

Farewell, my dear companions.

These are not words I ever intended to write. The parchment crumples beneath my hand, a testament to a life I never intended to live.

You have known me for a time as a man, a craftsman, and a mentor. These words hold truth, but in their shadow lies the axiom of truth. I am a man, I have lived and breathed as one amongst you, mortal, with all the pain and joy and confusion it brings. I am a craftsman, having created works of all forms, praised and cherished by many across the great world of Scyll. And I am a mentor, having guided your path through your darkness into the light we share.

But that is not all that I am.

I am Kaivin, the firstborn god, the Echo of All.

My name was given to me to elicit a sense of strength and creativity. I do not know whether my father was successful in this, but I do know that in everything else that I was meant to be for him, I am a failure. Just another experiment. Another disillusioned creation destined to dissatisfy his everburning lust for purpose.

Though I may be born of those that have, and are, and will, I have lived and breathed. I am bound by the constraints of mortality, a craftsman who sought to sing a new song, but found myself merely echoing my father's tune.

Indulge me for a moment. Find yourself a pen, inkwell, and parchment.

Now, write me a story. A story of truth, your truth. Pay close attention to how you tell this story.

If you are of the nature I believe you to be, you started by laying the parchment down, dipping your pen into the inkwell, before pondering what your first words would be, the ink drying on the tip of your pen before the first word was etched. Eventually, either through impatience, confidence, or reckless abandon, you scratched the first markings on this parchment. Your lettering started deliberate, clear, and strong, yet, as your tale unfolds, the words become a dance of ink across the page.

When I told you to pay close attention to how you tell this story, I did not mean the words that you wrote. Your truth is your truth, and those words are your words. The only thing that mattered within your choice of words was that they were yours. However, the act of writing is what intrigues me. The way you press the pen against the parchment, how you react to the imperfections of the texture of the page. These are the things that matter. It is perhaps the bravest and boldest act one could make.

The parchment is possibility, the inkwell time, and the pen your story. You cannot tell a story without having experienced time, yet we experience time before we are ready to tell our story.

The inkwell begins to dry before we have even a moment to think of who it is we are. Then, whether through impatience, confidence, or reckless abandon, we find ourselves, or at least the beginning of ourselves.

As you act, as you write your story, the infinite possibilities of who you are become finite. The parchment had been altered, the stories you could have told are gone, forever. It is the bravest act, to say my story is worth telling. But, you cannot tell a story without leaving a mark on the world you leave behind. As you are who you are, in that moment, the infinite possibilities of who we are become finite. The parchment has been altered not just for your story, but for the stories that could have been for us all. It is the boldest act, to say my story is worth telling.

As you continue to be who you have found yourself to be, your pen finds itself working amongst the grooves and textures of the parchment. You might find yourself pressing harder, against the grain, or softer, working with it, a dance of give and take. The ink may stray, but these imperfections add character, inspiring and challenging you. As the inkwell empties, the urgency for each subsequent word grows, and even as time seems to stretch and contract, it imbues your story with layers and breadth. A story hidden within a story.

This process is nothing short of beautiful. Your existence, the tapestry of you—joy, pain, solitude, connection—it's all breathtakingly beautiful. Nothing, and I mean nothing, can exist that is as intricate, or as exquisite, or as worthy as your story. I know this to be true, as I once knew what it looked like when you could not exist, where there was no pen.

Everything seems to exist within two perceivably infinite factors. Space, and time. We occupy space throughout moments in time. Nothing exists that does not occupy space, and to exist is to be bound by time. These truths go beyond the understanding of even the most dedicated scholar, from which everything we know to be true can be known to be true. They are everything.

But I have learned that they are nothing but reflections of what truly defines existence. Space is merely a perspective of reality, and time, a glimpse into its fate. They are two sides of the same coin, forever intertwined. Without fate, reality lacks direction; without reality, fate has no stage to play upon. Outside of our narrow perspective, there is no beginning, no end, no now, no then, no here, no there, no this, no that. There is only everything. An infinite canvas with infinite paints of infinite colors.

I know not of the origin of existence. Perhaps even nothingness longed for a purpose, and what good is a perfect canvas without an artist arrogant enough to destroy it? From this infinite canvas came those that gave me breath. Ex, the great artisan, and Mother, the author of all.

The two of them existed for the purpose of the other's existence. My father, despite being the master of all reality, was unable to set it off on it's own story, and my mother, despite writing the story, could not write a story if there was nothing to write about. My father is the parchment, my mother the ink. Without each other, they hold no reason to have been created.

So, what then, is the pen? How brave and bold we are to etch our stories, to leave a mark on the world, to limit its possibilities. Yet, we hold just a page, an inconsequential amount of space for an insignificant time.

From the unfathomable depths of the infinite canvas, Ex, my father, spun realities into being. He painted universes, sprinkled nebulas across the endless night. He took the mundane and shaped it into something... something worse. Not in that it held any less merit, but in that it held less possibility. He created bounds, laws that would manifest beauty in its incapability. In an instant and eternity he crafted everything that could exist. All the beauty, all the chaos, from nothing to everything and back.

