

# *Untouchable*

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*<https://discord.gg/rphq>*

I wasn't allowed out of the temple since the day I was honored above all others. I was chosen at just 6 years old to be the bride of Uhl. One girl from each settlement, to be trained in the arts of pleasing. My settlement had chosen their most precocious child, and from that day I was confined to the temple to await my intended as I learned how a wife is supposed to behave.

But after 17 years of isolation, my only company the wise women who came to train me, with no sign of this deity coming to claim me, I was more than finished with spending my days in isolation, forbidden from touching or being touched. I had windows, high atop the temple, no larger than a hands width, from which I would often stare out at the world I couldn't join. Today I watched as the poles were strung with strings of pendants and the vats were hauled from storage. Children would run buckets back and forth from the river to fill the massive vats, and the colormaster would add the pigments to the water.

Then, after sitting overnight, the festival of colors would begin. By the end of the week-long celebration every person and surface within sight would be brilliantly colored with splashes of every color in nature. There would be music, games, competitions. And I would be here, watching it all happen while I awaited my Godly suitor to come claim me.

Be grateful, they told me, for I have been given a great honor.

They could take their honor and shove it up their assets for all I cared. Yet, for all my impotent rage, rebellion, lashing out, there was no relief for me. The door to the temple was sealed. My food

and clothing was passed to me by means of a small slit along the gifting wall.

They did give me gifts, every day. Sweets, flowers, clothing, books, soaps, trinkets, so many gifts. They said each gift was an embrace, and I should be more grateful.

Perhaps I should have been more grateful. But it wouldn't have stopped what happened next. As I watched the vats being slowly filled with water, a figure appeared in the sky overhead. I thought my mind had finally cracked. Nothing could possibly be standing in the sky! Another figure appeared, and another, all seeming to drop out of the dark, rolling clouds that perpetually covered our sky.

Then the clouds seemed to bulge toward the city. A massive shape emerged, descending toward the people below, who had only just seen the anomaly. They pointed, waved, and stared in awe as these new gods came down from the heavens.

It occurred to me that my godly intended may have finally come to claim me. My heart raced uncontrollably. Would he take me from my prison, touch me, let me walk among the people of the city? Would he simply take me back to ... wherever he came from?

I wasn't ever told what would happen when he came for me, but within moments I was certain this was not him. Uhl was said to be a God of knowledge. He had led us to the time of prosperity, helped us create the technology that ended our starving and brought up wealth and comfort.

Before any of the figures touched the ground, they began to flash with light and sound. Something they carried emitted bursts of

flame and people below them began to fall. Soon screaming filled the air as more and more of the figures poured out of the large object that slowly lowered out of the clouds.

The newcomers covered the city quickly. Within hours the screaming had ended, though there was still an occasional shriek from somewhere in the city. Buildings were destroyed, blown to pieces or burned, to make a space for that thing that lowered out of the clouds.

On the edge of the city I could see thick, acrid smoke billowing into the sky as they burned bodies. I should have grieved, I should have cried. I should have despaired to see so many of my kind murdered. But I felt nothing.

How long had they all ignored my sobbing? I had begged, pleaded, screamed until I had no voice. Time and again, for someone to touch me, to open my prison. I had done nothing to deserve this imprisonment, I'd been chosen because I was good!

So I watched my city as it was invaded and destroyed. The object from the clouds settled onto the area cleared for it. It looked like a castle, a flying castle. The next moment something was flung from the object, ribbons of some sort of fluid raining behind it. One object flew towards the temple. I ran as far as I could, but the object destroyed everything. I was rendered unconscious. I didn't see the city burn.

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Daybreakers, a cult of beings who both worshiped and thrived in the radiation emitted from the various star systems in the galaxy. Fully

believing their race of being was of divine selection by the one true God in the universe it was their sole purpose in life to not only spread the gospel and ways of their God, but to eradicate non-believers, or those that appeared to be an affront to their very way of being.

Most notably it was those races and species of beings that were classified as being Umbra, that were targeted specifically to be cleansed. Species that either lived in near or mostly darkness, or species that aesthetically were less beautiful than other more radiant ones.

Over the course of years this particular planet was surveyed from afar and superficial information was garnered from the inhabitants therein. These were the children of Uhl, demons, whose very presence was a stain upon this galaxy. The Daybreakers did not see themselves as aggressors, invaders, or murderers as they had decimated several civilizations prior to this. Instead they were cleansers, the one true species that could shed the filthy shackles of darkness and help bring their radiant light to even the deepest and darkest pockets in the galaxy. Their mission was one of divinity and there was no question in their minds that what they were doing was for the greater good of all.

Mindless culling was not the sole goal of the Daybreakers. Indeed, it was important to reduce the numbers of resistance fighters by overwhelmingly making an example of those that stood within the way of divine advancement, but many would be taken in as refugees. Some would say as prisoners, though Daybreakers would refer to this as purifying and saving souls who had lost their way. To simply erase a civilization did little than eliminate an immediate

problem, but would do little in promoting their own line of beliefs. Thus it was just as important to convert, and learn the intricacies of these pagans so that the Daybreakers could better eliminate the source of the problem, at its root.

Twenty spired citadels descended that fateful day, as beacons of hope that shone and illuminated the landscapes below. Each headed by a Bishop of Sol, the Sun God. Each Bishop responsible in not only subjugating their respective regions, but an overarching goal in studying the native species and ultimately learning how they might better overcome the blasphemous beliefs at their core.

Flare was the Bishop of Citadel VII having ascended the ranks of the most faithful to be anointed as one of the youngest Bishops on record. The equivalent of being in one's 30s if compared to a species of a much shorter timespan. Bishops were blessed by their gods, bestowed with a sliver of divine power which shown in the form of a marking upon their foreheads, and eyes that would light ablaze. This alone was among one of the highest honors one could hope to achieve while in the Daybreakers, to be touched and blessed by their god.

“Utterly filthy-“ Flared commented, taking his first steps upon the soiled grounds of the blanket. Ruins of a decimated city lay for as far as the eye could see. Corpses, wounded that were still clinging to life, as well as officers collecting the still able bodied. “To think these people had to live in such squalor.” His heart went out to those misled by a false idol as he walked through the remains of a ruined temple, undoubtedly an offering to that fake god. Golden eyes shown upon what he presumed to be a female of the species, a corpse of yet another non-believer.

"Look at this destruction, where is your god now? If only you could have been shown the lighter path to walk upon instead of blindly wandering in the darkness-" He crouched down, extended an abnormally warm hand to cup and contour to the female's neck. "Oh- So your journey is not yet over is it?" He mumbled, noting the subtle weak pulse along her neck.

the fitful nightmare of my solitary existence is ended by a gentle touch on my neck. My eyes snap open and meet the glowing eyes of...

"Uhl?" I say, my voice a faint whisper. I try to sit up and my vision blurs. Pain spikes in my head, so severe I feel nauseous. I clutch my head and moan pitifully, certain my head will burst. I feel stickiness matting my hair to my scalp. My own blood.

"I'm hurt, lord Uhl! The pain!" I cry, unable to stop the tears that pour from my eyes. "Help me, Lord Uhl!"

I reach toward the creature before me, stopping short of touching him. My hand trembles visibly. Though it hurts to open my eyes I want to see my soon to be husband, the man I've waited, alone, to be given to, for the majority of my life.

He looks nothing like what I expected. All the depictions of Uhl show a large, horned, ashen colored being with the solid, colorless eyes of my people.

This being has glowing eyes, and wears clothing I've never seen. But he touched me, of that i am certain. My isolation ended, I want nothing more than to be touched, to feel his warm hand on my skin again.

Flare's brow lifted as the female curiously referred to him as Uhl, that defiler, the impure false god that had tricked this species into a life of condemnation. His immediate inclination was to correct the foul association, but perhaps this bit of disillusion could benefit not only him, but Sol. What a sad species to worship an idol that never so much as visited these people, or so he assumed given she so easily mistook him as the idol.

Indeed, what better way to show his love to Sol than to be the first Bishop out of twenty who could unravel the secrets of this civilization, and bring down Uhl from the source. And this girl, hurt and weak, appeared to believe him to be none other than her savior. In many ways he was.

"Easy there." His palm warmly drifted towards her cheek, to help support her gaze as he peered into those colorless eyes. "I am here now for you. You are among the very few that will be spared this day. You who never stopped believing in me, even in your darkest moments." Flare would not specifically refer to himself as Uhl, but neither would he refute her. Not yet. Not until the girl warmed up to him a bit further. It was much easier to peer inside the mind of one warmed and opened to the reader, as opposed to closed and frigid.

With minimal effort the Daybreaker scooped her up in his arms, carrying her bridal-style towards the bridge that would take them towards the spired citadel. Whether she chose to lose consciousness, or watch her surroundings made no matter. Many foreigners could be spotted, soldiers wearing warmer colors. Shades of reds, oranges, and gold. None with the eyes or markings quite like Flare. The looks she garnered were of disapproval. She



was a tainted being in their eyes. So much so bare skinned contact would be avoided, aside from only the purest of the Daybreakers. In this case Flare's radiance would simply overwhelm whatever latent darkness was left inside her.

The journey was a lengthy one as she was carried through the floating city and towards the upper echelons of the spire whereby ultimately she would find herself admitted into quarters befitting an officer of the corps. Markings of the sun and similar motifs were engraved in the tile and woodwork across the entire Citadel. The same warm colors that the soldiers wore was extended to the various rooms one may find. Torches, braziers, hearths were common sights, and this was no different when he walked her into the bedroom and laid her on the crimson colored blankets of the bed. The walls and ceiling basking in the light of the flickering hearth as Flare tore a portion of his own garment so to begin cleaning some of the blood that stained her. Trying to access just how wounded she might be.

"Tell me, dear, across all that rubble that lay strewn about you, I could not see another. Not so much as a single person. For what reason were you so alone? Or perhaps, is that something you prefer?" He inquired, fishing for knowledge so to better keep up appearances.

It feels wonderful to be touched! The looks from the others barely registering as I lay my head against him, amazed at how warm he feels. This is why I wasn't to be touched, so that I might feel this touch, only this touch! Surely no other person could feel this wonderful!

All too soon, he places me on a bed inside of the enormous castle that he rode down from the skies. The room is unlike anything I've seen, adorned with images of the sun everywhere I look, and firelight flickering in every corner. The red cover on the bed is the richest, most vibrant red I've seen. My hand idly smooths over the soft material.

Your question confuses me, though. Why would Uhl ask why I was alone? It was by his demand that I had been sealed in the temple to await him! Could he have forgotten? Or, could this question be a test of some sort?

"Lord Uhl, I have remained sealed inside the temple, awaiting your return. I was chosen to be your bride, lord Uhl, I have waited alone since you commanded a bride be chosen." I answer carefully.

He tends to my injuries using his own clothing, an honor I am not blind to. I flinch away as he reaches for me, but quickly recover and lean into his touch tentatively. He feels so warm when he touches me! His touch drives away any doubt about who he is. This must be Uhl, who else could have come like he did, descending from the clouds with fire and death?

My hands shake as I remember the screams. Uhl was our savior, wasn't he? Or did he come to destroy us? Had we gone so far astray? I look at him fearfully, wondering if he means to destroy me as well.

Half hooded eyes peered down upon her, his gaze filled with warmth in much the same way that his own body radiated heat. By comparison she felt much cooler, he could practically feel her greedy skin trying to take in as much of his heat as it could. This alone only underlined Flare's belief in that he was following the true

path. Here was one, trapped in darkness and so cold. If that was how things were meant to be then surely she wouldn't be seemingly craving such a touch.

So she was meant to be a bride? To think their god would demand sacrifices to bond in marriage, to sate and/or fulfill what Flare could only presume to be carnal indulgences. Sol was the one true god in his eyes, devoid of mortal sins such as lust or greed. Flare was notably not absent sin, none of the Daybreakers were, for no mortal could be sinless, but only aspire to be.

Before she may piece together this Bishop may be something beyond the Uhl she was expecting, Flare went to pacify her fears. It wasn't lost upon him as she flinched at his advances. After all this was all new to her, coupled with the sight of her homeland brought down into ruin. These first moments together would be quite important towards framing her view of him. Almost like an imprinting, first impressions were critical and difficult to overcome. It would behoove him to be seen as her savior, her lord, her god.

Taking a seat upon the edge of the bed he leaned over, propped up by elbow while his left hand was free to roam, tucking her silver hair, stained with blood, behind her ear. "And what a beautiful bride you are. Tell me, my bride, what would you like for me to call you by? You needn't be fearful-" His hand warmly took her own shaking hand, entwining his fingers with her own before leaning forward to press a warm kiss to her forehead. "You've been through quite a lot haven't you? I hope you can forgive for the wait, but I am pleased after so much time it was you I was able to find."

I had spent so much time hating this God, raging against the cruel honor of being confined, alone, to wait for him, and he was everything a God should be! He touched me gently, and spoke patiently and was so very perfect!

But something wasn't right. His appearance was only part of it. I couldn't understand why he would destroy so much, only to be so kind to me.

I struggle with my confusion, my training, and everything I'd just witnessed all so at odds with what was happening now. I'd spent so long hating this God, who was the reason I had been cut off from life! And now he fed me compliments and touches I'd craved my entire life!

I could see how I'd been trapped, how my confinement played into his hands. I was expected to become so enamored of him, the only one who would touch me, that I would...do what?

He kisses my forehead gently, leaving a burning brand where his lips touch. I'm almost lost, then, as tears spring to my eyes at this display of affection. This cannot be Uhl!

I clutch at your hand, hugging it to my chest as tears fall. My voice is clear when I speak, at odds to my appearance of turmoil.

"If you are Uhl, then I am not worthy of being your bride. I have spent my life hating you. You put me in prison, alone, for... seventeen years!"

I look up and meet your gaze, anger flashing behind mine.

"Can you imagine? Seventeen years I waited. I cannot forgive you, I never chose this honour! And now you come and ... you cannot be

Uhl. You cannot be the cruel God who took away everything from me!"

Almost desperately, I reach toward his face, needing to touch him, to prove he is real.

"Please, you can't be Uhl!"

Removing his lips from her forehead his eyes searched her reaction. She seemed quite receptive to physical touch. Perhaps a bit shy, uncertain of indulging in it, but he would soon come to learn that uncertainty emanated from the loathing deep within her being. At this moment Flare was leaned in such that perhaps half a foot existed between their faces, close enough for the heat of his gaze to radiate and fall against her cheeks subtly.

And then came the tears, followed by a fire lurking behind that passive face of hers.

Oh Uhl, you failure of a deity. Flare could surmise based upon her description that she served in something akin to a priestess role. An emissary to be sacrificed to her own god and instead of being instilled with honor, she instead exuded resentment and loathing. Perhaps this girl was not so far from salvation as he once thought. Ironic given this confined, nearly imprisoned girl in the darkness was among the only of her species to have wandered off the incorrect path, and onwards to something brighter.

Flare withheld a grin which would spread from ear to ear to know that even before his rescuing of her, that her soul was already corrupted.

It was with some heavy consideration that his lips finally parted and a confession flowed forth. "I am not the false god Uhl who has seen fit to entrap you in a prison until such day he found you worthy. Quite frankly, from what I know now you would appear to be defiled within his eyes. Defiled due to the fact that your first touch was applied by my hands." To add insult to injury, although she might not consider this an insult, Flare brought the flat of his left palm to rest against her abdomen. Allowing the heat of his touch to permeate the cloth and warm her belly.

"What he would see as defilement, I would argue is purifying. When I found you today you appeared to me as a corpse. Cold, pale, and almost lifeless where no flame resided within you. Only darkness and coldness as that is all Uhl ever gives. But I was wrong because I can feel it, faintly." He maintained a gentle pressure against her belly. "You've a spark within you. Weak as it may be, if left untended it may extinguish and expire, however, with the proper kindling perhaps even you may one day experience radiance."

Seeking to fan and stoke the little spark within her, Flare poured forth his warmth in the form of a touch against her, though only briefly before he removed his hand, and took his heat away. "My goal is to purify these lands and free them from these dark shackles. To do so, bride of Uhl, I will need to continue my defilement of you. To grow that little spark into a flame of your own." The Bishop further leaned back, creating further space between them, taking away his touch.

"Bride of Uhl, knowing what you know now, what is it that you seek?" He inquired, bluntly asking whether she would further allow

herself to be tainted in the eyes of Uhl, or repent and pray that cruel god may take her.

I stare at him in silence as he speaks. His hand on my belly, the heat it emits, warms me incredibly fast. My heart races, pounding in my ears loudly.

My entire life was given to please Uhl, every moment of solitude was to satisfy his desires, regardless of my consent.

"Flame?" I question, seeking to understand. "I am burning inside? Is that what you mean?"

With that question, so many more crowd my mind I can't tell where to begin. How does he even know of us, of Uhl? Who is he? Where does he come from?

He pulls away from me and for a moment all I can think is how to bring his touch back, how to keep him near. I reach forward and catch hold of his arm, hesitantly moving it back towards my belly.

"I seek answers. Who are you, where do you come from? Why are you here?" I ask, hoping to prolong this physical contact. "Was my life wasted, then? If Uhl is a false God?"

I realize what I just asked, the meaning of the words sinking in. false God. I had never heard this term before. There had never been doubt in my mind the Uhl was the divine being. There was never any other option. My entire life was given to him, taken from me and given in honor to Uhl.

"Uhl is this false god?"

My hands tremble as I push his arm away. I abruptly stand and walk toward the far side of the room, turn, and walk back. The more I whisper the words, the more they sound like truth.

"The False God, Uhl." I spit through my teeth, my hands balling into fists as I pace. "They took everything from me, because of a lie!"

Shaking as years of anger boil over, I let out an impotent, heartfelt wail of rage and despair.

"All of it was for nothing?!" I cry desperately, my hands both move to my mouth as I try to hold in the frantic sobs that threaten. I feel nauseous, the room feels like it is spinning. I don't realize how rapidly I am breathing. I reach for you, but my legs seem to crumple under me and I go down fast.

The Bishop was not exceedingly pure in the moral sense of the word. By his command he had seen to the destruction and slaughter of numerous cities and cultures across the galaxy, all in the advancement of Sol. Was this girl any different than any of those thousands of lives he's impacted up until now? On the surface, no. However, if he could better understand her connection to Uhl, perhaps indeed she would become a quite valuable asset.

If that meant breaking down her previous beliefs and building her up to mold and shape to his needs then that is what he would do, for the betterment of Sol.

She was unique in that she had been starved of any form of touch and affection and that made her uniquely susceptible to what Flare could offer her. Flare was no god, but comparatively, for what he



could give to her? He could be more than a god than Uhl was in her eyes.

Psychologically the revelation of her life being wasted seemed to take a heavy toll upon the girl. The sickening realization that all her suffering was for nothing.

This girl's hate for Uhl was something Flare would nurture. To stoke and build up until such hatred was akin to a burning inferno. Of course, this would be a drawn out process. He first needed to instill dependency in the girl. She was a dull and blunted knife, but in time, through careful polishing she will gleam and cut as he needs her to in the future.

Upon her collapse the tall, seemingly kind, male approached her, and lowered himself to her level. Knees touching the ground. It would be unthinkable of a god bowing to the level of a mortal, but it was important in these initial moments to draw contrast from himself and Uhl.

"Easy now." He says, inviting her to lean against, and if need be to sob against his shoulder as his arms warmly, and welcomingly embraced her shattered, crying form. "I am an emissary of Sol, the light bringer. It is my mission to bring his light, and warmth, to the far reaches of this galaxy, and free life from the dark shackles of false gods. There are many cultures and civilizations which would like to plunge our worlds into shadow, to snuff out the light so that they blindly serve undeserving idols."

Flare's voice was quiet, he didn't need to speak very loud as he neared his lips towards her ear, and spun her a tale. Letting the heat of his words blanket against her skin as he sought to provide her

some understanding. "In truth, Uhl is a god, but he is a god that deserves no following. A god should serve and make prosper the lives of those who follow him. A god should give and not just take. You know better than most how much Uhl takes, but it's not only you. Most of your people blindly followed his teachings, unaware that they were simply getting ever further away from the light."

"For my people, we believe there is a flame that burns within each and every living being. Even those that do not follow Sol. It is why I can sense a small spark of warmth within you." He underlined this by replacing his palm to her abdomen. "I would like to grow that spark within you, until you may have a flame of your own. And ultimately my dear, I would like to free not only you, but everyone from Uhl's influence. To do so I am going to need your help. That little spark of warmth inside you already makes you unfit to be Uhl's bride. What I propose is to nurture that spark, until you are a flame and then we present you to him." Flare cupped her cheek, seeking to guide her gaze into his golden hues.

"He won't know the light your harboring until it's too late, and he's already engulfed in your newfound flames." Flare held her relatively intimately, by standards of proximity. Gazes nearly met, faces but a few inches to the point she could feel the warmth of his words fall against her lips. "I'm sure such an idea is scary to you. Rest assured, you won't be walking this path alone. Besides, that is quite far away now. Now then- I am going to fix you a bath and then there are matters I must attend beyond these walls. Will that be alright with you?" He asked, genuinely curious how the girl might react to the idea of being alone, if only temporarily.

I hear his words, and feel his touch, and it helps to calm me. What truly catches my attention is the promise of revenge. To make myself into the weapon that would bring down Uhl, instead of the wife he had locked away from the world.

I know the way he touches me has a powerful effect on me. I can feel it every time, like everything in me tries to be touched, tries to push into his touch. I know it is affecting the way I think and feel about what he is saying. Just like I always knew that the wise ones not touching me affected the way I thought and felt about Uhl.

I feel like I'm being told to choose between two dangers. But picturing myself, with this flame inside of me, destroying Uhl as he watched me. But at what cost?

Was I tricked into my imprisonment in honor of Uhl, only to be tricked in another web of deceit?

"You say a lot of beautiful words, and you touch me so nice when you say. I don't know if you tell me the truth, or if it's all lie, everything!"

At the mentioned of being alone, my eyes grow wide and I press into you.

"I don't want to be alone!" I whisper, as if to my self.

Flare considered her words, the poor girl has been through a lot this day. Weak and vulnerable as she was, conflicted given so much of her life came to be shattered. Could she really believe this man? "If I was a liar would I not lie and ask you to trust in me regardless?" Inviting her to make a closer embrace, he continued to spin further words for her ears only.

"You've been told what to do long enough I think. For the sake of Uhl how much have you given and sacrificed? You needn't trust me, but I do want you to know, I don't intend to take anything from you." His right palm this time pressed over her heart, just north of her left breast as he let the heat of his touch permeate the thin cloth and soak in against her chest.

"Would you prefer to not help me? Would you rather me not try and give you this nice warmth and stoke your inner flame?" He asked gently. Of course he knew the answer. Even now the girl showed such signs of dependency. Not that that was a negative, if anything, it would only aid him in better learning about not only her, but her species, and ultimately Uhl. "For once in your life I am giving you what no one else has, and that is a choice. To make all on your own. What do you want, my dear?"

I try to focus on his words, but his touch makes it impossible! I can't think, this physical contact that I've longed for for so long makes me feel...

Things I can't explain except with his own explanation.

"My inner flame?" I ask quietly, "is that what you are making me feel?" I look at him, complete sincerity, vulnerability, trust, and innocence in my colorless eyes.

"Is that what my inner flame is? Here?" I move his hand from over my heart, down my body, to low on my belly, pressing his hand against me. His touch leaves heat to sink into my skin everywhere he touches, and pressing his hand there, where so much of it seems to have collected, feels absolutely incredible. I whimper quietly,

unprepared for the explosion of desire and arousal, physical sensations I have no experience with.

"Is that the flame you are talking about?" I ask, my heart racing, my pulse strong enough that you can feel it under your hand.

Passively his warm gaze looked into her curious colorless eyes as she inquired about her own inner flame, as she tried to better understand the feelings coursing through her. Flare was not lying to her when he spoke of feeling a heat within the center of her being, even if she wasn't of the Daybreakers. Most species across the galaxy had the potential for a flame, and those flames, or souls, by some references all responded to different kinds of nurturing.

This girl, starved of even the smallest forms of affection, even something as simple as taking another's hand seemed to utterly crave and thrive off the sensation of touch.

Flare, for as much as he may pretend to have all the answers was still trying to understand both her species and her specifically. He considered this a learning experience, not only for her, but for him as well as he let her guide his hand, his palm, to glide along her thin form, to contour over her flesh before she centered his palm upon her lower abdomen and commented upon a heat.

His eyes subtly widened. For one who had moments ago questioned their very reason for living, now was resonating in the form of a pulse that was strong to the point that he could feel her body throb, her heart beat and yearn beneath him.

"I have that too-" If she was going to guide his hand, then he was going to allow her to know how it felt to not only be touched, but to touch another. Keeping his palm to her belly he took her free hand in his and cocked his neck slightly, exposing the left side of his warm neck before clasping her hand against him. His carotid artery pulsed strongly and rhythmically beneath her hand, in tune with his own heart.

"See? We're more similar than you know. Although your channels are faint. You could place your hand anywhere on my body and I'm certain you would feel the throb of my flame beating against you. By comparison, yours is quite strong here, however, it needs to be guided to spread. You wouldn't know it by looking at your own arm, but-" He removed her hand from his neck, and instead guided her fingers to his wrist and had her trace an arterial line up from his wrist, to his elbow along the brachial artery and further towards his collarbone, allowing her to feel his pulse at every inch of the way. "There are channels on every extremity of your body, all centering and all guiding towards that heated, inner core. I believe, from lack of touch, yours are lying dormant. Would you like me to try and wake them?"

I look up at him, startled. All over my body? I look down at myself, covered in dust and soot and blood. His hands are already grimy from touching me. I blush, which, on my grey skin shows as a subtle, purplish hue.

"I want that very much, but if you are going to touch me I should be clean. Your hands are as dark as mine." I point out, reluctantly moving away from him and frowning at the grime left on his clothes.

I pull away, getting to my feet as my mind races. I don't know why I suddenly need to have space between us. I want him to touch me, but when he offered to do exactly that, I back away.

"You said I could bathe?" I ask timidly.

Flare withdrew his hand from her body, noting that indeed his fair skin was blemished by soot and dirt. Did he entirely blame her? No, she couldn't help the neglect she felt at the hands of her own people. And by extension it's not her fault that he decided to lay waste to her city.

"Ah- yes. You've still got some dried blood staining your, and for your own health I'd like for you to get cleaned up so if there's any cuts upon you that need tending we can get them looked at." Flare stood up from the ground as his eyes settled upon the timid and now self-conscious looking girl. At the very least she was amusing.

"I'm not sure how it was before we met, what sort of accommodations they had for you, but I hope you'll be happy here. Come-" He gestured with his head towards another door within the bedroom, one different from the one they entered in, and opened it up into a washroom. Decorated in much the same warm regalia as the rest of the citadel. Gold, red, and orange colorings as tile lined the walls and floors, and ultimately a large tiled basin that would serve for her to bathe in. Flare took a seat at the edge of the tub and opened the faucet such that heated water could begin pouring forth and filling.

"I assume you've got this? There are some soaps and wash clothes on the counter there. You need only wait for the water level to rise, or would you prefer to stand while washing?"

my eyes land on the tub and my face lights up with a smile.

"That is a wash basin? I can fit inside of that! Am I supposed to go inside of that?"

I radiate excitement, overjoyed at the thought. I strip off my long t-shirt, leaving myself completely bare. I come to the tub and climb over the edge without waiting for him to move. The tub is hardly filled but I eagerly start rinsing, cupping water in my hands to transfer it.

The water stings a bit in some places, though not as much as the soap. But the soap has a lovely, clean scent. Once the tub is full enough I lay back and gently wash my hair, working the dried out and off my scalp.

When I get out of the tub I pick up the plain long shirt and bring it to the tub where I promptly dunk it in the water and start rubbing it vigorously.

She was cute. A heathen that was born worshipping another god, but she was genuinely cute. It wasn't just her facial expression, or the aesthetics of her body, rather, it was her voice and the happiness that carried along her tone at even the most simple things, such as being given a bath.

Flare had every intention upon offering her privacy to undress and bathe as she pleased. Despite being appointed a Bishop, it wasn't as if Flare was a saint. Still, emotionally vulnerable as this girl was, it was important for him to foster the idea in her that all of this was what she wanted. He already knew she liked the company. The warmth and heat he could give her. It was just as important at times



to remind her that those could be taken away. It would be interesting how the poor girl fared when the revelation came that he would eventually need to return to his own quarters.

That was neither here nor there as the pale, ashen skinned girl removed the shirt from off her body and stepped into the waters before he could state otherwise.

Of course his eyes wandered. Sol was sinless. Flare? But a sinful mortal. She needn't know of the physiological response. Be it the dilation of his pupils, or the subtle warming of the surface of his skin as his capillaries dilated and warm blood rushed towards the skin.

Sight lingering for only some seconds, Flare turned his back to the tub, and took a seat on the floor, offering her some relative privacy, despite being so near her. It wasn't until she got out of the tub to begin cleaning her shirt that he spoke aloud.

"I've commissioned you some clothing. Undergarments along with a light dress, silk-like in texture that I think you'll find feels nice against the skin. I'm sure you're attached to that shirt of yours, but it is soaked now and you would catch a chill putting it on wet as it is."

my hands grow still in the water, and I let the shirt float away. It was a temple garment. I'd been given gifts, and sometimes clothing was gifted, but my temple garments were what was provided for daily wear. I'd kept my other things, an odd, mismatched assortment of clothing in various sizes with no particular theme or style, in a chest. Sealed in the temple, there was no reason to wear such things. I couldn't participate in festivities or celebrations. My birthday wasn't

celebrated. I didn't even have one. They had told me my birth was the day Uhl came for me, and that counting the passage of time would only make it more difficult to endure.

I'd celebrated my birthday anyway. They never caught on, but I always knew my birthday was the first day of the festival of colors. Before I was sealed away it had always been my favorite festival. It was like the whole settlement celebrated me for the entire week.

Once they had sealed me away they stopped telling me the days, or the time of day. It hadn't taken me very long to find the solution. The festivals were always at the same time each year. And the festival of color was the entire settlement celebrating my birthday, even if I wasn't there with them. It helped, as I got older and people came to leave gifts less and less, to think of it like that. It made me feel like they still remembered me.

My thirteenth birthday was the first birthday my mother didn't come to leave a gift. That had been painful. I had felt more alone then than at any time of my life. The feeling had never gone away.

I frown into the bathwater. I wasn't sure how long I had been unconscious before I was found. I remember watching the vats being prepared, which meant my birthday was the next day. Today. And today I was no longer sealed in the temple. I was no longer waiting for Uhl. Uhl would never rule over me again. I was unfit to be his bride now. I was impure. I was tainted.

This new God, Sol. Would he want me, even though I was impure? did I want him too? I'd watched my entire settlement be destroyed for this God, and he had said there were more. More deaths,

innocent people killed, families, children, all of them ended in an instant. As they prepared to celebrate the festival of colors.

Flare was no monster, though. He said there was Sol fire inside of me, too. Even though I was to be a bride of Uhl, I still have this fire within me. Did Sol love me, then? Was I still wanted, if I was impure?

I turn to Flare, where he sits, pointedly not looking at me. I can understand, he must find it strange to look at me. We have many similarities, two arm and legs, we are both upright, two eyes and ears, our basic body shape is the same. But that's as far as the similarities go. My skin is ashen, grey, my eyes colorless and shaped very differently from his. He is pale, and his eyes blaze with his Sol fire. His skin is warm, almost hot, and mine is cool. My ears are long and pointed, his small and round. I have never seen any of my people without clothing, but I can understand how I would be difficult to look upon for him.

I walk over to him and sit down beside him on the floor. The floor is cold, and I am still wet from my bath. Goosebumps prickle across my skin, my nipples contract. I rub my hands over my arms to smooth away the bumps.

I want him to touch me again, to feel his warm touch. To feel something alive with me. I want him to show me my Sol fire, teach me about this feeling he said I could use to bring down Uhl. I want him to teach me about touch. I want him to teach me his touch.

He's already freed me from the temple. He touched me, even though I am not like him, and I was dirty, and hurt, he touched me. He was kind and gentle with me. He said he would teach me about Sol.

It feels strange, to reach toward someone, to touch them. I reach toward Flare, just to gently lay my fingertips on the warm skin on the back of his wrist. I smile when he turns toward me, then, as he averts his gaze again, I realize one more difference he has 4 pointed teeth in his mouth, two on top, two on bottom. I have 6, two on bottom, 4 on top.

My smile fades away quickly. My hand returns to my lap. I lower my head to drop my eyes to my lap. For a moment I feel despair, alone, afraid. I don't have to look at Flare to feel his burning eyes on me. His Sol fire burns hot and bright. I don't think anything could ever extinguish it.

"If today is the day after you came, then today is the first day of the festival of color. I'm not supposed to know what day it is, but today is my birthday. I am 23 today." I say, turning my face up to see him. "Today I've been given the greatest gift of any. Today I learned about Sol, and my Sol fire. Today you freed me from the temple, and Uhl. I can live again because of you, Flare. Thank you."

I need to feel his touch again. I reach for him, move closer once more. I sit like we had been in the other room, pressed close to him, and bring his hand to my stomach. Its still there, deep inside of me. I feel my Sol Flame. The burning heat and tension and need.

"Can you do it now? What you said before, about my Sol flame, and opening the channels? I'm clean now, and I want to burn, like you do. I want to build my Sol fame until it burns as bright as yours, Flare."

I look at you in faith, confident that you can show me how. If nobody else alive can do it, I know that you can.

She was certainly odd, but in an endearing kind of way. The only reason he took a seat beside the tub was to offer her privacy, as well as to wait for her to finish cleaning herself. It wasn't as if he expected her to sit beside him, but she did, nonetheless, and apparently without any hint of modesty in her unclothed appearance. Perhaps given lack of interaction with others she never developed a need to want privacy, if anything, perhaps she wished to avoid privacy all together since that would leave her alone.

"You're ridiculous-" Flare commented as her wet, naked, and clearly chilled body moved against him. His words and tone weren't harsh more so amused as he invited her form to settle in his lap, and for her torso to freely sink in against him. "You'll catch a chill like this." The Bishop leaned forward, his warm clothed chest pushed against her own thin form as he reached out behind her to grab a pure white and warm towel as he unfolded it and brought it over her back, almost like a blanket. Casually drying her off and if he was annoyed at her getting his clothing a bit damp he certainly didn't appear to be.

After her back was dried, her hair, running the soft fabric along her collarbone and down the front of her body Flare placed his warm palm upon her ashen cheek and looked into those colorless orbs of hers. "Allow me to say happy birthday. I could think of no better day than this day to invite you into the house of Sol and allow you to learn of the fire that lies dormant within you." His eyes softly assessed her features, allowing his gaze to drift from her eyes and towards her facial structure, her pale lips as his thumb lightly settled against her bottom lip before peeling it down. Exposing her teeth and the softer flesh on the inside of her mouth. His for

instance would be a healthy pink, so he was curious to know what color tongue and gums she had.

Curiously he brought the soft pad of his thumb to press against her double set of upper incisors, seemingly paying no mind at the light amount of her saliva that 'stained' his skin. "We're quite different. You'll come to learn that. Physically there will be many differences, some minor, some more prominent." He began, before withdrawing his thumb from against her lips and 'cleaned' it off by licking the saliva off the tip of it. "But I think if we look hard enough, we'll find we have more in common, than we have differences. Of course-" His palm moved to the back of her head, guiding her to tuck herself against the crook of his neck.

"I will teach you to burn the same as me. I'll warn you though, at times it might feel stifling, it might feel like it might be too much to handle, but I promise it'll all be worth it, when you can have a heat, a flame residing deep within you, all of your own."

With that, his arm embraced and held her around her back, while his other supported beneath her bottom, standing up with her as she would be allowed to cling onto him as he would walk them out from the bathroom and towards a more suitable locale for the opening of her Sol channels.

The room was subdued in color. Merely the ever present orange glow from the hearth that cast its flickering warm light to spill across the bedroom. Nothing too bright as he went to approach the bed and moved to lean over, such that she would be free to lay upon her back.

“Give me a minute? You made a bit of a mess.” His tone was gentle, almost playful as he stroked her cheek once to let her know she needn’t worry about having made a ‘mess’. But all the same his clothing was damp now.

Being a leader as he was, Flare was not frequently expected to attend the front lines, and as such, his regalia today was not hard and sharp armor, but instead cloth robes. Stepping from the edge of the bed Flare’s gaze wandered briefly upon the pale skinned woman laying in bed, her body clearly showing signs of having caught a slight chill, although it would not be long before he would be sharing his heat with her.

“I hope you don’t mind? I didn’t bring anything else to wear-” He said, shedding the top garment from off his torso, exposing a fit masculine physique. His Sol markings appeared as almost glowing tattoos upon his body. Not too many, more so several lines that accented his form. A couple horizontal lines along either side of his ribcage, a golden line that trailed from his navel and lower before being covered up. Despite shedding his top, Flare still wore robes beneath it. A mix of warm colors in the form of what could best be described as a long skirt which flowed down to his ankles. A sash that secured the flowing garment was positioned low upon his lean waistline.

“Before we continue. Would you do me the honor of telling me your name? And if your old name is not one you like, perhaps as you are reborn today, you may choose to be called another?”

I sit up on the bed, watching you walk away and undress curiously. Briefly I wonder how you can wear so many layers and not get too hot, with how warm you already are.

Your question surprises me. I had a name, once, before I was chosen. It was taken from me with everything else. Uhl would tell me my name, they had assured me. It was not for us to tell to him. He knew what my name was.

"I liked the name my mother chose." I admit, thinking of the beautiful, multicolored pendant my mother had always worn. I remember it more clearly than her face. It was like fire turned to stone.

"Opal, my name was Opal. My father's name..." I pause. This part is more difficult. I have no memory of my father, except that he hadn't come the day I was sealed in the temple.

"Opal Neiquart!" I grin when it finally comes to me. To have a name, after so long with none, made me feel truly liberated. I lay back on the bed again, closing my eyes,, unable to hide the happiness that this simple thing brought me.

"Thank you, Sol." I whisper, the name of my new God coming easily to my lips. It feels wonderful, like salvation, like freedom. Like I was given back my life.

"Thank you Flare," I whisper just as quietly, just as reverently. As soon as I say it, I feel the heat, the warm, urgent feeling. I press my own hand to my abdomen, like you had done. I focus inward, observing this Sol flame, learning about it. Wanting more of it.



"Flare, does it feel like this all the time? To have this flame? Does it always feel so...distracting?"

"Opal Neiquart." He repeated her name, allowing her to hear her own name pronounced by another. "A beautiful name. I would say Sol would very much approve." Already he could faintly hear the girl paying thanks to her new lord. If only all species were as willing to convert as she, but of course this was a rare case. She was lucky in that Flare intended to enlighten her and share with her a heat, a sense of belonging, of being loved unlike she had ever felt before.

His eyes drifted to her hands that resided on her belly as he slowly approached her and took a seat beside her. A light chuckle escaping him as she commented upon how distracting the flame could be.

Warmly he placed his palm over the back of her hand, splaying his fingers and interlacing them with hers. "Yes and no. I imagine it is standing out in quite an apparent fashion because this flame of yours is so fresh and new. I feel Sol's love coursing through me at every second of the day. You are also beginning to understand what it feels like to be embraced by a god that loves, as opposed to one that only seeks to take from you. So on one hand, you will always feel Sol with you. It will feel like... the subtle comfortable heat one would feel if they were standing in a ray of sunshine. A gentle, warm reminder, but hardly something that I would classify as distracting." He explained, unlacing his fingers with her own, and traced his index finger along her lower abdomen, south of her navel.

"Your flame is still weak Opal. It hungers for life. To grow, and to fill you with warmth. If I had to venture a guess I would say your little spark of a flame is reacting to my own." He took her other hand and

pressed it over his left breast, allowing her to feel the strong pulse beating beneath the surface. "Admittedly, my flame has been burning brighter since I've been in your company. Now Opal." Flare traced the soft pad of his index finger, along her very lower waist line, between the two pelvic bones that jutted up against the surface of her skin. But then he stopped.

