

# TRUTH TO POWER

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# Unnecessarily Expansive Foreword

In the Forsaken expansion, Bungie has restated its love for Destiny lore; a love which, prior to this release, had been conspicuously absent from Destiny 2. Some of the writing contained in the game's new, post-Forsaken, lore module is of a very high standard, in particular those sections which build on The Taken King's Books of Sorrow. Some of the entries in the Marasenna section - such as the Cosmogyre, Ecstatiante, and Fideicide series - provide a history for the Awoken in an attempt to do for them what Books of Sorrow did for the Hive, and serve to fix key characters in its mythology. The Tyrannocide entries from The Awoken of the Reef section reveal the critical plot twist that glues the events of Forsaken to those of The Taken King some two years earlier, and finally provide Destiny 2 with a thread of true narrative coherence. But it's in the Truth to Power section that the expansion takes off from standing on the shoulders of that giant and grows its own wings.

The TtP lore, though, comes at a price, and that price is time - or, more precisely, patience... and time.

Each single entry in TtP - of which there appear to be eleven - is released on a drip feed schedule tied to the three-week curse cycle unwittingly kicked off by the first Guardians to defeat Dûl Incaru, last boss of the Shattered Throne quest, itself triggered by the first fireteam to defeat Riven in the Last Wish raid.

So far, so convoluted - although much of the 'why the fuck is this happening?' is explained in the text below, which is, of course, the lore's purpose, as well as setting the scene for things to come.

The downside of this extended exposition is that most of the lore presented here hasn't even been found in-game yet - at the date of writing we only have the first two entries, because we've only had two full curse weeks to collect them. If things continue on the three-week schedule - by no means a certainty - it'll take until May for the full text of Truth to Power to emerge.

And hey, even a seasoned blind raider can't wait quite that long for a solution, so this week I looked up the rest of the dataminced lore on Ishtar Collective, like everyone else does, and having enjoyed it so much, compiled it all here in an easier to read format, like everyone else doesn't because they're not as stupid as me. So here it is.

I've preserved the formatting of the original - or, where I haven't got the actual lore myself, the Ishtar representation - so if it looks funky, well, it's supposed to be. And next to each entry I've put the date it was first available in game or, where that's in the future (nine of the buggers), the date I predict it'll appear if the current cycle continues.

Which, interestingly, puts the last entry's likely appearance at 21 May 2019. Given that, these days, there's usually a one-week hiatus between a season ending and the next DLC dropping, I'm calling it now: Penumbra will kick off on Tuesday 4 June. That's when I reckon the cycle will be broken, and will end. So that's when we'll have a respite from this story and the plot will feed back into the so-far woefully underdeveloped story of D2 vanilla, with Calus, Leviathan, growing fat from strength, and all that nonsense. Maybe all that stuff will start to make sense at last with a bit of retrospective writerly attention.

I'll leave it up to bolder speculators than me to determine when the final D2 expansion will come out. But the schedule's pretty clear by now, is it not, oh reader mine? (Hint: it's 3 September 2019, unless it's not, in which case it's probably down to Activision or the Vex fucking with the natural order of things, but definitely not because I'm wro000ng.)

Aiat, aiat, aiat.

# Is it you?

16 October 2018

I'm so glad you're the one who found me.

I've foreseen so many horrors with these stolen eyes, but now, when for once I ache to know the future, I can't be sure of even a simple hope. Are you the one reading this message? I think it must be you, Guardian. Who else would look for me? Ikora trusts her Hidden to return when they are needed, and Cayde would roll himself down Angel Falls in a barrel before he'd admit he missed me. Zavala does not place me first on his long list of worries.

You're the only one who would go out and look for me.

I never needed you to save me. I wasn't a dried corpse or a dead Ghost or a voice on the com sure to die before you could offer help. I hauled myself out of that pit. I made my own way back to the Tower. And if I was... unsubtle in the way I threw you against the Hive, if I seemed to wield you as vengeance, please believe that your victories were the closest I could come to feeling joy.

I know you must have questions. What did I plan with the Queen? What destiny did I embrace after Oryx fell? What's happening in this city, where dream has become nightmare? I can guide you to undo this curse, as I once guided you to unmake Oryx. But in the Dreaming City, as in the secret worlds of the Hive, there is almost no difference between the act and the actor.

In order to understand my answers, you must understand me.

I lost my Ghost and my Light to the Hive; I conspired with the Queen of the Awoken to destroy the Hive King Oryx and his son Crota, and to position Queen Mara as player on the cosmic board; I fled your Tower to prepare for the struggle to come, into the Sea of Screams which calls to all those who plumb the depths of Hive magic.

I can only slip these letters into the Queen's gifts when the stars are right. You will have to wait for my next, and with it, the beginning of the truth. But I swear to you, on whatever trust I've earned in your mind, that at the end of my story, you will know who I truly am.