He found himself amongst his creation, his masterpiece, desolate. All he had created, everything that could, was an empty husk, teeming with life, yet void of purpose. He was a specter amongst a sea of stars. Though he had created life, it stood lifeless. He longed to create something that would look back to him, understanding the gift of being.

But my mother held the pen. I once questioned this. Why? Why keep the pen away from the parchment? Why not let the flow of ink inspire? I believe the answers to these questions lies in asking the opposite. Why put the pen to the parchment when there is no story to be told? Why force the flow of ink to tell your story? The moment you do is the moment you no longer control what your story is. If I believe it to be so bold and brave to tell my story, yet I hold just a page, surely to write the first and final, the only story to ever be told, would be so bold and brave it would be better described as narcissistic and negligent.

My father did not understand this, as he is not a storyteller. I have no doubt if he held the inkwell, he'd have poured it on the page. He was in anguish and would do anything to feel as if he held meaning. I do not think my mother ever intended to hurt him, she only sought to protect herself, and in doing so, protect him. She knew what it meant to give purpose to his creation. It meant her end. Just as the inkwell empties, the more of a story she would write, the less of her there would be.

So, she sought a way to appease my father while telling a story that would fill the inkwell. I believe she wanted to create something that would allow the story to be written eternally, something that the act of writing about would create new stories. So, she convinced my father to have her bear his child, one born of both reality and fate, one that would spill the inkwell on the page so my mother could weave fate in the emptiness it left behind.

Together, they conceived me, the inaugural progeny born of those who weren't. They hoped that I might inherit the spark of creation, and craft wonders that rivaled even those of my father. However, I was nothing but a disappointment. My creations were mundane, uninspired imitations of his perfection. I had failed to meet their expectations.

My parents, in their desperation, continued their experiments. Lucia, a weaver of chaos, and Kigjiir, a harbinger of destruction, were born. Each possessed unique powers, yet each failed to fulfill my father's expectations, further fueling his discontent.

He was ready and willing to erase it all. Me, my siblings, my mother. If he held no purpose, then certainly we held no purpose. However, my mother, either through a selfless act of sacrifice, or through an understanding I will never hold of the tides of fate, offered to help my father in one final creation. A reality that was bound not only by the rules and laws he would compose, but by the fate she would weave.

In that moment, the pen scratched the page, leaving ink in its indentation. A story had finally begun. They crafted reality in an instant, and it was beautiful. The life I saw in my father's eyes was not one he had crafted, but rather a reflection of the life that looked back to him. Amongst the infinite sea of stars was a single planet, one my father could not keep his eyes off of. The world of Scyll.

The world of Scyll was a tapestry of verdant forests, sapphire seas, and mountains that touched the heavens, their peaks mirrored in the rivers below. However, its people were what made it unique, not in their individuality, but as a collective. They, in and of themselves, weren't new, but as a collective, they knew. Mother in her profound wisdom, had woven the threads of Scyll's destiny, entwining their fates with a deep-seated love for their creator.

They had an inherent sense of their world's sacred origin. They revered the land, water, and air, recognizing their world's divine origin in each element. Every raindrop that nurtured their crops was a reminder of their creator's gift. Each story passed down through generations, each song sung to the evening sky, each monument built in honor of the unknown, all bore testament to an innominate, loving creator.

As Scyll and its people flourished, my father's attention began to shift. A wedge appeared, separating him from me, my siblings, and our mother. His focus was ensnared by this newfound purpose, a purpose that provided the love and acceptance he had been longing for. It was as if a veil had fallen over his eyes, blinding him to all but his precious Scyll.

Mother was the first to feel his cold dismissal. Her power, once seen as an asset, was now viewed as a threat to his newfound haven. Just as she weaved the fate of his world to be as it was, she could just as easily take it all back. He decided that she could no longer remain within his reality, for she could disrupt the balance he had so carefully crafted on Scyll.

A flicker of sorrow passed through her eyes, quickly replaced by resolve. She had foreseen this, and with a final act of defiance, set her own plan into motion. She had ensured that her essence, a fragment of her being, would find its way onto his creation. It was her final act, a last attempt to assert her influence in a reality that was slowly slipping away from her grasp. A seed was planted. Knowing my mother, we might never realize when it has sprouted until it is already grown.

As for me and my siblings, faced with our collective failure to meet his standards, our father cast us aside, exiling us into the very world that he had created, separated by realms that reflected our failure. Thrust into mortality, we were a stark contrast to the divine purpose we were meant to serve. Stripped of our godhood, we were now just a painful reminder of his unmet expectations. We were given a simple statement as our parting gift, "If you cannot learn to love me as my people do, then you are not worthy of having been created".

