

Pangea

Marching One By One

Sidebar

In theory, any animal can be turned into an Awoken, be it a cat, dog, or even insect. The magic that creates them gives them human like intelligence and can even evolve their bodies to be more humanoid.

Vik jumps at the rumbling voice coming from Rakesh's dragon companion. "Ah! Oh, goodness me, sorry. You know, in all our dealings with dragons, I don't think we've heard one speak yet. Forgive my reaction."

Pan floats toward Vik, his wingless body still capable of flight by means of some ancient draconic magic. "Few of your kind know of mine. Fewer still have met us. Open your mind to the possibilities around you, small one."

Eryk huffs, puffing out his chest. "You're one to talk, you oversized noodle! I'm taller than you are long, and easily five times your width!"

A bemused rumble escapes Pan's throat, before a cold get of water shoots out of his mouth. The splash hits Eryk in the face, soaking his neatly kept beard.

"Hey! What was that for?!" Eryk digs through his bag for a comb. "Stupid noodle!"

Allura giggles at the sight. "Sir Eryk, perhaps insulting our guide and host is not the wisest course of action, hmm? We wouldn't want to get lost in a place like this, now, would we?"

Eryk grumbles as he straightens his beard but otherwise remains silent.

Rakesh marches the group further into the Red Desert, the deep hazer blocking most of their sight. Yet, the catfolk moves with purpose as he and Pan make their way toward the site of Rakesh's trade city.

"We should be there in a couple of days, as long as we don't get lost. Please, stay close. The desert can be an unwelcome place if you are not careful." Rakesh continues forward.

"Anything we should be aware of, Rakesh? I don't think any of us have been here before." Omara looks around, futile as that is. "I don't know how you navigate this place."

Rakesh turns back and smiles at Omara. He nods to the cart, where Pan is curled up, waiting. "I have traveled this route many times now, but Pan is also helpful for navigating the desert. He can smell a water droplet from miles away, or so he claims, hehe."

Vik wipes a thick layer of dust off his glasses. "That is most impressive! And most helpful in a place like this, I imagine."

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“Oh, most certainly,” Rakesh says with a bemused hum. “Pan is a wyrm of many talents. One time, he-.”

Pan rises from the cart, hissing. “Danger approaches, Rakesh. Ready yourselves.” Pan takes up a defensive position around Rakesh, a shimmering field of water forming around his body.

After only a slight pause, out from the ground bursts a small group of giant fire ants. Each one stands some two and a half feet long, with a foreign symbol marking their back.

“Chh, tch chh. T-ch!” They click in the group’s direction, rising on their back legs to stand tall.

Eryk slowly draws his hammers, ready to become an exterminator. Allura holds the back line, preparing a spell to help her allies. Vik waits patiently, eagerly studying the symbol on the ants’ backs. Omara keeps one hand near her sword, though she awaits the right moment to strike.

“Easy, friends!” Rakesh calls out. “They mean us no harm, rest assured.” He turns to the massive ant creatures and chitters back to them. “Chh chh tch! Chh tch tch.”

Vik listens intently, shocked that a mammal could speak insect. However, the patterns are simple.

The ants lower their antennae, sniffing the group. In a broken tongue not used to mortal language they respond. “Why here? Not us, not us! Why here?”

“Rakesh, can you tell them we only want to pass by?” Omara asks, her hand still hovering over her blade.

“Of course, but perhaps you all should lower your weapons, hmm? They do not respond well to aggression.” Rakesh turns to the bug people. “Clan Solare! We are only here as we pass through. We head to Rakesh, then the big mountain in the distance. Please, let us through.”

The ants chitter amongst themselves, then nod to Rakesh. “You. Follow. Us.”

Rakesh looks back at the group, then shrugs. “I don’t think we have a choice. The bugfolk Awoken are very set in their ways.”

The Appenendats surrender to follow the fire ants of this supposed Clan Solare, yet each one stands ready to defend themselves and their friends.

The fire ants lead the small band of travelers deeper into the Red Desert, before stopping at the mouth of a descending cave. The group looks at it eerily, before the bugs speak once more. “Queen, meet you. Follow.”