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The Deceivment Of The Witch In the Ruins.

By Samuel Cortes II

Thick cobwebs hangs from the passageway leading into the chamber. Splitting the strands with his staff, Sestein crosses the doorway. Light streams in from unknown sources patching the room in dimly bloomed areas.

Dripping water echoes from somewhere nearby. At the opposite end of the chamber, a makeshift altar stands erect, illuminated by various candles that slowly orbit the structure.

Within the alcove, a feminine aria reverberates off the deteriorating ivy-covered walls.

As he continues towards the altar, he observes the room vigilantly. Coming to a stop, Sestein braces himself upon on his staff. His vision blurs. A disorienting white noise builds up. His knees falter for moment...

Silence.

“Have you come for me?” A maidenly voice whispers from the shadows in the room.

Sweat drips form his palms. His heart pounded in his chest. A slight moan escapes his parted lips at the sight of her.

Her face blushes. With a seductive smile, she saunters toward him. “Are you the crux?” As she steps closer to him, he levitates off the moss smattered stone floor. His eyes flutter and roll to the back of his head.

“Stay here with me...forever.” Her voice echoes in the chamber.

He gulps and exhales. “As... as you wish.”, but his lips were sealed. Slowly her smile decomposes. “What?” she remarks.

It begins as a high pitch whistle, then it steadily grows. An incantation in a male’s voice.

“Ju - soo-heh-tahr - chan eil - ħawl – di sopra – meni.”

She warily glances around the chamber, cautiously watching the shadows. “Who else is here with you?” she hisses.

The chanting continues unfaltering and rhythmic. The voice continues getting closer, more distinct and vigorous.

A whispered breath crawls below her lower ear, making her swipe at her neck and hair. Her face creases as she shakes her head trying to prevent this trickery.

A sudden silence envelops the room, emphasizing the air seeping into the empty space.

She tilts her head up towards Sestein. Even though Sestein was still entranced and slightly slacked jawed, the masculine voice surrounds her somehow.

“Is it unfeigned or do the grains of sand of an hourglass count its days?

It straps you bare, asphyxiates your thoughts, cinching your very spirit in its depths.

What Am I ? ...”

Unsettled, she draws back her power, almost dropping Sestein in the process.

In midair, he suddenly awakens, quickly thrashing his body forward, sending his staff spearing though the air.

She sides steps the staff as it nearly misses her head. She spins about and draws a dagger in mid-turn, But as she turns back to refocus on her target, a shocking sting to her lower adman intercepts her next attack.

The man that was once in her clutches, now’s stands abreast to her. Slowly drawing the dagger out of her.

In the thralls of pain, she instinctively uses her powers to fling Sestein across the room, slamming him into some old shelves near the altar. She falls to her knees clutching the bleeding wound.

“You made a promise!” she yells towards the Harbinger Gem on the makeshift altar. “I did as you comman- aghk-“

Her body slouches forward as she falls silent. Sprinkling of pebbles and dust scrape across the old stone in the silent chamber. Gradually her body begins to wither and mummify, convulsing and falling apart. Her souls' essence begins to vapor out from the empty sockets of her skull and into the air like a radiating powder.

An unnatural breeze whiffs and swirls the glowing particles towards and into the Harbinger Gem Sestein now held in-between his bloody fingers. As the last remanence of her essence seeps into the Gem, he quickly envelops the gem into a cloth. Secures it into a small pouch, knotting it tightly.

Standing alone within the alcove, Sestein shakes his head in disapproval. He walks around the wilted remains on the uneven stoned floor.

Wincing, Sestein picks up his staff off the floor. A cold wetness at his side gooses his paling flesh. He leans upon his staff and gazes at droplets of deep red that free fall from his finger tips, splotching his boots and the crumbled stones underneath.

He gnashes his teeth as he palms the gash at his side. He slowly retraces his path down the dreary hallways, and past the crumbled arches of the great hall once more.

With a feeble smile, Sestein crosses the threshold. He hobbles towards the sunset beaming through the ravaged main entrance, It's warmth being his guide.