

*The oracles of the ancients prophesied to honor the gods.*

*Oracles are made through the artifice of men to be gods.*

*Both serve men.*

Vi woke up to sunlight streaming through his bedroom's window. Yawning a little, the man turned over on his side, absentmindedly gazing at a little switch on the wall before it was caught in the grip of an invisible force. The psychokinetic movement was complete in a second. The window started to turn opaque after a few moments, the light dimming in tandem. Satisfied, the plantoid rustled a little bit under the covers. Judging by the warmth, he must have soiled himself around an hour or so ago. Vi did not mind this, though. He savored warm, lazy mornings.

Vi was half-asleep when his auditory membranes caught the sound of the door opening.

“Rise and shine, sprout. The day isn't going to wait for you!” the familiar voice of Liri sounded out. Vi gave a languid little smile and began to shift beneath the covers, despite his misgivings.

“I think I woke up earlier, there's still fifteen minutes, no?” he asked, eyes finally spying the unassuming form of his caretaker.

“Not when we need your butt plopped down in the Eye in five! Speaking of which...” Liri spoke, heading over towards the plantoid's synthetic bed and beginning to take off the covers in calm, common movements. A definite smell emerged as soon as she started to do so.

“As expected. We'll need to get the little boy prepped first.” she shook her head, smiling.

Vi just smirked to himself in his daze while Liri took his hand and guided him over onto the changing table. The cushion was nice and warm as always, so Vi just psychokinetically flipped the switch controlling the smart-glass while he waited. The glass became translucent once more, helping Liri while she combed through the assorted supplies below. She came back up with a fresh diaper while his eyes were combing the ancient Revnian motifs he had requisitioned for the wall a week ago.

“Alright, time to check what surprise my little Oracle has left for me today...” Liri went through the standard protocol for changing, recoiling a little once she popped the tabs of Vi's current attire.

“Good heavens, I am not quite sure what they've been feeding you recently...” Liri chuckled a little to herself, wiping her charge down with unprecedented grace. Vi just relaxed on the table as he always did, still smiling in his half-asleep manner.

Liri finished the process swiftly, soon disposing of the old diaper in the slide-out disposal chute and taping Vi up into a new solar-themed diaper. After that, she helped him sit up out of habit and patted his bum a few times before he hopped down onto the floor.

“Now let's get a move on. I anticipate that a few more functionaries are going to be in the theatre today.” Liri spoke, more to herself than anything.

Beginning to exit fatigue, Vi's brow furrowed and the man pensively nodded.

In a minute Vi was dressed and in two the pair had wended through the halls of the facility to arrive at the Extrasensorium. Vi's medtech was already in the spotless white room, fiddling with a few electric panels on the black egg of the Eye. Liri approached first, going over some sort of protocol or doublespeak with the man that Vi was long accustomed to. Soon enough, though, she had backed off, smiling once more at Vi before she made her way to the rim of the room, out of sight. Vi returned the gesture and snaked his way past the banks of electrical and medical equipment to join the medtech at the closed pod in the center.

"Just in time; the viewing is about to begin." Jal wasted no time in conducting the preliminaries check-up with his scanner. Vi heard the distinctive ping indicating that his vitals were all in order.

"No kidding." Vi sighed a little. "Barely had time to get dressed." he continued, taking a moment to assess his jumpsuit and its barely-perceptible bulge. There were more creases than usual.

"Eh, nothing we haven't seen before. Now hop in, your ol' tech can get you hooked up in a flash!" Jal beamed in deliberate faux-drama. The pod began to open, revealing the maze of blinking lights and bodily instruments inside.

"...You don't seem like the oldest adult around here." Vi just cocked his head.

"Knowing you for a decade is close enough. Now hop on it!" Jal said, chuckling to himself a little.

"Aye." Vi gave a resolute nod, stripping off his jumpsuit and gingerly taking a seat on the chair-like contour of the pod's interior. He leaned back while he threw the jumpsuit out of the pod's area, feeling some of the preliminary uplinks being made as his spine's ports connected with the Eye. Of course, nothing came over his perceptions yet, which was part of why Jal was all over him, setting up tubing and going over the readout screens of the psi-machine. After only a dozen seconds, he was satisfied, and the man simply gave a final salute as the pod closed once more and nigh-pure blackness took over Vi's senses. He could feel more smartwires worming their way around him, some more spinal connections being made, and the tell-tale tinge of concentrated Oculine from the psi-drug repositories entering his system. Finally, just as he felt a familiar not-drowsiness begin to cover his mind like a wet blanket, Vi closed his eyes and the womb of the pod became an electric blue sky and vast planet down below. A vacant electronic voice sounded out the arbitrary coordinates of his target.

Vi heard them and his awareness immediately shifted to a residential interior. It was decently stately, perhaps upper middle-class, but small; an apartment, or condominium, perhaps. Then he was thinking of a bedroom, a bedroom with a *real* fur rug, and then there was a small, tightly guarded safe, and within it was a message, and the text was nigh-indiscernable but, there was a number? Vi briefly mused on whether or not it was a code, or what he was even supposed to be searching for, but he could feel the ports and knew the other processes of the Eye were already funneling all of these perceptions from his brain to databanks, etched into silicate for easy access. Whatever it was they wanted, they'd be able to see it live in the command center and in perpetuity from the archives. So Vi just did the job of an Oracle and mapped out the relevant parts of the building. A bedroom, office, studio, living room, the usual works. Vi was a little pleasantly surprised by the child's bedroom, though he wondered what possible intelligence could be gleaned from it. Though he certainly wasn't a run-of-the-mill psychic with the average hiring arrangement, he did enjoy the childhood he had at the facility and its sumptuous grounds. He had read the minds of a fair few others, normal citizens listening to wild rumor mills of super-psychics created from captured test subjects and detained in a chilling purgatory. Vi would always smile when he read such thoughts. So speculative, so far from the truth. But not all individuals

would be ready to understand Oracles, and so they had to be shielded. Smiling, Vi continued with the scan until every last scrap of useful information had been obtained, evidently. His trance broke soon after, and Vi quickly recognized that the tap of Oculine that had previously been running through his veins had been shut up. The audio unit's tune returned then, this time with the rehearsed voices of command giving the same solemn, enigmatic response of thanks that they always did. Vi nodded along to it by himself before the pod began to open. He was beginning to feel the fatigue of withdrawal, he realized, and so he didn't fuss much when Jal came to help.

