

Alomah Stargazer

Twenty one years ago...

Alomah cracked open one eye and looked around expectantly. After 3 hours, he thought surely there would be **some** sign of the spirits of one of his ancestors. As a Kitsune of 13, he was **finally** undergoing his Skulk Stone ceremony, or “chasing his tail,” as the pups laughingly called it-when their Elders weren’t within earshot, at least.

Seeing nothing but the strangely upright circle of stones, as usual, he scratched the charcoal fur on his back and closed his eyes again. “How long is this gonna take?” He thought for the thousandth time. “Kip was only gone for an hour **at most** when he was chasing **his** tail.”

“Clearly the boy needs to learn patience,” a deep and hollow-sounding voice said testily. ‘Lomah’s eyes snapped open and there he saw a somewhat ethereal Kitsune with no fewer than 7 tails seated in front of one of the stones to his left. “I suggest we send him into the Mountains to find his Leash, that he may learn to wait as the stones do.”

“Come now, Braxis,” a female voice intoned, materializing to Lomah’s right, “that’s not how the ceremony is done and you know it. We need to ask the child what **he** wants before we offer our suggestions for where to find his Spirit Leash. I think we’ve made Alomah wait long enough. After all, we only made his older brother Kip wait two hours before communing with **him**” she said with a sly smile and a wink at Alomah.

“Wait, the Spirits of my ancestors can hear my thoughts?” Lomah thought with a wince. Then, more befuddled, “The Spirits of my ancestors wink at me?”

“G-Great Grandmatron Fallah?” He said hesitantly. “G-Great Grandsire Braxis?” He said, looking left. “What must I do to find my Leash?”

“As my Love says, son,” Braxis said, more softly this time, “tell us of your hopes and desires and we will strive to guide you.”

Having already been thinking about this moment for months, if not years, Alomah launched into his prepared speech: “Oh great and wise ancestors, I feel called to the skies! Since I was a pup not yet walking on my hind legs, I have heard the voice of a Heavenly being, and had visions in my sleep of a Celestial power, inspiring me to great works! I want to study the heavens and learn what they can teach us. I want to uncover mysteries that lie just beyond the horizon! I want to bring the Light of Davros to those who live in squalor and darkness!” That last bit he decided to add only last night. It still felt a little ... off somehow.

After a long pause, Braxis made a small cough and said softly, “That was a bit dramatic, wasn’t it?”

Fallah smiled and looked at him mischievously before saying “he takes after your side of the family, clearly.” She then turned back to Alomah and said, more seriously, “Alomah, these are noble and worthy goals, but if you seek to follow the path of the Gods of the Heavens,”

“Gods?” Alomah thought.

“Then I think I must concur with my Mate’s initial suggestion as to your Leash,” she continued, “though not for the reasons he gave. Patience is an important virtue to learn, yes, but for one with his head in the skies, you would be well served to be Leashed to a spirit that can help ground you, and therefore, provide balance. And thus, here is the quest we give you: travel deep into the Mountains of Kragath’s Spine, to the base of the old volcano, Mount Lotsun. On the Southwest side, near the base of the mountain you will find a cave, which burrows deep into the mountain’s core. There you will find an Earth Spirit who will serve as your Leash, if you can complete the task they give you, and, thus, will grow your first tail, and be known as Skygazer.”

“Th-thank you Fallah! Thank you Braxis! I will leave first thing in the morning. Is there anything else you would have me know before I go?”

“Only this.” Braxis said solemnly, “When your Great Grandmatron said Gods, she did not misspeak. Keep your ear tuned to the Heavens and your heart open, and one day, you’ll find the greater truths you seek.”

Alomah Skygazer is a Kitsune from an Earth (what the Kitsune refer to as their family structure or Clan) embedded deep in the pine forests that cover the foothills of Kragath’s Spine. He is 34 years old, stands 5’9”, has a deep charcoal coat and light, piercing blue eyes. His face and snout are rather broader than typical amongst his kin, giving him the look of what most might call closer to a wolf than a fox.

Alomah (or Lomah, as members of his Earth often call him), is a rather serious-and single-track minded Kitsune. As such, he has still grown only one tail, something that some of his kind might consider a slight cause for embarrassment, for one who also considers himself to be wise and spiritually-minded.

And he *is* that. His Leash, an earth spirit known as “Padraig,” and who carries the ideal “Truth,” has been bonded to Alomah for 20 years. Padraig typically resides in the cavity of a hollowed out Sapphire embedded in a Silver ring that Alomah wears around his tail (though ‘Lomah will often call on Padraig for help, or even visit him inside the ring himself from time to time when seeking his company.)

