

THE
CROSSFADE...
SOLO

The title 'THE CROSSFADE...' is rendered in a large, ornate, serif font. The letter 'C' is particularly large and stylized, with a decorative flourish. A musical note is integrated into the design, positioned between 'CROSS' and 'FADE'. The word 'SOLO' is written in a smaller, simpler font below 'FADE'. Three small blue circles are placed to the left of the 'C' and three to the right of the 'E'.

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With that said, Please Enjoy!

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Chapter Five

MEMORY GAMES



A Few Days Later...

Lemon's recovery was rather smooth, but a little longer than both she and her family expected. This may be the case because everyone was so eager for her to return home. At first Lemon perceived their anxiousness as missing her a lot; however, she later found out it was because they needed to talk to her about something they did not even want to mention in public. As a result, she had become very irritable and well...sour.

Her arrival home was quite messy. She and Valerian got right back to their bickering as usual, and Dahn really didn't have much patience for either of them when it began. He had only eyes for the prize at the moment; getting on with the discovery of Mnemons. After the events at the Talin's residency, Dahn, Valerian, and Haidee all agreed to go quiet on the whole fiasco until they figured out if Lemon was a Mnemon too. Nonetheless; they are all only too keen to explore this avenue more.

The day after Lemon's release was a beautiful, calm, and clear, Saturday. This day of the week was commonly known among the 3 members of the house as "Sleep Late Day", in spite of this; Dahn was up at 7:30am. He was fully dressed and pouring over his 'secret material' he was often occupied with in the past two weeks. He knew after Lemon's experience with the bell, whether or not she was a Mnemon, he'd have a ton of explaining to do. Knowing how hard it could be to have calm conversations with his family, let alone the nature of what he was going to be telling, he needed everything to make sense. The best way to do that, was to make sure it all made sense to himself at first. This was his chance to finally convey his ideas and research, as well as prove that Crossfading was not only real, but a full-fledged solution to his parent's amnesia. If he could get them to understand the power that was in their midst, maybe they would agree on helping him carry out a plan to finally end this chapter of their lives and begin a newer and happier one.

Dahn wasn't the only one whose excitement about the Mnemonic bell incident wasn't hidden. Haidee had been busy visiting with the Xiriga's all week long. She found herself spending a lot of time at their house, talking to them, cooking for them, and just hanging around. When she wasn't at work, or running career related errands, she'd bring them random useful things just for an excuse to hang around. Dahn perceived that she was exceptionally lonely and after a long discussion with his uncle the night before Lemon's release. As a gift for being so forthcoming and kind, they decided to give her Lemon's keys to the house and get another pair cut for the blonde.

Therefore, when the ambitious young man smelled a delightful smell creep into his room unannounced during his reading, his first thought was that Haidee must have come over and was cooking them breakfast. After all, no one else in the house cooked "breakfast".

"Well good morning Mom." Dahn joked appearing in the Xiriga's kitchen doorway still wearing his bathrobe.

"Good Morning!" Haidee beamed turning around swiftly to make eye contact with her new company. "I know I came in sort of unannounced, but I hope you can forgive me. I wanted to cook Lemon a nice breakfast. I felt really bad when she found out we were eager for her to come home to test her."

"And here I was thinking it was for me?" Dahn joked. "I mean because you're happy I commissioned for you to be able to come here whenever you want." He then added quickly for clarity.

"That too!" Haidee added sheepishly with a chuckle. She began grabbing screaming bacon from a sizzling griddle and placing them into a porcelain plate. "It's just home is really lonely you know? And you guys are fun to be around."

"Even Val?" Dahn challenged.

"Ha-ha! Val scares me and compels me at the same time! His sarcasm and wit never gets old. It keeps things interesting even though he can be so annoying." Haidee laughed.

“Yeah wait until you’re the butt of all his jeers.” Dahn mumbled as he swished across the kitchen floor to get a glass of water. “So what about your family?”

“I have a couple siblings abroad.” Haidee responded more seriously now. “But we don’t talk much.”

“I see.” Dahn nodded as he gulped his water. “And parents?”

“Dead.” Haidee answered shortly. She slid over to a steaming waffle iron and check on the progress of its contents.

“I’m so sorry.” Dahn sighed. “I hadn’t guessed at all, you seem so kept and strong.”

“Well it’s been a while and I’m not one to mourn long. Life is too busy and I knew I had a lot to do when it happened.” Haidee explained. “They didn’t die at the same time, my dad went first when I was a teen. My mother a few years back. Both were claimed by diseases, part of my motivation to enter the medical field.”

“I’m so sorry...” Dahn trailed off.

“Like I said it’s alright.” Haidee smiled wryly. “But let’s not soil the atmosphere with such dark memories?”

“Sure.” Dahn whispered. He felt terrible whenever he heard of someone losing their parents.

A moment of silence followed after Haidee’s small revelation. She didn’t see at all much bothered by Dahn’s questions. She just continued diligently preparing a big rich breakfast of Apple Cinnamon Waffles, Scrambled Eggs, Bacon, Crum Apple Muffins, with cheddar cheese slices. The young brunette had also set a kettle of tea to steep and a pot of coffee to brew; she seemed to on top of the world at this moment in time and nothing could bring her down.

Dahn however, thought more about how the loss of parents may have impacted her life. He tried to imagine how he’d fair without his. Only to his horror, he realized that that is what he had been doing for the past 2 and a half years; and part from not getting a solid education after high school – he was fine. It

kind of scared him to realize that he didn't *need* his parents...exactly. Not that he had no use for them whatsoever, but he realized it meant that if worse came to worse; he'd be able to find himself now with the ability to choose the option for his parents that he so voraciously denied all this time.

When the tragedy happened, he could not fathom how he could move on with his life knowing theirs had been abruptly halted. Not only that, but leaving them with no memories of their past was a great and terrible way to rob someone of their most precious possession. But now he finally began to see what his persistence for them to remain online was costing others. Both Lemon and Valerian were greatly affected by the loss of HIS parents. His old friends, people that were counting on him to fulfill his part of the community, and not to mention the space and equipment that his parents were using; it all had to come from somewhere, and he was realizing that Valerian was right, it's time to move on.

"How could I have been so selfish..." he thought guiltily. "I really owe everyone now - but wait - I'm a Mnemon which means my parents are Mnemons too..."

He was indeed a Mnemon; a rare kind of human that seemingly didn't exist. His parents obviously were too. So are their lives just as valuable as another human's own? Or was their survival less of a selfish act that it'd appear to be?

The morning progressed rather fast. After giving Haidee a hand, Dahn went to go wake the rest of the house so they could enjoy Haidee's surprise labor. Lemon was very happy about Haidee's cooking, more because they all sat down to breakfast like a family opposed to their normal routines. Nonetheless, she was still a bit grumpy about her situation and kept getting into small spats with Valerian despite her efforts to stay away from quarrels. She was mostly tired, and wanted to be over with her injury all together.

The entire morning, Valerian kept tossing "looks" at either Dahn or Haidee, suggesting that they breach the subject to the blonde girl about the Mnemonic Bell. No one really wanted a fuss and they figured that is all that would come from asking her about it. So when she appeared in the living room a couple hours after breakfast, eagerly asking about the bell; it was as if a yoke had been lifted off the entire house hold.

The Bell had been carefully hung in an isolated room in the basement. This was to keep it from ever being rung accidentally but at the same time, if it ever needed to be rung, they didn't need to excavate it like they did in the Talin's residency. The small backroom had been mildly emptied and tidied up to reduce the amount of objects that could interfere with both the vibration of the air and resonance of the sound.

"Wowwee". Lemon chirped as she saw the bell. It dangled solemnly from the beams in the basement's opened ceiling. "I think I seen this before to be honest."

Dahn, Haidee and Valerian exchanged knowing looks; they all figured she'd say that.

"We kind of expected you too Lem." Dahn grinned sheepishly.