“Good job kid! Nothing like a little clairvoyance for the morning, eh?” Jal grinned, pulling on one of Vi's arms in assistance as he unsteadily staggered up.

“Uh, I think I feel more like sleeping now, actually...” Vi mumbled.

“Nonsense! The day's just starting after all.” Jal shook his head, beginning to turn toward the woman who was walking toward him. “Liri, please take Vi out to the gardens as soon as possible. The boy could use some sunlight.”

“Perhaps afterward, I'm afraid that we're due for a check-up soon after brunch, particularly after such a heavy vision.” the woman responded, beginning to hold onto one of Vi's arms after he had gotten dressed again.

“Heh, well alright. Just keep it in mind, y'hear?” Jal said, looking towards the pair with a certain ineffable, look. Both silently nodded. Jal just smirked to himself as though on the verge of a chuckle while the two exited back into the winding halls of the facility.

*An Oracle is a specimen of man genetically-engineered for the greatest possible psychic functioning yet known.*

*Oracles are a new advent in biological and parapsychological research, and the mechanisms regarding their creation are to remain classified.*

*A baseline individual is capable of sparse clairvoyance. 1% of the population can achieve mild proficiency in such clairvoyance.*

*An individual enhanced with retroviral genetic modifications for improved psychic ability is capable of strong clairvoyance and telepathy. These powers can be used with less concentration and time than that required of baselines.*

*An Oracle is a genetically-modified individual capable of masterful clairvoyance, telepathy, and psychokinesis. Recent tests of the rare, previously apocryphal phenomenon known as apportation have proved fruitful.*

*The genetic profile of the Oracle has some necessary constraints. Both baselines and other genotypes may prove better suited for other areas of functioning.*

Vi suddenly felt himself poop on the way to the medbay after eating with Liri. He had already urinated in the Eye, and so the man went on in the usual calculations of an Oracle's incontinence in order to assess how much room his diaper had left.

Liri guided him through the bureaucracy of the vita office in short order. Of course, there was little to begin with due to his status, but he still liked that Liri went through the minutiae for him. Soon enough they had passed through the quiet repose of the wood-panelled waiting room and into the sparkling halls that led to his appointment. Vi already knew where his room was, so he reached it and opened the door before Liri got there.

“Ah. Welcome, Vi. Feel free to take a seat, we can get started soon enough.” the voice of Teril came out almost hypnotically through the entranceway. The man himself was standing in the same synthcoat as always, frame cast against the floral prints of the stark white walls. Vi began to walk in while Liri came to inhabit the doorway.

“Well, it looks like everything's settled, then. Vi, I'll be back to get you once you're done. Should be within a half-hour.” Liri spoke calmly, looking intently into Vi's eyes.

“I'll let you know if anything comes up, but I doubt the strain of the Eye will call for any serious operations.” Teril commented, nodding solidly.

“As I would expect. Thank you, Teril.” Liri nodded towards the man.

“Simply my job.” he responded in turn.

Liri looked at him for a few more seconds before she left, though Vi thought it unnecessary. He loved his Warden, of course, but he had been an older boy for a while now. Once goodbyes were fully made, Teril got to work acquiring his instruments. Sitting down on a chair, Vi took the time to acknowledge the room he had made so many trips to.

Looking around brought the Oracle some memories. There wasn't really a situation where it would *not*, really, but Vi still thought it to be notable today. The floral prints were certainly different from the little animals and tramline motifs that used to be on the walls, but those were for really little boys and Vi could not exactly complain about their departure. He was glad that they kept the old measuring tree graphic, though, along with all of the different marks that had been made as he grew up over the years. Though, looking at that also always made him sad a few moments after the viewing. They let him grow tall and...mature...physically, for all the normal health benefits one gets from such things. An Oracle must be physically as well as mentally fit if they are to be useful to the people, and Vi certainly knew from experience how useful his frame was when he apported into remote, hostile locations for hit and run jobs, procurements, and all the more unsavory jobs under heaven. But it had been hard growing up, with Liri not being able to hold him anymore, or playground equipment not supporting his weight, that strange, *weight* to his body. Even now he didn't quite understand it, for Oracles are children and the gods do not copulate. But his body had grown larger, and they set him on the anagathics regime soon after he achieved the physique of a deity.

Vi didn't tell anyone this, but he did not like to look at himself too closely. It was irrational, he knew, because everyone at the facility knew he wasn't a grown-up, but his room did not have a mirror regardless.

Vi looked back up from thought. It looked like Teril was setting up the last of the chemical cocktails for the latter half of the check-up. Vi could still feel his excrement plastered over his bum as he sat in the seat. He thought about when he should change, and briefly considered finding a room to clean himself in. But having never changed himself before, his knowledge on the matter remained

theoretical.

“Teril?” Vi began to speak up. “Could I get a change before we start?” he asked simply.

“Sure, lad.” Teril absentmindedly spoke up from his work with the syringe. “We’ll be doing a physical anyway, so we’d need things to be spotless anyhow. Give me a moment.” the man said, putting down his current work as he crouched down toward the drawers. Vi simply remained placid in his seat.

“Mmm...got your change for afterwards.” Teril spoke as he grabbed an adult diaper in Vi’s exact size from the prepared packages of the diaper drawer. “Ah, cute. I still have some of your old, itty bitty sizes in the back...”

Vi felt his cheeks flush a lighter shade of green. He awkwardly waited a little while longer while his doctor prepared the padded bed on the other side of the room.

“Alright, son. Hop on.” Teril patted the cloth surface. Shyly, Vi made his way to the other side of the room and did so. He was undressed and ready not long after.

