—YEESHA—

So, friend, the Tablet has responded to you.

Of course.

If you're seeking my father, his time is passed.

He won't be requiring your assistance.

The Book to his cursed island lays locked and gathering dust in his prison.

That Book along with his pain and his burden have been passed to me.

And now you will know it, too.

You will listen carefully. This is not to be taken lightly.

The Tablet has responded to you. It will be your burden.

The Tablet "chooses" someone then? It *looks* like some sort of technology... I wonder if it has a sensor? But what does it respond to?? The Tablet itself looks D'ni in design yet the Keep where it resides definitely is of Bahro design.

The Myst book, the pain and the burden are part of Yeesha's legacy... and are being passed to Watson??

The Tablet is the burden, then, so what is the pain?

Choose wisely in the end.

For there will be no second chance.

Many have taken this Tablet, and they tried not to let go.

It is the power of the writing. It... seduces all who try to hold it.

I have held it...tasted its sweetness.

But I can hold it no longer.

They have served too long.

Always serving.

Ever watching.

And now, perhaps you will see how to release them.

First, collect what's been scattered, and then the Tablet will be released.

Then, you will hold it.

No second chance--so someone can hold the Tablet only once... and it has had many owners, all who have tried to cling to it. The Tablet is seductive, perhaps even subtly destructive to its owners... perhaps this is the pain Yeesha mentioned?

Yeesha is trying to be clear here--our goal is to free those who serve, the Bahro. Apparently, it's not obvious how to release them?

The scattered stone slates are keys to open the master Tablet.

You will find in each Age along the journey that there will be help, and there will be hindrance.

You will start this journey where I started, where my father Atrus started, where my great-grandmother Ti'ana started.

You will end this journey here when the Tablet is released.

When you return, the Tablet will be yours.

When the Tablet is yours,

do not give it to me.

What you still don't understand you have failed to hear or don't need to know.

Begin.

NNNNN

Help and hindrance... the Bahro and Esher, I would guess. This is the only warning we get from Yeesha about him.

We know Yeesha went on her pilgrimage from the Cleft and Atrus followed Gehn to D'ni from there... and Ti'ana found the Cleft and then later the great D'ni city beneath... But is Yeesha saying something about this Tablet journey too? Is she implying that each of these three journeys was in regard to the Tablet itself?

At the end of this, Watson will *own* the Tablet. Yeesha's only guidance is regarding herself--she doesn't want it back. But she also is telling Watson that he doesn't have to keep it himself, he can give it to someone else...

—ESHER—

You have seen Yeesha.

She was, I'm sure, not very hospitable.

You are confused, no doubt.

My name is Esher. It is my pleasure to meet you.

She has given you the Quest...

Yes...the Quest. The Quest to carry the four. The Quest to release the Tablet.

The Quest that is proving to be more difficult than she anticipated.

Many have taken the Quest...and the Tablet still has no master.

I will tell you what she will not.

I will help you when she will not.

The four... that which has been scattered, mentioned earlier by Yeesha. The four stone slate keys in each of the four Ages.

So completing the Quest and becoming the Tablet's master are not synonymous...

Yeesha has been pretty straightforward regarding her past experience with the Tablet. Is Esher implying that something more happened? Were Yeesha's choices as the Tablet master directly related to Calam's death?

His comments about Yeesha strike me as probably a good description of Esher himself... Esher has the same reaction to Yeesha that many explorers have. She speaks in metaphor and symbolism... the tree growing again, the "called".

But she and I agree on this point...DO NOT...give her the Tablet.

She has lied to you already...

uttered words that bite her heart as they leave her lips...for she wants that Tablet...

more than anything!

She desires what she can no longer feel...but once tasted.

You must not...whatever happens...give it to her.

Ah...She is the desert bird that longs to fly.

She has dreams of taking flight in her ambiguous world filled with vague clouds and shadowed air.

Careful...she is a clever one.

I'm sorry. I'm overwhelming you.

Look for the hole in the ground...

That's where your journey begins.

I will find you.

NNNNN

—ESHER—

Ah-hah...Direbo.

An Age for resting.

Hah... Such a peaceful place.

And...the way to get to the first Age.

There. That profane thing and the other pedestals like it are not of D'ni.

They are a regrettable part of this journey.

The pedestal will allow you to link in a manner similar to the Book that brought you here. But...

know this: they are perverted tools of the creatures.

The creatures....

You have seen them.

