

“HEY,” said Jecht, sliding noisily into the seat opposite Braska. “You writin’ a letter?”

Braska nodded, not looking up from his careful penmanship.

“Yuna?” Jecht guessed.

“No,” said Braska. He put the pen down, and met Jecht’s eyes. “It’s to Luzzu. The young man from Besaid, who ran the Crusaders’ Lodge. He left one here for me – I thought I’d write back.”

“Oh yeah,” said Jecht. “Never saw you guys talkin’ to each other much,” he added, not without a little jealousy. “Didn’t realise you were friends.”

“We stayed there several days,” Braska reminded him mildly. “Friendships have been formed on less.”

He turned back to his writing with a frown. *I am as well as could be hoped*, he’d written. *Jecht is, mercifully, his usual self, and Auron*

That was where he had stopped. He looked out, past the flap of the Crusaders’ tent, towards the dusty ground of the Mushroom Rock Road, and his gaze drifted towards Auron, who sat facing in the other direction, apparently focused on polishing his sword.

Braska sighed; his head hurt, but that was nothing new, not after receiving the power of five aeons. “Jecht,” he said, “would you check on him? Auron?”

“I just did,” Jecht protested. “You know nothing I say is gonna – you should talk to him yourself. He might listen.”

“No,” said Braska quietly, shaking his head. He might have been able to convince Auron not to mourn if it was someone else’s death they were expecting – but not when that death was Braska’s own. There were burdens he could bear as a summoner, burdens that barely anyone in Spira would have managed, but to have to speak of those things to a dear friend was impossible.

Jecht walked away, rolling his eyes; Braska turned back to his letter, and chose not to see it.