

Her face never dared to show her confusion.

*The plan was to meet with the Stars later. I'm curious as to how they were even remotely aware of what was going on in my head. Nav... could it be that you can communicate with them?*

*"That would be groundbreaking. Unfortunately, my hands are tied in this one. I could not tell you if I wanted to. But I can theorize that they read your face during the Arbiter's Council. Your eye movements must have communicated –"*

*Nav... that's like saying the movement of my eyebrows conveyed the same thing via morse code. Or my breathing patterns told them what I'll be having for breakfast. Then again... there's a marionette out there that can interpret mechanical groans as commandments.*

*"Not so farfetched, is it?"*

*Still, it was obvious that I would be meeting them in due time. So why the hell are they telling me that I'm the one that summoned them...?*

After a small moment of silence, Frost finally answered the Stars.

"Not this soon. Neither do I recall asking you all to assemble before me so soon. I was under the impression that you were here to protect the Council." Frost watched their faces suddenly glow, whilst others seemed disappointed at themselves.

"Our interpretation was false. My... *Our* sincerest apologies. The quakes made the translation difficult. There was a lot of anger during the Council." A fox-eared Demi-Human, whose eyes were perpetually closed shuddered as if this had cost him his life.

"Interpretations? I've been missing from the Nexus for a while so my knowledge is admittedly lacking. Would you mind explaining to me what you mean by that expression?" Frost stated. None of the Stars moved from their place as they observed one another, wondering who would be the one to answer her. "I'm unfortunately not familiar with the expression."

"Oh, it's not an expression. It's a real thing." The Vampire girl spoke as she pulled her scarf just enough to speak, but never allowing her jaw to be seen. "Amalgam, we Stars are devoted day and night to the Nexus. The oldest ones, being the Iron Stars, can look at the Nexus and know precisely what it desires. It's a vibration. A distinct, rumbling fueled with an emotional charge that we feel throbbing within the walls of the Nexus."

She spoke with controlled reverence. Her voice was low and the kind one would expect to hear from a timid girl. One of her eyes was red, and the other a deep purple. Her heterochromia was beautiful, and the first Frost had ever seen.

"We hear, feel, and sense the will of the Nexus and act accordingly." A blue-faced man with a giant mushroom cap as a scalp spoke, his voice audible seconds after he mouthed the words. "The fact we are here to answer your call has already proven you are truly the Head of the Nexus. We only approached you now because the Nexus warned us against approaching you directly until now."

*That must have been during our respite... So they can sense what I want through the Nexus? I... don't get it.*

"That makes you similar to the Living Looms. I presume all Stars are capable of this?" Frost wanted some clarification. This finding completely stumped her, and she had nearly forgotten about her meeting with the Moons just ahead.

"We can." A scale-cladded man who stood at an absurd two and a half meters tall said, his beautiful wings tucked close behind his back like rolled scrolls. "We who devote ourselves to the Nexus can. It's stronger here, but beyond it can be difficult. Hence why we are messengers of the Nexus, and why Stars usually fall into advisory or guiding roles in Ateliers. Aside from Scarlet Logic's disgusting Red Giants." A small puff of smoke left his nostrils, the mere thought causing his amber, snake-like eyes to erupt in flames.

Not metaphorically, but literally. A flame could be seen behind his irises like the light of a lantern.

"The Nexus has a much more clearer voice now ever since you arrived." A Human woman said.

"What was it like before?" Frost wondered.

"Very ridged." Was the answer of an Elven man, and the others shared the same sentiments. "It was what helped us seek out Moons, the Exalted and fellow Stars. But Stars are no longer."

"Degenerate Era it is." The Mycelli mushroom man said.

"We thirty-five are the last. We thirty-five await your orders." The Fox-man hummed.

"Awaiting we are." The Mycelli echoed.

Frost wondered if it was either Elysia or the Arbiter whose voice was carried by the Nexus. They were unfamiliar with Elysia, and they did not believe that it was the Arbiter who spoke to them, as she preferred to speak with them directly or through Galia.

Rather, they simply believed it to be the Nexus itself. Nothing took precedence over the Nexus, aside from the Amalgam now that they were aware of her identity. Frost did not wish to keep the Moons waiting for long, but she doubted they would mind.

So, she spent a few minutes asking several questions.

One was how Stars were formed.

The Avian man answered.

"It begins with a sensation originating from the Nexus. It's a longing beyond that of false worship and the ire of obsession. A tangible hook will latch itself into one's soul and guide them towards the Nexus. There is no such thing as a Star that could never be. Only Stars that have fallen. When near the Nexus they reach enlightenment, for the Nexus holds all the answers to our troubles."

Then, the Vampire woman added:

“For different reasons. It’s never just an imposed will. Some of us followed it like a star because we couldn’t see any others in the sky. Iron Stars will tell you of a time when the Nexus didn’t exist, but they followed its call and wandered the world like nomads spreading the words of the Nexus.”

“The history of the Stars sounds exciting. May I ask what those words were?” Frost asked.

“They’re lost to us I’m afraid.” The Fox-Man answered. “The Iron Stars don’t like to speak to anyone. What they know is inscribed in tablets, but that is only accessible to them in the Zelmori Region. The far western continent. We are not even sure if Iron Stars are real. None of us has ever seen one. It’s all hearsay from what we know.”

“Nevertheless, we ask of you, O Amalgam to please call upon us. It pains us to watch you deliver your messages alone.” The Dragonkin lowered his head, holding a hand to his heart which was located in the center of his abdomen rather than his chest.

“Rejuvenate our purpose as Stars.” The Vampire uttered, also lowering her head.

“Maintenance of the Nexus is not our only duty.”

Soon, Frost was the only one standing.

They worshipped her as the living persona of the Nexus and yearned for her to put them to good use. Having them as messengers would absolutely help with the logistics, both imposing her will and increasing her reach significantly.

Their meeting was a blessing in disguise.

“We serve better as Messengers than guards or Receptionists.” One said. “More than ever now that the Three Heads of Security have been established.”

Frost cleared her throat. Their proposal was their natural role to begin with, so she had no reason to refuse them. However, entrusting them entirely was difficult after what happened with Iscario.

“Raise your heads. There’s no reason to ask me for permission. If you can interpret my will as you claim, then you will know what to do soon. Otherwise, I would appreciate it if you did not collectively approach me. You will know when I require you to stand before me. But I am pleased to meet you all.”

“As you wish.” One uttered as the Stars slowly erected themselves, watching her resume her march towards the archway leading to the Arbiter’s Council.

“You’re dismissed.” She called and at once, the Stars returned through the way she entered from.

A long, mental sigh filled her mind. It was incredibly tiring to keep up her performance. It felt like all of her energy had just sapped away, and now she had to do it all over again in front of another 56 Moons.

At least the Triplets will be there to help!

*... they will be helpful, right?*

*"My condolences."*