

# Astral Breach

## Kurzgeschichten

Von abgemeldet

### Dangerous Connections

Ishkay cursed mentally as the Council of Ancients met today... The opposition was presenting the fact that something as sacred and divine as the Elysian Spring had been tainted by the visitors to Morrden, making it too weak to even protect itself against something as some sort of parasite.

Damn, there really was nothing that stayed a secret to Lord Aqil.

"We don't know for sure if it was the presence of the people of Ehana that caused the spring to get tainted. From all we know, the parasite was of Celestial nature. The Elysians and Celestials have been fighting for dominance over each other since far longer than even the War of the Confluxes." Ahriman replied unimpressed, standing from his seat to address the council. As always, Sandro sat right by his side, so did Ishkay as he usually spoke for the boy. "You are blowing this completely out of proportion."

"Eight dead elysians isn't something we take lightly, Lord Ahriman." Lord Aqil replied in his usual whisper like voice. "And you shouldn't either. They represent the spirit of the Gods of Morrden after all."

"I beg to differ." Ahri made a snorting sound at that. "Most of them are arrogant, caring only about sleeping around when not wandering around on their own and are way too full of themselves. Prejudice? Maybe, but doesn't Xaos teach us as that arrogance leads to downfall? Doesn't Noxir teach us to be humble as the night? Doesn't Ahryma teach us to be one as we all are joined in death?" Not that he really followed those teachings, but that was the crap he was supposed to be preaching whenever he held the mass in the dark church of the Silent City. "The elysians are just one kind of inhabitants of Morrden, not less but also not more. Just because they are called Moon Spirits doesn't make them superior to other morrdean races. Besides, even ignoring all of that, Lord Ishkay here was personally involved in stopping the elysians from getting killed by a parasite that was planted there by one of the

celestials, the arcenemies of the moon spirits. So let's not mix the mere presence of the ehanan people with what was an aimed attack between two parties that are fighting each other since the day of creation."

Aqil cocked an eyebrow at the part with Ishkay, addressing the conflux next. "Is it as Lord Ahriman says, Lord Ishkay? Is the reason the spring was tainted -really- because of that only or was there more to it?"

"I couldn't tell." The conflux lied without the slightest hint of hesitation, being rather good in this political game himself. "Our priority was to recover the Elysian Spring to its former state. We had no time researching on the possible causes or else more moon spirits would have fallen victim to the parasite." Another lie... he had researched the water... it had been how he even had been able to come up with a solution to their problem.

"Hm... I see. Well that's too bad. Especially since it seems, Lord Ahriman, that way neither of us can prove their side. We can--" He stopped as a messenger hurried into the room, bringing something to Ishkay and whispering something to him. The conflux accepted the letter, quickly looking into it... before paleing just a little and quickly closing it. "Something the matter, Lord Ishkay?" Aqil asked pointedly.

"Nothing. Just personal matters. Proceed." The conflux murmured, though seeming a bit distracted from then on, only half paying attention to the council meeting any longer.

"W-what? But that's way too dangerous!" Sandro whined, shaking his head. "Rhayen almost got you last time again!! And staying in Itherion for so long is dangerous too! Even if you take your conflux crystal or come visiting every couple of days, t-that's going to wear you out and make you sick and hurt..."

"I can bear with that." Ishkay shook his head with a sigh. Rhayen certainly was a problem... he wasn't officially allowed to just outright attack or imprison him after last time, but that'd hardly stop him. He wasn't of enough political importance considering he was 'only Sandro's servant' to really have any grave consequences. "But I can't just ignore this either. I started it, so I have to finish it. Lady Astrea needs the support." He sighed, arms folded in his sleeve elegantly.

"Did I interrupt something?" Aqil's voice came from behind them, Ishkay and Sandro tensing instantly, looking unamused at him.

"No, we were just done." Sandro huffed, flipping his hair even though it was way too short to be impressive in any sort of way.

"Good." The other Magi replied, looking at Ishkay then. "Since I wanted to speak with you in private."

"You are one of the very few people, Lord Aqil, that should know that whatever you have to talk to me, my Master may hear." The taller man replied, eyes narrowed.

"I am well aware of the special connection between Master and Conflux, however, this is more of a personal nature, just as your stay in Itherion."

Ishkay hissed and cursed at that. This guy really had his eyes and ears -everywhere-. "Fine. I'll be okay on my own, Sandro... just wait for me in our room." He murmured to the boy, following Aqil as he led him toward the large balcony garden behind the council chambers to talk in private now that everyone else was gone.

"What is it?" Ishkay murmured almost defensively.

"I can offer you political protection for your little trip to Itherion." Aqil replied calmly, his black eyes focusing on the other man intensely.

"...what do you mean by that?"

"I need to go to a small trip to Itherion myself actually... joining the Holy Senate for a few things and making our current position clear to them, that we -can't- let any more Ehanans into the fields. Those divine block heads don't seem to get the danger they are putting the world of the dead into... and if our world dies, where will all the souls go after their life ends? How will the Astral of the three worlds regenerate if not cleansed and channeled through Morrden? ...anyway, as leader of the opposition in the Silent City, my visit is highly important and if... theoretically... I brought for example my adviser or an additional ambassador, they'd have complete diplomatic immunity."

"And what would that cost me?" Ishkay growled, his hands balled to fists. That was too good of an offer to come for free...