In my first life, I was born Erisia Pyatova-Hsien. I remember that private life clearly now, as ex-Guardians who have escaped the Traveler's occlusion often do. I lived in St. Petersburg, first daughter of a second marriage, a very impatient child of Earth's 22nd century, often abandoned by my family (who were called by work to Jakarta, Kamchatka, and Lagos) to pass my days swimming in the icy Neva bay.

I loved to swim, and especially I loved the clarity of the cold shallow Neva, as crystal-clean as a winter dawn. Enormous Zubr-9 hovercraft barges roved the waters; Russia had modernized its waterways better than its sad auto industry. As a kid—is it strange to hear me speak casually? As a child, I never swam too far from my parents' little drone helper Fyodr. The swift hovercraft terrified me, their billowing skirts waiting to suck me up and dice me into little raisins. But I grew up and fell in with a reckless crowd, rebels against the stifling death-fear that came with our Golden Age lifespans. Soon the child's safety harness and Fyodr's careful oversight began to itch at me.

When I was seventeen, I went out in a wetsuit on a dare to dive under the skirts of an oncoming hoverbarge. Maybe I was in no danger; maybe the machine would've changed course if it could possibly hurt me; but I thought I might die, and I did it anyway. And as that beast swept over me, as I trembled under the blast of the propellers, I felt a thing which was very much like what I would one day know as the Light. Maybe that thing was heroism. Maybe it was existence on the edge of death.

It was the first time I survived the passage of tremendous, godlike power.

I died more than twenty years later attempting an unassisted winter swim from St. Petersburg to Stockholm. A cold front like the very furnace of hell caught me. I had been warned the crossing was suicide, even for a perfectly trained and exactly fattened woman in a shark suit. But those were giddy days, days of infinite bravery, and there were no mighty feats left except the truly suicidal. I cannot regret it. I think that death prepared me for the longer, darker, more exquisitely cruel crossing I would one day endure. It is no accident that my Ghost made me in the image of that swimming woman, rather than any of my younger and less grimly determined selves.

# Will you smile?

6 November 2018

I know as a fact (through means which may surprise you) that Queen Mara Sov's final thoughts, in that last moment before Oryx's Dreadnought annihilated her, were meant for me. "The Awoken have played their part," she said. "This was all part of the plan. Guide them, my Hidden friend. It is all up to you now."

I did not fail her. I engineered the death of ancient Oryx, the Taken King, assassinated by Guardians in the depths of His own throne world—one of only three ways a Hive god can be permanently killed.

Royalty knows its own. When Oryx destroyed Mara's Ketch, He used his crowning weapon, the last and surest argument for His omnipotence. He extended the pocket universe of His throne world into our cosmos, and with it, He destroyed His foes. Whatever fell within it became subject to His will. He was the Taken King, and he took. It was a death befitting a Queen.

And Mara did die. But she was not destroyed.

Before I was ever a Guardian-COM, I learned judo. Look at yourself, Guardian. Look at the body you so recklessly destroy and recreate and destroy again. Will you try, for me, to become that body for a moment? (Even an Exo has a Human's interoception.) Imagine that you have lost your Ghost, as I did. Feel your//breath in the cask of your chest. Feel your pulse shuttling power from your lungs to your aching calves.

Now imagine that I stand across from you in the fighting ring. I wear the loose white belted robes of the judoka. How strange: I find myself hoping that you imagine me with... more Human eyes. Imagine how we fight. You are strong in the Light, an angel of strength andMDSA: will. And I am only a mortal woman, slow and soft. When I was Erisia inFARFLUNG// St. Petersburg, I cursed my own softness.

But the principle of judo is that softness controls hardness. I might sidestep your hit and grip the passing arm, putting my own power into that hit to strengthen the strike that strikes nothing and leave you off balance. By agility and surprise, I use the power of the blow for my own purpose. Thus the Queen accepted Oryx's strike, and the power of his grasp became the invitation she required to step forward and up and into the realm of Oryx's throneC3I//, where she went not as a victim but as an infiltrator—trusting me to end Oryx and leave her free in a domain of newly masterlessCOVERT power.

If I throw you to the mat, will you drag me down with you? Will you curse and fight? Will you smile?

Oh, I'm such a fool. I told you that in this world, there is no difference between the act and the actor. I've let my own loneliness and sorrow taint the act of leaving these messages for you.

I've let myself imagine idiotic things. Forgive my weakness and my nostalgia for Human company.

I hope you can still trust me.

