

Chapter 24: you're getting the band back together

The chapter begins with the protagonist confronting Tonkee, revealing she knows her true identity as Binof, a former Leadership child from Yumenes. Tonkee, now a geomest, admits she has been tracking the protagonist for decades, initially to protect her but later due to her potential to command obelisks. The tension escalates as the protagonist demands explanations, frustrated by the layers of deception. Tonkee's past is unveiled—she was disowned by her family for rejecting societal norms and pursuing academia, where she thrived despite conflicts. Her obsession with the obelisks stems from a discovery in the Fulcrum, a secret she believes is crucial to understanding their world.

Tonkee explains that the obelisks move toward orogenes with the skill to control them, hinting at a deeper connection between the protagonist and these mysterious structures. The protagonist is unsettled by the revelation that obelisks were converging near her in Tirimo, suggesting her son might also possess this ability. Tonkee's research, conducted with a network of scholars, reveals patterns in the obelisks' movements, tying them to orogenic potential. The protagonist's anger gives way to reluctant curiosity as Tonkee emphasizes the importance of their findings, though the protagonist remains wary of her motives and the implications of her own role in this larger mystery.

The chapter delves into Tonkee's backstory, detailing her transformation from Binof, a disgraced Leadership heir, to Tonkee, a self-made scholar. Her family's rejection forced her to adopt a new identity, but she found purpose in studying the obelisks and challenging academic conventions. Her partnership with other researchers underscores the collaborative effort to uncover the obelisks' secrets, which she

believes are tied to a catastrophic event in the past. The protagonist, though skeptical, begins to see Tonkee as more than a manipulative figure—a dedicated scholar driven by a genuine desire to understand the world’s hidden truths.

As the confrontation winds down, the protagonist acknowledges the inevitability of confronting her own secrets, including her past with Hoa, who watches the exchange silently. The chapter ends with a sense of impending revelation, as Tonkee’s discoveries about the obelisks and their connection to orogenes hint at a larger, unresolved conflict. The protagonist’s exhaustion and frustration are palpable, but the chapter leaves room for the possibility of collaboration, as both characters recognize the weight of the knowledge they now share. The stage is set for further exploration of the obelisks’ role in the world’s upheaval.