

Skire's very crust tearing itself apart shocked many, the lives and homes taken bringing way to a fog of grief and fear. The emergence of Ichor beasts and their creeping infection only bolstered the struggle brought upon Skire, as a new, unfamiliar threat rearing its many heads from the blackened abyss below. However, for some, this volatile crisis was the perfect opportunity to take advantage of those affected. Vaughn knew this sentiment intimately, knowing that with a now weakened society came the moment to recover his roots of influence and spread even further than he could've before. There was just one obstacle; The Ichor beasts.

Vaughn knew little to nothing about them, something that gnawed at his nerves like a voracious insect. Sure, almost if not everyone else knew nothing either, but Vaughn couldn't just leave this threat be. He couldn't turn away from it... especially if they could be used as a weapon. *Especially* if they could grow his power, or at the very least be used for creating new, useful Vegas. When the first expeditions to the core began, Vaughn at first watched from afar with a burning need to know just *what* was waiting for him below. As groups came and went, it became clear to Vaughn that if he wanted to get any *proper* information, he'd have to go down to the core himself.

Sweet talking his way into a rented ship went smoothly, and calling upon his vega Psyche to accompany him was no burdensome task. Before disembarking, Vaughn made sure to organize a group of his vegas to meet him when he returned. He would need someone to take his findings and safeguard them. Prepared to dig into any samples, written logs, and recorded logs, Vaughn's vegas stood at the ready for his eventual return, wishing him only the most bountiful search, confident that he would succeed.

Aboard the small expedition ship with only Psyche and his most necessary supplies, Vaughn's heart fluttered with the anticipation of what he would find below. He couldn't help but let a sickly grin flash across his lips as the ship lurched to life, beginning its turbulent, long descent. Psyche slithered amongst the supply crates as Vaughn navigated, dutifully assuring that all was in order for her Scion to achieve his goal. Opening crates and confirming their contents, Psyche methodically sorted and returned items to their places, strengthening the latches that held them snugly in place. As usual, she did not work in silence; Humming and trilling an unknown tune as she shifted about.

Vaughn had never minded her vocalizations, having grown to become used to their almost constant presence. However often Psyche made noise, she was still adept at knowing when to *not*. Her intellect and obedience were two of Vaughn's most favored traits, ones that he'd been most pleased she'd developed after being created from "*discarded scraps*" drenched in magic. The only thing Vaughn was slightly displeased by was Psyche's inability to adapt her appearance like his own kind could. Thus, Psyche remained a gorgon-like, fleshy, sentient construct; a most *offputting* at best creature for many to encounter.

At least her strength and smarts would aid him well, Vaughn mused internally as his hands grasped the steering sticks of the ship. Having come from one of the highest floating islands above the core was a disadvantage, but it gave Vaughn time to navigate and familiarize himself

with the controls and new environment. It wasn't much longer before the glistening ichor seas and bleached, shattered bone-like monoliths came into Vaughn's view, pointing up at him like swords emerging from the center of skire's heart.