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Upon Initial Themes

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN PROPHET AND PROSELYTE AS RECORDED BY THE SCRIBE

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* PART I *

A proselyte, who, upon wandering the grounds amongst the ruins of the Cathedral of St. Ielis is taken by the looming image of the only remaining tower, proceeds to enter that very tower, ascending its many spiraling steps with great effort. Time fell away. Darkness increased. A warm glow soon broke the umbral veil from an unseen room above. Making it around a final curve, the proselyte peered within and saw the Prophet, acting in the capacity of the Scribe, who is one and the same with the Prophet. Then did they converse, and they spoke of many things fundamental to the Bronze Order.

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I.

PROSELYTE:

Pardon my intrusion, oh Prophet, but I had not known what to expect in my mindless wandering of the cathedral grounds. I hope that I do not hinder your work, but now that I am here I have many questions to ask. Many are the things with which my mind wrestles, finding no answers on its own, and I desire a deeper knowledge of our order.

PROPHET:

It is no trouble at all. I was just finishing. Please ask according to your desire.

PROSELYTE:

I thank you for humoring me, though I came unexpectedly and at dusk. I know that we only wear bronze when we go to war with the fisher, but why is it that we choose so weak and base an armor when others seek to obtain better? Dragons are slain behind the protection of metals much superior to bronze, which itself can hardly withstand blows from the most common weapons of man.

PROPHET:

Fellow follower of the true way, know that I meet your lack of understanding with charity when I correct thee: To those who know not, bronze is not fit; but to us who know the truth, it serves with great power when we wear it. Bronze is the only element which contains the unified properties of *The Bronze*. When *Sorenth (falsely called Gielinor)* proceeded from the *Holy Essence (which is The Bronze)*, the elements that it was composed of no longer resembled the pure wholeness of the *Holy Essence* itself, but each element became of its own, as when light shines through a prism and is fractured into that which no longer, but only partly, resembles its originating source. Each had its own place within the all encompassing array, distinguished from the next by those properties it bore apart from the Holy Essence. But there was an *element left pure and complete* which engendered and sustained life. This was *elemental bronze in its truest form*. Its power was unparalleled because of its perfect resonance with *The*

Bronze, and nothing was comparable to it except the *souls of the Piscines*. Though this element was fractured in ancient times into two sister elements by the attempts of the *Darkness (known in its personification as Dagon)* to destroy it, and thereby has it lost its potency even when the two are rejoined, it gains some of its former efficacy with us, who, being chosen by *Kristy* to take up our holy cause, are with her perpetual blessing able to wear it with the power such a blessing bestows. For those that follow us not, it is but the weakest of all armors, but to us it has the power of *Kristy*. Yet her blessing only grants power over things unseen, and not protection from corporeal dangers, for it is our present purpose to war against things unseen. Accordingly, only armor made from bronze is able to withstand the spiritual powers of *Dagon* and the spirits under his dominion.

II.

PROSELYTE:

I understand now. Forgive this my faulty presumption - my former **prejudices against this most** worthy element. I now wonder whether there be any motion of initiation to receive the blessing of our lady.

PROPHET:

There is no initiation process by which one may receive her blessing. She sees **those that have the** heart of our cause, and she thereby imbues bronze armor with her power when such ones wear it.

III.

PROSELYTE:

I see this now. My mind is being enlightened every moment. Esteemed Prophet, **I desire to know** more, and I hope that I do not cause inconvenience, but I know nothing of *Kristy* or her origins. From whence does she come?

PROPHET:

Blessings upon you. I do not weary of questions, nay, **I encourage them**. *Kristy* was formed as a tear of mourning within the *Holy Essence* in olden times. And this tear was caused by a noble spirit as he ascended into *The Bronze*, bringing with him his sorrows because of the destruction that the *Darkness* wrought in his world. And it was he that was possessed of the *Darkness*, but was freed from it in death; and the spirit of *Darkness* that was within him became *Dagon*.

