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From Their Eyes

Chapter 1: A Plan Set In Motion

In an ancient temple, in the middle of a vast and almost vacant land, a spirit named Dormin lamented. However, it was not a quiet lament, for that spirit was full of rage. He had been betrayed by those who he had watched over. In fact, he had watched over those beings for countless years, in the communities they had set up in the lands. They had prospered in the lands, but then they wanted to travel beyond the safety of the lands.

It was incomprehensible why they would do that. They had come to the lands in the first place because the lands beyond were unsafe. The spirit took them in, and helped them prosper. Dormin didn't even ask much, just the tribute he was due. He even had his brethren help them and protect them.

However, the spirit hadn't realized what mistake he had made until it had happened. He had been unaware of the betrayal that had sprouted in the ones who had come to the lands. It was like they did not want to pay the small price they had to live in the lands. Instead, they worked to convince the brethren to turn against the spirit. A fierce battle ensued, and many of the brethren and the people died.

Dormin had resorted to making parts of the vast land inhospitable. He flooded sections of the lands, and turned other parts into a vast desert, both of which ruined certain habitations. He had even called on the shadow beings to keep everyone in check, and return things to normal. The spirit finally had to even restrain the leader of his rebellious brethren, Malus. He had forced Malus to remain standing near the endless sea. It was a fitting punishment, and it should have stopped the rebellion.

He had been wrong, since they had all still communicated with the smaller beings, and even managed to tell the little people what they needed to do to be free. Some of the people had taken to forging what was needed to perform the atrocity that put Dormin in the state he was in now. The people had worked to perfect the ritual, and they used it. The remaining brethren had even volunteered to help in the ritual. The spirit remembered that day well.

The various brethren had worked to secure the spirit at the time, and the imprisoned one managed to block all his powers. He had not realized how powerful the one that was imprisoned had been. The spirit was helpless, unable to struggle free, and unable to summon the shadow beings. Soon, the leader of the small beings stabbed the physical body, causing the powers to leave. Each of the brethren absorbed those powers, and a statue of them appeared in the temple. Soon, the physical body died, and Dormin was contained in the temple, unable to pursue those who had turned against him.

He was only able to watch the small people head out of the temple, and across the long bridge to the realm they had left a long time ago. They had thought Dormin was

confined in the temple, but the spirit still had some powers left. He would watch the people as they passed back into the other land. Time ran differently there, and ran differently at the top of the temple tower as well. That was the land Dormin longed to be back in, and he would return, even if the brethren didn't.

He went back to watching the small people. He saw them forming a community, and the one that preformed the ritual was their leader. he watched the days pass, and the people multiplied. He also heard the leader vilifying the spirit. That made the spirit angrier. He saw time pass, and the leader set up a religion around his greatness. Eventually, others believed him, and only believed the leader. He saw some of them getting into families, finding loves. Then Dormin saw something he could exploit, something that would allow he to become free.

Before he could act, Malus spoke in Dormin's mind. *"Don't you dare try to take control of them again. They wised up to what you do, like the others had. We even realized it now."* The spirit felt fury, but he took comfort in the fact that he would return to power soon. He had found the way to do so.

He waited for a moment, and saw where to strike to start his plan. He focused on the minds of the leader, who had aged greatly since he had left, and his followers. he found the easiest one to exploit, and planted a dream into the followers. Soon he saw them act on the dream, and kill the woman in the dream. The woman would be part of two plans. Now he had to start the next part of the plan.

he planted another dream in the weakest of the followers. he then watched as the dream took root, and the young man abducted the body, and the sword. The same sword that sealed him into this state would free him. The man didn't know his fate, but he knew how to convince the man into doing what was needed. He watched as the man headed for the lands the one who imprisoned him called forbidden. The plan was working.

He saw one drawback happen. The one that preformed the ritual noticed that the sword was stolen. It would not be long before he followed. To the spirit, that would be a plus. If everything went the way it was supposed to, the spirit would get its vengeance. The man would come into the trap, and the man would learn the true power of Dormin.

Now, Dormin would wait. Dormin knew it would take time for the young man to reach the lands, since the path was long and perilous. He also knew the young man would ask to have the girl restored to life. It was what Dormin let be known in the dream. The young man would only have to do one thing. The young man had to destroy the Colossi, the brethren, and Dormin's powers would be restored. Dormin would also have a physical body again, hopefully before Emon would arrive.

However, Dormin also had to be sure the young man was prepared. Dormin summoned some of the shadow beings, and when sixteen were present, he gave them their orders. "Wait for a young man to arrive, and rush him. He will try to scare you off, so let him, then follow as he frees me. Bring him here when he succeeds in each task." Dormin saw them all nod at once, and then go into hiding in the temple. Now, as the sun remained stationary in the sky, compared to the outside world, Dormin knew it was all a matter of time.

Chapter 2: The Lone Minotaur

Valus walked along his usual path, a path that he has been traveling for a long time. He always traveled this path, partially in a bit of penance. The path ran through an enclosed valley where plants used to grow. As he strode through, it reminded him of home.

His original home had been a very lush land, and very quiet, much like the land here. However, there were also many others to commune with. Then came the exile, and they were all forced to come here. He understood why it happened. He had been tricked into siding with Dormin.

For a time, they were the only ones in the land he now walked. Then, the little people had come. Some had been scared of him and his brethren. Others tried to attack them. Eventually, they came to live side by side with the brethren. Unfortunately, Dormin demanded tribute so they could remain. Only Malus, the second eldest of their kind, realized what Dormin was doing, and warned the little people. He then took part in the task to defeat Dormin, and separate the powerful spirit into less powerful parts.

As Valus mused, he passed the gap that allowed a view of the central temple, where what was left of Dormin resided. He chanced a peripheral glance at the tower, which was also the link to the land they had left. He continued his walk, wondering if they would ever be free to return to their home, and forgiven of their transgressions.

His thoughts were interrupted when he heard Malus's voice in his head. "*Beware, Dormin has managed to contact one of the little one's descendant. That one is trying to...*" Valus did not hear the rest of the message, as he felt a pain in his leg. It caused him to stumble, and for a moment, he felt like something was on him. It did not make sense.

He got back to his feet, and continued his path. However, something was wrong. He felt something climbing up his back. He varied his step, hoping to dislodge what ever it was. It did not seem to work, because with each step, he felt something moving up his back.

For a brief moment, a chill went through Valus. It felt as if something bad was coming, something that had no right to happen. He and his brethren were a dying race. Only sixteen existed anymore in the world, and they all had a sacred task. No one could be so callous to want to end that. They would have to be a fool, since it would free the wrath of Dormin.

His thoughts were cut off by a sharp stabbing pain in his head. This was severe. It wasn't as if something had tried to hurt him. It was as if something wanted to kill him. He shook his head, remembering that on his head was one of the seals to hold in the part of Dormin's spirit he held. In fact, he was certain that's where the stabbing pain was.

Valus shook his head, and was rewarded for his actions when a small person came into his view. The person had obviously been holding on for dear life to his brow. He had to look cross-eyed to see the being. It was then he noticed two things. The first was that the person was wearing the same symbol that was binding Dormin's spirit. The second thing he noticed was that this small man had the same sword that was used in binding Dormin.

His eyes went momentarily wide as he realized what was happening, and he started

to shake his head violently. The man had already climbed back up, and he hoped that shaking his head would dislodge the man again. He then realized that it had been a warning Malus had given. It had been just at that moment that the man had attacked. Now, he was being attacked, and he felt very weak. He then remembered how frail the small people were, and tried to fling the man free of him. Maybe the fall would kill the man, and Dormin would not be freed.

Just as the thought crossed his mind, Valus roared in pain. It was a pain so bad, he saw his vision blur. It was then that he felt his body stop responding. His vision was failing. He was dying. He fell to the ground, and in his fleeting vision, he saw the small man run away from him. It was then he felt it, Dormin's essence was flowing out of him. The tendrils of that essence went out of him, and into the small man.

Valus closed his eyes one last time, and thought to his brethren, *"I have failed you, my siblings. You must stop this misguided man. If he knows not what he does, he can be forgiven."* He didn't want to think the alternative was possible, that the man was a believer of Dormin's lies.

As his other senses failed, Valus heard laughter in his head. It was Dormin, and he was sure that Dormin saw this as the beginning of his freedom. However, as Dormin laughed, he heard Malus one last time. *"I will restore you once this small one is stopped."* Valus could not respond at that time. He had finally given in to death.

Dormin laughed in delight when the fool had killed the first Colossus. He was even unaware of the price he paid in killing Valus. It was evident in the way the man fell to the ground after the essence entered him. For part of Dormin's essence to go into the man's body, part of his own essence had to be forfeited.

The result left the young man prone to attack, and his loyal shadow beings were there to make sure he was returned to the temple safely. He also knew that Malus would be warning the others, and may even attempt to stop this him. However, he was certain that would not happen. The Colossi were all that was left in the lands. The only other living creatures were either lizards, or the horse.

He chuckled again to himself. The horse would have no purpose once the task was complete. In fact, he felt the horse would be in no shape to transport anyone when the time came. He then planted in the horse's mind the need to come back to the temple. He knew how the shadow beings traveled, and they would be back to the temple in a matter of moments.

That quick, Dormin returned his mind to the temple, and saw one of the shadow beings standing over the man. He then felt it happening. The statue of Valus trembled and exploded. Already, he felt part of his power returning to him, and if all went well, his brethren would pay the price for betraying him.

He then thought of the one that he wanted revenge upon most, at least here. He focused his mind on them, and in that moment, he noticed that his enemy was now noticing something was wrong. It would take time before the true extent of the problem would be known, but there was time. Now, Dormin had to wait for his pawn to awaken. Once the young man awoke, he would send them after the next of the Colossi, Quadratus. That one wasn't far from the temple, and Dormin knew Quadratus would be shy, but curious. That would be the only way to take down Quadratus, and as the young man

started to stir, Dormin told him of his next target.