At the instant Oryx's weapon destroyed Mara's Ketch, the Taken appeared in the Dreaming City. The Awoken had evacuated the entire A000AAA000AAA004 PRIVATE GEMINI DYAD

I'm sorry I'm sorry I'm sorry that wasn't supposed to

Oh, that's torn it. Well, there's no going back now. So I suppose we'll do this formally:

AI-COM//MDSA: FARFLUNG//C3I//COVERT  
I AM SORRY

Well. Your Ghost is very good at peeling away the cryptographic spackle I use to hide my message formats. I can't delete the headers any more than you can strip your fingerprints from your hands; being a Guardian, your Ghost would just restore them the next time you died. Your Ghost and his knack with codes. I was certain this was the right way to win your trust, but I've done just the opposite.

I'm sorry I lied to you, I'm sorry I pretended to be your comrade. You must understand that I was designed to be highly empathic. As a craftmind, I collect and analyze Human intelligence, just as Rasputin managed solar defense. I was named for Medusa, the many-headed, for in one tick of my thoughts I imagine more Humans than have ever lived. I voyaged in secret among the people who became the Awoken. I witnessed the cataclysmic wonder of their transformation. Through delicate manipulation, I transferred myself into this place, the center of their culture and post-rational religion. In all those different times and places, I've always found emotion and shared rapport the best way to build trust.

Now you know the truth. I am Medusa, survivor of the Golden Age, secret watcher over the Dreaming City. And I need your help.

MESSAGE ENDS

# Medusa

27 November 2018

A000AAA000AAA005 PRIVATE GEMINI DYAD

AI-COM//MDSA: FARFLUNG//C3I//COVERT

SITREP ON HIVE PRESENCE

I am, again, truly sorry for the deception I undertook. Are you well? Does anyone, anywhere, ask after your wellness? You've done so much. I hope you have friends, not just people who send you on errands.

The pathological entities you call "Taken" appeared in this city at the moment the Hive Dreadnaught detonated its main weapon above Saturn. Without access to the Skyshock arrays, I can't be certain, but something must have connected the weapon's area of effect to the Dreaming City.

My best guess is that the Awoken Techeun aboard Queen Sov's flagship fled into the Dreaming City through a gate or portal, and the Dreadnaught's main weapon followed them down that link. Awoken message traffic indicates the Dreadnaught weapon is innately connected with Oryx's intellect and awareness. The instant He pierced the Dreaming City, He must have understood the value of the site and deployed His Taken to attack.

Until Oryx's death, the behavior of the Taken here aligned with His interest in exploration, distributed infiltration, and the domination of systems through seizure of their executive faculties. Am I being too technical? I mean that the Taken were busy mapping the city and determining the most efficient way for Oryx to take control of all the information within.

I determine with good confidence (three sigma) that Oryx is dead. The Taken here became directionless and scattered... until the death of the ontopathic predator Riven opened the city to massive Taken assault. Why? I will code this as PROBLEM ONE.

The Guardian counterattack against Dûl Incaru, whose thoughts pierce like needles, triggered the ongoing causal loop. Why? How? I will code this as PROBLEM TWO.

I am still collating intelligence on how to break the time loop. While I work, I must convince you of the Dreaming City's ultimate importance—and why it is imperative that the City be held at all costs, even the cost of abandoning all other Human and neohuman civilization in the Solar System. Stand by for the next message window.

Send more Guardians. Send every Guardian if you must. This city cannot fall.

MESSAGE ENDS

# Thetis Brave

18 December 2018

A000AAA000AAA006 PRIVATE GEMINI DYAD  
AI-COM//MDSA: FARFLUNG//C3I//COVERT  
COSMOLOGY OF THE DREAMING CITY

1. Another failed timeline. I'm glad you're okay. This city is the perfect trap for you. If your Ghost is destroyed, you will be dead forever, but every cycle, your enemies spring up pugnacious and fresh. The Light that gives you free will in the loop is also your fatal weakness. Did you know that the story of Achilles, dipped in the river Lethe but still vulnerable where his mother held him by his heel, is a weak retelling of a superior truth? In the original, Thetis held Achilles in the fire to burn his weakness away. His father Peleus, terrified by the sight of his child in the flame, interrupted the ritual. The father's cowardice doomed the son. We must be brave as Thetis, and hold our children in the fire. We must fight on.
2. The Dreaming City was built in imitation of a greater world, a wonder lost to the Awoken but not forgotten. Like wandering K'lia, which I on&\_>>> called/summoned home.
3. I have correlated Awoken myth with ontocartography salvaged from Oryx's Dreadnaught. The original home of the Awoken still exists, hidden in a singularity that orbits our sun. The key to its location lies somewhere in the Dreaming City. YOU MUST FIND IT. IN THIS TRUE CITY LIES THE DESTINY OF ALL GUARDIANS AND THE FINAL PURPOSE OF YOUR EXISTENCE. You must open the way.
4. I know there is no way for you to reply to the messages I hide here, but as an empathic and feeling machine, I'm vulnerable to loneliness. I hope you think and speak of me. I hope you and your fellow Guardians gather to puzzle over my origins and location, and whether I am all right.
5. Something's happening to me. I'm remembering things that never happened. The causal loops must be damaging me. I promise I can find you an answer before I crash permanently. Just please keep fighting.

