

RE: DEITY - THE BREATH OF CREATION

1.14 Rest and Recover

Sleep was just another form of work, for me. It was a time where I could do my most subtle works, allowing divine incarnations to delve through the Four Realms while my true body did other things. Like balance the karma of the Four Realms, delve into the mysteries of the divine, amass power, speak to the Overgod of the Multiverses on a more personal level, and feel ashamed of myself.

“You don’t know how high the heavens are?” Did I really say that out loud?” I groaned, hiding my face in my hands – er, well, hand, now, I suppose. Good point about being in my mind right now, I couldn’t feel pain. Bad point; I could still feel all the rest of my emotions, and no matter how mad I was and still am, I cannot believe I said that.

Yes, you did. It was properly cringy, and you should feel ashamed. Now that you’ve calmed down a bit, would you like to continue our conversation?

“Right, right. Sorry. Just...what was that thing that attacked?” I apologized, refocusing. Currently I was in my own mind, aware of myself and the system-like boxes that kept appearing in the air before me, for me to read. We’d been

talking for a little bit already, though Boxes had been giving me time and space so I could sort through my own anger. When I'd first appeared I had been practically frothing at the mouth, and the Boxes had patiently waited for me to become more reasonable and rational, even holding a small conversation to cool me down.

I was still furious, of course, but an angry mind is liable to make mistakes. And I had a lot to think about.

A paradox. A borderline-sentient something born from the Void's nothing. As origin deities are the creators, a paradox is a destroyer. They seek to return all creation to the Void, and are a part of the perpetual game of creation and destruction we play.

The paradox's creation was an accident – the foreign god your children battled disrupted my barrier by some miracle, giving it enough space and feeling to be created. The fact that the foreign god was from a recently destroyed universe, the aftershocks of which are still being felt, and had flecks of Void invading its very being only further agitated matters.

Your pushing of the foreign god into the void served as the coup de grace for the paradox's creation, not that you can be faulted for it. As I stated earlier, I will aid you in the restoration of your realms regarding the damage the paradox caused, mostly by reinforcing and healing the primordial chaos. This will not include your own injury.

Your arm will be gone for some time. The paradox severed your soul as well, causing damage that needs to be healed the natural way. I will not deny you the opportunity to learn from this – it will be beneficial in the long run.

A bit of indignation flared in my chest at that, but I quickly suppressed it, feeling far too tired to truly do anything about it. And Mr. Boxes was right, of

course. It would be hypocritical of me to complain about not receiving aid for an injury, when I was going to have to do much the same to my children and the Realms. This attack was a wakeup call in many ways, and my children needed the opportunity to grow from it. Especially if we were going to be dealing with more Paradoxes, after the Overgod's protection ended. Not that I could do much more than heal some of the cracks in reality the battle caused in my current state, anyway.

That did bring up another question, however.

"So...is the fate of all universes to just be destroyed by the Void, then?" I asked bitterly.

No. Many universes grow large and powerful enough to survive even without my help, or the help of other beings. There's also the possibility of splitting off to form your own multiverse – though that typically ends in flaming disaster. But many are destroyed after enough time. The one I mentioned was a relatively recent universe, from only two [Trials] before yours, and had been unstable since its founding. The Origin Deity in charge of it was killed halfway through the [Trials], and many of their works remained unfinished, thereby dooming the unfortunate universe.

I frowned, absorbing that information. I had a lot more questions to ask, things I wanted answered, but first and foremost there was something I need to clarify, and I got the feeling that Boxes wasn't going to answer much more. Already I could feel my own energy starting to flag, an all-encompassing exhaustion slowly draping itself across my shoulders.

"Earlier, you claimed that you would not heal damage caused by denizens of the Four Realm's actions...hence why you're not aiding in healing the interior." I said, slowly. "My question is, what is the Shadow?"

The most I can tell you is that the foreign god was lured here from within your Realms, and only then because you yourself figured it out already. I can say no more on the matter.

Now sleep. Rest and recover your strength; you will have much work to do, but rest is just as important.

I yawned, pinching the bridge of my nose, my eyelids drooping heavily. This part of my mind was clearly running on fumes, and needed to be shut down...so with a muttered thanks to the Boxes, I dismissed all thoughts and allowed myself to sleep.

Randus hovered over their Creator, shifting from foot to foot and unsure of what to do. The Big Four stood silently in the red-painted room alongside him, observing their Parent as She lay atop a soft, luxurious bed that had been, at one point, reserved for guests. She looked absolutely awful. Her black hair was in disarray, Her robes torn and stained with golden blood, Her face pale and wan even as She slumbered. Never before had he felt Her aura so weak – even if it was still a bonfire compared to his own candle. And her arm...

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It was missing from the shoulder down. Gold light shone from the wound, sparking and fluttering occasionally as Her body tried to mend itself. It had to be a grievous injury indeed for it to not be healed immediately; perhaps it was an injury of the soul, as much as the flesh? Randus did not know and neither, he felt, did the Big Four. Perhaps only the Mistress knew, and She was in no position to be answering questions.

And they had already done all they could for Her. Reika had cast her healing magic, soothing the wounds, while Alexander and Elvira flooded her with their own energy, to try to ease some of Her exhaustion. It, of course, didn't solve the issue. She needed time and rest to fully heal.