Chapter 3: Curious Colossi

Quadratus rested in his cave. It was his usual thing to do after he explored the canyon that was his home. It was his usual ritual every day since the little people left. In honest truth, it was the usual ritual all like him had done.

Back in the old land, the one they all had been banished from for following Dormin, he and those like him would explore everything, each time finding new stuff. When their punishment was given, he had been saddened by the fact that he could never explore those lands again.

When they had arrived in these lands, a long time ago, he found happiness in the fact that this was a new world to explore. There had been vast deserts, caverns to explore, and even forests. However, no matter what, he would always return to the canyon, and the cave he called home there.

Then came the time of the little people, who entered the lands from the bridge over the vast desert. They had been such interesting things, and even though it took him some time, he soon understood their language. Some spoke of places they had passed on their way to the lands, and he wished he could enter their world. He also listened to their stories about smaller creatures that looked similar to himself and his brethren.

There was also the creatures that the little people had. Some of them were also similar to them in shape. The only differences were in size and intellect. He could not communicate with them either. It was as if they didn't understand the mental talk that the little people eventually understood.

Those days were long past now, after Dormin, the one who fooled them long ago, tried to control those that looked for a place to stay. The sad thing was that Dormin craved power, and he would hide it behind promises of good things. The worst thing was that he used vague promises to get what he wanted. He would promise things, but never tell anyone directly what he wanted in return.

Now the little people were gone, and Dormin was defeated. Quadratus knew that because he had a part of Dormin's essence in him. It was the only way they could all be truly free of Dormin's evil. Of course, it had cost a lot of the Colossi as well. He was the last of his type of Colossi left, and he just explored his home area now. Every once in a while, one of the others would contact him, and the smaller ones would make the trip to visit him. However, they had to keep those visits short since the longer they remained together, Dormin would feel stronger and start to overpower their minds.

He sighed in his cave, the noise echoing through the cavern. Deep down, he hoped that even a little being would return and visit, or even some other creature. However, he knew if someone had come, it would not be a good thing. The only people that would come would either be trying to free Dormin, or trying to stop someone doing that.

For a moment, his lamenting thoughts were broken when he heard Malus speak with them. A moment before, he heard Malus say something, but he had been too focused on his lamenting. This time, he heard the message. "*Valus has been slain by a little person being manipulated by Dormin. Remain on your guard.*" The words took Quadratus by surprise. How could a little person be doing that? They had wanted

Dormin defeated like the others. What would make a little person do that? It was something worth trying to figure out, since it was a very curious notion.

His thoughts on the matter were broken when he heard something outside his cave. It sounded like hooves walking around. The little people didn't have hooves. If a little person had killed Valus, then this wasn't a little person. In an instant, he broke through the wall. It would mean one of the others might have to help him close it up again, but it was needed.

As he emerged, he was surprised to find a strange figure. It was part little person, and part horse. What did the little people call such a figure? In an instant, he remembered. The creature was called a centaur. He had never seen one before. It was amazing. It didn't even look threatening. It was obvious to him that it was no danger, and it looked at him with curiosity.

In that moment, Quadratus knew he had to show the centaur around. He telepathically told the centaur, "*Welcome to my home, centaur. Let me show you around.*" He then started to move around the area, turning his back on the centaur. He had no reason to fear this action, since the real threat was a little person. He thought nothing of the momentary pain in his foot, which caused him to momentarily kneel.

He had to apologize to the centaur for this pause. He turned back to say something, and felt some dread cross into him. He didn't see a centaur anymore, but a horse. Had he been mistaken about what he had seen, and that it was the mysterious little person who had killed Valus. He shook the foot that was hurting, and felt something come out. He needed to return to his cave before the attacker got onto him.

He froze when he felt something move on his back. It had to be the little person, who had disguised themselves as a centaur. He just had to figure where the little person was, and then throw them off. For a moment, he shook his whole body. He then waited a moment, hoping he had shaken the form off. It would be a disaster if he died, even though he was curious about it.

At the moment he was sure the terror was over, he felt a painful stabbing in his backside, right where one of the sigils were. He knew what was happening now. The little person was killing him. He started to shake his body again, hoping he could shake the being free now. He couldn't die now. Dormin had to remain sealed.

Again, he paused, trying to feel if the little person was still moving along his back. After a moment, he received his answer as fiery pain pierced his skull. The little person had succeeded. He felt his life force end, and he quickly sent a message through the mental link all the Colossi had. "*I am sorry, Malus. However, it is now my time to take the great adventure.*"

He was almost startled at the quick response. "*Do not fear, Quadratus. We will stop him soon. And if we don't, others should be on their way.*" Quadratus would have nodded, but there was no more energy left in him. Before his vision faded, he saw the dark tendrils of Dormin's essence enter the young man. The young man was doomed, and someone needed to warn him before it was too late, if it wasn't too late already.

Dormin watched the death of Quadratus and if he could have smiled, he would have. Another part of his essence had been freed, and entered into the young man. More of the man's soul was gone, and in time, his soul would be reformed. Then he would

leave the lands, and take his vengeance on all who betrayed him.

He then focused on his shadowy minions. A few had neared the near-dead body near the Colossi's body. Their presence was spooking the horse, which he was already aware would happen. He had used them many times to spook the animals. This time, the horse was shying away, almost backing up the sloping road. That didn't bother him, as long as the horse didn't die. He knew the horse would be needed later.

Once the horse raced off, the shadow beings transported the young man back to the temple. While they were doing that, he looked at the woman again. By the standards of the little people, she was attractive. It was also possible she had a motherly side to her. That would be useful when she was revived.

As the figure of the young man appeared, and the second statue exploded, Dormin started plotting out his back-up plan. As he formulated it, he watched as the figure started to stir, which meant that Gaius would be the next to die. As with the other Colossi, this needed to be done, but it truly needed to be done to Gaius. Before the banishment here, Gaius had been one of his generals, and now they would pay the price for betrayal.

Chapter 4: Solitude Of The Swordsman

Gaius looked up at the sky, which is most of what he did anymore. It had been his choice to remain on this solitary local, an elevated structure in the middle of a vast lake. It was true that the lake wasn't as big as the ones Hydrus and Pelagia called home, but it was enough to ensure his solitude. It was true that the solitude was self imposed, but it was what he deserved for his crimes.

He sighed, looking up at the sky, to the Lands Above. That had been his home, before he followed Dormin. Back then, he had been idealistic, and believed Dormin had planned to improve things. This had been his first clue, once he thought about it, that something wasn't right. Things weren't really bad back in their old land. He was young, and foolish to believe Dormin.

Dormin had made him, and many of the others, believe that his way was to be the proper way. He convinced them to fight for his cause, and he realized his folly too late. He had led the charge on the ones in power, and during the charge, he saw the truth, but it had been too late for his correction to have any effect. Because he had been part of the charge, he was banished to this world.

After the banishment, he walked the land, until he finally found the lake with this lone platform. For years, he remained there, looking up to where he was certain his old home was. He even remained there when all the little people had arrived. Shortly after their arrival in the strange lands, he had heard them wandering about, looking at the place he had made his home.

He was brought out of his lamenting when a voice entered his head. It was Malus, another one of his brethren who had been fooled by Dormin in their old land. *"Be on the alert. Dormin is going to try and break free. He has been sending messages to the little people beyond our lands."*

Gaius just sighed. It was happening again. His thoughts went back to the past, when the little people had first come to the land. When they had first arrived, he had heard that Dormin was being kind to them. Dormin had even asked them to forgive his mistakes, and help the little people. That had been right, and at that time, he forgot his self imposed exile, and helped the little people.

He had been sad to find out that it was just more of Dormin's treachery. It was a kind that Dormin had perfected. He never lied to them, he just omitted certain truths. When he told the little people they could live in the lands, he never told them the cost. Dormin demanded tribute, and he and the other Colossi had been tasked to collect that tribute. At first, the tribute wasn't large, like a small livestock animal, but it kept getting higher and higher. What was worse was when they couldn't pay, Dormin wanted the Colossi to destroy their dwellings, something the Colossi had never done on purpose. The fact that they could easily flatten the little people with a stray step made them avoid that. It had been at that point that Gaius knew that Dormin was truly up to his old tricks, and so Gaius approached Malus.

Malus had been one of the first to realize that Dormin was not who he claimed to be. Malus had even tried to warn the little people in the beginning, but they didn't listen. They soon realized that Malus had been telling the truth, and they fought back against

Dormin. Even after all that, he kept to his solitude. It had been wise, at the time, when Malus had been confined to a stationary existence.

At least he thought it had been wise. Shortly after that, Dormin praised him for returning to the flock. After that, he again left his solitude, and made his way over to Malus's prison. He had been joined by others, including Valus, and a few others. Shortly after that clandestine meeting, Dormin had been stopped, his essence divided into all of the Colossi remaining. He was proud that day, when the little people left, and thanked them all.

That day, he swore never to give in to the dark essence in him. Inwardly, he thought, *"I will never betray the Colossi. I will never serve Dormin again."* He had even made it his primary reason for never leaving his solitude. He also swore to bash any followers of Dormin into pulp.

At that instant, he heard Malus speak to him again. *"I know you would not. Just be alert. Dormin has somehow bewitched a little person into helping him break free. Valus and Quadratus are gone. If you defeat this little person, they will be restored."*

Hearing that bit of news took Gaius by surprise. After all that Dormin had put the little people through, why would any of them want to help Dormin? That one would have to be a fool, or desperate. In all likely hood, the person had to be a fool. He could not fathom that one of the little people would willingly help Dormin for any reason.