"Ok let's do this!" Lemon grinned as she walked over to the corner of the room and snatched up a baseball bat. She assumed that was the tool they'd have her use to hit the bell. The blonde girl heaved it over her good shoulder with some effort. Without even asking, she shifted her wait and prepared to use her shoulder to help her strike the bell with one arm. The other was too occupied with being in a cast.

"WAIT!!!!!" everyone else in the room screamed unanimously. "Goddammit man..." Valerian added running his hand through his defiant hair.

Lemon placed the bat back on the ground and scratched her head with embarrassment. "Sorry, I need to work on that." She sighed.

"No need to rush Lem, it's not going anywhere." Dahn pointed out. He walked over to her and clutched the bat. "And you need to remember that you have an injured arm ok?"

"Yea..." she sighed.

"Listen." He commanded. "We don't know exactly how the bell works, but from what we have figured out, it's like an alarm signal. It wakes up your inner Mnemon as soon as you hit it. Now it seems like the bell has 3 elements to it that will trigger Mnemons. There are pictographs on its body that people whose Mnemonic powers are focused in their eyesight will see. No one else can see them. When you hit the bell, only people whose powers lies in what they hear will hear it. And finally, only people that specialize in the sensation of touch will feel the vibrations. For example, Uncle won't hear it, and Haidee won't feel vibrations, and neither of them can see the engravings on it."

"I see..." Lemon nodded genuinely. "I see pictures."

"Then I guess we already know what you are." Dahn grinned.

"So then you're like me?" Lemon asked turning to face her friend.

"How so? Dahn asked innocently.

"Well, you wouldn't know there are pictures to be seen if you can't see them." Lemon explained logically.

"Smart." Haidee chirped.

"Well..." Dahn began looking slightly nervous. "I guess your right ha-ha." Lemon furrowed her brow shortly as she noticed Dahn's shifting eyes.

Dahn resumed he educating as Lemon playfully tried to pry his fingers off of the bat. He held onto it firmly as he continued to explain what they knew about the bell; Lemon continuing to tug nonetheless.

“So we need to get out of here when you hit it, so we don’t enter the state that you are going to enter. You’ll pass out feeling as if someone cut off your breathe and when u wake up you will be greeted by a man. As for whatever else, I don’t know - the accounts of what happens there are personal to my knowledge.” He finished.

“Cool.” Lemon replied still pulling on the bat. “So want me to tell everything that happens too?”

“Yea please do,” Valerian but in. “We need to figure this out completely, you seem to be the missing part of the puzzle – so cooperate.”

“Well you know the saying!” Lemon giggled. “When life gives you Lemons, you make Lemonaid!”

“Unfortunately, life gave us a Babylemon, which doesn’t amount to much.” Valerian heckled. “So we can only make a little bit of Lemonaid.”

“So mean.” Lemon whined. “Ok Dahn I’m ready – let go of the bat please; I won’t hit it until you all leave.”

Dahn loosened his grip on the solid wooden bat slowly and felt it slide out of his grasp immediately as Lemon resumed her original stance.

“Ready when you all are.” She said.

Lemon’s company filed out of the room slowly with Valerian bringing in the rear. He closed the door behind her and looked at his companions with a dull expression.

“I’ll be in my car.” he said as he made his way pass Dahn and Haidee. “I don’t want to see that pretty boy again.

“Can we even go in a second time?” Haidee asked no one in particular.

“I’m not sticking around to find out. And you shouldn’t too.” Valerian answered firmly. “This is a test; we should eliminate all variables that were not present when it first happened so we can make logical deductions about this device and this whole Mnemon thing.”

“Well said Unc,” Dahn agreed. He grabbed Haidee’s arm and began to pull her towards the staircase that his Uncle was traversing.

“IMMA COUNT FROM TEN TO ZERO GUYS, THEN ILL HIT WHETHER YOU ALL ARE GONE OR NOT!” they heard Lemon yell from inside the small bell room.

“OKAY!” Haidee shouted back. “WE ARE GONE NOW!”

Back inside the room, Lemon poised herself once again and counted from 10 to 0 with confidence.

“Five, four, three, two, ONE!” she cried. The small girl swung her bat and struck the bell with a wince. She heard it wail out as it swung to the left about 13 degrees from its normal. The engraved pictures that Dahn had seen on its surface as well began to glow and seemed to raise from the bell’s glimmering surface; much like the effect of 3D-glasses. Within seconds, Lemon was curled into an unconscious lump on the floor beside it...



Lemon emerged into the living room about 5 minutes after hitting the bell. She looked around tentatively as if she were expecting to see something startling once she arrived. Her face was shining as if she'd just returned from her prom; her cheeks pink with fluster, her breath coming in short puffs. She walked briskly to her favorite corner in the cream colored couch of the living room, and leapt into it.

Lemon received bewildered looks from her companions who were scattered about the homey center of the house. Val had been relaxing nonchalantly in his "recliner" positioned by the unlit fireplace and accompanied by their ancient circular coffee table. Haidee sat cross-legged right beside Lemon's 'curl-up spot', perusing through a graphic novel aimlessly. Dahn lounged in the opposite corner of the sofa just staring into thin air; most likely lost in thought as he so often was. This was the case before Lemon had come into the room of course; after she had arrived, all eyes were on her.

"Well?" Valerian called expectantly. "Let's hear it."

Lemon looked between her anxious family members. "I'm an Optique!" she cried excitedly.

Valerian groaned. "Oh my! What an anomaly..." He mumbled sarcastically.

"Lemon, you're obviously very excited, calm down and fill us in." Haidee tried.

"You're right." Lemon nodded maturely. She clasped her hands together and inhaled deeply, closing her eyes after the depth of her inhale. Then she exhaled calmly and opened her eyes once again.

"Ok so I wake up in this vibrantly colored world, all alone – totally unaware of what just happened – I'm in a prairie sort-of field." She began slowly. "Then an exceedingly pretty male pops up in my face!"

Both Valerian and his nephew snorted. Haidee giggled.

"He was so cute; I almost got butterflies just seeing him." Lemon gushed. "My oh my! I never did see a boy so pretty. His hair was long and free, he had such a gentle smile, yet such a deliberate jaw. He wore this black close-fitting t-shirt that had a turquoise symbol of something like a treble-clef or whatnot. The T-shirt fit well, it showed off his physique."

"I know right?!" Haidee agreed. "So handsome."

"We *know* what he looks like ok?" Valerian barked. "Sorry if I'm not amused by the fact that you girls got w-

"YES UNCLE! We all agree Toane is... pretty for a male!" Dahn cried, stifling his uncle's remark in mid-sentence. "Lemon? Continue please."

"Anyway..." Lemon resumed. "The guy told me his name was Toane, and that he was expecting me soon. He then added that he was a friend and I could ask anything. So I instantly told him that I was confused, so he took my hand very gently, lifted me to my feet, and told me I was so graceful. I got frightened and ask how come my arm and chest felt fine. He told me to imagine I was in my imagination, and that my physical body is damaged, not my spiritual one." Lemon resumed rambling.

"Then he put me through these trials where you have to find the bell using only one of your five senses and if you couldn't use it then you'd fail. You know? Ringing the bell and that stuff? I'm assuming you all know it too?"

Everyone nodded in agreement.

"Yea so of course I tested as an Optique." Lemon continued. "Then I got more sober than I usually am. Toane saw it and asked me why it seems like my mood has fallen. Then I told him things made more sense now. And then I mentioned the fuss I had with Val. Then I couldn't help but tell him that I've always known I can see more than others do. Where people see squares, I see cubes. Where people see circles, I see spheres. Then he asked me if I trusted him, and I told him that I did."

Lemon paused for a moment and looked at the back of her left hand.

"He asked me why and I said: 'when I look in your eyes, I see trust'." Lemon told her listeners.

"And what is trust?" Dahn challenged.