Vi didn’t move much while Teril wiped him down. Like Liri, Teril was also experienced in changing him, but unlike her, Teril didn’t take things slowly or, well, smile at him much during the process. It was just brisk and to the point, like how he did most other things. In that way, though, Vi could still appreciate it.

“Err, thank you, Teri...” Vi mumbled while Teril opened up a disposal chute to throw his old diaper into. He was left sitting naked on the cushioned platform.

“No problem.” Teril replied after returning from his visit to the trash. “Now then, let’s begin the examination.”

Vi figured that Teril got most of the information he needed when he held the scanner still for five seconds, but he still waited for the inevitable pat-down. It followed after Teril typed up whatever readout had popped up into his recorder, with merciful brevity. The doctor maintained his traditional disinterest throughout the entire procedure, from the vascular inspections of the head leaves to the infinitely more awkward nether region assessment. Vi found this part of the appointments to be the most annoying of all, and it was really only the fact that Teril was the most matter-of-fact man on base that prevented him from throwing more of a fuss. Quickly, though, it was done, and the doctor left Vi to recollect himself on the bench while he collected the equipment for the next step.

“All clear, vitals spotless, no cancers, nothing really.” Teril nodded to himself, though with his affect it almost sounded like he was somehow disappointed. “Perfect, all around. In that case, we can proceed with your juicing for the week.”

Vi gulped a little. If the previous part was annoying, this part was legitimately perturbing.

But the man had gone through it many times before, and so he betrayed little sign of his discomfort as Teril rounded up the chemicals of an Oracle’s delicate homeostasis. For Oracles were not like men in their biological balance, Vi knew, and the fullest extent of their prowess was not seen in just their genetic might, but also in how their body could handle vast amounts of psi-drugs over indefinite periods of time. All of it; the diet, the drugs, the genes, the Eye; all of these interconnected elements

were what truly elevated them beyond mere mortality. While normal men supped on the fruits of the Earth, Oracles drank the ambrosia of divinities. And it was really quite good that the base seemed to always have such ambrosia in ready supply.

“So, how have things been recently?” Teril asked. Vi already saw the hypo in his palm and knew what he was doing, but answered regardless.

“I, uh, have been in the library a lot recently. I think I'm going to requisition an-” Vi paused for a little while when Teril stung him with the hypo as though in a conjuror's trick, but he did not yelp. “-another visit from that priest of that Revnian reconstructionist group.”

“That sounds good.” Teril said in that same tone that he always did, with an additional token nod. Vi's brow furrowed at the sight, but he supposed that it must seem odd for a divinity to have a religion.

“Mmm. I was thinking of also meeting with some of the councilors when they next visit. Not like the usual field trip, more one-on-one.” Vi continued, this time not breaking his sentence when Teril made a hypervitamin injection.

“Hmm. Wish you luck with that.” Teril spoke in a vaguely more attentive tone. “It'd probably be best to cozy up to the command staff a little more, they're always paranoid about appearances up in that little dome.”

“Yeah, just figured that performances would assist in making the case. I don't know. I just sometimes want to...you know.” Vi said, gesturing with his arms a little before Teril stilled one to flood his veins with more psi-drugs.

“Well, I think we all do at this point. But of course we both know that most people don't really...understand you, Vi.” Teril paused for a bit in his speech to actually look into Vi's eyes. He returned it with a sigh.

“Yeah...” he looked off.

Teril shook his head in that way he did sometimes, and patted the man's back after the last injection was made.

“Chin up, kid. When you really want things, you can't be mopey.” Teril commented until he was satisfied that Vi's attention was caught, and then promptly went to work stowing his assorted paraphernalia. “Now, your health is looking clear enough that we can forego a pod scan. I don't know what's on your schedule after this, but I do know that we're having a few operatives visiting the facility later today. If you want to make an impression around here, you couldn't do too bad with them. As long as you maintain the Code of course.”

“Of course, Teril.” Vi responded swiftly, a certain upward curve to his maw starting to form.

“That's more like it.” Teril smirked. “They don't know too much about Oracles, so you should be able to make a...” Teril paused for a little while in delicate word-selection. “...rarer sort of impression than is possible here.”

“I, uhuh.” Vi's cheeks went flush briefly, but he recovered quickly.

“Just like I like to hear.” Teril spoke, attention turning toward the door. “Now if I’m not mistaken, Liri should be here any moment now.”

Vi nodded in affirmation, and by the time he had been rediapered and dressed, the door had opened to reveal the familiar frame of Liri. Vi smiled a little at the arrival, and patiently waited while she conversed for a little while in confirmation with Teril. All three gave their respective farewells, and soon enough Vi and Liri were out the door.

“So, nothing came up?” Vi asked his Warden as she guided him out of the medical section.

“Indeed. Free period starts now.” Liri responded with a certain smirk, the pair finally stepping back out into the rest of the facility.

Vi hugged her and she did so back. It was with some trepidation and more than a little giddiness that Vi left the company of his handler and began to walk alone in the spotless synthetic halls of the base.

*An Oracle must never harm Kin with their powers.*

*An Oracle must never read the minds of Kin.*

*An Oracle must never scan the secrets of Kin.*

*An Oracle must not wander into places they are not supposed to be.*

*An Oracle must use their powers as directed by Kin.*

*An Oracle must always listen to their elders.*

*An Oracle is a child of heaven, and will always be loved.*

Vi founded himself in the gardens, after having asked a few passing personnel for the location of the new arrivals. They were to be arriving at the launchpads to the north, in the woods, and so Vi thought it most appropriate to hang around the side shrubbery while they passed through the main thoroughfare onto the base proper. He had forgotten to actually ask for the time, and so the man ended up waiting for a decent while. Eventually, though, his eyes were surprised with figures breaking through the tree cover. A couple of the guys in the front looked like they were already being hounded by other personnel admittedly, probably discussing some operation or details regarding their stay or the like, but one yet remained alone behind them. Delicately, Vi made his way from the bushes.