His thoughts were cut short when he heard something. Something was approaching his place in the lake. He could hear it swimming, which meant it would soon make its way up the ramp. Maybe if he pretended to be resting, he could lure the attacker into a false sense of security.

Soon, he sensed the figure approaching. It approached slowly, obviously being cautious. This figure would not be fooled by his ploy. It did not matter. The little person could be easily squashed by his sword. He got up, and looked down at the person. Like him, the figure held a sword, but it only reached the top of his foot in height. It would not take long to get rid of the little person. He approached the figure, noting the figure was not moving. Maybe this would be taken care of quickly. He raised his sword and slammed it down. Just before it connected, the little man jumped away.

That move frustrated Gaius. The figure had to have some skill in fighting, to have avoided that move. He turned to make sure he was facing the man again. At that moment, he saw the sword, and it looked familiar. It almost looked like the one used to defeat Dormin long ago. If it was that one, it was good all the sigils now on his body were high up, where the little person could not reach them.

He moved towards the little person again, raising his sword to strike. The little man remained in one place, a place that looked different than the rest of the plateau. It did not matter, the little man would die under his huge sword. He raised it up again, and brought it down. Again, the little man jumped aside, and his sword hit the ground, but this time was different. When his sword hit the spot, a tremor went up his arm, and he felt something shake loose.

Then everything changed. He looked at the arm, and noticed something had broken off. Then he saw the little person running up the blade of his sword. He quickly lifted his arm, hoping to throw the little person off. Unfortunately, he was too late. The little person was climbing up his arm. He kept moving the arm, trying to throw off the

little person, but they kept climbing. He felt them climbing on his head, and he tried to shake them off.

Then it happened, a splitting headache. The man was attacking his head. He really had to get the little man off of him. Hopefully the fall from the height would kill the man. He then felt the man lose his grip. Hope swelled in him, for the man would fall to his death, the fool that he was for following Dormin. Also, if the man did still live after the fall, he could squash him flat.

He started to turn around, looking at where the man should have landed, but he saw nothing. A slight sickening feeling started to swell in Gaius. Could the little man have managed to catch onto his stomach region, where the other sigil was? It couldn't happen like that, could it?

He received his answer with a stabbing pain right where the other sigil was. It was followed by another, and everything started going dark. He could feel Dormin's essence flowing out of him. He was dying. The little man had foolishly killed him. He felt himself fall to the ground, and he hoped that as he fell, he would squash the little man. It would at least end the man's misery, if the little man was aware of what was happening to him for doing this. It was the last thought he had as the darkness consumed him.

Dormin watched with great delight as he saw Gaius fall. Gaius had turned on him, and choose not to return to him after the second betrayal. Some of the others had, but it was the ones who were left that did not. They had killed all the loyal ones that were enforcing his wishes on the little people. But it had been Gaius that had gone to Malus first. Now that vengeance had been taken care of, he could step up his plans. He could let his foes know he was returning.

While that thought give him such joy, he wondered who he should taunt first. He did not have enough power to taunt those that cast him out of his home world. Malus was already aware of his plans, and was trying to warn the other Colossi. The only one he could taunt would be the fool Emon. He would need to form the perfect taunt for him.

He then looked at the little man that was destroying the Colossi for him. His essence had just entered the man. More of that man's soul was dead, and his skin was getting paler. Soon, more physical changes would begin. The shadows would make sure the man was in the temple. However, as they moved the man, he knew he had to take some precautions. Those would involve making sure the man does not forget why he started this.

He turned his attention again to the woman. He could sense now that she would be key in a back-up plan. Her soul, once he pulled it back to her, could be manipulated. It would be the key to returning to his home world, if he main plan failed. However, he would need to make sure she could get up there. The horse would be the key. He then let out an inward chuckle, just as the third statue exploded. Phaedra would be the next Colossi to defeat. He wondered how his young puppet would handle the challenge of Phaedra. He would wait and see.

Chapter 5: Sacred Stallion

Phaedra rested in the quiet little valley, where he remained since the time of the little people. It was similar to where he lived back in the time before the trickster, Dormin, had fooled many of them in to thinking he would be a better ruler. This had been a lie, and most of Phaedra's kin realized it before they committed to the cause.

Phaedra shook his head, thinking back on his stupidity. His kind had a special purpose back in the homeland. They had the most sacred job of all: guarding the dead. All Colossi knew the dead were sacred things, and only vile things, like the shadow beings, used the dead. The shadow beings would sneak into grave sites and fuel themselves using the dead spirits.

That was why Phaedra's kind guarded grave sites, and he had missed that when he was among the banished. Banished because he worked with controlled shadow beings. That was something he kicked himself for many times. He had never realized that Dormin was using the dead bodies to increase his power and control over the shadow beings.

He sighed, and looked at the grave sites he was near now. They had been started by the little people who had come to the land. Many of them had thrived, even though they kept paying the tribute Dormin had demanded. Some did it out of fear, not knowing what he would do to them. They had started to complain and refuse when the requested tributes got to big. It had been at that time when Dormin used a lot of power to ruin some of their settlements. Some had been completely flooded, while another had been turned into a vast desert.

Those attacks had cost Dormin a lot of power, as well as some of his shadow people. Those events had led to the dark day; the day Dormin had asked him to leave the little peoples' grave site. He refused, knowing what Dormin was asking for. Dormin wanted to use the dead to create more shadow beings. Phaedra had watch many funerals end at the tombs here, and he would not allow that. His kind of Colossi knew that all dead deserved respect, and to be allowed that eternal rest.

It was shortly after that when the little person known as Lord Emon had joined forces with Malus, and they began the attempts to stop Dormin. The first attempt had failed, but Phaedra had told them that they could try again. The shadow beings numbered in the hundreds, and the Colossi of all sorts had slowly realized that Dormin was power mad. In the end, Dormin was defeated, and his shadow beings, which counted fifteen in total, went into hiding.

It was then that the little people had left. Phaedra had remembered that day, because before they left, the one known as Lord Emon had asked him a favor. He was one of the few Colossi that could speak with the little man. He could still recall that last encounter.

Lord Emon had been standing at the entrance to the final resting site. He did not venture too far in, since his people were ready to leave the lands. He recalled the small person speaking. *"I thank you again in helping us escape Dormin, and I have one last thing to ask of you. I want you to continue to guard our dead."*

Phaedra had agreed, since it was what his kind had always done. He even recalled his response to Lord Emon. *"Of course I will. My kind know how sacred the dead are."*

However, Lord Emon, you should remember that because of what we did, your life is much longer now. You have the lifespan of us. No doubt, you will see many grow old and join those who have already passed. It is the cost of the ritual." That had been the last time he had seen Lord Emon, and the little people.

Those thoughts were on his mind when he heard Malus. He had heard the warnings before, but this one really caught his attention. *"Gaius has been killed, by the little man Dormin is commanding. Be on your guard, Phaedra."* He did not need to be told twice. While he had part of Dormin's essence in him, Malus was aware he guarded the dead, and would not leave the post. Malus was not aware that he had taken steps to make sure the tombs were sealed inside, thanks to some well placed stomps, but there was still a chance Dormin could get his shadow beings in.

He then looked around, looking for the little man. The way he was positioned on the ground, he could see anything approaching. There was only one entrance to this area, and most of the surviving Colossi could not enter it. So he knew that once he saw a figure, it would have to be the little man. He was not surprised when the figure finally appeared, and it was on a horse.

Phaedra felt a kinship to the creatures the little people called horses. They were obviously noble animals, and were loyal to those they served. They could also tell right from wrong. When the little people were there, he had seen a few horses buck off owners who had wanted to violate the tombs. He watched quietly, and as the horse approached, he noticed it. It wasn't an obvious attempt to turn, or a misstep on the ground. It faltered for a moment, and that told Phaedra that the person was up to something wrong.

He got up and approached the man. His action prompted an action from the little man that he didn't expect. The man fired arrows at him; arrows that exploded. This person was indeed up to no good. He started to advance, and to his horror, the man ran into the tombs.

He then had a brainstorm. He would eliminate the man the same way he made the interiors of the tombs inaccessible. He started stomping on the ground, and as he did, he heard the sounds of earth and rock falling in the tombs. He kept it up for a bit, and looked for the horse.

The horse was a slight bit of distance away, almost ready to bolt out of the valley. He wondered what kept it from doing so. It should have been obvious that the little man wasn't coming back out of the tombs, unless the horse could feel the man wasn't dead. That made Phaedra pause. The little man could not still be alive.

He lowered his head to look into the tomb, and was startled by what had happened. The little man leapt out of the tomb, and grabbed his braids. He then felt the man start to climb. He knew what was going to happen. The sigil was on the top of his head. If the little man reached it, it would be his end, and more of Dormin's essence would be free. It also meant no one would be left to guard the tombs.

He violently shook his head, hoping to shake the little man loose from the braids. No matter how hard he shook, he could still feel the man on the braid. Eventually, the sensation ended, and he could no longer feel the little man. He hoped that they had lost their grip, and fell. He went to look down at the ground, where he figured the little man's body was.

He realized quickly that the little man had not fallen, but was on his head. The

realization came from the stabbing pain that came from the sword piercing the sigil. It was repeated so quickly, Phaedra had no time to react. The only thing he could do was collapse. The darkness of death was consuming him, as Dormin's essence left him. As his sight faded, he could see the shadow beings approaching the tomb. He had failed the little people, and he had failed the other Colossi as well.

Dormin was happy as more of his essence was freed. He was also thrilled with the fact that the tombs were unguarded. Some of his shadow beings were already making their way inside. He knew that they would work to get at the bodies. It was due to the nature of time in the lands that the bodies in the tombs would still have some spirit linked to them. They would not need any direction on what to do. However, he made sure four remained to bring the man back.

He then turned his attention to the horse. The horse, which the little man called Agro, was starting to realize something was wrong. It knew what was happening to its master. It might even choose not to leave the body of the girl soon. He could not allow that, but the horse could be useful for his other plans.

