

RE: DEITY - THE BREATH OF CREATION

3:5 Where You Put Your Roots

It was almost time to start locking things down. I was already pressuring the Realms a little bit as a warning, but now that we were about to enter the construction phases I was going to have to suppress most souls from moving too much up or down the cosmic scale. A little bit of movement was given, and I knew how frustrating it would be for most of these folks to feel like they were running in place, but they'd just have to deal with it.

It was going to cause issues. I knew this. "Heaven's oppression" was already a term being thrown around with the darker souls in the Realms, and it would only increase from here on out. But on the flip side, some of the issues that would pop up were going to happen either way. We'd had a period of relative peace following the Sun War, as the Realms settled down and finished growing in the ways I had accelerated them to do to force Morgan out of hiding, despite dark spirits, devil cultivators, dark angels, and other evil souls running amok.

These dark beings just weren't causing overt issues; trying to consume entire planets or something was...rare. They did bad things of course, but that was natural. It wasn't unbalanced in the way they acted. For now.

I could still see a day where people tried to rebel against the heavens, despite my best efforts to avoid it, though such a thing hadn't been in the cards for a long while yet. People needed to become more powerful to feel like they could really challenge the gods – the Dao Progenitors were still humbled by angels and the like, after all, and Karmic Immortals were still among the most powerful beings.

Now? This process was going to be accelerated. Which seemed to be the theme of my time as an origin deity.

“Randus,” I said, rubbing my forehead. With a slight pop my ever-loyal child and butler appeared beside me, holding a steaming cup of tea. I accepted it gratefully, taking a sip as I glared at the construction plans I had laid out on the table. “Is she here yet?” I of course already knew that the Mad Scientist had just arrived in my palace, at my request, but Randus enjoyed the little duties I gave him. And even in times such as these it was important to enjoy the little things.

“I can bring her to you momentarily.” He said with a bow. I nodded to him as he vanished, scratching my chin as I made a few last-minute alterations to the plans. The Mad Scientist was a valuable source of outside information and ideas; even if she wasn’t a god, she, at the very least, could come up with other ideas we had not, or point out potential flaws in said plans.

That, and I’d been meaning to ask her about all those little rituals she’d been doing, summoning hellfire and things like that.

“The Mad Scientist, ma’am,” Randus said as he reappeared, bowing and gesturing broadly as said woman appeared beside him in a wave of darkness, the avian ruffling her feathers and smoothing down her skirt, shooting him a quick glare before refocusing on me, adjusting her glasses. Foreign magical energies swirled about her in a maelstrom, reaching up, out of the Four Realms to connect to bigger and greater things.

“You’ve been busy. It’s been a while.” she said, suspicion swirling about her chest as she glared at me. I raised an eyebrow at her, unamused and fully knowing what her suspicions were all about. “What’s with all the sudden pressure?”

“It has been a while. It is good to see you face to face again, and I apologize for my relative absence, I have been busy. On that note, let’s get this out of the way. You’ve been listening to others too much.” I accused, shaking my head and patting the table. What was it she’d been hearing from those dissidents? Calling them dissidents was a bit strong of a term – children who know nothing. Except Xing Wu, he was just being grumpy. “As if *I* would feel threatened by Immortals. They are a few billion years too early to be a threat to me, and by the time they are, I will be so far beyond this level of power that it will not matter.”

“...you read my mind.” The Mad Scientist said, wings flaring in discomfort. I rolled my eyes.

“Dear, I saw through the nature of your existence within twenty seconds of meeting you. I can’t *not* hear your thoughts, or anyone else’s in the Realms. They are all as plain to me as the Sun in the sky, and that is severely downplaying the fact. All my children, every soul in the Four Realms, scream their thoughts into my ears and mind every minute of the day. You can’t tell me you didn’t hear Xing Wu grumbling about me not meeting him because, and I quote, ‘he’s not worthy to punch me in the face,’ and you misconstrued it as some sort of typical godly arrogance.”

“You heard that.” The Mad Scientist grumbled, crossing her arms. I raised my eyebrows at her, and she had the decency to look ashamed. Maybe I was being a little bit aggressive here, but I did not care, and I wanted to cut through the bullshit. There were clear benefits to remembering so many lives like she did, even if she did still maintain a mortal perspective, but inherent drawbacks as well. For one? She had the tendency to think she’d seen the truth behind matters at a glance.

