

When I exited the Hall of Divines, I found Willy and Molucca seated at one of the tables with a book between them. I walked up to the table to listen in on their conversation.

“Now, as you can see here, the Haven’s construction was actually theorized two thousand years ago. Its size, structure, armaments; everything except for the enchantments comes from this design,” Willy points at the open book.

Glancing over his shoulder, my eyes wander over an engineer’s sketch of a dreadnought. It looks exactly like my ship, both in and out.

“But it’s not made of the same material,” Molucca leans in and points, “this calls for wood and metal, but the Haven is made completely of metal.”

“Yes, yes, clearly Rraune changed much, but the hull and deck plan are exactly the same here. The Haven was designed by a [Master Ship Architect] to be as large and seaworthy as possible using cheaper materials. Using this ship as a guide was smart on Rraune’s part. I am merely demonstrating that the Haven’s design and concept are not novel.”

I listen silently as the two dwarfs continue to bicker over the Haven. Eventually, after ten minutes, I realize that the two could continue their conversation for hours, if not centuries...

“Sorry to interrupt,” I interrupt. The two dwarfs, startled, both turn to me, “but I’m in need of some more assistance.”

“Ughhhhh, my fucking heart.” Molucca groans while Willy closes the book they were reading.

“Right, yes, what can I help you with?” Willy asks.

“The fuck is a Uaithine?”

Willy raises an eyebrow, “That would be Johnson’s famed legendary harp that he created upon completing the city’s enchantment. I’m surprised you’d heard of it.”

Quasi scratches his cheek, “A harp, eh? I don’t suppose you’ve got it handy?”

Willy frowns, “Well, it used to be in the conservatory wing, but was relocated to the castle a long time ago. If you want more information, you should ask Member Schlong.”

I nod, “I’ve got time.”

“Then let us go.”

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“When you create music, never create it without a purpose. Always have a motive. Whether it is to impress a potential mate or to earn coin, always have a plan of action.”

Schlong walks left to right at the front of the classroom while gazing at the seated rows of young [Bards] taking notes. One [Bard] raises his hand.

Schlong points. “Anthony.”

“I don't get it. What if you need to improvise? Then you don't need a plan, right?”

Schlong stares at the young man, a [Bard] too young to be let anywhere near Member Shaft's wing.

“Then plan to adapt. Practice the skills of adapting music and develop a rhythm for it.” He now looks away from Anthony and stares at all the students. He strokes his beard with a grin. “Our founder, Johnson, created songs and music numbering in the tens of thousands. He had created so many that if a situation required a specific song, then he'd probably already written it. And if not, then he merely needs to modify a similar enough song. He made adaptation easy.”

He looks away from the students and glances at the classroom door. He sees Willy waving through the door's window.

“Students, reflect. I will return in a moment.”

Schlong exits the classroom and grins at the three men in front of him.

“Is there something I can help you all with?”

“Yes,” Willy points at Quasi, “he wishes to know of the Uaithine.”

He looks at Quasi.

“Johnson's Harp?”

Quasi nods, “Yea. I want to try playing it.”

Schlong frowns, “That is unlikely to happen. The Harp has not been played since it was transferred from the Chasm Observatory.”

“Chasm Observatory?”

“Ahh, it may be best to show you. Come, come.”

The group follows Schlong as he leads them to the end of the Observatory wing. They reach a double door wherein they enter. When they do, all eyes shift up to a circular room with a magical ceiling of stars. When you stare at the stars, you are met with thousands of dicks created from dots. So many dick-like constellations that, combined, form into an even larger member encompassing all others.

From those stars, the room is illuminated, revealing a chasm except for a small bridge leading to a central floating platform. On said platform is a stand for what is presumed to be a harp.

“It is said that when Johnson played, the chasm played back and the city listened.”

“Huh.” Quasi walks to the edge of the platform. He steps forward.

“Quasi!” Molluca screams when it looks as though he is about to fall, but he does not. A barrier comes to life, protecting the chasm from being entered.

With glowing eyes, Quasi gazes at the tapestry of magic in the room. So much magic that it is blinding. This room is the control-point to all of the enchantments through the city. He can feel it in his bones. And the mechanism for the control is probably the Harp.

“Do you know what’s inside the chasm?” Quasi asks.

Willy and Schlong shake their heads.

“None have ever been able to descend.”

“Since the harp was removed?”

“Errr, actually, yes. Why? Is the barrier controlled by the harp?” Schlong asks a question that had been asked many times before, but all the [Enchanters] they’d brought had said no.

Quasi stares down into the chasm. And the chasm stares back with a concentration of mana exceeding the limits of an entire [Mage] army.