"It's very personal." Lemon replied. "Everyone's trust will look different."

“Yeah you have a point, ok continue.”

“So anyway, after a bit more talking, I told him bye and started to look for the exit to the place where we were. Then Toane laughed and said to me, ‘you automatically assume there is an exit or an end.’ To which I replied: ‘everything has an end, it’s just lost to those who are too lazy to look.’ Toane paused for a moment and then I saw the smile that seems as if someone paid him to have change into a real amusing grin. He then walk up to me and hold my hand and told me. “Lemon, you are going to be a great Mnemon.” I wondered what he meant by a good Mnemon, was there Bad Mnemons? Or did he mean I would be excellent at being a Mnemon? Of course I asked these things.”

“Toane look at me and blinked so much, and then he looked at the sky. “There are two kinds of bad Mnemons, Mnemons that use their blessings for evil deeds, and Mnemons who are so shallow and selfish that their abilities waste away. Evil Mnemons are called Demons; they are some of the most malicious humans I have ever seen.” I then asked him what makes a good Mnemon. He told me a person that begins with the truth, will become a good Mnemon. He also said a single heart - something like that, I really don’t know what he meant.”

“How come he talks to you so much?” Haidee asked sounding slightly jealous Lemon go so much attention from the pretty man.

“Hahahahaha!” Lemon burst out laughing. You know that’s so funny! I asked that too when I was about to leave.”

“And?” Haidee pressed.

“He said to tell you all that it is because I asked.” Lemon replied frankly. “He said my inquiries were based on wanting to hurry up and leave, but because I truly wanted to know, so why not tell.”

“I see,” Haidee mused. “I shouldn’t have been so frazzled but it was so sudden.

“Yea, you went in on your own terms, we were tossed in amidst chaos, so we were of a different frame of mind.” Valerian agreed.

“Well I left soon after that. But I did ask what Crossfading is.” Lemon revealed.

Dahn, who had been quite silent for the duration of Lemon’s account, finally cried out after hearing that. “You what!?”

“Well I could tell this was a 1 time thing, and I needed to know if you were chasing a dead end, I didn’t mention where I learned the term but he did seem very surprised when I said it. You know, after all that stupid stuff you told me you did at the hospital.”

“What did he say it was!?” Dahn asked anxiously as he edged from his seat.

“He paused for a while and looked around as if he thought someone was listening.” Lemon recalled. “Then he said it is when a Trybrid - Mnemon that has access to all three paths - combines tokens of someone, something, or an event, to create a Memorial. He said, that Individual is said to have used Crossfading.”

“I knew it!” Dahn almost screamed, slamming his fist on his knee. Lemon winced for his knee’s sake. “I just knew it!”

Dahn received glances questioning his sanity from his surrounding friends. He sunk back in his chair with embarrassment, and went back to being quiet.

“I asked what the kind of memorial was called, but then he hurriedly told me to enjoy my time and that I needed to go. Before I could protest; I was back here.” Lemon concluded. “It seems like I wasn’t even gone long though.”

“You mean like three minutes?” Valerian asked. “Yeah it’s short like that.”

A moment of contemplative silence followed Lemon’s bell ringing account. Everyone had their own questions buzzing around in their mind. Nonetheless, a common question governed over all others, and everyone was asking it – what next?

Before Dahn could speak up about his underground dealings with Mnemonic concepts, his uncle decided to make a confession.

“Well, guess since Lemon told us all about her account with Toane, I should confess a little something myself.” Valerian coughed. “Let me see now...hmmm.” He squeezed his brow, and shut his eyes tightly; trying to recollect his confession.

“Ah yes,” Valerian thought aloud. “Your dad, my younger brother - he joined this club during his later teen years. It was an after school club.”

He paused momentarily. “Well before I continue, we all agree here that Dahn’s parents both are obviously Mnemons?”

Everyone nodded slowly, but surely.

“He was real damn secretive about that club you know? He didn’t want to talk to anyone about what he did there. I didn’t care – as long as he wasn’t getting in my way, I was fine. It was approaching the time when I would leave our home town anyway. Sari and I had gotten serious and I really wasn’t close to your dad. Anyway, one day I walked in on him in his room – he was packing for a trip. I asked him where he was going and he was like: ‘somewhere you’ll like; you won’t see me for a while.’ I grabbed some brochure he had laying on his bed, and read it aloud. ‘Sponsored by *Stalgia: Empowering Young Mnemonics Minds.*’ It read.” Valerian disclosed.

“I didn’t get to read the rest because your dad snatched it from me so fast. I laughed and said to him: “You mean to tell me that the after school groups you been spending so much time with are grammatical institutes? No wonder you hiding it like soiled drawers Hahahahaha!”

Lemon rolled her eyes while Haidee face-palmed.

“My brother said nothing to this at first. “ Dahn’s Uncle continued. “Then he paused and cocked his head to one side as if he’d thought of some sort of cheeky comeback. But instead of verbally riposting me. he just said: “You know Val, you could be great, but imma let you be the way you are and we’ll see who

turns out like what in the end.” I found this amusing and a challenge; however, my confession is not about my brother, but about the logo on his brochure – it’s the same as the one on the He-Barbie’s t-shirt.”

Valerian wrapped up.

“He –Barbie!” Dahn cracked up.

“So you think Toane is like some teacher or professor of some sort?” Haidee asked, ignoring their heckling of Toane.

“I don’t know, seems like it.” Valerian shrugged.

“Well that’s as much as we can know for now but it’s a start. Thanks for sharing Val.” Lemon piped up, she reached back and gave her shoulder an itching.

“It’s not though...” Dahn’s replied; no longer laughing.

All eyes turned to focus on him. He pulled a book from inside his inner vest and held it up self-consciously. The book’s title read: “*A Student’s Orientation and Guidance Handbook for the Aspiring Mnemon.*” Dahn grabbed the lightweight paperback book in both hands and then flexed it, letting it snapback with a humble “whack!”

“This book here, is like a quick reference and/or cheat sheet for being a Mnemon.” Dahn explained. “Well... at least learning for to be one. It seems like it came from some institute that was practicing the teaching of many Mnemons together. That’s obviously where Stalgia came in; it must have been the university that issued copies of these books to its freshmen. This book features a ton load of information including few historical accounts of people that did great things, and what lessons should be learned from it. It also has common beginning practices for each Path for the types of Mnemon, and a terminology and glossary.”

“I guess you are going to tell us why we are just hearing about this?” Valerian frowned giving him a corner eye-glare.

“Yeah,” Dahn replied flatly. “Remember terrible day when we all had a big fight and you said we need to get over this nonsense?”

Lemon raised her hand and then without being given the approval, she said: “Oh I remember it like yesterday.”

“Yes I remember, you both left the house for hours on end, and then you didn’t come back for days.” Valerian recalled.

“Right,” Dahn nodded. “Well I don’t know where Lemon went, but went to my house and I stayed there for all the time I was gone. My confession is about a chest my mom and dad used to keep deep in their wardrobe closet when I was a kid. It had a padlock on it, so I know it was serious business. Anyway, when I was a child I used to play hide and seek a lot with my mom. I loved to hide sitting on that trunk in the closet and fumbling with the padlock while I wait mom to find me. She’d always remind me that the trunk had monsters in it and other bad things when I inquired about it. When I grew older, that wore off and I was told that it contained things about their past that weren’t ready to see daylight again; I kept prying to know what was soooo shameful that they refused to even talk about it. Well, that day never came – they never told me and were always mindful never to openly discuss the contents of the trunk.”

“So what happened?” Lemon asked curiously.

“Well just as I’m talking right here at this very moment – something just hit me.” Dahn cried with shock. “But wait let me continue.”

Everyone edged a little closer as Dahn dove deeper into his tale.

“I left the trunk alone, it’s not like it was something that rested on my mind every day. Only periodically did I remember about it and try to get my parents to let me explore, nonetheless; they never wanted me to look. But... I just realized something...”

