

RE: DEITY - THE BREATH OF CREATION

3:1 Begin Preparations

“Primarily I will be pushing power into the outer regions of the primordial chaos. We need a buffer for the impact, and that will be the first thing to be struck – once that is stripped away, the important parts of the Four Realms will be laid bare. We cannot let that get damaged.” I said firmly, gesturing to a layout of the Four Realms. It hovered in the air of my workshop, a six-dimensional rendering of the entirety of the Realms, complete with a few projected projects. The Big Four sat before me alongside a couple of other powerful deities; these were who I considered my inner cabinet, and those I could trust the most. Randus, Kei, and a few others were among them.

For now, we would not be spreading the news of the impending catastrophe to the other gods. Panic would make things worse, and there being a million or so years until the actual impact meant I could ease this information into the populace at large. We were still in the planning stage, too, and right now it was a need-to-know basis.

Though if and when people started to ask questions, I would be honest with them.

“So you want to build a hexagonal shield around the Four Realms, comprised of energy, that will act as the first barrier. That will be a layered shield, after which will come the primordial chaos, which is the secondary defense.” Keilan surmised, nodding his head.

“Yes. Additionally, as much as I want to limit the growth of the Four Realms for now, we will likely be unable to avoid it entirely. As such, I’ll propose a tertiary defensive layer; false Regions.” At this, I snapped my fingers. The internals of the Four Realms exploded outward, a series of regions – minor Trees, Mountains, Valleys, and Rivers – forming a secondary hexagonal shield around the important bits, including the Realm Sun and Lunar Star. They would be sacrificial pieces, and therefore I would keep all life and souls out of the regions themselves. I had gotten this idea from the Progenitor, ironically enough, with how his Garden was mostly sacrificial to keep his eternal

Garden safe from the Void for a time, and protect what he thought was the most important or interesting.

Not that the ball of light origin god likely thought of it that way, but that was how I interpreted it. But speaking of other gods...

“Finally, we need to start building up the power of belief. We’ve been neglecting it for now, but every ounce of power we can get our hands on means another inch stronger our barriers and defenses will be. There will be some negative effects to this from the mortals, but we will deal with those as they pop up.” The power of belief had been a key component of the Cosmic Planes realm, empowering the gods within to an absurd degree. It was no substitute for true power, but it definitely added *something*, and that faith could add just another layer of protection.

“How long will these projects take?” Elvira asked, eyes narrowed. “We’ll be rededicating a lot of resources to them, I assume.” Her expression was firm, likely already calculating how to go about this.

“As long as we have. We’ll be bolstering them as much as possible until the very end.” I said.

“We should also have reserve power and energy stored somewhere in the Realms themselves, to help fix the damages when all is said and done.” Alexander rumbled. “Somewhere like beneath the Holy Mountains, Life-Giving Trees, or the sort. If the damages are severe, it could be a life-saver to prevent total collapse.”

“But we have to be careful that it doesn’t end up causing an explosion. Might there be a way to neutralize the energy, make it benign so it doesn’t react after impact?” Reika mused, toying with her dress. “And should I push everything to head towards winter, Mother? That should stall some of the growth.”

“Not yet. We still need power to be redirected toward the barriers, and I want to grow the sacrificial regions as quick as possible.” I told her. Reika nodded thoughtfully. The good part about those, at least, was that if this wasn’t as bad a catastrophe as everyone feared it would be, the sacrificial regions could be easily repurposed as true regions.

“And what about the growth of people and gods?” Elvira pressed.

“There are quite a few souls that will be upset at being held back.” Keilan agreed, nodding.

“A balance must be struck. Too many new powerful souls would throw the entire project out of balance and force us to expand the Realms, too few and the defenses will not have the strength to hold upon impact. Right now it’s a non-issue though; primarily, I want to raise up the Eight Pillars.” I muttered. I’d been waiting on those beings ever since the War of the Sun, and I could no longer afford to let them appear naturally.

“I vaguely remember you mentioning that before. Something about Kei being one? What exactly is it?” Reika asked.

“The internal, spiritual structure of the Four Realms is based off of a concept I had a unique connection to in my old lives, and especially now. It’s the idea of sources, basically. There is one great source of all creation; in this case, me, called the wuji. You call me the Luotian, or highest Heaven, or the Heavenly Dao. This source can be broken into two different things – yin and yang – which are in fact the same thing, just different aspects. Again, represented by me, but this time adding Morgan into the picture. Less so now, without its Fate binding it though. Below that is the Four Images, an even further simplification of the wuji. These are Yang, Old Yang, Yin, and Old Yin, represented by you four. This is why we call you the Big Four, as you are representative of inherent structures of the Realms.

“Following that is the Eight Trigrams, or the Pillars as I call them. I am mixing up some spiritual words with literal people here, so bear with me. They are representative of different aspects of life and creation, even further breaking down the big four. Xing Wu has already decided to become one,

he just doesn't know it yet. Kei is another, alongside Randus and Inesa. Alone, they are not as powerful as when paired up with their opposite, even if that pairing is antagonistic. Xing Wu and Inesa are a prime example of two of the Pillars strengthening each other through a positive bond. They will be imperative in keeping the Four Realms structurally sound, and will play a role in maintaining the barrier through the impact.