As the horse made its way back to the temple, he planted an idea in the horse's mind. If the worse thing happened, the horse would make its way to the garden. It was the ethereal bridges between the Forbidden lands and the home land. He then waited, seeing that the four shadow beings had brought the man back. If the horse was showing signs that it would not be loyal to the man, this would be the moment. It knew the man was trying to revive the girl, and if it would remain loyal, it would approach the girl, hoping that her revival would restore the man as well. If not, the horse would leave.

He watched as the horse entered the temple. It slowly climbed the steps, and he had the shadow beings disappear. He was happy to see that the horse went to the girl's side, as well as the little man. Everything was going as planned, and now he would put the man to a difficult challenge. The man would now have to take on Avion.

Chapter 6: Taking Wing

Avion enjoyed the gift of flying his kind had. He was more serious about flying than Phalanx, the other Colossi who could fly, but that had to be expected. Malus entrusted him with the task of watching the Forbidden Lands, just in case someone tried to do the foolish task of restoring Dormin.

As it was, he had seen the little man when he had entered the lands, crossing the massive bridge that led to the portal the little people had come from, and gone to. He did not know what was beyond that portal, and he was not overly curious. What he did know was that Dormin could still, even though his essence was divided up amongst the remaining Colossi, contact the little people.

He had seen the little person destroy four of his brethren so far, and with each defeat, the shadow beings appeared and took the man. All the Colossi knew that the beings were the loyal followers of Dormin. It still amazed him that Dormin had learned to control the creatures. They were beings of darkness, only controllable by the darkest of magic. A magic Colossi shunned.

In fact, he had just seen the fall of Phaedra, and he had to consult with Malus. Malus was old fashioned amongst the Colossi, but not so old fashioned that he stuck with the old ways of the old land. This made it worth the risk to enter the only area of the Forbidden lands that had any foul weather. It was one of the lingering spells Dormin had imposed on that land, that and Malus's continued confinement to that area.

When he reached Malus, their leader did not hesitate. In their native language, which no little person had ever heard, Malus said, "I am already aware of Phaedra's passing. There still may be a chance to bring him back." That was one of the good things about Malus. He felt remorse over the passing of any Colossi.

Avion flapped his wings so he could stay level with Malus's face. "I figured you already knew about it, Malus. We all knew the risks when we took on the pieces of Dormin's essence." He then thought of Phalanx, and amended, "Well, most of us do. However, I have seen the foolish little man. I could easily eliminate him. He has traversed the open areas, on that creature they call a horse. It would be no problem."

He stopped speaking when Malus glared at him. There was a slight glow in the left hand, but no attack came. It was a warning. "No. The ancient rules of conflict still apply. We do not lash out until they invade our home, and lash out at us. We did not lash out at them when they first entered these lands."

Avion bowed his head. "I know. I just thought that with the seriousness of this matter, things would be different. Dormin is the root of this problem."

He saw Malus nod. "I know, but he is still weak. We have already taken the precautions to avoid being in large groups. Many of them have stronger wills than you. It could be the combined essence of Dormin is trying to influence you."

Avion had to concede that point. There were only four mentally weaker than him. He nodded, and then flew off, figuring there was nothing more to talk about. Malus was the wisest of all of them, and they also all knew that until Dormin's old spell wore off, he would not leave that spot.

He was also certain that many other areas in the lands were still touched by

Dormin's anger. His own home area, which had been many tall buildings constructed by the little people, was now a lake. Of course, that left very little land areas for anyone to stand on. So the little man could not even reach him to challenge him.

When he reached the area, he went right to his favorite perch, the tallest of the towers sticking out of the water. Once he landed, he saw the little person. He studied the man, and noted that the man could not even reach him. Maybe the man would give up, and leave, abandoning Dormin's influence. It would be best, since Avion could not break the ancient rules when it came to the little people. Rules that followers of Dormin would easily abandon.

He was so focused on those thoughts, that he was shocked when the exploding projectile hit him. He glared at the man, and saw him firing a bow and arrow. It was one of the primitive weapons the little people used, but something about the arrows made them more powerful. Avion was happy about that, since it allowed him to do what he had wanted to do. Eliminate the little man. He left his perch, circled round, and let the speed propel him at the man. He was certain that the result would be a blow that would knock the man into the water.

As he reached the man, he was stunned to find the man had jumped and landed on him. That was not good, especially as the man managed to hold on to him as he flew. He felt the man's grip as the figure moved about his back. He banked, hoping the man would fly off, but was stunned when he felt a stabbing pain in the wing. He glanced back, and saw the black smoke that was Dormin's essence coming out of where the man had struck.

He rolled in the air, hoping the sudden move would cause the man to fall off. He circled round to where he was above during the roll, hoping to see some ripples in the water. He didn't see anything, and that worried him. If the man wasn't in the water, that meant...

He faltered in his flight when he felt the second stab in his other wing. That worried him, since that meant only one spot was left. If the man could get to that, then he would die. He started to do another roll, and then he felt it. The last stab of pain, right in his tail.

Avion's vision started to fail, and he felt himself losing altitude. He could no longer remain in the air. He was falling, right into the deep lake. He couldn't tell if the man was still on him, but he hoped he was. That way, when he hit the water, the man would get pulled under. It was either that, or hopefully the man would drown when Dormin's essence enter him. The last thing Avion felt was the water, and he only regretted not breaking the code of conflict.

Dormin watched as Avion fell into the water. That Colossi was the only one that could go to all the other Colossi with ease. He knew that Avion had a distinct dialog with Malus, but he also knew Malus didn't need the spy. Malus could have easily stopped him long ago, but he had managed to stop that. Here, in these lands, Malus almost managed to do it, but only succeed after Dormin had underestimated the little people.

He brought his attention to the little man when the piece of Dormin's essence entered the man. The man would be unconscious, and would sink into the water. Luckily, the shadow beings could flow easily through the water. Soon, the shadowy forms had engulfed the man. In a few seconds, the man was no longer floating in the water. Which

meant that very soon, the man would appear in the temple. It also meant the horse would start galloping towards the temple.

Dormin turned his focus to the temple, and saw the man lying there. Soon, the statue of Avion would crumble and fall. That would mean that five Colossi would be gone. That would mean that the man's confidence, which was disappearing slower than the soul, would be ready to tackle the more dangerous Colossi. He knew the next one would be brutally tough. So he knew what he would do to keep his own spirit up.

He reached his mind out to the land beyond. He knew what mind he wanted to find. He had been watching it ever since that man put him in this state. The time had finally come to taunt Lord Emon with the fact that he was going to regain his full powers.

Far away, in his bedroom, Lord Emon was in a deep and fitful sleep. For the past few days, his dreams had been plagued by disturbing visions. They had started off with images of a girl surrounded by a dark aura. Later, she was shown sitting on a throne, and both she and the throne radiated dark power, and shadow beings. He then knew what had to be done. If the girl was to be doomed to being a pawn of some dark force, like Dormin, it was best that she should not suffer it.

After that, he had been sure the dreams would calm down, but a shadowy figure had now invaded the dreams. All he could tell was that it was a man, and he had an odd bundle in his arms, and a weapon at his side. The dream persisted for a while, but nothing changed, until now.

Now he could see the figure, and while it was all in shadow, it had horns. Those were another sign of Dormin's influence. However, there was a more troubling image there. The sigil was on the figure, and something about the movement made him think it was on fabric, just like his honor guard wore. He also heard Dormin's voice, the first time in, what was is, decade, centuries. The curse of a longer lifespan due to the Colossi's ritual. However, while the curse of a longer lifespan could be dealt with, the words he heard were more devastating than the curse of an extended lifespan. "I will be free soon, and then I shall have my revenge on you."

Lord Emon sat straight up, and all he saw was darkness. It had been another horrid dream, but this one told him that Dormin had manipulated one of the honor guard. He quickly got out of his bed, and called for the most senior of the guards. Once they had arrived, Lord Emon spoke. "Scour the grounds. I want to know where each of the guards are. And check the reliquary."

After the guards left, Lord Emon looked in a mirror, and he could see worry on his face. If that dream had been another omen, it had been far worse than any he had so far. Dormin reforming would mean the end of the world. Humans had just enough power to survive Dormin's evil before, because of the Colossi. If Dormin got free now, all the world would be his. The time of man would end, and that scared him worse than his own death. He just hoped they could contain it this time, and stop which ever guard had gone astray, before they released Dormin.

Chapter 7: Colossal Combat

Barba sat quietly in the cavern he called home. It was one of many that riddled the lands the Colossi had come to, since their banishment from the old land. It was the closest to what his kind liked, and the little people had built a structure near it back when they were there. In fact, it brought back many happy memories of the old land.

Back in the old land, his kind were aggressive, but kept it in check by having good natured sparring matches. Every day, two of them would have a fight, which most times was just friendly sparring. It was on rare occasions that they had to settle a dispute. It was something that was enjoyed by all. It was even said some of the other Colossi would try to predict the winners.

Then the dark day came, when Dormin convinced them that the ones in charge were wrong. If there was anything his kind of Colossi hated, it was those that purposely did wrong. Barba recalled how eager he and his kin had been to fight for Dormin's cause. It had been unfortunate that they had not realized their folly until it was too late. Almost all of his kind of Colossi had been slaughtered before those remaining realized their mistake.

The worst part was when they were banished to these lands. Several, when they realized they were stuck in a land where their only companions were the ones who caused them to be banished, decided it was not for them, and they had chosen to end their existence. Then, the little people arrived. There had been little people in the homeland, but they remained far away from the Colossi, interacting with them very rarely.