“What?!” everyone cried unanimously.

"I have always known the pass code to get into, the chest. Just like the Mnemonic bell! Not only that, but my parents must have known that I'd know too!" he exclaimed. "I am only just realizing this now, but it makes sense. That is why they kept insisting to tell me not to touch the chest. They must have known that I would know the combination on the padlock if I ever tried it," the young adult disclosed.

"So as we come to it, I opened the chest when I was there alone. I was feeling so alone and I low down; much like a failure. It never occurred to me that this was a place that I was not supposed to know how to get into. Neither did I feel like there was anything to lose by looking – that's where I found this."

Dahn's audience said nothing after he paused and searched out their faces for their reception, obviously they wanted more.

"The trunk had a lot of weird random items and books. My sorrow was quickly suppressed by my curiosity, despite the fact that I felt really bad going into the chest, but I knew I had struck gold. I knew at that moment in time, that Uncle Val was utterly wrong about me."

Dahn saw Valerian shake his head with an amusing smile as if to say "They just don't stop."

"I knew I couldn't take everything at that point, so I took what mattered the most – the books." Dahn continued. "There wasn't that many books that seemed to have information about Mnemons exclusively. There were a lot of traditional text books as well as literature books. But if Mnemons were reading these, then they had some relevancy right? I of course did not know about Mnemons then, I only knew I was searching for answers. So you know my neurology book? That's where I got it from."

"But I've never seen that one you got there." Valerian pointed out with a beckon of his chin to Dahn's handbook.

"Yeah, I agree, and I'm around you much more often." Lemon added sounding less bouncy than usual.

"I hid it well, often times when I read it; it was behind the neurology book." Dahn grinned nervously.

"Slippery fox," Lemon huffed.

“So with that said, I think it’s time to start connecting everything we just learned.” Dahn declared.

“Toane says Crossfading is when a Mnemon combines various tokens to create a Memorial, am I right?”

“He said when a *Trybrid* combines.” Lemon corrected him.

“Right, a Trybrid, according to this books’ terminology section, is a Mnemon that is linked to all 3 Paths.”

“Toane said that...” Lemon growled quietly.

“Wow, that’s over powered, I forgot the possibility of that could have existed.” Haidee mused rubbing her chin. “Must be a lot of mental burden...”

“Must be,” Dahn agreed. “But stay focused people. “We need to have this solid in our minds.”

“Then...” Dahn trailed off as he started filing to the terminology section in his handbook. He intended to quote its definitions. “A **Hybrid** is a Mnemon linked to 2 paths. A **Token** is a figment of someone’s memory. It can be the anything that quickly embodies a strong feeling. A **Souvneer** is a memorial created by a **Trybrid**. It *usually* consists of various Tokens, each resembling a strong memory from each of a person. Souvneer are very mysterious and arcane. Demons have tried to use them in the past to wrought strange things. **Crossfading** is the process used by Trybrids to entangle the tokens into a Souvneer. **Memorabilia** is the content of a Token...”

“There are more terms, but they are a lot more specific to each path and we don’t need to focus on that right now.” Dahn squeezed the book shut with a gleeful smile spread across his usually sober face.

“You see guys? We are getting somewhere.”

“Yeah it’s all starting to make sense in a fantastic sort.” Haidee agreed. “But I’m kind of missing what you’re trying to prove Dahn.”

“I see, that is because you guys lack understanding of the brain and memories and how they are like the source code for a person’s entire mapping. It’s like your computer; you can pull everything out of a computer, even its CPU - which is its brain, and yet you still won’t have *your* computer back without the

contents of your hard drive. Every bit of data that gets written to your computer's hard drive is what defines it as your computer. Everyone can run the same hardware, but what's on that main drive is what matters. Imagine if when you had data loss, you could rebuild it back from mixing a couple files the computer would recognize from an extra source – you could rebuild all your data then.”

“You're saying, if someone Crossfaded tokens of your parent's lives back together, it would instantly restore all their memories to them?” Valerian asked.

“YES!” Dahn nearly yelled. “And today I will prove it!”

“You speak as if getting a Trybrid is so easy, where would we get a Trybrid from Dahn?” Lemon asked. “You see how Toane acted when I simply mentioned Crossfading. Sounds like risky territory.”

“Yeah kid,” your girl's got a legit point.” Dahn's uncle said. Lemon tossed her nemesis a dirty look. “I'm not his girl ok!?” She barked.

“Stop stop guys, I have been at this for months, trust me, I got things figured out.” Dahn began as he walked into the center of the Xiriga's living room. “Listen to this - It's a long story, but I will only read the part that matters. It's an account of how Mnemons became extinct, and here's a heads up warning... it's sad.”

“Okay let's hear it.” Valerian leaned back in his recliner and lifted his right leg across his left.

“Ok, I'll start here at this last article.” Dahn cleared his throat and began to read aloud the manuscript before him.

“Dear Mnemons, I have reached a most critical point in my writing whereas I must share with you a disgustingly tragic tale. It is the reason why we as Mnemons exist the way we do. A great many years ago, there were hundreds of thousands of Mnemons, not quite as many as one would think, but there was hope that the numbers would increase. That hope was not commonly shared among all people, as always, some wanted us gone. However; it is not as you think. You see, back in the day, there was an overwhelming demand for Mnemons! Yes, Mnemons were highly esteemed people; to have a Mnemon in your household meant you were destined for great prosperity. This

was because Mnemons excelled in their field of work by default. We usually only worked jobs that conform to our path, and we get so good at doing it - anyone blessed by our workmanship just feels like nothing can go wrong. It started as a small issue; local family businesses became renowned in their work of trade usually due to the power of a Mnemon, tailors, shoemakers, chefs, cooks, artists, doctors, you name it! These small businesses would grow and eventually start companies; continuing the tradition of hiring Mnemons to manage and create comprehensive groups of an elite task force. Before long, Mnemon labor was a new attribute of a countries wealth. Things started to get testy when a demographic analysis went forth in which the world's population was recorded. It occurred about ever 25 or so years; they called this measure of time a "Generation's time". It turned out, some countries Mnemon concentration was much higher than others, and it was starkly reflected in their commerce and trade. This stirred controversy and jealousy among countries and soon a world conference was held (which included fellow representing Mnemons of their respective background) to discuss the matter. Some argued that this was the natural course of life and that it should not be tampered with, others argued that this "gift" should be equally shared throughout the world. Many used the "developing third world countries" as a front to argue that Mnemons should not be allowed to solely work for their country. After much dispute, the S.H.A.R.E Act was drafted and put in motion as soon as possible. The purpose of S.H.A.R.E was to limit the amount of working Mnemons a country was able to have in a particular field. Mnemons were now forced to move to lacking countries that supported their field of expertise for better lives and job opportunities. Because of the early stage of Mnemon growth that this occurred at, "Cerebral Resonance", the term use to describe the power that made a Mnemon a Mnemon, was widely misunderstood and thus no one "taught" people who were found to be a Mnemon. There was just no way of teaching a person how to be a Mnemon, it as an all natural occurrence. Just as you are now enrolled in Stalgia – an institute dedicated to teaching Mnemons – we are the first to do so. So this situation resulted in a grave imbalance with Mnemonic abilities, some Mnemons were really good at what they did, and some were just bad. The reasons I mention this nuance is because this limitation made it so that if a Mnemon didn't work in the field he or she was most comfortable with, they'd become a nervous wreck."

Dahn paused for a moment and looked at his audience. "You guys getting all this?" he asked.

“Mhmm, yeah, yes please continue,” came their mixed replies.