...which, if I thought about it, could be worryingly connected to my own abilities, but that was beside the point. That was why I wanted my children to become as powerful as I, or at least partially on the same stage. So someone could keep me in check from doing something stupid.

“Which, for the record, he isn’t worthy to see me yet. He promised me that next time we met he’d punch me in the face, and neither he nor I will accept anything less than him meeting me at full power, while I am at full power. Right now, he could draw no closer than twenty feet from me with the intent to do me harm. No, my dear. I called you here because I am under a great deal of stress and would appreciate an outsider’s opinion.” I explained, tapping the table once again. The Mad Scientist’s frown deepened, then she sighed, shaking her head.

“Of course you do. Is this regarding foreign universes again?”

“Well, yes and no.” And I explained the situation to her. I walked her through the diagrams and the catastrophe. I explained the depths of our dilemma. I described the structure of the One World. I explained the intricacies of what bound us together, and even showed her the depths of my left

arm, and how the Void flowed through my veins now. Through it all she was silent, just listening and learning as I talked. When I had finished she hummed, stroking her chin and adjusting her glasses as she observed the 3d diagram I had rendered of the Four Realms and the One World.

We were the size of a marble. They, the size of a watermelon. And even that scale was a little off.

“Of all the reasons I thought of for you to be putting such pressure on the Realms, this was not even on the list.” She admitted, reaching forward and grabbing the little marble that was the Four Realms. The magic that made it responded to her touch, expanding to match her in size at her command. Heaven was layered over the Physical with the Karmic beneath, kind of like a sandwich, with the river weaving through it all. Little threads marked the Hidden Realm, a fourth or even sixth dimension to add to the already multi-dimensional Realms. “You said you were flooding the Hidden Realm with excess energy?”

“Yes.”

“In one of my past lives, there were things called mana stones. I experimented with them endlessly, and eventually came to the discovery that they were essentially pure energy, condensed, crystallized, and made inert. The crystallization process itself is what made the energy inert, and could only be drawn out by magicians and the like. I will design a series of rituals to aid you, but my suggestion is to fill the Hidden Realm with this crystallized energy – when and if we survive the impact, you can then begin to draw out said energy to start the healing process.” She explained. “It will likely also help the Realm maintain its structure, adding another layer of support.”

Crystallized energy? I raised one hand and focused, drawing out a bit of my power and, instead of creating a powerful crystal or some such, just condensed the energy itself. It took a bit of finagling, but after a second I figured it out and with a flash of light a drop of my energy turned into a little tear-drop shaped gem the color of gold. It was perfectly inert, yet I could still feel my divine essence flowing through it. The Mad Scientist shook her head, amazement coloring her heart.

“Your power of creation is as impressive as always.” She muttered. I tossed the gem to her, grinning.

“Fascinating. We obviously can’t turn all the energy of the realms into these crystals, but at the very least it will tone down the chances of an explosion, turning a universe-ending detonation into a much more manageable one. Thank you.” I bowed my head to her and she flushed a little, tails thrashing.

“That is just off the top of my head. If there is anything else I think of, I will contact you. That said...Statera. I apologize for my suspicion.”

“You were right to be, think nothing of it.” I waved dismissively. Honestly, I should be the one apologizing for my harshness, but I would not be baselessly accused of such things by her. My own children would be making plenty such accusations in the coming years.

If you stumble upon this narrative on Amazon, it's taken without the author's consent. Report it.

“No. I – two lifetimes before I came here, I spent nearly thirty thousand years being tortured by an evil god. There were nothing but evil gods there, with mortals constantly fighting to keep their influence at bay – it was only due to my nature as a soul that I escaped at all. My connection to that universe crumbled, I perished when I should have spent eternity in that hell, and then the next few lives I lived were...empty. Some judgement towards gods from that life transferred over here, and it is unfair. You and the other deities have been nothing but kind to me.” I said nothing to the admission, letting her speak. Emotions that had swirled about her were slowly being shed, some more of the apathy she had once displayed vanishing. It was true that when she first arrived everything about her had been closed off...and now she was showing far more emotion.

Not on her face, though. That was stoic, even to me. Luckily I had no need to read expressions. Which was why I said nothing as I waited for her to continue, working up her courage to speak. She took a deep breath, adjusting her glasses and fixing me with a serious look.