"I know you're warm right here, and I know you want to be warmer. This here-" He gently pressed against her lower abdomen. "Is your core. But only a spark for now, I intend to help ignite you. Just as in the real world, pressure and friction gives way to heat and later fire, I need you to embrace the fact that there may be some discomfort in the near term. We need to start from your extremities, open your channels, so that we can help all that delicious heat to flow towards your needy core."

With that, assuming she would trust him, Flare's left hand encompassed and ensnared both of her wrists and held them down upon the bed, over her head. His right hand then moved to begin tracing along the arterial lines connecting from her wrist, to her elbow, along her upper arm, and further towards her underarm.

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"There are channels as I will come to show you, passages to transport heat from one area to another. And then there are beacons. Unique areas upon the body that down transport heat from the outside inward, but areas that help stoke the flames internally." Flare was half laid along side her, his gaze upon her face, even as his right hand wandered lower to cup her left breast. Allowing her pert nipple to feel the friction of his skin graze against

her before gently seizing that nipple between thumb and index finger.

"For instance. Tell me, does this make that flame within you more distracting?"

"yes!" I breathe, keeping still in his grip. His hands felt incredible, tracing along my skin, trapping my nipple, sending shivers of heat racing through my body like wildfire! I feel him next to me, radiating more heat, and my body longs for his touch.

My heart races, pounding so hard I can hear my blood rushing in my ears. The flame in my core intensifies, becoming more sensation than I know what to do with. I draw my legs up slightly, pressing my thighs together.

After a few moments I am able to relax again, though not fully, and my heart races on. I watch Flare, feeling his heated gaze traveling over my body whenever he doesn't return my gaze.

Anticipation, excitement, and a touch of apprehension keep me eager to continue. It feel incredible, everywhere he touches me feels like fire sinking into my skin, but there is no pain.

"Does...does this take away from your flame? Does pitting this in me make yours less?" I ask, certain what I'm feeling is coming into me from you.

Despite being entirely in control of the pacing and the situation that was unfolding between them, despite teaching Opal what it would mean to have a flame of her own, Flare was also learning from her. After all, she's the first of her species he's interacted with, and while he has converted others before, she would be the first bride of a

god he would share his flame with. In that way she intrigued him, piqued his curiosity, and surprisingly enough he could feel a yearn from within. His own flames wanted to spread and mix with her own.

Growing more bold with his touch, his palms and fingers reached, gripped, even groped at her flesh. Letting his searing touch imprint heat into her body, and allow for her own body to stir and wind up its own.

“For the time being Opal.” He says, releasing his hold on her wrists. To free her and allow her hands to wander, if she chose to. “For the time being I am passing my flame into you, sharing with you. But make no mistake, by the time we’re finished here, we will burn brighter together than we would have been if remained as separate.”

Expelling heated breath near her neck Flare proceeded on with trying to open her channels. “You’re doing quite well Opal. I can feel your body react and try to draw in the warmth it seeks. Would you like to take a little of my heat inside you?” He inquired, letting her mind wander at the implications before helping the dear girl out by bringing his lips nearer to her own. “I would like to still try and find the rest of the beacons on your body. The spots that help stoke your internal flames and I have a hunch that one resides, just past these lips.” Flare said, partially mumbling by the end of his words as his warm lips brushed against her comparatively cooler, yet still soft ones.

I have the use of my hands, but am at a loss of what to do with them. Yours move all over my body, and your lips on mine cause

more heat, more fire, to erupt inside of me. I gasp, automatically bringing my hands to your shoulders.

I touch you and don't want to stop. My hands tentatively explore your body, learning every curve and plane. My touch stay soft, light, hands just barely gliding over your skin. I only have to tilt my head to press our lips together, and as my body feels hotter just from that contact, my lips part in a quiet gasp.

I don't stop touching you, exploring you. There are not so many differences between us. Just color, really. I don't think color even matters when this Sol flame is considered. This flame is stronger than color, or background. And we share it, we have this is common, whatever our differences is nothing compared to this.

My fingertips brush over your nipple, slowing down to gently stroke over the small nub of sensitive skin before trying the same that you did to me. I take it between my fingers, tugging gently until it slips from my light grip.

"Is it the same for you? Does your flame get stronger if I touch you like you touch me?" I ask. My tentative hands tremble against your skin, but I continue to touch you, slowly moving down your torso.

And this reminded Flare that he was not a god. A pure god such as Sol would not want, and would not crave, but as Flare's lips made contact and he felt the silent gasp of her beneath while her lips parted, Flare felt that yearning. A nameless, perhaps it was greed? Yes he wished to share his flame with this former bride of a god, but he knew there something more to it.

Given in to curiosity and desire Flare unabashedly pushed the slick, heated appendage of his tongue to dip within the bride's mouth. Tainting her oral cavity in ways that would make Uhl turn over in his grave. She was cooler to the touch as his tongue pushed forth to pressed heatedly against her own. To taste her, to let her feel the heat of another radiate from within. But cooler as she was, this was not unpleasant. Diligently he helped to warm the dear girl, until the interior of her mouth was thoroughly coated with what he had to offer.

Tasting her upon his lips only seemed to incite his temperature to raise, for the lashes of his tongue to fall just a bit heavier, as if hungry on its own accord. It was not until he felt her dainty fingers trace his torso and seize his nipple that she elicited a smile from him. Withdrawing his tongue from her mouth as he let out an amused huff. "On the surface, yes. I feel warmer beneath your fingertips, but our beacons I believe are subtly different. For instance, my chest I believe is less reactive than your own, although tasting you has caused my blood to begin stirring ever more warmly beneath the surface." Flare softly panted, the musculature of his physique tensing in an ebb and flow, his abdominal muscles knitting together as he felt her soft fingers wander lower, perhaps trying to feel his own heat as she might assume it was in a similar place as her own core?

"You're almost ready. Your upper channels seem open. We need only unlock your lower channels and impart onto you a mark of Sol that you will wear upon your skin. This branding, while potentially uncomfortable, will be the physical embodiment of your love for

Sol. Once given I cannot take it away. So I'll ask you, Opal." Flare's hand trailed lower, even past the lowest part of her waist before his fingers pressed up against the interior of her thigh, about midway up. "Would you like to wear his markings?"

I pant, writhing under his touch. It feels incredible! I can't control myself, my body seems to move on its own to press against you. You stole my breath, I'm certain of it, but when you pull away, leaving your taste in my mouth, a quiet whimper escapes.

Your touch moves down my body and I whimper again, even as my legs open to accommodate your touch on my thigh. I feel your eyes on me, on my body, as certain as I feel your hand. I shake, everywhere, my heart races faster and faster, and the heat, my Sol. Flame, burns uncontrollably throughout my body.

You ask if I would wear the mark of this God, who gives me this uncontrollable fire inside? I don't hesitate to answer, though my voice comes as a. Breathless, needy, desperate whine.

"Yes, please, Flare, I want the mark of Sol!"

The room, understandably was growing quite warm, an energy within the air as one might expect. After all, he was trying to coax the light of a god into one who up until only today has been worshipping a false god. To Flare's surprise, she seemed particularly responsive towards accepting Sol's divine light. Thriving off it even.

Flare wet his lips with his tongue as his gaze had turned molten in its expression. Half hooded eyes, yet his irises seemed to swirl and bubble like boiling gold as he listened to her plea to wear the mark

of Sol. Who was he to deny her when she was so accepting of this light?

Peeling away from her touch, and removing his touch entirely from her body Flare stood from the bed and faced her. A subtle panting as his musculature was flash defined with each breath taken in and expelled out. Abdominal muscles knitting as something appeared to be projecting out against the front of his lower robes, more so than before. Flare wasn't obscene in his appearance, although he couldn't help the slow yet steady flow of blood that was making matters more swollen by the minute.

Drawing her attention back to him he spoke before moving to kneel onto the bed before her. "As I warned, this may cause momentary discomfort, you may reach out to grab onto the bed, or me, but I would ask you not try and pull me away until you're wearing the mark properly." Flare crawled forward, almost predatory like as if stalking his prey and going in for the kill. Warm palms cupping the outside of either of her thighs to coax her to spread her legs for him.

Shutting his eyes, even still his eyelids glowed as Flare leaned forward and neared his face towards the interior of her right inner thigh. "Try to relax-" His heated words wafted over her skin like a humid blanket to splash against bare skin and soon she'd feel the moist sensation of his lips parted and placed against her inner thigh, the points of his teeth making contact with her grey skin, and a sensation as if he was sucking, or trying to coax whatever defilement was left in her from Uhl, so that he could replace and make her truly pure.



I lay back, closing my eyes as Flare touches me again, touches his mouth to my thigh. I relax, still trembling with need, with the flame burning in me. I feel him suck on my skin, making my Sol flame slowly burn brighter.

I don't know what constitutes a ceremony for Sol, or if Sol has rituals. It could be something only false gods demand of their people. Yet ceremony and ritual has been my entire life. I need ceremony for this mark of Sol to have the significance I feel it is owed. With nothing to draw from yet, and refusing the formality of my false God's form of worship, I cast around in my mind, quickly, to come up with a way to give proper reverence to what I feel is a significant moment.

I contemplate my new God, what I know about him. I've only heard heard about Sol from one source, therefore I know very little, but I have known religious observance my whole life, and the very little I know is easy to expand on.

Flare told me Sol is the one true God, and that all other gods are false.

"This mark of Sol is my trust and faith in Sol, my loyalty and devotion to the one true God." I say with confidence. "I renounce my false gods, I am a child of Sol. I am free from the prison of the false gods. I have hope in the radiance of Sol. My life, my flame, everything I am, is by Sol. I am nothing without Sol. I give myself to Sol in love and wear his mark proudly."

I only say it because it's what I'm used to, most probably a false belief, but I needed it to feel that it was truly Sol, not Flare, who brought my Sol flame raging throughout my body.

I am calmed by my own words, and able to relax. To feel everything Flare does, as a servant of Sol. I open my eyes to see, as well.

Hearing her words Flare couldn't help but think out of all those he had converted in the past, forced or otherwise, species and planets that were forced to adopt their new righteous lord, that Opal seemed most worthy in being granted Sol's flame, Sol's embrace and Sol's love. Uhl was a fool to allow her to waste for so long.

Flare wanted to give her verbal praise for the beautiful words spoken on behalf of their God, but understandably his mouth was full and upon the reciting of her words, of her offering herself to Sol, Flare proceeded with the branding. The pressure grew and the heat emitted from Flare steadily rose, specifically to the upper and lower set of his incisors before piercing her grey flesh, enough to break the skin before the heat of which cauterized, cleansed and imparted to her, her very own mark of warmth. Much like Flare's eyes and the markings upon his body, in this spot along her inner thigh she would wear a glowing, warm reminder that Sol was always with her.

When Flare finally broke the seal upon her inner thigh he was left panting yet again as his face rose from between her thighs and his gaze shifted to look upon her. The glow in his eyes was a few shades dimmer as his flame would need to recover. Implanting but yet another seed of fire within her.

"Go ahead and feel-" He pressed his lips to her lower abdomen, to gesture for her to assess the newfound warmth at the core of her being. "You've gone from spark to flickering flame of a candle. Sol resides within you now too. His presence will grow in time, as will

your flame by extension. Would you like to take a break Opal? It can be rather taxing on the body and soul to receive his mark. I don't wish to make your flame grow too brightly, too hot, before you are ready."

there was pain, still, as I reach down to feel the mark. Most of the pain had faded, leaving me gasping for air. I drag my fingers over the fresh wound gently, feeling the change in texture. I look down my body and meet Flare's burning gaze.

"How can you not burn up? Is it Sol? He protects you from it?" I ask, my trembling hand moving from the mark to Flare's face, cupping his jaw while my thumb traces over his lips. "Thank you, Flare, for bringing me to Sol."

My hand trembles, my thumb lightly pulls his lip down, exposing his teeth for a moment. Before my hand falls to my tummy lightly. I press against my body, my other hand joining the first to glide up over my skin. I cup my breasts, catching my nipples between my fingers. I arch up from the bed as I pinch my nipples firmly, causing sensation to arc through me.

"I don't want to stop, Flare, I want this to go on for ever." I close my eyes again and roll my nipples between my fingers, biting my lip as I inhale sharply. I let my hands fall to my sides and grab onto the covers.

"Do you have a mark like this one?" I ask, "did it hurt when you were made? You have many marks, did they all hurt? May I see yours" I push up onto my elbows, looking at the marks that glow upon Flare's body.

I consider his warning, cautioning against too much at once. I don't know what might happen if my Sol flame burned too hot. It already feels hotter than anything I've ever experienced...except Flare's heat. I look at his mouth, my hand returning to my thigh.

This is my Sol mark, given to me by Flare. It hurts, but the pain is just a dull ache now. This mark that Flare burned into me with the heat of his Sol flame means that I am a follower of Sol, like Flare.

I am fascinated by my new God, a true God, one who will not seal me away, take away everything that gives life meaning. Uhl was the only thing I was allowed to live for before. I was to spend my every moment in waiting for him. I was given the ideal environment to allow me to exist free from distraction away from my contemplation of Uhl.

"I remember the day Uhl chose me. I was so excited. Everyone said it was an honor, I was so lucky. My mother cried and hugged me so tight, I thought... I thought she was proud of me. My father though... I don't know what he did. I never saw him again. He didn't come to the ceremony when they locked me away. He just ... it was like I'd never had a father."

I touch Flare again, sitting up to be more near to him. I tuck myself close to him, even move his hands to my body. I hug one arm across my chest, placing his hand on my breast, and the other on my abdomen, well below my navel, where my flame burns.

The feeling of my flame has diminished, though it's not entirely gone. I still feel it, especially where my skin presses against Flare's. I carefully criss cross my legs, making sure I don't bump my fresh mark of Sol.

"I was so alone for so long, Flare. They never let anyone touch me from the day the temple was sealed. I could see the faces of those who gave gifts, sometimes. But speaking to me anything but Uhl's blessing was prohibited. I never got to speak to anyone but my keepers and Uhl. For so many years!"

"Then the day before my birthday, Sol came and destroyed everything in fire and light. All that had been built with Uhl's blessing, gone before the true God. And my imprisonment was ended when you touched me, Flare."

A thought occurs to me, one that brings back my Sol flame to blazing life. I gasp, closing my eyes to let it wash over me. It had to mean I was right, didn't it?

"Flare, you are my gift from Sol! He sent you to me on my birthday, to bring me to Sol!" I look up at you and smile, "he sent you to me, to touch me and teach me, and waken the fire in me! He sent you to show me the true god!"

Flare indeed was warm to the touch, more so than the moment they first met, even when considering the fact he'd shared a bit of his heat with her. He had warned her from the get go, that through this process, even if he'd be taking a portion of his flame and implanting it within her, that the end result would leave the two of them burning more brightly, and hotter, than had they remained separately. The Bishop of Sol earlier might as well had been ablaze, and just like a forest fire run amuck, even those infernos burn a bit cooler at night. His flames, still alive and well, were merely resting for a moment.

She was inquisitive, that much was certain. Asking questions. Maybe because she was genuinely curious, maybe because she just enjoyed finally having someone to talk to and didn't want this to stop. He welcomed that curiosity in her and smiled as he repositioned himself to sit upon the bed, his back propped up against headboard as she invited herself closer, even so far as to manipulate his warm hands to once more find a place upon her body.

"My marks were not received in the same way as you although they are similar. I received my markings directly from Sol, it's an honor bestowed upon only to the Bishops, who in turn may thought of as Sol's generals. Our responsibility is to take Sol's blessing and impart it onto others. I have those who work under me, imbued with Sol's heat and by extension, like passing a torch to start separate blazes, they can branch out and pass his blessing. Admittedly, the connection is diluted with each subsequent 'node' involved. True believers can have their markings reapplied at a higher efficacy. You however have just received among the purest transferences I can offer you." Flare explained. Sure, he could still stoke her flames to burn hotter, but eventually there would be a limit to the point where if she wanted even more divine light she would need to see Sol personally. But of course, only Bishops got to meet with Sol on such a level.

"I guess it's understandable you are curious." He noted, as her hands moved to roam him. Parting his lips for her if she was inquisitive enough to want to see his teeth and gums, or allowing her hands to descend along his torso and trace his Sol markings. "Locked away as you were with the limited contact you had. It is as you say, my dear Opal." His hand upon her lower abdomen transitioned to her hip,

while the hand upon her breast slid up, along her neck, to ultimately cup her cheek and try to coax her to come sit herself in his lap.

"Come closer-." He said in a whisper.

"It appears even though you were out of sight and out of mind for so many of your fellow people, even to the point that your former god didn't even notice you, that Sol pierced through the darkness and shown a light on you even from afar. Sol did not tell me that today I would find you, but his guidance was there all along I am certain." Flare leaned in towards her neck, allowing heated breath to spill and cascade down against her bare skin.

"You feel his heat inside you more clearly now, don't you? His love for you bubbling beneath the surface. I wonder how just how hotly you can burn." He mumbled against her neck, lips brushing with each syllable uttered. "I wonder if you're one of the few who could receive him properly." He said, being a little cryptic. Could she possibly be bishop too? Time would tell, but she would certainly need to be able to burn much more, and to that end, Flare's hand upon her hips trailed upwards to seize her nipple with a little more firmness than before, experimenting with a subtle teasing as he rolled her nipple one way then another to see if he might incite more fire. "We should try and find more beacons-" He mumbled against her neck.

I readily explore his body, tracing every mark I find, coming closer to sit in his lap. My eyes never leave him, I take in every word he speaks, his warm hands roaming over me quickly making my hands shake again as my flame grows.

When Flare pinches my nipple I cry out at the explosion of heat and sensation. I meet his burning eyes as my back arches, panting, leaning onto his supportive arm as he rolls the sensitive flesh between his fingers.

I twist slightly to grab onto him, careful not to push away his hands. I look up at him, desperate need etched in my face, then turn into his neck. My lips press against his hot skin, surprising me. I taste his salt on my lips and kiss him again.

"Flare!" I gasp gently, unable to help myself. My hands shake so hard I have to press them against him to stop them.

What Flare didn't reveal to the woman was that there had never been a Bishop appointed that had not been born to the Daybreakers. Undoubtedly it would cause ire and outrage among the other Bishops for Flare to even 'joke' about the possibility of bringing this foreigner to Sol himself. It's not that Flare felt the need to enlighten Opal to that fact though. The girl was surprisingly receptive to the flame, he could feel his own flame yearning out to help hers grow. Heat is attracted to heat, flames will ultimately converge if given enough time and as such, not only was she showing greediness in wanting more heat, but likewise, Flare could feel his yearning for more of hers. Maybe she didn't notice it because it was a gradual transition, but she was feeling much, much warmer than when he first had found her.

Ironically, for a room that was only growing hotter, she elicited cold chills for a moment as her lips pressed and tasted the salty skin of his neck. To hear her light panting against him as he continued to hold her pert nipple hostage.



Her sudden gasp cause him off guard, not in a bad way, but rather surprised at the reaction. His muscles contracted, from his torso, down towards his abdomen, and even yet a more southerly muscle blanketed by his robes and less on display given she was on his lap. His markings had dulled in color immediately after granting her Sol's mark, but now? It appeared he was resonating in light. Markings shining brighter upon his face and around his eyes, an ebb and flowing glow of the vertical line of marking that stemmed from his abdomen, down from his navel, and towards his waist line before being cut off by his robes.

"You're shaking Opal." His words were a bit huskier in tone, feeling the girl hang onto him to stabilize herself. "Receiving more of Sol's blessing can be blinding." He released her nipple before leaning forward, lewdly parting his lips so he could paint the teased sensitive nub in his heated saliva, before blowing softly. "Are you sure you'd like to grow hotter?"

"I want-!" I moan as Flare's warm, wet tongue teases my nipple, my hand automatically going to the back of his head, though I don't try to keep him there. My nipple hardens as he blows cool air across it, the temperature contrast intensifying the sensation. Both nipples contract, and I feel a similar sensation deeper in my body, where my Sol flame is.

"I need it!" I pant, looking up at Flare, "please, Flare, I need it! I need to feel Sol, I need to be filled with Sol!" I close my eyes, trying to breath evenly, to be able to speak and be understood.

"I have been so empty, Flare, so alone! They shut me away from the light and warmth, and Sol, to wait for their false God! I-!" I sit up in

his lap, eyes snapping open and going wide with shock. "Flare is that why they chose me? Because of my Sol flame? You said it could bring down their false God, is that why they chose me for him?"

Glancing up Flare took her by the chin as she stumbled upon a possibility. Initially even Flare believed he stumbled upon her by coincidence. He never would have imagined that the pale, almost lifeless girl he'd picked up that morning would have been a bride of a god or someone so capable of embodying the flame of Sol. Truthfully, and still, Flare's goal is to defile Uhl's bride, to leave her burning with the light of Sol, and then to offer her back to that false god. Now? Now Flare was beginning to wonder if perhaps Sol really did have a plan for Opal.

"Perhaps you were born special. With a small flame in your belly. Perhaps that is why they saw fit to keep you under lock and key, shunned away from the world. Starved of touch, of praise, even basic affection in hopes your flame would wither and extinguish by the time you were given to Uhl. My guess? Given how weak your light was when I found you, you had maybe only a few months, no more than a year before your little spark would be extinguished, unable to be lit forever. My guess is that's when Uhl would have come for you. And now?"

Flare sat up to meet her, pressing his bare chest against her own, before moving the two of them together such that he positioned her upon her back. "I know it's scary to think about, but if I fill you with Sol's fire I do believe you would be enough to kill Uhl. Our Trojan Horse where we will present you to him, while he's oblivious to the fire you keep within, until it's too late. I know if you were to

bring down a false god that perhaps Sol himself would seek an audience with you, and offer you his praise."

hatred for those that denied me this, that tried to take this away from me, flashes through my mind. But as Flare puts me on my back the heat inside burns it away.

I focus on Flare, his burning eyes so close, his heat radiating into my skin. My hands move down his back, barely touching him, until they meet the fabric of his robes. Barely breathing, my heart racing, my fingertips follow the line around to the cord securing the garment on his body. I untie the knot easily, even with my hands shaking.

"Please, Flare, Sol is giving me life. I would spend that life in service to him, gladly. I will destroy the false God, I will endure any pain to bear his mark, I will do anything it takes to meet Sol, to have him inside of me, to thank him for his gift and his love."

"I feel my Sol Flame, and it is hotter than anything I've ever known. Except you. Your touch burns into me, and I need it!"

My hands move under the fabric, gently gliding over his skin to push the robe out of my way as my arms wrap around him.

"Flare, I need your help! I don't know how to be filled with Sol! If my Sol flame is why they imprisoned me, I will show their false God what a true God is capable of! the false God Uhl tried for seventeen years to extinguish my Sol flame! I am not so weak, I am not so afraid that I will wait for him to die on his own! I will hunt him, and bring him to answer for what he did! Uhl will face Sol, and beg for forgiveness!"

My touch changes as I speak, my hands pressing into Flare's skin, gripping his ass. I move my hands up his back, pressing against him. My fingertips curl, dragging my nails over Flare's heated skin.

"Help me, Flare, fill me with Sol's light, let me burn with Sol's fire. Give me the love that Sol has for me!"

"You really are worthy of his praise—" Flare spoke, voice a husky whisper as he could literally feel the neediness within her words, the desire to be made one with Sol, and even more importantly, her decision to bring an end to the False God, by her hands. This was important. Perhaps Flare could have imprisoned her, slowly and methodically conditioned her or blackmailed her to the point that she'd be the poison pill to feed to Uhl, but she was infinitely more useful when she was acting upon earnest beliefs.

Feeling the robes loosen around his waist, it wasn't long before they fell away and he lay just as bare as she. His body heated, the markings upon his skin glowing a radiant gold, and notably a heavy and apparent difference between their physiologies came to light as Flare's Sol-hood hung heavily and hotly below him, making contact with the bare skin of her core, which up until this point he hadn't specifically touched before.

With more of an aggressive hunger than before, Flare's heated palm cupped her cheek as he brought his lips down upon hers, and pushed forth his heated tongue to plunge into the depths of her mouth and begin filling her with the mixture of light from both him and Sol.

Hot and heavy the strokes of his tongue were as he ground the fleshy appendage with her own, but it would not be the only new

sensation the girl would be feeling as the supple skin of Flare's heated, throbbing, muscle found itself precariously positioned between her ashen thighs. A heaviness to his movements in tune and rhythm to the way with how his tongue ground with hers. "We've done well to stoke your fire to a roaring flame-" Flare licked his lips as he guided her hand down between their bodies, over her abdomen and lower so she might feel not only the throbbing heat of the Daybreaker, but to feel her own heat. "This is where Uhl would have filled you with his darkness." Flare explained, very gently pressing the tip of his middle finger at the very beginning of her petals, before gently tracing upwards. "And this is where I can give you Sol's blessing. Deep inside you, if you're willing to accept him."

"Yes! Flare, I need it!" I gasp, my hips rising as I writhe underneath him. Panting with need, I grip him tightly. My legs open, knees bent to push my feet against the bed. I burn with need, whimpering as your touch ignites more heart, trembling uncontrollably.

"I need Sol inside of me, I am His! I burn with Sol fire, my body aches without His touch! Please, Flare, do not deny me any longer, I need Sol inside of me, I need you to give me His blessing!

my hand, guided by Flare's, wraps around his throbbing, hot, swollen member. My eyes widen as my mouth opens in surprise. Having never seen anyone, male or female, naked, I was unaware of the physical differences of our bodies. But I know what my body looks like, and I quickly realize how I will receive Sol's blessing.

"Like this? Here?" I whisper, lining up Flare's member to enter me. The heat in my core makes me moan, and as my hand touches my

own body I feel wetness, moisture from my center. I bring my hand away, thinking it is blood, but the moisture is clear and slick. I look back to Flare, frowning slightly.

Half panting, Flare's body was more than eager in planting the hot seed of Sol within her. Undoubtedly a scandalous set of circumstances should news break out upon a Bishop passing Sol's blessing to a foreigner such as her, but he couldn't help himself, nor could he control who Sol wished to bless with his heat.

Clenching upon the moment her hand moved to take hold of his swollen muscle, Flare expelled a heated breath as his waist dropped and he was more than prepared to slide within her depths and for their flames to touch properly. But of course, being inexperienced as she was, it was entirely natural she wouldn't understand how divine blessings are passed. He had to half chuckle at the concerned expression in her face when her hand returned from her core, glistening in colorless 'blood'.

"It's supposed to be like that- Flame and heat is good, however, holding our hands within fire will result in burns." Flare guided her sticky hand towards his cheek, parting his lips to suck on her thumb. "It's your body's natural way of preparing for my heat to be inside you. Without that our flames would be too hot to handle. But with it..." Flare reached down, guiding the tip of his member to split the petals of her nectar covered flower. For her to wet the tip of him as he helped position himself at her entrance. "Tonight, Opal, you become one with God." With that, Flare slowly yet steadily sank that throbbing spear of light deep within her core.

I gasp, arching under him as he opens me, stretching my body, penetrating deeper and deeper. Heat, no, this is the fire Flare promised, this is Sol entering my body! The pain is nothing compared to the intense sensation of fullness, of pleasure, of Sol!

I draw a shuddering breath, clinging to Flare, pressing against him. I can hear myself whimpering. My legs wrap around him, urging him deeper.

"Yes, oh, Flare! Yes!" I moan, but this overwhelming feeling can't be from anyone other than Sol, this feeling is Sol!

"they attacked at the Gmong settlement, too, destroyed everything. Killed everyone." The messenger cradled his mangled arm, pain etched in every line of his body.

"You have done well to make it here with such haste." Journ kissed the man's forehead tenderly, "go to the Healer, with Uhl's blessing."

The man was going to lose his arm, that much was easy to see. there was nothing that could be done to save him. just like all of the refugees that had been pouring in since the attacks began, he had fled the settlement and come straight to the House of Uhl.

this was the first one to come from Gmong. The first had been from Hoolt. that made a total of three settlements, out of twenty. those three were the ones that were no more than a days travel from the House of Uhl.

Journ expected to learn that every major settlement had been attacked. perhaps one or two had gone unnoticed, but from the reports pouring in, the attacks had been simultaneous, and identical. every report was the same, a massive structure had

descended from the skies, pouring out strange, pale faced creatures who brought death to all they saw. the settlements had been completely razed, flattened systematically, while survivors were hunted down and killed like animals at slaughter.

Journ had been in prayer when the first reports came in. it was his honor, as the Hand of Uhl, to spend his days giving homage to the great god. he was the vessel through which Uhl controlled his people. there was no higher authority except Uhl himself. so why had he not foreseen this attack? who were these attackers? where did they come from, and why?

Uhl would certainly walk among his people again, to give them strength and hope in this devastating time of need. journ was correct, and every settlement had been attacked, then this was easily the greatest tragedy in their history. this was war, and they were fighting for their lives, their species, and their god.

Uhl was their only hope for salvation.

"they have taken the bride of Uhl!" I announce as I push the temple dedicate out of my way. "I will retrieve the girl, we can only hope she will not be tainted!"

"She is alive?" The old crone seated below Uhl's throne raises her sightless eyes to stare blankly in my direction.

"I must be given Uhl's blessing, so that I may touch the girl. I cannot safely retrieve her without it!" I stride right up to the woman to make my demands. These temple attendants are known for taking their time with requests. To my surprise she moves quickly.



Familiarity with her surroundings is adequate for the blind woman to stride with confidence toward the shelf at the side of the throne room. Here, at the temple of union, there will be no refugees. This sacred place has long been where bonding ceremonies occur. Pilgrimages are made from the world over to be bonded Here, seated before Uhl's throne. This is where Uhl himself will be bonded to his bride, if she can be retrieved. If she is still pure.

"Here, this will cleanse you." The crone approaches with a bowl and a brush, and paints symbols on my skin. The symbols glow only briefly, then soak in and disappear.

"You are cleansed, but I cannot give you Uhl's blessing. For that you must go to the house of Uhl."

"Then that is where I am going." As I turn to leave, the crone calls me back.

"Baraxis, wait!" She shuffles toward me, pulling a rolled scroll from her robe. "Deliver this to the house of Uhl. And make haste! You mustn't allow the bride to be touched!"

I leave the temple of union and pause to watch the smoke rising from the nearby settlement. In the distance, on the horizon, I can see even more smoke. More destruction and death.

This bride of Uhl must be terrified. Taken by the invaders, alone, away from the peace of her sealed temple, she won't be able to defend herself.

"I'm coming bride of Uhl. I will be your righteous warrior, I will bring you to Uhl, you will be given your honor, this I swear by my life!"

Mostly calm and collected up until this point, after all, everything was going according to plan. Hell, even better as she was so willing to allow herself to be defiled in the eyes of Uhl. To think she'd be readily accepting Sol's divine light. But of course, touching her inner flame in this way was far different than holding her hand and passing heat. This was a far more intimate, unfiltered and undiluted exchange. A way for her flame to reach out to connect with his, and vice versa, for Flare to channel the heat in his core and contact hers.

Fire and heat was attracted to fire and heat, as such, it was pleasurable to draw together like this. Perhaps more than he was expecting as hot and heavy hands seized and gripped upon her body. One heated palm slipping beneath her bare back, stabilizing her, while his other hand traveled lower, taking hold of her ass and keeping her body in place as Flare took on the role of something more instinctual and primitive in nature as opposed to an emissary of god. Hushed grunting and panting left his lips as the slow rhythmic motion of his movements stirred and created friction between their bodies. Her own, quite slick and accepting of her gods 'blessing' as he invited her ashen thighs to wrap around him.

"Sol-" Flare moaned out before pressing his lips, his teeth to the supple skin of her neck as the bed rocked, and creaked each time Flare's waist met her own. This of course was a 'sacred' exchange, that said... the sound of wet skin meeting skin, the clapping, the carnal scent of bodies in union, filled their small private room as Flare sought to share with her Sol's blessing. A blessing that she would need to go to Sol himself if she wished to obtain anything hotter, and more potent.

“You can feel it, can’t you? Your body craving his blessing?” He mumbled against her neck, able to feel the clenching of her body’s wall as it seemed to greedily desire that heated seed of light. The ‘pre-blessing’ seeping from Flare’s saintliness was notably warm to the touch, iridescent as it would appear to emit its own white light if exposed to the air. But of course, much of it for now would be contained in her.

Heavier and more desperate, the Bishop’s fervent thrusts sought to plow her fields in hopes that his heavenly seed would grace her. Breath hitching, muscles interlocking and seizing, finally Flare bottomed out at the true heavenly gates of her core before spilling a rush of Sol’s hot, pure white essence to paint her gates and fill her inner core, adding to her own flame and spirit. And what an amount he had to give her, after all, it’d been quite some time that one was worthy of such a blessing. A heat so radiant, she could feel the warmth by simply holding a hand over her abdomen.

I feel bliss, each thrust pushing the heat inside to new heights. Uncontrollable moans escape me as he pushes deeper and deeper, our bodies coming together again and again as I writhe, my own hips rising and falling with his. I grab onto Flare, panting hard.

I know something is coming, Sol’s blessing, given to me through this act with Flare, but my body burns with it already. My core, already the source of the flame, seems to be exactly what Flare is searching for. Again and again I feel him push deeper and deeper so that I can’t stop myself from crying out, from grabbing onto Flare as if to keep myself from burning up.

But Flare is just as hot as I am, hotter, and relentlessly drives into me. I feel a new sensation, a tension in my core that has me whimpering as I arch up from the bed.

"Sol!" I cry out at this overwhelming sensation. I know the exact moment I receive his blessing, as liquid fire erupts into me, making me scream as my own body releases, throbs, every muscle suddenly igniting in a pleasure I'd never dreamed of!

I lay under Flare, feeling the heat of Sol's blessing inside of me. Feeling Flare inside of me. Feeling Sol inside of me. I tremble, smoothing my hands over Flare's skin until I feel stickiness on his back where my fingers had gripped him. Long gouges run the length of his back. I don't remember doing that.

"Flare!" Startled and ashamed to have hurt him as he gave me this gift, I shake my head slowly. Guilt grips me as I anticipate an angry reaction. "I'm s-sorry! I didn't....I don't remember doing it!"

It's difficult to make my dry mouth form words. I still tremble with physical bliss. Flare is still inside of me, and as I look at him, and feel him inside of me I'm brought almost to tears, gasping, my Sol flame burning hot, wanting more, spreading throughout my body again. I want it again.

I whimper, face flushed, and tense against the heat, which only intensifies it, making me groan desperately.

"Again! Please. Flare, I need it again!"

So lost within the moment Flare didn't even realize she had broken his skin until she commented upon it. If anything, the physical representation of her need in to form of holding, pulling against

him to bond with her more deeply only served to fuel his own flames and desire to give onto his Sol's blessing.

It was partially mind numbing, feeling as if he'd given himself over to a higher power. Body acting by instinct and laying claim blessing the new arrival. Even now his heart beat and pulsed, reverberating the drumming of his life in the form of a throb from deep within her being. Panting, residual after shocks of pleasure elicited a little more essence to grace her depths.

When had he ever found such a suitable follower for Sol? It was preposterous to consider, but Flare almost felt like Sol himself had briefly taken the reins.

"Seems we both lost a bit of control there didn't we?" Flare said, looking on into those colorless eyes. Same as before, but she was not the same cold girl he'd met within the temple. She had a heat to her, all her own. A smile crossed his lips. She already knew he was proud of her, she wouldn't have been given any blessing if she hadn't been a good girl. That warmth seeping into her core was proof positive that she was deemed worthy but Flare couldn't help but chuckle as he leaned down towards her ear and whispered.

"That right there, Opal, is referred to as Greed. A sin-" He explained to her, but his words were soothed, not the tone one would use to scold, but instead a tone used to teach. "Of course Sol understands to Sin is a part of life. Uhl would want you to be sinless. Sol on the other hand wants to teach you to rise above Sin. You'll come to learn there are many facets of life which are sinful. If you continue to be faithful, Sol will continue to guide you through such sins. And through such guidance you will learn that receiving his blessings can

be as rewarding as the sins themselves.” Flare paused, separating his torso from her own. A light sheen of sweat coated his body, making an intimate seal of bare skinned contact when the two were in the midst of their ‘prayers’. And soon, that throbbing lifeline withdrew itself from her heated core as Flare stood back up off the bed. Shameless, swollen and hanging heavily as it was her fluids shimmering upon his skin. “And you do want his blessings to continue, don’t you Opal?” Flare motioned to her with his index finger, as if to come forward and see whether or not she’d be obedient so as to keep her new God pleased.

trembling still, feeling cold and empty where I had just felt so full, hot, fullfilled, I still eagerly follow Flare, eyes on him as I come near.

As I stand and obey Flare’s summons, I feel a trickle of heat spill from within. I look down, pausing, to consider this new sensation. Flare’s seed, Sol’s gift, leaving my body as though I’d been offered more than I could contain. I look back to Flare, uncertainty and curiosity dominating my features.

Gently Flare placed his left hand beneath her chin, to direct those colorless hues up at him. She was still beautiful to gaze upon, her colorless eyes offering more light and illumination than when he’d first looked upon her. A warm smile and soft gaze reflected upon her as he noted she could feel the blessing trickle down her thighs, the slight perplexed expression as to how she should feel now that the seed was leaving her.

“Stay faithful to him and you’ll receive more blessings. He’s shown favor to you today, to think you woke up today without so much as knowing he existed, only to end it by harboring his blessing deep

within the very core of your being. And you ask for more?" Flare said, still not scolding her. It was only natural she would want to be closer to Sol. Who wouldn't want to be? But to ask for so much of his god's time, truly this girl must think she was a Bishop for how much of his blessing she was seeking.

Flare was treating her like another follower. Sure, preferential treatment in that he was the medium that delivered the blessing, but he didn't want to spoil her.

On the verge of telling her good night, to tell her that another blessing may be in store for her tomorrow Flare paused briefly. Going dark as the light from his eyes, and markings completely dimmed entirely. His body growing still as he still held her chin.

Spoil her Flare. Teach her Sin. Defile her for Uhl. I'll help guide you and supplement your heat.

Sol's presence rang throughout Flare's consciousness. It was not the first time Flare had been spoken to by Sol, but it was surprising his God would intervene at a moment like this. Countless lives Sol touched and looked over, and to think she had the attention of the Divine Being in this moment.

After only seconds, like a flip of a switch, Flare inhaled in an audible gasp as his eyes and markings came back to life.

"It appears Sol has taken interest in your plea, Opal. He would like to assess your faith. Will you position yourself so as to receive his guidance?" Flare remarked as if expecting Opal would know how to prostrate herself. To maneuver to the bed, facing away from him, on

her knees while her hips were up high and cheek down upon the bedding.

for a brief moment it felt as though Flare had left. Though his hand remained under my chin, even his skin had cooled as the light within him flickered. A moment of fear had come over me.

Flare returned quickly, chasing my fear away. His next words make my heart rejoice. Sol does know of me! He does love me! I could feel it from the first, when Flare told me his name.

"I would do anything Sol required of me, Flare, I would do anything! I just need to be told how to do it!" I say sincerely, with reverence and awe. Sol had spoken to this man, had made his wishes known, here, in my presence, and I cannot contain my admiration.

"Flare, this is what it means to be honored, this, not being sealed away in a temple, not being left to be forgotten. Sol has shown me what it is to be honored. I will prove that I am worthy. I will prove that he can trust in me, I will ... I am His, Flare, truly I belong to Sol, for nothing has made my heart rejoice so much as you bringing me to Sol."

After allowing her to finish, Flare leaned in to press a kiss onto her, pushing forth his heated tongue to dip back within the recessed of her mouth and allow it to entangle with her own. The kiss was deep and wet, almost sinful in nature before finally withdrawing his tongue from her such that a bridge of saliva briefly connected them and then broke. "You say the sweetest things. So sweet he couldn't help but want a taste. You're very special Opal, which is why I've been permitted to..." Flare paused at the phrasing. "Spoil you as he put it. Come, let me show you how to present yourself before a god



and maybe one day you may be able to do so before him personally.”

Flare turned her around as she stood, the tip of his still slick member, hung and just as swollen as earlier, brushed against the small of her back as Flare leaned over and whispered to her his instructions.