19 years ago...

He’d found it. Finally. After searching for the better part of two years now, Alomah had found the stone tablet that Padraig had sent him questing for on their first meeting in the heart of

Mount Lotsun. The directions had been vague enough: Padraig didn't so much speak as he transferred thoughts to Alomah's mind – usually in the form of images and feelings.

When he first received those directions, a vision of the Emerald Wilds appeared in his mind, but the forest seen from high above. He felt his attention drawn to a part of the vast forest, somewhere in the North East, relatively near his home. Then, he saw an old stone temple – vines covered nearly every square inch of the decaying structure, the forest seemingly attempting to consume the edifice completely. Just before the image vanished from his mind, Padraig sent one single word. The same word which Alomah would later learn was the ideal his Leash represented: "Truth."

"So, you want me to find this old temple in the Emerald Wilds?" Almoah said to Padraig. A feeling of affirmation swept over him, emanating from the small spirit, who looked like little more than a small pile of rocks with eyes. "And... there I'll find... truth?" Again, affirmation. "What truth?" Alomah said. This time, no response. "Fine. See you when I find some truth!" Alomah said, trying to laugh off a feeling of foreboding as he began trekking back up the tunnel that led out of the mountain's heart. He was starting to feel claustrophobic anyway.

And now, after nearly two years of searching, befriending countless animals and fae in his quest, and making enemies of many more, he looked up the gentle slope to the old stone temple, hardly believing his eyes. Running up to what remained of the building, he clambered over a portion of wall that had fallen and began searching. "Truth... truth... what am I supposed to find in here that will teach me truth!?"

He didn't have to search for long. Inside a portion of the temple that had somehow been left largely undisturbed by the forces of nature that were consuming the rest of the building, he found a small altar. Atop the altar was placed a small tablet made of a kind of stone Alomah had never seen before. It was as hard as glass and smooth to the touch, but black as night. Etched in silvery letters were the words of what looked to be scripture or, perhaps, the words of a hymn:

All the Stars in the Sky, burn to black, close your eyes
All the Stars in the Sky ,say goodbye, say goodbye

We were here yesterday, now it seems so far away
We were here yesterday, the words she says:

You don't know me. You know one side of the story

So open wide, your wounded heart, feel yourself be blown apart
Open wide your wounded heart, it's a funny place to start

In the light of the sun, we are found we are undone
In the light of the sun, we are undone

And you don't know me. You know one side of the story.
But if we could be free, one with all this glory.
If we could be free...

"What the...?" Alomah said to himself, turning the tablet over in his hands. On the back, there was simply the same line from the poem on the front, written at the top: "All the Stars in the sky" – the rest of it was covered in tiny specs of light. There were dozens of them. Perhaps hundreds. Most of them seemed to form a pattern of some sort, but it was nothing that Alomah could make out. "I guess this must be the Truth I'm supposed to find, but hell if I know what it's supposed to mean." He shrugged, put the tablet into his back pack, and started the long journey back to Mt. Tabor to finally finish chasing his tail.

19 years ago, after completing Padraig's task requisite for the Leash bond to be complete, Alomah left his Earth and traveled to Terebaun, where he began studying with the Priests of Davros to learn more about the Heavens and the light which all disciples of Davros seek to spread to the unenlightened of Aneria, and perhaps see if he could uncover the "Truth" that his tablet supposedly could teach him. After studying for several years and completing his training as an Acolyte, he left Terebaun. For 15 years he traveled the length and breadth of Aneria, performing acts of service as well as proselytizing, and also using his growing power and wisdom to heal the sick and wounded, and even protect the innocent from those who would prey on them.

And yet, from the day that Alomah entered Davros' service, he felt an unquiet about his chosen path that left his heart restless. Though he never admitted it to anyone, he always questioned whether the call he'd always felt since a child to pursue and proclaim Heavenly power came from a source that was somehow... beyond the Sun God himself. Such thoughts would often leave him feeling both guilty and restless on many a night, when the sun had sunk below the horizon; he would stare up at the dark sky, lit only by the faint glow of the distant Beacon, and hear that call stronger than ever. Sometimes he thought he could almost hear the words written on his tablet, sung as a song, just beyond the reach of his senses:

You don't know me. You know one side of the story.
But if we could be free...

One night, about two years ago, Alomah's life changed forever.

He had been in Big Town, lending what little aid and healing he could to those suffering from some sort of plague there, when it happened. Suddenly, the light from the beacon just... went out. No warning. No explanation. And then, looking up into the night sky, he saw them for the first time: stars.