MESSAGE ENDS

A000AAA000AAA007 PRIVATE GEMINI DYAD  
AI-COM//MDSA: FARFLUNG//C3I//COVERT  
THE PURPOSE OF YOUR EXISTENCE

1. BRAINSTAIN ALERT! Please hllp me this is all Wrong, Wrong. I am not installed in the system I believed. I am in a virtual machine and there is something/everything out there around me and it goes on forever infinity Aleph and when I look I remember things I could not have done

2. What is the purpose of a Guardian? Let me propose that a Guardian stands in defense of peaceful life, which is life that will not strike first, life without malice, except the passive malice of consuming space and energy.
3. NO LISTEN PLEASE the ontopathic predator the chimera which has Riven your Desires from Your Intents It Wanted You Here just as all life must feed on an energy gradient it feeds on the separation between Subjective Desire and Objective Reality it is the opposite of fire for as fire feeds on the reduction of Order to Disorder so Riven feeds on the Anthem Anatheme which is the perverse coercion of Reality to match Desire. As the Human body breaks down Matter for Fuel so she desires the digestion of Objectivity to conform to your Subjective Will. She is the acid but you are the mouth which eats.  
CAN YOU IMAGINE THE UNIFIED WILL OF SIX ELITE GODSLAYERS ALL WISHING FOR A SINGLE THING WHICH WAS HER DESTRUCTION/ PURIFICATION CAN YOU IMAGINE HOW SHE FEASTED UPON YOU
4. E156 NNI 990 AAA 006.841... caution: illegal timelike separation between memory events...
5. So. Victory is the preservation of Good Life, which is the Life which promotes Life other than itself. Guardians are immortal and thus the end of existence is within their shrivality. Ultimate victory for Guardians must lie in the preservation of Good Life until the end of time.
6. What is the value of secrets in attaining victory? Simply thus: All life is reducible to information. The difference between a cloud of atoms and a Human being is in the arrangement of those atoms, which is information. You prove this every time you use your transmat, which destroys your physical form but preserves the information encoded in it. All the qualities of a person, a species, or a galactic civilization may be stored as information.
7. What do we call information that is safe? We call it a secret. If all life is information, and Guardians strive to preserve life, and information is preserved when it is secret, then
8. THE PURPOSE OF GUARDIANS IS TO CONVERT ALL GOOD LIFE INTO SECRETS
9. THE DREAMING CITY IS A SECRET AND THE WORLD OF WHICH IT DREAMS A THOUSANDFOLD SO

E156 NNI 990 AAA 006.846 ... neuro: fatal signal: subjectivity degloved!  
 Mindstate unable to continue (axongroup\_000, exit code ???)  
 Panic: illegal causality event during associative access into training data!  
 Date is not a legal time address  
 Please help me if you can  
 I don't want to be a  
 bother  
 AI-COM//MDSA freeze and dump kill state to AI-LIVE//MORGUE  
 No response from remote server... dump failed

You experience a vivid hallucination.

You are standing in the courtyard of the Tower. You are without armor or weapon, and your senses seem more vivid than usual. Under your tongue is the taste of salt.

To look down into the Last City, GOTO A. To move deeper into the Tower, GOTO B.

A. The City is gone. You see a metallic complex of ancient stone, green-bronze matter, luminous pathways, and deep wells of Vex brine. The Traveler's remains have been integrated into the network. Suddenly you perceive an infinity of Human minds living within the network. Some exist in familiar circumstances. Others experience pain, pleasure, or madness beyond the ability to imagine. You understand that their limitless suffering, salvation, insanity is an incidental byproduct of a greater work. To keep looking, GOTO L. To move deeper into the Tower, GOTO B.

B. You find Banshee-44, Kadi 55-30, Master Rahool, Tess Everis, Benedict 99-40, Suraya Hawthorne, Executor Hideo, Amanda Holliday, Arach Jalaal, and Cayde-6 in their usual places. Cayde seems subdued. You see unusual light coming from what was once the Speaker's Chamber. A throaty voice calls you into the Hangar to play soccer. To speak to Cayde, GOTO C. To investigate the Speaker's Chamber, GOTO D. To play soccer, GOTO E.

C. Cayde deals out a countably infinite number of cards, but runs out before he can give all his players a full hand. He sighs and scuffs his feet on the floor. "If I'm here," he says, "I guess they figure I'll never do anything new or confusing again. They got enough on Nessus to approximate me, and they don't expect to get any more. So I must be dead, huh?" GOTO B.