Esher makes no secret of his low regard for the Bahro technology. He says nothing of why he views the Bahro tools as "perverted"--perhaps because they are not D'ni? Yet he also is quite aware of the power of this technology.

Always watching, calling to one another in the darkness, loathsome...wraiths.

They are not as we are.

Remember that.

Touch the pedestal.

It will bring you to the Age of Tahgira.

I will find you there.

NNNNNN

Hmm, Esher clearly *hates* the Bahro, perhaps simply because they are different?

Yet the Bahro technology is both powerful and mysterious. A stone pedestal with the innate power of a Linking Book, simply by the presence of a symbol etched on the surface. Touching the symbol is exactly the same as touching a linking panel, down to the tingling sensation as the phase shift begins. I wonder if the Bahro cloth linking tablets are Yeesha's version of this technology...

—ESHER—

I don't know why the creatures chose this place for the Slates.

Taghira. Cold, barren, desolate it has been described...

However, also...purposeful.

No doubt Yeesha sees only evil here.

This was a prison Age...

for those who committed monstrous crimes.

They were sent to this place to live out their lives.

Justice...not evil.

nnnnn

The Bahro *chose* this Age and the lesson here?? So this is a journey of learning the Bahro story as told by the Bahro themselves... a Bahro required lesson or even test of worthiness to *earn* ownership of the Tablet they serve...

So perhaps the Tablet responds to a potential owner because the Bahro are considering choosing this person? The Bahro influence the Tablet's behavior? It seems clear that the Bahro are deliberately *acting* in some way through the Tablet...

—ESTHER—

Much to learn.

First, the stone Slate:

Pick it up from the pedestal and take it with you.

But know this about the Slates.

They too are abominations, made by the Bahro creatures' abuse of the Art of Writing. Still...

...they carry great power.

You will find that you can write on the Slates, anything you wish.

There are some elementary symbols the creatures understand.

At least in this way you can use the Bahro hindrance for your good.

So the slates are pieces of technology to communicate with the Bahro; quite probably devised by the Bahro themselves by the look of them.

If the Bahro are testing Watson's worthiness, it makes more sense why they obey what others write on the slates. They are required to obey only the Tablet; they must be *choosing* to obey the slates...

So the Bahro do not appear to be mindless drones doing the will of others. Something complex is afoot...

They will take it... if you drop it.

They will obey it... if you order them.

They will return it... in time.

As you learn, you will have more control.

Esher makes it clear that he learned about control in his version of this Quest; control seems to be his focus, even obsession. So perhaps the Bahro tested him and found him unworthy in the end?

How is it that the Bahro are bound to a piece of technology? What is the mechanism? And who figured out how to do it? At 10,000 years ago the prime suspect is Ri'neref. If so, the D'ni built their new home and infrastructure on the backs of the Bahro, being literally dependent on them for the transport of goods and equipment between the Ages. We already know the transport limitations of the Books, yet the D'ni obviously had found a solution. A solution quite apart from the Books.

We see hints of the Bahro slavery in Yeesha's original Journey Ages--in the Kemo bahroglyphs, in the Gahreesen prison, in the Teledahn slave caves. Is Yeesha hinting at a Kadish connection with the first vault on Tolesa?

—ESHER—

Use the Slate to free yourself....

The burden you carry is heavy. But for that...

...you will be thankful.

NNNNN

—ESHER—

I was not so sure of you.

And yet you have done well.

But...do not be proud.

You think you understand what you see...you may be wrong.

For example...this appears to be ice, but there is more.

Like the prisoners, there is life here that seeks heat. Unseen life...in the water.

There is no longer heat in this place.

But you can make them bring it.

nnnnn

—ESHER—

Do you not marvel at what the prisoners were able to do here with so little?

Structures, food, life...

As D'ni built, so they did here.

Nothing.

None of it matters now.

The future is all we have.

Justice is at hand. We will build again!

NNNNN

"We will build again"--who is "we"? Esher is talking about the D'ni here... his goal sounds like the rebuilding of the once-flourishing empire. But there are few D'ni left now. What is he really hoping for here?

—ESHER—

These are their tombs.

And as they died here, so did all of D'ni.

Guilty here. But my D'ni...was innocent.

May we rebuild structures. Not leave tombs.

Make them bring you to the Keep...for it will run

from you.

NNNNN

Esher is implying that these prisoners survived the fall of D'ni. So he is aware that the D'ni are nearly extinct. Again, how is he hoping to rebuild??

