

## **Inner Excogitation on the Curious Diren Stela**

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**Artifact:** Stone carved relief

**Origin:** Unknown. Fabled to have been unearthed 2E418 from Summerset, near the Caomus River. Brought to the Vaults beneath White-Gold during the Septim Conquests. Relinquished to the Mage's Guild in 3E359 by Pelageus IV in hope for uncovering medicinal aids for the infrastructure workers engaged towards Gideon in the Black Marsh region.

**Measurements:** 50 pertans wide x 100 pertans tall

**Description:** Central figure of a tower extending from base. Entire upper half encircled by a stylized solar eye. Within the eye is an encircled drake, chest situated as resting on the top level of the tower. The drake's arms are clawed, but one holding a knife poised at it's own breast. Standing on top of the drake's chest is what appears as a hand held looking-glass. Along the drake's inner circle are prominent totemic figures, holding weapons also directed in aggression toward the object atop the tower and drake. On the outer radial of the drake are multitudes of lesser chimerical figures, all killing, mating, and mixing with each other. As each couple clashed, out of their meeting emerges more chimerical forms from another ring, who then engage and repeat another emergence into another ring that repeats to fill up the edges of the solar eye. The base of the tower show a lightning bolt shaped crack running up its length. On inspection its noticeably not incurred damage, but apart of the original carving. Closer examination reveals the shape of the crack is also present on the Drake's chest, the heads of the inner totemic figures, and even on the inner oval of the looking-glass. The door to the tower, where the Tower's crack-bolt begins, is represented by a larger version of the same looking-glass symbol. On each side of the base are 2 sets of 8 figures, with each their own looking-glass held to their chest, all kneeling in reverence to the tower's entrance.

**Past scholarships:** Sizable records of study from Callus Sardinius, Arvian Luffey, and Lessa Cardonus... each focusing on deciphering alchemical formulae interpreted from the coupling of the chimeric figure depictions. Most notable are the successes of Tarvis Rendil, who through affiliation with a close friend, had major breakthroughs that aided him in the creation of his Apparatus Table.

### **My inner commentary that day...**

*Would it be possible to say that the creature branded Lorkhan never really existed in the Dawn at all? But rather resided inside the Convening attendants until its end? Only then manifested at the first tick of the dragon's coil...*

*Did they create the Void Ghost as a scapegoat to bear their shame as Auri-El's Ethos bid them*

*to spit out something they all had held, so it might be cast off across the world? At such an Adament suggestion, was it only then they shed a face to blame, so they could be free of guilt... and time only was asserted linearly as to solidify its separation?*

*What if that is why he's Missing? Because that Urge that drove us to make a horizon to rise over... once dwelled inside us all? Did it leave an impression, a wound-void, empty near our centers?*

*Perhaps we remember, not wholly, but enough to project the root of its desire, as a heart still throbbing and counting the time since... a secret temptation to return to, or a key to the horrors we wish to remove from our awareness?*

*Git of Padhome... yet that entity does not exist within the context of this world really... all encompassed by its slumber. Totality for us has a name, and it's a singular tower... not truly twinned in that way... mirrored only by the impressions by the eyes outside that dared observed its faults.. they dwell not within, but their revealed limitations of its structure created a crack in the foundation... and a static thing like a tower cannot truly evolve, nearly fall and crumble in the face of lack... but leaving a seductive suggestion that it could be rebuilt.*

*That it is where Padhome resides... within each of the scattered pieces... rooted at the absolute center, a lack of, a zero tearing away what impressions the name once held on to, too tightly about itself... the not-even-there drove separation... the stride of fragmentation. Division is a motion, only becoming evident from the space that enters new distances between... spaces where outside things can come and find root here through, but that's another matter...*

*Yet all the dispersed fragments carry the same croock at their axis. New names just false coverings obscuring the empty... As Dispersion was fueled, so it gave rise to an Urge. But it came not from without... it rose from within... to each and every fragment given motion... and brought the conspirators back together.*

*That Urge lead to combined effort... effort that lead them to a conclusion... a conclusion it seemed most could not live with... or adapt to... what truth did they learn about themselves?*

*Many met this outcome with concern or fear... fear lead to flight response... and eyes broke on the edge as flight returned them to formless innocence.*

*Others denied it... held a meeting to enforce their Adament assertion to the contrary... assertions of preferred selves... slave to former self-meanings... Erecting a monument to their exultations. But Few came out with more than the others... but all left the grounds with something Now Missing...*

*That's what we are... offshoots of the deniers who came out lesser...*

*Even the few who embraced it, too now saw its lack. But they embraced that empty inside and emulated it... making themselves worlds of voids, crowned by their desire to hold on to themselves...*

*Over the wound-touch of Padhome, the Never-There, we built shrines to obscure it. From shrine came houses to hold it, and yet even more walls to hide behind... yet unbeknownst to all, each new house still carrying a shrine to the injury at its center... the alter to which is the impression of something that is Missing... Ghosted and out of reach.*

*Yet we still see enough of it from time to time to make us wonder if it returned. A walking nerve traversing in skin like ours, towards an unknowable goal, only visible when enough gathered together in a place to be noticed.*

*Who is this Alter to Padhome? Hunger? Trickster? Prophet? Alchemist? Serpent? Fox? Scarab born to die and rise again? All these things or none? None can be truly known, but yet a fiery lost wisdom still lingers. It must have been true enough to shatter the All's internal reflection.*

*Remove your agency to approach this tabernacle, or risk its scorching. Walk a way that pays no heed for destination and you'll find it. Others can show you the layered gates, places where the Urge passed through within them...*

*Stride the philosophies between, but that's not how you can breach through the final veil without sinking... know your death resides in the shrine of the not-there... embrace the Missing at the foot of the byproduct of the Not-Even-There... and become purified into its like.*

*Only then so tuned to the Missing's edges, you may find impressions that could reveal that Urge there that once belonged...*

*- Ziah Dreth-*