On closer inspection, he could tell that this man had a, well, more substantial suit than the rest of them. Probably approaching battle dress, at least to the extent a scout suit could. Furthermore, he was helmeted, and based upon the design of the armor alone and the nature of certain other operatives, Vi could figure that he was cyborged to all hell beneath it. Taking one more, deep breath, Vi casually walked to the side of the man as he sometimes saw soldiers strut.

“...Hello.” an audio unit tuned in from the man's armor, surprisingly. Vi recovered enough to respond.

“Hail, sir.” the man gave a little salute, and hoped it wasn't overly formal.

“Indeed. Do we have business with you? I did not recall the report saying we would be working with psychics.” the operative tilted his helmet slightly. In its visage, Vi thought it more predatory than curious.

“I, uh, no, I simply wanted to see what other operatives were visiting the base. I'm stationed here, so it's just good to know of the comings and goings on-site.” Vi responded more capably than he had expected.

“Sensible.” the man spoke, remembering to walk with the rest of the group. Vi followed along, and aside from a few curious glances from the other chatting personnel from the base, did not stir up too much attention. “I have not associated much with psions, so this may yet turn out to be a decent learning opportunity.” the voice hissed out of the suit's speaker.

Vi nodded along, still rather surprised. He hadn't thought the marks on his jumpsuits to be that noticeable.

“So, what's your duty?” Vi asked. The group was passing by the rose gardens now as they approached the central facility.

Even with his adherence to the Code, Vi could almost perceive a certain smile behind the opaque visor of the man.

“There is a very great Tree, and they are my single love in life. I feed them. I trust you follow.” the man's synthetic voice came out.

Vi nodded, weakly. The man thought his furrowed brow must have been noticed, because the operative simply shook his head strangely and changed the subject.

“Well, my name is Vrisk. It seems our lines of work are very different, though I trust we can at least, appreciate one another. What is your name?” the man asked, briefly turning toward Vi.

“Oh, Vi.” he made out after a second. “Sorry, I just...we have soldiers, of course, just not, y'know.” Vi sort of trailed off, mind desperately trying to think of a conversation-salvaging technique.

“I understand. There are many talents that are of use in the world.” Vrisk said. For a moment he looked back toward Vi, scanning up and down. Looking back similarly, Vi noticed the man's sidearm for the first time.

“Hmm. I guess I should have supposed you wouldn't be in full kit at the moment.” the man said, gaze beginning to rest on the lower segment of Vi's torso. “That, is your jumpsuit tailored well? I don't think I've seen that...bagginess down by the posterior before.”

Vi cocked his head in confusion for a moment, before he remembered. “Oh, it just puffs out a little bit from my diaper. I think I can get my psi suit a little later actually if you want to compare kits, I just usually store it when not on apportionation missions.” Vi related.

“I see.” Vrisk nodded along to himself. “Decent sign of combat experience if you've been in enough to be shot there of all places. Though I'm surprised we don't yet have surgeries for that...must be a very



particular sort of injury constellation.” Vrisk went on, though Vi did not really follow. “Good to be in competent company, though.”

“Uhuh...” Vi semi-responded.

Vi walked along with the man in silence for a little while, peeing himself a bit in the interim. A larger crowd had formed in front of the main doors, he saw, with the front operatives already beginning to join them in what was probably whatever business they were at the base for. Vrisk too started to follow, giving Vi a little send-off wave.

“Good to meet you, sir. Perhaps we’ll join one another once more in a kill-team one of these days.” Vrisk’s audio unit tuned, before the man turned and joined his companions. Vi hung for a little while in the silence, almost enraptured by something. A demeanour, an ambiance of a conversation, the way light had reflected off of the suit or the way two people had met. It was all so surreal, simultaneously like a dream and yet also more real than how he had talked before. Vi wasn’t sure if he liked it or if he didn’t like it, and because of that and the way his head was hurting, he decided to re-enter the facility and hit the library.

That, “sir,” though. That was something.

Vi boxed up a nice linner for himself in the mess hall and made his way to the library after some languid strolling throughout the complex. Stepping into the unassumingly small room, Vi approached the console that was affixed to the eastern wall, letting it read his biometrics before quickly inputting the code for his desired tome. He could hear the whirring of selector arms behind glass as they made their way past vaulting datastacks. Vi took the time to set his meal down on the table of one of the study nooks in the western corner, hidden behind emblemed wood. By the time he had returned, the system had successfully retrieved the dusty book Vi had been seeking. It was when Vi was returning to his table with his prize that another figure wended their way out of a similar study area. Vi smiled when he saw who.

“Fancy seeing you here.” Ren spoke first. He was adorned in a standard psi suit. Must’ve just got off of an operation, Vi thought.

“Wonder why. I thought we both knew each other well enough to know where our proclivities intersect.” Vi responded, scooting a little more into his booth to make room. Ren simply leaned against Vi’s table.

“Fair enough.” Ren smirked. “Well then, I suppose I can ask what you’ve got there? Or is i-” Ren was cut off.

“Your guess is likely accurate.” Vi just smiled. He took his hands off from the cover a moment later.

“Well what do you know! Who would’ve thought that men in togas would have been popular all these centuries later...” Ren said in that jesting tone he sometimes used.

“Eh, really more robe-like, all things considered...” Vi said. “Besides, I don’t see how it’s anymore ridiculous than your own studies.”

“At least mine are eminently more useful than aping a fallow religion...” Ren trailed off as he sat down

on a part of the curved bench opposite to Vi.

“You know, I didn't know the techs had confirmed witchcraft makes the Eye work better.” Vi said in a certain jesting tone he used with Ren occasionally.

The two looked at each other for a few moments, before grinning.

“So, what are you planning?” Ren asked.

“Mmm, don't quite know. I was hoping to get to meet with some of the councilors next time they come over.” Vi spoke.

“Really? Rather out of character for you, but I'm glad that the sprout is finally moving up in the world...” Ren said, psychokinetically patting Vi on the shoulder.

“Hmph. I'm just curious. At the very least it's not as much as some of your strange designs.” Vi shook his head.