When they arrived in the land the Colossi were in now, Barba noticed that Dormin had offered to protect them. For a time, he thought the one who caused their banishment had learned his lesson. The small people grew, and built up small cities. Eventually, the small people lived in harmony with all the Colossi, and some, wanting to get their own aggression out, built the arena.

Barba had enjoyed that at first, until the little people here were proven to be not as durable as the ones in the home land. Those had been gifted with magic, while these little people were not. This meant that in the arena, a fight with them was terribly one-sided, and eventually cost the lives of the little people that entered the arena. Barba felt remorse at having snuffed out the life of one, and swore never to do it again. He kept true to those words, even after Dormin had shown his true colors to the little people.

After that, the Colossi, again, banded together to stop Dormin, and the result was that Barba was the last of his kind, living near the arena, with part of Dormin's essence in him. He missed the combat, but to keep Dormin from gaining power again was far nobler. In fact, he had figured that Dormin was a Colossi that wanted not power, but godhood. No Colossi should ever think themselves a god.

His thoughts were brought back to the present by a sound. Something was climbing down the wall of the arena. That was something that had not been done in countless years. The last time something climbed down the wall had been in the years of the little people. He started to venture near the door, concerned, when Malus contacted him. *"Be on your guard, Barba. A little person has entered the Forbidden Lands, as they call it now, and has killed five of us so far. He is under Dormin's influence, and he must be stopped. He is losing his identity and he must be unaware of it."*

A new determination entered Barba at that moment. If a little person had been influenced into helping Dormin, there was only one thing to do to save them. The person had to die. The little people were not Colossi, and they would not have the willpower to fully throw off Dormin's control. If the little person were to be defeated, but left alive, Dormin would influence them again.

Once at the door, the mystical energies that had been put into it made the door open. Barba stomped into the arena, and allowed his eyes to adjust to the light there. Soon, he saw the little person, holding a sword he had not seen since the defeat of Dormin. The little person was not the one who held it all that time ago, but the little person obviously knew what it could do.

Once he set eyes on the little person, the person ran, scaling the dividers that separated the floor. Inwardly, Barba was not happy about that. Even at the best of times, Barba could never fully step over the things. Now, he was not going to do that, which would make a mess of the arena. However, it seemed the little person felt the need to head to the far end.

Barba could see the sense in that. Many little people in the past would head for hiding areas, when the combat was between two little people. It actually used their size to their advantage. The downside was that the Colossi could see in the dark. It would not help this little person. It also did not help the little person that the ruined dividers upset Barba. It would take a good deal of time for the Colossi to fix such delicate things.

As he neared the far end, he felt something hit him, and it exploded. He realized the little person had to be in the alcoves there. He was certain that the little man was not in the higher alcoves, since there was no way to them from the arena. That meant he would have to bend down and look in all the alcoves. Of course, once he saw the little man, he would reach in and grab him.

Once Barba bent down, he realized what the little person's goal was. The only way the person could get at the sigils was to climb onto him, and the only way to do that was to grab Barba's beard. He felt the little person grab on, and start climbing, making its way around the Colossi's form.

Out of instinct, Barba started to shake his body. Since he was one of the few Colossi that were bipedal, he could do a lot more shaking than the others could do. However, as he did that, he felt the little person hold on tight. When he paused, he felt the little person move. As he was about to shake again, he froze as a sharp pain hit his head. He then felt the essence of Dormin starting to leak out of him.

He tried to shake his head, hoping to throw the little person from him. He was certain that the fall would break the little person's bones. Unfortunately, the little person had held on, and was climbing all around. This worried Barba more than the pain in his skull. If the little person found the second sigil, it would be all over. He would be the first Colossi of his kind to die in an arena.

That was his last thought when the stabbing pain came again. Instantly, his life faded, and Barba started to fall, further ruining the arena. It didn't matter, since his time living had ended. He realized before his thoughts ceased that he was dying a failure. He failed in the arena, and he failed in his duty to prevent Dormin from rising again. Maybe, if one of the others would not fail, he might return to life, but now darkness consumed his thoughts.

Dormin was elated when Barba fell. That sole Colossi, the only one remaining of that type, had been a problem. It started with the Colossi trying to warn the little people, and continued with this. Now six of the traitorous Colossi were gone, and the little person had a nice portion of Dormin's essence in him. Of course, it was costing the little person's soul. That was of little concern to Dormin, since it was his freedom that was the goal.

Dormin then turned his mind to the next Colossi. He knew it would be Hydrus, and that one would pose a challenge. The little people never had the ability to breathe underwater, and Hydrus thrived in the water. He knew that issue had to be addressed while the shadow beings transported the little person back to the temple.

Inspiration hit Dormin, and he used the fraction of his essence in the little person to improve the little persons breathing endurance. It may even allow the little person to withstand being pulled down into the depths of the region Hydrus called home. It would do Dormin no good if the little person died now. He then waited for the little person to come to, so they could begin their hunt for Hydrus.

Chapter 8: Aquatic Adversaries

Hydrus swam through the depths of the lake that was his home. It was the perfect home for a Colossi whose natural home was a deep lake. It offered solitude, which was nice for his kind. The Colossi that most saw as sea serpents loved their solitude, which is why they also preferred deep bodies of water. Those, however, were in little quantity when they had been banished to this land. The only deep waters Hydrus initially had access to had been the tunnels to the ocean, or the vast body of water Pelagia called home.

Hydrus had once tried to investigate the larger body of water that the other water Colossi called home. That had been a disaster. Pelagia was not about to share the lake, and the two almost fought. The result had been that Hydrus had been forced to live in the smaller, shallower lake at the time.

As Hydrus swam around the depths of his lake, he let his mind wonder back to the times before, back when he was in his homeland. At that time, the lake his type of Colossi lived in was very deep, with a single structure in the center. A vast castle, which had a bridge to a high cliff at one edge of the lake, and would take days to reach from any of the other shores.

His kind of Colossi were made guardians, since the castle had been the prison of the Shadow Queen. A countless age ago, in Hydrus's homeland, the Colossi and the other beings of the land were plagued by shadow creatures, led by a shadow that held the form of a humanoid woman. Eventually, the Shadow Queen and her most powerful minions were contained in the castle, and the lesser shadows were exterminated. The Shadow Queen, who could not be destroyed, still resided there, even though her minions were dying off.

During one of Hydrus's times surfacing around the castle, he had first seen Dormin. The powerful, horned Colossi had been studying the castle, almost infatuated with it. It was not unusual to see the occasional Colossi staring at the cursed place, but he had seen Dormin come back many times. It had become an unhealthy infatuation.

Hydrus, however, had been blind to what Dormin had actually been doing. He was the only who had ever seen Dormin there, and he never realized that Dormin was up to something. The result had been Dormin breaking free many of the shadow beings. It was not as many as it could have been, but it was enough. The result had been a war between Colossi, and the near end of the Shadow Queen.

Since Hydrus had not realized what was happening, nor told of the repeated visits by Dormin, he had been exiled with the others. It was a huge blow, since he had been forced to live in a small area. That, he felt, was an extra punishment for not saying anything about Dormin.

Hydrus was brought out of his thoughts when he heard a voice in his mind. *“Hydrus. You must be on your guard. Dormin has tricked a little person into helping him. They have already killed six of the others. They need to be stopped. If Dormin is restored, he will take vengeance on the little people, and even the home world.”* It had been Malus, and Hydrus knew a warning when he heard one.

He reacted to the news quickly, since right after he heard from Malus, he heard something enter the water high above him. As he swam up to investigate, he remembered the little people, and that some of his lake had used to be their homes. Dormin had

flooded the area, punishing the little people for not paying tribute. Hydrus had been aghast at that, especially since their tragedy added to his domain. Out of respect to the dead, he remained in the part that was his original home.

As he neared the surface, however, Hydrus saw the man swimming along. Actually, the little man was, as the little people called it, treading water. If this was the little man working for Dormin, there was only one reason the man was here. He swiftly moved through the water, preparing his devastating attack.

On Hydrus's back, there were three spines that created an electrical charge. A shock in the water, Hydrus knew, would kill the little man. It had happened before, with a few luckless little people, who tried to tempt fate. To this little man, it would be a quick death. He had no doubt the man was already dying, especially as Dormin's spirit consumed the man.

As he neared, he was surprised that the little man had moved away from the shock points. Not only that, the man had grabbed his tail. That should not be possible. A little person could not move like that. None had done that in the past. What made it worse was the little man was moving along his body, striking at the very points that allowed him to shock attackers. Each blow disabled one of the shock points.

Hydrus knew what he had to do. He started diving deep. He knew the little people were not made for diving deep into the water. The deeper he would go, the water would either drown, or crush the man. Of course, that was if the man didn't realize the danger they were in. Once Hydrus reached a certain depth, he was thankful that the man let go.

Hydrus was certain what had happened at that point. The man had either drowned, or was crushed to death, and since the body was dead, it could no longer hold on. The little man had to be dead, and Hydrus relaxed, returning to the surface. He would have to dispose of the body, after the essence of Dormin left it. That would be enough to restore the fallen Colossi.

Those thoughts were cut short, however, when Hydrus felt the man grab hold of him again. The little man wasn't dead. It could not be possible. What was worse was that the only shock point left was at his head, near the sigil that bound Dormin's essence to him.

Hydrus decided it was time for a different tactic. He breached the surface, and swam at break neck speeds. He had hoped that by doing so, the little man would lose his grip again, and go tumbling back into the lake. He kept up this tactic, until he felt a stabbing pain at his head. He knew what it was the second it happened. The sigil had been pierced.

In that moment, Hydrus stopped accelerating. The body kept moving forwards, but it started to thrash as Hydrus' brain shut down. He noticed that in his final moments, the water was getting darker. He even felt his body start to sink. As his body died, Hydrus felt the essence of Dormin leaving where the sigil had been. He was sure it was snaking through the water, and making its way to the little man. Maybe, if they were lucky, the little man would drown, ruining Dormin's plans. That was the last thought Hydrus had.

