

# Apostle

After she acquired the 'voluntarily' provided stats of the surviving brigands she noticed a trend. Looking at their numbers and comparing it to the girls' she could draw up a broad median of the general statistic of the average human. Even though they were tipplers, be it difference in physique or lifestyle, the men had noticeably higher stats and certain odd skills.

*'Back Alley Brawler, Mugging, Intimidation, Mob strategos, Plunderer's instinct, Nomad... interesting... And those titles too, Reaver, Manslayer, Fornicator...*

*As for human's stats, they have around a total stats number averaging around 900 points total spread about dividing that to the main 5 stats gives them a rating of 180 which is D+ or at the cusp of reaching mediocrity with C-. But if I take away magic from the equation then things look much better. Taking away magic stats which averages around 75 we get a much more modest 825 average which when divided by the 4 physical stats, that gives humans an average of 206-207 ish median stats pushing them to comfortable C- tier... Goddamn it why is my former species so damn average?'*

Another thing Alicia noticed was that humans' greatest asset; intelligence was not rated by the system. Enquiring about the matter from the system led to an elaborate explanation leading to why intelligence was arbitrary as technically every decision made at the moment is always the correct to the self even if another mind would have found it lacking. Making it objectively unquantifiable by Alma, instead humans were rated on a Class of sapience with a high rating of 7 out of 10, supposedly she and Alice were rated 8 for being an entity 'aware' and able to interact with 'the overseers'<sup>1</sup>...

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Ever since she had discovered the void vault an idea was festering inside her mind. *'Am I opening a portal to another... dimension... of sorts? Why when I open its... door is it always the same place that it leads to where I left something there? Does that mean the dimension is moving with me? If I can open doors leading to the same place in the void can't I do something like go inside and open another door back to this place and end up somewhere*

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<sup>1</sup> G.O.D the smug girl upstairs.

*else? That is effectively a type of teleportation. I know time... doesn't necessarily stop inside it. Just seems to be... extremely unpredictable...'*

Its true nature still eluded her. And she intended to find out more.

「VOID VAULT」

Light warped around the epicenter of the breach, lensing around to let it one see what was behind it despite it being a completely opaque object. As its circumference grew the burden of energy demand from sustaining the spell was alleviated until it stopped at a diameter of around meter wide. For the first test, she found a long dead branch. Instead of fully inserting the stick she let go of it halfway. The stick seemingly defied gravity by levitating with no apparent force applied... or rather... something else from the otherside was holding it up. There was one thing she wanted to know... While something or someone was using it, what would happen if she were let the hole close?

〉 VOID VAULT 〈

As the otherworldly rift collapsed in on itself the wooden stick was ejected back with extreme force.

〈 Instinct 〉

〈 Reflexive Reaction 〉

〈 Snap Reaction 〉

When the rapidly approaching projectile flying towards her was registered, her body moved before her mind could grasp the situation. Somewhere she thought she heard an explosion. She found herself face deep in soil and pebbles with minor scratches that quickly closed up. As her mind finally caught up, it appeared that she jumped to the side with such force to avoid the imminent danger.

Standing up and looking around she found a spectacle of landscape similar to a plane had crash landed behind where she was standing. Earth gouged out forcefully, trees peppered with something akin to multitudes of deep bullet wounds, gashes on boulders as if someone carved it out. The stick had reached intense velocity in such a short time that the integrity of the wood couldn't keep up and turned into a sawdust travelling at outrageous speed. And those tiny pellets were the reason behind the disaster.

- "That... was AWESOME!! I thought it was just gonna cut it off. This is even better! Terrifying too but imagine if I got some sharpened metal

rod and did that, that's gonna be a ballista to be feared! Let's do it again!"

While trying to replicate the event something different happened. Instead of shooting out the second stick the rift seemed to just swallow the branch with much the same force. After multiple sawdust related explosions and failed attempts she found the reason.

*'An object whose most of its mass is already in the void will be swallowed whereas an object whose majority of its body is outside it will instead be ejected with ridiculous speed as the rift closes... More of it is the void the faster it travels, if it is just barely sticking out of the void then it will flop onto the ground harmlessly... I guess I could control its speed like that. I wonder...'*

She never realized this but... she could open rifts to the void without her immediate presence by just picking an image from memory and using other senses she could remotely open rifts. Rifts in plural, multiple of them. Although opening them took a considerable amount of mana and concentration, once they were opened they could be sustained with minimal effort. She could weaponize this unexpected discovery. Lastly she still wanted to see if the teleportation was possible but she was still skeptical about fully stepping into the rift after what happened to the giant rat and Dauntless.

Of course the first thing she tried was to let a mirror image go in and close it behind it, with a simple command to return back to her after a minute. It was deemed a failure as soon as the chasm closed up the connection with the image was severed and unsurprisingly the image did not return. Breaching into the lightless space again, she found a sphere of water in its expanse, the remnant of what used to be a mirror image. This was more or less expected, after all without the supply of mana from her the images would fail and dispel. Incidentally she didn't know a good way to pull out the water sphere of water. But she wasn't about to give up just yet. If she couldn't extract information from her images she just had to use something else that wouldn't perish so easily.

With the communication between her images impossible as they would degrade into their base material something more substantial and closer to her physiology, or rather, someone.

- "Mmmhhhhmmm!! mmMmmhhhuum!"