“C'mon, Vi. Do you really *want* to be stuck here? At least if we make some more noise we can normalize Oracles enough that we can walk around more freely...” Ren said.

“I don't know if we really *need* that though. Even in ancient times the gods sequestered themselves from the world. And from all those brains we've been probing I'm sure people understand even less nowadays.” Vi spoke.

“To be fair, such secularism could be an aid to my plans. I might even get to be treated more like Kin if their beliefs deny my divinity. As annoying as that would be, admittedly.” Ren leaned back a bit.

“Good luck accomplishing that when you can levitate on command.” Vi mused.

“Heh. Well hey, I didn't say I wanted to *be* Kin, now did I?” Ren smirked.

“Still, I think the bigger obstacle would be becoming an emancipated minor. I don't even know how you're supposed to go through the paperwork for that, or if there aren't stipulations for it.” Vi shrugged.

“I don't know either, but it'd beat just hanging around here all day.” Ren shook his head almost imperceptibly.

“I don't know. The paycheck here is nothing to sneeze at.” Vi commented.

“And you spend that...where? Random orders from the city that can't even put a dent in your account?” Ren shook his head more firmly. “Can't even get private housing around here...”

Vi rolled his eyes a little at this one. Many would jump for joy at free room and board, but Ren could throw a fuss over the smallest of inconveniences in such an arrangement. Sometimes it even seemed to Vi that he would want to change his own diapers...

“Not sure you've thought about the logistics of getting Beryn over to your little dream home, dude.” Vi shook his head.

“Eh, I could get him a cabin or something. Besides, depending on how far into the future this was, I'd be planning on keeping the house empty for me and a special someone...” Ren trailed off in thought as a strange smile overcame his maw.

Vi felt his features contort for a moment in legitimate perturbation.

“Ugh, you should *really* leave those thoughts for grown-ups, Ren...” Vi shuttered his eyes briefly.

“Just sayin'. I'll be there eventually...” Ren said, staring off toward a window to the side.

Vi just sighed to himself as both men briefly retreated into the temples of their minds. Vi couldn't blame Ren, really, but they'd been closer before and in some ways it now seemed that they occupied different worlds. Vi hewing to the tradition that inspired their birth, Ren meandering down paths of obscurity and magic. Then, when their bodies got more...mature...Ren was the one to take to the strange instincts of Kin, though both of them remained children. Vi couldn't help but shake his head at the thought. When it came to *that* stuff, at least he liked his diapers, not people.

“Ren...?” another voice suddenly rung out in the librarium, almost lyrically. “Where'd you go kiddo?”

Vi recognized the voice almost immediately and Ren just groaned not long after. The sound of footsteps heralded a lean, pale-mint man clutching a glintslab.

“Ah, there you are. Good to see that you found your friend at least.” Beryn subtly nodded his head, approaching the study nook and beginning to play with Ren's head leaves.

“...I thought we were gonna meet by the fountain, sir?” Ren spoke after a second in a low, vacant voice.

“No need for formalities, Ren. Unless you happen to mean something by that 'sir.'” Beryn spoke normally, but Ren gulped and shook his head.

“Nuh uh.” Ren spoke instinctually, orbs wide.

“That's good to hear. Anywho, sorry for interrupting your little rendezvous, Vi. The boy here just got a job out of the blue, hence why I'm picking him up so soon.” Beryn said with a head turned down toward Vi. The smirk was definitely apparent now, though not its reason.

“Coulda just met at the fountain...” Ren mumbled.

“Hush.” Beryn snapped his head toward Ren with a brief blank look and the man went silent. The plantoid took his charge's hand and began to coax him out from the seat.

“Good to see you though, Vi. Perhaps we should arrange for a proper playdate one of these days...ah well.” Beryn said, looking off wistfully. Vi remembered an evening from toddlerhood with the man bearing the exact same countenance, and for reasons of embarrassment, pushed the thought aside.

“Kay? Guess I'll see you later, Ren.” Vi nodded toward his friend.

Though still largely huffing, Ren nodded back.

As the two journeyed from the booths, Vi saw Beryn gently pat Ren's behind and then check his glintslab, no doubt for the diaper status app. The image instantly brought the memory out of its shackles, of the time where he had visited Beryn and Ren's residence for a birthday, an event where Liri's unfortunate absence meant that he ended up being changed by other Wardens. Of these, the loss was most keenly felt with Beryn, who in his absentmindedness forgot that little sprouts often associate yellow flowers with girls. Thus, after a sippy cup or two left him wet, the man thought nothing of using a lenni-printed diaper to cover his behind. The fact that other Oracles apart from Ren were there made the embarrassment worse, for those were the days when they still met, albeit infrequently, before their maturing abilities and the indivineable machinations of Command led to their placement at other facilities.

Vi still thought of them and missed them sometimes, hence the memory's survival.

In a strange intuition, Vi got up and left the library.

The Oracle ended up wandering in reverie throughout the halls of the facility not long after, for the initial spark seemingly vanished soon after it came. The plantoid's eyes would flit about from one white wall to another, dancing along the endless parade of gunmetal fixtures, but nothing really gave his orbs something to rest on. The emotions he was experiencing were, strange, and difficult to compartmentalize, though he knew he had felt them before.

For a while Vi's thought-train was derailed when he saw a couple men standing by a window to the garden. They were talking and laughing in that jovial manner other personnel sometimes did, a manner he could never quite participate in. As he passed by he could hear their conversation still, and they gave him the smirking glances and welcomes he had long come to expect. The man could hear their voices return as he continued down the hall, and in a daze he turned to see them continue their conversation. It was interrupted a moment after when one of them excused himself, to visit the nearby lavatory. It was an everyday thing, really, but this time Vi felt his brow furrow at the sight.

Vi could feel a certain knot in his chest grow as he continued on, one familiar on away missions perhaps, but not so on-base. Sometimes, as his feet slowed, Vi would feel that something was dreadfully, unspeakably wrong, in some difficult to pinpoint way that just made the feeling all the more worse. But then his legs would start up again and his vision would focus and the feeling would abate for a time. Oftentimes he would head down a hall just to make sure the sensation did not reappear, and by the tenth round or so Vi was sure he had no idea what he even wanted to do with the rest of his free time. But that ended when he made another turn.