“Slowly, but surely, unrest cropped up among countries regarding their Mnemons. People began to hide the Mnemons and their abilities, come up with ways to circumvent S.H.A.R.E, and plan tactics to work abroad and then sneak back home as soon as possible. S.H.A.R.E responded with tighter and more intrusive rules forged around families and other organization of peoples and their Mnemons. After proposing a rule that a family was limited to 3 Mnemons, world leaders realized an end needed to be put to this bullshit. Triumphantly with enough support from many countries, S.H.A.R.E was abolished and a simpler and much more reasonable rule was applied. Countries were not allowed to use Mnemon abilities for illegal acts of war or any sort of aggression whatsoever. Mnemons were humans just like any other human and should not be treated like a commodity. This course of action helped level the playing field quite a bit, and soon, Mnemons were again a blessing to for the world to share. However; the driving force behind the people that insisted to keep themselves abreast with balancing the power of these special people, was still active. Even when the first Trybrids and Hybrids were discovered, articles popped up suggesting the threat that people with such power could cause. This next act was the beginning of a history changer. Not too long after these events, maybe 50 or so years, a game was created, for Mnemons... These “Olympic” games were going to be held every 5 years and would be a challenge much like the traditional Olympics. The goal was less individualized however; the aim was more focused around a massive performance, using the powers and abilities of all the able Mnemons a country could muster. The more amazing the performance was, the more trophies, medals and riches that country could take home, only one country could win it all...and then there was silver and bronze placing of course. The games sported a tier system, in which performances would basically taunt their opponents to outperform the challenge presented. This would be spread out among days, with scores being incremented to the last face off. The world was excited for the first and grand opening of these games; little did they know that the ‘Empyrean Games’, as they were titled, would never start. One of the small achievements that really polished off the Empyrean Games was to be able to brag about how many Mnemons your country was responsible for. So for example, there was a lot of Japanese Haptique; this was a bragging point for them. This whole system of getting as many Mnemons to attend the games was crucial to the plot. The mastermind behind the whole stratagem knew exactly what he was doing. The games were to be held on an island in the western pacific oceans, a couple hundred kilometers from the

Mariana Trench, an island called Emyryia. Quickly, stadiums and hotels, airports and docks were constructed to specification to service the grand demand for hospitality and transportation. The island was a small, very compact, and elegantly built, flaunting the best architectural minds in the world. News about its construction never ceased to buzz, and was seen as a marvelous accomplishment. Not only because it was so beautiful and well constructed – but also because it was the largest team effort between different countries worldwide; the world was proud of Emyryia.”

“Finally, an official date for the first competition was set, and families flocked into Emyryia; the hotels were jam packed like tasty baked potatoes, the harbors well massively overwhelmed with ships and the airports crammed with planes. But no matter how many people came, Emyryia seemed like it could handle them all. And to ice the cake, tickets for the games were cheap and participation fees were easy to adhere to. It was as if they wanted everyone the whole world to come. Of course the whole world didn’t and couldn’t come, but pretty much every Mnemon that was aware of their abilities was there. Now there was a specific Mnemon holding sky-scraping acclaim named Dr. Devis Xeon. He was renowned for being able to communicate with pathogens; he was a freaky man, probably attributed to his dedication to microorganisms. Xeon was able to diagnose any disease that surfaced and figure out a cure. Rumor has it that he could even control these organisms on a pathogenic level. Dr. Xeon was a Trybrid.

Well...The world does not know what happened to Xeon. He mysteriously went under one day, not a soul could find out where he went. Many just assumed he went insane and killed himself in some quiet way. But I, author of this article and protector of all that is left of us Mnemons, will tell you the truth - Xeon became a Demon.

This Demon used his vast knowledge to breed horrific disease. No one except who he worked with knows what the name of it is; it doesn’t matter because what it did the night of the opening ceremony of the Emyrean Games was so horrendous and diabolical, that no one would want to know the name. Emyryia was drenched in this disease and in about 2 days everything on the island including itself was mutilated and totally fouled beyond recognition. There were no survivors, no one lived to tell the tale, and not a single body was left anything less than vandalized. The little organic tissue that was salvaged from the revolting mess was poorly analyzed by scientist who could barely make anything of it. The most they could tell the public was that it seemed as if the tissue was “eaten” by itself.

The point was to wipe out all the Mnemon....”

Lemon let out a long and sympathetic sigh.

“I will not recall what went on after this, not in detailed anyway. Sorrow followed for years after this monstrous tragedy. As the premature legacy of Mnemons began to die, the suspicions of the event grew. Before long people started to realize that everything fit too perfectly and that the intention seemed to be to destroy all the Mnemons. Again another world conference was held on the subject of Mnemons, but this time it was to build a peace offering to the people of the world – a memorial for the Mnemons. Later, Mnemphyria was constructed near the wasted island of Emyria – which was so badly degraded that it had sunken. Mnemphyria was an archipelago whose goal was to reflect the little Mnemon history that was allowed to be public. Mnemphyria, often just called Phyria, aimed to be a tourist attraction dedicated to the earliest Mnemons and their path. I wish to talk more about these happening, but quite frankly, this publication is too public to freely speak; therefore, you will learn more about Xeon, Demons, how he was killed, Mnemphyria, and other great thing when we see you here – at *Stalgia: Empowering Young Mnemonics Minds...*”

Dahn looked up from the his slowly and exchanged glances with each of his fellow Mnemons. Everyone looked more or less vexed. Lemon particularly looked disturbed; she was always one to hate these sorts of actions a fearful passion. Haidee looked more fidgety, as though she were expecting someone to burst through the windows and kill them at any moment. Valerian rubbed his chin continually with his blank expression, suggesting he was not bothered by the riveting tale at all.

“Yeah I remember hearing that about Phyria...” Dan’s uncle was the first to speak. “Well, let’s all thank Dahn for a great experience and history lesson. I think we all know a bit more about Mnemons. I think we should take a break and maybe just do something unrelated while we let our minds soak this up.” He suggested.

“Mhmm” Haidee agreed. She stood up and stretched long and hard. “I didn’t know Mnemons were so...I don’t know the word for it even.”

“Hunted?” Lemon shot; her voice drizzled with hurt.

“Yeah but not actually that word.” Haidee insisted. “Anyway Val’s right, we should break.”

“Not yet,” Dahn interjected. “We should put this all together.

Everyone paused and looked at the young man.

“While our minds are still deep into this, let’s make a comprehensive plan of our mission. I mean it’s obvious right? What we have to do? Well at least – what I have to do.”

“You mean how to save your parents.” Haidee asked as she sat back down.

“Yeah, I’ll go over everything, you guys can listen. I’m not forcing you all to help, but this is what I’m going to do.” Dahn informed.

“Well? Start talking.” Valerian commanded curtly.

“Ok, so again, we talked about these Souvneers, which are a combination of items that comprise a powerful memorial right? The items used to make this ‘artifacts’ are called tokens?” Dahn began.

Haidee and Valerian nodded, Lemon however, just looked a bit blank, nonetheless; Dahn continued.

“Although we need a Trybrid to crossfade the tokens to make a Souvneer; we all understand *IS* the method that which could surely restore my parent memories?”

“Your right, but we are going to need tokens that build up their core memories.” Haidee noted. “The human brain stashes a lot of its defining memories into long term memory storage after its been engrained into their minds. Those memories won’t jog an upstart right away, but they will be vital for restoring their minds on a fundamental level.”

“True, we don’t know the power of a Souvneer, but I’m sure it will be able to accomplish our goals. By the time we make one, we can assume we will know what things to take into account.” Dahn agreed. “But like you say Haidee, we need to get tokens that comprise core memories, not the mundane ones that don’t define a person.”

“Graduations, awards, tragedies, wedding, your birth...just some of the milestones we should cover.”

Valerian added.

"Yes! You guys are getting the jist! " Dahn smiled.

"But what exactly will we make? As a Souvneer? We know so little about it." Haidee countered.

"Songs." Lemon replied flatly.

"Songs?" Dahn asked.

"We don't know what path you parents were on, so we need to use something that covers them all. Songs embody all three paths. They can be felt, heard and seen. It's the best medium." She explained quietly.

