

Life inside the Shadowed Library, the domain given to my piece holder's three students, is about as exciting as it always is. I can see my only peers at the distant tables silhouetted by my own lack of insight. I have not met them nor seen their faces, though I know they are there as they know I am here. Such is the nature of the library.

The tome I have before me today is filled with knowledge of the brutal sort, 'Essence: War and combat' by Sheefa. Sheefa, from my understanding, is an Aerune player with the ranking of deity and a great deal of respect from other players. Given the chance, I would meet with her to discuss the contents of this tome further. The tome is read from left to right, top to bottom, displaying only images. Then the tome is read from right to left, top to bottom, as it displays only the words attached to the previously mention images. To retain the knowledge one must read the tome in this manner at minimum three times. Any fewer and the tome takes it's knowledge back from you.

Life within the Shadowed Library consists of hours on end of simply reading, studying inherent knowledge within our respective races so that one day we might master an empty world. As mundane as life is this waking hour, I've found something to distract me from idle behavior. Beneath the desk I call my own is a small hole, nothing more than a loose floorboard when compared to the mundane world. Looking through this hole I have peeked into the world from which I was born. A world where breath is life and water flows only by the pull of gravity. I don't know if I can ever truly live in that world again as I have grown so used to the realities the bend and twist about me now. None from that world can comprehend the happenings I call everyday, simple, and ordinary. For these creatures, what goes up must come down where I know for certain that what goes out must move to the closest and strongest source of pull. I still haven't gotten my glass from the ceiling, I suppose I'm lazy in that respect.

I won't lie, I have often fantasized about returning to that land and living breath to breath, meal to meal but I feel so strange just remembering the mortal coil, the way it felt to exist, the knowledge you have a end in sight. I know this will ultimately be my fate as I bring about the first struggle of life in a new world but cringe at the notion of leaving the safety and boredom of the library. Few things change here and my very nature seeks to offset the flow of these parallel lines I call my home.

Regardless of my fantasies, I peered down through the hole and saw something terribly disconcerting. I fear that what I saw will be the fate of my eventual charges. The world beneath my feet is ravaged with war and violence as it's primary method of change. I saw a series of wars spanning three generations, the imprisonment of a whole people and the slaughter of millions of innocents. It was senseless and yet produced the technologies and knowledge that would save millions more in the next hundred years. And before that hundred years is up a whole new war would boom out of a series of smaller wars that would then do almost the same thing. The technologies from this latest war becomes the beginning of their

space faring age as they take to the stars in automated ships in search for new life and life sustaining planets.

It is my dream that my eventual charges will not need such a gruesome method in order to change but sheer competitive willing to evolve. The distinction I believe I need to make is so minor, yet so important. The world from which I was born seeks to 'Be The Best' and as such feel the need to bring down their betters which brings about everything from foolish bullying to war. They each wish to be completely undefiable, correct, the best. I must instil the need to 'Do better' rather than 'Be the best' so that regardless of their shortcomings or if they are incorrect they will simply continue to try and do the best they can. Competition is equally driving. I will have to study this subject next. As much as I applaud Sheefa's true insight on the essence of war and combat I wish to avoid the need for it.

Violence isn't the only way, though many species have found that it works. As gruesome as it can be, it seems necessary for the people of my origin.

~ The 9th