

AWAKENING

Ertar. Our world. For over a million cycles it's full of life, all thanks to the Goddess of the Three Skies, the Goddess who not only gave us Ertar, but two other worlds as well.

Pryansotgemetis, the Gardens of the Goddess, a place where the Goddess can get at peace, and the First World she created. There are only a few who have ever witnessed the Gardens.

And Belccyrein, the Underworld, where the essence of a spiret travels to when they stop respawning. A world where you never feel like you really exist, even if you're still alive.

But Ertar, that's her masterpiece. Mountains, oceans, big plains, and cities. Big cities, all made by her creations, the spirets. And a wide diversity of baptmi's, one of the first kinds of creatures the Goddess gave to the world. This all forms a unity, a whole where everything has a purpose, but where everybody can make their own choices. It's hard to believe that this is could all just be a simulation.

A track. A track that ran through an endless void. It started out straight, but the farther she went it got more crooked, sometimes even gravity defying. There was something with this void, but she didn't know what it was exactly. It seemed like it was anything but empty, like... She didn't know. It was a feeling she couldn't understand, something she had never felt. Could it have been fear?

She also knew what was coming. She had seen it many times before in her sleep. At this moment there would be a quake, she would fall off the tracks, she would wake up.

But she didn't.

Instead she kept on falling, deeper into the void. It didn't even feel like she was falling. It felt more like floating. The feelings she had earlier were also gone. Furthermore, it seemed like everything had changed. A starry sky replaced the void, and when she looked right from her she saw a glowing sphere. It was a sun, a blue sun, just like home.

She looked again to the front, and saw a sphere. She didn't even notice there was something in front of her. Was it a planet? The surface shined in the light of the sun, as if it was made of metal. She noticed the sphere was growing bigger, or no, she was coming closer to the sphere. She didn't know what actually was moving, she or the sphere, but at least she could now see the surface. It indeed was made of metal.

After a while she could see more on the surface, creatures, all made of metal and in different shapes. At first she could see the big ones. Those seemed to be bigger than

the biggest city she had ever seen. After that she kept on seeing smaller creatures, from creatures as big as buildings to creatures who were only just smaller than the smallest spirets. All seemed to have their own tasks.

And she kept coming closer to the astronomical object, further and further, until she reached the surface. But she didn't stop there. Through an opening she continued, deep inside the sphere. She could now see the nature of this sphere. It was a network of terminals, a networks of networks. Everywhere she looked she saw machines, machines who seemed connected to each other, machines who seemed to stand alone, small machines, big machines, machines that produced other machines, and there, in the distance, a machine in the shape of a spiret.

She came closer to this machine, and for a moment it seemed she could touch the machine, this spiret-like machine. But the moment she came close enough, everything faded in a blinding light. She could barely hear one thing.

Terra...

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Nikene opened her eyes, and in front of her was a planet, her planet, Ertar. There, somewhere in a blue-green ocean, she could see Moctod. She knew the global shape of the continent, mainly through her travels. She could also see other continents, perhaps not as big as Moctod, but big enough to see with the naked eye. Nikene wondered if she would ever set foot on the other continents. No, she knew it. She would visit them.

Slowly the planet came close, and Golgeo, the city closest to her home, became visible. She never realized how big Golgeo was. Of course, from the surface Golgeo already seemed big, but from up here you could really see the size.

Deeper did she descend, until she floated above her home. She descended through the roofs, and finally saw herself.

She opens her eyes.