

# 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 beings with millennia worth of experience and some marginal power to have creativity surpassing the average bacteria. One would unfortunately be wrong. If Targon were ever adept to any one thing it would be to subvert against any notion of wisdom.

Their ambitions are as trite and monotonous as those of any loosely sentient mortal. They treat me as if I were an instrument of their will, a weapon to be employed. A gross misuse of my talents but what else would you expect from self-proclaimed gods?

Even as I fulfill another one of their seemingly endless and perpetually trivial tasks, they resume their commonplace

fighting. And then, a familiar beckoning. The Caretaker, or Bard as some from pitiful Runeterra have called him, has once again made his presence felt in this plane of existence. And he has need of me.

He calls to me, across worlds, muttering no words, but I understand what he wants in full. This is how the Caretaker talks: with pure ideas and intentions, abstract conceptions that do not lie, unlike the ever deceitful words. Ideas transcend language or culture, world or species, ideas are ever-changing but never false realizations.

The Caretaker tells only the truth, insofar as he needs to tell anything at all. In this, he and I have an understanding, for we both respect the other's mandate. And it is because of this that I know he speaks the truth when he tells me that I have to be besides him to fully grasp the situation.

Even while under Targon's thrall, Bard respects the terms of our relationship. The stars are my purview, the safety of Creation his, and provided he consults with me on matters of the Celestial Firmament then I am pleased to aid him in his ventures.

He tells me that he can annul Targon's sorcery for a few hours but little beyond. I know not if he simply does not wish to free me or if he is unable to do so. He seems to care little as if such petty concepts were not his to hear.

In exchange for short-lived freedom, he requires my assistance. The thought of being free, for even as little as a few hours, is irresistibly alluring.

An entourage of lesser spirits, "Meeps", surface through small fissures carefully woven into time and space. They speak some unknowable tongue and chime along our merry way, as they've always had 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 my dying child. This was one of my first ventures in star forging, the creation of a massive star, my technique has evolved a 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 that is Creation whole.

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

He watches me fly away and chimes once again, this time he both thanks me and apologizes profoundly. He speaks the truth, he always does.

I fly as fast as I can, for I have no desire to prolong this mockery. I reach the star's core in a few minutes 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 ever tighter 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 it. I will not allow the eons of this star's 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 through the planets it slowly accrued through so many years. I allow myself to dwell on its residual heat for the briefest of moments. I mourn its death, knowing that it is my fault alone.

My pride has shackled me and now I am all but 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, old friend. I know.”

He tells me that he cannot free me. That it is not his place. I feel the need to mock him for even implying I need or would ever want his help but I hold my tongue, he has earned that much.

“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.

You, he answers. In my mind, I see myself, proud, beautiful, free. This is the only being who could ever free me. This is my punishment to endure and escape from.

He is gone and I am alone again.

Slowly the Aspects' voices become audible once more, their incessant commands returning.

I look to what remains of my child as I fly off to another of their errands.

And I obey.

For now.