

(Every character depicted in the story below is a consenting legal adult over the age of 18)

A/N: No pressure, not like it's literally everything on the line or anything.

-x-X-x-

Before he can spiral too badly, Jason forces himself to calm down and think for a moment. He's glad he does, because in doing so he gives himself a moment to notice something even more baffling. Using Focus, all of his attention had been on the Simurgh and the Controller-Controlee connection between her and Eidolon.

But upon focusing on Eidolon a bit more, Focus tells him something else... Eidolon is still registering as a friendly to the power. There isn't a trace of red anywhere on the man. That... that makes all of this feel even more senseless, because so far Focus has never been wrong about who is friendly and who is hostile to Jason.

In fact, it had even been capable of marking people who didn't know who Jason was before he debuted properly as Portent. All of the gang members, all of the criminals, all of the villains had been automatically marked in red without Jason having to ever interact with them and without them knowing a single thing about him.

So then why would Eidolon, who had apparently been secretly controlling the Endbringers for decades and killing millions of people, register as anything other than hostile to Jason's power? Why would Jason view Eidolon as anything but a monster?

It didn't make any sense... but given the situation they were currently in, Jason couldn't afford to hesitate for too long. He needed a second opinion... and unfortunately, the only other person up here was one of Eidolon's closest allies.

Still, Focus was still claiming Alexandria was friendly too right now. And a 'look' at her showed no Endbringer-sized skeletons in her closet. There were other

things, things she regretted, secrets she was keeping... but Jason doesn't push too hard. The Endbringers take priority.

He needs to speak with Alexandria without Eidolon knowing. Thanks to Chaos Magic, that's not too difficult. His first thought is to create a miniscule Flash Air portal between his lips and her ear canal for them to speak through, but he's not 100% sure Eidolon wouldn't be able to hear them.

So instead he does something... well, a little questionable and connects directly to Alexandria's mind. At the same time, he speeds up his own perception so that the world almost seems to freeze around them, giving them a chance to for a full 'conversation'. He's prepared to do the same for Alexandria but finds he doesn't really have to. Her powers already allow her to do it herself. Her mind is like a supercomputer...

Alexandria. Please do not react. This is Portent, I am speaking directly into your mind. You may think back to me and I will hear your words.

The Triumvirate Cape is already absolutely still, presumably a byproduct of her powerset that completely removes the need for things like twitching and fidgeting. Thankfully, she doesn't say or do anything beyond looking at him a bit more intently as her 'voice' comes back a moment later.

How are you doing this?

Is Jason surprised that Alexandria's mental voice comes with notes of 'strength' and 'unyielding resolve'? Not really. And it's not worth focusing on right now either. He doesn't bother lying to her... even if she wanted to use the information against him, at this point it doesn't really matter.

I am a Trump with multiple powers that can grow. I am using one right now to connect our minds for telepathic communication. But the 'How' is a lot less important than the 'Why' right now.

Then why are you doing this?

Grimacing internally, Jason hesitates for the briefest of milliseconds, which in turn feels like several seconds to him. In the end though...

Because I have just discovered that Eidolon is in control of the Endbringers and I need to know if you knew that.

That gets an actual reaction out of Alexandria. Her eyes widen almost imperceptibly, her already still body somehow becoming even more so. A relative eternity passes as she sees to process this, a full second of real time that they'll never get back. Jason lets it happen anyways though, even as he's gratified to realize she clearly didn't know.

Are you absolutely sure? How do you know?

That... Jason could explain Focus to Alexandria. But it would take even more time. Time they might have... but also time he didn't necessarily want to waste. Instead, he dives back into the power itself, directing his attention back onto Eidolon, seeking out more information to try and figure out what the hell was going on and how this was happening.

What he finally finds... chills him to his core. Its there at the heart of the matter. A simple four words. Jason shudders, even as he sends it back over to Alexandria.

He needed worthy opponents.

Eidolon wasn't actually in control after all... not consciously. It was his subconscious that had created the Endbringers for him to fight against. And not just the three they knew about...

Oh David...

Even as Alexandria inadvertently exposes Eidolon's civilian identity (it didn't matter, Jason already picked up the man's name when he was doing his deep dive) Jason feels along the connection from Eidolon back to the Endbringers. He

was expecting to feel just two more connections, specifically to Leviathan and Behemoth respectively.

Instead, he feels nineteen more connections. Leviathan and Behemoth are the only ones 'awake' aside from the Simurgh, but there are seventeen more dormant Endbringers just waiting to be brought forth. All because of Eidolon's insecurities. All because of his obsessive need to not just be 'a' hero, but 'the' hero.