Vi stood before the corridor dedicated to the high staff. While the design was spartan the quality was most certainly not so. By virtue of being an Oracle he was honorarily accorded permission to go into a great many areas that would otherwise be barred to ordinary personnel. In practice, there was never an expectation that he would have any duties in this area, and one in service to the People would only ever be in places where they could perform their duty. But it was his free period and for once Vi was curious. Vi stepped down the corridor as though through a temple. Apart from him it was silent.

Vi stopped his movements about halfway down the hall. As he did so, his neck slowly rotated right and he saw the one opened entranceway in the whole hall. Inscribed on the nameplate beside the doorway was the familiar name of his caretaker, Liri.

Standing there, staring at the traditional long welcome hall of the entrance, Vi began to think.

He had always wondered why Liri held a post barely below the Council.

The little home-trees and potted plants just past the door stood like people. Vi walked a little closer, and in the unprecedented surreality, was not sure if he was reminded more of childhood, an alien world, or both.

Vi hovered right by the door. In his lack of movement that feeling from before had returned, now a siren stranger than any myth. He held in a breath, and the world did so as well. He, took, he took a step, and-

“Now where has my little orchid gone off to?”

In an instant Vi had stopped his movement and looked toward the source of the sound. The voice was sweet and familiar and he knew exactly from whom it had come.

“L, Liri...?” Vi's voice came as a reed blowing in the wind.

“Whoever else could it be?” the woman said softly, and though some part of Vi thought that it shouldn't be so, he felt his heart ease.

“W-What're you doing here? Thought, thought...” Vi trailed off. Liri approached the trembling man and began to run her fingers through his head's leaves.

“Thought, what exactly? I didn't think you were privy to my schedule...” Liri said, laughing to herself a little in a certain rare tone.

“No, I just, didn't think...I dunno...” Vi felt his speech trail off, his mind not far behind.

“Shh...it's alright, little guy. Shh...” Liri said in a specific way, and in that manner Vi felt ancient reflexes quicken. He let his head rest more against his Warden's body, and she began to pet his leaves in a way he hadn't felt since he was a very young child.

Vi's mind drifted off into a cozy cocoon of sensation and soft sound. In the relaxation, he could feel his bladder release, and a sudden bowel pang release a little lump into his diaper.

“Now then, I guess you were looking for me?” Liri asked mesmerizingly.

“Mmm...” Vi said as he came back into a semblance of normal consciousness. “Oh, um...I just wanted to walk around, kinda...” Vi said in recollection, though he could not quite remember and he almost thought there was another factor he should be looking out for.

“Well, could have fooled me! Should've just asked if you wanted to visit your Warden's work, honey.” Liri spoke gently, close to Vi's auditory membranes.

“Nuh...” Vi whined a little, but listened. “I jus', got weird feelings, and, an'-”

“It's alright, baby. No matter why you're here, I can tell you're a little stressed out right now. I might

have been putting a little too much on you recently.” Liri said. Towards the end, Vi noticed that she looked off toward the side briefly.

“Hmm. Well, I think that just means a certain little boy should be getting extra-special attention now, wouldn't you say so?” Liri snapped her head back towards her charge.

Vi thought of a few things but just ended up squealing a little and vaguely nodding. He still wanted to talk about...the thing...but...

“Hehe, glad to hear, dear.” Liri nodded at him in a slow, rhythmic way. She briefly turned towards a control panel right by the door. She inputted a command and shut it, before taking Vi's hand. Even in his stupor he dragged his feet for a little while, but little by little the woman pulled him along. It was once they were several feet away from the door that Vi turned back and noticed the icon of an old keylock on the control panel to the quarters. Vi frowned. And then Liri looked at him in a way that made that disappear.

Liri guided Vi down the halls in a way that made him a happy little boy, as was apparent to any passersby. The two swiftly arrived at his quarters, and Liri wasted no time in bringing the boy to his old playroom. Most of the old equipment had been moved out, as even Vi knew he was no longer quite a baby, but for now he had forgotten that and Liri simply rested him on a plush beanbag in the corner. Resting on it was like laying on a cloud, he thought. There Liri would tickle him, rustle his head's leaves, listen to his excited speech and gently caress him in a way that made his heart melt. Really, it was quite difficult for Vi to process all of the perceptions that were being received, and despite the fun, some part of him hated the indiscernability of the whole situation. Just when Vi thought enough to speak about it, Liri spoke first.

“Hehe, well, I'm glad that we were able to have some time together, Vi, but you really seem rather tired now. C'mere.”

Vi's forehead creased and he looked askance as Liri helped him off of the beanbag and held him tight. It could only really be the early evening right now, he thought. Vi thought this to himself and kept thinking it, even as Liri ruffled his leaves in a gentle pattern. Even as they exited the playroom and approached his bed, he thought. Even as he tried to slur protests, but found his body and shattering senses betray him. It really did not take long for Liri to undress him. In the end, he did find himself quite sleepy, though that did not stop him from feeling indignancy when Liri lowered an unused bar over the side of his bed and formed a pseudo-crib.

“I think it's time for the sprout to get some shut-eye. Once you're rested you'll feel better.” Liri nodded and smiled such that Vi didn't really protest when the next step came.

As he lay there in the bed, Vi went off to a wall and waited for a small shelf to eject itself. Once it did so, she retrieved a small set of fiber earmuffs and returned to Vi's side. With blinking eyes, Vi wriggled around a little to help Liri get the set on.

Vi heard the rare but known sounds of the woods come in through the comfy headset's in-built speakers. This and the subtle white noise in the background tended to help him get comfortable sleep, which given the bad-feelings he was having, would probably do him a lot of good, he thought.

“All right, now that the little sprout is all toasty...” Liri commented as she pulled some more blankets

over the man's frame. She tilted her head for a moment in the process, eyes focused on his body, before she shrugged and continued.