Kristy descended into *Sorenth*, and, seeing that all bronze was shattered by the *Darkness*, and seeing that only the *souls of the Piscines* held the world together, she sealed them within the waters (because their affinity was with the water) as a refuge for them.

Thereafter was she taken back into *The Bronze*, but she has appeared from time to time throughout the ages. And *Kristy* has indeed appeared again to us in our times to confirm the *King's position as a King after the Order of Bronze*, tarrying for a short while with us. Soon did she disappear without a word, being taken back into *The Bronze* this last time. It is not apparent, even to me, whether she will return again as she has.

IV.

PROSELYTE:

Please tell more about why it is that *Kristy* sealed the Piscines in the waters. **I know that we protect all** aquatic life, and I know that somehow fish are sacred, understanding that this is perhaps because of the Piscines, but there is much I still do not understand. Please, enlighten me.

PROPHET:

And enlightened you shall be, because this will get us to **the heart of the matter: bronze - that is, the element that was pure and resonated with the Holy Essence** like no other element - before it was *fractured in twain*, was the very thing, as you may have guessed, that caused life to flourish in *Sorenth*. Even more, *it was that which kept the whole world from collapsing into the void*. And after it was shattered by the *Darkness*, it was seen by the *Darkness* that, though this was a necessary condition for the destruction of *Sorenth*, yet it was not sufficient because that the *souls of the Piscines shared in like resonance with the pure element* and thereby had they become the *last thread by which the world hung*. Because of this, the *Darkness* gathered with his spirit many nations to rise against the *Piscines*, which lived in the *Tower Upon the Sea*, to destroy them. When *Kristy* saw that there was no hope for their survival, *she sealed them within the waters* before all was lost. Yet did she leave some few *Sages* to roam the lands, for their time was not yet. In this you have guessed correctly: it is because of this that we protect the waters, for in all but a few things in the water the spirits of the *Piscines* reside.

V.

PROSELYTE:

But how is it that, when fish perish, even in a natural manner, that the spirits of **Piscines remain in the water?**

PROPHET:

Given what I have before spoken, **no better question could have been asked.**

When a fish perishes, the souls of the *Piscines* that resided within it (for sometimes it is one, sometimes many) return through the cycle of death and rebirth in the waters. Thereby are they bound to this world of *Sorenth*. And much of this remains a mystery. But what is not a mystery, but a very apparent fact, is that the cycle must be protected from the excesses of the fisher - from the sordid machinations of fishermen whose minds are aflame with malevolent spirits. These seek, though they do not know it, the destruction of *Sorenth* itself.

VI.

PROSELYTE:

So because of the *Piscines* aquatic life is sacred and must thrive lest the souls **of the Piscines be lost from this world**. If this were to happen, you say that *Sorenth* would be lost. All this is the reason fishing is forbidden, which I had but little understood before. But now I ask, is knowledge of the fisher's craft forbidden? If I were to gain skill by knowledge instilled through magic lamps and books, by word of mouth and other means, is this against the will of *Bronze*?

PROPHET:

I could only wish all had your **hunger for knowledge after the ways of Bronze**. Alas, I drift into sleep. I shall answer your question on the morrow if you wish to return. Be careful, for the steps going down are more perilous than they are on the way up. *Bronze* be with you.

* PART II *

And so, the proselyte returns early in the morning, seeking further answers. The sun hid behind the clouds as a breeze from the lake swept over the rocks and through the trees of the sharp promontory in which the ruins of the cathedral were nested. The Prophet was nowhere to be found, and so the proselyte sat against a tree and began to drift into sleep, thinking of how the ruins of the great cathedral seemed more solemn than before. A storm began to rage. The Prophet awakens the proselyte, and, hastening to shelter while chased by a foreboding mass from above, they make it past the threshold of the tower just before the rain engulfs them. The Prophet then requests that the proselyte remain within as he steps outside again and into the weather. The proselyte watches as the Prophet passes into the opaque folds of the torrential veil, returning after a little while as though the downpour thought not to touch him. They then descend into the archives below, speaking along the way.

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I.