—ESHER—

Huh...hmm... You have found the Keep, the destination for the Slates.

You have seen this pedestal already in K'veer, where you started.

And you will see it again. It is in...in many places at once.

Touch the Slate to finish your task.

Only you can make them solid.

Three remain.

Return to the tunnels, the path that leads to D'ni, and you will find another Book.

Well done.

The Keep is quite an advanced piece of Bahro technology, existing simultaneously in at least five locations across space and time... Or looking at it a bit differently, a single location and bubble that pierces five different locations across space and time. An inter-dimensional bubble. How did the Bahro master such mysteries? I'm guessing from this evidence that the Bahro are not limited by the D'ni "rules" at all but can go anywhere, anywhen. All this technology seems unneeded by the Bahro, but is more a courtesy to us...

NNNNN

—ESHER—

I apologize for the goggles earlier, but my eyes are not accustomed to the sun in this Age.

I have taken this same journey...this same Quest...and failed.

I'm not proud of my failure, yet I think that what I learned will be useful in your Quest.

Your journey continues through that door.

NNNNN

Esher definitely has made this same journey. What was his failure? Interesting that as helpful as he seems, he is silent on this. Perhaps he wishes to hide something about this failure from Watson?

—ESHER—

Re-gah-ro-ti-wah...

The Great Shaft.

Amazing is it, not?

Built by those from beneath. My people.

I am D'ni.

It was this shaft that permitted the great-grandmother of Yeesha to find our deep city.

Rather than bore you with tedious details, you need only know this...

She killed us all, and the great D'ni city lies lifeless and ruined.

There is a room at the end of this first elevator.

So Esher is familiar with the history surrounding Ti'ana. He clearly isn't old enough to have lived in those times himself, so he learned of this history... where? from whom?

It's interesting that the D'ni universally seem to blame Ti'ana for the choices made by a D'ni man, as if they cannot lay the blame squarely upon the shoulders of Veovis himself. Perhaps another example of their cultural arrogance and blindness? D'ni was killed by D'ni.

A small room with a D'ni Rest Age book for the D'ni who would have traveled this path.

The Book will link you to Direbo.

I will come to you there.

The Tablet was owned by one master at a time but apparently inspired the worst sort of behavior in its owners. Was the greed and selfishness (even malevolence) of the Tablet's D'ni creator embedded within its substance? Or was it only the lure of its unimaginable power that seized people? Perhaps its existence was a closely guarded secret, for the owner would be the single most powerful D'ni alive. It would follow that each king would be an owner. The later five guild masters would have faced a challenge though since only one of them could own it, most probably the Writer guild master. Though it seems likely that Kerath would have mandated that the five lords must share the privilege and burden, else the transition away from kings would be for naught. If this is so, then it was the Miners turn at the fall and Lord Rakeri was indeed the final owner... A powerful family hiding the Tablet in the Keep on their private island...

We already have very strong evidence that Wingrove was given only partial records when collaborating with the DRC and Miller brothers on writing the three published books about D'ni history, so it's no surprise that all information about the Tablet was withheld from him.

—ESHER—

Todelmer...

Built to study the heavens.

And glorious heavens you will find here.

I'm only sad we were never allowed to finish.

I have told you some of the story.

Yeesha's great-grandmother Ti'ana came to us

desperate for control...

convincing our people to betray rules we had held

for generations.

And...we died.

Yeesha claims such death, as painful as it was, had

to be done.

A plan of the Maker. And that she will rebuild...she

The control theme again. Esher seems to be pretty obsessed with it but isn't shy about accusing others of desiring it as well. The D'ni in general seem to be obsessed with control, perhaps encouraged by their relationship with Writing and their Ages, believing they had every right to use Age resources and inhabitants as they wished... I suspect that for the most part, the D'ni were a good-hearted people who simply were blind to their sense of entitlement and thoughtless arrogance toward non-D'ni peoples and worlds.

will rebuild.

I will tell you, such delusive wisdom comes from vague feelings and daydreams, and the Tablet you will have is far too powerful for such wisdom.

Tadelmer...

Enjoy the beauty of the heavens while you consider the power that can control them.

vvvvvv

Huh? Esher has already said he wants to rebuild D'ni, so why is he saying Yeesha is delusional to want to do the same? He's definitely trying to build a case against her, but we already know she doesn't want the Tablet back... what's he really up to?