“...due in no small part to all the watering and fertilizing he's been doing, I'd wager.” she smiled a little. “Somehow I don't think the sprout will mind going without a change.”

Vi just smiled a little in his lethargy, enjoying the warmth of his diaper a little more.

“Mhm.” Liri shook her head, smirking. “Well then, I think I'll just leave you to your dreams now, Vi.”

Slowly, Liri's left Vi's side. As she turned the window opaque and went to the doorway, Vi heard one more thing before unconsciousness.

“Goodnight, my little orchid.”

*Thus, given the inherent limitations of retroviral therapies, we are left with prenatal geneering as our only option for any further increases in psychic ability. I have already submitted my proposed plan for such an operation, and it seems as though it could go either way at this point. Given the exceptional remote viewing of our Epsilons, I anticipate the deciding factor for approval will be their valuation of the geneline's telepathic prowess. Given how unlikely it is that deep probing will be made possible in current psychics, even with advances in psi-drugs or our current sets of amplifier-pods, I suspect that they might force themselves to bite the bullet in order to acquire perfected telepathy. Of course, this will be in contention with the obvious intelligence safety hazards such an operative would propose. While their psychokinetic (and dare I say it, apportional) capabilities would in all likelihood be mere complements to their extrasensory ability, such powers at such a strength would likely give them a better chance of escape than our current employed and normally grown psions. Their method of arrival would also complicate things clearly, and I believe the council is torn between the prospect of having super-psychics under their thumb and the subsequent potential for rebellion once they realize their imprisonment. I suppose I am being paid no matter what the council decides, but I would like to have something fun to work on, at least.*

*Well, I suppose I should not be so surprised, but the council has accepted the proposal. And, along with all the logistics of cell-line acquisition and technical preparation that I was already going to be saddled with, they have added a new stipulation; a method of keeping them in line. Luckily they have given me free reign in deciding on just how to accomplish such a feat, so I will be consulting my team and see what methods they can cook up. I must admit, I am somewhat surprised that the measure went through that quickly, but again, I should have expected it in hindsight. When most people call souls to this world, I don't think they expect they'll be doing so through a gestation pod, but it is certainly cleaner than the natural way.*

*The final draft of the geneline has been sent, and to avoid having to use that damn confounding designation in every log, I shall simply refer to them as Oracles. I believe we have optimized their psi functioning to the greatest extent possible without meaningful damage to relevant areas of ability. I don't think the donors would be too happy, but I did end up splicing the received DNA samples from members of those great psychic bloodlines. I expect minimal damage to the innate strength displayed, which will itself be more than made up for in terms of tolerance to psi-drugs over extended periods of time and heightened compatibility with what the tech boys are now calling the “Eye.” One of my only niggling reservations is some of the unoptimized mapping present in the autonomic nervous system and the spinal cord in particular, but it was the only way to get the configuration elsewhere right and*

*projections assure that no essential functions will be impeded. But I digress. I must say that having the opportunity to work from the ground up is quite freeing to the mind. Granted, it also adds in a multitude of complications, such as the remedial cybernetics courses I will have to be taking for all that optimized brain-taping we have planned. Even then, I do appreciate the challenge to a degree. Once this gets the a-ok from the Council we will finally get to see some of the first non-projected results, and that should be interesting. I suspect that even the "prototypes" will have reason to exult in their power.*

*Surprise surprise, guess who's a parent? Me, of course. Yes, only in the abstract, and technically that is never wholly true in either the concrete or the abstract, but I digress. Our first batch of Oracles have finally begun to grow and I must say that the whole matter is both slow and morbid once brought to actualization. Me and my colleagues have finally come to a sort of plan regarding the control of these new genotypes, and I must say the method of doing so is rather appropriate, if corny. Given the name of this line, it was suggested that we use religious means to control, specifically one that would both cater to their egos and appear rather plausible. Growing in our laboratories, these Oracles will be "children of the gods," once decanted from their tanks, a claim which should be perfectly evident once they exercise their powers. This idea should still work even once they reach maturity, get an inkling of their technological origin, and realize that the conception is not quite as literal as they thought in youth. I must say, it is quite amazing just how much adaptation the religious can withstand. Of course, Beryn keeps nagging to me, saying that this could just result in uncontrolled megalomania if they still view us as mortal, and so he has been suggesting that we add another element to it, some sort of oversight. I must admit that I have not given it as much thought as I should, but I do think some sort of stewardship angle could work, perhaps parental. "Children" of the gods indeed...*

*The children are coming along swimmingly (yes, Beryn and I have been bouncing ideas off of one another) and our tertiary programs are similarly plodding along. The Oracle-optimized psi-amplifier that the psychotronics division planned should reach completion within a few months, and the behavioral division has collaborated with the neuroscience division to create an effective system of hypnoconditioning. We are still hammering out some kinks in the directives that the Oracles will actually be implanted with, but the initial conditioning should last after sufficiently forceful impressment, with only minor reconditioning later on, and the process itself should be able to be scrubbed from memory without leaving obvious gaps. Tech application can likely be phased out after this first phase, with codewords or actions being sufficient for control afterwards. Rather old-fashioned in style, I must admit, but likely effective in modern practice. In other news, I've been reading quite a bit of old Revnian documents recently. There is disappointingly little regarding demigods in the traditions, and the Oracles aren't quite oracles in the normal sense, but a little faithcraft never hurt a soul. Actually, that is blatantly untrue, but I liked the sound of it "on paper." Sue me if you will.*

*With recent events it would seem wise to make another entry, so here I am. The children's forms have reached the stage where a reasonable assessment of their health upon decanting can be determined, and I am glad to say that their health is for the most part spotless. "Most," because we are still determining the exact nature of this nervous system anomaly. I have a few favorites of mine working on the problem, but I suspect that we will have to wait for the Oracles' homecoming to get the final answer. In regards to that matter, I have already zoned out all the necessary spaces for the upbringing of this generation. In difficulty this will likely rival the logistics of forming the geneline and its accoutrements in the first place, but it is of course necessary if we want to have loyal operatives. Discussion is still being held as to the proper time to implement the hypnoconditioning. In many respects, we can only hope that the naivete of youth will prevent them from reading our minds and*