PROPHET:

Ah, yes, I remember your question from the night before. Knowledge and skill gained of the fisher's craft by means of books and magical instillments is not forbidden, but there is a truth that I shall reveal which you may find a matter grievous unto the zeal that lingers fresh upon your recent conversion to our ways. As you may have wondered based on what we had discussed the day before, fishing was not always evil, and not only this, it is now that it is *allowed only within our order*. For our eyes have been opened, we have been freed from the control of *Dagon* and his demons who have set the minds of the fisher aflame with avarice, *but we fish only when we have need*. And not only this, *but we alone have the power of Kristy, by way of prayer, to release Piscine souls so as to not violate their peace while they remain within their sacred vessels*, which vessels are sacred only because of their presence (though all life is in a sense sacred). If they perish naturally, the souls are not disturbed, but if we interfere, there is a great chance that their sacred rest will be troubled, for there is foreign intent behind anyone's drawing them up. *Yet to fish is a very solemn matter*, and I would that *only the wise partake* in it lest fools bring destruction. I have seen a vision concerning this matter, it can be found as the *Scribe* recorded it within the *twenty-third entry of the Revelations of the Prophet*. Seek out also the *sacred text entitled The Prayer of Release*. This can be found in the *Sacred Archives*, to which we are now going. The act of fishing that is according to our order is called *Calam*; the act of fishing not according to our order is called *Sikath*. Be wary and know that *Calam in excess becomes Sikath*! And I also say: *step not within the places where fishers do gather*, for not only will demons use your presence to make our cause seem the errand of fools in the eyes of the unconverted, but the darkness may be more than you can bear!

For though you cannot see it, the darkness is vile, and it gnashes upon all souls who would tarry in its midst; and like a ravenous beast with rapacious hungers, it devours the light to its hurt or otherwise diminishes it. Again, I say: Be warned!

PROSELYTE:

I am very surprised at this indeed, and I do not feel right about *partaking of anything resembling the* acts of the fisher. I will abstain at all costs. But now, I do question whether all creatures of the water are inhabited by Piscine souls. I have heard of such perverted beings - if I may so call them - as cave kraken, dagannoths, and lava eels which prey upon unwary travelers or either, as the legends have said, consume hate. Are these also under our protection? And also, what of amphibious creatures?

II.

PROPHET:

As for frogs and other like things, these do not have pure affinity with the [water, and therefore they](#) were not fit to be vessels of the *Piscines*. They are not, however, of an evil nature. But as for the others you mention, such are corrupted forms. They were fashioned by *Dagon* long ago after the fall of the *Holy City*. He had hoped to corrupt the waters with these, but the protection of *Kristy* would not allow it. Through the ages they became of their own, having in them the desire to be vessels of the noble race, that they might entrap them. They may be slain and hunted after, but *one must first obtain a holy herb from a priest and eat it the day of the venture, and one must always carry with him or herself a piece of bronze in whatever form one can obtain*. And if you have any questions about this creature or that, it would be wise to consult me or others who have the knowledge to speak.

PROSELYTE:

This is very troubling, can we not then, as have seen in our battles, [slay those corrupted beings with the](#) frost that falls from heaven? And now that I have said this, I realize that I do not have adequate knowledge of this substance. Prophet, if it pleases thee, enlighten me further.

III.

PROPHET:

Ah, how did we miss so important a subject when we last spoke? [The frost from heaven, as you call it,](#) is made up of the *Tears of Kristy*, for she mourns all *Piscine souls*, and awaits the day of their restoration when the *Darkness* is finally cleansed from *Sorenth*, and when the *holy element* is finally rejoined in all places. It has the power of purification, *so while we cannot use it on things seen, it burns with cleansing fire the demons that linger upon mankind*. As for the corrupted forms of which we just spoke, these are but fleshly forms that wander without true souls, and so the frost has no effect on them.

PROSELYTE:

There are but a few other things that I wish to know, and then I shall take my leave. [Can you tell me a](#) little more about the *Piscines*, who they were, why they have an affinity with the water, and why they resonated so perfectly with The Bronze? Also, I wish to know more about the nature of *Dagon*, the one you call *Darkness*. From whence did he come? And what is this that I hear about his *Dark Lords*?