"Below that is the Sixty-Four Hexagrams, or a series of paired elemental gods, one hundred and twenty-eight in total, that create a synergistic bond in the Four Realms. This one is already fulfilled, with another layer of it well on its way to completion, so the only thing we're waiting on is the eight Pillars." I explained.

"Who are the eight pillars, then?" Alexander rumbled. "I assume Fang Xu and Celene are among them – the pairing of the Lunar Star and Realm Sun are too obvious."

"Indeed. Fang Xu and Celene will be among them, though I can only pray they hatch in time for the impact. If not, we may need to find temporary replacements. Otherwise there is, of course, Xing Wu and Inesa, Kei, and Randus. So we are missing two." I said. "They are currently present, but...well there are a few candidates that have yet to realize their full potential. A few souls still in the running that may overtake another..." Surprisingly, the Mad Scientist was not in the running for any of the positions. The serial reincarnator was performing a few weird rituals and things, and I intended to question her thoroughly when I got the chance, but she didn't seem to want to take center-stage.

Limited though her mortal perspective might be, sometimes enlightenment came from the mouths of babes.

"Do we have any further questions?" I asked.

"Mortals." Reika said. "I recommend we take some inspiration from them. Arranging the newly-made regions into a formation of sorts to help guide and channel the energy of the Realms better might be prudent." *Way ahead of you, kiddo.* I thought, nodding to her with a smile. Several of my

incarnations were already hard at work designing formations; I wanted to know exactly how many regions I'd need and where to place them for an optimal defensive position.

The tale has been illicitly lifted; should you spot it on Amazon, report the violation.

"I will consult some of the elemental gods. As you said, the internal structure of the Four Realms is based off of symbology. The Five Elements could add more depth to our preparations." Elvira said, the conversation devolving a bit as my children began to discuss and dissect ideas. Alexander was one of the quieter ones, simply letting the noise wash over him as he absorbed the information, occasionally looking at me.

I simply nodded and connected with the many incarnations running through the Realms. Namely, I connected with the one that appeared in front of Morgan. No one could be spared a workload when it came to survival. Not even my reclusive, temper-tantrum prone shadow child.

"Well there is one good thing about all this," Kei piped up during a lull in the conversation. Everyone turned to face her as she grinned at me mischievously, tails thrashing as she sauntered forward from the corner of the room she'd been hiding in. "The One World is home to grandpa's *girlfriend*."

The silence that reigned following that statement was so all-encompassing I could hear clear across to the other side of the Four Realms. I groaned and buried my head in my hands.

Of course she would say that right now.

"What?" Keilan deadpanned, brows furrowed.

“I knew something was weird about how you two acted! It was Yueya, wasn’t it?!” Reika demanded, slapping her hands on the table and standing, stars practically in her eyes as she turned to me.

“Yueya?” Elvira parroted. “The pretty one?”

“How do you know, Kei?” Alexander asked. Kei opened her mouth, then her expression soured, and she made a disgusted face as she turned away. This seemed to be all the explanation Alexander needed, as his head snapped back to me, eyes wide.

“Tell. Me. Everything!” Reika demanded, leaning over the table. I groaned again, resigning myself to a sudden interrogation, though I obviously wouldn’t share everything. Even if I did appreciate Kei bringing some levity to the conversation, getting chewed out by Morgan would be far preferable to this.

“Morgan, my child, I have come to talk,” I said conversationally, this incarnation purposefully tuning out the rather embarrassing grilling my true body was going through. Morgan lounged in the darkness of its Hidden Realm, eight spidery limbs weaving space together in a tapestry while it stared out over the main cavern. Its people, the Aracheons, had made a little hive-city here, and were farming mushrooms and other such things that grew in the miasma, though my attention was solely on Morgan.

It didn’t feel antagonistic. Every the outward bristling I had come to expect from my Shadow wasn’t present, replaced by an eerie calm.

“What do you need?” It asked. I almost missed a step I moved beside the spider-wolf, Morgan’s tone almost...casual, rather than the snapping and snarling I was used to. The change was sudden, and sharp, and far too drastic. I knew where this was coming from, and I bit my cheek. Maybe this conversation wouldn’t be a preferable to the other.

“I presume you were listening to the conversation I was having with the others?” I asked rhetorically, knowing that Morgan was. Even if it looked like it was only here, small incarnations, no bigger than a spider, ran about the Four Realms just...listening, and observing.

“Yes. I do not approve of your relationship with the vain bitch.” Morgan said.

“I do not need your approval, and we will see if it even lasts through this.” I said with a heavy sigh. “I need you to restructure the Hidden Realm a bit. Right now it’s a little all over the place; properly rebuilding some of the walls and passages could strengthen the structure of the Realms tenfold. Also, there is a lot of excess energy in the Four Realms, and I need to flood some parts of your Hidden Realm with it, at least until the barrier is ready to be made.”