"That makes a lot of sense!" Haidee exclaimed. "She's right Dahn, I don't think there is anything better to make."

"Yeah...Thanks Lem," Dahn agreed slowly, turning to look at his blonde friend. He felt an angry vibe emanating from her and felt a bit uneasy addressing her after that oddly cold tone. Nonetheless, his curiosity got the better of him.

"You ok? You sound angry." He tried.

"Do I always have to be chipper?" She snapped without looking at him. "I'm fine just tired."

"Ok..." Dahn trailed off feeling a tinge of sadness. *"I wonder what's wrong."*

"It's ok Lemon, why not go and rest up after this?" Haidee suggested sweetly.

"Soon." Lemon replied sharply.

"So anyways", Haidee interjected. "Besides from the fact that we need to find us a Trybrid, and information on how exactly to do this Crossfading thing; what else do we need?" Haidee asked, turning her attention from Lemon.

“We need to go to Phyria for starters; it’s where we grew up. I feel that visiting the childhood homes of both your mother and my little brother are no-brainer ideas to collect tokens.” Valerian put in.

“Of course,” Dahn agreed. “Well make calls to all of our extended family and see what they can contribute. We will need to pay them personal visits also because we cannot disclose our motives via public channels. Less someone evil is listening, we don’t want to endanger anyone.”

“Tell you what; I will take care of your Dad’s side totally.” Valerian offered. “He is my little brother; I am frankly one of the best people to begin collecting tokens. Your mother is a different story, you will need all of our resources to aid you in uncovering her past. I never dealt with her much, thus I only know what everyone else knows. Some of her relatives have passed away, but her father is still alive.”

“Yeah he didn’t seem as devastated about her accident as I expected...” Dahn mused as he recalled his grandfather’s behavior towards his mum’s accident.

“Your dad said he resents her for not pursuing the family business.” Valerian explained. “He much prefers her sister.”

“I see, so maybe it’s time to reconnect with that side of the family. We will need to plot a voyage course and map out our objectives so we don’t get overwhelmed.” Dahn stated.

“Yeah and again this will take us back to Phyria.” Valerian pointed out. “So it’s the best place for us to start this search.”

“You guys lived in Phyria?” Haidee asked curiously.

“Yeah, the residential district; It’s quite a nice place. Back then, we had no idea of its history.” Dahn replied. “My family moved up here when I was young, I’m not totally sure why. But I vaguely remember my days there as a kid.”

“I moved away from down there a long time ago. I met Sari while she was down there during a vacation in Primleave. I moved up here after we got serious.” Valerian informed. “If I remember correctly, Phyria is like a bunch of small Islands mothered by 3 larger main lands. Each hosts a large city sporting a

sort of theme. Primleave is like the 'Las Vegas', its big, busy, bright, rich, and wild. They've got amazing bi-annual light shows, holographic outlets, theaters, lotteries, backstreet clubs, casinos, strip clubs, dancehalls, balls, and other places... they've got it all. The people that actually live in Primleave are living rich lavish lives in high-rise apartments and spending crazy amounts of money every day. The other two mainlands I know little about. I know one is called Tsuyima and the other one... um - Qualraen. I haven't been either of them though."

"Then there is the residential district", Valerian continued. "It a bit higher up on a topographic level. It's got all your basic residential needs and it's pretty quiet. You can see the 3 mainlands on the horizon when you go up on the high hills. They call the residential district Subphyria.

"So what makes people go to live in Subphyria?" Haidee wondered. "What's the population like?"

"Haidee, the history of Phyrria is not very widely known, this content that Dahn just read is news to me. I don't know much about its history. We were taught in schools that Subphyria was a world project to address the growing concerns of available living area. Which families and people went to live there is a mystery to me. I'll say this though, Can't be more than 500k in all of Subphyria's islands alone." Valerian responded. "It's a small place I'm telling you.

"I see I see..." Haidee mused. "Gosh I want to visit it."

"People people, we are straying." Dahn waved his hands in the air to say "no no, stop talking now."

"It's alright Dahn, we pretty much have it set. We'll spend the rest of next week preparing for travel. This'll include getting contact information, the whereabouts of who we will be visiting, money, passports, gear, equipment and whatever else we need. We'll fly down to Phyrria as soon as we can." Valerian smiled.

"Wow." Dahn breathed. "You're really on board with this?"

"Dahn...it's been a long time and to be honest, you were right. I haven't been the best uncle to you or to Lemon...if that means anything."

Lemon's sulking silent head shot up like a jack-in-the-box at this.

“Not only am I bored, but if this is what it going to take to put your life back together, I’m willing to go for it. Besides I have wanted to visit someone down there for a while and also, I think there are doctors in Tsuyima that can help Sari. In short – I’ve got nothing to lose.”

“And you’re going to take care of my dad’s side alone?” Dahn questioned.

“Yeah, we cover more ground faster.” Dahn’s uncle reasoned. “I don’t need to be looked after; I ‘am a first-rate exceptional detective after all. If I don’t get worn out with bullshit, this might actually be fun.”

Valerian grinned. “And with these new Mnemon abilities, I’ll be even more unstoppable.

Haidee rolled her eyes.

“So I’ll take my mom’s side then. I think we should first visit Stalgia – if it even still exists. Be-

“No.” Valerian cut his nephew off. “That’s way too obvious – if someone is watching us, they’ll be able to backtrack our course of action to piece together what we are attempt way faster than you think.”

“Really? Is it that obvious?”

“Detective speaking.” Valerian boasted. “Just listen to me. We will schedule a visit for Stalgia after we’ve been in Phyrria. If anyone is stalking us, they will be thinking like a detective.”

“Ok boss.” Dahn nodded. “Well, we’ve got a ton of work to do uncle, don’t we?”

Lemon rose from her position in the sofa slowly and cleared her throat loudly to get everyone’s attention.

“Can we all just continue acting like I’m not sitting here?” She snapped, placing her hands on her hips. “Why do you all talk like this??? Are you all *SERIOUSLY* thinking to leave me here? What about Haidee? I think we should ALL GO? Hmm? Men? What you think?”

Dahn chuckled softly. “Lemon, I couldn’t ask you to accompany me...this is dangerous at the least.”

“IM GOING!” the small bodied girl yelled. “This is as much a mission for ME as is for YOU. I don’t care how dangerous it is.”

Dahn tried to hide his smile. Something about Lemon's attitude didn't tick him off the way it should have. It was kind of heartwarming. He knew that she wanted to be at his side.

"I am going too." Haidee added. "Lemon is right - Did you guys seriously consider not taking us? We are the two ranged perception Mnemons also. You guys need us."

Valerian coughed a few times, he then cleared his throat forcefully and gave Haidee a lofty look of pride. "I don't *need* anyone."

"Haidee, go with my Uncle, Lemon will go with me. We will travel to Phyrria together, but spilt goals once we reach our destination." Dahn commanded. "Uncle, I don't care if you can derive pi in your sleep after a hangover, you will need assistance. We are going back to Phyrria to rake up an obviously dark past. You said it yourself, we have no idea what and who could be watching us. You may be a world class detective, but you cannot fight well seasoned Mnemons...much less Demons... Two heads are better than one, especially if one head is Haidee's."

"Fine." Valerian grouched.

"You sure you and Lemon can handle yourselves out there?" Haidee turned to Dahn with concern.

"I was going to go myself originally. Lemon and I can handle ourselves, I'm sure of it." Dahn smiled looking at Lemon. "Besides, we'll have phones and stuff and we will be in the same area remotely, so we just need to keep in touch regularly right?"

"Right." Valerian agreed. "Don't take on any tasks you *think* you can handle and get yourselves killed. If you're not sure, contact us.

"Ok, so it's settled - we have our mission." Dahn nodded. "NOW we can break."

