Orcus Learns… Something

After his excursion to the Night Market with the other members of the guild, Orcus had been preoccupied with trying to understand and get a grasp on the secrets and events that unfolded. He had been distracted with the information the twins imparted to him and the efforts he needed to take to try and save those he cares for. Each time his feet were back under him, something new and shiny would make a path for his mind. After the festival with Fae running rampant through the city, Orcus decided it was finally time to focus on what really matters. The key, the one hidden from the Ifrit, that had been held by the Diamond city. The key that could well be the method for resurrecting the magnificent, floating place.  
  
 If only Orcus had that sort of focus. He did manage to devote a large amount of time to the Key, what he was allowed to at least under supervision in the guild. His determination and lack of understanding led to other thoughts, thoughts about his uses of the Ether. Specifically, how his abilities and adept ways interacted with The Night Market. Touching the Ethereal realm had sent him back in time. It had done the same for Obeah when he’d finally convinced Orcus he truly wished to attempt the same, but had been described to Orcus as even less controlled.

There had to be something with that. That had to be how other Masters had managed some of the more outrageous uses of the Ethereal to influence this plane. Orcus had heard stories of Masters who could rescue the dying with lightning quick reflexes. Sure, Orcus was fast, he could even slip into the Ether and get to someone mostly uninterrupted, but to run through and back was something he normally just could not manage. This frustration, being the lowest of the more lauded uses of Ethereal manipulation, combined with more outlandish stories of Masters rearranging entire rooms at parties or entire battlefields when convenient, spurred his mind more than the Key.

Orcus would begin and end most free days with the key, trying to decipher it. During lunches, or teas, he would stretch his mind toward other, seemingly more achievable goals. Most afternoons were spent going over equations, trying to bend his mind around concepts and theories about the flow of time. Orcus had books and scrolls he had read when he had taken to his quiet life as a Hermit, but nothing compared to what the guild had on hand. At least, that’s what he told himself. These materials had to have better knowledge, more accurate summations for him to grasp and bend to his will.

The better part of two weeks passed before Orcus found any sort of satisfaction for his efforts. He was startled out of trying to rework a particularly irritating equation suggested on a parchment, startled by the screams of someone on the street nearby. They were being attacked by some sort of large bugs, and though a few of the more skilled fighters were on their way, the stranger was already visibly marked with oozing cuts and gashes. Orcus leapt up to help her, rushing to her side lifting her to the air, and bringing her back where he had been lounging with studies.

She did not react, not right away. He called to her, a quick ‘Miss’, to try and startle her out of her daze. Getting no response, he turned from her, to see if the bugs were giving chase. They floated there, still in the places they had been, as though her body were still there supporting them. Realizing what he had accomplished, Orcus lost concentration and everything immediately started moving forward again.

He had managed it. Ever so briefly, but it was still true. Orcus was able to stop time and rearrange small parts of the world. After seeing to the safety of the woman, Orcus made a schedule. Less books, more action. Maybe, with luck, he would stumble across an answer for his other frustrations, foremost the Key. Always so much to do, and even now, never enough time.