

And then it was finished. Irwyn faced Az'morgis, the first undead reduced to a disembodied soul and bound by powers not even it could hope to escape. The Grand Crusade had taught them well that Named undead were beyond death – and even the one exception was simply not feasible in this case. Therefore, they had long prepared to capture. It was unlikely their once friend could have resisted three of them...

Let alone all nine. After eons of effort, they had finally cornered and bound him. Stopped him from spreading the seeds of the poison.

Low he may have been laid, there still was no hatred. No grudge in the eyes of the Betrayer's very firstborn creation, unlike all the rest Irwyn had slain. Just a... certainty. That it had been inevitable.

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"That path would take all too long," the man with grey eyes shook his head, staring everywhere at once. He wore a hint of a m...ocking smile.

"How? what?" Irwyn paused, staggering as he was forced to become himself once more in between instants.

"Everything in time. If I explain you will just forget again," the man said. "For now, a change of order is warranted. A shortcut."

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Right before Irwyn lay the altar. A funeral pillar of stone. He wished he could have crafted it himself, alas, Golem's work would be all he had. He stared and stared until a hand was placed upon his shoulder, a surge of pain coursing through him as their anathemic natures sizzled.

Even though it burned, Irwyn did not flinch away from his brother's touch. The grief, albeit dulled, still hurt more than something merely skin deep. The rising agony was almost a welcome distraction.

"A fitting place for all this pain, I think," he said, dragging Irwyn away before he could spend days brooding as he had last time they had done this. All the way to the entrance. "Better it be somewhere we can forget."

Central to the tomb was a divide between Light and Void, a wall of Flame that allowed the two remnants to exist within such close proximity.

Half of the hall was engulfed in Light – gentle, mending, forgiving, indefinable...- the other in Void. And in the middle a great divide of Flame separated the two, only equal force able to stop them from clashing. Though even suppressed, their power felt all-consuming.

Of course, They could never seal them utterly. Try as they may, their best effort struggled to hide the true nature of what they were. Therefore, they had been sealed in layers. Bit by bit, through rooms and labyrinths they walked. When they reached the exit not even they could

For they were burying the Aspects. Or at least the smallest fragments. Secrecy was paramount when one sought to not let such might fall into the wrong hands.

And what power it was: beyond reckoning. Beyond understanding... Beyond control. For all they were their children, none were ever meant to harness this source. Magic had been made to be wielded. The fragments were power incarnate, stripped of will and purpose. Without the gentle structure tempering it.

"Perhaps it is a mistake to do this at all," Irwyn admitted.

"Under some lenses, perhaps," his brother half agreed. "But it is a choice we have made. Do not let doubts lead us astray. Either way, it is done."

Perhaps a different path was hidden somewhere. But this tomb was neither the first nor the second. "Fourty eighth," Irwyn nodded. "The last triad. The rest will have to be inhumed separately."

Put simply, the only reason that remnants of both **Lumen** and **Umbra** could exist in such objective proximity was the stability provided by **Ignis**. Alas, in the First Betrayal's wake, their father had left... far fewer pieces than the rest.

"Everything one step at a time, brother... It might be appropriate to leave some within the Void and among the true skies. There they will not be in danger of corruption."

"There they will also be much easier to find and usurp," Irwyn frowned. "Not all are worthy."

"Even so, if some mortals are, surely a few among the immortal will be as well," his brother disputed. "And it would make my heart easier to leave more there. Especially..." then he paused, hesitating.

"Especially because those would not require a contingency," Irwyn finished for him, nodding.

"Reasonable as it is, I still fear we might have made a mistake," he nodded. "That a Time will come when the Rot learns of this and abuses our preparations. That rather than an opportunity to subvert doom, the tombs will become its very cause."

"Such is the risk of consigning Fate into mortal hands - and that is what you wanted," Irwyn disagreed. "If none are worthy, then may they perish alongside the Rot."

However much they had pondered and argued Irwyn would not relent on that point. He would not let their parents be defiled again. It was their duty to ensure as such. Yet the fragments were useless in their own hands. Irwyn could not create and his brother refused to - and most other uses would be wasteful. Eventually they have decided to give those far beneath a chance at contributing - through chance and Fate beyond artificial reproduction... As long as a safety measure was in place.

After all, the Crusaders had found *one* way to destroy the Named Undead in the end... albeit not reliably and at such a ruinous cost that it had not been used more than a scarce few times. The fragments of their parents did hold their untamed power whereas only an Aspect could erase a Name. But in doing so that fragment and *everything* even remotely adjacent would cease to be. A foolhardy use; a sufficient contingency.

Not looking back anymore, the brothers stepped out of the tomb, the doors sealing behind them. They would only open for one of truly undeniable Fate if they would ever crack open at all. Only at a time of need and despair.

Dessert skies spread before him, a familiar landscape. A place of a memory which was why Irwyn had chosen it. In the distance stood mountains of glass and two suns shone high overhead - one of his own making. One day the tomb would be opened and give this Realm a last glimmer of hope when facing death - or spare it from a Fate far worse otherwise. Either way, the Rot would burn. That was what truly mattered.