“If you would listen to me, I would warn you of a few things.” I had no idea how much warning she could give, but I listened all the same. The crystallization thing had been a good point, after all. “Your universe is young. So young, in fact, that I have determined there has yet to be an Original Sin. The Physical Realm is practically a Garden of Eden, a utopia.” Well, that didn’t sound right. There was plenty conflict and chaos in the world. Plus, what about Morgan? Wait...more importantly, she said Garden of Eden and Original Sin. Those were terms from my last universe. Was she from Earth?

“I hardly think –“

“Of course, a garden is still a garden. The spider still eats the fly, and snakes hide in the bushes. Dark spirits, devil cultivators, greed and envy, all those things exist, but it is not...obtuse. There has been no great...what is the word...it escapes me, but lesson or rebellion or change from the mortals. I cannot describe what it will be like in this world, but I can tell you of other universes. Of the men who rebelled against the creator, and were granted their wish for immortality in the cruelest way possible. Of a fantasy where mortals killed their gods. There is the Shadow, which is, as far as I understand it, your creation, a reaction to you. Then there is what I speak of, a creation of the peoples within it, and the destruction of heaven on earth. I imagine not every universe faces this. But your universe, the cultivators you have created...it could be one hell of a Sin you face.” She shook her head, while I nodded slowly. Funny how I was thinking about something similar to this just before she came here.

...but I think she was blowing it a little out of proportion. My initial reaction was that this Original Sin, as she called it, was an echo of the Shadow, just as Mr. Boxes had said we'd experience. My other children devouring Morgan's fate had lessened and changed what those echoes would be, but, most importantly, it felt more like something my children had to face, not something for me to intervene with.

“I understand, but they will just have to deal with it.” I said firmly, folding my hands into the sleeves of my robes. “Besides, it might be arrogant, but at this stage there is very little any of them could do to me or the others. Maybe they could mess with the construction plans to a minor degree, but honestly, I worry more for the long-term than immediate consequences.”

“I will do what I can to keep things smoothed over.” The Mad Scientist said. “I am but one woman, but I *have* lived for quite a long time, and seen quite a bit. The hand of a mortal might be just as effective as the hand of the gods in this case, if not more.”

“I appreciate it.” I said, though she was right. She was only one woman. But one kind soul is all it took to change another’s entire world, too.

“Which leads me to my next warning. There is someone else coming to the Realms.” She said, expression serious. I turned a little, poking at the diagram of the Four Realms, the part of my mind delegated to managing projections altering it to include the crystallized energy, just to see how it would work. “Statera, listen to me. This one is dangerous. It is why I have been using so many foreign techniques; I had to be sure they were coming here, before raising the alarm.”

“How so?” I asked, keeping that thread on the crystallization plans while simultaneously turning back to her.

“They are a Monkey Wrench, like me, but...” she sighed. “We call them the First. I have met a few other of my kind in my time – I am not the oldest, but I am fairly experienced compared to others. Experienced enough to have access to certain abilities that let me feel and contact other Wrenches. Thanks to you I know why I do not see more, but that is beside the point; we don’t actually know if the First is the original Monkey Wrench, but they are the absolute oldest of anyone I, or any other of my kind, have ever met. They have lived countless lives. Been a god. Lived longer than some universes. And they are coming here.”

Now she had my full attention, yellow fear that spinning its way through her veins, setting her wings to twitching and tails to thrashing. She was usually more composed than this, her lips pulled into a frown.

“You have not seen the full capabilities of a Monkey Wrench. We are not just skilled or knowledgeable – we are the type of existence that can take a tribe of savages with sticks and stones to an intergalactic, space-faring people in a single generation. We are the type that can slay a god or raise them, end the world or save it. I have been taking it easy here, Statera, and I cannot guarantee the First will. Especially not when they see you oppressing the mortals. Unless they have changed, they are the type to think they know best no matter what anyone else says.” She said slowly.

I nodded slowly, rubbing my chin in thought. Sounded like a pain in the ass to deal with, if I was honest, but until they got here there were other concerns that need to be prioritized. She was right, though; I truly hadn’t seen the full extent of a Monkey Wrench’s capabilities. The Mad Scientist has spent almost all her time gardening the new Trees.

“The other problem is that the First is always accompanied by the Rival. Their direct counter, and an inseparable duo. If one is the hero, the other is a villain – their clashes are legendary, and destructive.” The Mad Scientist shook her head.

