

PROLOGUE

The many subraces of Uragi that inhabit the land of Phi'uja Maana have settled their kingdoms and capitals that best suit their nature. The Sekht huddling its capital amidst the sultry rainforest, Phenx amidst the rolling dunes of the deserts, Viidorn proudly atop volcanic masses and mountainous fissures, and many others, but are too many to mention. But in the case of the Udakii, the dark skinned, bioluminescent variant of the Udakii, looked upon the grand, lustrous lands of their brethren, proudly displayed in all their gods given glory and thought to themselves; "screw those guys" and promptly dug a very big hole into a mountain. This is what birthed the great city of Suhl'kaajt, the City Beneath the Stone.

It is a very common misconception that the Udakii are very archaic, often attributed to only weidling stone tools and weaponry, bearing jewelry made from bone fragments, and generally living in caves and shallow ravines, banging rocks together and eating bugs off the wall like savages. Although it is true that in some regions of Phi'uja, this description may fit one such Udakii huddled into a narrow Crevasse throwing rocks at anyone that happens to meander by, many of these misconceptions are over exaggerations of common Udakii culture, as one of which is greatly under exaggerated. The Udakii don't just live in caves; they live in grand Caverns. Large expanses of underground networks and buildings carved directly into the stone that a single Udakii village could put to shame a dozen Phenx villages with its intricacy and attention to detail, all achieved by the Udakiis adept skill at masonry. A single Udakii could carve their home within the side of a cliff face, etching and engraving ornamental designs into every surface of visible stone, treating the rock as a canvas, bringing out the beauty hidden within the stone. And if one skilled stonemason could bring forth a home from a cliff, a group of stonemasons could bring forth a village within a gulch, but an army of stonemasons could bring forth a city within a mountain. Which they did. but, impressive as it was, they would have changed their minds almost immediately if they looked into the future and witnessed what future kings would inherit their mountain city. If they could, they would drop their chisels and throw themselves into the nearest pit, where they would promptly build a city above ground like a sensible Uragi would. But this is where it all begins, within a mountain, in the city of Suhl'kaajt, where the king and queen of the Udakii are going to have a very complicated birth.

During this time, the city Suhl'kaajt was relatively peaceful, keeping to themselves most days and doing very occasional trade with outside cities, focusing more on their crafts and internal politics more than anything else, which was relatively fine. The city itself was incredibly grand. Once hearing about it, most would believe it just to be nothing more than a bunch of fancy rocks in a dank and dark cave, but the reality of which is far more impressive. The mountain which Suhl'kaajt resides under as been more than dug into; it has been completely hollowed out, to the extent that within the city, the

interior ceiling of the mountain could appear as a vast night sky, with blue glowing stars blinking and pulsating amidst the darkness, which were just the bioluminescent flora that had grown on the walls of the immense cavern. Each building had been individually carved out of the stone of the mountain, each and every one intricately sculpted to be unique from one another, creating expensive towns of densely populated stone buildings of various shapes and forms, with roads winding in spirals to interconnect them all.

The city itself was entirely freeform, as if the stonemasons that had carved out the city were each individually expressing themselves as they chiseled each building, road and statue, which caused the city to have a very unclear, yet unique structure. But apart from its freeform nature, Suhl'kaajt comprised of three sections.

At the bottom, closest to the earth and the gates, was intended to be merely residential. Small, individual housing, each fitting around a small family of Udakii, purely meant to hold the majority of the population of the Udakii that wished to reside within the mountain walls. This was the largest of the three sections, purely out of necessity.

The middle most section was given much more generous treatment, catering towards the more opulent residence of the Udakii. Large buildings, intricate roads, artful statues, places of worship, it was a haven of worship and grandiose living that most Uragi strived to settle for. But the middle section paled in comparison to the highest section; the royal palace.

The palace itself was purposely built into a large section of the wall of the mountain, giving it a grander feel as if the palace was the mountain itself, looming over the towns below. Luckily, out of pure coincidence and alleged “totally intentional” planning, the palace itself was chiseled out of a vast, expansive crystalline cavern, which was then incorporated into the palace's architecture. Halls lined with large, glowing crystal structures, weaving and mazing as the halls were carved out of the natural paths of the cavern itself, rooms built off to the side to hold dining rooms, foyers, courtyards (somehow) and great halls. But the most convenient out of this already convenient architecture, was the throne room. The throne room was carved out of the largest crystal deposit found within the cavern, with a giant, central crystal cluster towering over the others shimmering onto the walls and emitting a strange, natural light. There was a plan to chisel the throne out of the stone, but upon witnessing the crystal's natural beauty, they instead chose to chisel the throne out of the crystal structure itself, which they correctly thought would be “really cool.”

During this time, the current king and queen of the Udakii held incredible respect over their disciples, ruling over Suhl'kaajt with a gentle word, keeping the law and respecting the culture of each and every Uragi. But they felt their reign was growing towards its end, and they knew the king or queen was destined to take up the mantle of the crystal throne. They needed an heir. Later that night, under the quiet light of the 3 moons, they proceeded to fuck each other's brains out, taking advantage of the queen's estrus cycle to procure a guaranteed heir.

Months passed, and soon the queen began to bear children, only it was a bit earlier that first thought. When the time came, and she eventually gave birth, two beautiful peacubs stared back up at

their parents, a pair of twins with black skin and glowing blue speckles. They were both beautiful, and both healthy upon first inspection. But it was only a moment before they realized one of them wasn't moving. The first born of the twins laid still and motionless, as the second born flailed and cried as normal. He was stillborn, much to the king and queen's dismay.