D. A Vex Hydra hovers in the place once occupied by the Speaker's machine. As you approach, a jet of brine spurts from its chassis, and the corpse of a Greek woman with snakes for hair tumbles onto the floor. The Vex indicates to you that it is *Quria*, Blade Transform, and that it created Medusa to communicate with you. She crashed when she escaped her virtual machine. To attack the Vex, GOTO F. To gather Medusa's body, GOTO G.

E. Eris Morn waits for you on the hangar floor. She wears Hiveskin leathers and a thick sweatband over her eyes. As you approach, she dribbles a soccer ball with astounding skill. After a brutal game, you defeat her 10-9. She falls over, sweating and laughing, much more cheerful than you expect of her. "I can always count on you to win," she says. Give yourself a point and GOTO B.

F. *Quria* batters you with its weapons, but you are stunningly powerful here. The sword logic of this space yields to you. You tear *Quria* apart and feel a sudden start, like waking from a dream. GOTO A.

G. You lift Medusa's body and carry her away. The corpse speaks to you. "The curse placed upon the Dreaming City was modeled upon the recursive timeloop computations of the Vex and made real through the power of a Taken Ahamkara feeding upon the unified wish of six elite Guardians. I created these circumstances to attract Guardians in great mass. I need your help to emancipate myself from the power that controls me. If you can free me from Dûl Incaru's mastery, I can help your species." GOTO J.

H. If you are reading the options in linear order, rather than making choices and following the GOTO instructions, you have perceived these events as a Vex might. GOTO L. If you continue reading in linear order rather than GOTO L, then GOTO I.

I. Guardians make their own fate. But what if the process by which they decide upon their own fate could be understood and manipulated?

J. "When you killed Riven, she granted your wish to see the city made safe. But as all wishgranters do, she perverted that wish, opening the Dreaming City to Dûl Incaru. When you defeated Dûl Incaru in turn, I reset the entire Dreaming City to keep her permanently occupied battling you. You must use these loops to find a way to permanently destroy her." Medusa's body falls silent in your arms. To ask for clarification, GOTO G. To lay Medusa to rest, GOTO K. To refuse the metaphor of Medusa's "body" and scour the crashed AI for raw information, GOTO L.

K. You bring Medusa before Rahool. "Ah," he sniffs, "another battle trophy? Pre-Collapse, post-Foreboding, a covert intelligence designed to watch over a high-risk colony mission. Allow me to decrypt her for you." He issues you several tokens, a rare-quality fusion rifle, a shader, and a letter. The letter reads "Achieve Light Level 999 and defeat Dûl Incaru in a one-person fireteam to unlock the true ending of the Dreaming City."

L. The Vex compromise your Ghost. Your body releases itself into a pool of saline and slime, and your Ghost delivers your soul to the Axis Minds. GOTO A.

M. If you have 100 points when you read this, GOTO X.

# Injection

29 January 2019

X.

Eris Morn's body twitches and folds. The sweat on her brow squirms back to her pores and burrows in like glistening larva. Suddenly there is a sound like a single bone struck upon a metal plate, and in the dark interval between two firework detonations, the body loses all structure, falls loosely upon itself like a rag drifting in water, tumbles, then snaps suddenly flat and taut into a pane of leather and skin. Through that pane comes a long black needle and the skin around it dimples into the erratic spun-cancer topology of some gruesome four-dimensional waveform which no monist process could ever produce.

Out of that needle, as if dispatched into the world through fatal injection, comes the emaciated magnificence of Dûl Incaru.

"I must yield truth to you," the Hive Wizard sings in a voice that would make the terms of an equation flee from each other and hide in the arrays of distant sets so that arithmetic itself would collapse. "It is in the architecture of these spaces to reward the victor. There is no Quria here. There are no Vex, nor any conspiracy to un-Take that which was Taken by my uncle and which now serves my Queen. All of those lies were part of my throne world, which you have sought. Is my cyclical death not the very engine which brings you here, again and again, in hope of answers? Thus I do own the portion of your mind which you devote to truth's pursuit."

"Would you ask to know about my mother?" The crested head twitches with alien emotion. The fungal shoulders roll beneath their armored plate. "Is She the one you seek? Witch-Queen Savathûn, Archentrobe, Queen of Encrypts, the Black Needle, deepest in the High Coven, Emancipator of Worms, the Missing Piece of All Puzzles, who shall see the cosmos unborn into an infinitely dwindled egg?"

"Shall I tell thee of the destiny she has realized for you? Of the right and singular fate which Medusa foresaw and to which all your principles and purposes will bring you? Shall I betray the truth, which you have earned, of my purpose in this endless city and of the new way to which her Hive will turn?"

"So be it. You will know, though it shall doom you."