Jason... Jason has never felt this much rage before. He's felt anger. He's felt fury. But this rage... it takes every bit of his willpower not to murder Eidolon right then and there. And it's only because it WOULD be murder that he manages to hold himself back. Because Eidolon didn't do it on purpose. He doesn't know, even now.

There are more, Alexandria. Seventeen more constructs, all on the same level as the three Endbringers we already fight. Eidolon's powers created them to feed his need to be a hero. To give him something 'worthy' of his strength.

Alexandria is silent for a time, during which Jason considers his options. Seconds of real time pass, each one adding to the chance that Eidolon will finally break the silence all three of them are currently existing in and demand to know what Jason is doing, demand to know what's going on.

The hero won't be able to help himself. He's been on top for so long. It's been quite some time since anybody told him 'no'.

If we terminate Eidolon, what happens to the Endbringers? Can they be controlled another way?

Now it's Jason's turn to go a little wide eyed. Alexandria breaks her silence, only to callously suggest killing one of her oldest comrades. And yet... he senses her resolve. She means every word. For some reason, that gives him comfort. On the other hand, the question of control... does not.

I don't need to kill Eidolon to disconnect him from the Endbringers. I can destroy all twenty right now as well and end their threat once and for all.

No! Don't!

What? Jason doesn't transmit that, but Alexandria continues on all the same, her mental 'voice' actually a little panicked.

If they can be truly controlled, we could use them. We need them, Portent. The Endbringers... are not the greatest threat we face.

That... again, Jason doesn't answer her. Instead, he dives deeper again with Focus... this time turning more of his attention towards Alexandria. What he finds... well, his own powers confirm it for him.

Feat Achieved: Uncover your first Multiversal Parahuman Conspiracy! 100 Points!

Feat Achieved: Uncover the truth behind Parahuman Abilities! 100 Points!

Great, no hope of Alexandria just being delusional then or Focus actually being on the fritz, he supposes. Nope, unless his overall power was fucking with him too, then Alexandria's greatest secret was real. Scion... was the source of all Parahuman Powers, and more than that he was an alien being who would eventually wipe out life on not just Earth Bet, but every Earth he could find.

Fuck.

... This is insane. You want me to put a leash on the Endbringers and what, hand the other end to Eidolon so he can control them properly?

Actually no. If you can do that, I don't believe Eidolon is the one who should have control. I believe you should take them, Portent.

Uh... what? Jason can't help being baffled.

You would trust me with that sort of power?

Its not a matter of trust Portent, but rather of necessity. We need the Endbringers if we're going to have a chance against the real threat. It was never a possibility before, but it is now. And it's not just three of them... but twenty, you said. We might have a real shot of winning with twenty Endbringers on our side. David- Eidolon... even subconsciously, has misused his control over them. But you... you've already proven yourself today. You've proven your worthiness by stopping the Simurgh in her tracks. Not only that, but you've also proven yourself a team player by reaching out to me and including me in this conversation rather than just handling everything yourself.

Given they're having this conversation by thought, it's not like either of them needs to take a moment to breathe between longwinded responses, but Jesus Christ does Alexandria know how to monologue. And apparently how to do dramatic pauses, because she's not done.

If not you, Portent... then who?

And in the end... she's right. If not him, who? If they need the Endbringers to fight against Scion, then the only real options are him, or Eidolon, or Alexandria herself... or maybe Legend. Legend would be a good choice; Jason can't help but think.

Yet... he doesn't offer up the other man's name as an alternative. Instead, he stays quiet and contemplative. Ultimately... he thinks Alexandria is right. It has to be him. Not because he's some moral bastion, but because his mind is already enhanced by his powers and can be further enhanced to even beyond Alexandria's own supercomputer brain pretty easily.

Beyond perhaps giving Taylor some boosts, Jason is the only one who would be capable of controlling all twenty Endbringers and their esoteric abilities in a knockout fight with Scion. And he wasn't about to put something like that on Taylor. He wasn't about to put that kind of weight on her shoulders. Especially

since... he had no idea what Scion might be able to do to her given she was connected to him via her power.

At the end of the day, the Endbringers were machines. Constructs. All twenty of them. And if they were left to their own devices, they would default to their original programming, which seemed to be destruction of the kind they were already participating in.

That couldn't be allowed to happen. Jason had to do something. And if he wasn't going to destroy them... then yes, he would control them.

We'll have to tell Eidolon. I need to make physical contact with him to modify his powers and take control of the Endbringers.

... I understand.

Coming out of the sped up perception, Jason has no idea how to go about bringing Eidolon into all of this without shattering the man with the truth.

"Eidolon. You're subconsciously controlling the Endbringers. Portent can make you stop, but you need to let him touch you."