Out of desperation and sheer instinctive panic, the two set down to the middle section with both children in their arms, taking their stillborn son to where the Udakii worshipped their gods. They set the child in front of a statue of Maana Luul, the goddess of creation and bringer of life, and begged the goddess to return the life back to their son. They pleaded for hours, their throats hoarse from practically screaming to their goddess for aid until a figure emerged from the statue, one that resembled nothing like the goddess they were hoping to call upon. The figure revealed itself to be Luurn'itaaj, the goddess of misfortune and chaos. Instead of granting their pleas directly, she proposed a deal to the two grieving royals. She could bring the stillborn child back to life, but at the cost of part of the second child's soul. They agreed to these terms with little hesitation, setting their second child beside the stillborn for the goddess of chaos to perform what she had promised. With a snap of the goddess's fingers, the king and the queen witnessed their child's soul leave their body and hover above the two now lifeless bodies. The wailing soul writhed in the air before the goddess tapped its head with a single finger, where it then began to slowly tear down the middle, perfectly sectioning the soul into even halves. The two halves of the soul lowered back down into both of their children's still bodies, and soon both of the children began to cry, and the king and queen were relieved. They thanked the goddess, who looked down at them with a silent, nefarious grin, and vanished back within the statue.

Many years passed and the two princes, Vaa'Kyraa and Vakth'Bythnul, lived their lives healthily, both becoming outstanding heirs to the throne. Well apart from Vakth, who had mysteriously gone blind in his teenage years. But apart from that, they were both healthy as could be. As the years grew longer and their coronation grew closer, Vakth's physical condition began to worsen, while Vaa's only improved. Vakth dwarfed in comparison to his brother, his body becoming skinny and sickly, his hair and body losing color, and most of the food he ate turned to sand in his mouth. But his physical condition was the only surface, as his mental health was the one that really suffered. His behavior was spastic, violent, and unbelievably nonsensical. There were many times during their families dinners, Vakth would stand atop the dinner table and stab the main course to death with a steak knife in order to prevent it from lunging at his face, screaming at the course about how it "could have killed him if it were faster." Behavior like this was very frequent around the palace, and was much to the dismay of the king and queen. And it only began to worsen. Day after day, year after year, Vakth's deteriorating mental state caused chaos throughout the palace, and soon his family turned his back on him in favor of his brother Vaa.

Alone with nothing but his thoughts, and on the day of what was supposed to be Vakth's coronation, he saw, more or less, his father crown his brother the new king of Suhl'kaajt, watching from a balcony with his name. That was until another Udakii, a young guard named Tuh'adek,

approached the besmirched prince and whispered in his ear, and placed the king's royal dagger into his hand.

That night, as the new king rested in his newly attained royal bedroom, moonlight bathing the room in a gentle glow, as the gaunt figure of Vakth appeared through the doorway, silently feeling his way across the room, brandishing the dagger Tuh'adek had given him during the coronation. After several attempts to find his brother's bed, and several more failed attempts at stabbing pillows he thought were his brother, he finally found his way to the center of the room, looming over what he thought was Vaa's bed. Just to make sure, Vakth tapped aimlessly in front of him, whispering his brother's name. Vaa stirred awake as his half insane brother began to tap at his back and chest, and before he could fully stir awake and ask what on earth his brother was doing, he looked up with half opened eyes and saw his brother raise the dagger, and plunge it squarely into his heart.

The room fell silent, Vaa laid wide eyed and still, and Vakth was frozen. The wound that had been left by the dagger began to shimmer around the cold steel, glowing a bright light from deep within the cut. Vaa looked on at his brother, barely clinging on to life as he saw the same wound appearing on Vakth's own chest, shimmering with the same glow right over his heart. Vakth convulsed as Vaa slipped away, his vision going dark as Vakth suddenly fell to the floor, having a seizure as the body of his brother bled out onto the bed.

When the prince woke up, he found himself sprawled out onto the cold stone floor, his heart aching and beating erratically as he crawled up to his feet and looked down at the corpse of his brother, feeling his cold face. The king, his brother, dead at his own hands, the knife still stuck into his heart. But as he looked onward, he could see something in the blackness of his vision, a clear visage of the Udakii he had just killed, a spectre of the deceased Vaa staring at him like a disappointed parent. This was the first thing Vakth had truly seen in quite a while, and thought of it merely as a madness induced hallucination, the ghost of his brother was all too real. Behind the panic riddled Vakth, the figure of Tuh'adek stood in the doorway, his royal sword drenched in blood and viscera.

"It's okay, my king..." Tuh'adek spoke to the shaken prince. "There is no one that can stop you from taking the throne now."

Vakth turned to the spectre of his brother, with a smile, the last strand of Vakth's sanity was finally snapped, and he began to cackle an insane laughter that rang all through the halls. Vakth got what he wanted, and the following day he was crowned the new king of Suhl'kaajt, his brother and parents having been mysteriously killed in the night.

Vakth lived like the king had always dreamed of being; doing whatever he wanted, with no one to stop him. He set laws in motion that made very little sense, spurred on only by his insane and childish thinking, and when met with opposition, his true colors began to show as a tyrant, ruled by his own anxiety and fear of every little thing. Imprisoning, enslaving, and executing anyone he deemed to be a threat, which was almost everyone. He lived the life of what he thought a true king should, ruling

with an iron fist and living every debaucherous fantasy in his mind, and with the aid of his royal protector Tuh'adek and his fleet of royal guardsmen, he aimed to live out those fantasies every single day. But one thing that never came to the Mad Kings mind, that his careless fucking of every woman the guards brought into his bedchamber would eventually have him bear his own child. A child he wouldn't know existed.