—ESHER—

Your destination is not here...but above.

The stars and planets must be aligned.

And regrettably, it is only the perverted power of the creatures that can do it.

Make them.

NNNNN

The Bahro can move the heavens at will. Esher is admitting that the D'ni cannot do this themselves, only the Bahro are able... such immense power, and whoever is master of the Tablet can thus control the heavens everywhere, everywhen.

—ESHER—

Do you begin to understand the power of the Tablet?

Surely it begins to pull you. Its strength grips you.

Look around.

Without the power of the Tablet, this would be left solely to your dreams.

Now, imagine how the power calls her.

She has tasted it already. She has the ability to use it beyond all others,

and she tells you not to give it to her, because she wants it so.

She destroyed the D'ni once,

Esher admits that Yeesha's talent surpasses everyone else, even his own. He knows an *awful* lot about Yeesha... how?? Perhaps it's not an accident that Yeesha's thoughts about Calam's murder have been left about for us to find... The bahroglyphs about Yeesha's history depict an encounter with an evil Writer who attacked Yeesha, killing Calam in the process; and that later Yeesha defeated this Writer... Is Esher this evil Writer? Was this great battle over possession of the Tablet? Did Yeesha use the Tablet to defeat him?

Huh?? How did *Yeesha* destroy the D'ni?? Esher has already shown he knows about Ti'ana and blames her for the Fall. So what is Esher talking about?? Is he admitting that Yeesha defeated *him*? Or is this about Kadish and the empty vault?

and she will complete our destruction if you give her the Tablet.

vvvvvv

—ESHER—

Listen carefully.

The quest is half complete and the decision nears.

You have seen much of what the D'ni once were

and what they were able to build.

Do you see what we might create yet again? The

city! The Ages! Do you see it?

Go! Bring us closer.

NNNNN

Esher wants to resurrect the past... and he is trying to recruit Watson to help with this goal. Yet there are no D'ni left to live in these Ages. None except Esher himself... we already know that Yeesha is not welcome in his plans.

—ESHER—

Stand in awe.

The surface is three miles above us. Three miles!

Our construction was triumphant... and tragic.

You will not be able to continue downward without

providing fresh air to the tunnels.

Raise this floor and power the fans.

I trust you can discover how.

NNNNN

Three miles is impressive indeed. Conventional wisdom says that caves cannot occur naturally deeper than about 2 miles (3000 meters).

Tragic because Ti'ana found the shaft and followed it to D'nin...

—ESHER—

Welcome to my Age. Noloben.

When D'ni died, I fled here.

From death to death.

You will see the fingerprints of the creatures everywhere. This was their home, and they did not welcome me.

To survive I was forced to learn.

You will learn here as well.

It is not like the other Ages.

NNNNN

Here Esher is saying he was not only alive during the Fall, but he was far from an infant! What is this saying about Esher's history then?! The Fall took place in 9400 DE (1745 AD), which would make him well over 260 years old; if he was an adolescent when he fled, he'd be about 275, if an adult at that time, then even older. So why does he not look elderly? Is this a result of his time as a Tablet master? Did he use the Bahro power to preserve his life in some way? The Bahro homeworld... they apparently lived simple lives when left to themselves. Why was Esher not welcomed by them, I wonder; they seem to range from friendly to shy in general (though the Twisted Faction is quite different). And how is Noloben not like the other Ages? Perhaps because there is no sign of the D'ni here? If Esher fled here without a Linking Book, then he was trapped indefinitely...

The native snakes have a toxin that disables the innate Bahro linking ability. I suppose it makes sense that such a thing would exist in their homeworld. Esher admits that he committed the atrocities we see evident in his laboratory... for the sake of science, learning. Esher is angry at the irony--the Quest requires the slates to be moved, which helps to free the Tablet, which then aids the Bahro. Control and restraint with the Tablet. Esher fears the Bahro. There is some history here about which Esher is strangely silent, history about his early life here with the Bahro... and his fear. Did he flee to Noloben assuming that he could dominate the Bahro without question? I doubt the Bahro were very understanding of Esher's lab experiments upon their kind. I'm sure he was trying to figure out how their linking worked and how to duplicate it for himself. Such power it would give him...

—ESHER—

You have unlocked my lab.

Impressive.

It is safe here. They are afraid. They will not come here.

The snake binds them - prevents them from linking.

I take no pleasure in what they have endured here...