Dormin could sense the death of Hydrus, and he knew his preparations had been

successful. More of his essence entered the little man, and that would mean he would be stronger. After that, he could start using that essence to make some of the next encounters easier. The next few Colossi would be dangerous to defeat, if the man went unaided.

While he was focused on those thoughts, Dormin almost missed the fact that the little man was now sinking into the lake. At that moment, Dormin sent some of the shadow beings to fetch the little man. He could not let the man die now. He was close to halfway done with his task. Besides, he needed the little man's body should this plan be foiled. He didn't think it would be, but there was always the possibility.

He stopped musing on that when he noticed the man had been placed in the Temple. Soon the figure would stir, and they would be off to their next battle. Dormin knew the next one was dangerous. He would have to take the time to prep the body again. The next Colossi was to be Kuromori, and his type of Colossi were always very aggressive. No doubt it was why that one had been confined to a specific structure the little people had built. He would have to afford a little more energy into the man, so the man could withstand the toxins that kind of Colossi used as a weapon. As he prepared the little man, he kept thinking that soon, his freedom would be at hand.

Chapter 9: Revenging Reptile

Kuromori basked in the sun from his place. It was the only enjoyment the lizard-like colossi could enjoy, since his place of dwelling was what the little people had called a Coliseum. It wasn't like he couldn't leave the place, but he actually preferred the isolation. It allowed him time to think, and reflect back on the mistakes that brought him here. There had been so many, and some had started long before he came into existence. Of course, all Colossi had a civilization memory, and that made it easy to remember the first thing that was held against him and his kind.

Back in the original land, Kuromori's kind were known for their fierceness, especially when their solitude was disturbed. There had been a few times where some of the other Colossi would fight them, but it was a rare few that could be an actual threat. Kuromori's kind had been blessed with what some called projectile attacks. Those attacks had come about, in part, because most of those Colossi that tried to impose on that solitude were Colossi that flew. This was all stuff Kuromori knew.

Then came the shadow beings. Kuromori had been very young when the first shadow beings had appeared, but knew the threat they were. The shadow beings would attack the living, and feast on the life force in them. What was worse was that the shadow beings feasted on the dead, draining the life energy away from the land. At first, the beings were considered vermin, until a leader was discovered. A little person who was actually a shadow being in a shell. Kuromori's kind had realized they could help, and was part of the group that attacked the areas the shadow beings had now controlled. What was discovered was that the attacks didn't destroy the shadow beings, but resulted in adding dead beings to the numbers the shadow beings could feast on.

That shame plagued Kuromori as time progressed, and eventually, Kuromori felt shame, especially when others would remark. Even after the shadow beings had been bound to a prison, along with their queen, Kuromori's kind had been shunned. While his kind had preferred solitude, it was not wanted because of shame. He longed for the day that he could redeem the honor of his kind. Then, they could return to the solitude they enjoyed, where it was imposed by their own choice.

Kuromori sighed, and looked up at the sky, taking a break from his recollections. He had been spending a good deal of his time thinking back to the mistakes, and the worse ones all involved Dormin. In fact, if it wasn't for that manipulative Colossi, he wouldn't have made the mistake that would have led to this exile. In all honesty, if he could have gone back in time, he would have never listened to Dormin.

His memories of that day were still sharp in his mind. When Dormin had offered him the chance to redeem the honor of his kind, he jumped on the opportunity. Dormin had told him that the only way he could do that was to destroy the prison. Part of him felt the action was not going to do it, but he gave in to Dormin's suggestion. It had just been a stroke of luck that when he fired his deadly blast, something had happened to cause the blast to miss the place.

After that, the battle took place, which started a war amongst the Colossi. On occasion, some of the little people had been killed, but as things progressed, his own kind were victimized by other Colossi. By the time the war ended, his kind's numbers had been decimated, and the rest had been exiled. All of that was due to his actions, and those

actions were done because Dormin had fooled him. So when they arrived here, his kind shunned him, and eventually he made his way to the location that he called home.

For a moment, Kuromori was brought out his recollections when a voice entered his mind. The voice was that of a kindred spirit, Malus. Like him, Malus had been fooled by Dormin, but Malus had wised up faster than Kuromori had. *"Kuromori, Dormin has fooled another little person. He's convinced them to slay the others. I trust you will be able to stop them. If Dormin is able to reform...."*

Kuromori understood what might happen if Dormin reformed. Dormin had been determined to change things back in the homeland. Dormin had thought the shadow beings were not a menace. The exile had stopped that plan, but then the little people appeared to exist in this world, and started to arrive in the land they now called home. He had purposely isolated himself, but if he had not, he could have warned the people.

At first, he thought maybe Dormin had learned from his mistakes, but time had shown that Dormin still wanted control, and power. He had made the people worship him, and then he made them design their laws around him. It was what had lead to the Coliseum, and Kuromori's task in the place. Dormin had told him that it was another shot at redemption, but he did not believe it. He went along at first, but eventually, he realized that all the people sent to him in the Coliseum had one thing in common. They opposed Dormin, a fact voiced by the last man brought there, and the only one Kuromori let escape; Emon.

A loud whistle brought Kuromori back to the present. He glanced up, and in one of the ruined walls of the arena, there was a little man. Right away, he could sensed the presence of Dormin. This was the little person that was being tricked by Dormin. There was only one thing to do, and he was certain the little man would not know his tricks. He decided to bring the battle to the little man.

He quickly climbed up the walls, stopping only when his head was level with the hole the man had been standing in. He didn't see the little man, but they had to be hiding nearby. He opened his mouth, and fired a blast of toxic stuff. While it would not hurt him, it would surely kill the little man. The threat, then, would be gone.

He kept thinking that until a pain hit his one leg. He paused for a moment, puzzled, and then felt a pain in another leg. In that moment, he lost his footing on the wall, and fell down to the ground, onto his back. It was not something he was afraid of. He could easily get off his back. It was just that such a fall needed a moment to recover from. Of course, he wasn't sure what caused him to fall, but he was certain it wasn't the little man. If that had been the case, then the sigil that bound Dormin's essence would be exposed, and in danger.

Suddenly, a pain when through him. It repeated, and Kuromori realized his folly. The little man had moved away from the hole, and had shot him off the wall. Kuromori quickly rolled off his back, and turned to see the little man fleeing back into the walls of the arena. He knew he could not follow the little man up there, but he had no doubt the little man would try to attack from the wall again. He turned his attention to the wall, and again the little man whistled.

Kuromori blasted the spot first, and then climbed up the wall. He was certain that this didn't give the little man time to escape. Again, he looked for the little man; and again, he saw nothing, but he did feel the sudden pain in his legs. How could the little man

move so fast? He didn't have time to think about that as he fell again from the wall.

He tried to get off his back, but the fall would take time to recover from. Time he knew he would not have, unless the little man somehow tripped. He started to get off his back, but as before he could move, he felt the stabbing pain again, and his vision started to fade. The little man had done it. The next stab would end it. His kind would never have the redemption they deserved. He would die a failure. He should have been able to stop this foolish little man. It would be his last thought as all went black and silent.

Dormin watched in silence as Kuromori died. His kind had been so easy to fool, and that had been an asset to Dormin. For a moment, he decided to silently mourn the death. Not only had Kuromori been easy to fool, but he had been an adequate fighter, and those one should always respect.

He then watched as the little man collapsed. It was the same each time as the essence of Dormin entered into the little man. Of course, that had to happen as Dormin's essence replaced what the little people called a soul. As progress of the task continued, the man would lose more and more of it. He needed to take precautions, since the man would become more and more a puppet. He needed to make sure the little man would not start questioning his task at this point.

As the shadow beings brought the man back, he peeked into the man's mind. He saw that the love the man had for the woman. That was the little man's unquestioning motivation, which Dormin had made sure of. Of course, her revival was part of his secondary plan, but Dormin was certain the little man would not see her revival. He never told the man that. A partial truth was still the truth.

For the time being, Dormin secured the memories and feelings for the girl. Those would be the last to go. He then turned his attention to the next of the Colossi that needed to be eliminated. That would be Basaran, and his home was a barren waste now, thanks to all the steam geysers Dormin had set up. Those would be needed to defeat that Colossi, but the human had to be able to withstand the heat there. Dormin would make the little man more resistant to the heat. Once he was done, he would wait for the little man to recover, and continue the task. That way, Dormin would return to his full strength, and get his vengeance.

Chapter 10: Terror In The Mist

Basaran rested in the cave he now called home. It was the only place that any of his kind would have found comfortable in the land he now called home. Of course, countless years ago, there were many of his kind that called the area home. The constant geysers caused clouds that made the area constantly dark. Even the few trees in the area were now petrified, due to the darkness. It was an area that was almost uninhabitable, perfect for a Colossi like Basaran.

It reminded Basaran of the cloud shrouded lands he and his fellow Colossi had occupied in the old world. All of his kind lived in the dark lands of the home world. At that time, his kind enjoyed seclusion, and enjoying the darkness. They never saw any of the shadow creatures that the occasional traveler would speak off. Of course, in a barren wasteland, a lack of life meant a lack of the parasites that preyed on life. It was an ideal situation.

That all changed the day the Colossi known as Dormin came to the dark lands. Several of Basaran's brethren were taken in by Dormin's claims about the shadow beings. Dormin had even convinced them that the elders had felt it was best to get rid of the dark lands. Basaran even believed the lie, since their kind relished the dark. The elders always respected the homes of the various Colossi and other life forms native to their world. It was only the shadow beings that had not been native to the home land.