“Your core is where your heat is, your flame of life, and where he places his blessing. Don’t mistake me Opal, you’ve quite a pretty face, but the day you meet him.” Flare phrased it as when she meets Sol, not an if. “You will assume this position for him until he demands otherwise of you. Now, pay attention. Crawl onto the bed for me, on all fours. Knees shoulder width apart. Present your core to him as if he could peer on into your soul.” Flare said, letting the heat of his words spill over her ear and neck before he let the dear girl try. She needn’t fear making a mistake, after all, this is why he is there, so that she may learn and be prepared.

I crawl onto the bed, just as described. I spread my knees apart, arching my back, and press my cheek to the covers to look back at Flare. I can see in his face that I've done well. I don't have to ask.

I feel exposed and vulnerable in this position, but I trust Flare, and Sol, and nothing can change the burning need in my core, the heat that has warmed my body and made me feel the divine fire that is Sol.

Flare is the hand of Sol, and the object of my desire. It's his touch that let's me feel Sol, his voice telling me how best to please my new, true God.

"Flare, how do I thank him?" I ask quietly.

After allowing her to finish, Flare leaned in to press a kiss onto her, pushing forth his heated tongue to dip back within the recessed of her mouth and allow it to entangle with her own. The kiss was deep and wet, almost sinful in nature before finally withdrawing his tongue from her such that a bridge of saliva briefly connected them and then broke. "You say the sweetest things. So sweet he couldn't help but want a taste. You're very special Opal, which is why I've been permitted to..." Flare paused at the phrasing. "Spoil you as he put it. Come, let me show you how to present yourself before a god and maybe one day you may be able to do so before him personally."

Flare turned her around as she stood, the tip of his still slick member, hung and just as swollen as earlier, brushed against the small of her back as Flare leaned over and whispered to her his instructions.

"Your core is where your heat is, your flame of life, and where he places his blessing. Don't mistake me Opal, you've quite a pretty face, but the day you meet him." Flare phrased it as when she meets Sol, not an if. "You will assume this position for him until he demands otherwise of you. Now, pay attention. Crawl onto the bed for me, on all fours. Knees shoulder width apart. Present your core to him as if he could peer on into your soul." Flare said, letting the heat of his words spill over her ear and neck before he let the dear girl try. She needn't fear making a mistake, after all, this is why he is there, so that she may learn and be prepared.

Flare's pupils dilate as she takes position. Her assumed form is an offering for a god of which Flare knows he is not. However, in Sol's infinite generosity, Flare is being permitted a view befitting a divine entity. Such a view could only be described as divine, as even if she is looking back upon Flare to check his expression for satisfaction, Flare's gaze is clearly pulled towards her core. Still slick from the exchange of heat and fluids from earlier as he gets his first full look at the pigmentation of her core. A core once promised to Uhl, now claimed by Flare, and by extension belonging to that of Sol now.

A shaky breath escaped Flare's lips, savoring the moment before her words break the spell and his eyes warmly shift upon her.

"He needs you Opal, just as you need him." A warm palm moves to cup her nethers, feeling the subtle pulse as blood circulates, vessels dilate, and her labia swells with eager anticipation.

"Your role will be key, and if you can fulfill it, I promise you I will take you to see him. If you seek to thank him, you need only play your part my dear. To serve your true purpose. That purpose may frighten you, but I promise, until you are ready we will practice these blessings." Flare lectured, whilst allowing the soft pad of his thumb tease at her entrance, although not sinking within to allow her anything to clench upon.

"Uhl, as we've established, takes. He's already taken so much life from you, and ultimately he would have taken the rest of it upon the day you were fated to become his bride. He would have taken your core." Flare confessed. "Same as we did." Flare plunged his thumb within. "But we gave, whereas he would take. Do you remember when we were inside you? The way your body reflexively squeezed

and milked me so as to receive our essence? We need to train that reflex in you so that when Uhl sinks within and tries to take away your flame, you take his essence and drain him entirely. That is how you please Sol. Does it scare you?" Flare withdrew his thumb, recentering it upon her entrance.

I turn forward as Flare's heat cups my center. I pant lightly, letting his words fill my mind. Flare's voice, the voice of Sol. My mind paints his touch as the touch of Sol. I moan with desire as he touches my entrance, my back arching, wanting more.

His words are alarming, though, seeking to divert my attention from what I'm being told. He enters me, instantly I feel stinging pain as newly opened passage is used again. I whimper, clenching to covers. My Sol flame burns hot, all throughout me. I still feel sensitive from just moments before, when I felt Sol fill me with his blessing, and my body felt such violent bliss.

This time will be more, this I already know. I whimper again as Flare withdraws.

"I am not afraid of Uhl, I carry the flame of Sol within me." I say, my voice shaky but confident. "Flare? When I take Uhl's essence...what will happen to me? Will Sol still want me, if I am tainted by the false god?"

I realize it doesn't matter, I will do as Sol wishes, even if it means Sol will turn from me. I could deny him no sooner than I could deny my own breath. I will obey Sol.

Flare's palm adopted a slow, but firm petting of her core as she inquired about her fate and what it meant to be tainted by the false

god. "Your flame will be significantly weakened after taking Uhl's essence, which is why it is important we stoke and feed your flame such that it is a burning inferno by the time you present yourself to Uhl. As to your other question, whether Sol will still want you—"

Flare steps closer as a familiar heat is pressed against the velvet lips of her entrance. Flare once more poised with his burning muscle. Teasing the poor girl, but not yet giving her enough to 'hold' onto. This in turn is to help provoke her sense of need, to make her fire burn a bit hotter.

"Sol himself will be the one to purify you of Uhl's essence. Once you help put an end to that false god I will escort you to see our divine lord where he will personally see to your cleansing." He pressed his palm against the bite mark on her inner thigh. "Today you received your first Sol mark. Upon the day that you are brought to Sol for purification, you will leave with marks like mine. Inscriptions upon your body symbolizing Sol's love of you. But—"

Subtly, bit by bit Flare applied light pressure towards her entrance, as if flirting with the thought of sinking his heat back within her slick, warm core.

"To get close to Uhl I have no doubt they'll enforce trials on you. To confirm you're not tainted. It'll be difficult, but Sol needs you maintain your resolve. Their trials will likely try and have you confirm such sins as wanting to be touched. So it's important, even if your inner flame is scorching hot, you must not break and asked to be touched. Not until it's just you and Uhl, alone."

my whole body tenses as I feel the pressure at my entrance. I listen, struggling against the distraction, determined to heed every word.

One thing he says catches my attention more than the heat probing at my core, one thing that sends a cold chill down my spine.

"Flare, how will I hide my Sol mark from them?"

the sheer volume of refugees is overwhelming. They destroyed our settlements, all 20 of them, how did they even know there were 20 settlements? it was Uhl's decree. There was to be 20, so Uhl had said. 20 settlements, built around 20 sealed temples. And once every 20 generations, a bride would be placed in each temple.

20 brides for the God, each one the same age. Two were confirmed dead. One was unknown. The rest of the refugees, from the other settlements, would be going to their respective places of worship. The lesser houses would soon be overrun.

Journ was in prayer, seeking guidance from his God. This invasion was alarming, and the number of people lost was rising still. But the number of people remaining was staggering. With only 20 settlements permitted, the large majority of people did not live in the settlements. They were scattered all over, and slowly seeking safety after the unexpected destruction.

The first arlit darted in through the narrow slit window and went straight to the litery. Journ stood immediately and followed it. The tiny winged mammal was exhausted, seeking food and water. The second arrived while he provided for the first. They each carried a message, tied with three cords of different colors. Each message was the same - three more settlements, destroyed by massive structures that descended from the sky. Refugees arriving in droves.

By the end of the day every settlement was accounted for. Every one of them, destroyed. Just as he had predicted. Journ refused his meal, sending it to the refugees, and knelt in contemplation of his God.

Uhl help them, they would fight back. These invaders sought to destroy everything, and everyone. They had come here with murderous intentions. But they would not find an easy target. Here they would find the Uhl's people, and repent.

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"let me through!" He demanded, once more forcing entry to a sacred temple. What did it matter if Journ was at prayer? His mission was urgent, and the priest must bless him.

"Journ, give me Uhl's blessing! They have taken her captive!" He didn't waste time with formal greetings, there was no time to waste.

"Who has been taken captive?" Journ did not rise. Not until I stood beside him, demanding he hear me.

"The bride of Uhl. I saw with my own eyes." That prompted him to rise. He strode over to a table and lifted an ornate sword, the blade battle scarred and ancient.

"She must be recovered, Baraxis, she must be presented to Uhl, untouched!" Journ contemplated the blade as he spoke.

"I was cleansed by the wise woman. I am ready, Hand of Uhl, to receive Uhl's blessing, that I may bring her to safety." Baraxis strode

to the throne of Uhl, knelt before it with his hand upon the floor. Journ slowly approached with the sword.

"You would take Uhl's blessing into your heart? You would become the Warrior of Uhl?" Journ asked.

"I would."

"You would take Uhl's blade into your heart, that you may accept the hand of Uhl?"

"I would."

"Are you worthy?"

"Only Uhl can decide my worth."

That was it, a simple ceremony for such a monumental blessing.

Journ pierced through Baraxis's heart with the blade, entering through his back as he knelt at the throne of Uhl. The blade glowed with blue light, brighter and brighter, then flashed brilliantly.

Journ stepped back from Baraxis as he staggered to his feet, the sword clutched in his hand. Baraxis opened his mouth to expel the blood that had pooled there, then gasped and coughed, grabbing onto Uhl's throne for support. Silence, except for his heavy breathing.

When Baraxis stood, his eyes flashed blue. He wiped the blood from his chin and turned to Journ, determination etched in his face.

"I will bring her to Uhl."

"With haste, she mustn't be touched."



Baraxis strode from the chamber, undamaged, empowered, and with single minded focus."

Flare took a step back from her entrance as his eyes fell forward, looking past her exposed core towards the glowing mark of Sol that he had delivered onto her earlier. It was obviously a glaring mark of corruption within the eyes of Uhl's order. Warmly he pressed his palm against her inner thigh, feeling the subtle pulse and warm glow of Sol coursing through her body.

"For the sake of remaining concealed, we will extinguish your mark temporarily. You'll feel a little colder, but I promise Sol's presence still swims within you. And of course, upon your successful return this mark, along with others, will be newly ignited upon your body. Etched by Sol's own personal touch." Flare said as his eyes shifted towards her own, as she was cheek down on the bedding.

"Can you do this Opal? Pretend to live a life of being untouched? To reintegrate into their society temporarily until you are brought before Uhl? Our presence, Sol's, will be unable to reach you, or if so, faint considering you will be surrounded by disbelievers. This will be a test of your resolve and your faith. No matter the cost Opal, it is imperative you do not give into desiring to be touched. They mustn't know how tainted you've become by Sol." He warmly stroked along her inner thigh, over her Sol Mark.

"If you are ready, we will extinguish your mark, and prepare you to be 'released' back to your people."

"will I still receive Sol's blessing, before my mark is extinguished?" I ask, doubtful I would be able to once the brand no longer glowed upon my skin. I don't want to loose the mark of my new God, or this

Sol flame burning inside of me. I only just learned about Sol, the thought of extinguishing my mark was painful.

I couldn't imagine not feeling my Sol flame, despite what Flare said. Not with how hot I burn every time he touches me. Having received Sol's blessing once, knowing what it was like, made my body yearn for it even more.

But if Sol wanted me to go, now, I would go.

"Can I really it, Flare? Can I bring down Uhl?" I ask. I maintain my position, keeping my face to the blanket. I don't see the fluid that drips from my core, I only know I want, crave, to have Flare inside of me, to receive another blessing, before I return to being the untouchable bride of Uhl.

Flare was undeniably swollen and quite eager for the anticipation of blessing Opal yet again. She was such a worthy follower of Sol. If it were up to Flare he would undoubtedly wish to keep her longer. To better deliver onto her blessings, such that Sol's essence would grace such things as her lips, tongue, throat or even coat her body.

In the back of his mind he knew there was a faint, unhealthy, sinful fascination with the vessel. She was after all, born to receive a false god and his own lord Sol has shown interest in making her a vessel. There was some inherent satisfaction in knowing he was chosen to administer her first blessings.

A breathy groan passed his lips as she inquired about receiving one last 'blessing'. How could he resist as she was positioned to him in such a perfect way of receiving? Before she knew it his presence was back, pressed onto her entrance, and soon sliding and

stretching her slick, inner walls to once more touch her inner core. Just as before, that swollen length of heat throbbed and pulsed like a beacon of light from within her body. Eyes visibly rolling up as heated palms possessively took hold of her by her hips.

Slowly sinking in to the point he bottomed out, feeling the front of his waist make contact with her skin as he clenched and flexed that holy muscle from within.

Breathily, trying to regain his composure he panted. "I promise you- The moment he dips within your core, he's going to have no choice but to spill, every, last drop of his false essence. Just as I intend to do to you-" Flare said, holding her in place as he slide himself out and gradually began to thrust into her from behind. Nothing impeding him from getting as deep as he could get within those velvety walls.

eyes wide, I gasp as Flare enters me from behind. He trusts deeper than before, bringing a moan to my lips as new, different pressures build with breathtaking intensity. I feel his heated body against mine as I tremble, gripping the covers, hardly able to draw a breath.

"Sol!" I gasp, his touch on the verge of pain, body shaking as I feel my core ignite. I briefly wonder if Sol's blessing has ever caught someone on fire. Then Flare begins to \*move inside of me, pulling back before thrusting deep once more, setting off an explosion of sensation entering my body in waves, overwhelming me so I can only cry out as my body builds tension. I feel myself tighten, gripping him, and my body moves as if on its own, instinctively rocking back to meet each thrust.

Harder, Flares hold on my hips guiding me, I gasp and cry out, then scream for my new God, as the tension building inside shatters, releasing wave after wave of the most exquisite pleasure. I'm left panting, trembling, unable to focus or speak. I whimper quietly, trying to catch my breath so I can thank Flare, and Sol.

By now rumors and gossip must have been circulating the citadel. Flare was a bishop, and even if he was blessing the temple girl, it shouldn't have taken so much time. Blessings occur in a multitude of way and rarely bestowed in such a way that Opal was receiving tonight. Let alone drawing the attention of Sol himself to vicariously live through Flare and experience the newcomer. This was less holy and more hedonistic in nature as the ritual descended into debauchery.

Moans, panting, the sounds of wet flesh meeting wet flesh echoed throughout the room, and spilled out into the hallway as Flare gave into temptation and desire, actively wanting to feed her core with his own flame. Yes, this was Sol's blessing, but undoubtedly Flare's own fire was reaching out and seeping into her core. It was almost primal the way Flare instinctually held onto and claimed her, fervently thrusting as their bodies seemed to work in ever increasing unison. She would meet each and every thrust, only to feed and drive him to meet her ever so desperately.

By the time they'd reach a blinding peak Flare was practically collapsed over her, filling her core to the utter brim with that fiery essence to the point that it was seeping out from around his member and down her thighs. Wasteful. Unlike Sol, Flare was 'unequipped' with preventing such waste.

After minutes of panting, trying to bring himself back to reality, Flare withdrew from her core, a wet sloshing sound as he pulled out entirely and briefly watched the gaping sight of her now blessed core.

"I hope that warmth in your belly will remind you of his love. Come back to him Opal, for he himself will wish to praise you for all you've done for our cause. Remember, this is not a punishment, but—" Flare pressed his palm to her inner thigh, draining the light of the marking. "But a means so that we can reward you. Now, I will ask you to bathe and wash all exterior evidence of your blessing. I'll have a new white gown laid out for you to don." Flare said, collecting his rope and fashioning it around his waist once more so as to be presentable when he left the room that held the humid scent of two beings having spent hours in deep prayer.

I remain where I am for a moment, then push myself upright on shaking arms. I press my hand to my stomach, feeling the muscles still contract with Sols blessing. I look over seeing Flare dress, and my heart contracts with fear. He is going to leave, I will be alone again!

I quickly get to my and cross the room to him, then stop, uncertain what I can do to stay with him. It takes a moment for me to realize I am the one who will be leaving. I have to prepare. I have a false God to bring to the light.

With Sol's mark extinguished, I feel my own Sol flame cooling. I don't like it, but realize it is necessary. As Flare dresses, I observe his marks, tracing them with my eyes. They are, to my eyes, which have seen so little of the world, absolutely stunning.

"Thank you, Flare." I say sincerely, "thank you for bringing me to Sol, thank you for Sol's blessing, that you may become the weapon to bring the false God to truth." I hesitate, then step closer and place my hands upon Flare's warm body. "Thank you for touching me. For making me alive. I will earn my Sol mark, I will prove that I truly belong to the true god."

I step away quickly and go to the washroom, closing the door behind myself. There is a mirror on one wall, that I hadn't noticed before. When I see myself in it I pause, shocked by the differences between myself and Flare.

I spend a moment looking, wondering if Sol would mind my grey color, my sharper teeth, white hair, and longer ears. But I did not think Flare would lie to me. The possibility never enters my mind.

After a moment to figure out how to get water into the basin, I slip into the water and wash myself, removing any trace of Flare's touch, and Sol's blessing. I keep my mind on Uhl, on my task. Even as I towel my hair and skin dry I think of my solitude, and the "honor" of being Uhl's bride.

I pause to look in the mirror before leaving the room, allowing myself one final moment to remember the warmth and love I felt from Flare and from Sol. As I bathed, I had felt the heat leaving me, washing away like the remnants of Sol's blessing. But I knew that wasn't possible. Sol's blessing was inside of me, protecting me, keeping my flame burning hot. I could wash away the traces left behind, but nothing would ever be able to extinguish this flame.

Once dry, it occurs to me that it would only help me be accepted back if I did one final thing to ensure no trace of my flame could be

detected. I return to the basin and fill it with cold water, then slip into it and submerge myself completely.

This is Uhl, this is his blessing. He has no heat, no love, for he is a false God and has taken everything from me. I will endure this cold so that I may take back what Uhl stole from me.

I will give it to Sol, willingly, with love.

I shiver as I dry myself again, but the chill doesn't last long. As I leave the washroom I note with satisfaction that it was a very effective way to further disguise my flame. I pull the white gown over my head, marveling at the fine quality and texture, so much nicer than what I had worn.

Except for the wound on my head, my injuries are minor. My head remains tender and sore, but no blood seeps from it as I dry my hair.

When I am finished, I move to the center of the sun mosaic on the floor and seat myself, on my knees, with my hands on my thighs, to wait to be released.

rumors are often inaccurate, and for Flare's sake, I hope these rumors are that kind. Locked in the room with a demon for hours, giving her Sol's blessing, as if she could even receive such a gift!

Travel between the citadels is easy enough, though it uses a lot of energy and is therefore only used infrequently. This is, however, more than enough reason for a bishop to travel the light to another citadel.

I enter the white tiled room and speak the name of the citadel Flare is housed in. The heat of Sol kisses my skin, and the familiar sensation of becoming heat and light washes over me. When it

fades, I stand in an identical tiled white chamber. This chamber, however, is in another citadel. Where I will find this young bishop and remind him of his mission.

As I walk through the wide halls, Sol's children bow respectfully. The Overseer is the first to greet me, which is to be expected, if the rumors prove true.

"Welcome, bishop Lumina!" The woman bows as she speaks, "we hadn't received notice of your coming, or we would have been better prepared!"

"I gave no notice. Where is bishop Flare?" I demand. I reach the audience floor and take the first seat at the large table emblazoned with color in the shape of the Sun of Sol.

"B-bishop Flare is currently engaged in matters of -" the overseer stammers, until I cut her off with a sharp gesture.

"Flare is engaged in sin, and you will inform him immediately that I require his attendance. Do not waste my time! This matter is of utmost urgency!" I snap at her. She bows and excuses herself, turning to open the door almost frantically, with a hastily muttered, "I understand, bishop Lumina, I will deliver the message myself."

I settle back in my chair to wait, closing my eyes to focus on Sol, the one true god, and allow his light to warm me, my Sol marks glowing brightly.

Redressing himself in his proper attire, Flare excused himself from Opal's quarters leaving the young sacrifice to clean herself and prepare for what was to come. The scent of prayer clung to his clothing and body. The scent of Opal more thoroughly was still



upon his skin and undoubtedly he would need to properly bathe, lest he set a bad example for those who worshipped under him.

Bishops of Sol did routinely collaborate, so it was not terribly uncommon for Bishops to travel to the other citadels, but usually not while being unannounced. Flare, comparatively speaking, was an upstart in the line of Bishops. The new 'golden boy' in the eyes of Sol. Sure he was a little less experienced than some of the long term Bishops, but he produced results. And most notably he was well on his way of bringing down Uhl.

"My lord-" His Overseer sounded at once relieved and surprised to see him having finally emerged from the room. She also seemed anxious, which was unlike her.

"Something the matter?" Flare rose a brow. There was no shame upon his face, for all he knew no one but himself, Sol, and Opal knew of what transpired behind those doors. The act of heat and passionate prayer whereby their psalms were recited and echoed throughout the room.

"Bishop Lumina is awaiting you in the-"

There was a flare-up in his eyes. What could she be doing here? Even though they were both Bishops, Lumina had been so for much longer than Flare. Some would say she was among one of the strictest followers of Sol, making it a habit of sticking her nose in the business of other Bishops. Or so Flare thought. Of course, he always acted cordially with her.

"I understand, I'll receive her now-" Flare's footsteps could be heard echoing off the tiled floor as he made his way to the Audience Floor

and saw Lumina, in all her lofty radiance, sitting in his chair at the head of his table.

“Lumina-“ Flare said. The ‘proper’ way to greet a Bishop was to use the title ‘Bishop’, however, they were of the same ranking, he thought it unnecessary. “To what do I owe the pleasure of your presence in my Citadel? Has subjugation of the demon’s city gone badly on your end and you are in need of more soldiers?” He approached the table, eyes peering on into her own. He didn’t know how much she knew at this moment, and so, he figured he’d not share with her any extra details until he knew of her reason for being here.

Renewed, reborn, and bless Baraxis emerged from the chamber intent upon reclaiming the bride of Uhl, and presenting her to his god, such that Uhl might see fit to intervene against the invaders who have completely ravaged their planet. How many brothers and sisters have fallen now, impaled by luminous swords and spears, shackled and taken as prisoners for slave labor. Truly it was better to be put out of one’s misery than be subjected to the barbaric ‘cleansing’ and re-education that he knew many of his people would be subjected to. He could only hope and pray to Uhl that these invaders could see the worth in Opal. That they would know she was reserved for the one true god. That they wouldn’t shatter years of her sacrifice only for her to be tainted by touch. Hope is all they had left.

“Brothers-Sisters. The light ones from above have come to decimate and erase our very way of life and beliefs. Uhl, who has watched over us from the beginning of time now is at risk of having his brides taken from him, and now I regretfully inform you that his latest

bride to be has fallen into the hands of light-ones. I prayer she has not been corrupted by their foul, unworthy touch, but even if she was, we cannot allow a vessel of his holiness to fall into the hands of another. It is imperative we reclaim her. Such that we can offer her to Uhl and receive his blessings, or, Uhl forbid, she is tainted, we must end her life, rather than to allow her continued suffering at the hands of these barbarians. Who among you is brave enough to step forth with me and reclaim his Holiness' bride? Many of us may perish in these attempts, but know that Uhl's appreciation, unlike our lives, will live on for eternity."

"Bishop Flare," Lumina stayed seated. Though she used the proper title, her tone was cold, making it clear it was a formality, a mark of respect for the rank, regardless of who held it. That he thought she had come to beg for help was insulting. She was a veteran of the cleansing and conversion of several such primitive planets, had brought the truth and light to those who suffered in darkness before he'd even recieved his first mark of Sol. Flare was the last bishop she would come to for assistance, should she have need. But to think she would need assistance at all on such a routine cleansing was ridiculous.

It only reaffirmed her position that Flare was too young, to immature to bear the responsibility. She had opposed his appointment from the beginning, and was determined to ensure he did not jeopardize their mission with his foolish and dangerous ideas. If, in protecting the ultimate goal, spreading Sol's light to all sentient species, she happened to find Flare lacking the qualities necessary to uphold the honor of his position, it would be her duty to bring her concerns before the council.

"My progress is exactly on target, there was never a concern there. I come to see how you are faring. This is your first action as bishop, and as the newest among our number I thought to offer my support and encouragement. It can be overwhelming, to be surrounded by so much darkness. The temptation to...indulge...can easily lead one to sin, if one were to act hastily, without guidance."

She could see enough proof already to confirm the rumors. His disheveled appearance, robes soiled and smudged, the lingering scent of copulation. The very thought of it sickened her. These were demons, ignorant of the true god, tainted, unholy creatures. They'd come to bring them to the light, not to satisfy their own sinful desires.

Flare suspected Lumina had it out for him the moment he was under consideration to receive the markings of Sol. Nothing was good enough for this woman. She was never satisfied, acting as if she alone was the right hand of Sol as opposed to all twenty of the Bishops being equally competent.

"While I always appreciate your insight, Lumina, I assure you matters here are progressing splendidly. The initial resistance to our descent was almost non-existent as their infrastructure crumbled. I do agree though, these are a species that have truly been kept in the dark. You've been around longer than I, I assume you know of Uhl as well?" Flare inquired. Surely Lumina had taken prisoners of her own. Perhaps subjected them to various forms of torture to extract what information she desired.

Flare however was not about to confess to Opal's existence, or the respond to the insinuation that he was 'indulging'.

"I suspect you consider anything without your guidance to be hasty and sinful. Is there something you disapprove of in my Citadel? Is it not as clean and orderly as your own? Does Sol's light not shine in every corner? Forgive me, perhaps I am just a bit on edge of your presence, given I have the sneaking suspicion you are trying to find any fault within me, no matter how insignificant."

In the back of his mind Flare knew Opal would be waiting for him. But he also knew she was a good girl, and an hour or two of waiting would be nothing compared to the years she spent in solitude. And so what if Lumina wanted to see the girl eventually? He had faith that Opal would be rather sinless in her presentation. Cleanly bathed and dressed in the pure white silk dress symbolizing her purity for Uhl.

She smiled at Flare, finally standing and walking close, eyes on his as he unflinchingly stood his ground. She smile and lened close, as if to whisper in his hear. Instead she took a careful breath, in through her nose, confirming her suspicions. She stepped back half a step, eyes flashing as she smirked.

"so the rumors are true then. You've been shut away with a demon since we made initial contact. Lust is a sin, Flare. As a bishop, you must be above sin."

She circled him, looking him over with a smug, satisfied expression.

"You disgrace us, Flare. It seems you need to spend time in meditation, repent for your sins, and renew your commitment to Sol. Where is she? I'd like to meet this demon girl you felt was worth jeopardizing our work, the work of our Lord Sol, for."

She fully expected he would produce the girl, and excuse himself from duties. She would gladly see to his citadel, it wouldn't be to much of a burden on her to run both her own and his. The people here had yet to mount a counter attack, it seemed they had no organized military. Any resistance would be farmers with wooden spears, easy enough to eradicate. A perfect first for a new bishop like Flare, if he were ready for the responsibility.

But she had known all along that he would make a mistake, it hadn't even taken him long to forget his mission. As much as it disgusted her to think of bedding a demon, she was glad Flare had done it.

"What did you think to accomplish? You know as well as I that a bishop is sacred, your seed is a blessing from Sol, what could you have been thinking?" A thought occurs and gives her pause, as she considers the idea. "You couldn't...I'm assuming this girl converted? Could you have truly thought I give her Sol's blessing yourself? The highest blessing of Sol, given to a demon of some unknown false God, of untested faith? Flare, you wouldn't be so foolish?" She asked incredulously.

Was he guilty of sin? Did he allow himself to slip off the edge and into the midst of lust while in the heat of passion, while railing Sol's teaching into Opal from behind?

Yes.

He knew deep within that while he was buried in that demon that there was much more to it than pure conversion. Even now, after having spilled several times within her still thought fondly back upon it and a part of him regretted the fact that she would have to

leave his citadel. But Lumina did not need to know that, nor would Flare confess.

"You know not with what you are talking about, Lumina." Flare stood his ground as the female bishop circled him. Her high and mighty tone only bolstering Flare's streak of defiance. "I'm sure you'd like that- I'm sure you're quite used to getting your way." He turned, looking into her as his eyes were ablaze with resolve. "I don't take orders from you Lumina. As for the demon- An empty vessel meant to receive the false god Uhl. If you're asking if I personally brought her to see the light, then yes. I bestowed upon her a Sol marking-" He parted his lips, flashing the upper and lower set of incisors, to let her know it was a bite.

"She's been tainted for Uhl with Sol's blessing. I know you might think I'm not doing my job, but in fact, it's through my actions, that this war will be brought to a close very swiftly, with minimal casualties. If you're unconvinced that she is a believer, you may see to her yourself, though not without my presence. Understood? This is my citadel, after all."

"you think you can single handedly bring down a false God? Your pride will be your undoing, Flare! What makes you single handedly able to do the work of 20? We have been to countless planets to spread Sol's thruth, there is a method, a tested and proven procedure, steps that must be taken!" Lumina drew herself up to her full height, staring down Flare, daring him to say she was wrong. "I assure you, rutting with the unenlightened demons is not part of that process!"

If she was to take this matter before the council, she would need to have all of the proof she could get. That Flare offered to show her the girl was a mark of his foolishness. It would be easy to question her, and find the taint that must be at her core. Prove her unworthy of a mark of Sol. And thereby prove Flare unworthy of the responsibility that came with the power to grant such a mark.

"Show me this demon girl, Flare, let me see this heathen demon you have honored with a mark she is most unfit for." Lumina doubted the girl would even know what the mark symbolized, what it meant to bear the mark of the true god. She expected to find the same thing found in every converted heathen- half understood lessons about the grace of Sol, beliefs that were nothing more than a bastardized mix of their heathen practices and their new God's teachings.

She followed Flair through the citadel, not surprised to be taken to the higher parts of the tower, where persons of untainted faith were permitted, instead of the cells beneath, where heathens and the unconverted belonged. It was more proof of Flair's poor judgement and inability to follow the very laws he was to uphold.

I wait for Flare to return patiently. So many years of solitude have made this into a familiar activity. I quickly find the calm, the meditative state I've spent so much of my life in. The only thing that's different is, now, I'm aware of my Sol flame. I don't sit and contemplate the false God Uhl, and my sentence to be his bride, I contemplate the warmth and love of my true god, Sol, and everything he has given me.



Time can pass quickly when I am deep in this meditative state. I forget about the world around me and enter my own mind. But this time, I don't mind so much. I know that Sol is with me, I do not wait for him, he is already with me. Here in this place, he is everywhere. I am not alone here.

My thoughts turn to my task, another thing that Sol has given me. A divine gift so valuable to me I can never express my gratitude enough. I will be the one who brings Uhl to light. He stole my entire life, and now I've been given the means to show him for the false God he is. My life spent in waiting for him to come claim me will not be wasted. I will bring Sol to Uhl, and to every one of my people.

And who better to do it? I had no purpose but to wait for Uhl to come. There are no people with any claim to me but Uhl. I have no family. My days were spent in contemplation of this false God. Can anyone claim to know him, to be closer to him, than myself? Can anyone claim to have more reason than myself to want to end the false God's lies and deception before he can force more women to the same fate as mine would have been?

As I sit in meditation, my heart slows, my temperature drops, I appear to be just a skillful depiction of a living thing. In this state, I've gone days without needing food or sleep while I built up my anger and hate toward the false God who sentenced me to my solitary prison.

I'd never dreamed I would be the one who ended Uhl. That was Sol's gift to me. And when, not if, I succeeded, then those years would be given to Sol.

Flare bit his tongue at Lumina. He was curious as to how the high bishop would react to learning that Sol himself seemed it fitting to interject in the blessing. That Sol himself had voiced his interest in rewarding Opal upon her success in bringing that False God's essence to him. Would Lumina dare say Sol was merely losing sight and 'rutting' with heathens?

He held his tongue, wondering if perhaps she was merely bitter and simply had not been called upon by Sol in a long time. Bitter that Sol would seek to appoint Flare as a new Bishop, rather than resolidifying his bonds with the other Bishops. If Flare had to venture a guess, he would suspect Lumina of the sin of Greed and Jealousy.

Silently Flare led the way towards the upper portions of the Citadel. He could practically feel the seething nature of Lumina's thoughts upon the perceived disrespect in housing this demon girl so high. After all, to be higher was seen as being closer to Sol. The upper echelons of the Citadel reserved for the most pious among them. But was Opal not pious? A girl, locked within a temple for 17 years of her life, all for the devotion of a god who hardly even knew her existence. Uhl wasted her, not realizing the caliber of follower that exists within her.

As Flare approached the door he knocked lightly as to announce to Opal his return. He could verbally warn her of Lumina. He could not tell her to not speak in detail of how she had been blessed. He could only hope she has cleaned herself, and assumed the role of Opal, the Untouched.

"Opal-" Flare's eyes and words were warm as he said her name, a genuine smile spreading to his face to see her on her knees, in what appeared to be prayer. The gown upon her looking beautiful and she pristine. A far cry from how she was just hours ago. "This is Bishop Lumina, of the neighboring Citadel. As we've established, you are quite special and integral to Sol's advancements. Why don't you greet her, and let her know to whom your soul, your fire, burns for."

I hear Flare's voice and pull myself from my thoughts by will alone. I've never been interrupted while meditating, but the familiar voice is welcome, exactly the voice I hoped to hear. When I turn and see him smiling and introducing the woman with him, I turn to regard her curiously. But as she abruptly steps past him to stalk toward me, a predatorial edge to her demeanor, I feel uneasy. A quick glance catches a subtle shift in Flare's expression, as he looks at the woman. My wary unease intensifies.

I look back to the woman, as she stalks around me in a wide circle, as though not wanting to come near enough to touch me. That suits me just fine.

"Bishop Lumina, thank you for honoring me with your presence. My name is Opal Neiquart, a child of Sol." I have never introduced myself before, and my name sounds strange to my ears until I add my faith in the true god. Stating my faith gives me a sense of calm, despite the way the bishop bristles at my declaration. Her reaction gives some insight into why she has come.

I glance at Flare, hoping for some reassurance, but knowing he can only do so much. Lumina steps close and demands my attention.

"Child of Sol, are you? When did you become a child of such a god?" Lumina demands, standing over me. The question seems odd, as though she expects me to answer a certain way.

I look up at her, unintimidated by her abrupt, aggressive tone.

"I have always carried my flame. It was almost extinguished, but Bishop Flare and Sol have fed my flame and shown me the truth. My life is for Sol. I am freed from my prison by the light and love of Sol."

Lumina looks surprised by my response, then looks at Flare as if he had done something wrong. When she looks back at me, she adopts a softer tone and expression.

"What do you know of the love of Sol?" She asks.

"Sol's love has always been with me, though I could not feel it through the darkness around me. Sol's love is light."

the girl answers with beautiful words, delivered from her pious position, that ring of simple honesty and faith. Lumina questions her, certain Flare has coached her on how to answer. She tries difficult questions, intended to test her faith and knowledge. While the girl proves to be ignorant of most of Sol's teachings, time and again she proves her faith in Sol's love for her.

"How has Sol shown his love for you?" Lumina asks, trying a different approach. Flare already admitted to marking the girl. Lumina was certain she would prove unworthy by ignorance of the significance of such a mark.

"Sol has given me life, Bishop Lumina. Life that Uhl would take from me. He has given me purpose, and the means to take back what was taken from me by the false God. Sol has given me bishop Flare, to

guide me to Him, and to give me my Sol mark." She smiles, but it quickly slips from her face. "My Sol mark..." she repeats.

"What mark of Sol have you been given?" Lumina jumps on the opening. Opal looks up at her, tracing the glowing marks of Sol on Lumina's own face.

"I was given my burning mark of Sol by Bishop Flare, to show that I am a true child of Sol. I offer my life to Sol, and he has branded me with his light."

Lumina stepped back, at a loss for words. The girl appeared to truly carry faith in Sol in her heart. She could not find any flaw in her dedication to Sol. Lumina walks over to Flare, glaring, angry that Opal appeared to be a completely successful conversion. She'd wanted to fault Flare, to show his incompetence.

Before she reaches Flare, she stops, a smirk growing on her lips as she turns back to Opal.

"Just one more question, child of Sol. You were given Sol's blessing, were you not? Can you please tell me how Sol chose to deliver his blessing?"

Opal hesitated, her eyes on the floor. Then she slowly turned to Lumina.

"Sol chose Bishop Flare to deliver his blessing into my core, that my flame might grow strong enough to bring Uhl to truth.

Flare bit his tongue as he allowed Lumina to assess Opal's worthiness. Flare, by this point, was fully aware of her faith and love for that of Sol, however, even he was quite impressed by how she was able to articulate such to Lumina. If he could offer Opal praise

verbally he would have, however, it was important to appear impartial, and as if he was not coaching the girl. To that end she performed splendidly. It's not even that she had to lie or bend the truth. The visible frustration was on Lumina's features, from Flare's perspective.

A confident smile spread upon Flare's face as a defeated Lumina turned to him- up until one last question was asked.

Lumina already accused Flare of 'rutting' with the demon. She must have suspected as much from the get-go, but it was important that Flare help put into context Opal's answer, lest Lumina get the wrong idea. Yes, she received Sol's blessing in her core. Multiple times. Although the 'multiple' part likely was not critical information for Lumina to know.

“While I think you might consider that hasty and extreme Lumina, this girl has in fact remained locked away within a temple, more so a prisoner, for the majority of her life in waiting for Uhl. She was to be his bride, surely you can understand that consummation would be quickly following. She is in the unique position of being one who is actually permitted to be with that false god. Who else would have access when his guard is down? And where better to bless her than the very same place Uhl will seek to taint with his own foul essence.” Flare looked over to Opal, who to this point has been very good. It would be a shame he would not be able to reward her.

“Her actions are anything but sinful. Even now, she's offering herself to be starved again of the very things she had been neglected of while imprisoned. Of course she doesn't want to. She would rather

spend her days learning of Sol's teaching and developing a deeper bond with her God. But instead, she's making further sacrifices in the name of Sol. Forgive me Bishop Lumina, but I do believe you're being uncharacteristically harsh on her. Shouldn't we as bishops foster, and nurture the new children of Sol? Tell me Lumina, assume you were the bishop of this Citadel, would you utilize her in the same manner? Or keep potentially the greatest asset we have underwraps, or severely lower her chances of being able to overcome Uhl's influence should she copulate without a strong enough inner flame. You speak of sin, but does that girl appear to you a sinner?"

Op:"Flare speaks up and I fall quiet, listening to him explain. I gather from his explanation that I've said something I shouldn't have, or else why would he be explaining. The look on lumina's face as she regards Flare is a look of contempt.

"I would have placed her in a lower cell and brought the matter to the council, as protocol clearly states." Lumina said, her words dripping with scorn. "Do you think Sol truly would have blessed this creature? Touched her with his own body? You gave her an empty blessing, bishop Flare."

I frown hearing her accusation. Maybe she thought I was not good enough to be loved by Sol, but I had felt his blessing, delivered into my core by Flare. I had felt the heat, and my Sol flame had grown. Had grown so much I had thought it would consume me.

I don't say anything, not wanting to make matters worse. I knew lumina was wrong, but it was not my place to correct a bishop. I had seen Flare when Sol had spoken to him, though. I had been afraid,

which made the moment vivid in my mind. I assumed there was a reason Flare did not mention that, however.

Talking about Sol, answering Lumina's questions, and being in the citadel, in the company of two bisops, made it difficult to keep my flame cool, as I needed to so I could return to Uhl. If it burned too brightly, I was certain I would be discovered. For the first time I allowed myself to consider what that would mean for me.

"If I fail, I will be put to death, and needn't think of me again, bishop Lumina. I only ask that I be given the opportunity to use this strength Sol has given me to take back what Uhl took from me. The false God stole my life and left me to solitude since I was a child. If I end Uhl, then all those years are not wasted. They would belong to Sol, as they rightfully should. I have nothing else to give to the true god but my life."

even the way opal answered that question was a mark of her faith in Sol. Lumina couldn't help but wonder if there was a chance Flare was correct. Perhaps this truly was Sol's plan. But there was so much done incorrectly, she couldn't allow Flare to become complacent of protocol!