"Reika, stay with Father," Elvira said with a small smile. Her face was still marred from the battle, a bruise forming upon her cheek where the foreign being had struck her. "We'll go tend to things. You stay here, make sure He and your...child are ok." Randus noticed the way she paused at the word child, as if unsure how to respond to such an idea. He wasn't sure either, if he was honest. A child not of Mistress Statera, but still descended from Her.

Said child had since stopped wailing, cradled in her mother's embrace as she was, and was now slumbering peacefully. Her orange fox tails curled around her mother's arms softly, ears twitching as she dreamed.

"No, but...I have to go fix the Tree, and you have your own realms to heal – and I need to apologize to Sol!" Reika stammered, moving as if to stand up out of the velvety armchair she had been sat in. Elvira was there in a flash, Keilan on the other side to keep her from getting up. It was not an unkind action, and Randus was ready and waiting with a cup of tea for her, to help her calm down. She did not accept it, clutching her child as she was, so he awkwardly set the cup on a little table beside the chair.

"We'll take care of it. The worst I'll have to deal with is the karma of mortal souls, something that may yet be better handled personally." Keilan soothed. "My realm was thankfully spared from the worst of the battle." Alexander nodded his agreement, having shrunk his massive draconic body to fit better in the smaller room.

"And I will be there regardless. The Spirit Realm is a mirror, remember. When your realm is injured, so is mine, and to heal one is to heal the other. Let us take the reins for a bit, sister. Rest for now." He rumbled, the patches of scales that had been broken in the fight already healing. Reika hesitated until Elvira leaned down and whispered something in her ear.

"Ok," she said in a soft, small voice, looking down at her child, running her fingers through the black hair atop her head. The little fox-girl had stuck her thumb in her mouth as she slumbered, and Randus carefully crafted a dream just for her. One full of warmth and kindness, of tiny foxes playing in peaceful meadows and the full, loving smile of her mother. She deserved that much, rather than the terror and pain that had been the start of her existence. The little girl wriggled in her mother's arms as the dream settled into her mind, a soft smile stretching across her features.

He smiled despite himself. Cute little thing. Although, despite her divine parentage he did not feel the aura of a god from her yet. Once again his gaze drifted back to the Mistress, and he absently began wringing his hands. Her dreams were troubled, touching upon the memories of those within the Four Realms to give Her some way to see what happened within Her realms. Even unconscious, She sought to protect, when She deserved rest. If only he had some way to ease Her mind, but he was too weak to warp Her dreams unless She let him.

Even now he could only touch upon those dreams, not manipulate them in any way. Nor could he even really see them, only what She let him.

"Come, Randus, let us leave them be," Keilan said, gently grabbing him by the arm and leading him out of the room.

“But I need to -” he stammered, feeling lost.

“Your dreams will be better served in the Physical Realms. Our peoples need reassurance and guidance in this time of trouble, and I have little doubt you will be unparalleled in your aid in that regard.” Keilan reasoned, his wings flaring as he closed the door behind them. Randus bobbed his head numbly, tugging upon his moustache. He wanted to be there for the Mistress, ready whenever She awoke with a nice cup of tea, or perhaps a glass of spirit qi whiskey. But he knew Keilan was right, and that She would want him out there, helping, rather than worrying over Her.

He could feel the dreams of the Four Realms. Chaotic was an apt description at the best of times for what he saw, a slurry of wants and desires and odd things, but that mere word did not have enough weight for what drifted through the land of dreams now. Chaos was their lives, and heavy were their thoughts and dreams. Randus frowned and reached out slowly, crafting a dream here, a dream there, to send to a few select mortals he had grown fond of. It was easy enough to make dreams, he didn’t even have to slow his pace as he kept up with Keilan. So he made a few more peaceful templates for the spirit beasts, riled up as they were by the chaos, to soothe their minds. And a few more for the children. And -

“And besides, I think Mother would be happiest to see our Realms stable and thriving once more when She wakes up.” Keilan added, breaking Randus out of his work.

“I concur,” he added after a moment’s hesitation, folding his hands behind his back. Dreams were not good for direct manipulations, especially since most mortals forgot them when they woke up. But they could be used for other purposes. Some might call it a “hypnotic suggestion,” but such a thing had a far more negative, and direct, connotation than Randus cared for.

Mistress always called it indirect guidance.

They were silent as they walked through the halls, Alexander and Elvira taking their own paths out, and paused when they came to an abrupt ending to the hallway. What had once been the double doors of a library now opened up into space – giving a pleasant view of the Realm Sun, slightly obscured as it was by clouds of dust. Mistress Statera’s power had obliterated most of Her home, and Randus glared at the dust distastefully.

“I still need to clean the palace. She left dust *everywhere*.” he complained, and Keilan snorted out a half-laugh. *That wasn’t a joke.* He complained mentally. It’d taken years just to get Her to finish the palace the first time, it would take even longer now to convince Her to do it again.

“That’s more like you. You always know just what to say. Come. We have work to do.” He said, shooting off to the Realms with a single flap of his great wings.

Do I know what to say? He wondered as he followed, slipping into the realm of dreams just to keep pace. Pink horses and strange twenty-legged beasts, illusionary dream-beings, raced alongside him as he ran invisibly beside Keilan. *I hardly know what I’m even doing. Not like I was any help during that fight. All I did was take Lady Reika away.*

And he hated how much that bugged him. But most importantly, he felt nothing but shame.