Finally everyone one by one began to rise from their locations and file out of the room, each mumbling their thoughts about what lay ahead - everyone except Lemon. Instead, the small blonde girl just sat back in her position in the sofa looking extremely uncomfortable and cross, she didn't move an inch. As soon as everyone was out of the room, she grabbed her head frantically with one hand and cringed as if she had a terrible headache. She slouched into the sofa and grabbed one of the throw pillows and stuffed it in her face roughly. Lemon began to scream angrily into the poor pillow with aggression. When she finally stopped, she sat there panting and sweating. Her mind was raging with questions to question she never wanted to ask herself. She wondered if her Optique ability was going to become more of a curse than a blessing, because seeing people's motives was proving too much for her...



Considering the Xiriga Residence had more people in it than usual, it was awfully quiet for the remainder of that revealing Saturday afternoon. No one really had much to say after the history lesson earlier and the new mission. Their minds were overloaded with trying to comfortably accept the reality. Eventually each person had gotten a hold of Dahn's parent's orientation book, and was allowed to causally peruse through it until they were either bored or tired of it. The more they read, the more they understood that life was rapidly going to change for them and how they'd adapt was what was consuming their minds. Lemon's weird behavior continued on throughout the day, she was the quietest amongst them all. On the contrary; Dahn was in rather good spirits. Maybe It was because he was already aware of the information he shared with his family and it was no longer a troubling thought. Not only that, but he seemed moments away from being able to launch into action to save his parents finally. Dahn knew his best friend enough even without mnemonic empathy to know this was hitting her hard on many fronts. She was always extremely cagey about her origins and now she may not be able to hide it. She also tried to hide from darker situations; wanting always to be "happy". Even Valerian was a slight bit concerned after

witnessing her mellow behavior at their dinner time that evening. Despite the solemnity of the household, Haidee still cooked a delicious meal of scalloped potatoes, London broiled steaks, with parmesan broccoli. She called it “Family Food”, and said it was in honor of them being 4 of maybe 100 Mnemons in the world. Haidee found this as a very special honor to hold. However, Lemon never commented, teased Valerian, or gobbled down her food. She just fished in it for a good while; listening to the conversations that floated around her, and then ate her steak and left the table silently. It was quite rude, even for Lemon.

She reappeared after diner was over, during a simple conversation about what things Mnemons probably could do with their everyday lives to make it more fun. She said nothing, but instead started clearing the table without acknowledging anyone. After that, she proceeded to wash the dishes and tidy the kitchen with admirable efficiency. This sort of behavior from Lemon was so weird it pretty much spooked her companions out. They sat around the now empty dining table contemplating what could have rubbed her so wrongly. As if he needed to be told, Haidee urged Dahn to go talk to his spontaneous friend.

“I don’t know when she’s like this – which is rare – I usually keep a distance. It could be that day of the month you know.” He tried lamely.

“When it’s *‘that day of the month’*, she’s a bitch – not a hurt rabbit. Clearly something deep is bothering her Dahn. I mean if I of all people can see that, you should already be talking to her.” His uncle upbraided him.

“Sigh...”

* * * * *

“Everyone is worried about you.” Dahn spoke softly as he sat on Lemon bed a few minutes later.
“Even uncle, what on earth has got you so troubled?”

Lemon pretended as if she didn't hear anything and just stared at the auburn colored carpet beneath her creamy sock feet.

"Why do you have to be like this Lem?" Dan asked getting frustrated faster than he usually did.

Lemon stretched across her bed to her night table and picked up a notepad and a black pen. She scribbled something on it and handed it to Dahn without looking at him.

"What the?" he groaned loudly as he took the piece of paper. It read:

"I am so hurt right now I can barely even think straight."

"Why?" Dahn breathed softly.

Snatching back the paper, angrily she responded:

"Wouldn't you like to know?"

"Cut it out ok? damn it!" Dahn snapped. He ripped the paper out of the note pad and crumbled it in annoyance. "Did I hurt you this badly?"

Lemon nodded slowly.

"Well how the bloody hell did I manage that?"

"Why are you trying to deceive us Dahn? Why not tell everyone you're a Trybrid." She mumbled coldly.

"W-w I'm- no- I mean...What?" he fumbled.

"I thought...I was special to you."

"You are. You mean so much to me."

“So much that you discovered ALLLLL this information and didn’t tell me for like 5 months?” Lemon choked. “You were my last morsel of unshakable confidence. You were what I resort to when everyone else fails me. Why did you have to destroy that? Do you know what I’ve given up for you?”

“It’s amazing how sophisticated she is when she’s angry...” Dahn thought as he listened to his usually simple friend.

“I needed time, understanding, more concrete information...” Dahn explained gently. “Would you even have believed me?”

“Yes Dahn!” Lemon cried finally looking at her friend. “I believe everything you tell me. I have always been like that. But I guess once again, I’m just a silly happy-go-lucky child. I see you way better than you see me. I think I’m going to go live with Haidee. She’s an Ascoutique; she will understand how I feel.”

“Lemon...” Dahn reached out to pat her shoulder but she dodged.

“A year ago, it didn’t matter if things made sense.” Lemon quarreled. “We told each other everything. I mean *everything*...where did that go?”

“We-

“You read the book probably a hundred times. Did you fail to see that part about the foundation of a Mnemon? Do you know what trusting is? Because that’s what it said you need to unlock to even begin making any head way.”

“I trust you Lem,” Dahn whined.

“Not me you idiot!” she snapped. “Yourself! Your stupid self? Everyone is getting on my last nerves! Is it because I’m Optique why it is that I can see what’s going on and no one else can????”

“Maybe...” Dahn trailed off. “Lem, you hide a ton of stuff from me too, for what reason I don’t know, but you do anyway. I’ve always respected that there is a part of you I don’t yet have access to – you should respect mine.”

“But I NEED you!” Lemon screeched, hot tears forming at the corners of her sad eyes. “You don’t need me; it doesn’t matter if you don’t know. But I need to know where you intend to go, what you will do, If you –

“Stop. I need you too.” Dahn corrected her. “Trust me; when it sunk into my mind that you had been in a car accident, I had actually grasped the fact that my parents aren’t the only thing I could lose. I was so afraid of losing you too.”

“I am just so sad you didn’t share this with me.” Lemon continued to complain while quickly dabbing at her eyes.

Dahn reached out on and put his hand on Lemon’s good one, which lay casually on the bed beside her. A sharp feeling of fear shot up his arm as if something frightened him, the spine tingling coldness spread through his gut and dissipated slowly as an image of himself choking Lemon popped in his mid for a second he felt extremely frustrated but he knew this was not his feeling – it was hers.

“Damn!” he thought.

“Don’t touch me!” Lemon yelled. “I don’t want you touching me!”

“Be quiet!” Dahn hissed. “You’re afraid I’ll turn into a Demon?”

“Well.” Lemon’s bottom lip quivered. “Trybrids carry so many burdens, and you’re so unconfident and so far removed from trusting people, and you won’t just tell things and you won’t get involved in love and you’re so isolated and you’ll leave me when you can’t get anything done right because you’ll feel like you’re hindering me when really it’s just you hurting yourself and then we will fight and I’ll lose you and you’ll lose control of your anger and –

Dahn didn’t need any special abilities to see Lemon shaking like a washing machine. It moved him sorely to see how invested she was in him. He felt a wave of responsibility thicken around his neck as he wondered what to do.

"I know I haven't told what my life was like before I met you but I can't go back...I Can't. Go. Back."

Lemon insisted.

"Then take control of that past and make it your strength to boost your will, stop letting it haunt you. You have the power now." Dahn commanded.

"How can I? I'm so afraid that you will fail to live up to your legacy, just because of stupid things like hiding stuff from me. I can barely focus on anything else."