Okay... what the fuck Alexandria? Eidolon rocks back on his heels, his jaw dropping open in disbelief for a long moment before he finds his voice.

"Wha- Alexandria, what the fuck are you talking about? What's going on? You-!"

"You needed worthy opponents, David."

The words hit Eidolon... David like a truck. Or like something actually capable of harming him, since a truck wouldn't really be able to do anything to a member of the Triumvirate. Regardless, this time Eidolon jerks as if struck... and then, like a puppet with his strings cut, he slumps and lowers his head, all the vim and vigor fleeing him in mere moments.

"No..."

Alexandria is at his side a moment later, a hand on his shoulder.

“I’m sorry David. But you need to let Portent help you.”

Lifting his head, Eidolon makes eye contact with Jason... only to shudder.

“Please... please make me stop. W-Whatever it takes.”

Jesus Christ. The stutter from one of the most powerful men in the world was bad enough, but the obvious implication that Eidolon wouldn’t even care if Jason had to kill him was... well, Jason was no therapist. It would be up to Eidolon’s friends and allies to make sure he got the help he needed after all of this.

Right now, Jason just floats forward, the massive angelic form of the Simurgh still frozen in stasis looming over them. He reaches out and places his hands on either side of Eidolon’s head... and focuses.

It takes a couple minutes... but not nearly as long as Eidolon or Alexandria is expecting judging by their shock when he finally pulls away.

“It’s done. You are no longer connected to the Endbringers. They will no longer answer to your subconscious commands.”

Eidolon shudders again before nodding.

“Thank... thank you.”

Where was the annoyed, slightly overbearing hero from before? Fuck, Jason almost wished that version of Eidolon was back, because this version was... pathetic. Then again, given what he’d just learned, he had good reason to be depressed at this point. He-

Hm? Something was happening. The Endbringers... Jason was connected to them now. Which meant they were connected to his power. And... his power was trying to do something to them? Jason turns, his brow furrowing as he

regards the still sealed form of the Simurgh. His power wanted to transform her and all of her fellow machines.

It seemed to be surface level. Just... aesthetics. But still, Jason could feel that while his power wasn't actually asking for permission, he could still reach out and stop it if he wanted to...

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A/N: Remember to go back and VOTE!

-x-X-x-

A/N: Will try to keep this up to date at the end of every chapter, get on me if I forget please. Though if it gets too out of hand, I might have to change it at some point.

Jason's current banked points:

600 Celestial Points

Jason's current banked power:

Darkin Weapon (400 Points)

Jason's current powers:

= Flash Air (Gained in Chapter 1

= Transformation Pendant (Gained in Chapter 4)

= Keen Eye (Gained in Chapter 4)

= Blood, Death, and Demons (Gained in Chapter 6)

= Alchemical Prodigy (Gained in Chapter 8)

= Staff of Magnus (Gained in Chapter 13)

= Bind and Seal (Gained in Chapter 17)

= Hero of a Hundred Faces: Everyone's Leader (Gained in Chapter 20)

= Minor Regeneration via Blood Empowerment Ritual (Gained in Chapter 23)

(Taylor got Major Agility, Vicky got Major Intelligence)

= Restraining Order (Gained in Chapter 25)

= Focus (Gained in Chapter 28)

= Scarborough Fair (Gained in Chapter 30)

= Chaos Magic (Gained in Chapter 36)

= Major Regeneration via Blood Empowerment Ritual (Gained in Chapter 40)

(Taylor, Vicky, and Amy all got Minor Regeneration)

= A Collection of Magic Rings (x6 Cursed Rings, x12 Drawback Rings, x6 Buff Rings) (Gained Chapter 44)

= Jason: T3 Armor Ring + Blue Ring, Taylor: T3 Armor Ring + Expert's Ring, Vicky: Red Ring + T2 Heart Ring, Amelia: T3 Armor Ring + T2 Heart Ring (Handed out Chapter 46)

= Lucky Charm (Gained in Chapter 51)

(Currently worn by Jason as of Ch. 51)

= Presidential Suit (Gained in Chapter 52)

(Currently reshaped to be Jason's new costume while still looking like the old costume Parian made for him as of Chapter 56)

= Taylor, Vicky, and Amy all get Major Regeneration via Blood Empowerment Ritual (Gained in Chapter 57)

= Jason gains Major Intelligence via Blood Empowerment Ritual (Gained in Chapter 58)

(Crystal and Lisa both get Minor Regeneration)

= Second Skin (Gained in Chapter 58)

= Iron Fist (Gained in Chapter 63)

= Exceptional and Lucky (Gained in Chapter 69)

= Safety Minded (Gained in Chapter 72)