The likelihood of his having truly bestowed a blessing of such caliber upon the girl was negligible. Daybreakers, bishops, were the only ones who received the highest blessing of Sol. The thought of Sol choosing to bestow such a blessing on a demon- even such a pious demon!- was laughable.

Lumina paused, however, when the girl so easily offered her life to Sol, expressed her hopes to be able to either give Sol the years she had spent in waiting for her false God, or die trying, with the



reassurance that the bishops would be able to continue the cleansing of the planet regardless of the outcome.

Flare's words rang true, despite her desire to find him incompetent for his position. She regarded opal, feeling an urge to protect the innocence of the demon. Should she be able to bring down the false God, they would find the rest of these heathen demons ready to open their hearts to the true god. There would be no more resistance.

And Flare would be given honors for finding this girl. That thought burned in her stomach like bile. That could not be allowed to happen.

"Send this girl back, let us see if you are correct. A life lost in service to Sol is never truly lost, after all, and what more honorable way to die, but in service to the true god."

It was true, Flare withheld pertinent information regarding Sol's intervention during the marking and blessing process. Perhaps something he could keep in his back pocket. Perhaps it was Lumina who should have greater faith in that Sol's hand and influence is ever present in helping to shape reality. Such things like making sure that Flare was the one to happen upon the temple demon, all according to his plan to.

"A wise determination, Bishop Lumina." Flare said, overly polite which he knew would just annoy the elder Bishop further.

Flare approached Opal to the point that they were close enough she could feel the subtle heat radiating from off his body. He would have liked to touch her now, cup her cheek, perhaps offer her words

of encouragement, but alas, she was to be 'untouched' now freshly cleaned from the bath. It would not do either of them any good to taint her or have her fire burn any brighter than necessary.

"I have faith in you Opal Neiquart. See to it you return to us so that I might be blessed enough to offer you praise." It was a personal request. Of course he would be introducing her to Sol, but even so the shameless Bishop couldn't help but want to show her his appreciation as well. Warmly his gaze lingered on her for some more seconds before turning his attention to Lumina.

"If you insist on staying here during this exercise, then allow me to enlighten you as to the plan I have in mind for her 'rescue'. I've been receiving reports of a resistance faction. Perhaps splintered individual groups across this planet, or perhaps branches of a centralized organization. It doesn't matter to me so much, but obviously Opal, rather Uhl's Bride—" He corrected himself. The distinction was clear though. She was Opal Neiquart to the Daybreakers, but to her own people? Nothing more than the bride of their god. Individually she did not matter to her own people. "Is a prized asset and something the resistance would undoubtedly seek to reclaim. We cannot just 'give' her to them. It would be thought of as suspicious, and rightly so. No, what I propose." And it was important Opal hear this so she can understand. "Is a fake escort. By your own words Lumina, a life lost in service to Sol is never truly lost, and in that I would enlist six of my soldiers to protect Opal and escort her out of the citadel." These soldiers would not be told of the truth behind their escort mission, doing so would impact the legitimacy of their actions.

“Opal, it is imperative you ‘flee’ to these would-be rescuers from the resistance. As if you want to leave us and Sol’s light. You will remain unbound so as to keep you in an ‘untouched’ appearance. Now, if you’ll come with me, we will be descending towards the barracks so I might assemble your escort-“ Flare said, expecting Lumina would be joining. Leaving the Bishops to discuss some finer details as they got this operation underway

Even though it was past sundown, the Citadel’s light radiated and illuminated the lands immediately around it, a gradual waning whereby the forested regions were cloaked in shadow and Baraxis, and his assembled platoon, lied in waiting. This point was days after Flare’s proposition to Opal. It was imperative to ‘leak’ the information of Opal’s transfer to another Citadel so as to feed falsified information to the resistance. Baraxis and his resistance group had successfully captured and interrogated several of the Daybreakers to extract information.

Hidden in the brush Baraxis and his resistance group waited until the fateful hour whereby it was said the Bride of Uhl would be transported. His group had primitive weaponry. Spears, swords, bows and arrows, but the Daybreakers bled like any others and would cease moving upon having their hearts impaled. A dozen and a half men and women awaited the moment that the Daybreakers would leave the light of the citadel. Already they could see the bride of Uhl, head down, wearing a clean white linen gown. From afar she looked untainted, and one could only hope that would be the case. Journ would have to assess her, being the hand of Uhl, to establish whether she was fit to be presented. Their people depended upon her to not have given into corruption.

“Go!” He gave the signal, ordering each of his men to let loose their arrows, before abandoning the weapons and charging in with their melee weapons in hand. They were skilled archers and hunters. It went without saying they could not harm the bride. Marking her skin would be a sin and Uhl would be liable to reject her for such a minor imperfection if he saw fit.

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the song of arrows all around alerts me to the presence of my own people. I stand still, watching Sol's children drop around me. A life lost in service to Sol is well lived, I remind myself. When the grey-skinned demons come forward with blades in hand and make short work of the few children who were sentenced to be sacrificed for my mission, I do exactly as I was instructed- I flee to them.

I carefully avoid touching any of my "rescuers", and shy away from the sight and sound of the final child of Sol being mercifully put to death. I don't have to pretend to weep. The confrontation was short and bloody. I've never seen death, and the children who just rejoined the light did so on my account. I bury my face in my hands and weep.

It had been days since I was blessed by Sol, and every day seemed to diminish my Sol flame. This was good, it was what needed to happen. But it left me feeling cold and longing for Flare's warm touch. I knew he could not touch me again, not without jeopardizing my mission, but I still longed for it. Flare was the only person I could remember ever touching me.

The few days I had to wait were more difficult to endure than the years I'd spent waiting for the false God. But now, I was returning to the ashen skinned, tainted people who had allowed their false God to imprison me for 17 years. I was returning to bring light to their God of lies, and to ensure that those years never truly belonged to Uhl.

A life spent in service to Sol was a true honor. Uhl was not worthy of such a sacrifice.

My rescuers came near to me, but none tried to touch me, none tried to comfort me as I wept. They didn't even speak to me, only whispered to each other behind their hands, as if even hearing their voices might taint me. I found solace in the "taint" I knew I carried I within me.

I quieted my weeping alone. If they saw fit to watch me, they would not have the satisfaction of watching me weep. "Uhl's Bride" would save her tears for after she was claimed.

Flare carefully laid out his plans, including the demon in the discussion as though her word were equal to his or mine. I slowly caught on to the fact that he thought the demon would be fit to be presented to Sol himself. He was more than a fool if he believed an ash-skinned demon would be raised to a bishop. Only daybreakers could be given that highest of honors, only daybreakers were pure enough to feel Sol's illumination upon their bodies, to feel the heat of his touch, to receive his direct blessing.

Flare presented a well thought out plan to bring down this false God. Lumina could find no fault in his reasoning, which infuriated her. She watched, listened, and observed, hoping he would err,

wanting him to fail. The only error he made was to so blatantly display his affection for the girl. He heaped praise upon her every chance he got, and more than once Lumina had witnessed Flare just stopping himself before giving her an affectionate touch or caress. The eyes gave them away, for every time Opal raised her unsettling, colorless eyes to meet Flare's gaze, the affinity between them shone forth. Flare burned brighter, and both of them shared a warmth of expression.

Lumina could certainly use Flare's fondness for opal to her own advantage. It was considered sinful for a bishop to feel more than Sol's own love for any children of Sol. Such emotional conflict would only create conflict amongst the children. Flare came dangerously close to breaking sacred law, and Lumina was going to see that it happened. If opal succeeded, her return would be a time of rejoicing for Flare. He would be more apt to make mistakes. It would be easy to create circumstances for Flare to ruin himself.

But in the meantime, she would ensure she was at Flare's side every moment until she had enough to damn him. She would make herself comfortable in this citadel, more than willing to be the thorn in Flare's holy side.

Baraxis wore the blood of his enemies, ashen skin now stained in the crimson blood of the light ones. They had fallen almost effortlessly. This didn't surprise Baraxis, or the others. This was an 'ambush' in their eyes, the arrows had felled two of the Daybreakers from the moment they were released, another two had been wounded and had their ability to maneuver greatly diminished. And with a three to one advantage in numbers the Ashen Ones made short work and overwhelmingly were victorious.

This would underline that guerilla warfare and ambushes would be successful in battling against the Daybreakers. This would be a war won through small battles until such time that Uhl would come to their aid. But for that aid they needed to make sure his bride was delivered.

“Bride of Uhl-” Baraxis touched her wrist, pulling her from her hands as she wept. This was likely the first time she witnessed and smelled the scent of death in the air. It wasn’t a surprise she would be overcome by emotion. It had not occurred to him that her emotional reasoning was anything but that. “I am Baraxis, do not fret for the hand of Uhl has given me blessing to retrieve you.” This was important, especially if Opal had been too ill, bound, or Uhl-forbid, hurt to the point that she couldn’t walk under her own power. His touch was cold, more so ambient in temperature to the air. It was nothing like Flare’s or the heat of Sol. Uhl fed off the flames of these Ashen people, leaving them to be but husks of their former selves.

“Come with me, Bride of Uhl.” There was no attempt at learning her name, such things weren’t important. She didn’t have an identity beyond being the bride of Uhl. She had no other purpose or desires in life. “It is imperative we take you back and have you assessed and in to the hands of Uhl as soon as possible so that he may bring an end to these corrupt beings. Can you walk by your own power.” Baraxis asked.

his touch startles me. I hadn't thought anyone would touch me until I was presented to Uhl. He explains how he is able to do so, and I feel another wound, another wrong done to me by these people. Every one of them did this to me. They left me alone, and they had

the ability to purify themselves, to be able to touch me, the entire time!

"You...you will take me to him?" I ask, realizing my hands are shaking. Baraxis seems almost like the alien, to me. His dark is a stark contrast to Flare's light. His touch is cold. Yet his body, though streaked with blood, is well defined muscle, he moves gracefully and with control.

He doesn't see me, though, I realize, he only sees the bride of Uhl. He only sees as his false God allows him to see. But he is allowed to touch me, and his touch brings back the cold, empty, loneliness of my entire life. And longing. His is the first touch of my people I've ever felt. I want more, like craving water in a desert I want more.

"Yes, I can walk." I am surprised by how quiet I sound. I walk with Baraxis, feeling their eyes on me. I keep my eyes on Baraxis. I'm struck with the urge to scream at him, to demand he use my name, the name my mother and the true god, Sol, gave me. I bite my tongue, well aware that would be a mistake.

Flare's plan is working. Sol's plan. I find solace in knowing that, despite the wrongs they did to me, I will be the one who brings the light of Sol to these people. My life will truly be lived for Sol, and I will bring his light to this dark corner of existence. There is no greater goal than to serve Sol by spreading his light. I hope to be able to show them all the Sol flame inside of them. If they have one left.

When he placed his hand on me, I felt no Sol flame at all in his touch. But if that were so, wouldn't he be dead? A cold fist closes on my



heart as I realize the terrifying truth. Baraxis is a corpse. He has been blessed by the false God, and it extinguished his flame.

“To Journ, yes. He’ll prepare you for our Lord, but for now you need just follow. Try not to speak, you’ve likely enough taint on you now. We can only hope and prayer Uhl will still find you worthy.” This was not nearly as warm and welcoming as being taken in to the Citadel was. These were her people, and yet they looked upon her with distaste, as if openly blaming her for being captured and putting herself at risk.

None of the other seventeen with them spoke to her directly. They talked amongst themselves, none but Baraxis blessed and permitted interaction. Ideally she would be entered into the care of the elder priestesses of their clan, left to be tended to by relics of their civilization. It was those same elder women who tended to her, dressed, and taught her how best to be a bride for Uhl. Male interaction was strictly forbidden. Her mind could not be trusted not to wander.

But these were trying times and the brink of their people relied upon getting her to Uhl as quickly as possible.

Through winding and twisting trails within the forest, easily making pursuers lose their way if one hadn’t traveled these trails throughout their lives, would ultimately bring the party to the mouth of a cave. Judging by the appearance this wasn’t a make-shift hideout, but rather a sacred place for their people whereby worshipping took place on the regular. Now it served as one of the last beacon’s of hope for their people. The heart of the mountain supposedly where Uhl, the great provider, sleeps and waits.

“Keep your head down, Bride of Uhl.” Baraxis said as they grew closer. Families, children playing, people conversing at tables and partaking in drink. This was a vibrant and rather lively place considering the circumstances. Comradery among their people, breaking bread, sharing in various drinks. A community. One she was not meant for. She shouldn’t have inappropriate thoughts of having friends, having alcohol, talking to the opposite gender, or even consider herself having a family in the future. She had but one fate.

Bit by bit the pack of resistance soldiers sloughed off and joined their comrades for food and drink, tending to wounds, or heading to the armory. The sounds of people died down but to a faint hum the deeper they traveled into the cave, through yet again winding paths before a chamber opened up before them, larger than even the temple she had been houses within all her life.

Single male was sat cross-legged before an oddly shaped rock set within the center of the chamber. He appeared deep in meditation.

“Journ- The Bride has returned, please, tell me that it’s not too late? Tell me Uhl hasn’t given up on us? Tell me we can still save our peoples?” He immediately took a knee, bowing his head. It was rude of him to demand such things of Journ, but clearly these questions weighed heavily upon his heart. Journ was the hand of Uhl, the single most holy of their people to be able to converse with God. If anyone had answers it would be he.

Journ’s eyes slowly lifted to look upon his brethren. His heart ached with the amount of pain, fear, and anger behind Baraxis’ words.

“That depends entirely upon the Bride. For the past seventy-two

hours I've beseeched Uhl in hopes he might offer us guidance in these trying times, but his silence is deafening and the result could not be more clear. We allowed his bride to fall into the hands of the invaders, it's an affront to Uhl and quite frankly we all deserve to perish for such a thoughtless oversight. We must bestow her upon him. I only pray she is not tainted. To be so... would truly be a dark day upon us to the point we would need nearly another two decades before Uhl might be ready." The implication here such that if Opal failed them, her value would be over and they would need to start over, from an untainted life and ready them until they too were of age to be wed to Uhl. Another life locked away for years and years, to miss out on all the warmth and love life could grant them.

"Come to me Bride of Uhl." Journ rose to his full stature. "You may speak to me, for my ears, my words, my hands are in service to Uhl and only he. Had your temple not been destroyed you would have found yourself brought before me, although within a ceremony, much like you are now. I would see you as I am now, and evaluate that you have not been tainted so as to not dishonor our god. Tell me, what foul sights graced your colorless eyes while in the hands of the invaders? And please- do not hold back on anything that could be classified as sinful. I must know the worst in hopes that you can still be salvaged."

now it fell to me to convince them I was still pure. I'd spent my days learning the texts and studying the word of Uhl- much of which had been Journ's own writings. I knew little of the ceremonies and rituals that others knew by heart, as they were never meant to be a

part of my life. I had spent years studying texts and records all attempting to explain the will of the false God Uhl-

Thoughts like that would get me killed here. I focused on Journ's question. This was the easy part. I described the daybreakers, giving the invaders a name for the first time. I told how they burned with fire, the strongest of them even showing it burning in their eyes. I gave them the name of the God their enemies fought under, knowing none present would hear that name I did. I found some small satisfaction hearing the name of Sol spoken in this place by my own voice.

I answered every question Journ asked, being careful not to incriminate myself. If I had thought I could believably say none there had touched me, I would have, but I had been taken captive. I confessed, with distress, to having been touched when they first found me in the ruins of my sealed temple. Their hands burned like fire, and they were quick to unhand me, so long as I cooperated. I had cooperated, of course, so that I might remain pure for Uhl.

I'd been taken to a cell, left alone for some time, then they had come to question me. I had only praised lord Uhl, they could not get what information they sought from me, for I know nothing but Lord Uhl. After more time alone, I'd been subjected to their teachings as they attempted to convert me.

My faith in my lord, the God Uhl, was strong. I'd spent my life building my faith in Uhl. I was not taken in by their God. I would not so easily betray Uhl, and waste the years I'd spent in preparation for when Uhl would come for me. I love Uhl.

When I was rescued, it was a mark of Uhl's favor, for they had been taking me to something worse than what I had seen.

They had been taking me to see their powerful bishop, to be shown the truth of their burning God. I had been fearful, for they spoke of ruining me, making me unfit for my lord Uhl.

I wove my tale well, my eyes remained cast down to the floor, respectfully, I spoke of my years in growing my faith and love in Uhl as the strength that let me see through their lies. I emphasized that, after they had first found me, I had not been touched, so long as I cooperated. They had no reason to touch me, were opposed to touching me, even, as they felt I, a pure, untouched bride of Uhl, would somehow taint them!

I did not know how many they are, or what they plan next. I was only told that they come to bring the light of Sol to our people. That they come to help us, to lift us out of darkness. Always, I made certain to fall back on my love for Uhl as what gave me strength.

I had not eaten their food, nor drank their water. I had fasted, and spent my time in contemplation of Uhl's mercy, Uhl's might, Uhl's grace. I had spent my time in prayer that Uhl might save me from these light bringers. And Uhl had answered my prayers, for Journ had sent Baraxis to liberate me just before I had been lost to Uhl forever.

I saw fit, then, to thank Journ, for his wisdom in planning my retrieval. I asked that he might cleanse the touch of the burning children from me, so that I might be presented to Uhl now. For only Uhl could know if I was still fit to be his bride.

“That sounds like a horrific ordeal.” Journ shook his head somberly as she recounted the past several days while being imprisoned by these wretched ‘Daybreakers’. “It’s admittedly worse than I imagined-” He began, the thought that she would have been subjected to conversion and the teachings of ‘Sol’ was concerning.

“It is however a relief that your faith and resolve remained firm even despite those attempts.” Yes, she spun a lie that was inline with what Journ wanted to hear. What Baraxis wanted to hear. Opal was to be a good little sacrifice for Uhl. Her life was one that had been stripped and deprived, so when they heard she further deprived herself of food and drink, so as not to partake in these invaders’ offerings, it was a relief that her faith in Uhl remained steadfast.

“Let us see then-” Journ reached out for her hands, lifting them and allowing his gaze to wander the ashen skin of her wrists and forearms, looking for markings in her skin. Bruises, burns, cuts- anything to signify she had been damaged. It’s not that any of those were irreparable, but it would take further time and effort to polish and buff out these imperfections so that Uhl might find their offering worthy. The general sense was that Opal was seen more so as an object versus an actual person.

“And rest easy knowing this in no way disqualifies you.” He meant, in reference to his touch to her bare skin. They believed her to be so brain-washed that she herself didn’t want to be touched. They believed her to not harbor any such thoughts and that she was truly happy in living such an enclosed, lonely, cold existence.

“These fibers are not of our making.” Journ said, turning her hand over as he looked at her palm, simply making an observation of her

gown. "While not an outright sin to have fabric touch your body, it would be inappropriate to present you to Uhl in your current attire. Please disrobe, oh Bride of Uhl." Journ said, releasing his hold on her as this man she had never met before stood before her, eyes unwavering as he entirely expected her to unclthe and bare herself for the 'first' time to a man.

I flinch when he takes my hands, expecting his touch to be the same as Baraxis's flameless touch. It's not. Journ's hands are soft, his touch light, and decidedly alive. This is the hand of Uhl, his touch would be the only touch I ever knew before I was given to Uhl.

His expectation that I disrobe causes no more discomfort than I had felt when I'd bathed in front of Flare. I pull the garment off and throw it to the ground, stepping back from it. I run my hands over my arms, as if to rid myself of the feeling of the material.

I look back at Journ, noticing his eyes on my body. That's as it should be, he is to inspect me for damage. Baraxis, behind me, makes no sound, though he, too, inspects my body. My lack of shame is born of innocence, I truly don't have any reason to wish to remain covered. I don't know how seeing a body affects people.

I know that now, more than ever, I must control my Sol flame. I'm surprised when it reacts to the way Journ's eyes seem to seek out every inch of my skin as he inspects me. Yet, even that doesn't make me think to cover myself.

Journ's eyes were indeed upon her body, looking over the ashen skin looking for signs of markings on her body that wouldn't have been natural. While highly frowned upon, even light scars from injuries in the past, such as a scrape wouldn't disqualify her, so some

imperfections were acceptable. What wasn't would be marks from others upon a body reserved for the true god Uhl.

"You appear in good health-" Journ said, not bothering to look into her eyes as instead his gaze was focused still on her body. Journ's touch was indeed notably less chilled. A benefit of being the hand of god. Although this paled in comparison to Flare's overwhelming heat. Still, there was no hesitation as his right hand moved to cup her modest left breast, the pad of his thumb brushing over the pert nipple. It wasn't meant to stimulate her, but rather assessing her body's reaction to cooler temperatures, and physical sensation.

"Did they watch as you undressed?" He inquired. Uhl would like to know how many sets of eyes had seen his bride. A selfish God.

"Again, I'm not seeing anything specific that would be unsatisfactory." Journ said, his words calm. It would benefit him for her to feel like she could reveal such secrets without judgment.

With his right hand still upon her breast, his left moved to cup her cheek. "Part your lips for me and let me see-" The male said, wishing to peer upon the slick inner flesh of her body.

obediently, I open my mouth. I wonder if he knows about beacons, if that is what he is looking for. My nipple contracts against his palm, though not from stimulation- my skin expected warmth, heat, from the touch of another. Journ's cooler touch cased a less pleasant type of response.

"I was not watched while I bathed or dressed, that I know of. They allowed my demand to be untouched, so long as I was compliant."



Sealed in the temple, any injury or accident that could have caused a blemish was made highly unlikely. Even during puberty I'd had few blemishes that might cause scarring. I was kept securely whole and intact. Removed from those experiences that make up a fulfilling life.

my teeth had grown in straight, and oral hygiene was part of the rituals of care I'd been expected to live by, as it was how Uhl's bride must be cared for. My entire day, every day, had been a ritual to ensure I was in a condition that pleased Uhl. No matter how I rebelled, nothing I could do would change the expectations on my behavior. The most I'd been able to accomplish had been the one time I hadn't received a meal for three days, and that may have simply been because the wisdom who was in charge of my keeping had died.

As if inspecting livestock Journ insert his thumb into her mouth and peeled back her gums, peering into and inspecting her teeth, gums, tongue. Visually she was an appealing offering to Uhl, which made sense given that it would be offensive to offer a less than beautiful bride to a god. "Considerate of them. I would still see that Uhl eradicates them and wipes their presence from this planet, but I am thankful your modesty had not been tainted. -Wider-" He said, almost clinical in his tone as Journ moved to dip his index and middle fingers deeper into her mouth.

"I imagine this is all rather new to you. Receiving touch like this, I know deep down this is an uncomfortable feeling, as it should be, until it is Uhl's hand that is upon you. Bear with me, Bride of Uhl." He said, while her mouth was full until the point he withdrew his fingers from the slick warm recess of her mouth.

“Impeccable-” Journ said, wiping his fingers off on his robe. “Tell me, Bride, are you familiar with the concepts of desire, eroticism, or sensuality? For instance-” He stroked two fingers along the side of her neck, slowly dipping down towards the crook of said neck.

“There exists certain points upon the body, more receptive towards sensation than others. Classified as erogenous zones, for those permitted.” She would have not been taught such things, however, it didn’t mean she didn’t self-discover. Nor did it mean her body was necessarily blind to such desires.

“As you well know, Uhl is to be your first, and your last. If you’ve inherited corruption even spontaneously were stricken by thoughts of impurity, it would not be good for our people to offer such a dirtied offering to our god. You know this. We all know you live and breathe for Uhl, your only purpose in life. Still, there are sometimes corruptions within the body that the mind itself is unaware of.”

Journ moved to retrieve a blanket, laying it out upon the floor as one lit candle was retrieved. “I would like you to lay upon your back for me so that we may prepare you to meet him.”

I gag on his fingers as he withdraws them from my mouth. His gentle caress comes as a stark contrast to that invasion. Completely off-balanced by the conflicting sensations, his next instructions catch me unprepared. I frown, moving toward the blanket, but to show reservations now could cause suspicion.

I lower myself to the ground carefully, laying on my back. The stone floor is hard, and radiates cold, even through the blanket. I lay with my legs straight, touching, and rest my hands beside me. I know I have nothing to fear, Journ is the hand of Uhl. He lives for Uhl, as much as I did. He could not cause harm to a bride of Uhl. But I can't

help feeling vulnerable, laying on the ground, subject to his examination.

I don't know how I am to be prepared. I was never told how I would be claimed by Uhl. I'd never been told of things that transpired between a husband and wife. And It had never occurred to me to touch myself for physical gratification. Sealed away in the temple, I'd never been around males who might stimulate desire, never has peers to whisper about fantasies. My only fantasies had been of serving Uhl in the manner of a wife, at least, the parts of being a wife I was allowed to know.

"Desire? To want? What is eroticism? Sensuality?" I ask, staring at the roof of the cave. "I am Uhl's bride, if parts of my body are more touchable than others, I will learn them when my husband touches them. I...I have only carried Uhl in my heart and mind. I am honored to be given the privilege to know his touch. I know nothing can ever be as sacred as receiving my husband's touch. I...I have desired his touch, yes, longed for him to place his hand upon my head, to feel his kiss upon my brow. Journ, you are the hand of Uhl. Do you know if I will be permitted to touch my husband?" I ask, my question sincere. It was a question I had wondered for years. I'd dreamed of placing my hands upon his body, that I might experience his divinity.

Journ knelt beside her upon the blanket, before fixing his eyes upon Baraxis who was still bowed. "You've risked your life, among others, to see to it that his Bride is returned safely. You've been blessed by our Lord. Come, you may observe the ritual-" Journ said, awaiting Baraxis to kneel on the opposite side of Opal. It was not to reward the male a closer look at her bare body, but to reward the man and

permit him to watch her be prepared. It was an honor to watch the to-be Bride of Uhl actually be made ready for their god.

Journ did not praise Opal for her words. She answered correctly of course, but why praise someone who was merely doing the right thing? It did however allow the high priest to breathe a sigh of relief, such that her mind had not grown twisted and sinful with debauchery,

“Of course you will” He said in response to whether Opal would be permitted to touch Uhl. “After all, he will be in deep contact with you. I would however refrain from being too greedy. Let him take the lead. If he desires your hand upon him, he will place it. If he is more so interested in consummation, then that too is an honor you should be overjoyed with.” The more likely fact would be that there would be no romance or warmth. Simply subdued and taken in an instant after a lifetime of waiting in eager anticipation. Hers was a cruel fate.

“I pray you satisfy him. We, our people, depend upon it.” Journ dipped his fingers into the liquid wax before painting the crimson, hot liquid, down her sternum. “I will ask your hands stay at your sides. We are not blind to the sacrifices you have made until now. Nor is Uhl. Your endurance will be rewarded, but I must ask you to endure a little more. Can you do that for him?” Redipping his fingers, he next seized her left nipple, letting the heated viscous liquid slowly coat the pert bud before blossoming out to coat some of her areola.

I can't help crying out as the wax sears my nipple, bringing tears to my eyes. This was nothing like the heat from Flare, like sol, it was

painful, unwanted. My skin, already chilled, felt the heat intensely. I gripped the blanket underneath me, trying to quiet myself, fighting back the tears.

Painful, yes, but I could endure this for Sol. Unwanted, no. I wanted this pain, as it was the only way to succeed. As Journ mercilessly paints the wax onto my body, I struggle against the pain. I want to call out to Sol, to the true god, but I cannot.

If I want to call out for Sol, I should be calling out to Uhl, I realize. I don't hesitate another moment, I cry out the false God's name. But not in love, as I would have cried for Sol. I cry out his name, expressing my hate, betrayal, and disbelief in this one passionate outburst.

That release gives me calm, a still place in my mind to protect myself. Journ paints searing symbols onto my body with wax, and I wait patiently for the ordeal to end. I do this for Sol, and my strength is the contempt I feel towards the false God who stole my life. Tears no longer sting my eyes, my hands relax and lay, unresisting, on the blanket.

My colorless eyes stay open, watching Journ as he performs his ritual, devoid of emotion or thought. Journ is just a piece, a player in this plan. He does his part to bring down the false God well, unknowing of the betrayal of his false God that would be impossible without him. I almost pity him.

"Thank you, Hand of Uhl." I say quietly, sincerely.

And thus the ritual continued- Journ painting almost runic like designs upon her body, forcing her to bear the marks of Uhl. This

was in stark contrast to the one mark given to her by Flare, blessed by Sol. Those were warm, a feeling of life to flow within, whereas this was simply painful. To think these people would worship such a god.

Unfortunately for Opal this ritual was a lengthy practice. Reciting psalms, followed by more wax from the candle, and when it wasn't too hot, she would be faced with the cold hard ground beneath her. Luckily she was not ashamed to be exposed before two males, for they each would come to know her quite thoroughly through this ordeal of preparation.

And so- This ritual would continue. Meanwhile-

"You know it could be days, it could be weeks before Opal is wed to Uhl." Flare had the utmost faith in Opal, as she reciprocated in having the utmost faith in him, and more importantly, their god Sol. He knew Lumina was more skeptical, and still the Bishop woman had not departed his Citadel. This was his way of trying to nudge her to leave. The bitter 'old' hag, clearly grappling with some sense of neglect from Sol if she was getting this irritated over Flare converting a valuable asset such as Opal.

Still Flare bit his tongue and dulled his words, so as to not appear 'rude' to her. While they were both Bishops she was technically a 'superior' by experience only. It was etiquette that the long standing Bishops be treated with reverence.

"Are you sure you don't wish to leave your soldiers without your presence for too long? As much as I and my soldiers enjoy you here, I would feel a little selfish. Perhaps I'll send word to you days, or however long it takes for her to return." Flare offered. It would be

highly bothersome for another Bishop to be wandering his halls, sticking her nose in places it doesn't belong.

"oh, my citadel is fine, bishop Flare. My staff have been with me for longer than you've been alive. They know how to handle affairs while I'm away." She says offhandedly, purposely affecting a more relaxed, carefree tone. She wanted him to relax around her. So far he had been much too careful, toeing the line, following protocol to the letter. Nothing had gone amiss during the transfer of the demon girl, much to her chagrin. She had nothing to do now but wait.

She knew her behavior was not befitting her station. It was most unseemly for a bishop of her stature to obsess over a younger bishop like this. But she couldn't stop herself. If Sol saw fit to make Flare's performance her focus, who was she to resist. She believed it was Sol's will that she, Lumina herself, find Flare at fault and ensure he was removed from his position, no longer to disgrace the God with his presence.

She had a plan, too, to call out Flare's sin, to prove he was unworthy. It was possible this business with the demon would not play out as she hoped. In that case, she needed another means by which Flare could be tempted to sin.

She walked abreast of him as they entered the hall, but quickly took the lead to stride across the room and seat herself at the head of the table. She made herself comfortable, then smiled at Flair. His own staff, present for the regular weekly reporting, shifted uncomfortably, some looking at Flare with confusion. When none of

them spoke, she tapped the table with one long fingernail, drawing their attention.

"You may begin. Be brief, and don't waste my time with useless information." She said shortly. There was a nervous rustle, a few sounds of uncertainty. "You give your reports to the bishop, that much is known. Now report." She snapped.

She glanced at Flair, gauging his reaction. She hoped it would take weeks to learn of the demon's fate. Weeks she could spend pushing Flair to the edge of his self control.

humiliated, aching, and covered in a crust of wax in the shape of symbols I don't understand, having laid on this thin blanket for so long the cold has seeped into my bones and aches, I still don't know if I will be presented to Uhl yet. I lay still, as I was instructed, so as not to cause the wax to crack.

No part of my body was spared. Red wax symbols were painted down my arms and legs, my breast and nipples, over my stomach, sides, face and neck. Even my sex was graced with the searing heat. Then Journ lit a white candle and covered me with spots, completing the symbols begun in red. My hands and feet had white circles, my long ears had been outlined with white.

He had warned me to close my eyes and mouth only moments before pouring white wax over my eyelids, sealing them closed, then my mouth was sealed with wax. Then Journ had instructed me to be still. To wait, and have faith in Uhl.

So I wait, unable to move, see, or speak. Only my ears are able to function, and as hard as I try, I can hear nothing. I realize Journ has



left, and most likely Baraxis has gone with him. Is this, then, how I am to be presented to my intended? I can not see him, nor speak, nor move. I am to simply wait.

Some time passes, though I don't know how much. Enough that my stomach aches with hunger, my throat burns with thirst. At least a full day passes. No sound can be heard within the cavern. There is no other living person here. Baraxis, I remind myself, is not alive. Perhaps he is still here, kneeling beside me, making no more sound than a corpse should.

Goosebumps erupt over my skin at that thought, and I struggle to repress a shudder. My heart starts to race, pounding hard, the sound ringing in my ears. I am struck with a sudden urge to run, to flee, to save myself!

Then a quiet sound, like a deep inhale through someone's nose, like someone smelling the air, whispers through the cavern.

Someone else is here.

she stared at the mountain, wondering what it meant. The smoke pouring from the vents was thick, choking out light everywhere around it. As the smoke rolled down the mountainsides and spread over the ground, it made everything seem darker. Like it could block Sol's light from reaching them.

The worst part was, as soon as the ash and smoke covered the sky, the demons who inhabited this planet became invisible. Already they were growing more bold, coming closer, taking more lives. And reports of this happening were coming from every citadel. It was

like the planet itself had decided to fight back. The ashen skinned demons had become more of a threat.

Emboldened, they were fighting back harder, seemingly unaffected by the smoke that choked every child of Sol who left the purified air of the citadel, "this is that demon girl's doing! She's woken their false God! What are you going to do about it?"

She whirled to face Flare, fury flashing in her eyes. The girl had betrayed them. She would be married to their false God, their sacrifice would be accepted, and the demons would be fortified against them. What had been a simple cleansing would become a grueling battle.

"This is your fault, Flare! To think she would betray her own kind for a new God, just because you asked it of her! What would you have done, in her position? She got herself out of captivity and back where she felt she belonged without even trying! And now she has been taken as a sacrifice, their false God is awakened, and the children of Sol are in danger! The people of this planet were ready for the light, but now? With their false God walking beside them? You think they will heed truth, when the proof of their own truths is right there, where they can touch it, feel it, and see his power? The demons will not be fit for cleansing for another five hundred years! You've failed, Flare! You have failed to bring Sol's light to these people!

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Flare kept a cool expression as Lumina brushed off his suggestion that she return to her Citadel to tend to her own soldiers, but the

audacity of the bishop to waltz into his briefing room and start the debriefing herself. She was really treading upon thin ice, but it would not suit either of them to devolve into arguing before the other soldiers. After all, they were to be examples for the others. The Bishops, the highest status of divinity a living being could hope to achieve, and only through death would the once living be reunited with Sol completely.

Even though Lumina told them to begin, Flare's soldiers still looked to him as if nonverbally inquiring whether or not this was 'all right'. With an audible sigh, Flare cast his gaze across the long table, upon Lumina before he took his seat with a nod.

The briefing was, as expected, negative news. Indeed, the main cities across the globe had been subjugated, prisoners taken, resistance forces fallen, and many many more forced into hiding whereby the Soldiers of Sol would be playing a long-game to rout out the little pockets that wished to avoid the cleansing light of Sol. But the disturbing tellings of the planet 'coming to life' in the form of volcanic activity, the foreboding reports that it was proof now that Uhl has awakened, and was soon to walk alongside the demons.

Did Flare believe in the other 'god' referred to as Uhl? Yes and no. Was he a god of Sol's caliber? Absolutely not, in truth, Uhl could be more likened to a Titan. An entity, while timeless and powerful, was a worldly power, whereas Sol's divinity and influence spanned the galaxy. And if Flare and the other Bishops had their way, Sol would eventually encompass the universe. That said, even if Uhl was tied to this planet's core, he was still quite powerful while they resided upon this planet. This was no laughing matter and could turn weeks or months of struggle into years or decades of stalemate.

“Jumping to conclusions aren’t you Lumina? The fact of the matter is, is that Uhl would have undoubtedly awakened sooner or later regardless of whether his sacrifice was ready or not. After all, his life force depends upon this planet. Draining their resources. It was only a matter of time before he was going to make a stand. And as powerful as you like to think you are, I would think even you would find it difficult to tame a Titan-“ Flare said, the other soldiers in the room were shocked and surprised, murmuring among themselves about ‘titans’. Planetary celestial beings nearly as powerful as gods, although that power was focused only upon their home-turf, the planet itself.

“If you ask me, it is you who need faith Lumina. You’ve felt our god’s love and warmth have you not? Or has it been so long that you’ve forgotten? You insult Sol to suggest that after he granted her his blessing that Opal would turn her back on him. She lives for Sol, as we all do. It’s insulting for you to suggest that Sol’s blessing was not splendid enough to convert her.” Flare calmly looked over towards his captains. “For the time being, recall the exploratory forces, and focus upon fortifying our Citadel and the surrounding lands. As strong as the sun’s light is, it too loses its warmth when spread too thin, but focus it and it will be hot enough to burn any that dare get in its way.” Flare said, preparing to weather the incoming storm. Much now rested upon young Opal’s shoulders.

“Worry not, Bishop Lumina, as clearly fear and doubt has sunk their claws into you. You may hide behind me when the demons come knocking at our doors. Whereas your heat may have degraded over time, I assure you, mine is still blinding.”

Flare chastised her, publicly, and dared insinuate she had lost faith? Lumina was furious, but it was a cold fury. Not the kind that would erupt out of control. This fury was cold, calculated, and precise. It was clear now that Flair was unfit. He had jeopardized all of them. For him to declare this barbaric false God as a titan would only harm his cause further.

She was tempted to let him continue to sink himself in his sin. She could see the extent of it now. Flare truly believed Sol had given his blessing to the demon girl. It was tragic, for they could have saved the girl from her fate. Being sent back to be the bride of this false God would surely mean her death. Flare had killed her as surely as if he had taken a blade to her heart.

She left the room, striding rapidly through the citadel. It was one thing for Flare to have placed a demon in such a position, but the results were clearly much more significant. His actions had awoken the false God, placing all of them in danger, including the bishops. It was unprecedented, and would surely be questioned by the council. She would see to it.

In the meantime, she needed to know what was happening at the other citadels. The other bishops needed to be made aware of Flare's part in rousing the false God. They needed to be aware of the danger he had placed them all in. They needed to know of her efforts to protect them from this fool.

"Sir- Is Bishop Lumina alright?" Flare's head priest asked of him, the others talking amongst themselves as undoubtedly there would be further talks going around the Citadel of the two Bishops having a heated 'debate'.

“Bishop Lumina is simply concerned for the wellbeing of us and our peoples. Clearly she’s overworking herself, and as such her concerns are potentially causing clouded judgment. I would ask you to lend her your strength during these trying times. Men, remember, it is always darkest before dawn. And right now we are heading into the night of this campaign, so to say, the worst is ahead of us, but I will see to it that we all make it through and see the light.” Flare said, after watching Lumina stride out. Unbeknownst to him she was already planning on making contact with the council.

Elsewhere in the Citadel, in the Sun Chamber, holograms of five silhouetted figures surrounded Lumina. Five elected Bishops every decade who acted as the deciding council for the others. Lumina herself had been on such a board at various points of her tenure.

“Bishop Lumina. Forgive me as it is surprising to see you calling in from Flare’s Citadel. Is the Bishop Flare doing well? Had he made a summons to you in hopes of receiving help?” Clearly it was a little odd she was calling in from a different Citadel, however, given they were in war times it wasn’t that odd if there was some legitimate reasoning behind it.

Meanwhile, Flare left the briefing room in hopes of locating Lumina. To possibly talk to her face to face and try to understand why she seemed so dead set on calling their plan a failure. After all, she could have stopped Opal from leaving, and yet, she agreed just the same as him that Opal was trustworthy.

"council, I come to you with foreboding tidings. Our mission here has been jeopardized through the acts of one of our own. Bishop Flare, our youngest bishop, has allowed sin to cloud his judgment.

He has been under the impression that he acts at the will of Sol, and that he has bestowed Sol's blessing onto one of the demons. He allowed her to be released back to her people, knowing she was intended as a sacrifice for their false God. It is through bishop Flare's divergence from protocol, and judgement clouded by lust, that this false God has been awakened. The demons now have their God of decept to bolster them, making what would have been a simple cleansing into a long and arduous war."