"Like this." Dahn smiled as he got off the bed and stooped before his friend. "Look into my eyes, and find what it is you need to know. Look and see that I am going to do everything I can to repair the damage done to you. All of us! Uncle, You, Mom, Dad, even Haidee. I have no secrets, I wasn't hiding from you, but I wasn't ready to dump such a load on you guys without proof. I needed proof – and now that I've got it, we're going to take control of everything that's dogged us these past years – every single thing Lem."

As soon as Lemon's soft blue eyes locked on Dahn's, he began to feel self conscious. The feeling increased rapidly and his clothes felt as if they were burning into ashes and floating away with every second that passed.

"Crap she is probably reading my very mind."

As if she needed a tighter lock, Lemon reached up and grabbed Dahn's cheeks and held his head firmly in her clammy hands; continuing her penetration. Dahn noticed for the first time how gorgeous her eyes were. He wondered if it was a byproduct of her inner Mnemon, or were her glassy diamond-like eyes just that attractive and he'd never noticed.

"Sheesh this is intense..." Dahn thought as a tidal wave of tingle washed over his surface. He wanted to move and shut his eyes, but he knew he needed to endure this intrusion to quell the fear in her heart.

Finally, Lemon released him and flopped backwards on her bed; a smile creeping onto her babyish face.

“Did you see?” Dahn asked nervously. That intensity made him unsure if she had seen even more than he knew himself. “Or should I say...What *didn't* you see?”

Lemon chuckled shortly and responded. “I can't read your mind, it's just...feeling you know? It's like injecting tentacle into your emotions to see if what I see is real. It doesn't tell me things that weren't in my brain – at least not yet.”

“You were right. I don't need to be afraid of the unknown. I can now take what I need and be at peace with others and myself.” Lemon smiled genuinely. “Thank you Dahn, you never fail to be what I need.”

“Anything for you Lemon.” He smiled as he sat back on the bed beside her. He flopped backwards too, joining her in a relaxing star-gazing position.

“I saw that.” Lemon continued smiling. “It was truly awesome. It was not like reading minds, but more like you giving me bits and pieces of your soul. Like using an eyedropper to suck up drips of pure soul and drop them on my tongue. I could taste and feel your very essence comforting me; I could make out what was fact and what was opinion in my mind with unwavering clarity. Sigh... it was just so sweet and connecting. Sigh... I feel sorry for non-Mnemons.”

Dahn felt a pang of something squeeze his heart after hearing his normally childish mate speak so poetically.

“Yeah...” he whispered. “Truly is...”

“So want to know how I knew you were a Trybrid?” Lemon asked playfully turning her head to face Dahn's.

“I sure do.” He replied eagerly. “I realize I'm going to need to be vigilant around you, you soak up everything.”

“Mhmm!” Lemon nodded. “You better! Because moi is a Hybrid!”

“Joke?” Dahn asked propping up on his elbow to face Lemon suddenly.

“Nope.” Lemon grinned triumphantly. “I only realized tonight. But I am – I’m sure of it.”

“How – can – you – even?”

“Well knowing you are a Trybrid is what allow me to know I’m a Hybrid.” Lemon revealed.

“Sometimes I wonder if you even read the whole book. You don’t seem to know as much as you should.”

“Just tell me how you found out.” Dahn groaned.

“Everything you told me, and the fact that you never actually said what your path was.” Lemon stated frankly.

“I told you a lot of stuff.” Dahn mumbled. If he was a Trybrid, it sure was hard to tap into his Ascoutique side to pick up what she was saying.

“I was pretty impressed with that Deliberation skill you pulled off. That’s for more seasoned Mnemons.”

“When did I use Deliberation?” Dahn asked getting more annoyed, partly because he wasn’t sure he remembered what skill that was.

“You did it when you knocked out Haidee’s jerk doctor friend.” Lemon replied giving him a “duh” look. “You told me he grabbed you and then out of nowhere it was like he got tasered.”

“Wow, she’s right that must have been what I did.”

“Remember, that skill is performed by deliberately delivering a sensation from your memory to another person. It’s strongest via touch. Most call it a Haptique skill, because it’s so hard to perform with other paths.” Lemon reminded.

“I gotta admit you’re dead on with that observation.” Dahn agreed.

“You also accidentally revealed that you could both see the pictographs on the bell, and you heard when it rung.”

“Right again,” Dahn replied.

“In the section about Mnemon types, it talks about Mnemon’s entanglement with their world around them and people in their lives. It told that a sure way to know a Trybrid is that they are automatically aware of Souvneers in their lives as long as someone they are related to knows about it.” Lemon continued.

“The heirloom,” Dahn concluded.

“Yep,” Lemon chirped. “You said you knew about it without ever seeing it. Don’t deny it Dahn.”

“I’m not, you’re sleuthing skill are amazing me to be honest.” He replied.

“Good because there’s more.” Lemon continued. “It says-

“Where there’s a Trybrid, there’s a Hybrid.” Dahn finished.

“Yup!” Lemon beamed.

“So how you so sure it’s you? Could be uncle.”

Lemon and Dahn shared a knowing look and burst out laughing. Lemon scooted across the bed and reached down and pulled up the book from Stalgia. She quickly flipped to the page in question and quoted:

“Where there’s a Trybrid, there’s a Hybrid close by. Hybrids are drawn to Trybrids subconsciously and vice versa. Usually the 2 will share a unique bond. The bond can manifest in many ways, it could be such as a Master and Apprentice, Sibling, Parent and Child, Lovers, or even Rivals. However it happens, the Hybrid will usually not know he or she has the ability to carry another Mnemonic path until the Trybrid awakens them. How that happens is usually personal between the companions.”

“Cute.” Dahn replied. “How do you know it’s not Haidee? She seems oddly drawn to me.”

"Are you drawn to her?" Lemon asked.

Dahn laughed, that sounded awkward.

"No! Hahahahaha. I mean, she of course a nice lady...erm you know what you mean."

"Yeah you mean you don't like her like that but you heard, it can be any type of bond really. Anyway it's got to be us."

"So do you know what other path you have?" Dahn asked.

"No but I'm hoping its Haptique." Lemon grinned. "That's your job mate. Unlock me!"

"If your arm wasn't broken, I'd pounce on you and unlock your screams with a tickle attack." Dahn grinned.

"To bad it's fine then." Lemon grinned deviously.

"What?" Dahn inquired. "*So much this girl accomplish in 1 day?*"

"It was Toane, he healed it, but he told me not to treat it like it's not broken because he isn't sure how good his healing abilities are. According to him, there is a branch of Deliberation that allows us to heal others as well. But only really powerful Mnemons can make the effects manifest in real life. Normally it's like only in your mind. So it doesn't hurt at all – not sure if it's wholesome yet, I'm afraid to try it out."

"Oh, thanks for telling us!" Dahn said sarcastically.

"I just forgot to say, my mind was overloaded." Lemon sighed.

"Nah its ok, I fully believe you." Dahn assured her.

Lemon got up from her bed and walked to her window and opened it up all the way. She pulled off her cat hair band; tossing it onto her bed. Her golden hair was released from its ponytail and allowed to fall messily down and frame Lemon's childish face.

“Dahn, the money from Madame Estelle, Haidee, this bell, and everything else that’s been happening, I think...I think we are finally getting the chance we’ve waited for so long.” She sighed taking a whiff of the crisp evening air outside her window. Dahn joined his Hybrid, pulling her into a neck-hug.

“I’m really scared and very excited about our voyage.” She smiled up at him.

“Don’t be afraid Lemon,” Her friend assured her. “You are more than right, and we are going to march on everything they ever tried to take us down – together as a team and a family. We will master our powers and skills, taking apart our lives at the root and rebuilding it back better than it ever could have been before. We will be on top of the world and we will be the most powerful Mnemon duet the world has ever had the good fortune to know.” Dahn assured her triumphantly.

Lemon leaned on Dahn warmly and patted his chest. “Good boy, that’s how I want you to talk from now on.”

“I won’t just talk it, I’m going to breathe it.”