"Nothing really... all I want is for you think of some questions, Ishkay." Aqil murmured,

turning to face the other man directly, his black eyes looking deeply into the conflux's blue ones. "Do you believe that, with times changing constantly around us, that maybe your maker, the goddess Ahryma... might have changed her mind on certain things?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that 2000 years ago, when Sandro and you showed up in Morrden after he died and you were freshly born, that back then you were born for a very specific purpose... two actually at once." The Magi murmured, arms folded in front of him elegantly.

"You know of--"

"Don't act so surprised. I was Magi when even Lord Ahriman was still new to the Council of Ancients. Before you decided to make a secret out of the fact that you are Magi Sandro's conflux, Lord Ahriman bragged with the fact that he became his pupil, the boy that owns a conflux, granted by Ahryma, that unifies two wishes inside itself, one of them being to protect the souls of Morrden. Besides... I have very special abilities. When you came to me for the blood pact with that Elysian, you allowed my magic to roam through your body. I might have taken a turn or two to find out more. Reading your worries, your fears,... Elysians might be able to read desires... I am able to read someone's worries and concerns if they let me inside deep enough."

Ishkay instantly grit his teeth, eyes narrowed. Dammit... "Anyway, I'm still not sure what you mean." He murmured eventually.

"I can tell that since the Astral Breach, you are a little torn." Aqil tilted his head, starting to head on through the mysterious garden. "Before the breach the two wishes you are made out of went hand in hand rather easily... Protecting Sandro, to allow him to be the person he decides to be rather than letting others determine it for him... and ensuring the rest and safety of the souls of Morrden. Without the Aetherlinks, Sandro was constantly in the Silent City without being able to run off gods know where, while you were taking over his duty as council member, doing all the paper work, looking for lost and wandering souls and bringing them to rest,... Now though your Master's wishes and the wishes you were born from differ. Your very nature is to protect this world. Your place is here. At the council. And actually, considering you are doing your master's job the entire time anyway, I have already considered suggesting you as member of the Magi." He murmured, eyes on the other man to gauge his reaction. "You are afraid... Since 200 years, you are afraid that you will cease to exist simply because you can't manage to make the stretch between being Necrodin and Ishkay. You even thought about splitting your soul... to make yourself and Necrodin different beings."

"...you know a lot." Ishkay visibly felt uncomfortable. This man knew way more about him than he liked...

"I investigate about people I am interested in. And I rarely was as interested in anyone as I am in you." Aqil replied calmly, one slim, long fingered hand placing on Ishkay's shoulder. "I can read your fears... You are afraid... because you believe everyone only sees you as a monster. They see you as Necrodin and think of you as disgusting, horrible monster... Even those who knew you as Ishkay first will hate and turn against you the moment they find out. You fear that the only people ever appreciating you, are your Master and Lord Ahriman, him simply because you are a fascinating object to him. You fear that the gap between Ishkay and Necrodin grows so much that eventually you will simply fade. You are terrified by the thought of leaving Sandro alone... you know that he needs Necrodin... but you also know that Morrden needs Ishkay."

"Stop it..." The white haired man replied, sounding rather defeated, having his worries and fears lay open in front of him like that.

"You feel it stronger than ever lately. That lingering, overwhelming fear. Sandro has grown way too fond of Ehana, loving to travel it, enjoying to meet new people and being the cheerful little boy he became after giving you your life. Forming a conflux can cost summoners their sanity... and let's not argue about him being a little... unique... since he is a necromancer. I doubt he was like this when he was still alive. That's the only reason he is supporting Ehana. He loves it because it is lively, colorful, loud,... the most fun he's had since he turned undead I'm sure. But that's no good reasons to support Ehana. Morrden is suffering from the constant flow of living creatures into our world. Look at our streets... once calm and a place of peace for those not ready to move on yet, suddenly overpopulated with bars, inns, brothels,... Low life scum traveling from Ehana here, often not even to protect their home but to make money by selling Astral they gain from plundering our sacred fields to whoever bids the most. You know it's the truth... and the part in you that was born to protect our world has to watch in agony how it slowly sinks deeper and deeper because your master is a supporter of theirs."

"P-please stop..."

"Splitting would have solved all of that. Necrodin could stay Sandro's play mate, protecting him on his many trips to Ehana, maybe even staying there with him while you could have stayed here, doing what you were born to do: Protecting Morrden. Even against the world of the living if necessary. It would have also solved your problem with people seeing you as nothing but a monster. It's Ishkay who has a problem with that, not Necrodin... and if you were separated, two beings on their

own, you wouldn't have to worry about people turning from you anymore simply for seeing you in your dragon shape. However, whatever happened made it impossible for you to achieve that now."

"STOP!!" Ishkay shouted eventually, stepping away from the other man, fear but also pain in his eyes.

"..." Aqil bowed to the man, looking at him with intense eyes though. "I apologize. Maybe I was out of place mentioning those things... take my earlier offer to announce you as my ambassador for the time of your stay in Itherion as gift to make up for my rudeness. I will not mention it on my own anymore. However... if you need someone to talk to... please know that I will always have an open ear for your troubles, young conflux. I have seen many of your kind form, live and disappear... maybe I can offer you advice... and services... in a way your 'friends' weren't able to yet." He murmured, finally turning... and leaving Ishkay behind alone in the garden.