But I had to learn.

Did you know that you aid the creatures, the Bahro, as you move the Slates? Did Yeesha tell you that?

Did you know that the full power of the Bahro is restrained by the Tablet? Did Yeesha tell you

that?

Did you know that they will not come near anything with the symbol of the snake? Did you know that the Tablet that Yeesha told you not to give her controls them? Did she tell you that?

I have learned.

They are terrifying creatures if not controlled.

Go to the top of my refuge... Up there.

Seal this refuge and you can climb.

NNNNN

And we know Esher succeeded in duplicating the Bahro linking for himself, though at the cost of another Bahro's ability to link. For he wears the pelt of a Bahro upon his shoulder, a pelt bearing the same symbol we see drawn in the laboratory. Strangely, this symbol seems to be associated with a monkey-like creature of unknown provenance... Nearly all Esher's drawings are of Bahro physiology, but this particular drawing was done by a different hand and there is something written upon it in the Bahro language...

Perhaps he tortured this information from a Bahro native? The secret is in the symbol, which is something the Bahro adopted from this monkey... No wonder Esher is terrified of them. They are angry.

Esher has a temper tantrum; I'm afraid any doubts Watson has formed have been from Esher's own behavior rather than anything Yeesha has said or done.

How did Esher manage to learn their language? This implies he was taught by a Bahro native. There is at least a 200-year history between them on Noloben, though we don't know exactly how long Esher lived here. Once he gained the Bahro pelt, it's unlikely he would have stayed.

"Save"? What sort of doom or disaster is Esher expecting?

He knows Bahro physiology, how they link, their language... and he is hoping this knowledge will provide an advantage "in the end"...

—ESHER—

No one understands these creatures as I do.

I see you doubt that.

No one has learned their language as I have. Do you question that as well?

What other doubts has she placed in your mind?

I have opened my Age, my mind, and my understanding; and yet still you question my motives.

I only hope the knowledge I have gained will save you and me in the end.

nvnvnv

—ESHER—

Why do I pace?

I am afraid.

I fear what you will choose in the end.

I hesitate to tell you this, to add to your burden...

but I must.

There is another option in the end.

The Myst Book.

It lies locked on the desk where you began in K'veer.

Yeesha will not go there. She has grown to detest that island, so the Tablet would be safe from her hunger for it.

Be alert...a choice awaits.

Esher fears that Yeesha would interfere should Watson choose to give the Tablet to Esher. And Esher already is attempting to interfere with Watson giving the Tablet back to Yeesha...

He knows that Yeesha will not go to Myst, another telltale sign that he knows a surprisingly great deal about her.

Is Esher trying to use Myst Island as a meeting place akin to a secluded, dark alley?!

Do not let your feelings of doubt, perhaps even of me, cloud your reason.

vvvvvv

—ESHER—

I wish you could see Laki'ahn as I remember it.

Anticipation.

The calls of the beasts bellowing out over the warm airs...

...and conversations, as we waited for the fires to burn and the battle to begin.

This was a place of great strength and triumph.

I wonder if you possess such courage.

The door to the trade house is locked, but the jeweler door on the other side...

That can be unlocked.

Laki'ahn appears to be another example of an Age where the D'ni interfered with the natives and imposed their own customs. And there is an important connection with Kadish here, for the native butterflies now also fly freely in the empty vault of Kadish Tolesa, the place with the fingerprints of Yeesha in her arrogant, heady days as a young Writer and budding Grower. Kadish, Yeesha and Laki'ahn.... there is a clear connection, yet its exact nature is elusive.

—ESHER—

Here, we watched.

The harvest of the gems, freed from the conquered Laki and painted with their bloods.

What triumph!

What grand sport!

What displays of strength!

Yeesha finds such strength brutal, even as she seeks it herself.

Ah! To have such fellowship with my people again...

Esher clearly witnessed for himself the cheering throngs of D'ni who came to witness the ceremonial butchering of the native Laki. It does not sound as though the native Kresh were part of the crowd, and so far as we can tell, after the Fall, the Kresh ceased this brutal custom, probably returning to their own traditional way of life. Perhaps this "ceremony" was considered criminal by the D'ni, for they did indeed have laws forbidding such interference with natives... was this a crime for which Esher and the Taghirans were punished?

—ESHER—

Once again you impress me with your ability.

The way has not been easy.

You have come here via the way of the Kresh... the warriors...

the natives who traveled here to subdue the beasts for us.