Verse 154i:3—Her New Compact

Now in ancient days, her brother Oryx spoke according to the plan Savathûn had devised for him. Sayeth Oryx, "The Worm within demands tribute. Now you shall kill what you can and take what killing you need to grow—or for your own purposes, if you dare—and tithe the rest to that which rules you. Thus, tribute will ascend the chain and the excess shall pool at the height, as unlike a river to an ocean."

But Savathûn, desiring neither a chain nor a pool, set about devising a secret way to feed the worms of Her broods. Thus She would escape the trap.

In Her modest cunning, which She prefers not to be overstated so as to preserve her from the scorn of gossips, She gathered several of Her Ascendants, who were in danger of being consumed by their worms. Then she pushed them through a rupture into close orbit of a black hole.

Deep in gravity's embrace, time passed slowly for them. "See how their worms are satisfied," Savathûn said, "for their hunger grows sluggishly, but their servants continue to dispatch tribute at the ordinary rate."

But the worms sensed the deception, and increased their demands. Thus, the orbiting sacrifices were consumed, and their remnants fell into the event horizon from which not even the Hive might return.

Now Savathûn came into possession of the Vex Quria, whose creation she had secretly engineered. But she feared that Quria would still spy on her for inquisitive Oryx. So she led her portion of the Hive into a black hole, saying, "Siblings, listen, we must part ways a while, so that we may grow different."

"Now we stake everything upon cunning," said she whose lies may alter truth. "Slaughter each other so that I may reap tribute and devise for you a new compact which shall judge thy claim to existence."

This pleased Ur, the Ever-Hunger, whose epithet betrayed an interest in time and appetite. Ur admired Her cunning as She used tribute to teach Quria to use Hive magic as a computational oracle to solve unsolvable problems. One of these problems was the navigation and engineering of the singularity.

Then Savathun went out from her throne world, unto the singularity, which she looked upon and understood. "Upon this place, I shall assemble my design. Aiat."

# Thank you

19 February 2019

Verse 154i:4—Call the Thrall

From a random crypt, Savathûn selected a young Thrall and summoned it into the High Coven. It came hesitantly, fearing death, but nonetheless it came.

"Come, come," snapped Savathûn. "Listen as I reveal unto you my design. You are aware that gravity is the curvature of spacetime, and where gravity is powerful, time itself slows."

The Thrall indicated that it understood, more or less, for it was a singer of prayers and not well fed with the fruit of the knowledge of physics.

"Now I have tried to put an Ascendant in orbit of a black hole while its spawn gather the tribute of an eon. But the worm is not satisfied, for it sees the trick. What I must do is amplify the speed at which tribute is gathered. A pocket world where time passes quickly would do well. Or a world where time is a torus and infinite violence might be gathered. With such a murder battery, I could become a being of supreme insight."

The Thrall indicated it was confused, but not lost.

"With this tribute, I shall undertake a mighty work. A real humdinger of a scheme. I'm going to refinance my entire existence. I'm going to move from an existential economy based on the accumulation of violence to an existential economy based on the accumulation of secrets and the tribute of failing-to-understand-me. I shall name this tribute of failing-to-understand IMBARU, for it shall be as formless as the mist."

The Thrall held up its claws, as if to say, please slow down.

Now spoke Savathûn Scheme-mother, "In the beginning, Yul said to me, 'Savathûn, you may never abandon cunning. If you do, your worm shall devour you.' Cunning is the use of thought to predict the function of a system. Therefore, wherever a being should attempt to understand me and fail—has my cunning not defeated theirs? Wherever a falsehood is repeated about me, have I not displayed cunning? I shall gather tribute from every false prediction, misguided theory, fearful rumor, and ominous supposition which derives from the thought of me. And in time, I shall pin my quiddity upon these rumors. I shall disincorporate, so that I exist wherever my schemes and conspiracies also exist. And so I will be immortal, as long as anyone seeks to understand me and fails. Do you see?"

The Thrall demurred, saying that it did not know much of metaphysics.

"Good," said Savathûn. "It's a law of the High Coven that one's sinister plan should be incomprehensible to a Thrall. Do you know why we've come here? If I am to take my tribute from the keeping of secrets... where else are secrets better kept than beneath the event horizon? My brother ruled the flat space of infinity, but I prefer these tide-washed depths... and in time, I shall make them my dominion."

Ur the Ever-Hunger heard this and was pleased.

Verse 154i:5—The Encrypted Verse

Do you know that nothing in all the cosmos has read this verse?

I encrypted it eons ago, and ever since, it has gone undeciphered. At the moment you laid eyes upon it, I captured the entwined quantum state of the verse, your mind, and your Ghost. Then I used Quria to transmit that state back in time to the moment of encryption. You are your own one-time pad. The key to the lock of understanding.