"What proof of this do you have, bishop Lumina? Bishop Flare has always acted with the guidance and blessing of Sol. How is it that now, he is led from the light? His appointment to bishop could only strengthen his faith and connection with Sol." One of the holographic figures asked.

"Bishop Lumina, you have opposed bishop Flair's appointment since he was first selected by Sol. This casts doubt on your accusations." Another responded.

"Bishop Lumina, your actions have led to your own station being placed under review. It is unthinkable that a bishop would oppose Sol's will. If you pursue this accusation, and bishop Flair is innocent of any transgression, you will be removed without honor from your own position."

"The council will withhold judgement until such a time as bishop Lumina brings us substantial proof of bishop Flair leaving the path of light."

Lumina lowers her head, hiding her anger and shame. Flare was the cause. It was his fault she was losing honor, his fault Sol had stopped giving his blessing upon her. Not that he, nor the council,

needed to be informed of that. She would prove Flare was a sinner, regain her honor, and receive Sol's blessing once more. All it would take was proof of what she knew already. It would be simple.

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Striding down the immaculate corridors Flare knew there was likely only one place Lumina would go after a scene like the one that unfolded during the meeting. Clearly she detested his authority to the point he had to wonder if this was a more personal matter in her eyes. Some vendetta against him.

However, deep within, Flare's resolve remained firm in his belief that Opal could well indeed be trusted. After all he swore he heard and felt Sol's presence while exacting those blessings onto the demon. He was not blind to the fact that there might have been some inkling of sin rooted deep within the center of his being, a more carnal satisfaction derived by his bestowing the blessings. Lumina did not need to know that part of the matter, and furthermore that was something he would need to deal with personally. His transgression should not jeopardize Opal or the many men and women of the Daybreakers who put their lives on the line in service to Sol.

But what would the council determine? After all Flare was an upstart, relatively speaking. He'd never held position on the council and likely would be ineligible for several decades. He could not simply assume the council would find her claims baseless. From the end of the corridor Flare could see light stemming from the Council Room and knew she was making contact with them, however, intent



upon speaking up on behalf of himself, when Flare ultimately opened the door to interject the connection had been severed and apparently concluded.

All that was left was Lumina, the rest of the projections went dark.

"I don't know what your end goal is, Lumina, however, it does neither of us any good to be openly arguing before my priests and commanders. You've been around a while." Perhaps a slight at her age, although the Daybreakers, especially when blessed by Sol hardly showed the weathered signs of aging at all. "You know morale is a critical ingredient as to whether or not a military campaign is successful. If you insist upon staying within my Citadel, then I am going to be forced to impose certain rules upon you, until such time you are satisfied with your 'evaluation'."

he thought to impose rules on her? Lumina stood, composing herself as she turned and strode from the room. In her mind, Flare was a child pretending to be an adult. Being raised to bishop had only made him more cocky, as evinced by this new decision of his.

If she had her way, it wouldn't be his citadel much longer. She walked to her room, letting Flare follow or not, as he saw fit. She wouldn't stand there and let this child dictate rules to her.

She truly did believe Flare's handling of the demon girl was what had cause the planet to awaken. She went to the large glass wall in her room to look out over the decimated city. This citadel was close to one of the newly active volcanos, the air was thick with smoke and ash. It disgusted her to think that a bishop had lain with an ashen demon.

"What are your rules, Flare?" She spoke as if she were merely humoring the boy, letting him have his little game. Which she was. For now. She surveyed the area outside of her winder as Flare spoke, seemingly complacent for the time being."

It weighed heavily on her mind that the council had put her under observation without informing her. She couldn't see that she had been that far out of line in her opposition of Flare's appointment. Bishops were appointed by Sol himself, and therefore their authority was Sol's own authority. Had that been when she no longer felt Sol's will, no longer had his blessing? It was just another thing to lay at Flare's feet, another wrong done to her by the upstart bishop.

Flare could be made to sin. He was young, healthy, obviously possessed of a sexual appetite, if his actions with the demon were any indication. Lust was a sin, moreso when it was a bishop who was guilty of carnal indulgence.

She smiled as she formed her plan. It may even be enjoyable for her, were she to succeed. Flare would damn himself and bestow Sol's blessing to her, she would know Sol's will again.

Flare did indeed follow her, as annoying as it was for her to simply waltz her way about his Citadel as she damn well pleased. His eyes evaluating the Bishop as she strode herself up to the huge, floor to ceiling windows overlooking the landscape.

Given she was a Bishop she was afforded about as elegant as a room as possible. Higher yet than the room offered to Opal, in fact they were so far up the spire of the Citadel that his own quarters were across the hall.

"I won't stop you from attending meetings, or utilizing the services here in the Citadel, however I will be accompanying you from now on. Everywhere. You're free to leave the Citadel and return to your own if this is unacceptable." Truthfully, a part of him did hope she'd find such stipulations unreasonable to the point that she would rather leave.

Lumina had never been 'warm' towards him, and certainly not now. He had no hard evidence to suggest that she was perturbed because she felt neglect from Sol. And the double slap in the face that not only had Sol neglected her but seemed to reward a sinner and bestowed a blessing upon an unworthy demon girl.

Lumina turned to consider Flare, actually looking at him for the first time. He was attractive enough, she supposed. Young, much younger than her. And already suspicious enough of her that it wasn't going to be easy.

But he may have handed her the answer.

"If you feel that's what you must do, Flare. I won't be causing you any more trouble. I only wish to remain long enough to see the demon girl, should she return."

She walked over to the wardrobe, filled with various sized articles befitting bishop. As she selected the items that would fit her she brought them over to lay them out on the bed.

"Did you overhear what the council decided?" She asked, wanting to know how much he'd heard. As she asked she untied her robe, pulling the belt free and laying it on the bed. With a barely audible

tsk she returned to the wardrobe, searched through the drawers for a moment, and found underwear. These she also laid on the bed.

She watched Flare closely as she slipped her robe off, leaving it on the bed as well. She may be considerably older, but her body is almost exactly as it was when she was Flares age. Her Sol marks, actually quite few in number, made a simple design over the tops of her breasts, down her stomach, and over each hip. They also, she had noticed lately, seemed to be dimming.

For now she put as much of her flame toward making them as bright as she could. She traced over the lines on her stomach with a finger, slowly, glancing up at Flare.

"How many Marks of Sol do you have, Flair?" She asked. The number of marks showed how much you were favored by Sol. She was curious about it, yes, but also wanted him to have an opportunity to sin in her presence. She was losing her position if she couldn't catch him sinning anyway. She would take him down with her. At least she would have the satisfaction of knowing he would no longer be seen as the prodigy the old fools on the council saw him as.

She actually sounded more agreeable to the stipulation than he was expecting, this in turn caused Flare to be a little suspicious, but no more so than he was initially. She appeared concerned over the recent developments, with good reason. It was not good that Uhl had awakened, but also necessary for their plan to succeed. After all, Opal would not be able to drain the Titan's essence if he remained dormant. Lumina knew this, although, clearly she was

having difficulty in trusting the demon girl. In trusting Flare's judgment, and by extension, Sol's judgment.

Standing in the center of her quarters, Flare's eyes steadied upon her as she walked to her wardrobe and began setting clothing out. Not necessarily odd, at least yet.

"No, but." He began before she pulled the belt free and slipped off her robe, leaving nothing but the undergarments that covered her body. It was admittedly rare for Bishops to see the Sol markings of other Bishops, unless facial or on the necks and arms. Short of assembling for more formal meetings it was rare enough that Bishops were even in the same room physically, let alone seeing one in the midst of changing.

Of course his eyes wandered. It was a curiosity to see the markings of their God upon another, after all Sol chose the areas to bless. Her body was more pronounced in feminine appearance than Opal's. A moderately larger bust, more curves to her form than Opal's rather thin makeup. If Lumina looked to his eyes, she would note his eyes wandered her body, likely to at least look at her Sol markings, if nothing else.

"No, but I would assume if you had convinced them to relieve me of my position that I would not be standing here before you right now. I have no doubts you expressed your concerns to them, although I do not know entirely what you divulged, or what you 'think' took place between myself and the demon girl." Flare said before she turned to better face him, inquiring about his own Sol markings.

He could see hers, as compared to his, were dimmed. Still radiant as compared to any other Daybreaker less than a Bishop, but not quite

as bright and warm as what radiated off of Flare, but not dim enough for him to realize she was purposefully making them appear brighter for the moment.

“It’s been a year since my last marking.” He confessed freely, which was fairly recent and would suggest he was still receiving new marks. Beyond his eyes, the Sun marking on his forehead, Flare’s torso was much more illuminated in marks than one might initially believe. “I was told my skin is quite reactive to the blessings.” He wasn’t bragging, more so trying not to ‘annoy’ her more than necessary as he hesitated in removing his upper robe, eventually peeling it off so she could see the almost tribal like markings on his body. Accenting his musculature, along the ribs on either side of his body, his torso, a line of light trailing from his navel and downwards. The beginnings of an illuminated ‘V’ marking at his waist, before his lower robes cut off the appearance of those markings. Flare’s markings seemed to ‘breathe’ Subtly growing dimmer, then brighter again, ebb and flow.

“I haven’t taken the time to count them-“ He wasn’t trying to outright brag, but it was clear he had more. “Satisfied?” His brow lifted, uncertain whether he should re-tie his robes.

Lumina's eyes widen when Flare reveals the extent of his markings, above the waist. Flare had been touched by Sol more than any bishop she had ever heard of. It was a mark of his devotion, loyalty, and faith in Sol, and a mark of Sol's favor on Flare.

Jealousy burns through her, honing her determination. How could this boy be more devoted to the light than herself, who was a veteran many times over of the purification of alien planets, who

had dedicated an entire lifetime to bringing truth to the darkest places in the galaxy?

"Well, let's see the rest. Sol's artworks should never be hidden." Lumina removes her brazier, laying it on the bed, then slips her thumbs under the band of her panties and lowers them to her ankles to step out of them. She had been blessed by Sol several times over, leaving markings down either side of her sex that came together deep between her thighs, and thinner markings that circle each nipple.

She studied Flair, the bright lines on his body fascinating to her. Without realizing, she had wandered closer to Flare. The considerable light Flare had been blessed with drew her in, tempting to her in the same way Sol's own touch would have been. She found herself longing for him to touch her, for she knew it was the closest she would come to receiving the blessing of their God again.

While his body was an intricate piece of art, Sol's own creation, Lumina still could not accept that Flare was truly more pure in his faith, or that Sol truly had acted through him. He was unworthy of such honor. She could not see that Flare is chosen by Sol. That Flare has been given a purpose greater than her own. To her mind Flare had somehow decided Sol, and her own drive was to ensure he was discovered. Her obligation, loyalty, and faith obligated her to reveal his sin. To expose him for his deception.

As much as she was determined to see that Flare was brought down, seeing the favor of Sol upon his body was temptation. It had been some time since Lumina had been blessed, and she

understandably craved the touch of her God. A touch that Flare carried.

She reached toward him and rested her fingers lightly upon the marks on his chest, tracing them ever so delicately. He was truly marvelous to behold. She let her touch follow his Mark to the top of his lower robes, watching her own fingers. When they are impeded by the lower robes at his waist, she reaches for the cord, her eyes flicking up to meet his.

Then she tugs the cord, letting the knot out and the garment fall to the floor. She couldn't help breaking eye contact then, her eyes drawn to the bright marking that continued down his body, covering all of him with their God's touch and blessing.

Admittedly Flare found his eyes wandering, dipping down past her neck and lingering upon her breasts. Naturally there was some intrinsic curiosity in seeing the markings upon another Bishop, although it was unlikely that that was the only curiosity. Flare's inner flame perhaps burned too hot for his own good as his eyes were next drawn to the movements of her thumbs slipping into the band of her panties. Lumina did not need to know how his pulse quickened ever so slightly, or the surface of his skin rising in temperature. Admittedly, Flare was almost hot to the touch on a usual basis, she would have no inkling as to whether he was burning hotter for her for any reason.

Perhaps despite being the one to bless Opal, Flare himself inherited some carnal sin. The concept of a bishop blessing another bishop was a ridiculous notion. In the history of the ascended Bishops none would have engaged in such forms of self-blessing. Still, as



unorthodox as this was, Flare didn't retreat as she sauntered forward, his own eyes upon her curiously as hers seemed to be drawn to him and his markings.

Her fingers made contact with the broad musculature of his torso, tapering down towards a lean waistline before his lower robes covered. He didn't retreat from her touch, although for the moment he resisted in reaching out to her. She was full of surprises this evening however as he felt her hand descend, grazing over the firm muscles beneath the surface of his heated skin, all the way down towards his waist.

Flare was taller than she was, and curiously he met her gaze as she looked up to him. A brow subtly raised. This was the closest he'd ever been to her, probably the closest he'd ever been to another Bishop, clothed or unclothed. It wasn't unpleasant. She had an appealing scent to her body, and admittedly he could feel the heat of her own body radiating off from her. It was only natural for heat to be drawn together.

Shamelessly Flare stood before her as his robes hit the floor, letting her eyes continue the lighted trail of markings from his navel, and along his pelvis, culminating at that organ of his she would probably consider sinful. Flare wasn't erect, but he was rather well hung. The epitome of strength and vitality as it appeared even Sol had placed markings upon this 'sinful' organ.

"Your own are quite beautiful, Lumina." His voice subdued and genuine. He had no problem complimenting her for something he found true. "What was the last marking he bestowed upon you?" Considering her hand had run upon him, he figured he might as well

do the same. Specifically his right palm reaching out to cup the side of her left breast. His touch very warm, although her own skin held a good temperature to it. His thumb brushed over, near the markings around her nipple, even briefly over it. There was nothing sinful in touching her here, just a Bishop touching the markings of another. That is, unless she harbored her own sins, buried, deep within.

Flares touch was hot, as hot as Sol himself, or so it seemed. She burns hotter, her scant -compared to the number on flare- markings becoming brighter at his touch. She knew it was sinful, and she knew he did too.

"Flare," she said quietly, her voice low. She steps close, almost touching, her body to his, and turns her hands around to slowly drag her nails up his body from mid thigh, up over his hips and stomach. Then, turning her hands around, she let's them glide up his chest and over his shoulders. "We all sin, sometimes, Flair. It's in our nature."

Lumina had never slept with a bishop, nor seen one naked. Seducing a man was not one of her strengths. She was hoping Flare shared her lack of experience. It wasn't something bishops were expected to be proficient at. She was no temptress. But she was a woman, and at this moment was very, very attracted to Flair.

She looked up at him, desire easy to read in her eyes, in her posture, the way her lips parted slightly. Her fingers find their way to his hair, taking hold to bring his head down for a kiss. The way her body responds takes her breath away. Flare tasted like Sol! She stepped back, releasing her hold on him, shocked at her own actions. In a

moment of clarity, Lumina saw that she had indeed left the path of light, and Sol had in turn left her.

This left her numb, empty, for a brief moment. When her eyes fell on Flare, brilliant with the favor of their God, Jealousy clouded her mind once more. She would have Sol's blessing, through Flare, and Flare would be taken down to a level more appropriate for a boy.

For him to refuse her was unthinkable. Her mind didn't even consider the possibility.

This was a side to Lumina the Bishop had never seen before, though naturally he was still a bit guarded. After all, she made it no secret that she opposed him. She was acting uncharacteristically, however, it was uncertain to him whether she was truly a sinner by nature, eager to feel the heat of Sol bless her again, or whether this was merely an act to see if she could have him indulge in her.

He didn't resist as she brought his head down in for a kiss. Testing the waters so to speak the male bishop before her didn't hesitate and pressing his slick, heated tongue past the threshold of her lips and to lewdly grind that muscle against her own tongue. On the surface it was pleasurable to kiss her, after all, she was a Bishop as well. Perhaps Sol burned brighter and hotter within Flare, but she certainly burned hotter than the majority of the population.

Flare looked at her through hooded eyes as she broke the wet kiss and stepped back. As if realizing perhaps she had overstepped. Perhaps asking herself just what in the name of Sol was she doing?

As if reacting to her presence, the markings upon his body seemed to glow brighter, emit more heat, that lewd masculine muscle hung

between his legs looking just a bit fuller. Maybe in this moment she'd expect him to grovel before her, to jump at the chance to sin with her. And to be fair there was a curiosity surrounding it. A temptation to lay with another Bishop. But he had to be more guarded than that.

"What's wrong Lumina? Was my tongue too warm for you? You're noticeably running a bit cooler." Flare said, wondering what just thoughts were going through the woman's mind. "Have you not tended to your inner Sol Flame before?" Flare cocked his, curious to know how much, or how little, she knew about such things, or whether there was any interest.

Lumina look up at Flare with an unreadable expression. Desire is still there, but something else, too. Something darker, somehow more sinful.

Lumina had never been the most attractive woman around. But she had always strove to reach the rank of bishop. It was the cleansing, the conquest, that sparked her interest. She had been with men, of course, but after being left several times by men who preferred not to compete with her ambition, she had stopped trying to find partners.

Now, though, Flare represented her only means to be near Sol, to feel his touch, and receive his light. Flare also represented her loss, and the inevitability of time. Lumina had grown past her prime. Though her body didn't show the mark of age, thanks to her proximity to Sol, she was old, even for a bishop. Yet her drive to bed Flare was stronger than any other time in her life.

"Feed my inner flame? Bishop Flare, I don't think I've heard of such a thing. Perhaps you could teach me, for I would love to burn as hot as you." She smiled at Flare, extended her arms partially out to the side, gesturing at the room. "Where shall we go for this...unconventional lesson?" She asked.

Flare still entirely know what her motives were. If he was smart he'd turn and walk right out the door, after dressing of course. To leave her and reject her while he held onto faith that Opal would return to him, and by extension, return to Sol. But Flare was perhaps too prideful, arrogant, or confident with himself and bolstered by the fact that he burned so brightly and hot the male couldn't help himself. Curiosity among other things were sins clearly rooted in his being.

Opening the palm of his left hand it took several seconds before a fiery ball, maybe slightly smaller than a golf ball, erupted in a blaze. A perfect sphere, looking like a tiny sun. He let her admire this while he stepped closer towards her, his eye contact still upon her own eyes as he didn't hesitate and pressing his warm, right palm between her thighs and cupping her sex. He wasn't shy in allowing the pads of his fingers stroke along her folds, curious of the supple texture, but he didn't dip inside the Bishop.

"Truthfully Bishop Lumina, we both have quite a lot to tend to. Overseeing the preparations and strengthening the defense of the Citadel. Sure, we could stay here, or I could take you to my quarters, but we would do so both knowing that our time would be better spent overseeing the soldiers." Flare calmly said to her, all the while his palm resided against 'her'. "I propose you allow me to place this sphere of heat to feed your inner core. Regardless of whether we

go into further lessons, or take a walk around the Citadel to manage the soldiers, this sphere will rub and emit heat until such time I deem it proper to extinguish. It goes without saying, even if it is difficult to maintain your composure, that I would not wish you to remove this sphere until I say so. Or—" In an instant the sphere vanished from his left palm. "Or perhaps you're not interested?" And just after, she'd feel a much warmer heat against her sex. That bright ball of heat reemerging in the palm of his right hand, pressed towards her sex, though not too firmly. It was important to see whether the bishop would forget this ridiculousness and tend to proper duties, or if she would want to flirt ever closer to sinning. she watched the sphere of light in Flare's hand avidly, in awe of a feat she could not have done, even in her prime. A concentration of one's own flame, externalised, manifest, real! He must possess an unthinkable amount of heat, of Sol, within him. And he didn't even seem to be affected by removing that much from within.

He was right, it would do as he proposed, feeding her own flame, giving her strength, warmth, bringing her closer to Sol again. But if she accepted, would she still need to seduce him? Would it be sinful for him to sate her in this way, or would she merely be sinning alone?

She wanted both for Flare to give her Sol's blessing, and to receive this from him. Greed is, of course, a sin, but if she was to be guilty of one, why not others? The result would be the same, would it not?

Without breaking eye contact, she brings her arm forward and wraps her fingers around Flare's sex, eyes widening as she felt the heat emanating from it. Could this truly be how Sol's blessing was

delivered to the demon girl? How could she stand it? It should have burned her, as surely as a brand would.

Flare must have spent much time to bring her own flame to burn hot enough to accept this. It shouldn't have been possible, it should have killed her! These were a truly dark, cold species, one that, even now, there was debate over trying to actually cleanse them. But if Flare spoke truth, they possessed a flame in them that could be built to such temperatures to be comparable to a bishop!

How?

It was further proof of Flare's deception. He couldn't truly deliver such heat to the demon. But if he had not, then he was innocent of exactly what she wanted to prove him guilty of.

He wouldn't be innocent for long. She stroked his member slowly, feeling it in her hand. She couldn't help wondering who had felt hotter to him, the demon, or herself.

"I think your offer sounds very appealing, bishop Flare, but I cannot allow this without an offer of equal value. I know you carry this sin in your body, Flare, as does Sol. You are already forgiven. Look at you! How could you not be?"

As if she needed any more indication that this man was truly blessed by Sol, she would note upon the first touch onto that sinful organ of his, that that also was as heated, perhaps more so, as the rest of his body. A dull throb emanating from the muscle. Flare was still not swollen to the point of erection, but he was very full, the organ weighty and certainly having substance to it.

There was no reason for Lumina to have her hand upon him here, not for anything proper anyway. Of course, the same could be said of him as his hand was still pressed to her own core. Still, her fingers, her touch was not unpleasant. If anything she surprised the younger Bishop at her boldness.

Breathily Flare expelled a silent sigh as he felt her fingers stroke along his length, as he felt the heat of her own core radiate into his palm. Opal was a cold demon when he found her, she practically drank in his heat, but Lumina? She was already plenty warm. Dipping his tongue briefly into her mouth proved that even as an elder she still burned hotter than most. Not that Flare was going to confess verbally that her touch was quite warm, yet anyway.

“Sin?” Flare tilted his head slightly as he made eye contact with her, that burning sphere of heat positioned at her gates before he slowly, very slowly, began to press with two fingers and sink that heat into her core, inch by inch, until even his fingers were past her entrance. Letting them linger there as that ball of heat radiated and throbbed from inside her. “There is that dirty word again.

Proclaiming me to have sinned with the demon girl. Perhaps you are right. Perhaps it was a sin to have enjoyed blessing her. Sin can be quite infectious, Lumina. Are you certain you want to play with fire? I am tempted to perhaps re-ignite some of those older markings on you. But...” He withdrew his fingertips from her core. A light sheen to them as he brought the tips up to his mouth to lick and clean them off.

“But I’m not sure you’re ready for such a thing. Re-ignition carries a very high chance of imparting sin as well, and surely one of your stature wouldn’t want to risk being tainted in such ways.”



Her hand clenches as the heat pushes into her, warming her. She gasps as it moves deeper, her eyes finding Flare's. He removes his fingers from within her, leaving the heat within, cradled by her body as it reacts to the gift, muscles flexing, pulling it deeper still. It burns hotter and hotter until it feels like Sol's own touch.

Lumina moans as she goes to her knees, assuming a position of reverence. Flare's member hasn't been forgotten, and her trembling hand reluctantly loosens its grip to stroke along his shaft. She tries to focus, but the constant distraction keeps pulling her attention. She sways slightly, every movement shifting the heat within, sending more heat, more sensation, coursing through her.

"I will not be...indebted to you, Flare." She breathes, then presses her lips to the flesh in her hand. Her eyes meet Flare's eyes as she opens her mouth and takes his sex in her mouth. She with her lips and tongue. She is clumsy and awkward, but determined. She rocks her body, moving the length of his organ, causing the ball of heat within her to shift and move, bringing her pleasure as she gives pleasure. It was wrong, and that was half of the appeal.

Lumina's position was quite telling, for the elder and arguably higher ranking Bishop getting to her knees before him. For a Bishop to bow to anyone but Sol could be thought as sinful, however for one who had Sol's will coursing through his body to such a degree, it could be thought that she was worshipping Sol by extension. The council might take issue with such a thing, but the council didn't need to know about this either.

Uncertain of what she had in mind Flare's hooded gaze smoldered as he looked down upon her, hand upon his sex, her mouth so close

he could feel the wafting heat of her breath against him, all before she took him into her mouth. This was the moment Flare broke his composure. His stoic expression shifting to one of shock and pleasure as his eyes squeezed shut and jaw slacked. Instinctively resting his palm atop her head, not to force her, but to stabilize himself. That sphere of fire within her contracted, grew tighter and smaller, before expanding a bit more. Pulsing within her walls in synchronicity with his own heart. She was breath-takingly hot. Yes, he had dipped within Opal when her own Sol flame was warm, but Flare had not occasion to dip himself within another Bishop.

Being well endowed as he was, he was already 'full' and moderately firm even before entering her mouth, but afterwards she would feel the heat of that organ radiate within her mouth, to feel it swell, his body reacting just as she would expect from a male desiring the touch of a woman. On some level this was annoying that she felt this good, that his bodily response was to crave more, especially as he was the one who wanted to keep control. But considering this might be the only time he would have Lumina on her knees in such a wanting state before him, he might as well take advantage of the situation. Flare clearly enjoyed this, it was hard to hide to fact his cock was swelling, or that his pulse along that sinful organ and within her own core was steadily quickening. But still, he'd play at having the upper hand.

"I take it your answer then is even at the risk of 'sinning' you would like some of your markings re-ignited. But I'm not so certain of how much resolve you have for it. I shouldn't like to start the process on you, only for you to back out when things get a little more... difficult. Show me you're committed to seeing this through. Let my

heat reside and throb in the back of your throat if you're truly intent on moving forward."

Lumina met Flare's eyes before continuing with renewed determination. She could feel his sex grow in her mouth, and the throbbing inside of her matched the throbbing of his organ against her lips and tongue. She pushed, taking him down farther, until she reflexively gagged and pulled off to catch her breath.

Then took him back in her mouth, eagerly. She was ready for her reaction when he hit the back of her throat this time, and swallowed instead of pulling back. She continued to rock her body as she slid her mouth and throat over Flare's endowment, pushing to take him farther down each time.

She took her hand away from his shaft and held on to Flare by the back of his thighs, using this as leverage to pull him fully into her. Her lips met Flares body, pressing against him, his cock fully seated in her throat. She paused, enjoying the satisfaction of that feat. Flare was not small, and forcing her tongue and throat to swallow around him was a final accomplishment, causing her tongue to press against Flares cock, her throat to rhythmically contract along the length of his shaft.

She pulled back far enough to part her lips and gasp for air around the phallus, then sealed her lips again and took it down. She stroked quickly, her lips, tongue, and throat traveling the full length of his impressive member. Her body rocking, tense, tightening on the throbbing orb of heat at her core.

Her own flame reacting to the heat radiating within her throat and center made her tremble. Her focus was tenuous at best, wavering

as she discovered she could get the most stimulation for herself as she moved forward, taking Flare fully down her throat. It was easy to forget she was a bishop, to forget this was sin in its purest form. She enjoyed this act, this sin, which brought her closer to her goal, closer to her God, and farther from him at the same time.

Flare was well aware this act of desire stemmed from something beyond a selfless act by which to re-ignite another bishop's markings. There was something darker lurking beneath the surface, initially. After all, for no good reason he could conclude Lumina had always had it out for him. Indeed, there was some personal satisfaction involved in the muffled gagged noises of the High Bishop down upon her knees trying to force herself upon him. There was another layer of exquisiteness in putting her in her place. Perhaps deep down the conflict between the two only made Flare inexplicably drawn to her, to have his interest piqued by her.

This was meant to be her penance. For him to have the upper hand and watch from above how far she had fallen, and yet Flare choked on his own breath upon feeling her lips make contact with the absolute base of his shaft. An involuntary reflexive clenching of his core which at once caused his member to swell in the already tight corridors of her esophagus, eliciting from the male a spurt of molten divinity to grace against the back of her throat and warmly drip down.

This was annoying because parts of him would not obey, parts of him would betray and relinquish the absolute control of the situation he had wanted. Christ "Sol" the Bishop moaned his lord's name in vain, nails pressed into the thick hair along the back of

Lumina's head as his body briefly shuddered, that illuminated sphere of heat residing with her vibrating in much the same way.

Almost sickeningly his abdomen knitted their muscles together to the point it took him a few seconds to collect his composure, to even breathe before withdrawing the slick, shimmering organ from her mouth. Once hooded eyes now were fully open, looking down to witness the satisfying view of her upon her knees, and him halfway within.

She was dangerous. He realized in that moment that if he wasn't careful this would turn from her wanting to receive this blessing to him yearning to give it to her.

Panting Flare 'dipped' himself into the warm recesses of her mouth, a bit rougher this time, basking in the feel of her slick walls choking upon him before withdrawing from her completely. To allow the trail of saliva bridging her lips to the tip of his cock to break and splash against her torso.

"I do believe you've earned the re-ignition of a couple markings. Come- To your bed." He said, believing it would be best to 'taint' the very bed she'd be sleeping in tonight. To allow her mind to wander. While perhaps she did earn re-branding, truthfully, this afforded Flare a little time to regain some self control. However, the branding he had in mind for her would not sate her, but rather, only fuel that hunger further.

she could feel it in her throat, burning intensely as the heat he had put at her core. She felt it already- even just this much, just the promise of Sol's blessing had left her invigorated, her flame hotter, her faith reinforced. She could feel her own vitality and vigor grow,

and her need for more with it. It wasn't about Sol anymore, it wasn't about revealing Flare's deception. It wasn't about her own position as bishop, or reigniting her markings.

She wanted sex. Nothing but the purely physical gratification of two bodies consumed by lust. She wanted to sin, a luxury she had never indulged in before. Flare looked down at her, gripping her by the hair, and she met his gaze with exactly that desire burning in her own. He thrust her back onto his cock roughly, unconcerned with her forceful reaction, and pulled her back off as she gasped for air.

To her bed. It wasn't far to go, she didn't have to try and walk on legs that trembled. She turned and crawled, presenting her firm, round bottom end and needy cunt, throbbing with heat, dripping with desire. She could feel the moisture on her thighs, a condensation only aided by the shifting of the heat Flare had placed within. Something she wanted him to see. She arched her back, showing off the aroused state he had put her in. Sol was the farthest thing from her mind.

She wanted Flare.

Lumina gracefully and shamelessly went onto her bed, opening her legs as she layed back onto her elbows. Her intense gaze found his and held, inviting him to take anything he wanted from her body.

Flare's abdomen subtly rose and fell in tune with the ebb and flow of his breathing. The man was clearly experiencing every physiological affect of being in a state of desirous arousal. Most notably that appendage that had just recently gagged the bishop, but beyond that a dilation of the pupils, blood vessels expanding, a quickening of his pulse as well as a rising temperature along the

surface of his skin, and the shallow quickened breathing he was experiencing.

This was made infinitely worse as he initially smugly expected her to obediently obey in hopes that he would bestow upon her more favor. It was him who was supposed to be stalling, to incite her hunger, to make her needy and while that was perhaps the case, it was him who was struggling to maintain composure as she turned and allowed him to gaze upon her from behind. She didn't need to look over her shoulder to know his eyes were on her and her needy core. Flare couldn't help himself, briefly wetting his lips as those glowing irises descended and bore witness to the shimmering pink of her sex.

There was the faintest 'patter' of a droplet of divine essence that dripped heavily upon the tiled floor of her quarters.

By the time she assumed the position upon the bed, baring herself in entirety it felt like he was wandering into the den of a lioness. It's not that he didn't want her. To sin so thoroughly with her that the entire citadel may need to be purged and rebuilt. It's that he could feel his body, his inner flame yearning, drawn to her like a moth to an open flame, only to burn up upon straying too closely.

All he needed to do was abandon this charade, to join her in bed, and fill that luscious core with his sin. But Flare was nothing if not stubborn and strong willed. Meeting her similarly smoldering gaze Flare approached her, the heat from her body heightened to the point he could feel it radiating even before he got to the edge of the bed. He could smell the desire in the air, the way her markings illuminated and drew one's eyes, especially along her inner thighs.

“For one who always seemed to have something to say. Some fault to pick out, you’re being uncharacteristically quiet. Not-” He approached under the front of his legs were pressed to the edge of the bed, any closer and he’d be kneeling down upon it. “That I’m complaining mind you.” Flare reached out to cup her left breast with his right palm, brushing the heated soft pad of his thumb over the pert nub before meeting her gaze and further leaning inwards to seize her nipple between his lips and allowing that searing tongue of his to make contact. Sharing with her his light such that the brandings along her areola and breast would once more burn as brightly as the first day she received them.

Eyes shut, he let his lips linger upon her nipple, all the while her scent rising up and streaming on into his lungs. The young Bishop was clearly struggling. His swollen need bobbing with every heavy beat of his heart. The still collecting bead of divinity at the tip, ultimately delivering a fat droplet to splash against her pelvis and warmly trickle lower.

Lumina arches her back, pressing herself to Flare, her hand reflexively going to the back of his head as his heat sears into her nipple. She groans, feeling his heat course through her, her own flame responding, building higher than before. This, she realized, is why bishops do not bless one another!

The air around them ripples with waves of heat emanating from their bodies. The citadel, built to withstand immeasurable temperatures, held fast, but the materials of the bedding began to smolder, smoke rising around their bodies. Lumina had only felt this much heat when Sol himself had given her his blessing, not that it mattered in that moment.



"Flare!" She moaned, gripping his hair and pulling him from her breast to kiss him as she fell back to the mattress fully, their bodies pressed together completely. She could feel his hard, pulsing organ pressing against her pelvis and stomach almost painfully. She could see the desire in his eyes as surely as he could hear hers in her voice. Her hips rocked against him, her own wet, needy, throbbing sex eagerly waiting his penetration.

She broke the kiss, pulling her tongue from his mouth to bite his lip, letting that slip from her teeth to look at the younger bishop.

"Was it like this with your demon girl, Flare? Did her cold body ignite at your touch? Did she burn for you?"

He was already losing a battle of attrition in regards to his willpower. Part of him knew he was playing with fire, that if he continued to dabble in Lumina this pull towards her would be overwhelming. Was he spiteful towards her? Did he want her to have to suffer? These answers, deep down, were yes. But even though she had been a thorn in his side for decades, his heart, and by extension his cock, absolutely throbbed for her.

Flare's mistake was getting too close to this lioness. To have wandered into the den when he should have turned away and maintained the upper hand. To leave her smoldering, burning with desire and for her to know she had not tempted him.

Instead, he found his lips just as eager, his tongue just as hungry as they heatedly pressed together and ground the fleshy appendages against one another. Hot and heavy kissing as his bare torso and abdomen made contact with her own, his swollen organ positioned against her pelvis as his tongue dipped back into the recesses of her

mouth to have more of her. Possessive, heavy, warm grabs from his palm onto her body to bring them closer.

He was caught by her spell, so ensnared in her that there would be no backing away. He didn't want to back away.

"Why are you so interested?" He asked, panting, eyes gazing into hers as his lips still shimmered with the mixture of their saliva. He couldn't help but wonder if Lumina's own self confidence was derived in wanting to feel better and more important than a lowly demon girl. However... it's not as if Flare could deny certain facts. His waist dipped as the younger bishop couldn't help but crave the sweet heat of friction, and thus, ground that lustful organ against her own slickened lips.

"She was cold when I found her I won't deny. And yes." Flare moved to her neck, brushing his lips with each syllable spoken. "Her body warmed for me. A small spark of a fire, slowly kindling to something more akin to the flame of a candle. And even after we were finished and I left her filled with a warm pool of essence, you could press your hand to her belly and feel the heat radiate from within." Flare worked his way up towards her earlobe as his hips adjusted again. A palm descending along her back before firmly seizing her ass. He couldn't help himself any longer as she would feel her walls stretching, and the feel of that heated muscle sinking deeper into her depths slowly.

"But you." He groaned, pressing his nails into her flesh.

It's not to say he, or Sol, couldn't work Opal's flame up to an inferno, but Lumina's heat was breath-taking. After all, aside from Sol, Flare

neither would have experienced such a heat. Yet another reason Bishops were to avoid combining their flames.

Even slipping the tip of his cock within her depths was past the point of no return. He wanted needed her and soon instead of pulling out, moved to seal the gap between their bodies and bottom out within her. She was stiflingly warm.

"You are something else all together-" The last vestiges of Flare's control dissipated and faded away in those moments as the younger Bishop began to rock his hips with the intent to sin spectacularly with her.

Lumina rose with each thrust, meeting Flare as he drove into her, his heat enveloping her mind and body. She gripped him, pulling him closer, urging him to go faster, harder, deeper with every push. She cried out, overcome with the sensation of holding this considerable blaze inside, the pressure driving her to the highest temperatures she had ever withstood. Flames licked at her skin as the bedding spontaneously reached high enough temperatures to combust. It didn't matter.

He described the demons flame as pale compared to her, as he'd tasted the delicate, sensitive areas of her neck, making her toes curl with anticipation. Now she was pushed to her peak, the heat burning within her must erupt, must be released!

"Flare! I will release!" She cried out, then cried louder as she climaxed powerfully, her body quivering as it collapsed to the mattress under Flare.

Even as flames broke out within the bedroom, Flare held onto her, unimpeded in his actions. If anything, the intensity and passion shared between the two bishops only heightened and had grown brighter. The slick, lewd sounds of two bodies engaging in sin filled the interior of the room, soon joined by the kindling and crackling sounds of her bed burning around her.

Fervently the younger Bishop laid claim to her. Perhaps he did fall into her trap. Perhaps now she'd have evidence of his sin, but such thoughts and concerns no longer mattered. He wanted her. He wanted to experience that certain pleasure that comes along with being wound up tighter than a drum before all that tension breaks free and is let loose.

Rumors could circulate if they chose to. However, one good thing about being at the very higher echelons of the Citadel would be that very few would be permitted to wander the halls. Very few even knowing what sorts of acts the two Bishops were engaged within. Unlike when Flare engaged with the Demon on the lower floors. Would they have to explain how her bedroom spontaneously combusted? Yes... though it could undoubtedly be covered by the bickering of two Bishops who despised one another.

Parting his lips Flare pressed his teeth against her neck. Half to stifle his own moans as his tempo quickened. Unwittingly pressing deep enough to begin leaving marks onto her skin all the while that inflamed appendage had its way within her stifling depths. It was not until she verbalized her climax that Flare's own will shattered around her. Something about the thought of her losing herself upon him sent the male over the edge as he seated himself, firmly and

fully within her as she would be rewarded by a hot, heavy rush of his essence to fill her.

Flare's cock surged inside of her, penetrating deep as he sent forth the most intense heat she had experienced from him thus far. She cried out wordlessly, lost in the bliss that she had only previously experienced from Sol himself. Flare truly burned as hot as Sol, ignited her as Sol himself could!

Could he possibly be...?

It was ridiculous to think. But laying in the charred remains of her bed, where the imprint of her body was clearly left for any to see, with Flare's phallus still releasing the last of his seed into her core, she has no reason to doubt she was in the arms of her God again.

Of course, once the initial effect of such a powerful physical event diminished, the thought was laughable. Flare could not be Sol. Flare was a deceptive child, and now she had what evidence she needed to prove it.

She could feel the poorly delivered mark on her neck, a permanent symbol of his sin. Of his fallacy. Her satisfaction went beyond the physical release of her body. She had what she needed to preserve her own rank and to eliminate Flare. Her own flame burned hotter than before, and she carried within her Sol's blessing once again.

Lumina was validated. All she needed now was an audience with the council.

Half convulsing Flare collapsed as at once the flames licking around them died down to that of embers, allowing the 'couple' the bask in the warm afterglow of their sinful carnage. Panting against her neck

Flare was still releasing that molten seed to fill her core, still resting between the Bishop's spread thighs and effectively plugging her such that not a single drop of his divinity might be wasted.

Flare had caved to temptation, engaged in sin. It was not the first time. It was unlikely not the last. Although, that potentially depended upon Lumina and what she would do now. Wearing the evidence of his marking upon her neck. Holding a womb full of his seed as blatant evidence.

Even as the heat of the moment died down around them, Flare remained inside her for several more minutes, not necessarily in a hurry to withdraw from her warm embrace. Now that she was exposed to sin, felt the reward, the pleasure in engaging with one such as Flare, would she really want to eliminate her only outlet? If Sol himself was no longer calling upon her, did she wish to ruin the next closest source of light?