What has become of them?

Back to their barbaric ways?

What a waste.

Yet more destruction at the hands of the outsiders who have never understood what D'ni is.

And now they can rebuild it?

Esher affirms that the natives slew the Laki to please the D'ni. He considers the Kresh native ways barbaric and the D'ni ways civilized...

What destruction does Esher refer to here? He seems to be speaking of the DRC, lamenting their ignorance of the D'ni ways and their desire to restore the cavern. So this commentary seems to be aimed squarely at Watson and his character as well as that of his colleagues.

NNNNN

—ESHER—

The Distant Isle.

Very few have been here. You have... you have done well.

Treasures were kept here... and still are.

The Tablet on the Keep is perhaps the greatest treasure ever held by man or beast.

And you will hold it soon.

Power is in your hands, friend...

Whether you like it or not.

Treasures were kept here--the Laki jewels, I suppose. Esher admits that the Tablet is the most powerful thing in all the Ages, that it soon will belong to Watson. Considering what we've seen about Esher and power, he must be beside himself...

Esher's last pitch.

Watson has two choices, to keep the Tablet himself or to give it to another. Yeesha has warned of the pitfalls of keeping it, Esher has been pitching himself as the only worthy Tablet master, carefully avoiding any suggestion of Watson keeping it himself.

If Watson gives it to another, he has three choices, one suggested by Yeesha (the Bahro), and two suggested by Esher (himself and Yeesha, though the latter was pitched repeatedly as mad).

—ESHER—

I will not have a chance to speak to you again. You will link upon touching the final Slate.

The Tablet will be yours, as will the choice.

I will be blunt, for it is my last opportunity. D'ni's last opportunity.

Her mind has changed.

Now she believes she must have the Tablet. She believes she is the Grower.

When you see her, she will beckon for it.

Do not give it to her.

But... the Book in K'veer? I have unlocked it.

Bring the Tablet there, to Myst Island.

Yeesha will not follow.

She does not want to be their master.

Bring the Tablet to the island.

There is no other choice. I will meet you there.

Please...do not fail.

It is what must be done.

Esher is beginning to babble... He is admitting that Yeesha does not want the Tablet back and he is obsessed with getting Watson away from access to Yeesha. Not looking good...

So what are the Age lessons the Bahro have taught?

Taghira shows how the D'ni treated criminals; and the limits of D'ni ingenuity in an isolated environment without the tools for Writing.

Todelmer shows the D'ni fascination with science and perhaps the desire to reach for and control the heavens themselves.

Noloben wasn't a D'ni Age at all but the Bahro home Age; and perhaps a prison Age for a criminal named Esher? Which would explain how he came to be trapped there and why he was so sympathetic to the Taghirans.

Laki'ahn shows us how little respect some of the D'ni had for their own laws about Ages and interference; and hints that Esher and other D'ni may have been punished for this transgression.

What is the Bahro story then? Perhaps simply that they have been silent witnesses to all this...

The family burden is the Tablet? How did Atrus's ancestors come to own the Tablet then? The presence of the Keep in K'veer is suggestive... Atrus's grandfather Aitrus was good friends with the family who last lived in K'veer. If this family owned the Tablet at the time of the Fall, it could well have remained there in K'veer until Atrus and Gehn's return. And Veovis's madness in destroying D'ni might be explained by the presence of the Tablet within his family at that time. Perhaps Veovis's father, Lord Rakeri, entrusted the Tablet to Aitrus after Veovis was lost to him and to D'ni... in which case, it would have passed to Ti'ana. Perhaps the Tablet was why Ti'ana was so protective of young Atrus, so reluctant to let him visit D'ni... The corrupting influence of the Tablet could also explain Gehn's madness and the destructive nature of Atrus's sons Sirrus and Achenar...

-YEESHA-

I am set free. The slavery of ten thousand years is over and the burden of my family is lifted from my weary heart.

Praise the Maker! He brought you for this impossible task. You have done well, and many will rejoice.

You have chosen the Least, the Least as Greatest. You have freed us all, yourself of pride, me of the burden, and the god

Bahro of their enslavement.
You are worthy of the new D'ni.

– – –

–YEESHA–
Oh, my father.

–ATRUS–
My desert bird.

–YEESHA–
It's over. I didn't know if... I faltered... I... I... I was not always strong. I am so sorry.