IV.

PROPHET:

The *Piscines* emerged from the waters in a time before man countless ages ago. [Some have said that if](#) one looks while standing at the edge of the cliffs of the *Shimmering Coast* (which cliffs are south of the ruins of the *Holy City*), just when the sun sets upon the waters and when the skies are clear, that one may see a brilliance unparalleled in the world. This brilliance becomes so blinding as it shines over the distant waters that one cannot look upon it long. Swiftly it shows itself and swiftly it vanishes, so that many have not beheld it. The few that have, when they spread their news of it, do so in vain, drawing upon themselves the mockery of their fellows. They know not of all the conditions that must be met, causing great confusion in those that follow their words. It is as if fate deemed only few worthy of this glimmering, reflecting as off a golden rock in the distant sea. This is the way to the origin of the *Piscines*. Coming up out of the water, they gathered together to build a city. And a great light sprang up amongst

them, streaming into the sky from the throne they crafted in honor of *The Bronze*, and its laws, and its hidden mind. As they gathered in contemplation in finishing the throne did this happen. And they were filled with a great and swelling sense of purpose to build the city upwards in order to clothe the light. For ages they built until its height exceeded the mountains. At a certain time they could build no higher, for the weight of visions was too great. Then did they rest from this great work for thousands of years, compiling vast stores of knowledge, living out their lives in contemplation of the cosmic truths. And they lived for ages, an ascetic people, nothing bought or sold, but all given and taken freely. You ask why it is that their souls resonate so perfectly with the *Holy Essence*? It is because their wills were so perfectly aligned with its ways that they resonated so. And it is because of this that the light sprang up and remained with them while they lived.

As for *Dagon*, he is the *Darkness*, but the *Darkness* did not always have him. He formed from it, and is of it. I say further: the *Darkness* formed of its own from a fragment that drifted from the *Holy Essence*, and it took a corrupted form because the evil in *Sorenth* provoked it so. After a time, its power grew, feeding on that which it had first attuned itself, that is, moral turpitude - perversion of all good things by perverse wills. When it had grown so great that the stars trembled at its presence, it began to war with the *Holy Essence*. But the *Holy Essence* was much greater. By its hidden will did it allow the *Darkness* to form, and by the very same did it overcome it, banishing it weakened into the universe, allowing it to journey into *Sorenth* in order that *Sorenth* would reap what it had sowed. After this, as I have said, the *Darkness* was shattered in its attempts to destroy the *holy element*, that is, *elemental bronze*. Though elemental bronze was broken in twain, a great many fragments became of the darkness. Out of some of these grew powerful lords. They had no mind, but only instinctual will. It was only when one of them possessed a twin prince of an obscure kingdom in the north that *Dagon* formed, having learned the will and spirit of man. Besides *Dagon*, there were *fourteen others*, but he became the greatest of all - he became their master. There came a time when he had gathered these *fourteen* unto himself, setting his gaze thereafter upon the *Holy City*, but before he could bring about his final destruction, his corporeal form was slain. His spirit fled into the wind and the rest of the fragments were sealed away in *Yorbz of the Valley*. But *Dagon* having formed as a spirit, he remains with us, roaming wherever he wills, and no one is able to take hold of him. He is a hollow personage, a mockery, a void. The fullness of his name is known only to the *King*, and perhaps a few with prying eyes, but I may reveal it further only as far as this: **DAGONSHAL**. One may never use this name lightly, but only to curse him. And I will say also that the prince whom he possessed, it was he who ascended, his soul freed from his dark bondage, into the heavenly realm - into *The Bronze*, bringing his sorrows with him, provoking *Kristy* to emerge.

And they spoke of other things, having reached the Sacred Archives, but this is as far as the Scribe deemed necessary to record, for more knowledge can be found in the Revelations of the Prophet, and in the Sacred Archives, for all those who seek it.

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