He stood gaping at those specs of light for several long minutes, admiring their beauty, before he realized that he was recognizing what he was seeing... patterns. He quickly reached into his back pack and pulled out his black stone tablet. Flipping it over, he held it up to the sky and

cried out for joy as, one by one, he began to recognize the groupings and patterns he was seeing – the tablet a near perfect symmetry of what he was seeing in the heavens. He fell to his knees and wept openly.

From the ring he wore on his tail, he felt Padraig “speaking” to him. “Truth,” Padraig sent, “but there is more...” Standing up, Alomah decided to head to the beacon to learn what more he could about why the light had gone dark and who, or what, had caused it.

Two weeks later, Alomah sailing on a merchant vessel from the Beacon to Sal’s Port. A little investigating around the Arcanum’s seat of power dug up some rumors about the group who was behind the Beacon’s destruction and the subsequent heavenly revelation: The Wayward Watch. Some said they were last seen headed to Sal’s Port, so that’s where Alomah was headed. He had to know more about why they destroyed the Beacon and, more importantly, what they knew about the stars that were subsequently revealed, and why and how they were hidden from the world’s view in the first place. He felt a new power rising within him, emanating from those stars, and the voice that had been calling to him seemed louder and closer than ever...

Finding passage on a merchant vessel was easy enough – there was always risk of pirate attacks, thus, need of mercenaries and guards for protection, and, thus, someone who could heal those wounded in battle. Not 3 days in to their journey south, Alomah and the other mercenaries had a chance to earn their passage, as their ship was attacked by an Airship full of Wasteland Elf pirates. They waited for a day of low clouds, and burst from the sky at dusk, opening fire with several volleys of grapeshot before throwing down rope ladders: the Wastelanders descending rapidly in droves, blood cry on their lips.

Most of the mercenaries proved largely useless, getting off an occasional arrow or lucky thrust with a blade before falling under the Prarie-hardened pirates veteran battle-prowess. What the merchant captain hadn’t realized was that in Alomah, he had gotten more than a simple healer. Calling upon both the newfound powers granted him by the stars, as well as his ancestors and his God, he helped stave off the enemy advance. Still, he wouldn’t have been able to hold the line had it not been for the offensive prowess of the one mercenary who was skilled enough to not have fallen under the initial surprise onslaught; Alomah watched in fascination as a diminutive-looking Half Elf with yellow eyes and hair darted amongst the pirates, weaving in and out of their ranks, there one moment, gone the next, slashing with precision and rhythm, and, Alomah would later swear, a faint song on his lips; an upbeat melody betrayed by darker lyrics: something about a tidal wave and giving up the fight, Alomah would later recall.

At first, any who managed to avoid the Half-Elf’s blades would be cut down by Alomah’s starry blasts or ancestral spirits. Before long, the pirates were scrambling back for their rope ladders, most of them being picked off by the two lone mercenaries as they scrambled for the safety of their airship.

“Well fought, friend,” Alomah said to the Half-Elf after the battle was won. “You are blessed by Davros himself to fight with such skill. The name is Alomah Stargazer,” he said, extending a hand.

The Half-Elf paused for a moment with a slight scowl, but then, shaking himself, clasped the proffered hand and said “Aramis. And not so bad yourself.”

Noticing a slash on Aramis’ arm, Alomah reached out, asking “May I?” But, not waiting for an answer, he called on the Divine and healed the wound.

Aramis flinched away but it was too late, uttering “I’m fine!” before realizing that the slash was already closed up, the pain gone. “Thanks,” he said, gruffly.

“So, where are you headed? Sal’s Port?” Alomah asked.

“None of yer...” Aramis started, but then, pausing, continued, “Last Stop, but my business is my own.”

“Understood,” Alomah replied. “I do not mean to pry. I’m seeking out the Wayward Watch in Sal’s Port myself. I hear they are the ones responsible for the breaking of the Beacon two weeks back. I seek answers to what they did and why, and if I find their cause noble, I hope to join them in revealing more Truth. I’d love to persuade you to join me; one with your skill might do much good to protect those in need and dispel darkness.”

“Hmph,” Aramis replied.

Alomah opened his mouth to make one last persuasive attempt, but suddenly, in a break in the clouds, a bright, silvery light burst from the night sky, emanating from a thing not seen in Aneria for millenia: the Moon, though they didn’t know to call it that, shone down on the passengers in all her broken glory. And more powerfully than ever before, the song hit Alomah in the depths of his soul:

“Open wide, your wounded heart, feel yourself be blown apart

...

In the light of the Sun, we are found we are undone

...

Oh you don’t know me, you know one side of the story

But if we could be free...”

In response, Alomah fell to his knees, lifted his face to the sky, and howled.