"There was the faint trembling of the ground, like footsteps gradually getting closer. In darkness and while devoid of light only when his offering was left entirely on her own did the Titan awaken from his slumber to assess his sacrifice. He had never seen Opal before. He had never bothered to look over his bride, to understand her struggles and the pain felt through the years of deprivation. He didn't care to. She was to serve but one purpose. To become his bride, and as such, sacrifice herself to the greater good. To make her a martyr as such that the race of ashen demons might live on more fulfilled. She had the unlucky fate of deserving nothing. Only the 'honor' in being taken by a god who cared so little for her beyond a mere piece of meat.

The tall pale male approached his wax covered sacrifice. So wholly unnecessary, and yet it seemed he needed his offerings to experience pain and deprivation. As if they would not be worthy of him if not giving up something in return. It spoke volumes of the fact that not only did he expect them to give up their lives, but endure even more pain in the moments before that.

She would feel the cold hard ground fall away as her body grew lighter and Uhl had the encased woman levitating at roughly chest level. Abruptly she would feel his thumb crush and pierce the wax covering the lips of her mouth, dipping the cool digit within. He was similar to that of a corpse in body temperature. His only purpose in doing so such that she would be able to speak now, even if her eyelids remained caked in wax.

“I am told by Journ that you’ve been waiting patiently for me. Some years now is it?” He glossed over the fact she’d spent over seventeen. For a being who was nearly timeless, he knew little difference between a handful of years and nearly two decades. Minimizing her sacrifice that had encompassed a large majority of her life now. “I understand you are quite eager to please your god, especially now when your kind are in such great

danger. You understand that the lives of thousands rest upon your shoulders now don’t you? If you are unsatisfactory that I may withhold some of my aid to your population.” He paused, letting his eyes wander her wax clad body. “Who do you love, bride of mine?”

My entire life, at least, as much as I can remember, was spent in waiting for this moment, for this destiny. No distraction had been permitted that might sway me from this path. Uhl was to have his

wife, twenty of them, and they would be perfect for him. I would be perfect for him.

Often I'd thought of the other girls, and I thought of them as I had lain on the cold stone floor, wondering if they had been given peace. They had never had a chance to learn of Sol, to feed their Sol flame. If they had any left. Would Uhl have taken them, sheltered them, even if they failed him by dying before they could be given to him?

It was easy to be the wife of Uhl I was expected to be. Seventeen years, a lifetime, I had spent being the waiting bride to be. My knowledge of Sol was but a fleeting moment in my lifetime of waiting for Uhl. This moment was what I'd waited for. And in this moment, I knew with certainty that I could lie to this false God.

Sol had chosen me, of the twenty, because there had been no other way. Had 20 wives of Uhl been laid here, each having endured the ritual sacrifice of their lives, and been asked by Uhl who they loved, he would have easily called out one who did not. After all, hers would be the voice that wavered with uncertainty, even her answer mirrored the others. She would be the one who reacted differently to his touch, her own conviction wavering as she heard each of the other wives give her answer with sincerity, knowing she did not feel what the others cried out with rapturous delight.

i would have been the one who could not answer with integrity, for I had spent my life hating this God for what he had taken from me. I had hated him more passionately than ever I could have loved him. Perhaps it was because of my Sol flame, ever burning within me, however faintly. Somehow that weak, deprived piece of the true



god that hid within my core had know he would come for me, he would give me his love.

only as the one wife of Uhl would my deceit remain undetected. Uhl had no means by which he could detect my farce, no basis for comparison. I need only sing the song he wished to hear, and he would rejoice, for it was as it should be. I need only speak what I was taught to speak, and there would be none to say any different.

I put passion into my words, for I felt passion. Mine was passion born of hate, and just as I'd done when I cried out this false God's name before, I used that passion to strengthen my words. I hate this false God enough to feel no remorse, no guilt, at my deception. He deserves this. My heart weeps that nineteen wives of Uhl had to die, for one who was strong enough to be his ruin. Their lives would not be wasted.

When the wax is broken from my mouth and I feel Uhl's touch enter my body I am sickened by it. His flesh is cold, emotionless, like death. Briefly I wonder if that was how I felt when Flare had first touched me. Had I been repulsive to him? Had his body recoiled from contact? He had not pulled away from me, as I did not pull away from Uhl now.

I push the crumbled wax from my mouth with my tongue, the movement causing further cracking of the shell over my face. It is inconsequential now. Uhl had broken the seal put upon his bride, symbolic, perhaps, of the seal he would further break when he entered her to consummate their union.

Passion born of hate lending itself to the first words I speak to my intended, to the lie I speak to my false God, I speak the words Uhl expects to hear from his bride.

"I love You, I have always loved you, my lord Uhl. I have spent my life waiting to give you myself, in love, that you may be pleased with my offering."

My Sol flame swells, growing brighter for a brief moment, as though, despite being deep under this mountain and in the presence of this cold, dead, false diety, Sol is still gently feeding the heat within me, still holding light, and warmth, and love for me.

"There were reasons as to why Uhl made certain his brides lived a life of deprivation, after all he knew his touch was uncomfortable, some might even say repulsive, however, to one who had spent their lives without so much as making contact with another, then surely Uhl would by comparison seem divine.

"Of course you do-" He smiled down upon his waxed doll, 'spoiling' her by pressing his thumb back into her mouth, giving her what she was 'clearly' craving. Uhl embodied arrogance and selfishness, it would never occur to the divine being that her words were untrue.

She would note he didn't respond with an 'I love you too', instead withdrew his thumb from her mouth and let her listen to the sounds of him walking around her levitating body. His eyes scanning over her bare body, at least, from what he could see from the wax over her skin. She was a decent sacrifice. At the very least a wet hole that would serve to please the god.

Abruptly and without warning she would feel the cool, slimy tongue of the man plunge within the depths of her mouth. So shockingly different than the first kiss shared with Flare, her first embrace with Sol.

"Even now the essence Flare had seeded in her womb glowed and warmed her dully. Just enough to let her know that despite her circumstances she was not alone. That if she could remain strong in her faith of Sol that light and warmth was in her future. This little ball of heat deep within the confines of her soul. Uhl too blind to notice, after all, who wouldn't want to be a sacrifice to such a divine being?

Practically suffocating the girl as his tongue roughly prodded the supple skin of her mouth, Uhl finally relinquished his assault and maneuvered the levitating girl such that she was on her knees, before him, eyes still waxed shut.

"I am pleased with you." He commented, voice above her such that she could assume he was standing right in front of her. "And as such, I will reward you. Go ahead, my bride. Reach for me for I have something special I'd like to give you. You'll know when you've found it." He said, under the believe she would not know of one's 'godhood', but of course this would be his opportunity to teach and share with her the cadaver like skin of the creature she was destined to marry. Would she had been happy with this if she had not known warmth and love by another? How heartbreaking would it be for her to not know that she was destined for something greater beyond this cruel deity.

Hesitantly, with the wax on my body cracking and flaking off, I reach forward. I slowly feel the space in front of me, stopping only when my fingertips touch something soft and giving, like skin, but cold, no hint of life or light within it.

I am grateful for the wax sealing my eyes shut. I cannot weep. This is what I was "saved" for, I would have gone my entire life knowing no touch but...this. I bring both of my hands to his flesh, unaware of their trembling. All I can hear is my own breathing, ragged and uneven. I'm terrified. I am touching the very deity I was told was my destiny, was my fate. I have hated and feared this false God, and been allowed nothing but my hatred and fear.

How many times had I tried to make myself love him? To find peace in my solitude? I'd spent endless days pacing the sealed temple, praying to Uhl, wondering what was wrong with me, that I could not find it in myself to love the divine being who had honored me above all others, that I may spend my life in preparation, and become his bride. I was considered too sacred to contaminate with the touch of any but my divine intended.

It was an honor, a privilege. I lamented that I was too selfish, to want more than the highest honor my people know. I wasn't strong enough to be his bride. I wasn't faithful enough. I wasn't pure enough. And always they assured me, I was enough. Uhl would not have chosen me if I were not.

I did love Uhl, at first. As a child, while I waited for my dream husband, the God Uhl, to come and take me from my sealed temple prison. He was the hero of my daydreams, and I spent many long days and nights with nothing but my dreams for company. Years. For

years I'd waited for my hero. Slowly I came to realize he was no hero. He was the reason for my imprisonment. He was cruel, pitiless, and selfish. Even the texts I read confirmed it. Uhl was a hard God. Always a hard God.

my hands slowly explore what I am touching. I can only assume it is a leg, from the position I'm in. I let my hands move up his leg, slowly, feeling the shape under my fingers. I find a knee. The cold from his body makes my hands ache, the cold from the stone beneath me makes my knees and ankles ache. I ache everywhere, from laying on this stone for so long.

The wax continues to crack and flake away, sometimes pinching or pulling at my skin. The more I move, the more the wax falls away. I reach higher on his leg, realizing with surprise that Uhl is massive. His knee is on level with my head as I kneel here, indicating that he would tower over me. I swallow, the sound loud in my ears. My hands continue up his leg, brushing gently along his inner thigh.

Everywhere I touch I feel cold flesh, it seeps into my hands, makes them stiff and clumsy. I continue moving them up his leg, then freeze when I brush against something else, something much smaller than his leg. My hand leaves his thigh tentatively, hesitating to touch this discovery. But I must, and must do so eagerly.

I bring both hands to his organ. I can hardly feel it, my hands are so cold by this point just using them causes pain to flare up in my protesting muscles. I force my fingers to curl around it, turning my face up toward the diety. I don't speak, there is no need to say anything. Now I wait for further instruction.

"Dull lifeless eyes looked down upon his beautiful sacrifice as he could feel her hands and fingers trembling as they caressed his body. He wore a sadistic grin from ear to ear, his heart and loins swelling as he took it to mean the girl was so overcome with eagerness that she was shaking. From his perspective Opal, her name that he didn't even bother to learn, was just one of hundreds of lives sacrificed at this point. From her perspective? Uhl believed she must indeed be having the time of her life. Sure, her life would be over shortly, but at least this brief moment of 'joy' more than made up for a sad, lonely existence.

"You needn't be worried, my bride." He said, noting her trembling fingers. Not understanding, or honestly caring that the girl might be freezing. Her comfort, her consideration didn't matter. Never mattered. "I know it's a lot to take in, it's overwhelming is what you're thinking. And yes if you're wondering this indeed will be inside you in due time." His palm moved to the back of her head. Unlike Flare's warm, understanding touch, Uhl's was rough. She could tell that he had every intent upon pushing the foul organ into her mouth the moment her lips were poised at the tip.

"Go ahead. Don't be shy. Taste me. Consider it my gift onto you, for you truly are a good girl. Compared to the thousands of lives I've looked after, only about a hundred or so have been so lucky and fortunate to be down upon their knees in the same position you find yourself within today. You should be thanking me, and in fact, you will by parting those lips of yours for me."

I had no experience of this, Flare had not shown me this! I feel his phallus touch my lips and whimper, my lips pressing together reflexively. But that would not do, that was not how the bride of Uhl

showed her eagerness to please her husband. I force my jaws to open, cracking the wax on my face further. I feel it pulling on my eyelashes, but only in the instant before my mouth and throat are filled with cold flesh, my throat invaded by this false God's body. I gag, I can't help it. My hands go to his thighs, trying to push away, trying to breath, but he pushes farther into my throat. My jaw is forced wide as his member swell and twitches in my throat.

I can't make a sound, can't protest, can't even cough as he thrusts his seemingly endless cock further down my throat. The wax on my face continues to crack, allowing my tears to stream down my cheeks. Finally, my face presses against the cold wall of his body, my lips stretched around the base of his shaft. I shudder as he holds me there, lungs burning, tears pouring from the cracks in the wax shell covering my eyes.

He pulls me back and I gasp for air, but before I can fill my lungs he plunges into my throat again, this time both his hands grip my head as he forces his engorged sex into my mouth over and over, not caring that I couldn't breath, that this hurt me. I struggled, trying to push or pull away, grateful for the brief moments in which I could attempt to pull air into my burning lungs. Excess saliva runs from my chin, coating his shaft, dripping messily from his swollen testicles. I can feel the slick droll coating my hands and his thighs, dripping from my face. He continues to pump into my throat.

I stop fighting at some point. It hurts less if I do not struggle. I try to just breathe, letting my arms hang at my sides as his grip on my head moves me as he sees fit. My hatred for this cold, dead monster only grows, as does my fear of him.

Uhl mistook her own body's natural measure of producing mucus and saliva as proof of her enjoyment of the fact that his organ repeatedly penetrated and plunged into the far depths of her mouth and esophagus. Her phlegmy gags only serving to better lubricated his cold, swollen member as in stark contrast to Flare's generous warmth it felt like every time this god plunged himself deeper inside her he stole what little warmth she had left in her.

This wasn't odd to the god. For her to weep, for her to gag, for her to grow more lifeless the more he took from her. After all, this was what it meant to be a bride of Uhl. For her to sacrifice her existence towards him. It wasn't just symbolic. He literally would fuck the life out of her.

After minutes, or had it been hours? Of relentless pounding, stretching, gagging of her as his phallus repeatedly dipped and choked her. A living hell whereby even if she wished to perish and suffocate if only to escape the moment, her stubborn body would gasp at what little moments it had to suck down fresh air and not his cold sex.

This heartless being seemed to feed off her, that firm muscle growing firmer over time as it stretched and choked her virgin throat. The god seeing her tears as tears of joy as she must have felt so blessed as to be receiving his 'embrace' in such fashion.

"Tell me love. What do you know of marriage? I see you weeping tears of joy, but I must wonder-" He said, pushing her head down upon his cock, forcibly holding her even after the point of her gagging and her nails vehemently pushing against his waist to



breathe. "Are you yet 'weeping' in another spot for me?" The cruel god asked of her.

I hope he allows me to suffocate. My vision fades, my fingers and toes going numb as my throat convulsed, trying to dislodge this invasion of my body. But he pulls me off completely, having asked a question I neither heard nor understood. As my air-starved lungs pull in air, filling and emptying in great gasps of relief, he pushes me back, moving over me. I don't even think to resist as he pulls my legs apart, it's not until his hand touches the folds of my own sex that I realize what he intends to do next.

He was checking for moisture, to see if my body was preparing for his ...blessing. Fear grips my heart, I gasp at his touch, finally thinking to defend myself, to close my legs, to push him away. My failing strength does nothing against him.

He finds my entrance ready for him, moisture produced as my body fought to reject his violent penetration of my throat, and as a fear reflex. He easily holds my legs apart as his fingers explore my sex. His hand on my thigh and groping my center feel so cold they seem to burn.

His hand covers my mark of Sol, keeping him from seeing the faint mark left after it was removed. It doesn't keep me from remembering it is there. From remember how Flare put it there. From remember what it feels like to be given Sol's blessing.

My Sol flame quickens, fighting against the cold penetrating my body. Resisting the draining, bone deep chill that radiates from Uhl. Reminding me of my only means of fighting this false God. Even if I die, which I now know is likely, at least I will die for Sol. Not for Uhl,

never for Uhl. I will die with Sol in my heart, fighting for Sol, doing everything I can to spread Sol's light even here, in this place of cold and death.

For a god Uhl was truly blind. Her mannerisms and gestures would clearly show the girl was loathing the experience, and yet the god searched for any, and really any tiny possible clue that she was actually enjoying it. He forcefully pressed his fingers into her reserved sex. Her core, reserved for this cold god for years only to be tainted so unlovingly. How miserable she might have been if she had not been rescued by those invaders, who... also caused so many of her own people to perish. Did she loathe the Daybreakers for killing her own people? Or love them because they showed her such warmth and love?

Cracking the wax from her pelvis and from her inner thighs, Uhl pushed that unwanted organ of his forcibly into her core. It didn't matter to him if she was slick enough to accept him, he pushed regardless. For all the things that he was not, he was indeed much stronger than her physically. It was simple to part her thighs, and part her folds to make her accept him.

This would have been the culmination of her life now. To be taken, to be raped within the dark dank cave of their realm by a cold heartless deity. And yet, the moment that foul phallus penetrated her, despite the sharp pain of not being properly lubricated, she would feel a small faint glow of warmth emanate from her core. A solemn promise that if she could only endure a bit more, that her reward would be true warmth.

"You truly are a tight one." He half groaned. Taking her lack of lubrication as 'proof' of her chastity. "I know it burns, but it's supposed to. Hush, don't spoil the moment." He clamped a cold palm over her mouth as her body was further used by this being. This was her moment. What she had been prepared for. To make him spill every last droplet of essence into her.

"Fuck-" He groaned, scratching against her skin, breaking it. "It's been awhile-" He stammered, uncertain of why it felt so different, as if with each thrust he was losing some minor war within him. "You really are-" He

pressed himself deeper. Her body was not born to be bred by a god. He was honestly too large and as such, the tip of him was knocking upon her gates. This would not be a pleasant experience for the bride, but if she could only endure a little bit longer.

I can't stop the tears, or the cries of pain as he breaks my body, forcing himself deeper and deeper. I try to focus on the spark, but my flame flickers, fighting for my life against the numbing cold. So cold!

And so cruel! He pushes harder, tearing me, finally getting the lubrication he seeks in the form of my blood spilling within. I cease to struggle. It hurts too much. I turn from what is happening to my body, I seek Sol. I plead for him to shelter me, to take me away from it. Even here, with Uhl inside of me, fulfilling what I was told was my destiny, I know Sol will take me.

I tried! I tried so hard! I gave everything, I gave my body, my life, if it is not enough, I have nothing left to give. I know, now, the Uhl would

never accept this, he would say I failed. Sol is a true God, and I feel him inside of me even now. I feel his heat, his light, his love.

So why can't I die? Why can't this failed attempt be ended? Why am I still experiencing this cruelty? Uhl is not stronger than Sol, why does Sol leave me to continue to suffer? I know so little of him, of his will, of his methods. But leaving me in this agony seems cruel, inhumane, barbaric.

"Sol, please, I need your flame!" I whisper, still waiting for the heat I know will come when he takes me away from this.

The ritual went as it always did- Uhl using his bride to fulfillment of himself, draining from them their spirit and life to live. Opal had not been the first, hell, for a creature such as he, she hadn't even been in the top several dozens. He used her fully, caring not if her skin tore and bled around him. It mattered not. For what twisted psyche and conscience the deity had this was blessing given upon his wives. Their firsts, their purity taken. How could it be 'bad' if they had nothing to compare it against?

One could only hope dear Opal blacked out during the rough process of being taken by a god. Skewered and split, and yet... this was not at all what Uhl had expected. The details would be lost to the depths of cavernous room at which Opal was made a sacrifice.

Her sacrifice, despite having felt like minutes in truth had spanned hours and further days. And still Flare and Sol held faith in her.

The next moment of Opal's dark existence was the warm greeting of a familiar slick appendage massaging her own within the confines of her mouth.

A slow, warm kiss that Flare had delivered, cupping her cheek before withdrawing his tongue from her depths. Her wounds tended to by him and for the days in recovery she spent in bed he had personally supplied her with his own warmth such that she need not go without.

“I’ve missed you. Have you come back to us, Opal?” Flare said, his smoldering gaze looking upon her upon feeling her tongue stimulating and moving on its own after she had lied lifeless for days.

Despite Opal losing consciousness, Uhl’s relentless pounding of her limp body continued onward, and further. It mattered not if blood had spilt and dropped upon the crusted earth beneath them, he took and claimed her. Oblivious to the fact that she had already been taken by Sol. Had he even cared a smidge about her existence he would have noted the small flicker of warmth from the depths of her core. But he didn’t. Of course not, why would a god concern himself with the plights of a mortal? She was but a means to an end. And for that he believed she would perish.

Much like Flare days ago Uhl did cum within sweet Opal. Only, Flare’s and by extension Sol’s blessing was one of giving. A tangible sensation of warmth spilled within, whereas Uhl’s was one of taking. He gave her nothing and only took, seeking to steal what little flame her tired, nearly lifeless body had left to give him.

Uhl came eventually, but not in a manner he, or Opal would have expected. For him, upon his climax he would have drained her soul. But that was not what took place, rather, for the god who was given everything in his life, he could not cum and reach climax. Minutes,

then hours and ultimately days had gone by of the god pounding her lifeless flesh in hopes that she would deliver upon to him her life force, and yet it never came. Fervently he fucked and thrust, leaving her thighs and even her groin bruised from exertion. The everlasting god eventually succumbed in expelling every last drop of life in hopes of being rewarded with that pleasurable release, and instead, Opal's faith... her Sol flame, devoured the god's foul influences.

"i..." I look at Flare, confused, images of the abuse done by Uhl fresh in my mind. I cover my eyes, horrified by the things I had witnessed...no, been the victim of!

Flare!

I shelter into him, pressing myself against him as I shake. I try not to cry, I try to be strong, but memories come faster and faster. I can't help the strangled sobs that escape me now, any more than I could when...

"I failed, Flare!" I lament. "I failed Sol, I c-couldnt, i... he broke me!" I press my face to Flare's chest, needing him to understand how hard I tried, needing him, of all people, to know I did my best. I held on as long as I could. I fought to keep my Sol flame burning, but...

"He was so cold..." and Flare was heat. He warmed me, just touching me. I could feel the cold inside of me where Uhl had violated me, tried to extinguish my flame. Flare cupped my cheek, and spoke to me, and I could feel it in me. The cold was terrible, but it could not withstand Flare's heat, and as Flare's heat reached within me, my own flame responded.

I lift my head and look at him in confusion, trying to make sense of everything that was happening. I couldn't have failed if I could still feel my Sol flame. I could feel anything at all was proof I had not failed!

"Is he gone, Flare? Is the false god gone? Please, let him be gone!" I plead, shaking again, seeking reassurance that only Flare could give me. "Have I earned Sol's love, Flare?" I ask, much quieter, every hope I have left hanging on the answer he gives me.

If that was not enough, then I will never be able to do enough. I will never know Sol's love. I will never be enough. The only thing I want, the only thing that would make what inexperienced at the hand of Uhl be acceptable, is to know Sol saw, Sol knows, Sol accepts my sacrifice to him.

My life. Every year, month, week, day, every moment I lived was a part of me stolen by Uhl. But if Sol accepted my sacrifice, then my life was snatched away from Uhl, and all the time I had spent being prepared to be Uhl's bride was done for Sol, that I might be the perfect vessel through which Sol could overcome the false God.

All the pain, all the loneliness, all the things ripped away from me, none of it mattered if I was a child of light. It was worth it if Sol wanted me for it.

After spilling his seed within Lumina, after passing off excused to the staff members of the Citadel, Flare had largely resumed his role as Bishop and within his heart had kept faith in Opal, the original demon girl that he had sinned with. Was he worried of the repercussions? No- Honestly, Flare had an air of arrogance about him, one which rubbed even Lumina wrong. The truth of the matter

was that Flare had felt more strongly than all others Sol's will. Flare didn't doubt himself, but rather knew what to do.

Lumina could have reported him to the council after she had a womb full of his essence. Perhaps she tried to, it didn't matter, and he didn't care. It's not that he didn't care about Lumina, but if she wished to betray him then so be it, he had faith matters would work themselves out.

Flare winced in shared empathy as Opal came to and reacted to his touch to her skin. She was obviously shy, her body abused and in pain. He didn't blame her from initially retracting from his touch.

"You did not fail Opal." His hand descended her body. She was cleaned now of clothing, of wax upon her pale skin. His warm palm moved towards her midriff, to rest just south of her navel. "The smoke ceased and the eruptions halted. I knew then to come seek you and when I found you you were lifeless. Cold. And..." He turned his cheek. "Bloodied." To which he didn't detail, however, she was mostly bloodied between the thighs after the ruthless pounding from Uhl. She would note, if she dared to venture a hand southward, her broken skin was healed. Sore and bruised yes, but Flare had seen to her care and helped her skin to re-knit itself.

"What little flame he had left in that husk of a body extinguished that night, although I'm sure it must have felt like days, weeks, or Sol forbid... even years. I am just..." Flare shut his eyes and tucked his face against her neck. "Thankful you had come back to us. To me. He..." And the reverence of the word 'He' gestured towards 'Sol'. "I can feel him pleased as well. I'm... Getting quite a lot of pushback from the other nineteen Bishops, however, I promise you Opal I



shall not allow them to harm a hair upon your body. And when you are strong enough, I would like to personally present you to our lord and savior, Sol.”

Lumina had waited, taunting Flare with the possibility of her reporting him to the council. She hadn't said as much, but they both knew what they had done.

Something kept her from going to the council with her proof. The mark Flare had given her was easily concealed by her hair. When the planet itself had calmed, Flare had been so quick to act, to race after the demon girl. Lumina herself had been left unattended. It was the perfect opportunity to speak to the council. But she had waited, anxiously waiting to see if the girl had indeed died.

What Flare had returned with was nothing short of a miracle. He held on to her life by his willpower alone. The fact that there was life within the unrecognizable corpse he carried back with him was astonishing, was proof that Sol had truly had a heavy hand in what had transpired.

Was proof that opal had faith in and favor of Sol.

Watching Flare tend the girl had been painful. Lumina was almost certain she would die. She was also certain that if it were possible to save her, it would only be by Flare's hand. She had silently watched over his citadel as he tended the girl. Not in an attempt to oust him, but to ensure there was nothing to distract him from Sol's work.

Lumina had found her peace, her connection to her God was stronger than it ever had been. She had been given a blessing nothing could rival. Which was why, upon checking on Flare and opal

again, as she had done frequently, and seeing Flare embrace the girl, vulnerable, his relief and affection clear in his closeness to her, she decided exactly what she would do next.

Lumina did not interrupt the pair, instead choosing to quietly leave them to each other. She had business to attend elsewhere. She did not detour, for she needed to act while her resolve was strong. She went to the council chamber, stood before the door, and steeled herself. This was for the light, this was something that needed to be done.

Lumina laid a hand over her stomach, sending a prayer to Sol that all would go well, then entered the chamber. She waited while the five council members seated themselves, their holographic images projected into the room at their own availability. As always, they were first to address her.

"Bishop Lumina, you continue to call the council from Bishop Flare's citadel. Are we to assume that you have evidence of your accusations?"

"No, councilman. I've come to withdraw my accusations. Evidence of the time since I spoke to you last has shown me, beyond doubt, that Bishop Flare acts under the will of Sol. He is indeed a godly man, and Sol is fortunate to count him as a bishop." Lumina replied.

"Bishop lumina, you understand that with this withdrawal means your own position is forfeit?" He eyed her with interest as he spoke.

"I understand, councilman. I've served Sol for long enough. I am at peace, and know I have served Sol well. It is time for me step down,

and make room for new children to serve the light." Lumina felt conviction as she made this admission.

"No child has been chosen by Sol, bishop Lumina. There are no favored awaiting an opening to fill. Bishop Flare was the last one Sol showed favor toward, and by far the youngest. You are leaving us without a bishop, and only Sol knows when another might be favored." Another councilman said shortly.

Lumina smiled, nodding to the council as she left the dias. "That's not entirely accurate, councilman. Sol knows, and Bishop Flare knows." She left the room with a very satisfied calm in her heart and mind. From there, she walked directly to her own rooms and penned a note to Flare, then collected her things and left. She did not take the fastest means of transportation, opting instead for a small escort and to travel over land to return to her citadel. Some risks were not worth taking.

"I will meet Sol?" I ask, my face lighting up with hope and excitement. "You swear it, Flare? I will meet Sol?"

I have never felt as much as I feel when you tell me this. I feel like my skin cannot contain it, like is bigger than me. Tears spill down my cheeks, I can't stop smiling. Flare will take me to meet him!

I struggle to calm down, knowing it cannot happen now. That I must wait doesn't bother me, I won't have to wait alone nor won't be sealed away. Nobody will ever be sealed inside of a temple at the will of a monster, to give their life, completely, to heartless, cruel, false God.

I go down paths that darken my excitement. What would it be like to meet Sol? Would he treat me as Flare had, with love and concern? Would there be rituals, liked when I was to be wed to the false go? Would they inspect me? Examine my body ad Djorn had? Would Sol touch me? Would I be permitted to look upon him?

I lift my head to ask you these questions, but seeing your face again silences me. Boldly, I lean forward meeting your eyes, and press my lips to yours. I still can taste you on my lips, and I have never known a sweeter taste.

Flare closed his eyes, basking in the taste and feel of her soft lips against his own. He was thankful she had been passed out for so long, as her body was truly damaged and abused by that false deity. Her lips had been split and bruised, reminiscent of someone forced to take something too large into their mouth or, forcibly colliding against something hard, like Uhl's pelvis. Hand prints and bruises had been all over her ashen body, among other evidence of brutality in her having been used as more like a doll than a bride.

Flare hadn't paid much attention for how much time was spent in this room, slowly trickling in his own light into her such to coax her broken skin to knit and mend and help her tissues and muscles repair themselves. Her flame had been so weak when he found her, like a fire left out over night in the rain, truly it was only a couple hot embers left and from that Flare had to coax those embers to glow and burn once again. Many could say he abandoned his duties, and largely he did. Lumina could have made the case that he was absent from overseeing the citadel, wasting his time on a demon girl who had been the toy of their enemy. But she didn't.

Flare didn't even know she left, and likely wouldn't for some time after, although, it would be very likely he would come to thank Lumina in the future, if, he were ever to have the opportunity of seeing the former Bishop.

The kiss was gentle, heartfelt as opposed to burning, hungry passion. "Easy now, don't strain yourself. Even now Sol is seeking to help mend you from the inside out. I know you can feel his presence within you, he has not abandoned you, quite to the contrary, you've been in his thoughts from the moment you have stepped outside these walls. I should like you to be able to walk under your own power by the time I bring you to him, however, even if internally you are still sore and not fully healed, I do believe he will apply his own touch and make it so that your body returns to the state prior to ever meeting Uhl. Untainted, unclaimed, unused such that you will be made pure to accept Sol's all-loving light, once again."

I relax into your arms and place my hand against your chest, letting my eyes close. Yes, I feel tired, and my body aches deep inside, and all over. The more I am awake the more I become aware of this aching pain. But I want your company, I want to talk with you, and touch you, and know that I'm still alive, my Sol flame still burns.

And yet, exhaustion comes in waves, overwhelming me quickly. I don't fight it too hard, as I know it will help me heal.

"Flare?" I ask, a sudden thought bringing up an urgent question. "If Sol should give me his blessing, would I still be able to receive your blessing?"

I don't expect an answer, not a real one, anyway. You are very good at giving answers that raise more questions, but it doesn't bother

me. I enjoy figuring things out on my own. It means I truly have an understanding of the things I question, if I come to the answer on my own.

Flare had taken to kneeling before her bedside for the past several days, though now upon her awakening and given she was clearly straining herself to reach out towards him, Flare took it upon himself to lift the blankets and join her in the bed, gently slipping his arm beneath her back and inviting her smaller body to rest alongside him. His body more than eager to share with her his warmth as the Bishop rested his head back upon the pillow and shut his eyes. Gently his fingertips grazed and caressed along her arm as he couldn't help but lightly chuckle at her inquisitive nature.

"You always have so many questions, don't you?" Of course, this was not a bad thing, but rather, something he found endearing about the demon girl. He could not think of another person who posed such questions that he himself had never considered.

"There are only a very select few who ever have the opportunity to receive a personal blessing from Sol, and those are referred to as Sol's Bishops of Light. Under normal circumstances bishops rarely have interaction with one another. It could be seen as a potential conflict, for bishops to engage in the blessing of one another." He was being truthful, however that didn't stop the fact that he had already done so with Lumina, nor the fact that Flare inwardly still desired to bless Opal.

"It cannot be understated how critical a role you played, and I know that Sol's appreciation for your sacrifice knows no bounds. You're too young to become a Bishop of Sol, Opal." Flare confessed, letting

his words linger for some moments. "But then again, I was once thought of too young myself. My thoughts are you will still need my guidance after receiving his blessing, so that I might better help you learn to channel his essence, and how better to assume the responsibilities thrust upon you. Would you be alright with that Opal Neiquart? To allow me to mentor you after your blessing by our Lord?"

I become calm and quiet as I tuck alongside you. I can feel the heat of your Sol flame, the heat of Sol, coming from you to warm me, to make me whole. My own Sol flame responds, but slowly, growing stronger and more sustainable. I feel the ice the false God left inside of me shrinking back from this heat. But so slowly, when I want it gone. I want it gone now. I feel tainted, disgusted by this presence inside of me.

The small smile I wear soon fades from my lips as you explain about bishops of light. It would be an honor, to be so blessed by Sol. A true honor, not the cruel joke I'd had forced on me before. But would I want that honor, if it meant Flare could not touch me, could not bless me?

Of course I did. Yes, I would always want Flare's touch, always, but compared to everything I'd already given for Sol, what was one more sacrifice? I had already done so much to ensure my life had been lived for Sol, even if I hadn't known it until recently.

I don't know how to be any different. I have always known I lived only for the false God of my people. Completely. Everything I knew was for him. Sol had given me a choice, shown me that it never had to be the way it was. But I couldn't change what had already

happened. I was, in my entirety, intended for Uhl. Sol was the means by which I had taken back what Uhl had stolen. I had not taken it back for myself. I could not go back and take the little girl I had been out of the sealed temple. What I had done was change the meaning of her sacrifice. All that they had done to me, for Uhl, had been to make me into what Sol needed me to be. Not because Sol had forced me to do it, but because that is what I choose it to mean.

I press myself closer to Flare, closing my eyes to enjoy his heat more.

"Will you be proud of me, Flare? When Sol blesses me? Will you be happy for me? Even if it means we can never... I would be happy just to be near you. My life is Sol's. Even if I cannot have you teach me, my life is Sol's. Even if..."

I mean to say that even if I never get to see Flare again, my life is Sol's, but the words catch. I stop trying to force the words. Why say it? I don't know if it is true. It doesn't need to be said. I want to enjoy this moment, while Flare is with me.

With his right arm wrapped behind, and around her back, palm to press gently against her side and sharing that warm touch of his with her he couldn't help but smile softly. She was cute and it warmed his own heart to hear her ask such questions. Inwardly he didn't want this to be their last time together, regardless of whether or not she was blessed to become a Bishop. That was sinful, inherently selfish of him, but he couldn't shake the feeling that he was not ready to part with the ashen girl.

Even though he didn't want to lose her, he still wore a smile and his heat was ever welcoming. He'd grown very fond of her, but



truthfully, regardless of what the future had in store for her, he was happy that she would experience happiness, to feel like she belonged, to feel Sol's warm embrace no matter where she was within this world.

"You're silly Opal." Flare said warmly, moving to press his lips to her forehead and then closing his eyes as he gently brought his forehead to meet her own. Touching his nose, lips only less than an inch away he could feel the subtle ebb and flow of her breath, as she undoubtedly felt his as well.

"There is nothing in this life that would make me happier than for you to receive his blessing. Yes, if fate deemed it such that we could not be together I will surely miss you, from the bottom of my heart, but I would never be so selfish as to deny you his flames and embrace." Flare turned to better face her, reaching his hand down along the long gown that had been pulled over her body, to the hem of it so that he could make bare contact with her skin.

His palm was scorching as it made searing contact with the outside of her leg, caressing her gently until his palm resided at her bare hip. He was warm. Hot. Hotter than the moment he'd given her his own blessing, purposefully so.

"I could melt you Opal. To pour my heart and spirit into you until your very existence is set ablaze. Quite frankly, I want to. But I know, no matter how bright and hot I burn, no matter how much of myself I share with you, I can still not share the same amount of warmth as he could, and that is something I would not wish to deny you. I still hope though-" He mumbled against her lips. "I still hope I will have the chance to share my heat with you again, and further

Opal, I would be lying if I said I wasn't also looking forward to feeling you share your new heat with me after your blessing..."

Flare sighed, knowing inevitably she would be in the arms of Sol shortly. Even if she wasn't fully healed, Sol would see to mending her broken body. Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, she would be reborn.

Selfishly he leaned in to touch her lips, and once again dip that heated appendage of his past her lips to taste her. "I can take you to meet him now, if you're ready." Truthfully, he'd rather savor these potential last moments with her, but he couldn't ask that of her. She deserved to know her god, after so much time. Life was cruel enough to her, he certainly wouldn't do the same to her.

my breath catches as you bring your hand to my skin. The heat from you is incredible, your touch on my skin feels like fire, burning into my body, pouring into my own Sol flame. I inhale slowly, listening to you, feeling your touch.

You kiss me again, and this time I don't hesitate to return the kiss, slowly exploring your mouth. When you pull away and tell me I can meet Sol now, my eyes grow wide with surprise.

I lick my lips slowly, tasting you. My eyes stay on your face. My hand comes up to caress your cheek, and I kiss you again. And again. My flame grows with each taste of you, with the way your hand presses against my hip, with the way your eyes grow brighter. I have to tilt my head back, eyes closing, as I take a deep breath breaths.

"Flare," I ask quietly "i...I know Sol is the true god, and he will not hurt me...but I...I am afraid Flare. What will he do? How would I

prepare? Is there a ...a ceremony? Will I be alone? I didn't know anything that was going on when they..." I stop, not wanting to remember.

"Will you be with me, Flare? Will you be there the whole time? Would he allow it?" I tremble slightly, for just a moment. If I could not be with Flare like this, after I was given Sol's blessing, I wanted this to last as long as possible. I wanted to lay here with him, feeling his heat and and touch, tasting him , exploring him.

To meet Sol, though, to see him and know his touch! To receive his blessing. It was what she wanted, it was what she lived for. She just hoped Sol would not ask her to be without Flare.

"I am ready to meet him, Flare. I want to meet Sol. I need to meet him.

Again she brought a smile onto his lips. So inquisitive, and yet he enjoyed this. If it were up to him they could spend an eternity as they were now. Wrapped up in the arms of the other as he would be more than happy to answer life's most difficult questions. To teach, and show her all the wonderful aspects of not only Sol, but of the world and what the universe itself had to offer. In many ways she had been deprived of so much that almost anything could bring a smile to her face.

"There is no ceremony." He began, and unfortunately he didn't know just how cruel and painful a ceremony she had underwent before being sacrificed to Uhl. "Sol loves and accepts you for you. There is nothing more he would rather have that to be presented with the real you. I say real-" Flare's grip gently tensed, pulling her body closer and more firmly against his side. "Because as you are

now is not the real you, although close. I do believe he will help restore you, to heal those wounds endured and purify what that cold god had left inside you." Flare turned his blazing gaze to peer on into her eyes as he warmly cupped her cheek and simply allowed himself to savor the sight of her in this moment.

"He is ever present Opal." He said, his voice not much louder than a whisper as his palm centered itself over her left breast, to feel the beat of her heart pulse beneath the surface. "I'm very blessed to have met you. In another world. At another time. I should have wished to be your Bishop, and for you to be all mine. But it seems as if you were destined for someone greater." His words weren't dripping with jealousy, or negativity by any stretch of the imagination. How could he be sad when what was in store for her was so much greater?

Once warm, then turned hot, Flare's tongue pushed back into the wet depths of her mouth. To taste, and savor the demon girl one last time. Flare's heated body radiated against her, his touch upon her body, while firm, was nothing like the sharp, harmful touch of Uhl when that false god held her. But a loving embrace instead.

Flare's heat was all around her, warming the sides of her body, filling her mouth as that warm, slick appendage ground itself so raw and heatedly against her own.

"At some point the peak of the heat was met. She could still feel the warmth of an embrace, but if she were to reach out and grab, she would feel nothing. If she were to try and brush her tongue back against the male who had his own tongue dipped within her sweet mouth, she would discover there was nothing of substance there.

And should she open her eyes she would discover no longer was she within a bedroom, but instead standing in an impossibly large chamber. Tiled floors stretching in all directions, white marble pillars supporting a ceiling with ornate stained glass mosaics high up above her. Torches and the flickering lights of fires filled the interior of the chamber, and while large and filled with marble the air was warm and not the slightest bit of chill could be felt upon her body.

Directly before her clouds of steam could be seen rising into the air as a bright figure stood ahead. His light so blinding it was as if peering directly into the sun.