“Thank you for the warning. Do you know when they’ll arrive?” I couldn’t afford to take risks right now, so if worst came to worst I’d have to personally deal with those two. Mr. Boxes...well, actually, I’d ask Mr. Boxes about it later. This seemed like something that would fall under his umbrella, especially since they were beings that came from the greater multiverse, not naturally within our own universes. So why were they being let in, in the first place? Would they provide some benefit to help us survive the collision?

“No.” She shook her head. “But knowing my luck, it will be at the worst imaginable time.” I tugged on the sleeves of my robes, considering that. Unfortunately, it sounded like my luck as well. “That said, there is one last thing I wish to do while I am here.” The Mad Scientist sucked in a deep breath, something within her clicking as she tugged on the little string of energy that connected her to her soul floating in the Void.

And it descended.

The effect was immediate. Energy from a thousand different universes flooded into the Primordial Chaos of the Four Realms, descending down into the rest of the universe in a scintillating display of colors. It felt like a shot of adrenaline in my veins, raw *power* coursing through the entirety of creation as everything, *everything* was accelerated. The Sun and Lunar Star drank up energy like a pair of sponges, the Stars shining brighter than before; even the newly made regions started moving, accelerating through space as their roots grew deeper, toward where I had planned to move them to make the universal formations.

I stumbled from the effect, one hand gripping the table while the other shot up to grab my head, shooting the Mad Scientist an incredulous look.

“You, but –“ I stammered as she sighed happily, eyes shining bright and wings flaring. Lines of age were smoothed out immediately as she was returned to her prime, the little cracks that were constantly forming as her existence fought against her staying here fixing themselves in an instant. She practically radiated light, the light of an immortal, and a smile bloomed on her face.

“That feels better than I thought it would.” She said. I hadn’t even thought she wanted to stay here at this point – it’d been so long since I pointed it out to her and –

“Oh, that’s weird, ok, that’s really weird,” I muttered as memories and things from the energy itself started to work their way into the Realms, fixing a few unbalances, unbalancing a few things that needed unbalancing – it was a net positive, the Will of the Realms, my Will, instinctively guiding the energy to where it needed to go.

“This is the longest I have ever stayed in a universe, Statera. My time here has been about equal to all the other lives I have ever lived combined. And while I have not really built a life here for myself yet, I look forward to doing so.” The Mad Scientist grinned, looking for all the world like her namesake. Curiosity and excitement coursed through her in waves, glee overtaking her emotions as she rubbed her hands together. “Besides, two universes colliding? How could I give up the opportunity to witness something like that?” Thoughts and mutterings of experiments and projections spilled from the Mad Scientist’s mind and mouth as she started to pace, her entire soul coming to rest within this body of hers, empowering her by an order of magnitudes.

A quick shake of my head cleared my mind from the fading energetic memories, allowing me to focus fully on her once more – and she was still plotting experiments, even as I began to walk her out of my workshop so I could categorize the changes she was causing and going to cause.

Now I knew where she got the name from, at least.

Then I looked skyward, toward the other two she had mentioned. Now that I knew to look for them, I could see at least one of them, travelling through the Void. The ball of memories and energy collected was massive, far bigger than even the Mad Scientist's, but something else was catching my interest here.

It didn't feel like some random soul.

They felt...familiar.

Ah well, one thing at a time, and I had a lot of excess energy to put to work thanks to the Mad Scientist.

It was only a few hours later, once I had safely returned the Mad Scientist home, that I readied myself to flip the switch. Xing Wu was visiting the Dao Progenitors and other immortals, to inform them of what was happening – not the full details, not for all of them, just that a great work was

underway. The gods and angels were ready. I was ready. I flipped the switch, and set into motion the sweeping changes.

The change was immediate. Power surged through the Realms as a pressure was fully placed upon mortal souls, like a boulder upon their shoulders. Energy flooded into the Hidden Realm and toward the construction sites; the growth of the Realms ground to a halt, while the Primordial Chaos churned and raged at the sudden influx of control.

I felt it all. From insects to Immortals, I could feel how everyone felt.

Dragons shifted in their slumber.

A young priestess glanced heavenward as she preached about me, her shadow frowning as she felt my hand.

An old priest of Reika shuddered on Cradle, as he stirred his soup.

A rebellious elemental scowled, anger coursing through her as she finished crossing her Bridge of Immortality, just in time for my hand to stay others.

And construction began.