That day had sealed the fate of Basaran's kind. He remembered joining Dormin and many other Colossi in fighting the elders, and trying to destroy the castle prison of the Queen of the Shadows. When the war, that almost brought the population of all the life in the homeland to levels where life would die off, ended, the elders exiled all of them. It would be impossible for any of them to return, since the way back would not allow any Colossi through. So, Basaran's kind left Dormin, and scoured the lands they were now confined to. Eventually, after several of them died off due to wounds, and the lack of a dark place to live, they found the geyser filled lands Basaran now called home.

For a moment, Basaran's recollections were interrupted when he heard Malus speak in his mind. *"Basaran, you must be careful. Dormin has convinced one of the little people to help him. The little man has slain half of our numbers. He is making his way to you next."* Basaran took that information in. He had no reason to doubt Malus, since Malus had always been able to see through Dormin's lies, but the claim did not sit well with him.

This had been due to the fact that Basaran knew the little people never liked to enter the geyser field. When they had entered the lands the Colossi called home, they never stayed. The land was devoid of all the things that the little people would need to survive. This meant the little people would stay away, and the Colossi would have their peace and quiet.

That remained the way it was, until Dormin again approached their kind. The conniving Colossi had told them that the little people were starting to plot against the Colossi, and had taken to setting up hiding spots in the geyser field. Dormin had told them that the dark area would be the perfect area for the little people to hide in. If the claims had been true, it would have meant the little people were planning to invade and kill them. That lie led to a massive disaster.

After hearing that, Basaran's kind began attacking the little people who dared enter, and started approaching the edges of the geyser field. The little people had, in turn, started attacking Basaran's kind. At first, it had been one sided, until the people managed to kill one of his kind. Soon, it became an extermination, and all but Basaran were killed.

At that point in time, Basaran had called Malus for help. It was then he had learned of Dormin's plans to keep the little people under his thumb, and how Dormin had to be stopped again. Once the true problem had been determined, Basaran left the geyser field to help finally destroy Dormin, and give them all freedom. The little people left the lands, and he and fifteen other Colossi held the bulk of Dormin's powers in themselves. The evil Colossi had been rendered powerless.

Basaran's mind was snapped back to the present when he heard an odd sound. It sounded like one of the small animals the little people used to travel. His eyes were used to the darkness of the area, and he looked around. He didn't feel threatened yet, since there was no way that any little person could find the cave in the gloom.

After a few moments, he noticed a figure approaching the cave. It had to be the little man, riding one of their steeds. He also noticed the sword the man was holding. He remembered it from when Dormin had been defeated, and he knew it could be used on him, if the little man could reach the sigil.

Basaran was determined not to give the little man that chance. The second he was sure the little man was in range, he launched a few blasts at them. While the little man would have a hard time seeing in this gloom, it meant the blasts would most likely kill the little man, and their steed.

He went over to investigate where the man had been spotted, but noticed nothing there. There did not seem to be any sign of the little man there, nor the steed. He knew his blasts wouldn't totally destroy the little man, so where had the man gone if they weren't killed.

He was momentarily distracted when a geyser went off underneath him. The force of the water had him stuck on two legs, as the others were helplessly in the air. He received his answer about the little man when pain struck two of his feet. Whatever had hit him made those two legs buckle, allowing his massive form to lower on that side. He tried to get up again, but whatever had hit his feet was too painful to recover from right away. He tried to look around for his attacker, but with how he was positioned, he couldn't see anything.

After a moment, Basaran could have sworn he felt something climbing up his legs. He tried to get up again, and this time succeeded, but it had been too late. The figure was on top of him, running towards his head. He knew what was going to happen, and started to shake his body, tossing back his own head. He needed to shake the little man off, especially if the little man had that sword.

For several tense moments, Basaran wondered if he was safe. Had he thrown off the little man, or were they still there? He waited a few more moments, resisting every slight motion as a reason to attack. Had the little man who had been killing the Colossi been flung to their death?

A blinding pain in the middle of his head answered the question. The little man had managed to get up to his head, right where the sigil was. He violently shook his head, hoping the action would send his attacker flying. For a few moments, the pain almost

went away, and he felt he had succeeded.

Then the pain happened again, and it was more intense. It was also brief, and Basaran knew why. He was dying. The little man had killed him, and had released more of Dormin's essence. That foul Colossi would be able to reform, unless one of the others stopped this little man. The last thoughts that crossed his mind was that one of the Colossi left might be able to stop the man.

Dormin watched in delight as the part of his essence that had been trapped in Basaran left the Colossi's body, and flew into the little man's body. More of the man's soul would be gone, but that was fine for Dormin. He'd still keep his word about reviving the dead woman. It was part of his back-up plan.

He watched as more of the shadow beings appeared around the little man, bringing the body into the shadow realm that was their home. It would only be momentarily, but it would be long enough to make sure the man was brought back to the temple. The more that gathered meant that his power was growing, and they could feel it. They knew their time was soon to return.

With the shadow beings arrival, Dormin returned his attention to the next Colossi that the little person would have to encounter. It was Dirge, and Dormin remembered the mental thoughts of that type of Colossi. They were some of the most bestial of the Colossi. He might have to give the little man some luck in dealing with the Colossi. He would have to fine tune the little man's aim, knowing how valuable eyes were to Colossi like Dirge. That would solve that problem. Things were getting too close for failure to happen now. It would all be a matter of time now.

Chapter 11: Hunger of the Sands

Dirge rested comfortably under the sands of his lair. He was doing what he usually did when resting in the sands. He was listening for food, not that a Colossi of his kind needed a lot of food. A good meal for one of his kind would keep them nourished for years. Most of what they needed to live was actually derived from the sun and the earth.

He was also mindful that this land he was in now was not as rich as the old land was in food. The old land had massive areas full of rich soil, and pure sunlight. The ground in the old land was so rich that the place replenished itself. His kind could burrow through acres and acres of land, and it would be just as well the next time they passed through. The animals that inhabited the land were always plentiful. His kind had all they needed.

Of course, that all had changed once his kind listened to Dormin. That particular Colossi had managed to convince them to get involved with the other Colossi. It wasn't something they usually did. They even agreed that amongst the various Colossi, they were the most animal like in actions. They were happy as long as they had their nourishment. It had been Dormin who told them that they were being kept from where the best food was. That had rallied his kind into joining Dormin.

It was also that which ended up sending them to this place. A world that was not as blessed in food as their home had been. Many of his brethren had died off; killed themselves actually. They could have been happy if the land was as nourishing as in the old land. They would have had to resort to eating animals, but the lands they were in were lacking in animals to eat. There was not enough for the number of their kind.

In the end, Dirge was all that was left, and that made him miss the others. It made him find the solitude of the place he called home now. It was the only place that seemed to have enough sustenance for him, so he wouldn't have to eat animals, at least not regularly. Occasionally, a stray animal would enter the lair, but those were few and far between.

He was brought out of his musings when he heard a message from Malus. "*Dirge, you must be careful. Dormin has convince one of the little people to gather his essence back together. Nine of the Colossi have fallen to the man.*" Dirge took that news to heart, and knew there was only one way to handle the problem. He would have to devour the little person.

Because of this, Dirge submerged under the sand in his lair. It was the best way to wait for prey, and it was something he had done before, back in the times of Dormin. Just the thought of this made him wonder if he was being deceived again. Many years before, during the time of the little people, Dormin had told him that some of the little people were trying to kill him. He knew that it was not possible for those people to do it at the time, but Dormin had convinced him otherwise.

During that time, anytime he heard hoof beats, he would lunge up, and devour the little people and their animals. To his surprise, at that time, those attacks only led to them attacking him. It was then he found out how Dormin was trying to control and contain the little people. After the other Colossi turned against Dormin, the little people trusted him, to a degree, again. Still, the memories of that time did not set well with him. His

kind would have never eaten sentient life. It was the only thing that ever separated his kind of Colossi from being mere beasts.

Hoof beats in the present brought Dirge back to the here and now. Something had started walking on the sand in his lair. No doubt, one of the pack animals that the little people used was walking through. That would mean that the little man was up there to, obviously too much in Dormin's limited control. If the little man had killed nine of the Colossi, there would be no reasoning with them.

Dirge monitored the vibrations the hoof beats made, and surfaced behind the figure. It was indeed a little person on a horse. No doubt, they would be wolfed down in one gulp. He started to pursue the figure. As he expected, the figure urged the horse to move faster. If Phaedra were still around, he would be upset about Dirge devouring the horse, but he had a good reason.

As he sped towards the little person, he saw the person stand up on the back of the horse. They were holding on to some sort of weapon, while also holding onto the things they used to control the horse. Dirge didn't understand why the little person was doing that. The little person must have known by now that such a small weapon would not work on Colossi.

All of a sudden, his lost vision in his one eye. It was as if something had flown right into it. Out of instinct, he closed his eyes, but he could not stop. He kept burrowing forward, not even recalling how soon he would reach the wall. He knew if he didn't open his eyes soon, he would crash into one of the rocky walls of the lair.

Just as he finished the thought, Dirge hit the wall. He hit so hard that the part of his body that was out of the sand fully was arched out of it. He was dazed by the strike, and paused for a few moments. With the threat that was there, however, he needed to recover, unless the little man had decided to run.

A sharp pain to Dirge's back told him that the little man had continued in his mad quest, having reached the one sigil. Dirge started to thrash about, trying to remove the little man from his back. Hopefully, when the man fell off, he'd be too stunned to move. He felt two more stabs to the sigil before he felt the little man was no longer on his back.

Thankfully, Dirge got under the sand quickly, but to his dismay, he felt the vibrations of both the little person running, and the horse. Soon the two merged, and he felt only one set of vibrations. He again used his senses to surface behind his quarry, but his vision was now impaired. He felt blind in his one eye. In time, the other would recover, but with the threat about, he wouldn't have that time for a while.

He was not surprised when the little person repeated the same stance as before. They were going to try and shoot at the blinded eye again. Dirge figured it would be a wasted endeavor, so he charged forward at that moment. This time, the little person would be eaten.