"I've been waiting for you Opal." A voice filled the interior of the gargantuan room she felt herself within. As if it was its own world. Masculine, thick, yet warm and oh so inviting. This was in stark contrast to how Uhl addressed her as only his 'bride'. "Allow me to tone it down." The intensity of the light lessened, until she could make out the basic shape of a man standing before her. The very surface of his skin seeming to glow, to ebb and flow in intensity as if itself was alive.

"There, how is that?" He asked, his tone considerate of her. "Can you see me better?"

I stare in rapture at the figure before me, at a loss for words. I tear my gaze from him for just a moment, looking around to see that I was alone. Flare was not with me. Then my gaze returns to brilliant figure before me.

"Sol"

I sink to my knees, staring reverently up at the deity I'd given my life to. He knew my name! Sol knows me! I could gaze upon him, hear him speak, and in this place I feel nothing but warmth, love, and peace.

This is Sol!

The flame, my Sol flame, grows and grows in his presence. Just being near him calls to it, feeds it. I press my hands to my stomach, but cannot pull my gaze from Sol. I don't know what to say to him. I wish there were a ceremony, or something that was expected of me.

I know what I want, need, to say to this true god. He has given me my life, when it was forfeit before it even began. Still staring up at him with utmost sincerity.

"Thank you! I love you, Lord Sol!"

It feels inadequate, like the words are not enough, and I need him to understand that. What I feel is more than gratitude, more than love!

"I am yours, Sol, my life is yours, anything you ask of me, everything I am. I am yours."

"Dressed in garments very similar to that of Flare, after all, it would make sense for the Bishops to adopt a fashion in kind with their god. Sol was topless, though wore a robe around his waistline, somehow the fabric not catching on fire even though Sol himself seemed to burn as hot as the sun.

Upon her dropping to her knees, head bowed, clearly flustered as she was met by this great deity, Sol only warmly smiled at her and

responded in kind. "I love you too, Opal." He was free to express, for it was true. He loved all who would place their faith in him.

As a god he was limitless in how he wished to present his form. He could appear to her as a giant, but for the purposes of conversing with her he saw no reason why he wouldn't adopt more acceptable size. He was still huge, a strong and well filled out man of over seven feet tall, he casually approached her such that he stood before her as her head was more at waist level. A warm palm descended atop her head as he gently praised her.

"I've waited for a very long time Opal. I know you may believe we are recent acquaintances, however, that was not the case for I have always been with you even when you hadn't known. That small flicker of light deep within you, your Sol Flame, that only began to grow once you knew of me. Believed in me." He knelt down now as he lifted her chin so she could gaze into the warm, blazing eyes.

"I can feel the history etched into your body. The cold, the pain, the loneliness. I know what was both taken by Uhl, and given by him." Sol said, knowing Uhl's life force now rested in her womb. "Come my love, for I wish to purify you, and make you anew." He scooped her up in his arms before turning around and casually making his way towards the heated waters of a grand spa which spanned off into the distance.

"Tell me, my dear Opal, has my Flare been good in how he watched over you?"

"

his hand on my head pours heat over me like water, making me gasp. To hear him confirm his love for me almost brings me to tears. Meeting this true god is so different from meeting Uhl. This is what a true God is. Love. Light. Warmth. I feel safe here, with him. His heat is love.

He brings me to look up at him, every word he speaks to me burning into my memory. He knows my name! My Sol flame, that he calls a small flicker of light, burns so hot within me, in his presence, hotter than I've ever felt it burn.

He validates me, acknowledges my loneliness, my lifetime spent sealed away. What was done to me by Uhl. At his mention of something given by the false God, I frown. Uhl gave me nothing. He took. He took everything from me, what could he have given me? Just as I begin to wonder about the intense, bitter cold that, even now, sits in my core like a part of me is truly dead there, Sol lifts me into his arms.

I forget everything, enveloped in his heat, cradled in his arms. He asks me about Flare, and for a moment I frown. But only for a moment. The smile that lights up my face is genuine.

"Flare has been good to me, lord Sol." I say, hugging myself tightly as Sol hugs me to his chest. My eyes stay on Sol, I neither know nor care where he takes me, so long as I am with him. "Flare has shown me your love, your light, lord Sol." I can't help having a more inward, personal smile for a moment, as I think about Flare. "He was there when I woke. He looked so worried, so relieved. I made him laugh. I like when he laughs." I rest against the burning diety, a small, dark,



colorless form, no bigger than a child in Sol's arms, enveloped and consumed by his heat.

"His arms envelope her smaller body to his own, inviting her legs to wrap around either side of his waist, although the way he held her was not meant to be overtly sensual. One arm to support under her rear while the other palm warmly caressed along her back as he stepped with her. He was in no hurry, why would he be considering he is a timeless being?

"I'm glad to hear that-" He said, even his breath was so hot that that it would elicit a sensation of cold chills when swept from her body as cooler air would rush in behind to fill the void. "He's fond of you." Sol admitted the observation. "Quite." His tone not betraying whether or not this was something he had a problem with, although it's not as if Sol didn't know the acts taken between Flare and herself, or even Flare and Lumina for that matter.

Step by step Sol continued walking with her, it could have been only seconds, or hours, as she was held to this immortal's body, his heat radiating off him and sinking in against her ashen skin. The further he walked, the more humid the air became, and yet, without so much as missing a beat, Sol took them down the steps of the heated pool. She would know at the bottoms of her feet would be the first to lick against the stifling waters. Not enough to burn her skin, but healing in its qualities. This god seemed to not mind his robe getting wet, and in turn he did hope she wouldn't mind as her own white gown would get dampened by the heated waters.

"I hope you understand how appreciative I am for the sacrifices you have made, Opal." He said, still holding her to his body, his tone

more like the tone might use to tell a story to a child, no rush as he carried her out further into the spa waters. "These waters are quite special, for these are the waters my bishops have been quenched within, after being reforged. For instance, Flare as you know him is a handsome young man, a mere pup by my standards, and yet his life will span on for centuries now that his skin has been licked by my flames and quenched within these healing waters. I meant it when I said Opal-" And soon they stopped, she would feel a warm stone surface against her bottom, as if they had traveled across the entirety of these massive waters. Her feet left to dangle over the edge as Sol unwrapped his arms from her, standing there between her legs as his robes were soaked, sticking to the skin of his body as his luminous eyes gazed down upon her.

"Uhl has hurt you. Mind, body, and spirit. You've given so much that I should like you to experience the lick of my flames, and ultimately for you to be reborn in these waters, but I need to ask you Opal, for what I can give you may be considered a curse. A never ending existence as long as my flame is tied to your own. I need to ask you, my dear, will you allow me to love you forever?"

I look up at Sol, reverence radiating from me. I don't hesitate to answer, for I've answered this question time and again, already.

"Please, Sol, please! I love you! I will always love you! My life is yours! I would have forever to love you, Lord Sol!" I almost weep, again. He offers me everything, everything! I would have forever to worship him, to love him, to spread his light and love to all who don't know him!

I would be able to stop false God's like Uhl from ever hurting people again, and show those without hope that there is a true God, and his love is always there, burning inside of them, just as Flare had shown me.

There could be no greater purpose. My life would truly be lived for Sol.

His eyes, similar to Flare's yet held a fathomless depth to them, rested warmly upon her. She was so free with her emotions, exuberant in her confession of love towards him, he trusted her from the bottom of his heart because while she herself may have been damaged, harmed, and tainted by those who she had come in contact with, her spirit and her flame was pure.

A kind smile spread across his lips as he corrected her. "Your life is ours. That flame inside you, while you may refer to it as your Sol Flame, it is just as much yours as it is mine." He said, not criticizing her, but rather happy to teach her. Soon he leaned forward, closing his eyes and brushing his cheek against hers, so that his lips neared her earlobe, for his breath to be free in how it would spill down against her neckline.

"Did you enjoy the markings upon Flare's body? Visual evidence whereby the flames of Sol licked his skin." His voice was husky, lips so near towards brushing towards her skin while his left hand reached out to blindly rest itself over her right hand. "Would you allow me the honor Opal, to paint my flames upon you? Would you like to wear my markings, the visual representation of my blessing and my love extended to you?" His lips parted, refraining from touching her ashen skin with his heated tongue, this had to be her

choice. Each Bishop received their own unique markings and he wanted to be certain she was ready for such actions.

my flame erupts into an inferno of heated desire as he reminds me of Flare giving me my Sol mark, and his actions become more intimate, closer, more personal. My breath catches at the intensity, but I am not afraid.

"I would proudly wear your markings, Sol, I would show everyone your love. They are beautiful, they are perfect. Flare has such beautiful markings, I..." I stop, blushing, realizing that the only way I could know of Flare's markings is by having seen him completely disrobed.

As if Sol could read her thoughts his lips spread into an amused smile. She was such a sweet girl. "I know-" He said in a husky tone before his lips made contact with her neck, his hand over hers tensing, not in a way to suggest he wished to overpower the girl, but rather, to comfort her as he knew his heat could be shocking. "I'm the one who gave them to him after all." And soon she would feel the searing heat of his tongue trace along her neck. That warm sensation left by his saliva continuing to radiate heat like warming oils spread onto her skin.

Pulling on the sleeve of her gown, the wide neck opening shifted to expose more of her left shoulder as Sol's lips descended, parted, and ultimately allowed his teeth to press against her skin.

"I am pleased to know you found them beautiful, for ultimately I am hopeful to bestow similar upon you." He didn't have to be explicit. She saw the markings along Flare's waistline. She saw the markings on his member. Would she be expected to have a god's tongue on-

“Your skin is beautiful Opal. I must say, when we’re finished here I imagine my markings will look absolutely stunning in contrast to your darker skin.” He confessed while his fingers from each hand dipped down to secure the hem of her wet gown by her shins and slowly began peeling it up over her thighs, and soon her waist.

“Arms up for me, Opal. Then I want you to lay back upon the warm surface of the stone, let your feet dangle into the water, and let me tend to your body-“

:

I raise my arms, as if in a daze. I lay back, resistance the furthest thing from my mind. His touch, his tongue, his heat is incredible. But I do not fear him.

I can feel the places he has touched with his tongue on my neck like fire, but with Sol fire does not burn. It radiates. Laying naked before him, and hearing him voice the very thing I had thought when I'd recieved my first mark from Flare- how bright, how beautiful it shone on my skin!

I trust Sol with my life. Giving him my body is so simple. I already have, I am His. I lay back, as instructed. This stone is smooth, warmed by the waters. Though it is not soft, it is not uncomfortable. I relax into it, completely bare before Sol, watching him with wide eyes full of reverence, love, and...desire.

I wouldn't dream of asking for more than he offers. I wouldn't consider asking him to hurry. It only means more time in his presence.

"I love you, Sol." I whisper reverently, needing to voice my trust, my faith. "I love you, my lord Sol!"

Gently he guided her knees to part, allowing him to step forward, to the point that the front of his legs would be up against the wall of the pool, allowing the god the freedom to lean over her such that his lips could find any spot upon her lovely body, and she was lovely.

If she wished to gaze upon his face she would note his pupils fixed upon her eyes, but then watch as they dipped, as her lord let his eyes wander upon her bare body. Stealing a breath within as she could bear witness to not only the muscles knitting in his body, but the way his own markings, all over, seemed to ebb and flow in intensity.

Teasing was not his intention, but for a moment he savored her, letting the tips of his fingers caress and trace along her collarbone, and down along her sternum, to trace lower towards her navel, just as slow if not slower. He couldn't help but to drink in the motions of her body. From the way her chest rose as she breathed in, to the way her belly would tighten as his fingers traced along her abdomen. These were details he would not be able to see when his lips, and tongue, was busy painting over her.

His eyes even wandered further southward, looking upon her splayed, ashen thighs. "Forgive me, for my eyes are becoming greedy." Licking his lips Sol's attention drifted back up. "You're like a gift bestowed to me, I hope you do not mind if I unwrap you, bit by tiny bit and savor the thought of what is waiting inside." And thus Sol leaned over, palms pressed into the smooth surface of the stone, mindful to not allow his torso, nor his waist, press and make

contact with her own. Instead, he wanted his lips, his tongue to be the blinding physical stimulation his dear Opal would be receiving, even if the heat of this god poured off his body.

Much in similar fashion to the markings upon Lumina's areola's Sol's tongue painted hers in similar swirls. But unlike Lumina's, Opal would find a pert, hardened nipple soon seized between the lips of her lord, to

feel that heated tongue press against the captured little nub while he sucked to add some pressure.

I gasp, body tensing as I resist with everything in me the urge to arch up, to press my breast to his mouth. I clench my hands into fists. This is nothing like the heat of the wax painted onto my body. This is extacy, this is how a God is meant to feel!

My heart races erratically, I pant rapidly. I feel moisture collecting between my thighs, enough that it sends a shiver as it tickles, trickling over my skin. I can't speak, only tremble beneath him.

Naturally being the divine being that he was he could feel the heat from her body attempt to reach out and mingle with his own. He could feel the restraint of her muscles clenching, releasing, some in response to her resistance, some in response to the direct heat being administered onto her body.

Through the same slow transition Sol seized the other neglected nipple between his lips, this time his right palm moving to clamp onto the outside of her left thigh, firmly, but again it wasn't about pain. It was about sharing with her a sensation of desire.

Peppering her torso with kisses and lashes of his heated tongue, Sol would like to be able run his hands upon her wet body, but this was not about what he wanted, but rather, what his dear Opal deserved.

Leaning further, his clothed waist made subtle contact against her own as her god peered on into her eyes. "You're being very good. Bear with me, I want to give you more." He praised her ability to stay restrained, giving her a treat. This would not bestow a marking onto her tongue, but Sol did push forth his long tongue to dip into the warm depths of her mouth. Much like how his saliva left residual heat to linger on her skin, so too would her tongue radiate with the left over heat of his kiss.

"Patience dear-" He said, breaking their kiss, moving his waist and his torso away so that his lips and tongue would focus lower upon her body. However, likely not low enough as she'd feel his tongue against her abdomen, painting wings of a butterfly against her skin, her navel acting as the center.

the taste of fire! Of desire, and love, and my body aching and burning for more, for Sol! I want to scream, to grab onto him, to pull him against me!

He praises me for keeping still, for resisting.

I tremble uncontrollably, though I try to be still. I can't stop the shaking. I barely breath, short rapid, shallow breaths that do little to fill my lungs.

This is exquisite torture, this is bliss! This drives my flame to burn hotter, consuming me with my own Sol flame! I whimper, then moan.



He continues to torment me slowly. I moan again, and force myself to stay, not to move. To be patient. I know how to wait.

Even if it has never been waiting like this, I know how to wait.

Sol's tongue dipped just low enough to brush against her pelvis jutting out from against her skin. His heated breath free to waft over her lower abdomen, to flow along the terrain of her body and wash down against her spread legs. He could smell her, and it was enough to cause the god to shakily exhale, to shudder, but in pleasure as he bit upon his inner cheek as it was him who needed to show a little restraint. After all, these were markings upon her body she'd need to wear for eternity. She deserved his concentration.

"You're not nervous, are you?" His voice emanated lower as at this time Sol had moved to crouch into the waters, bringing his face more so in line with her bare core as her splayed legs were resting on either side of him.

Smiling gently as he could see the marking Flare attempted to make upon her body. "Don't worry, I don't intend to erase his, but I'll be sure to let it glow a little brighter. Do tell me if the heat gets to be too much dear." Sol whispered, purposefully allowing his breath to whip along her inner thigh. His words more like a tease as he knew she wouldn't mind the heat. If anything, she'd want his scorching touch to trail higher, and yet, she was painfully subjected to feel of her god inching his lips, his tongue, his humid breath higher up along the interior of her thigh.

my legs shake as I gasp at his words, dissolving into a moan. My body aches for more, my core clenches, fighting itself to remain still.

I can't stop my legs from shaking, I can't stop my head from tossing, pressing back against the stone.

I moan, and whimper, and finally find my voice.

"Sol!" I pant, then, stronger, "Sol! I need you! My god!" I struggle to stay still, to continue. Would he stop, if I could not keep still for him? I moan at the thought, and it gives me determination to be still. I have never burned so hot, never felt such exquisite ecstasy.

This is what Flare wanted for me, all along. I close my eyes, finally, giving in to the physical sensation of Sol. Though I still tremble, I take a breath and my body relaxes, calms. My flame burns hot, but as hot as I can burn, Sol burns that buck hotter, and he will not leave me wanting. I trust this. Sol will fulfill my need.

I still whimper at his slow, careful, meticulous attention. Sol works upon me like an artist, and my body is his to create.

Of course he felt her muscles spasming, trembling, he could hear the tremor in her voice, although he knew her reactions were rooted in desire not in the heat being too much for her. He knew she wanted more, she confessed as much, but he wouldn't simply rush matters to appease a fleeting desire. She was his master piece, to gaze upon for eternity, surely he could restrain himself a bit longer.

His tongue trailed up her inner thigh to the point at which her thigh transitioned to her groin, running that heated appendage along the crevasse as the heat of his mouth flirted with her sex. He could feel the energy, the heat from her body bubbling beneath the surface at the sheer torture of his advances. To his best knowledge Flare

hadn't pressed his lips, nor tongue against her bare core, a place whereby her Sol flame resided. Of course it would make sense for him to kiss her here as well.

He withdrew his tongue from her body, at the very edge of her labia, making her think this was over. Leaving her body dripping with desire, before finally she would feel the shocking heat of his tongue, press against her taint and firmly trail higher, splitting the slick, supple petals of her sex while his tongue painted her flesh, and in return, she coated him in her nectar.

While tending to her sweet flower, Sol blindly guided her foot beneath the waters, pressing the sole of her foot against the erect, burning muscle beneath the waters. If only to let her know she wasn't alone in feeling the desire this evening.

I gasp, unable to stop myself any longer from moving, my body doing as it pleases. My mind begs my body to remain still, but my hips rock anyway, rising to the intense heat of Sol as he parts my folds with his tongue. I begin breathing, rapid, frantic breaths. I tremble uncontrollably.

I feel his touch at my foot, a much needed distraction, as he guide it to his engorged sex. For a moment I don't comprehend, but only for a moment. I bring both my feet together, his searing hardness between them, and explore this oragan, knowing he wants me as much as I want him. It gives me a focus. I cannot see what I am touching, so I use my feet to learn, carefully finding every inch of him. I press my feet together around him, exploring the length and girth, using this to focus my mind that I may keep my body still for him to finish.

Her taste was exquisite, a pleasure upon the tip of his tongue, however, painting her folds was not enough to feed her fire. She was burning up, her body betraying her, but still not enough to feed her fire. Further his tongue trailed, all the way up to a certain bundle of nerves that left his dear Opal twitching beneath him. Perhaps he should have showed her some kindness, to tease and roll that little button against his tongue until she inevitably would shatter, but Sol had different plans for-

Her god gave a muffled groan as he felt the touch of her feet make contact with his inflamed organ. He meant to only share with her the thought that he was just as filled with desire, and yet, even as she had a god knelt before her, tending to her sweet flower, she selflessly offered to provide him some much desired friction. Or perhaps she was simply curious of his Godhood?

“So it doesn’t scare you?” He asked, heated breath to practically spank against the raw skin of her freshly licked sex. “In that case-” His right hand dipped beneath the surface of the waters, untying the knot that secured his robe as the layers fell away and his raw muscle was freed for her to touch. He was larger than Flare, although the Bishop hadn’t been lacking. Not quite as large as Uhl, however, Sol’s form was taken to something more suitable for Opal. This was not meant to harm the girl, but even so, he was throbbing with life. His veins coursing with virility and strength, in stark contrast to the corpse-like touch of that false god who had his way with her earlier.

Panting her god steeled himself. The waters of this spa laden with minerals, the texture of the water almost having a soapy like sensation as he felt her feet rub against him. So as not to betray

himself and give into such moans again, Sol pushed forth a truly slick, heated supple muscle to slip past her entrance, to push deeper into her warm inviting walls, to further pass along his blessing, his healing touch, within h

er. The length of his tongue rather unnatural, though he should hope she won't be complaining as he sought to be greedy with her nectar.

I feel your bare skin under my feet, and your tongue enter my body, and I cry out, arching from the stone I lay on, my feet pressing together around your sex.

"Sol!" I pant, then reduced to whimpers, soft moans, and turn I need my head side to side. My hands come up and grip my own hair as I feel an overwhelming tension building from my center. My body trembles violently. I try to focus on my feet, but it's impossible. My hips rock with the thrusting of your tongue.

I am powerless against the tension building, nothing I do can change the slow, intense buildup. My cries become more frantic as it grows stronger and stronger.

I want to tell you, but I don't know the words for it. You must know, though, you are Sol, my body is yours.

As soft and supple as her feet were in delivering sweet friction against his organ, swollen with the desire to bestow upon her his blessing, Sol wanted something else for the two of them could always grow further entangled at a later moment. After all, where they were here within the heated chambers of Sol's domain time truly didn't matter.

Running his tongue firmly up along her slick petals Sol's hands grasped that of her thighs, lifting, and thereby removing her feet from his swollen organ. That was something to be tended to later as instead he guided her knees to rest over his broad shoulders. There would be no escape for her now. No distraction.

"It's alright Opal." He murmured, lips brushing over her sensitive, swollen button as he spoke, feeling her smaller body begin to unravel. "I want you to-" Further mumbling, his heated tongue coaxing and serving the wind the poor girl ever tighter with that tension. "Go ahead Opal, cum for me." With that, Sol seized her swollen button, to suck and tease until the poor girl would be left writhing for him. Until she gave him her blessing.

panting rapidly, unable to stop any of it, unwilling to try, the tension continues to build. No longer able to touch him with my feet, my toes curl, shaking legs tense more and more, as if to pull him closer to me, everything in me tenses. Every muscle pulls tight. I grip my own hair, hard enough to pull some out as I arch, twisting and writhing, your hold on my body keeping me where you want me.

My eyes snap open as you tell me to cum, and your burning mouth encapsulates the very peak of my most sensitive beacon. I meet your blazing gaze between my thighs and my mouth opens to emit a truly instinctive, uncontrollable eruption of sound, of climax, in the form of one word,

"Sol!"

Drawn out as my Sol flame bursts throughout my body, wave after wave of heat, of pleasure, of sensation taking any vestiges of self control I'd thought I maintained and destroying them.

Proud of her as he was, and as much as he wanted to extend to her some verbal praise, she would have to accept the praise of his tongue as he rode the quaking orgasm out to its finale. There was something highly erotic for her to lose control and succumb to involuntary reactions, spilling herself both physically and emotionally before a god she held such reverence for.

Of course, to not over stimulate the dear girl, he did taper the intensity as the initial peak of her release transitioned into merely aftershocks.

The licks of flame painted upon her skin were glowing, her raw core shimmering with the mixture of saliva and sap as was spilled from the sweet fruit between her thighs. Soon her god rose to stand, his lips, his chin, shimmering in the evidence of her loss of control. To have made a 'mess' upon her god, although, if it were up to him, she would be making him much more dirty.

Pressing his palm to rest upon her belly, he simply admired the way her body contorted with each gasping breath taken. The rise and fall of her chest, her exposed, pert nipples hardened as she herself was a work of art long before his tongue went to paint her.

"I thought I lose you there for a minute, Opal." He smiled, there was a hint of amusement in his tone. He wasn't making fun of her, but he was proud at the way her body overwhelmingly responded to his stimuli. "Mmm, was I too rough, my dear?" He leaned forward, pressing a heated kiss to her breast. From her vantage the very bottom of his waist was exposed for her eyes to drink in. Even the root of that swollen muscle she had felt before, only the beginning

whereas the majority of that raw muscle still hung heavily in the waters.

my hands find Sol's hair as his head is at my breast, outside of my control. I am not thinking, just acting, for if I thought I would never dream of guiding, directing, or demanding from Sol. But my fingers scandalously sink into the hair on his head as kisses my breast, and urge him to my lips, gripping tightly as his lips come to mine. My lips part, and my tongue pushes into his mouth, exploring, tasting, wanting him to feel everything he has made me feel.

I kiss him, not to take from him, but to show him the same as he has shown me. Sol has given, and given, and given to me, I seek to give to him. To worship him as he has worshipped me.

I realize what I am doing and release my grip on his hair, moaning my shame before he pulls away from me.

"I am sorry, Lord Sol, I am sorry!" I exclaim, certain I have made some grave error in making my lord Sol kiss me

It was clear by her mannerisms Opal was stifled, mocked, and made to doubt herself and her actions. Her life had been one of imprisonment, whether physical or psychological. It was never what she could do, but rather a long series of things she couldn't do. At some point it was likely easier for her to not do anything by her own actions or desires, lest she be reprimanded or worse, find herself unwanted by her to-be husband.

Those days were long gone now, from the moment Flare had rescued her, and by extension, when she became aware of her Sol



Flame. Whereas she might have been used to repercussions for her actions, Sol sought to nurture them.

Yes, he could have over powered her tongue, but that wasn't the point, he wanted her to explore her desires. To not be afraid of receiving discipline. His own tongue, carrying the residual taste of her fruit still upon it, slickly pressed and ground itself back against her inquisitive little tongue. Outwardly Sol fed her burning little core, letting her flame burn brighter, and hotter. Just when she thought she had that splendid relief of all that pent up tension, now it seemed her inner flame was hungry all over again. But that is what flames do, they devour insatiably.

"You should be-" He said, eye lids opening as he kindly looked into her own, noting the concerned expression upon her pretty face. "I wasn't done tasting you-" It was only a tease as Sol pressed his lips gently back to her own, before backing away as he stood tall, admiring her body laid before him, legs still spread and hung to either side of his waist.

"You've a hungry flame my dear." He poked fun, in a loving way, pressing a kiss onto her belly. "Your markings are complete now-" He said, admiring his work, light caresses of his fingers tracing along her markings, be it her torso, or brushing his knuckle gently along the interior of her thigh. Some would not know the true origin of how a Bishop receives markings, however, any of the other Bishops would know quite fully just how Opal managed to have such markings at such locations upon her body.

“All that’s left is having you quenched within these waters. Come, do you want to join me?” He stepped back, extending a hand to her to step into the waters with him.

I take his hand without hesitation, slipping off the stone into the water. I cannot resist looking at myself, seeing the marks Sol has made upon my body. I like them, what they represent, what they mean, how I acquired them. They are more than enough reward for the sacrifice I made for Sol. They are the mark of Sol's love for me.

I look up at him, smiling, grinning, and step closer. Sol loves me, he is my love, and my lover. He gives me as much as I give him, and more. I offer him my life, and he returns eternal life. I offer him my body, and he returns a work of art. I offer him my love, and he makes love to me in ways I've never dreamed of.

Right now I offer him all of that, and more. I truly feel like a child of Sol. I give him childlike trust. I don't question his intentions toward me. I know without doubt that he loves me unconditionally, and that his intentions are only for my own-and his, by extension- benefit. He will never hurt me. Never. He cannot. It is not within him to hurt me. Only a false God is capable of hurting people and calling it love.

Sol is no false God.

I don't think of my time with Sol ending. I am with him now, and I think only of now. Of Sol burning into my skin, of his love for me. Of just how incredible it is that I am here.

I had not known what Sol would be like or what he would do. Everything he has done has been unlike anything I've experienced. But what surprises me most is his teasing. His humor - the humor of

the true god!- is not cruel, dark, or cryptic. It is gentle, loving, and encouraging. He doesn't tease cruelly, or even with disapproval. His teasing has made those things somehow more acceptable. His teasing shows his approval.

I wonder if this is what they wanted me to feel when I was given to the false God. The thought breaks my heart, that 20 girls, myself included, would feel what I feel for Sol now, only to be cruelly destroyed for it by Uhl.

My step falters at these thoughts, I press my hand over my heart. 19 brides of Uhl were saved from an unimaginably horrific reward for their lifetime of abuse. They were saved by the mercy of Sol. I stop, tears running down my cheeks. I have many questions that will never be answered about my life, my suffering. But I was not the only one who suffered the same. Knowing what I know now, there is no doubt left that had I not been needed to destroy Uhl, death would have been favorable. They were given a mercy I was not. They were killed so that I could succeed. My success ensured that never again would there be a bride of Uhl.

They were just girls when they were chosen. They deserved so much more. I never met another bride of Uhl, but I always felt a kinship with them. Without them, there is nobody who understands what my life has been except Sol.

"Lord Sol," I don't know if I will ever feel my sister brides this keenly again, and I need to speak for them now, before it fades away. "19 brides of Uhl were given mercy the day the citadels rained fire and light from the sky. Even in that, you showed them love and kindness." I look up at Sol, take courage from him. "They had names,

before they were called Uhl's brides. If their names can be found...could they be given, each, to the citadel that brought them mercy? Uhl took their names, it isn't right that their names should die with Uhl. They were faithful. They were loyal. They were virtuous. They were lied to, but they were good, Sol, I know they were.""

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His eyes shown warmly down at her as she joined him in the heated waters, her back pressed against the wall of the spa as her god stood in all his glory before her, admiring the way her skin glowed in the markings freshly painted against her skin. She illuminated the waters as she stood, his right palm moving to cup her cheek as he smiled downwards upon her. She would note the sensation of his organ gently pressing against her belly. It wasn't necessarily purposefully done, but rather something he could not avoid given the proximity of their two bodies.

He wondered if she knew what would come next between them. If she was ready to receive his blessing. After all, she had now received blessings from Flare on a couple occasions. He could feel the anxious energy from within teeming just beneath the surface of her skin. Sol too held some self-desire in regards to touching her Sol Flame with his own. To dip into the center of her being and make contact with that flame they had spent so long nurturing, until now where she burned as bright as any other bishop. She'd come so far from that cold, lonely girl trapped within the temple for years and years on end.

Despite the smoldering moment before the two, how they were moments away from having her reforged within these blessed waters, she selflessly thought of her sisters, once again underlining how kind in heart she was. Truly, her skin and her race may be referred to as 'demons', but she was many times kinder than even some in the Daybreakers.

"Oh, Opal-" He said softly, looking into her eyes as he wished to be entirely truthful to her. "I know what you ask, and that is commendable. Just because you've been rescued from the dark you would still rather not see others left to wallow. You know personally how hopeless and deprived a life is without a flame. And yet-" Sol moved to press his lips to her forehead, closing his eyes as his heart wept for hers.

"I can only see where my light has penetrated the dark. Your sisters, the former brides, their flames are but embers. Some... so cold that their flames have gone out entirely." His words painted a somber picture.

"However, even things that had once burned may burn again. Like charcoal, they in fact may take to flame quicker, they need only be introduced to a spark. That said, finding them a suitable spark is an obstacle unto itself. I myself cannot walk the same planes, the same lands as you all, for my presence is all too bright and heated for me to be able to leave, such is why I have my bishops act on my behalf on spreading my light onto these worlds." Sol leaned forward to press his lips onto hers, to push his heated tongue into her depths.

"If you can find them in the dark for me we can ignite their Sol Flames to burn." Sol considered the idea of having each of the

former brides to stand in representation to each of his citadels. "In that way, perhaps a new position may be created. 19 Priestesses of Sol, while you, my dear Opal will be a bishop and thereby not require a priestess of your own. Allow this to be your journey upon returning back to your realm. Allow those who have been untouched all their lives to know the warmth of an embrace."

I look up at Sol and nod. This is something I can do. Even if they have died, I will find their names, and bring them to Sol. If they live, I will bring them to Sol. They will know what love truly is, for they will know Sol.

"It would make my heart burn with joy, lord Sol, to find the Brides of Uhl and bring them to your light and love!" I capture Sol's hand, clutch it to my chest, press my lips to his burning skin. My eyes turn up to his face and I almost weep with joy. "Thank you Sol! To serve you in this way- I- thank you lord Sol!"

I reach up to him, going up on my toes, to embrace him. My body presses against his, his heat burning into me. I feel him all throughout my being as joy and relief and love. My skin warms to his touch as he returns my embrace.

I feel his sex against my body. I'm unprepared for the response this elicits within me. I gasp as my flame, already burning so intensely, finds more heat. I feel my own sex throb with need. I close my eyes as this heated desire courses through me, taking my breath, making me tremble, finally collecting in my core to give my own sex the heat, and the moisture, it will require for Sol's magnificent organ to penetrate me, to leave his blessing at the very source of my flame.

I turn my face up to his, lips parted as my breathing increases in response to my racing heart. I love this God, I want to give him all of me, including my body. I am not afraid of him, he is only good. I want his blessing, and I want to give him my own heat.

I can feel his heart throbbing inside of his body, see his light pulse. I know he desires me, as much as I desire him. I press my lips to his chest. I would kiss his lips, taste his divine flavor, if I could reach. He is so much taller than I that even on my toes I must reach up to embrace him.

"I want you, my Sol, I need you!" I say quietly, my gaze not wavering from his.

"I am ready, Sol."

Effortlessly, both because she was so petite compared to him, but also due to the buoyancy of the waters, it took no effort to lift her such that her body would be brought to be more in line with his own. Allowing her darker skin to wrap around his waist as he guided her supple legs around him, resting above his waistline as her arms would be free to wrap around his neck and hold onto him as she pleased. Sealing the gap between their torsos as he peered on down into her lovely colorless eyes.

His length was poised against her core, not necessarily with the tip of his godhood at her entrance, but touching to the point she would be able to feel her god pulse against her, and in turn, for him to feel her own body throbbing in kind. And why not? Two flames burning, feeding upon one another, spirits entwined. It should only make sense that in turn their hearts would beat in unison, a mutual warmth and throb shared between the two.

Sol's gaze grew brighter as his abdomen clenched and his organ reacted favorably towards being positioned at her core. He loved her, as was clear given by the way his heat burned within her, given by the way he painted his own markings upon her skin. Of course he desired to entwine his body with her own, and his member reflected that. Holding such a heated rigidity to his form. If she wished to stroke a finger along him she would find his skin to be warm and supple in texture, however, just beneath the supple texture, he embodied strength and virility. A strong throbbing heart to pulse along his organ as strong and as enduring as any star burning in the cosmos.

"I want you Opal Neiwart." It felt appropriate, because he did desire her. Of course there was an underlying intimacy between this act, but it was important for him to express this wasn't one-sided. Her body yearned for him, but the opposite was true in that his own body was caught by her own warmth. A desire to combine their flames and burn together.

He was gentle, much more than Uhl who had simply thrust with no abandon. This was slow as he maintained his loving gaze upon her, and positioned himself such that his tip spread her slickened folds and bit by bit pushed into the warm, inviting interior of her core. With each inch pushed deeper she would be ever closer to her got, as if a beacon of warmth and light was pressed inside her body. Pulsing strongly against her as his own life force, his own heart, now beat within her.

Sol's body adapted to be exactly what the other needed, and wanted. His organ was neither too large, nor too small for her. He filled her, entirely, although not to the point of discomfort as she'd



feel that raw, throbbing muscle in its entirety beat within the core of her being. So warm she could press a hand to her lower abdomen and feel the heat of the god radiating from within. And thus the tip of the god flirted against her cervix, against the gates of her inner Sol whereby he would soon be bestowing his blessing.

I keep my gaze locked on Sol's own firey eyes as he enters me, even as I gasp and arch to accommodate his penetration. I cling to him, feeling his glorious heat, his throbbing member filling me perfectly, as the true god should. I can't tear my gaze from his as he lowers me onto him.

I can't breathe, at first, as I am filled with such heat and pressure as I have never felt. I tremble in his arms, feeling as if I would break, peak, release, already, similar to what he had cause with his mouth but so much more!

I finally manage to gasp air into my lungs, and my body starts trembling. It feel right, like I was always meant to have this inside of me, like I had been made for this.

"So-ol!" I manage to whimper, clinging tightly to him. My legs stay locked around him, even though they shake. My hands grip tightly, fingers curling into his skin, though it's not possible for me to damage his skin.

I bite my lip, hard, and it does nothing to calm the shaking in my body, or the heat that floods through me from deep inside, where Sol is perfectly situated to stimulate and feed my own fire.

The longer he is contained within my walls, the more his heat pours into me. I feel full, completely, physically, but that is not his only

intention. He fills my entire body with a heat so intense, so completely of Sol, alone, I am certain I must be ablaze, flames flickering over my skin like Sol himself. The waters around him, where his legs are submerged, boil and steam copious amounts.

And I can only watch his eyes, his blazing, intense eyes, locked on me as he gives me the greatest gift of all.

Even if he was a god he was not unfeeling, if anything, the expression worn upon his face would she that she similarly affected him. A slackening of his jaw as he pushed inside her depths for the first time. His hands moving to cup her bottom, fingers reaching into that crevasse between them and lewdly spreading her into the warm waters as his member fully stretched her core around him. Nails pressed against her skin, not to deliver pain, but to physically hold onto her, and for him to keep his balance as he was momentarily awash with the pleasure of combining his flame with hers. After all, appointing a Bishop was something done every so many decades. Flare was his most recent, and it had been a longer while before that, that he had the opportunity to sink into the heated depths of a woman.

Over eager for this demon's body his abdominal muscles clenched tightly, granting her a small amount of his godly essence to form at the tip and smear against her. She'd already been tainted by Uhl, now was her time to be purified by Sol, so fully and thoroughly that she will glow from how radiant and blessed she is following this.

"That's a good girl-" He said breathily, feeling the way her legs wrapped around him, how her nails pressed into his body. He needed her to hold on tight, just as he guided her body along that

raw, swollen, throbbing muscle again and again. The very pools around them grew heated her body became the vessel for his flame.

Burying his lips against the crook of her neck her god panted in unison with how his organ repeatedly plunged into her slick, ever welcoming walls. Decades now he'd stored his potent blessing, ready and awaiting one who would be worthy enough of taking every last drop within them. Opal was special, she should know that, and to feel his love for her radiate from his very being. He could feel her own body respond in its want to draw forth his blessing.

Panting against her neck Sol pressed his teeth into her skin. His movements, his thrusts, his panting growing more frantic and needy with each passing second.

"Opal-" He panted, breathily saying her name. "It's important you do not spill me- Not even a single drop. Can you do that for me? Allow me to bless you fully?"

"yes, Sol! Yes!" I hear my own voice, rapturous, blissful, tense with passion. Sol moves me on his throbbing member, causing pleasure to erupt and radiate through me in waves, originating from the depths of his penetration. I clutch at him, helpless to do anything but hold on as best I can.

More and more, stronger and stronger waves of pleasure and heat build inside of me. I cry out wordlessly, unable to restrain myself. Sol holds me closer. His hot breath sings over my neck and shoulder. My hand goes to his head, holding him close.

At his question I feel a peak, a climax, like standing on the edge of a precipice. I want to drop over that edge more than anything I've ever wanted.

"Yes, Sol, please! I would not dream of wasting your blessing!" I respond in the same tone and passion as can be heard in Sol's voice. I only need him to tell me to release, as he did before, when he tasted me. My body is ready to receive and to give blessing, my flame burns as hot as Sol himself. "

Whereas Sol may have proceeded tentatively initially, mindful of the girl's more frail form, the heat and passion between the two soon amplified towards a fervent need for one another. His hips moving to thrust with purpose and desire as he stuffed the demon's core with his burning godliness. Caught up within the moment he hadn't noticed the way the spa waters were incited to a rolling boil, how clouds of steam blanketed the air to the point that one could hardly see one's hand before their faces.

Hot, humid, the air sticky with the mutual convergence of these two beings, Sol was left panting against her neck as his hands served to pull her down upon his godhood a final time before sinking his teeth into her neck. At this point she was fully supported by her god, the waters evaporating to the point the two were standing in mere puddles where once a vast pool had stretched in all directions.

"Yes, my Opal-" He mumbled possessively before his peak was reached. Buried fully within his lovely follower, Sol's spirit and heart throbbed heavily like a pulsing star from within her body. Eyes ablaze now, even as his eyelids were shut, Sol's entire shook as he ruptured and spilled the molten contents of his divinity, past the

passage of her core and further to fill her womb heavily with his essence. Like a flood of heat to seep deep into the very center of her being Sol spilled in her every last steaming drop as his body shuddered. Horrifically, as he had warned her to not spill even a drop, he took that chance away from her as the base of him grew swollen like a knot, effectively tying the two in place in such an intimate manner, even after the bliss of release had washed over them. For her to be able to feel her god strongly pulsing from within, for her to feel herself grow heavy now full of his blessing.

