

The Baron's Journal - Page 3

Reyadh Rahaman

...For then I commanded my energetic eye to unleash its wrath. Like an army of phantoms, unseen but undeniable, they surged force faster than thought and swept the miasma away like it was a mere cloud of dust. The force within Orothac dissipated as well, for the time. In this moment of calm I quickly dashed forward and snatched the void heart from Orothac's statuesque form. Already, violet light was returning to the eyes, nose, and mouth of this husk. Though, when I snatched the heart away, it faded permanently.

Deciding to have some fun, I then unleashed a roundhouse kick to the humanoid demon's sternum. Though, since their frame was already weakened severely, the force of my kick was enough to separate their upper and lower halves. Orothac's limp torso sailed through the air and into the frigid waters of the Cocytus. In alert reactions, the cold eels of the depths rose swiftly and tore apart the torso in a bloodthirsty frenzy that dyed the waters of the near shore with crimson viscera.

"And now for dessert!" I yelled to the hungry beasts as I delivered a reverse axe kick to the legs of the dead demon, which sent the lower body flying into the red water where the upper body previously landed. As expected, the eels made short work of it.

Now that the annoyance had been dealt with, I could now proceed to my actual business, though, as I held the void heart in my hand, I heard a ghostly whisper in the back of my mind. One urging me to give them my soul. I snorted in derision. "Yeah, right," I scoffed before beckoning one of my ocular minions. "Reginald, you're up."

Then, from my darker than black cloak, emerged a beholder with a large, single, central eye with a golden iris. Their five tentacles quivered in simultaneous waves as a greeting. Small sparks jumped from their tentacle tips as tiny eyes opened and closed there as well. Their round pupil constricted briefly into a slit before rounding back out, testing the different lighting of Cocytus. This sub-species of beholder, *Ecce fulgur*, had no mouth, therefore communicated solely through physical cues.

"Hold this, but don't touch it," I said before gently lobbing the void heart at the pink-fleshed, floating, minion. They nodded their entire head-sized body in agreement before extending their five tentacles out before themselves. They created a net of fine sparks in the shape of an inverted star, which caught the almost equal-sized black gem in a magnetic field. "Good, now let's go, before anything else gets in my way."

And without delay, I finally entered my cottage through the gnarled, moaning door. When Reginald and I were within, I shut the door behind us and bolted it with thick bars of iron, steel, silver, and orichalcum. I did not wish to be disturbed. "Now," I said with a deep sigh, "time to get to work." I handed my cloak to the skeleton butler by the door, who nodded knowingly.