Gagged and bound with silken cords men came to, stripped off to the most basic of undergarments were held in a dark subterranean den. Their base

was overtaken by monsters somehow and without knowing they carelessly walked right into the group of them and overwhelmed by Arachnid monsters. They were spared, or rather set aside for later consumption. Only a few of their many companions present in this prison... one could imagine what had come to a pass to their missing brethren.

Something came and grabbed him by the cords and dragged him away. Terror gripped his whole being, tossing and turning he fought with what little strength remained in his body for it was his time to be devoured. Fiery sting pierced into his tender meat. Burning pain spread from his thighs.

- "UUUURRRHHH!!!"-

Then his head was forced into someplace dark, blacker than the light forsaken subterranean den. Winds howling around him carrying voices speaking of maddening conspiracy and paranoia. The blinders covering his eyes wore off letting the full brunt of the malignity of the cosmos to fall upon his frail mind. And the gag had fallen so he screamed, yet the voices roared louder. Up he looked seeking salvation, there was no sun, there were no stars, only the immeasurable darkness of creation. Below...? Which way was below? Is there an up or down in this godless place? The air he breathed was choking the life out of him. Air? Was this even air?

- "Gods! Anyone!! SAVE ME!!!"-

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Holding the man in place without injuring him was becoming more and more difficult with how much he was tossing about. More importantly however... *'Huh... I guess sound doesn't travel between... Maybe...? No, I pulled out his gag.'*

As she slowly pulled the man out, as soon as his head was on her side of the world:

- "-AAAAEEEEUUUEEEE-"

Surprised by the volume of his wail, she quickly shoved his head back into the abyss. His grieving cries were silenced as abruptly as it arrived.

*'Yeah he's screaming alright... sound definitely doesn't travel. Hm... does he not see that rift right in front of him? Light probably doesn't travel either then... Hey Al-'*

>Data extraction complete... Compatibility registration underway...

>Compiling profile... Processing...

>Usability assessment underway... Processing...

*'I was gonna ask if you could make something out of that but I'll take that as a yes.'*

>Generating heuristics based profile stand by...

>[Trespass] Acquired.

Trespass	
Briefly breach into the void and instantly egress at a different location.	
<Glimpse>	<Blink>
<Gateway>	<Mercurial Snap>

*'Ohh... that sounds awfully like blink.'*

In her excitement she almost forgot about the man with his head stuck into the void vault.

*'Eh... let's see what he has to say to defend himself. I think I gave him enough of a scare.'*

As she pulled the brigand's head out of the pocket his reverberating hoarse and raspy screams continued.

- "AAAAAEUH!!!"-

Upon hearing his ear splitting scream she nearly reconsidered her decision.

- "SPARE ME! I-I WILL DO ANYTHING! I WILL GIVE YOU ANYTHING!! DON'T LET THEM TAKE ME!!!"

*'Them...? Whatever Alma, what can you get from him?'*

< Soul Echo >

>Neural activity consistent with extreme psychosis.

>Caution. Prolonged exposure to location designated as Null Void may cause irreversible mental degradation to sapient subjects. Cause: Unknown.

>Warning. Subject has experienced intense time dilation. Cause: Unknown

Alicia was surprised to see the man, for he had undergone extreme changes in just a few minutes within the void. Tears and phlegm had accumulated on his face and collars over the layers upon layers of dried

mucus. Lips cracked and dry. Creases and wrinkles had formed where they were not present before. Eyes and cheeks had sunken in, hair thin and receding. The veins of his neck were visible and had a reddish appearance to them resembling a meshy web like structure<sup>2</sup>. The physical changes on his head weren't uniform with the rest of his body still on her side. She just about believed that this person was a different man from before.

*'Looks like he just aged twenty years in there... But...'* Soul echo still showed his age of thirty-four. His constant nonsensical pleas of mercy and delusions were getting on Alicia's nerves. She quickly incapacitated him by squeezing the jugular veins, depriving his manic brain of blood carrying oxygen. In mere moments his fighting ceased and he fell unconscious. *'Thought my arms were too thin but still I can do it... I'll just have this guy thrown out of the forest with the rest of his friends after they get baptised by the void as well. Whether they live or die afterwards is no longer my concern anymore.'* Rather she couldn't care much about these outlaws especially with a successful discovery of a new spell, they had outlived their usefulness.

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Sometime later a trio of aged doomsaying heretics came from who knows where. They preached of some great end of an age in a coming upheaval that will bring about an utter darkness swallowing the sun and stars throughout the free cities and states alike. Often cast off and exiled as madmen they travelled throughout the world. And with time the pervasive influence of the void over their minds waned and some semblance of sanity returned to them but it's scars never disappeared serving as a timeless reminder of their eternal stay in a godless realm.

In their previous lives they were wanted men with bounties to their head. Yet in an age with imprecise descriptors and vague artistic illustrations serving as the sole descriptors in wanted posters, the physical changes brought upon them by the void made them effectively different men. Their mind was scarred but the body was still whole. Where they would have been apprehended and sold off to slave away in treacherous mines or executed under the law, they walked free and lived. In an ironic twist of fate the sea of darkness gifted them another chance at life. Heavens

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<sup>2</sup> [Telangiectasia](#) (Telenjyektazia) also known as spider veins. No it has nothing to do with spiders for the most part.

know they cherish the fleeting stay of others and their own in a world under light.