Just as he was upon the little person, he felt pain in his other eye, and all went dark. He was completely blind, and unable to slow down. He hoped, as he crashed into the rock face, that he had flattened the little person in the process. At least then he would have a lot of time to recover from the blinding.

To his horror, he felt the little person climbing up his back again. He started to shake his body, hoping to shake off the little person. No matter how hard he shook, the little person kept climbing. Eventually, the person had stopped moving. Dirge hoped he

had managed to shake the person off, hopefully from a height that the fall would have killed them.

There was another stabbing pain, and Dirge felt his life force fading. It became harder for him to think as more stabbing pains hit him. The little pawn of Dormin was succeeding. He felt it one more time, and then he felt nothing as his consciousness faded. Dirge was joining the other Colossi in the death, and Dormin was going to be free again.

Dormin sensed the death of Dirge as it happened. While the beast-like colossi was a tough one to stop, he was proud his pawn had defeated Dirge. More of his essence was being gathered in the little person, and after a few more Colossi, he would be free again. Free to take his revenge on those who had imprisoned him.

He then saw that the number of shadow being had increased again, and were bringing the little person back to the temple. They knew the little person was working for them, and their freedom. They also knew that Dormin would also free their queen, when the time was right. First Dormin had to get back to the home lands.

When the little person was laying on the temple floor, he put his focus on the next Colossi. The next was Celosia, who was one of the two smallest of the Colossi left. It would be tricky, since the Colossi would be hard to handle, and stab its sigil. Dormin even noted that Celosia seemed almost like the creature the little people called a cat. With the now added essence to the little person, he could help augment the little person's abilities, allowing him to keep up, and hold on to the Colossi. Of course, given how dark the lair of Celosia would be, maybe giving the little person a bit more night vision. He remembered, however, Celosia's one fear, and knew the might not work. Still, he would wait for the little man to stir, especially as the tenth idol exploded.

Chapter 12: Fire Will Not Kill Me

Celosia sat in his lair, keeping his distance from the ledge that overlooked the four torches. Even though they were below him, and nowhere near him, the flames still filled him with unease. He knew they were only there as part of an unused shrine, and that when the little people were here, they felt the flames should never go out, so Celosia watched over them. It was almost ironic.

Normally, fire was something that never scared any of the Colossi. Celosia knew in his mind that that was the truth. Their massive bodies, and the shell like armor they had, kept them immune from the heat of fire. His fear of it was the result of a great misfortune, one that had took the lives of many of his brethren.

He started to reflect on that moment, from countless ages ago. His kind had lived in the vast jungles of the old lands. They were one of the most beautiful in all the realm, and home to many creatures. Many had thought the jungles would always exist, and then that day happened.

The whole of the world to his kind of Colossi were shocked when the fire had started. Celosia had been the most shocked since the fire had started near his particular home. Normally, when flames started, any of his kind would stomp it out. This time, that wasn't an option, and much to Celosia's shame, he ran.

That action had devastating results. The fire went unchallenged, and the jungle foliage kept feeding the flames. In almost no time, the fire had consumed half of the jungle, and by the time any of the various Colossi and other beings living in the jungle or land could do anything, it was too late.

Celosia shook his head in shame when he recalled that day. It had been his fault that his kind no longer had a home. It left them all homeless, and after so many years of each one having their own home territory, they had to live in a pack. That was not easy for his kind, but they had managed. It was even a blessing that no one blamed him for his inaction.

He then recalled when Dormin had come to them. At the time, that Colossi had seemed so genuine in trying to find them a new home. The council of the Colossi had been taking their time in trying to find them a new home, but a majority of Celosia's kind understood they had their hands full with the plague of Shadow Beings. They had thought them to be contained when the Queen of the Shadow Beings was imprisoned, but the beings still caused problems. Some Colossi even thought the creatures of darkness were the ones responsible for all the tragedies, including the jungle fire.

Celosia even thought it was the truth, at first. Dormin kept insisting that certain measures had to be taken, and those seemed overly aggressive. To be honest, at first it sounded right to Celosia, but then he found out the truth about Dormin. It was something that Celosia didn't want to accept at first, but he came to understand it after he witnessed one of the ways Dormin tried to get others to follow him instead of oppose him.

It had been one day when Celosia was walking around the burned remains of his home. He still wanted to know what had started the fire, and it had taken him some time to find the starting point. To his horror, he had found signs of only one creature having been there, and that had been Dormin. Dormin had caused the fire, and now his kind were

following Dormin. That Colossi was an expert manipulator.

Celosia then recalled how Dormin had manipulated him into not telling about his findings. The manipulative Colossi had been able to make him think that he would really be blamed. That fear had resulted in the exile to these lands, and a further insult was that his kind forced him to watch the flames. He still couldn't break his fear of fire.

He was brought out of his current musings when he heard Malus's voice in his head. "*Celosia. You need to be on the alert. Dormin has tricked one of the little people into freeing him. He has already killed several of the others, including Dirge.*" That news truly made Celosia take notice. He had no doubt the news was true, but for a little person to defeat Dirge was almost unthinkable.

That disturbing thought made Celosia's blood run cold. No doubt that as the little person defeated the others, Dormin's essence was merging inside the small body. No doubt, the little man's soul would be long gone when the task was done. There had to be some way of convincing him of his mistake. Some way to get through to the misguided little person, like the Colossi had managed so long ago, if it was so long ago. Time in these lands was so hard to keep track of.

He was brought back to the moment when he heard movement in the room with the torches. He went to the edge of the balcony that overlooked it, and saw the little man. Maybe the little man's brain was being hindered by Dormin. If that was the case, there might still be a chance to stop the little man before a grave mistake was made.

Celosia jumped down to the room, and immediately he knew reason would not work. The little man ran for one of the torches, and climbed up onto it. Well, if the little man burned, then Dormin's plan would be over. With that in mind, Celosia rammed into the torch. To his chagrin, the little man hadn't fallen off, or into the flame, but a long piece of wood had.

He tried to shake off the impact, knowing it would make his head spin for a bit. As he did that, Celosia saw the little man jump off the torch, and grab the wood. Celosia tried to focus on the little man, but when he had, the little man was approaching another torch. He gave chase, but unfortunately, the little man had gotten on top of this one. This little man was going to be tricky to get.

Celosia could be patient, though. He was a bit like what the little people called cats. He would be ready to strike when the little man returned to the ground. To his surprise, the little man jumped down almost as soon as he had gotten up there. Celosia knew this would be his moment to shine. He charged toward the little man, confident that no weapon could pierce his hide.

Just as he was upon the little man, he came to a halt at the sight of the flame on the stick. The little man waved it through the air, and Celosia started to move backwards. The old fear and memories flooding his thoughts. Rationally, he knew the flame could not hurt him, but the fear was overwhelming. He kept backing up, trying to get away from the flame.

Just as his back paw lost traction, he realized he had backed up too far. He had reached the outer edge of the room, which meant he was going to fall outside. He had looked at that gap a few times, and knew it was a long drop. As he fell, he hoped that the drop would not jar his natural armor. A few of his kind had lost that protective shell from a drop like that, and it would take weeks to grow it back. This was bad because it would

also expose the sigil that held the part of Dormin's power he was guarding in check.

He hit the ground with a loud smack, and as he did so, he felt the armor shed. It was the only thing he was certain of as he took note of the world spinning. That was bad, but he was certain it couldn't get worse. The little man would have to be suicidal to jump down to him now, just to go after the exposed sigil. It would take a leap that would be most likely fatal to the little man.

That certainty disappeared when Celosia felt something land on his back. He wanted it to be a falling rock, but a sudden stabbing pain in his back told Celosia that the little man had landed on his back. The little man had even stabbed the sigil. Celosia didn't want the little man to get a second stab in, so he did the only thing that would dislodge the man. He bolted, and he felt the little man holding on for dear life. The little man couldn't stab Celosia, but he hoped the little man would fly off when he rounded the turns back up to the torches.

To his horror, the little man never lost his grip. That meant Celosia's only hope was to stop quickly, and hope the little man flew off. He even made sure that when he stopped, it was possible that the little man would go flying out the same place that he fell through when the man swung the flaming stick at him.

Celosia came to a halt, and he felt the man start to lift off of him. Unfortunately, the little man's grip never slackened. It was possible that the sudden stop might have caused some injury to the little man, and Celosia had to take the opportunity he had. He started to shake, in the same way a wet animal would shake off excess water. The little man still didn't release his grip. The whole scenario was terrifying. If Celosia stopped shaking, the little man would take that moment to stab the sigil again, and he couldn't keep shaking. He realized in that moment, he was going to die.

He gave in to fate, and stopped shaking. Just as he figured, he felt a second stab in his back, right where the sigil was. As it happened, he felt his vision go black. His thoughts even started to fade. He was dying, and it would free more of Dormin's essence. He took only a moment to recall who Dormin might send the next attack to, and his last thought was of how difficult the little man would have next.

Dormin reveled in Celosia's defeat. With this Colossi's defeat, that left five more to go. Added to this that some of the remaining Colossi were the largest ones by far only excited him more. Only one was near the same size as Celosia, and the fact that the little man handled that fight with ease was very comforting.

Dormin then focused his mind on the next battle that was coming up. The little man would be fighting Pelagia next. That battle would truly be one of the most trying the little man would fight yet. It was possible that the little man would be doing a lot of swimming in this battle, and that would require more stamina.

As the shadow beings transported the little man back to the temple, Dormin boosted the stamina of the little man. He also knew that if he continued to alter the little man, he would soon sprout horns. That, however, was part of his back up plan. The girl would also be part of that back up plan, just in case Emon managed to arrive and stop his plans. If his plan went right, when Lord Emon arrives, Dormin would be back at full power, and able to crush his old foe with ease.