. The god of tides shot her a quick look out of the corner of his eye.

“My Lord,” he began, bowing his head. “Is there some matter we can aid you with?” I nodded to the blue-haired god, his robes colored a light teal and decorated with waves that truly moved across the fabric. Just as when he had first been born, he smelled of the salty spray of the ocean.

“No, no, of course not. You all are yet young, I am merely coming to see how my youngest godly children have been settling in, and if you are enjoying the festivities.” I said gently. A chorus of answers echoed out from them, which I endured with a patient smile – they were largely rote answers, stammered out in an effort to please me. Only Inesa, hesitant as she was, remained quiet. “That is good. Tell me, then, and answer honestly. How have the Four Realms been treating you? What have you seen, be it glorious or concerning? How does your deific domain fit within it?”

“You wish for our opinions on Your great designs, Lady Matriarch?” the god of lava asked. I nodded.

“Often times, it is from the mouth of babes from which we hear the truest answers.” I said. My words settled upon them like a blanket upon their shoulders, the weight of my intent driving the truth of their thoughts out of the hearts and into their mouths, where it stayed there. It was an unconscious effect on my part, and was something that had become far more prominent since I consumed the missing parts of my soul. My words held more weight. Reality had always bent to my whims; it was far more noticeable now. And people whom I spoke to often felt encouraged to follow my words, to feel the truth within my voice, and follow suit. It was not compulsion, though it was dangerously close at times.

The five deities glanced at each other and slowly began to answer, starting with the god of tides.

“The flow of energy within the realms is like the tides, I see no issues,” he said with a smile. “I still have much to learn.” That broke the metaphorical dam, and praises came flying at me like the incoming tide. A few minor things were brought up by the four deities who spoke, Inesa remaining quiet throughout it all, but nothing that was truly ground breaking.

Only once their pieces were said did I thank them, wish them well and promise them that if they ever needed advice they were more than welcome to come to me, and back off. Despite wishing I could speak with Inesa, to drag out of her the words that stayed upon the tip of her tongue as her eyes roved the interior of my palace, I could also see that my pressure would do more harm than good at this juncture. She was too fragile. Too intimidated. But the point of the matter remained, as I walked away to return to my eldest children.

Alexander watched me from where he sat beside his draconic creations, eyes gleaming with a light that showed he knew what I was about to say.

As always, my wisest child. And as such, he struggled the most with the Shadow’s fate. It still sat within him, trying to absorb itself into his being, while he remained a wall of surety and caution. It would not change him. But it must.

“Watch her, Alexander.” I told him, turning back to gaze at Inesa from afar. She still looked about the palace interior, gaze distant and heart wavering, something like concern welling up within her. “What do you see?”

“Her domain is not just light. I am not sure what else it is, but something else colors it.” He said firmly, eyes flashing in understanding. I nodded and smiled at him proudly. That was the answer to the question I’d been having for so long, and was the result of what splitting Morgan’s fate had been. No gods would ever be born of an abstract concept like Justice. But, in time, they may come to represent it on their own, through their own choices. Of all the gods of the Four Realms, Inesa, a young god of only a few centuries, had already set foot upon that path. Before almost any others save for myself and the titular Big Four. Her sub-domain was yet to be fully determined, but I could see the path plain as day.

It was truly beautiful.

With a wave of my hand a chair appeared beneath me, and I sat down, letting the sounds of the party wash over me. It felt warm, if a bit noisy for my usual tastes. Parties weren’t my thing. But still...

It was good. Celebrations. Perhaps we should have more of these.