*many other things too soon.*

*Somehow (that was a joke) the absolute whirlwind of the last week was enough to make me forget to record all that has occurred. So I will do so now. In short, all of the Oracles were decanted within the span of 24 hours, and the damn cherubs' charisma has been preventing me from getting as mad at them as I otherwise would. But of course that's a good thing, in hindsight. I have the assistance of the team to make sure all are properly cared for, but me, Beryn, and a fair deal of the other collaborators have been getting involved in a far more hands-on way than I expected. I suppose that most people consider their projects their children, but in this case it is particularly true. Sentiments aside, we have all assigned them proper creches. We are still working out who will end up as their permanent caregivers and, ultimately, handlers. The Council does not particularly care as to how that is managed so now we are seeking suitable specialists. It looks like my double major will come in handy in another way, it seems. Aside from that, the children's powers really are prodigious, and we haven't even started them up on the chemical treatments for obvious reasons. Despite my shared excitement, it seems that I have to push all of the other psi researchers out of the room when one of the children psychokinetically draws a plush towards them. There will be plenty of time for such study later, and indeed will be necessary. Thus far there is no indication than any of our minds have been probed, but as they mature this gets more and more chancy. Their adorability is surprisingly good at covering up that nagging fear, though. Yesterday, one of the little boys we were working with made the strangest little sounds as he rolled over in exercise. Might just be the biological clock ticking, but it certainly was captivating.*

*It's been quite some time since the last entry (at least for my private records if not the reports) and needless to say much has transpired. The children are both far more mobile and far more loud, and one can easily guess the effect this has had on our psyches. Probably the biggest incident thus far was a month-long period of intense observation after one of the children apported (yes, apported!) a plush to themselves from inside of a box. It took some careful imploremment of the council to not have the Psi Division immediately test the kids in ways that would likely ruin the delicate psychological engineering we are engaging in. And much of that has been occurring. Each of the children has finally received a Warden, as we are now calling ourselves, and I am lucky to have received that little rascal that made such an impression on me in the first week. Vi is certainly one you have to keep an eye on, but he likes being held greatly and the close contact has definitely indulged my weaker sensibilities. I, for my part, have been caring for him to the utmost (not an easy task when he's as leaky as a faucet), and begun some of the lessons that will cement our main control scheme. Right now it seems that he knows that his powers set him apart, and in the animistic intuition of childhood he is already getting a sense of invisible beings. There is still work to be done on making sure the Oracles know how they are set apart from less-endowed psychics, as well as their theological status in the little system we have designed for them, but that will come with time. In the meanwhile, we've been planning some more far-reaching concerns now that the initial bustle has started to settle, including the details of the anagathics regime they will eventually be put on. I anticipate that at the current pace of progress, the means of coming up with an even more efficient generation of psychics won't be coming for a long time, and thus we will have to extend the vitality of our current ones significantly. It is difficult to imagine such grand schemes when the Oracles are still donning diapers, but we do have entities approaching deities on our hands.*

*This entry will be short and sweet. The children have had some more extensive medical scans today, and after referencing the records of their genetic codes, we have finally determined the result of the nervous system anomaly. Incontinence, urinary and fecal. On one hand I am glad that we caught this before we attempted potty training, and on the other hand I cannot believe that this was the end result. We've been having the medboys run the numbers trying to see if any corrective intervention is possible,*

*but I doubt it severely. The modification was a necessary byproduct of the adjustments for perfected psi functioning in the first place, and ludicrousness aside, pants-wettings are not enough to unduly impact their overall performance. Thanks to the infectiousness of their visages, I am starting to feel some guilt for not just this, but other unseemly elements of this whole scenario. But it is too late for that. In other news, we have a new dedicated supply chain for diapers in the works. I am not quite sure what the manufactories will think once we start getting to the larger sizes.*

*One of the children entered in a passcode to a pantry today. Security cameras and telepathic scans confirmed that the child had no sensory access to the code. She must have used ESP, telepathic or clairvoyant, in order to gain the data. It was an old unit, slated to be disposed of, and physical records of the code were in all likelihood destroyed. If anyone recalled the code, it would have likely only been accessible via a deep scan. It was utterly harmless but the Council grew frightful of the potential. The vote for termination was narrowly avoided, likely helped in part by my implorements and promises to the Council. Having this occur right after Uni teleported from his crib was terrible timing. We aren't taking chances anymore. We will be administering the hypnotherapy posthaste, and me and Beryn have agreed that the leash will have to be short. They are children, and will be treated as such. I don't know how this will be sustainable in the long-term, but they must be loyal if they are to survive. It hurts to write at the moment. I might come back to this later.*

*All of the children have had the Code fully implanted, and their memories of how this was done have been wiped. They can fall apart at a word, now, like a beast before a master. At times I dislike myself more than I usually do, but the sentinel eye of the Council is at least less wary, now. The religious conditioning has been able to take effect more fully now. I am not sure if those old Revnian gods would take offence at this point. It is a difficult matter to let them grow with just enough agency to be useful operatives and still remain subject to our control as their earthly "Wardens," but we are succeeding in just that endeavour. I anticipate that their diaper-dependency will be an unassumingly strong tool in that regard. Vi has taught me that much. And more. In heaven I suppose I will see if he will forgive me.*

Liri tapped out of the documents. Sitting at the desk of her clean quarters, she shut off the dumb-terminal and leaned back in her chair.

She wasn't even sure if she hated this anymore.

As she got up from her seat and paced about the bedroom, she thought it funny how her career had turned out. After all, she took the job for parapsychology, not psychology.

Parenthood had so many more responsibilities than project management.

Though of course, she remembered how there really weren't such things as parents.

With the barest of smiles, Liri finally began to retire for the night.

Dreaming, Ren saw the sun veiled through clouds.