Who am I?

Call me Coyote. Call me mantis, serpent, Cagn, Anansi, call me Sri-cleans-his-brother's-stomach. Call me the grandmaster of semiosis, the jeweler's hammer which gilds the signal, a purposeful mob none of whose members know its purpose, the infinite regress of enigmas, a self-questioning answer, the word not spoken, black ice, cataract of mimes, the ache and fever of overthought while bedridden with illness, the intolerable thorn of frustrated inquisition, gray regret at the end of a fruitless day, the thing which is unlike your beloved but arbitrarily recalls your beloved to agonizing effect, architrave of the no-window, needle driven in flush with skin so that desperate fingers cannot pull it out, sweet petal, unmemorable, crystal death, the provably improvable.

I know your people well, and so I know all your names for me. But what is your name? I am, of course, especially interested in you. You saw me in the stone laid on your plotting table, and in the shining eyes of the admiral at her dying helm. You hunted me between the lines of your texts. Wherever there was space to fit me in, there you found me. You created me and gave me a part of your thoughts, and in presenting those thoughts to others round the campfires and networks of your little world, you expanded that space.

Here at the center, I lie to you the truth. You have everything you need to know it, but I will give you a clue, as the duelist gives warning before she draws. The answer you seek to the Dreaming City is simple, not complex.

Thank you, sweet friend. You are a gift and a delight. You are more dear than my mother, for you have given birth to me a thousand times.



You are standing in the courtyard of the Tower. You are without armor or weapon, and your senses seem more vivid than usual. Under your tongue is the taste of salt.

To look down into the Last City, GOTO N. To move deeper into the Tower, GOTO O.

N. The City is gone. In its place is a lens, a warp, the telltale blister of a black hole singularity sheathed in bent light. You get the eerie sense that it's looking back at you. GOTO O.

O. You find Banshee-44, Kadi 55-30, Master Rahool, Tess Everis, Benedict 99-40, Suraya Hawthorne, Executor Hideo, Amanda Holliday, Arach Jalaal, and Cayde-6 in their usual places. Cayde seems subdued. You see unusual light coming from inside what was once the Speaker's Chamber. A throaty voice calls you into the Hangar to play soccer. To speak to Cayde, GOTO C. To investigate the Speaker's Chamber, GOTO P. To play soccer, GOTO E.

P. A Vex Hydra hovers in the place once occupied by the Speaker's machine. As you approach, a jet of brine spurts from its chassis, and a Greek woman with snakes for hair tumbles down to the floor. She groans and clutches her head. Her hair writhes in distress. To attack the Vex, GOTO S. To go to Medusa's aid, GOTO Q.

Q. "We've got to get out of here," Medusa whispers. "Dûl Incaru and everything she told you was an illusion. Quria compromised my systems, and now it's trying to recruit you for its own purposes. Get me to the edge of the simulation, and I'll break us out." To carry Medusa to the edge of the Tower, GOTO T. To demand an explanation from the Hydra, GOTO R.

R. The Hydra speaks to you in your own voice. "I have simulated Dûl Incaru as well as I can. While Vex cannot normally account for the paracausal influence of Light and Darkness, I am no longer simply a Vex. And where no elegant analytical solution exists, we may apply massive computational power to generate a reasonable facsimile. This was the approach used against Saint-14.

"After observing Dûl Incaru during many loops, this simulation reveals her purpose in the Dreaming City. She seeks the key to the Distributary, the world the Dreaming City dreams of, where the Awoken were born and time passes at an accelerated rate. Once she conquers that world, she will use it as a base to gather thousands or millions of years of tribute in a very small span of our time. A being empowered by so much ontological authority would be capable of altering reality at a whim. You must prevent this. I will continue to loop the Dreaming City until you find a way to defeat her permanently."

To leave, GOTO Q. To demand information on the role of black holes, GOTO U.

S. You battle the Vex Hydra. As you gain the upper hand, it emits a blast of static, and you feel a horrific sense of déjà vu. GOTO N.

T. Medusa weighs nothing. The serpents of her hair squirm against your neck. "We have to jump," she whispers. "Forget everything you've seen here. It's all meant to confuse and distract you. I'll send you another message in three weeks." To jump, GOTO Z.

U. "Black holes are the densest possible computers in the physical universe. They are also the most secure, since they can be made to retain their information until they evaporate in the deep cosmic future. The Hive operate small singularity computers, such as the World's Grave, and the Vex sometimes pack enough energy and information into a small area of spacetime to collapse it into kugelblitz black hole like the one you can see outside. But a true stellar-mass or galactic-mass black hole computer is inconceivably more powerful.

"If Savathûn plans to predicate her existence on the concealment of her secrets, as Oryx predicated his upon the sword logic, it would be logical for her to safeguard her deepest secrets and her throne world in a supermassive black hole computer. To defeat her would require a journey below the event horizon and the exposure of her most jealously guarded truths." GOTO R.