Morgan twitched. “That will taint the energy. Do you not need it to be pure?”

“In this case, not entirely. Pure energy will be more useful here, but some negative energy will still be useful. We’ll be burning it up pretty quickly anyways when the projects begin.” I reasoned. This was a big ask of Morgan, and also something that would likely worry Alexander and the others. Leaving Morgan with this much energy at its disposal? That was asking for trouble – assuming it would utilize it for its own gains. Which I highly doubted it would.

I didn’t even see it as a possibility in Morgan’s future, at least in a detrimental way.

Morgan hummed thoughtfully. “The negative energy created by this may not be as useful to the Four Realms, but that does mean it would be better to be used wastefully. Such as venting it as a sort of...jet, to move the Four Realms in the desired direction.” I frowned at Morgan. I had hoped that it would be willing to play along – no, I had almost been ready to have another fight with Morgan, but that had clearly been a case of me willfully ignoring what I already knew. Already spider-like threads were shooting off from Morgan’s body to go guide the rest of the Realm, to force it to obey its whims. A sound like grinding stone echoed through the air as Morgan held my stare, eight red eyes unblinking as the Hidden Realm began to shift and change.

Morgan’s gaze was firm and steady, not an ounce of accusation or hatred within it. Only raw determination. I looked away, knowing what it was saying.

“That is a good idea. You are being very helpful, thank you,” I said softly.

“I know who you are. Moreso than the others. They underestimate you, and your resolve.” Morgan shook its head, spidery limbs freezing as it looked back out over its domain. “You are the kind to sacrifice yourself first, before anyone and anything else. You are the kind to take risks to protect what is yours. Like putting a baby in a river. Conquering tribes. Playing therapist. Keeping the bridge. Sacrificing an arm, and an eye.” The last statement was punctuated by Morgan standing, turning to fix me with a glare. “You will sacrifice yourself first, before you let the Four Realms crumble. In the coming years, you will force the others to grow faster than ever before, to ensure they are ready to take over if the worst comes to pass. Allow me to be very clear. I will not. Let. That. Happen.” It snarled, shaking itself. I closed my eyes and took a deep breath.

Right. That was the kind of being Morgan was. But it was right. And I knew it was right. That didn’t change what I would do if it came down to it; if the cost of my children’s survival was my own life, so be it. They may come to hate me for pushing them the way I was going to, but we had to be prepared for all eventualities. Even if that eventuality was the death of their parent.

“I will cooperate for the sake of your survival.” Morgan said, standing. “Plan on surviving.”

“I don’t plan on going anywhere, Morgan.” I promised, shaking my head. “But I would rather you all have the tools you need to survive without me, and not need them, than need them and not have them. If you would like, I will aid you in the process of reshaping your Realm.”

“No. Go. I can do this.” Morgan huffed, turning away from me. “Focus on matters only you can handle.” I smiled at my wayward child, reaching down and scratching it on the top of the head. Morgan flinched and pulled away, snarling as I chuckled at the little reaction. Put on a show it might, but I saw the little flash of joy it got out of my touch.

“Thank you again, Morgan.” I said, and let the incarnation fade away, leaving Morgan to handle the Hidden Realm on its own.

Elvira frowned as Father’s true body turned away to go begin managing the energy of the Four Realms. To start the workload wouldn’t be too bad, as plans were drawn up and support systems put in place, but that didn’t mean she had time to just sit on her laurels. Especially now that this was happening – which, if she was being honest, was a little outside of her realm of understanding.

Collision with another universe? She only recently had physical confirmation that other universes truly existed, even if Father had told them as such before. But in truth, something else bothered her more.

“Did you all notice?” she asked her siblings.

“I did,” Gilles said, shaking his head sadly.

“Mother did not change once, the entire time we spoke.” Keilan said with a frown. Elvira nodded. Usually Father shifted forms multiple times in a conversation – she may call Him Father, and speak of Him using male terms, but that did not truly mean she didn’t think of Him as their mother, too. And sure, at times He preferred one form over the other – for example, He’d been in his male form a lot lately, but seemed to like His female more in earlier years; a cycle that had repeated itself a bit – but this time? He was stuck in his truly androgynous form, neither male nor female, a steady and perfectly still body.

“What do you think that means?” Reika asked, her earlier elation at learning of Father’s...escapades, fading like dust on the wind, the levity the conversation had brought vanishing just as quickly. “I have never known Her to do that.”

“It’s a sign of how serious He is.” Alexander rumbled. “He is channeling an aspect of Himself, just as He did when He battled the primeval dragon.”

“Survival is what He’ll be thinking of. We need to ensure that He doesn’t burn Himself out like this.” Elvira mused. “You know how hyper-focused He can get.” At this the others agreed, nodding their heads and muttering as they stood. Elvira sighed a little as they all began to filter back to their respective duties, to begin preparations.

A million years was a long time. At least, it felt like it.

At least they had time to prepare.