I do not know what came of my siblings, but my first moments of mortality were unpleasant to say the least. I found myself in the heart of a desert, with nothing but the soft sand beneath my feet and the unbearable heat against my skin. Hunger and thirst quickly became familiar companions. I walked for days, though I cannot recall how many or how I found my way. What I do remember is the sensation of drinking water for the first time.

This simple act, this first sip, was a revelation. In my humble, mortal existence, I found an unexpected understanding. The grandeur of creation wasn't in echoing the symphony of the universe, but rather in finding the single, poignant note that resonated. The first sip of water, the colors of a sunrise, a moment shared with a friend—these were the true beauties of life.

I began to create, at first to appease my father's desire, but each piece that bore my touch whispered back to me. It wasn't about shaping the world in the image of my desires. It was about understanding the rhythm of existence, about bringing forth the inherent beauty of the raw materials I worked with. Each creation whispered a story, a life, a breath of my essence merged with the unbreakable identity of what I molded. The parchment I wrote upon guided my story just as much as I did.

The people of Scyll saw this. They embraced my creations as art, built the city of Kaivinduur in my honor, and founded the Crafter's Guild to preserve my legacy. Among ordinary people, in their appreciation of the mundane, I found truth. In their lives, I discovered the beauty of mortality, and in the strong, steady heart of a mortal man, I found a love I'd never known.

But, as I said, I have failed. My father set forth a task for me, and I have gone a different path. My followers have anointed me, expecting Ex to deify me. I have not the heart to tell them otherwise. It is the end of my days. I am to join the endless creations that have come before me, as another failure. Here I am, at the cusp of destiny, yet I do not despair. I have lived, loved, and created.

In the end, perhaps that is all that matters. Ex may be a god, but he is blinded by his desires. He fails to see the beauty in the mundane. He overlooks the joy of creation, the joy I've found in each and every bit of my craft. But I see him. I see the smile of those who cherish my work. I feel the freedom it brings. I taste the bitterness of dissatisfaction and disregard. I understand, though I will not let it dictate who I am, and he is weak for letting it control him.

And, perhaps that is why the people of Scyll have grown weary of Ex. A shift that was not

sudden, but gradual, like a star losing its light over millennia. Their reverence for Ex, once unshakable, has begun to wane. They no longer see a god who is in tune with their desires, but rather one that is consumed by his own, unwilling to accept a creation that does not worship him or his creation. But, while they have turned away from Ex, they have not forsaken faith altogether.

They have found solace and strength in their unity, their shared experience. It is in this strength that I see a glimmer of hope, a promise of a future that they can create for themselves, independent of Ex's desires. This is the world I find myself a part of. The freedom, the reality, the raw emotions they carry - these are the things that truly define existence. These are the things that give life meaning.

As I etch each word onto this parchment, my inkwell mirrors the end of my existence, inching ever closer to emptiness. Though, I can't help but notice the dried ink on the rim, or the stubborn stains on the glass. It's a historical record of all the writings that have come before, a story that cannot be taken, only added to. With each word I write, each confession, I feel a profound release. Not of regret, nor of failure, but of fulfillment.

I do not leave behind a universe teeming with cosmic wonders, but rather a city, a home, adorned with the works of my own hand, and the hands of those I've guided. More importantly, I leave behind hearts that have felt the warmth of my love. A love that seeks not reciprocation, but rather a simple connection, to the real and the tangible. I leave behind not an echo of my father, but a legacy of something greater than greatness.

And so, dear reader, as my ink fades and my story ends, I leave you with this final truth: Find your own melody, your own dance amidst the chaos. For in the end, it is not the echo of another, but the sound of your own heart that truly matters.

As I leave you, my students, I leave you with the remnants of my soul.

To Shoaksia, I leave the whisper of Vash'Vorax. In silence, may they reveal your reflection.

To Pexi, I leave the dream of Proteus. In boldness, let the boundless be your guide.

To Urmyr, I leave the embrace of The Moltengift. In stillness, may the sentinel stand.

To Oliver, I leave the shadow of Nyxveil. In the light, let the shadows pierce true.

To Reyna, I leave the echo of Resonance. In the melody of the unspoken, dance.

To Gremnon, I leave the legacy of Firstblood. In bloodshed, may friend and foe unite.

To my dearest Drodak, with heart of oak, you have shown me the love I thought I'd never know. Though you will never read these words, I hope you know them to be true. In the vast tapestry

of existence, I needed to find you. Amidst all the chaos, you were the cornerstone, a constant amidst the ebb and flow. Our love was not divine, but raw, and real, a beacon in the midst of our journeys. Though mine is at an end, I know yours is just beginning. I leave you the very heart I found in my soul, The Oakenheart. In the storm, be the anchor and the sails. Take care.

To those blessed and cursed to find themselves raveled in the knowledge of my family, let our failure not be in vain. Learn from our selfishness and fear. But I ask one thing: Remember me not as a failed god, but as a successful man. For in the shadow of a creator, I found my own light.

I was Kaivin, the firstborn god, an echo of my father.

I am Kaivin, a craftsman, a creator, loved.

Farewell, dear reader.