Yeesha clearly took up her father's obligation many years ago. Atrus has felt sad and guilty about this legacy which he describes as a crushing burden, no doubt because that was his own experience. He seems to have seen it destroy many of those he loves... We can only guess how this burden and legacy played out for Atrus as there is little or nothing written of it in his surviving journals. Perhaps he learned caution after the corruption of his two sons...

Somewhere in Yeesha's youth, he must have recognized her as the Grower of prophecy. It must have filled him with both hope and dread. Hope that as the Grower, she would possess the wisdom and fortitude to finally end the old cycle and free the slaves. Dread that the weight of the deed would destroy her, his beloved child and only remaining family.

-ATRUS-

No.

-YEESHA-

But what was asked of me, I have done. And now the tree grows again.

-ATRUS-

No, no, no.

-YEESHA-

Just to be your daughter again. Hold me.

Yeesha hopes that all is finally done and she can return to being a daughter to her father in his final years. Sadly, we soon find that this is not to be... for the legacy of Esher's abuses must play out through the Twisted Faction of Bahro...

-ATRUS-

My precious one, I am so sorry for this burden, this crushing weight. I cannot bear to think of it. But you carried it. I wish your mother could... You have truly become the Grower. You bring D'ni back to life. Another circle closes, another new tree grows again.

Thank you, my old friend. Welcome to Releeshahn, this new D'ni. It's been a long, long journey... difficult journey. And

Atrus affirms that Yeesha is the Grower; that he has seen and known this potential in her for many years.

Atrus calls Watson his old friend, the same greeting he used with The Stranger in the old days. Is Atrus mistaking Watson for this old friend? Acknowledging Watson's kindred spirit with The Stranger? Or are Atrus and Watson already friends in the same vein??

I am old and weak. But I've lived long enough to see this day. To see my... my desert bird, my precious. Yeesha return as the Grower. Filled with the wisdom of the Maker. Truly our long burden has been lifted. Now, my days can end... here, in peace.

~~-ESHER-~~

This is not accept... Where are you taking me!? Release me, I order you, I demand it!

Atrus is relieved that at long last his family is free of this old burden. His life finally is fulfilled.

-YEESHA-

Oh... yes.

-ESHER-

Let me go, you evil demon, you cannot hold me. I am Esher!

-YEESHA-

There is this to deal with.

-ESHER-

I am the Grower! Where is this?

You!! Idiot! Moronic lump of filth! You are nothing! Pah!

Esher's delusions are now painfully clear; the resemblance to Kadish and his delusions of being the Grower are once again apparent.

And he is furious with Watson.

Aiiiiiigh! I needed the power! I needed it! D'ni needed me! You threw it away to this witch and her legion of scum, the demon slaves! You have released the slaves as masters! You've turned the small to great! Curse the Maker!

-YEESHA-

Silence!

You are no longer subject to the great. You have become great yourselves. Do with him as you

Yeesha is tolerant of Esher's babbling rage and madness until he blasphemes the Maker. Interestingly, Esher obeys her command. Does she truly have the power to silence him or is Esher merely startled?

Esher still wears the Bahro pelt yet doesn't link away. His two Bahro guards have their hands on him constantly, which must prevent him from escaping... so the Bahro can both cause and prevent linking.

should to the Least, for I am no longer worthy to give counsel to you.

-ESHER-

No, no... no, no... nooooooooooo...

-YEESHA-

I am not given easily to those not close to me. But you have chosen well, my friend, and have allayed my fears. Many have been freed. The Least will be greatest again as it was before we began. The old is gone and

Yeesha speaks to the Bahro as a friend and equal, acknowledging her failure to them with the Tablet, recognizing that they should trust themselves rather than her words to them. Apparently, she was a trusted advisor to them before.

Esher is, of course, horrified.

We know nothing of his fate at the hands of the Bahro. Yeesha has urged them to mete out justice to him as they would to their own. We may never know what that means...

"as it was before we began"... Yeesha seems to be talking about the D'ni, back when they first left Garternay. So she believes the Bahro were greater than the D'ni at that time... the Bahro enslavement coincides with the D'ni arrival to the Cavern...

the new begin to grow. This is the new D'ni, restored and free. Over none, under only the Maker. This restoration of D'ni is not a restoration of the outside, of structures and stone; but of the inside, of hearts and truth. For kingdoms are only as strong as the hearts of their people. Your heart is right. Welcome to this kingdom. Welcome to this new D'ni.

