

STELLAR BLACK HOLE

If ever there was proof of inherent benevolence in the cosmos, Targon's prolonged existence would surely be it. I can find no reasonable explanation for their survival other than divine intervention. And I'm not talking about my own, mind you.

One would expect millennia-old beings with some marginal power to have creativity surpassing the average bacteria but one would be wrong. If Targon were ever adept at any one thing then that thing would unmistakably be to actively defy any notion of wisdom.

Their ambitions are as trite and monotonous as those of your average mortal. They consider me naught but a weapon, a gross misuse of my talent, but I wouldn't expect nothing more from self-proclaimed "gods".

Even as I fulfill another one of their seemingly endless and perpetually trivial tasks, they resume their commonplace infighting. And then, a familiar beckoning.

I feel ripples in the very fabric of creation, an unfathomable melody echoing even in the void of space. The Caretaker, or Bard as few humans on pitiful Runeterra call him, has once again manifested in this plane and he has need of my assistance.

He calls to me, across worlds, speaking no words. The Caretaker speaks only the truth and words are the natural enemy of the truth. Words are the forefathers of stories and lies and dreams and falsehoods and the Caretaker cares not for these things.

Instead, he speaks in ideas and abstracts, every listener hears exactly what he is meant to hear in exactly the terms he best understands. He speaks no words beyond what is strictly necessary for what is the Caretaker beyond his purpose?

He tells me that he can annul Targon's control for some time. Nothing permanent, he assures me, but the thought of even a momentary respite from the Aspects' bickering is enticing and I accept it without little thought. In exchange, I gladly bless him with my assistance.

An entourage of lesser spirits, "Meeps", surface through small fissures carefully woven into time and space. They speak some

unknowable tongue and chime along eagerly, as they've always have since I can remember them, guiding me across portals and dimensions to meet with their patron.

We emerge in a small uninhabited planetoid, the closest one to one of my children but something is amiss. I feel the desperate cries from the this star, it is dying. In my servitude, I had neglected to listen for the plight of my child.

This was one of my earliest ventures in star forging, the creation of a truly massive star. A beacon to light this previously unremarkable corner of the universe. My technique has evolved thousandfold since but I love this one no less because of it.

It has lived for so long, witnessed so much. I am taken back to times when I was free to build and watch over stars like this one, free to contribute to the great cosmic canvas.

Bard calls to me and the image of this star's death surfaces in my mind as does the thought of all the destruction that will inevitably come with it. I understand what he's asking and grudgingly abide. I must snuff out the life of this dying star myself.

I fly as fast as I can, for I have no desire to prolong this mockery. I reach the star's core in a fleeting instant and take control over that moribund cosmic furnace. It feels good. I had forgotten how warm it could be, how intense it could become.

I rebel against the increasingly aggravating pull of gravity as the star's core begins to collapse into itself. This star's death threatens to take so much more than just itself with it. I will not allow the eons of this star's proud existence to end in such an unflattering manner. It is simply inadmissible.

I feel the matter as it compresses and churns and boils and send it away to the depths of space. I kill the star from the inside, scattering its remnants, some through the planets it slowly accrued through so many years. An event like this will inevitably confound scholars of thousands of civilizations for years to come and is bound to attract the attention of less benign entities.

I allow myself to ruminate on the residual heat for the briefest of moments. I mourn the star's death, knowing that it is my fault alone. My pride has shackled me and now I am powerless to prevent my children from suffering.

This, all of this, my doing.

My brooding is interrupted by the Caretaker. He reassures me that he would have called someone else if he had thought someone else powerful enough.

“I know. I know.”

He tells me that he cannot free me. That it is not his purpose and what is the Caretaker beyond his purpose?

I feel the need to mock him for even implying I have need of his help but I hold my tongue, he has earned that much. The simple fact that he is willing to apologize speaks volumes for that is not part of his purpose.

“Then who?” I ask weakly, the tragedy of killing one of my own children consumes me and I haven’t the strength to rise again.

The Caretaker speaks only the truth, as he always does, and shows me a dragon so curious and lonely that he was once willing to meet with those mortals he deemed worthy of his time.

This is my punishment to endure and escape from just as it was my punishment to fall into. I am trapped in a prison of my own design.

He departs and I am alone again.

Slowly the Aspects' voices become audible once more, their incessant commands returning, gnawing at the very edge of my perception.

I look to what remains of my child as I fly off to another of their errands, my will reinvigorated. What is the Caretaker beyond his purpose? A friend.

And I obey.

For now.