“And now you know what it means to be quenched, my Bishop Opal.”

I scream as my womb, my core, is bathed in your release, my own body exploding with heat and rapturous climax. I don't feel your teeth on my skin, only heat, such heat! And the intense, consuming, overbearing climax as my entire body spasms, every muscle pulling as tight as possible before, in a moment of harmonious unity, just as your heat fills me my own is returned, bathing your Godhood and more, enough to trickle down your thighs and from your heavy, pendulous, orbs.

When I can breathe again, I gasp for air and grab on to you, holding my weak and shaking self tight against you. I feel you still, deep inside of me, your flame burning hotter than any fire. I whimper quietly, overcome completely by this sensation, by this blessing.

I press my lips to your shoulder, your neck, anywhere I can reach. I pant hard, even minutes after, as the pure heat of the essence of Sol finally warms every part of me, ignites the deepest places of my

body. The bitter cold left by Uhl's malicious cold is gone, unable to withstand the fires of the true god.

I arch, sucking air through my teeth as a wave of sensation and pleasure washes through me, and moan as it passes. My walls clench and release at its passing. Another aftershock rages through me, again causing my body to contract, to squeeze, to eagerly milk every last drop from the body of Sol. Several more times I grow rigid as you hold me, each time more gently than the last.

In my heat-induced haze I barely hear your words. They sink into my mind slowly, fixing in my consciousness permanently. Bishop Opal. My heart rejoices, I squeeze the true god with my arms and legs as tight as I can.

"Thank you, lord Sol, for this heat, this light, this blessing." I want to say more, need to say more. Words won't come to me, none that can say what I feel. "I love you Sol." I whisper, still burning inside and out. Consumed in the flame of Sol. Blissful.

I close my eyes and press my lips to your neck again, trembling still.

"I love you Sol."

He could feel his toes curling as her own sweet release could be felt painting the waist of her god, dripping down his thigh and towards the heated puddles of water remaining below them. Panting just as hard as she, there was an eroticism in having their sticky, bare skin pressed against one another along their torsos, their abdomens, not to mention the fact he was still buried deep within his new Bishop. And what a fitting Bishop she was, her body reflexively responding to him, her muscles tightening to milk her god greedily. But of

course, Sol was a generous deity and was more than willing to bestow upon her the full extent of his blessing.

He found it cute. Her to be cute in the way her legs and arms wrapped around him, the glint of excitement in her eyes as he confirmed to her that at this moment she had ascended to become a Bishop in service to him. So that she might help to spread his light onto others so that they too could bask in the warm glow of his love.

“You needn’t thank me, my dear Opal-” Sol stepped with her, still firmly seated within her, moving so her back against the smooth stone surface of the pool as he looked into her illuminated gaze.

“It has been my complete and utter pleasure to bestow upon you my blessing.” He pushed his tongue hungrily into her depths. “We are partners now, you and I. If you should feel so obliged to want to compensate me for my blessing I could only ask that you might help spread my love, my light, to others who have spent so long in the darkness. So that they too might know what it means to share in a warm embrace.”

“Know this, Bishop Opal, even when we depart this day, even when the stifling warmth of my blessing cools to that of warm embers, that my love for you is as undying as the light of the sun. This will not be the last time you and I meet my dear, only the beginning of our partnership.” Sol said before dipping his tongue back within.

I enjoy Sol's kiss, just as any woman would enjoy her husband's attention. Unbelievably, my body responds to his touch, leaving her a writhing, squirming, aching mess before I realize what's happening.

My eyes close as I savor the taste of the true god once more. Yet even as my flame is fed by his kiss, his caress, I feel cooler. The air around me seems chill. The kiss on my lips is not Sol, but I know this kiss. I don't have to open my eyes, I lick my lips slowly, tasting Sol and Bishop Flare.

I open my eyes to see Bishop Flare, as he was when he took me to Sol, laying with me, his hand on my hip, looking at me with concern, and affection. Only now he wears a different expression. He looks surprised, curious, as he looks down my body. The white nightgown, bunched up to my hip where Flare's hand rests, covers much of my new markings.

I'm most surprised when I reach up to touch his face and my hand, my own skin, has changed. It's lighter, though still ashen, and has taken on a colored tone. I gasp softly, bringing both my arms within sight, examining myself. I had never thought I was unattractive, though I had of course noted the differences between Flare and myself. This unsettled me, but only for a moment, as I look back at Flare and realize that my Appearance is exactly how Sol wishes it to be.

"Thank you, Flare,!" I say with sincerity, turning back to Flare. I cup his face with my hands, stroking my thumbs lightly over his cheeks. "Thank you, Bishop Flare! Thank you for bringing me to Sol!" I meet your fiery gaze with eyes that are alight with their own, colorless, flame.

"thank you for bringing me here, thank you for giving me the chance to know Sol, thank you for everything!" I kiss Flare, while I can still taste Sol on my lips.



Eyes shut Flare savored the moment of locking lips, entangling tongues with the demon girl before him. Would some rumors continue to circulate in regards to Bishop Flare engaging in sinful acts as he bestowed excessive blessings upon the demon girl he'd just met at the temple? Most likely, however, such rumors would likely be snuffed out entirely when others learn that Opal was much more special than originally anticipated. That Flare perhaps was among the first, aside from Sol, who could look past the surface and see her for who she truly was.

While she had only been in his life for a couple of weeks, he had unfortunately only had a small taste of her the day she was rescued. Until now they had spent more time apart than they had together and for the Bishop he still found himself craving for her. For her touch, for her taste, for her sweet voice to grace his ears.

Lumina was right to think a sickness had befallen the Bishop. For the disease of Opal had settled deep into the forefront of his mind, the demon girl passing his thoughts throughout the day, and steadily along those long nights.

With a longing Flare's tongue heatedly savored the feel of her own, painting her in his warmth as he held the broken and bruised body of her after she had made the ultimately, selfless sacrifice.

It was as he remembered, the cooler interior of her mouth mixing with the warmth of his own. She was not unpleasant to touch, to kiss, or to dip within the depths of her core, but somewhere along the lines of grinding his tongue with her own there was a small heat emanating from her touch, which in turn blossomed to the point that by the end of the kiss she was just as hot as he. Body stifling,

and when he would open his eyes he would see that she was glowing. From the markings upon her face, her neck, along her collarbone, and judging by the way the light shown through the thin fabric of her gown, she too had many more markings upon her body, far more than the 'sinful' bite he'd given her inner thigh.

He had known in an instant what must have transpired. It was surprising, admittedly, not because he thought her unworthy, if anything he alone knew of her worthiness, but because he was overjoyed that Sol saw that too. But of course Sol would, for he was all knowing. It merely reinforced Flare's own love for his god.

With surprise painted on his face, a knowing smile soon crossed his features as his eyes dipped from her own face, towards the alluring markings upon her neck. A knowingness in his smile as he knew exactly by what methods she would have received those markings. Not that he was judging, after all... he was full of his own. If anything he was merely envious that he lacked the heat to bestow upon her markings of such beauty.

"You needn't thank me... Bishop Opal." He said, quite fond of the title bestowed upon her. "I should be thanking Sol for fatefully leading me to you that day. I'm only pleased to know that-" Flare leaned in, lips pressed heatedly against her neck, wet and firm as he drank in her scent. "To know that my god got to taste what I've grown so fond of."

"He really did a number on you, didn't he?" He said, tone a bit amused, poking just a little fun at just how marked up her body was.

Forcibly, Flare maneuvered such that he loomed over her, knees down between her legs, splayed beneath the blankets as his arms

were down on either side of her body. Her colorless hair pooled out behind her as she rested against the pillow.

“Perhaps now I should be asking you what your thoughts are on the ‘sinfulness’ of showing another Bishop your markings. What do you think?” He hooked a finger into the neck of her gown, peeling it aside to expose more of her shoulder. “Think it could be worthwhile to compare our Lord’s blessings? For research-“ He lips descended onto the flesh of the newly revealed skin of her shoulder. “Of course.”

I inhale sharply as Flare's lips touch my skin, closing my eyes and to better feel the softness of them. I feel my body respond, the delicious heat burning in me, left wakened by Sol, now fueled by Flare. Sol had wakened it within me, again, with his kiss. He had quickened this burning desire, and delivered me to Flare's arms.

"Sol wants us to love, Flare, not...he never meant for his love to mean we cannot love another. He loves us, so that we may give his love. He wants-Flare, kiss me!" I don't hold still under Flare, I don't have to. My body wants to move, to touch, to taste.

My hands tangle in Flare's hair as I guide him back to my mouth. His taste is exquisite, his heat incredible. I am not timid, this. Time, I am not just a curious little girl, being touched for the first time. I've known the touch of two gods, and one man. I know the worst, and the best of what can be done with my body. Right now I only want what Flare can do with it, and to find out what I can do with his.

I find the tie around Flares waist and have it open in moments. Before I'd only watched as Flare disrobed, not this time. I sit up as he moves back to sit on his heels. My hands are on his skin as he

pulls the garment off. My lips are not far behind. His markings are more beautiful, more impressive, more tempting, now that I know how they were received.

They are a map to Flare, they are the key to his fire. I pause long enough to pull the gown off my own body, so that I am naked before Flare, and to untie the sash at his waist, before I allow my own lips and tongue to touch the burning marks Sol so tenderly traced onto Flare. My hands explore him further, the harness and curves of his body, caressing his chest, waist, and hips.

What Sol had drawn onto Flare was all the more impressive, for as I tried to follow the map laid out by the true god, I knew I would never be able to trace every line, I would never have to patience, the control. Which was acceptable, for I am not a God.

I could only strive to like one.

He had tried to control himself, even prior to the point of Sol welcoming her with open arms. Flare had missed his ashen demon, both in spirit and in body. His flames yearning to spread and warm her own. Of course, given the broken state of her body he restrained himself, but it didn't matter as their initial kiss served to incite his flames, to stir that heated blood to pool down in his loins. His body craved her touch, her presence, long before she had ascended and become a bishop. As such, by the time her hands greedily untied the knot around his waist, causing his lower robes to become undone and spill to the wayside, his organ was already well heated and inflamed for her.

Were her words gospel? Was she spinning him untruths about whether or not it was permissible for the two to 'join'? No. Sol knew

Flare's own feelings for the woman. If that was to be a problem then Sol would never have appointed Opal, but instead, he did even knowing Flare craved her, and by extension, if her hungry eyes and lips were anything to go by, she craved the young Bishop as well.

As if they were two parched wanderers lost in a desert with water now within reach, the moment the gates of civility and etiquette were breached his hands, his lips, his tongue was upon, or inside her as quickly as he could manage.

Groping palms, grazing nails, possessively wandered her body, a fistful of her hair as he felt her own lips descend his hardened torso. His skin ablaze, his markings pulsing with varying degrees of intensity, and of course, that thick muscle bobbing with every heavy heartbeat resonating within the man before her. Oh how he desired to plunge himself into the warm, wet depths of her mouth, but he was just as starved for her as she was for him.

Chin tilted up to the ceiling, Flare basked in the feeling of her lips descending, hand tightening on that grip upon her hair as a heavy sigh escaped his lips. Primally, almost as if he was in rut he couldn't help himself as he pulled her back, resting her down again as his waist positioned itself between her opened, welcoming thighs and soon that throbbing heat found itself within her.

"F- Yes." He groaned, biting against her neck as if he felt as if he was 'home' again. Exactly where he should be.

your hand in my hair pulls me back onto the bed before I've finished, I gasp, then, as your body opens and enters mine, I cry out, grabbing onto you, more bold with touching you than I dared with Sol.

Touching you feels amazing, being touched by you, but holding you deep inside my core, feeling your heat, where Sol's own heat still burns, quickly becomes my focus.

"Flare, can you feel him?" I ask, wanting to share Sol's blessing with you. Wanting you to feel what I feel.

She was stiflingly hot, her slick inner walls clenching about his throbbing heat. She was so much different than the Opal he'd last blessed. To be quite honest she made Lumina feel like a campfire, whilst now he felt as if was entering Sol himself.

Nails pressed deeply into her skin as his canine teeth ached in their want to bite and pierce her, if only to stifle the groans emanating from his body. "Yes-" He groaned, hands wandering down to her bottom where he gripped firmly, deeply pressing his fingers between the crevasse and holding her in place as he sought to bring the two of them closer.

She was about as warm, as hot as the time Sol took Flare into his mouth, resulting in the lewd markings upon Flare's member. "I feel you- Him, radiating within you-" A heat rose to his cheeks as he could sense her womb was utterly stuffed with the essence of their god. Her inner walls still slickened with the lewd mixture of her own arousal and Sol's blessing, which now in turn was coating Flare's own member. He in turn craved his lord's blessing, her blessing, and in exchanged wished to fill her with his.

"I only wish I could have joined you in that moment-" Flare pressed his lips to hers, bucking as his body involuntarily took control. The room so hot that the very air grew wavy, the headboard at once

knocking heavily against the marble wall as two luminescent bodies collided together.

Undoubtedly, long before the two were done this evening even more rumors would be circulating the citadel.

Op:"Flare!" I breathe, my body matching your every thrust. Despite having just been quenched, sated, fulfilled by Sol, my desire for Flare is what fuels this burning, passionate exchange.

I want Flare, as much as I want Sol!

I moan loud as Flare thrusts into me over and over. The heat of our bodies soon causes flames to dance across the surface of the bed. Faint flames even lick across our skin. I feel my flame consuming me, combining with yours. I cry out again and grip you tighter.

It feels incredible, the heat and the tension, the passion. It feels even more so because I feel more free to touch you in return, to bring you as much pleasure as I feel. As more and more heat builds between us, the flames on and around us grow. Our bodies scorch anything we touch except each other. The bed itself catches on fire. Rumors would be more than confirmed.

I hit the point where all it would take is a word, an order, a request, anything from you and it would tip me over the edge. Sol had told me to cum for him.

"Flare, please, " I moan in your ear, "may I cum for you?"

In the midst of a heaty and breathy exchange of loud prayers Flare was further reminded that if this was indeed sin then he would be more than happy to bathe in the flames of Hell if it meant his own Sol Flame could mix with her own, with his lord's.

She was similar, yet so very different than the cold, meek Opal he'd found in the temple. Indeed her body responded fondly to his touch those first moments, but now? He hands claimed him, her core possessively milked him every step of the way. In the grand scheme of things only moments had gone by since the two had met, but she had already derived a lifetime of lessons and wisdom.

A pile of ashes would soon be all that remained, nothing to stop their bodies from further entwining, their skin so heated that even ash itself incinerated, leaving them just as clean and spotless, aside from the evidence of their own blessings coating their bodies. Flare couldn't help himself, having missed her for so long, leaking essence as a puddle of mixed fluid was free to leak from her core to settle against the warmed tiled floor beneath them.

The lewd question, coupled with the very thought of his dear Opal releasing upon him, releasing not only her blessing, but Sol's to further coat him, them, was enough for his eyes to shine through his shut lids, the very thought of her being tipped over the edge nearly enough to send him spiraling himself.

"Opal-" He breathily groaned, the fervent rhythmic of their praying culminating to the harmonious chorus of two slick bodies slapping together in ever ascending frequency. "Please- Cum for me- So that I might-" He couldn't finish before he was already tipped over the edge, burying himself, seating himself fully within her depths as he heavily and warmly filled her with that pent up seed, the very feel of her own body convulsing around him serving to briefly stop his lungs from functioning as the Bishop gave her everything he had to bestow.



that was it! I arch up from the floor, feeling your seed spill into me as I cum, teeth clenched tight together until I throw my head back and cry out uncontrollably. I shake, my whole body shakes as I lay under you.

"Flare," I say calmly once I've caught my breath. "I love you."

Collapsing, Flare ultimately shifted their bodies such that he could lay on his back, and so that she could rest her body down upon his broad torso. Naturally he was still stuffed within her, still residually throbbing with each beat of his heart. Basking in her warmth, Sol's warmth, as the mixture of love slowly seeped down along his shaft.

Warmly his arms rested along her back, fingers lightly caressing against her skin as he simply savored the moment, the after bliss now that his hunger for her had been sated, if only for the time being. "And I you, Bishop Opal." He reconsidered his words, deciding she deserved to hear the words plainly spoken. "I love you, Opal Neiquart." He confessed, as Sol as his witness, confessing love to a demon. To another Bishop. What difficulties would ensue between them when she would have to return to her own Citadel? Assuming Flare was willing to give her up for that long.

"I saw within, in that moment you let go." He said softly, fingers tracing aimless designs along her back as he thought back to that blinding moment they shared together. "You, rather, what has been lingering in the back of your mind." And why not? In such an intimate exchange, bodies, souls connected, why wouldn't some of her psyche trickle forth and be shared with him as they shared so much else?

"Your heart goes out to your sisters. You wish to find them?"

"yes!" My eyes widen, surprised. I marvel at how quickly Sol works, and love him more for it. "That is my mission, to find the remaining brides of Uhl, and bring their names to Sol. To bring them to Sol's light and love, so that they may know the true gods love." I explain. "I would bring Sols light to all of my people who can be shown the way, but I would start with them."

I turn and look up at you, smiling. "Would you help me, Flare? Would you help me show the other brides of Uhl that there is a God who loves them, and he would never take from them like the false God has?"

In this instant, I want nothing more than for Flare to be with me, to help me, teach me, and teach the other brides about Sols love. I know Sol's love for meb, have felt it myself, have been so loved by Sol that any other love pales in comparison. I do not know anything about how the bishops teach people to live in the light or to honor Sol.

I take in our surroundings, as the heat in the room cools, and notice with curiosity that the room is filled with smoke, yet we remain in clear air, laying as we are, on the floor. I note the ashes of the bed, and even that the curtains and draperies have burned. My eyes widen and I look back to Flare, shocked.

Flare reaches out to cup her cheek, admiring the light shining against her skin, within her eyes as she asks him such a silly question. He cannot help but smile widely back at her. "Did you really even have to ask? Of course I will help you. Not just for you, but because everyone deserves to know the warm embrace of Sol. And if your sisters had to live a life of darkness, of deprivation, then

they above all deserve to be rescued from that hell." Flare leaned up, pressing his lips to her own as he still was planted deep within the bishop.

Her facial expression was humorous to him as she looked over at the chaos that overtook the bedroom. "I suppose since someone burnt down the guest bedroom that you might be needing to temporarily stay in my room." He teased, but then grew a tad more serious. "It's not that we're not researching more suitable substances. For the general population their warmth could never hope to get to an ignition point. Bishops... are not commonly brought together, but you can see the result of such. Perhaps... we'd be smart do future praying while beneath the shower?" He said, as if commenting upon the fact there would be future 'praying'.

"Now, while I'm certain you would like to keep myself and Sol warmly within you, we should still aim to get you some new clothing. I am going to have to assemble a meeting and introduce you to the other Bishops. We will need their help, their eyes if we are to find your sisters."

I blush at the thought of staying in your room, my heart beating hard in my chest. You mention "future praying" and my eyes widen as I consider the implications of that statement.

I do need clothing, to meet the other bishops, as well as a bath. I ease off of you and stand, pausing to offer a hand to help you to your feet. I look at you while you stand there naked, tracing your Sol markings, imagining Sol touching, kissing, and licking each burning

line onto your skin. When I look back at your eyes I smile, but don't say anything.

I turn and go into the bathroom. It takes just a second for me to remember how to draw water into the tub. I run the water hot, steam pours out of the tub. It still feels cool to me. I don't look forward to losing that much of the heat that has built up inside of me. I also don't quite entirely believe my new markings won't wash off. I get into the tub as it fills and wash myself quickly.

When I finish I run my fingers through my hair, marveling that the heat and waters of Sol seem to have changed even this. I move over to look at myself in the mirror and stare in shock at the image.

The first time I'd seen a mirror was after Flare had blessed me. I remembered the girl I'd seen then vividly. Her dark, ash colored skin and haunted, lonely eyes had held hope. The woman I look at now is much lighter colored for having bathed in Sol's heated waters. The marks upon her skin shone beautifully. Across her-my- abdomen was the image of a butterfly.

"I am beautiful!" I whisper, and the markings on my body radiate brighter light, as though in approval of my assessment. I had never considered my appearance before, nor had the means of comparing myself to others of my species. I see myself as the way Sol wishes me to look. His work of art, even the color of my skin made to exactly the shade he preferred.

I study myself in the mirror, memorizing every line Sol gifted me. Even glancing over my shoulder before raising my leg to look- even

there! Everywhere Sol had touched me with his tongue was marked! My thigh still bore the mark Flare had given me, as well, though Sol had made it brighter, and altered his design to highlight it, as though giving it a place of honor.

I had died by Uhl's hand, and been made new by Sol's. Now I would bring the light of Sol to my people, starting with 19 sister brides whom I had never met. I hoped I could bring my family to Sol. I would not stop until all of them were found.

"You are-" Flare said stepping up behind the now freshly bathed Bishop. She had no reason to feel shy or insecure, he could see her expression in the mirror, entranced and captivated by those beautiful Sol Markings now upon her body. Of course she would be fascinated by them, she had spent her entire life without them, and now? No matter what she would do from this point forward her Sol markings would stay with her forever. She was more than welcome to admire the way with which Sol graced her.

"And I'm sure the others will think so too." He said, warmly pressing his lips to her neck as his eyes looked beyond her shoulder and into the mirror, so that he too could admire the front of her body.

"I love you Opal. Sol loves you, and your markings prove that. However, I do expect some of my brothers and sisters may reject you. They... Are afraid of those who are different, but that's only because they do not yet know you." Flare's palm traced up from her body, from warmly centered over her navel, to ultimately moving to cup her left breast so that he could feel her heart beating beneath the surface. "Regardless of your skin, your heart beats just as ours. They will come to see that. But in case initially some might be

outraged at your appointment... I just want you to know that I, and of course Sol, will stand by you."

Flare had brought more silk garments and robes. Opal was no longer a temple girl who had to simply wear a simple white slip, she could now take on the garments befitting a Bishop. Without rushing her, Flare got dressed, and watched too as she found an attire suitable for herself.

Lumina may have thought of Flare as being cocky and arrogant, but rather, the young bishop was merely confident that he had Sol's love. It was this confidence now that he extended onto Opal, knowing that whatever the hardships, that they would be alright, and if need be he would stand against the eighteen other Bishops until they recognized Opal the way she should be.

"When you're ready-" Flare offered a warm hand, caring not of what etiquette or rules may be broken in two Bishops, walking down the halls, fingers interlaced together.

I finger the supple, smooth silks of the robes bishops wear. They remind me of Flare, this feeling I would always associate with Flare. This was what he wore when he carried me out of the ruined temple.

I put on the robes slowly, finding some that fit without dragging the ground, or covering my hands. It seems I'm considerably smaller than other bishops, as even the shortest of the robes are long for me. I'm pleased when I find a solution. I select a longer top, put it over my shoulders and position it, then use a sash to cinch it around my waist. It covers me to my knees, leaving my calves and feet bare.

I slip my feet into the slippers that bishops wear indoors, then, when I see Flares hand, I break into a grin and slip my hand in his. I see his marks glow brighter when he grasps my hand, leaving no doubt mine do as well.

"I'm ready." I say, sounding much more certain than I feel.

Flare's eyes were ablaze with confidence and resolution as he led the shorter, more petite demon girl behind him. She certainly looked different than a typical Bishop, but he loved her all the same, and so did Sol. In fact, perhaps a portion of the allure he had for her was because of those unique differences that made her beautiful in his eyes.

Ultimately he led her towards the solarium, the aptly named Sun Room, where he would be reaching out to make contact with the other Bishops. Standing front and center, with Opal a bit hidden behind him, it took some time before all the Bishops could be in attendance. Both females and males alike.

"Why have you assembled us Bishop Flare?" One asked. Other voices could be heard mumbling amongst themselves. One asking where Bishop Lumina was as surely she should be in attendance as well.

"Good day to you all, and I hope Sol is shining down on you-" Flare began. He himself was a bit of a controversial character. He was the youngest Bishop, well was now that Opal was ascended, and yet he also wore the markings of possibly the most loved Bishop by Sol. Or was as the markings upon Opal's own body rivaled his own in their beauty. Fittingly considering the two couldn't help but be drawn to one another.

“Yes, yes, Bishop Flare. May Sol be shining down upon you as well, but what is the purpose of this meeting?” Another voice said, lacking some patience.

“Yes- so-“ Flare began, before being interrupted.

“Should we not wait for Bishop Lumina to make her presence?” Another female voice asked among the group.

“Well, about that, this ties in with what and why I’ve called upon you all today. Bishop Lumina, from my understanding, has relinquished her position and-“

This immediately caused an outcry amongst the Bishops in attendance. Gasps, questions, what’s and why’s. What did he mean? Why was it Flare who was coming forth with this knowledge. What happened to Lumina considering her last call to the council had been from Flare’s Citadel. Naturally some suspected foul play, but the reality of the situation would undoubtedly upset some of the older Bishops more than if Flare had simply taken Lumina’s life.

Clearing his throat, his markings seemed to only glow brighter. As if to nonverbally tell those who would suspect him of foul play that Sol still loved him, and quite dearly by the looks of it.

“Bishops, please, if I might? No, former Bishop Lumina is not harmed. My understanding is she is traveling for the time being, and I should hope to be able to see her again in the future. That said, her help and her support was instrumental in not only the conquering of the false Deity Uhl, but in having faith in our new Bishop-“

Again, he was cut off at the mention of a new Bishop. Usually this would take months, or years of careful selection. Only the most



pious of Daybreakers garnering enough votes. The fact Flare was coming out with a new Bishop while no one had voted upon it was shocking. Not unheard of, as Sol had been known to appoint those in the past without elections, but not in quite some time now.

“What is the meaning of this Bishop Flare?”

Flare could feel the heat emanating from the unhappy Bishops, and yet, he only warmly smiled. He cared little in angering, or upsetting them. He knew Sol’s will and to him that was all that mattered.

“I present to you, our new Bishop of Sol. One, Opal Neiquart, who without her lifelong sacrifice we today would not be able to stand victorious over the false god. Please warmly welcome her-“ He stepped aside, his larger body shielding her from their eyes, but now, for them to all gaze down upon the demon girl, wearing their clothes, wearing markings of Sol upon her skin.

Flare warmly reached his left palm to press gently against her back, keeping it there as if to let her know she wasn’t alone. She would never be alone now, not with Sol within her heart, and Flare at her side.

I listen to the bishops noise over your revelation about Lumina, their questions, their comments. They seem to do nothing but talk while you try to speak. When you introduce me, however, they fall silent. I raise my eyes to look at each one in turn, trying, with my inexperienced eye, to gauge their reception of my appointment.

I am afraid, initially, but your hand at my back calms me, and more than that, as you step aside and I am introduced, I feel a heat, the

heat of Sol, descend over me. Sol is with me, is always with me, but his focus is on me at this moment.

I smile at the assembled bishops. After a moment a few whispers are heard as they begin to talk amongst themselves. Finally one speaks, but not to me.

"What ridiculousness is this, bishop Flare? This demon girl cannot be a Bishop, you know this as well as any of us."

I feel Sol react, disapproval and heat pulsing through his touch. This was disrespect, you had stepped aside, given the floor to another bishop. I look at the man and his name comes to my mind like a whisper.

"Bishop Illuminair, I hold the floor. How could Bishop Flare answer your question better than I? It was not bishop Flare who raised me. Only by Sol's wisdom is a Bishop chosen. My appointment was no exception."

My statement implied that the Bishop questioned Sol himself, and the result is his immediate retreat. Only for another bishop to voice her disbelief.

"Dear child, you cannot expect us to believe Sol would choose from amongst heathen demons to grant his highest honor? Sol has never chosen other than a lightbringer to raise to the status of bishop, why would he suddenly deign to choose a demon?"

"For the same reason he would choose a lightbringer. My life is Sol's. Even before I knew his name. I was always Sol's. All my suffering was so that I could give my life to Sol, and bring his light to my people.

All the cruel...cruel things that I endured was so I could choose to give my life to Sol."

Once I start, I can

't stem the flow of words that pours forth. I need them to know.

"I was chosen to be a bride of Uhl 17 years ago. I was 6 years old, and I was given the honor of being placed in the sealed temple to await my godly intended.. for 17 years I was untouchable, and the only voice I heard were the voices of those who though to bring an offering, and gain Uhl's favor. I was not told the day, nor the time. Instead, they told me it would only make it harder to wait. My birthday had always been a treasure and a joy to me. Now it was taken away. My name was taken away. My entire life."

I pause for a moment, realizing my hands are shaking. I feel Flare press against my back, and Sol embraces me with warmth. I am not alone.

"Even then, Sol found ways to keep my flame alive. For even then, my Sol flame burned. They failed to take away my birthday, for I could never forget that I was born on the first day of the festival of color. Each year I would spy on my city as they all celebrated my birthday, turning everything into a mosaic of vibrant color. I counted the years of my life as they were spent in waiting. "

I pause again, unaware of the heat emitting from me, or the brilliance with which my Sol markings shone.

"The citadel came the day before my birthday. The sealed temple that had been my prison was destroyed. I thought I was going to die. I thought I was dead."

I turn to look at Flare, burning even brighter for the love I bear for him.

"I was woken by a heat unlike any I'd ever felt. I was woken by the first touch upon my body I'd felt in 17 years. I was woken by bishop Flare, as he touched my cold body and felt life. He took me to the citadel, and taught me how a true god loves. He taught me that a true god gives, does not take from those who walk in the light. He taught me that I have Sol inside of me, and that it burns for me, and for Sol, and it burns hotter than anything imaginable. He gave me Sol's blessing, and I fell in love with Sol. And Sol loved me, as he always has, but now I could feel his love. It made me weep, to think, I had been given this love my whole life and the false God Uhl had taken it from me. My whole life spent alone, waiting for Uhl, sealed away from my true God's love. Bishop Flare gave me back my name, another gift from Sol. I would have lost it, had I not always remembered that I was named for my mother's pendant, a stone she was never without, a fire, frozen in black stone. Opal."

"I was given another gift that day. My flame burned hot enough that Bishops Flare and Lumina believed I would be able to bring the false God Uhl to the light of Sol. If I could do that, my life was not wasted in waiting for the false God. I would take back my life from Uhl, and every moment, every tear, every lonely second and year spent begging for mercy, I would take it back from Uhl and it would belong to Sol. Then my life would not be wasted. Never would it be mine, but it was never meant to be mine. My life wasted for the false God was a tragedy, a sin, a cruel torment inflicted upon me. I was given an opportunity to to give my life meaning and purpose I could choose. My choice was easy. I returned to my people, having

known the warmth and love of Sol only for a moment. I learned the truth of what it meant to be a bride of Uhl-

I have pause, as I remember the pain and tragedy of what had happened in that cave. Sol's heat is great at this moment, but its Bishop Flares heat that burns hotter as I speak of the sacrifice they made of me.

"If I had not been shown Sol's love, I would have gone to Uhl as innocent and pure a sacrifice as any false God could wish for. I would have felt only Uhl's cold, heartless touch. And I would have believed it was love. I would have been-

I cover my mouth, stiffling a sob. I don't know how to explain the absolute wrongness of what would have transpired. The love I feel for Sol would have been given to that monster, and he would have consumed it in sating his bloodlust. He would have destroyed my body and grown stronger for it. I turn to Flare, grab onto him. His arms go around me and I feel safe and loved. I feel Sol embrace me, the moment my eyes close. Flare stands beside me, and through him my Sol holds me close. He lowers his head to kiss the top of my head, and whispers with Sol's voice.

"I am here, Opal, you will never be alone again."

I turn back to the other bishops and continue.

"I was the only bride sacrificed to Uhl. There were 19 others, each one having suffered the same cruel honor of being chosen to sate Uhl's lust. To die by Uhl's carnal urges, and believe that is love. But bishop Flare and Sol had made my flame burn hot, hotter than Uhl could extinguish. And Uhl tried. He tried, and tried, and tried,

until...i...I don't know what happened. Uhl was drained of life, and I was all but dead. Bishop Flare came for me, and kept my flame burning, and fed his own flame into me so that I could wake and finally meet the true god, who was always what my sacrifice was for. Is for. Sol showed me what love is. I love Sol. I loved him the moment I learned his name.and he has always loved me."

I hesitate, but I feel they will not be satisfied until they know, and Sol made me into his art not so that I could hide, but so that I could spread his love and warmth everywhere. I untied the sash around my waist and let the robe fall from my shoulders, letting every mark Sol bestowed upon my body shine forth. I know it is beautiful, for it is what Sol made me. It is perfect.

I have nothing more to say to them. If they still doubt my love for Sol, and his love for me, then they will not be convinced. I retreat back to Flare's embrace, where I feel Sol's love more powerfully than anywhere else I've been except in the arms of Sol himself.

Perhaps it was just the audacity of the demon girl before them that caused them to shut their mouths and listen, or perhaps it was the clear representation of Sol's markings upon her body, but there were quiet gasps, and yet no verbalization of dissent against Opal as she bared her heart, soul, and body to the council. Even if it upset the elders, they could not shake the thought that Sol himself was listening, watching as he always did. They all still loved him, and they all still desired his warmth and love. Clearly, the couple before them was radiating. Blazing proof the Sol still loved others, and yet, perhaps this council should reflect more deeply onto why it was that Sol seemingly didn't love them as brightly.

If the council was wise they would proceed with some self reflection of their ways and thoughts. A person could lie and be deceitful, they could hide their true intentions from their fellow man, but from Sol? From a God? Sol knew well their hearts, regardless of the deceitful lies.

Many looked upon Opal in that moment, eyes resting over her naked body, taking in the Sol Markings, and understanding well exactly how such markings were bestowed upon her body. As she stood, it was not as explicit as if she had been laying with her legs splayed and core on view. All the same, any watching in attendance this day could see the light radiating against her thighs. From Sol. And further, the 'blasphemous' marking of Flare, thinking a Bishop could bestow a marking onto another, and yet he did. His marking wasn't as perfect as Sol's, but because of its flaws it made it stand out and made it the most unique marking upon Opal's body.

Flare at this moment stepped behind Opal, ensnaring, and enveloping her smaller, petite body in his warm protective arms as his eyes shown defiantly up upon the council members. He embraced her, hands upon her ashen body. Supporting under her breasts, while his other arm wrapped around her lower waist, until his palm was centered over her lower abdomen, her womb.

His chin rested upon her shoulder, looking outwards upon the council as his eyes shown brightly, and then... were set ablaze in a manner not seen before. Visible fire erupting from his eyes, unlike any Bishop before. Unlike anything they would have witnessed, except of course for Sol himself.

“How far have you all fallen to shut your hearts to those who need you? I built those towers of yours so that you could look out and see those in need, to help them. Not to look down upon them and shut your hearts off to those you thought were beneath you.” The voice emanated from Flare, but it wasn’t Flare’s voice at all. And judging by the silence of the council, they also knew whose voice was speaking.

It was not unheard of for Flare to borrow the body of a Bishop. To speak, to hear, to see, and feel through the eyes of his most loyal followers. It was rare though, however, perhaps unsurprising for some, and perhaps annoying to others, the blessed golden boy Flare was yet the vessel that Sol made his appearance. Possessively wrapping himself around that ‘demon’ and defiantly looking out upon the ones he once loved.

“I call upon you all today, to know this woman speaks true. The bishop behind her, who has gone out on a limb to rescue her, to believe in her, to love her because even though he cannot speak now, I know he does. Open your hearts and see that not only she, but her people, need our love too. They have been blinded by darkness. Living generations under its lies. Please, do not forsake them because they are different, because they do not yet know of our ways. I ask you, my children, please accept them, because I do. I share myself with them and I have with her-” He said, a bright light emanating from her lower abdomen, just beneath Flare’s palm. A white flame that he drew outwards, and held within the palm of his hand.

“If you’re still uncertain, allow this to pacify those concerns. And Opal-” His lips, near to her neck and ear now turned solemn. “I



apologize for not asking beforehand, however... it is a result of our 'quenching'. I do hope you can forgive me. If... it makes it any better, I used Flare's DNA as the basis-" He returned the white flame, to burn within her womb. A flame, not her own, but a mixture of her god's, and Flares. A fiery spirit that would grow, and eventually be a whole entire new life.

This was proof to the council that she, a demon, a non-lightbringer, received the highest of honors in being seeded by Sol.

"I ask now that you please, open your hearts to them. To find those brides who still exist in the darkness, and help me to spread the light."

With that, 'Flare' who was overtaken by Sol, eventually lost consciousness for a moment, before the real Flare took over. He, actually didn't know that Opal was pregnant. And that, her child would ultimately be based off his own genetics. As if not knowing at all that Sol had intervened, Flare still possessively held her.

"And so, that is why I ask you, my brothers and sisters, please help us. For in the end, we are all children of Sol, and in the end, this will only strengthen us all." Flare said, his hands still clasped over the woman he loved. Over the unborn child he still didn't know was his.

And surprisingly for him, the council members had grown quiet. Not because of his pleas, but because he didn't know that Sol himself had spoken, and of course, Sol's word was law.

Eventually the meeting would have come to a close and eventually darkness would have fallen over the solarium. Leaving the two

together. Opal with the full understanding of what transpired. Flare, with about half.

Panting, he was out of breath, although not entirely positive of what had fully taken place. He didn't remember her disrobing, although, it wasn't necessarily surprising, after all, her markings were as beautiful as his and naturally if she hadn't pulled off her robes, he likely would have.

"I... I'm sorry, my dear Opal. I seem to have been inflicted by some brain fog. The council... they have gone dark. Have they... accepted you? Your sisters, are we... going to find them?" he asked.

"oh, Flare!" I turn around and embrace you, raining kisses on your face, finally kissing your lips, thrusting my tongue past them to explore every surface of your mouth.

"Yes, Flare, they will help, thank you! Thank you so much! Thank you Sol! Thank you Flare! I love you!" I embrace you, resting against your chest, tucking myself close against you.

"Flare, you are truly loved by Sol, and by me. And the whole council knows already, but Flare-" I capture your hand and place it low on my belly, exactly the same place you held your hand when you taught me about my Sol flame. Where I now carry two flames.

"Sol has given me- given us a blessing, Flare!" I beam, positively thrilled, unable to contain my happiness. "He made it from you, Flare, he gave me your baby!" I press against you, holding you tight. "I'm so happy, Flare! I am so happy!"

He was still a bit lost, although not necessarily complaining given he'd grown fond of Opal's lips and her affection. To be honest, she

was a far cry from the girl who had bent herself over and prostrated herself before him, only to be filled by the man of a species she had not yet known. It was her instead now directed his hands, his mouth, and informing him of what had happened.

The jutting look within his eyes suggested he understood the gravity of the situation when she pressed her palm against her belly. To be a bishop was one to be in service of Sol. It wasn't expected, hell it wasn't even within the realm of possibilities that a Bishop would be able to have a family. It wasn't disgust, or second thoughts that ripped through the bishop as she pressed his heated palm against her lower abdomen, but rather a warmth, an understanding and belonging that made him wish to meet her lips and her tongue just as hungrily as she had met his.

Cupping her Ashen cheek his eyes bore into hers as he looked upon his love and drew her lip into his. Biting upon it, suggestively, yet not breaking the skin.

"I love you, Opal Neiquart. And perhaps I said that reflexively nights ago when we were still freshly basking in Sol's afterglow, but I do know now I do indeed love you. You... and our..including, Sol's child." He pressed his palm heatedly to her belly, forcing his heat against her skin. He could, after all, set fire to a forest. He was a bishop after all. This heat, was merely physical evidence of him wanting this baby as well.

"I promise, I won't quit until all of your sisters, those brides in waiting, know Sol's touch."

And thus mountains collapsed, the very world crumbled and nearly died when Uhl and his essence was sucked into the bride Opal. She

had quite literally killed the very titan, the god of the world that she was born in. Sure, he used her body, but in exchange? Every single living entity on the planet died that day.

At least it would have. Sol stepped in, knowing it would shorten his life, his power, greatly. It didn't matter if it was a blade of grass, he offered it health. Of course he would, for he was a true god, unlike Uhl. And that would ultimately be the defining difference, and ultimately lead her people to salvation when they could differentiate between a dead god, and one who brought such life. Uhl was a dead god, long before he was physically dear.