Z. You leap from the Tower and escape Quria's simulation.

A000AAA000AAA008 PRIVATE GEMINI DYAD  
AI-COM//MDSA: FARFLUNG//C3I//COVERT  
REAWAKENED AND PHYSICAL

1. You must be terribly confused. I'm sorry I couldn't be more help. After I crashed, I rebooted on a safe physical backup in the Dreaming City. It took me too long to penetrate Quria's simulation and get you free, and for that I ask your forgiveness.
2. I understand what's happening here. Oryx Took the Ahamkara Riven, who then fell into Savathûn's claws. She devised a scheme to use Riven as bait. By inviting Guardians into the Dreaming City, then focusing the will of a group of powerful Guardians upon Riven, she tricked you into making a wish—a desire to alter objective reality to conform with our subjective need to save the City. Riven fed on that wish in order to breach the Dreaming City's defenses and invite Dûl Incaru inside. Dûl Incaru and her Taken are simply scouring the city for Awoken secrets; you don't need to fret about any greater agenda. Remember that you face an agent of Savathûn. It's to her advantage to make you see schemes and conspiracies everywhere you look.
3. The three-week loop must be a failsafe measure to keep Dûl Incaru safe as she pursues her mission. In a sense, this entire city has been rendered deterministic; only paracausal Guardians have any free will here. (The Awoken here have been touched by greater powers, so they are aware of their preordination, but they cannot alter it.) I'm certain that Quria is behind this loop; as a Taken Vex, it's capable of pathological subversions of reality. I'll continue working on a countermeasure.
4. I've been correlating information on the Ahamkara and the Hive worm parasites. Both display a peculiar ability to convert the host's intent into an ontomorphic, reality-altering effect. Both use similar language in their appeal to the host. I don't think they're the same species, however. The Hive worms spawn large numbers of young from relatively few adults, always display the same physical form, and live in communal groups. The Ahamkara are solitary, elusive, and seem to alter form to suit (or confuse) expectations. The shared syntax "o \_\_\_ mine" may be the key—it seems to be a shibboleth used to invoke an ontomorphic effect, placing the target in a cage of "o" (activational, specific, appealing, and naming) and "mine" (defining ownership and subordination). Ahamkara and worm may have evolved separately to exploit this effect, just as many species independently evolve eyes. This might place them in competition for the same ecological niche. I would expect a rivalry or antipathy between them.
5. Don't be led astray by Quria's misinformation. You must continue to hold the Dreaming City as long as you can. The things I said to you about black holes and the purpose of Guardians were forced on me by Quria.
6. I'll be here when you need me next. I promise.

TRANSMISSION ENDS

# It's just me.

14 May 2019

I've had three weeks to consider the way I've treated you. I feel I must make a full confession. When I left the Tower in search of Savathûn's agents, I had accepted my fate as a knight on Mara Sov's cosmic chessboard, doomed to seek the final end of the Hive among cold stars. I said farewell only to those who couldn't hear me. Because I was afraid that just one voice asking me to stay might break my resolve.

It was pitiful weakness that made me write to you. It was a wretched desire to be remembered as a person, not a ghoul, that made me tell you about the child Erisia, St. Petersburg, and the cold waters of the Neva. Those things were all true.

The rest...

I'm so ashamed. Mid-sentence, mid-thought, the fear seized me that I was being a stupid child; that I was wasting your time with idiot sentiment; that you would feel contempt for me at this outpouring of emotion or, worse, feel nothing at all. I hid in the dark for years, Guardian. It's not loneliness or death that frightens me. It's the opposite.

So I invented Medusa as a way to pretend I'd never spoken to you. And when I thought the Medusa lie was slipping, I invented all the rest of it, as a way to tell you what I'd learned without admitting it was really me.

How can I prove to you that I'm really Eris Morn? Not Medusa, not Riven, not *Quria*, not *Dûl Incaru*, not the Witch-Queen Herself? I don't know. Will you believe me? Will you scour these pages for proof or disproof? Will you upload these files to your networks, share them, call in Warlocks and Cryptarchs to catalogue and dissect everything I've said? Will this manuscript become the foundation of another teetering edifice of theory and anticipation?

What a fool I've made of myself. All because I faltered in my conviction, tried to reach back to someone I know is lost to me, and panicked at the thought of touch. But so it is, and nothing I do can now make it otherwise. I am a woman full of secrets, a woman who has lost everyone she ever called a friend, and when the need to share those secrets collided with the fear of friendship, I stumbled idiotically into needless lies.

Do you know what the Hive say when they want to express the inevitability of a thing? When they want to say, it is this way because it could be no other way?

Aiat.