“I think so, but I won’t be sure until I check out the Uaithine.” Quasi looks to Molluca, “which should be tonight if I can convince the [King].”

“Should be possible,” Molluca adds, “but the party is not until later tonight. We still have time.”

Quasi nods, “That’s fine. We’ll tour the Bards’ Guild a bit more and then pick up Jessica and Testudo.”

“Perfect,” Schlong announces with a clap of his hands, “then allow me to show you everything the Observatory has to see.”

Willy clears his throat, "I too would like to persuade you to see some of the artistry within the masonry wing."

Quasi shrugs, "Then lead the way."

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The sound of knocking interrupts Jessica's dreams. Her eyes open to stinging light- not sunlight, but something stronger that makes her grimace. She tries to hide under the warm covers, but the knocking continues.

"Miss Jessica, this is Madam Chanel. My apologies for waking you, but there is a problem."

Groaning, Jessica pushes the covers away. "I'm coming!" she yells.

Blurry eyed, she pushes herself up on the edge of the bed. Her bare feet touch cold wood as she stands up. Barely able to see, she glances at the other bed in the room, an empty bed devoid of Quasi. Realizing that Quasi was already gone, she tries to remember if she'd seen him leave, but no bidden memory comes forth.

She yawns and walks to the entrance. She unlocks the door and opens it. The visage of Madam Chanel meets her gaze.

She yawns again. "Who did he do?" she asks.

A frown and smirk wars with Madam Chanel's face. The woman eventually settles on a blushing grimace.

"I've come to collect my staff."

Jessica pouts.

"What did he do with your staff?"

Madam Chanel sighs. "I'm not sure, but I sense them in your room's closet."

Jessica raises an eyebrow. She turns her head to the closed closet. After a moment, she shrugs and steps away from the door to allow Madam Chanel to enter.

The two women walk to the closet. They stop when they hear the sound of soft breathing.

Jessica pulls open the closet and squeals in surprise as a wave of naked, tied up women spill out.

“What?” Jessica steps back. She eyes the naked women with their hands and feet tied and gags in their mouths.

“What is this?” She asks again, of which Madam Chanel can only sigh.

“I did warn you that many people will take an interest in your man.” Chanel eyes the bound women, counting all of her female staff and several of her female regulars. “Though, even I wasn’t expecting *everyone* to try to sneak into his room.”

Shaking her head, Chanel kneels down and starts untying the women and directing them to leave. Jessica watches the women leave sore and utterly defeated. They’d attempted to get in bed with Quasi, but instead found themselves captured, bound, and stuffed into a tight closet overnight.

As the last woman leaves the room, Testudo pokes his head through the door. He spots Jessica and Madam Chanel.

“So, has anyone seen my master?”

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The [Grand Chancellor] sits again in front of his war table. Atop the table is a map, not just a crude map with poor terrain sketches and figurines, but an enchanted, continuously updated, zoomable, pan-able, three dimensional map of the entire battle front. The map is a divine item gifted by Odin, revealing all that is under his control. Every church home to a [Priest] or [Priestess] reveals everything around it in a five to fifty mile radius. Each church has been placed to surveil the entirety of the Aesir lands.

But today, the map fills the [Grand Chancellor] with frustration. To the east, the war rages and progresses apace. Armies battle and units level. In time, the east will be slowly overtaken by the constant [Archangel] summonings. Sacrificing an [Archpriest] to summon a being equivalent to an army is an acceptable trade against the Amazons who have few warriors able to fight them toe-to-toe.

Or did.

He looks up at the [Grand Tacticians] silently watching him.

“What is happening?” he asks them, both rhetorically and genuinely.

The [Grand Tacticians] do not break eye contact, nor do they speak, content to wait for orders. They are charged with guiding his armies while he is not present, and for the most part they have done an amazing job.

He looks away from them and refocuses on the map. The eastern front has shifted slightly left.

“Have we any information on how they are suppressing our [Archangel] summons?”

“None, only that the introduction of powerful reinforcements had shortly resulted in our inability to further summon them.”

Scowling in annoyance, he shifts his focus to a more imminent threat. An army of demons rampages through Aesir lands, directly toward his location. At their current pace, they will arrive within a month.

The [Grand Chancellor] straightens his spine, closes his eyes, and touches his *Necklace of Ultimate Sight*. His mind's eye soars out of the building and across the land, hundreds of miles to the north, until he is peering at an army of demons. A quick peek at their levels is all it takes to change his mood from sour to dour. He opens his eyes and steps away from the table.

“I must speak with the All Father. Wait for my return.”

Frode leaves the room and the three [Grand Tacticians] release a combined sigh.