= = =

Yeesha talks about a restoration very different from that of the DRC. Watson clearly takes these words to heart, for when he returns to the cavern, his says he no longer believes the DRC model for restoration to be realistic or appropriate.

—ESHER—

So, you listened to my wise counsel and have brought the Tablet.

Well done.

There was...no way for your feeble mind to comprehend the...power of this Bahro Tablet.

It was meant for a worthier Master.

You couldn't fully grasp that the Master of the Tablet...

was the Master of the Bahro...Master of their full power.

It was really only yours briefly, and only then...to give to a true Master.

Did you think you would gain a piece of its power?

Esher's delusions reach full flower and Watson bears witness to the unleashed monster.

Esher has devised a support for the Tablet, as even after having the Tablet given to him freely, he still cannot grasp it. As we saw early on with Yeesha, once the Tablet is lost, it becomes thin as air to the former Master, perhaps taking on the characteristics of the Keep, being both here and elsewhere...

Esher has overcome this obstacle, realizing that he can make contact with the Tablet by using a pencil to trace its patterns. So apparently, it is only Esher himself that cannot make contact, for the Tablet is held by the support and responds to the pencil. Esher has figured out how to cheat once again.

Is that why you brought it?

Or perhaps my words... Perhaps I don't give myself enough credit.

Regardless...now...it is mine!

Ah-hah-hah-hah-hah! ... Yes my powerful servants, your new Master is here!

Let's see what remarkable feats you can perform for me...

The new Master of the Art!

Oh...yes, thank you...idiot!

You performed...well enough.

So...I give you...this wonderful island.

Consider it a Myst opportunity.

Ironic isn't it?

This island that was always the place of escape has

Although we know that this scenario is not historically accurate (that Watson made the wiser choice rather than this one), it is informative in many ways. We can surmise that the madness we witness here is an intensified version of the former Tablet master. Esher now no longer troubles himself with pretense and manipulation.

And he speaks of this as the Art, normally the D'ni term for Writing. So he acknowledges openly that the Bahro are the true masters of the Ages, that there is a deep connection between the Bahro and the D'ni Art of Writing.

now become...your prison.

Now, let's see where this power will take me.

Unlimited Ages and an army of Bakro to do my bidding.

What fun I will have!

Ah-hah-hah-hah-hah!...

= = =

So just as she showed Watson at the beginning, Yeesha still cannot grasp the Tablet; it has slipped through her hands. Now neither Yeesha nor Esher can touch it. Nor can Watson now that he has given it to another. The Tablet indeed has a mind of its own, though a predictable one. We all knew from the beginning that the Tablet master can choose only once.

Esher will have to look for another patsy; and he clearly had always intended to abandon Watson on Myst Island.

So what is the connection between Esher and Kadish and Calam's murderer? Are they all three the same person? They all three are part of the story the Bahro are telling through the Quest, though Kadish is only hinted at. We know that Yeesha claims to have rescued Kadish from his death in the vault. And

—ESHER—

After everything...

did you not trust me?

After all the help I provided? All the aid and assistance?

Well done...now it has slipped through her hands...

wasted...FOOL!

Now your journey has been a waste,

and this precious island that once represented escape is now your prison.

We have all failed.

You have accomplished NOTHING!

And there is no way from here.

No one will come for you.

Myst Island is your end...

...forever.

we can see here that Esher is privy to some intimate details about Yeesha and her history. It appears that Yeesha once confided in Esher, before she recognized his true nature. The bahroglyph depicting her initial encounter with the murderer appears to show a friendly one, where neither she nor Calam suspect anything amiss. Later bahroglyphs depict an angry attack against Yeesha by the murderer and it is only through the intervention of Calam that Yeesha survives, though it costs Calam his life. Why does Yeesha blame herself for this? She appears to feel responsible for the presence of the murderer, which points toward her rescue of Kadish; she brought him forward in time, through Bahro wisdom, or through the Tablet, hoping his meaningless, wasted end would be righted somehow. Yet she speaks in her journals of how her pride was punctured only through death, the death of Calam. She was prideful in her youth and power, naive in her desire to help the unrepentant delusional pretender to the Grower throne. I imagine Kadish was none too pleased to meet the true Grower in the flesh... and Esher's hatred of Yeesha certainly bears a strong resemblance to what we see between Yeesha and the murderer and what we would expect from a dethroned Kadish.

Many possibilities, few answers...