

**"I only meant to make one. I only meant to make one!"**

## **Things for Hands**

I am certain that I am going to be fired for this. Likely worse, actually. There are punishments of a more existential nature for this kind of thing.

I know my flaws. I let them get the better of me, alright? Give me a break, good grief.

Listen: it was a good idea at the time. I took the clay and I sculpted it. It wasn't easy, you know. I went through many iterations. The clay spun and spun under my hands all wet, smooth and malleable, I formed it, and I had ultimate power over all things. I could shape it any which way I desired--more bulbous here, ooh, an appendage in this direction, and so on.

I understand I had my responsibilities. I know my flaws. But I couldn't resist! There was absolutely no way!

Listen: I swept my hands over the clay and it deformed at my command and I ran my fingers over smooth crevices gently and hummed to myself and a sweet breeze smelling of roses (a fantastic idea, I must congratulate you on that one) washed over me and I created something with a long body and six appendages. One would contain the sensory parts of and one would be for balance--four would be dedicated for mobility.

This was inefficient, perhaps. I squeezed, gently, its ends, scratched details over it, you know how it is, I get invested in these things.

So on. I made another one, somewhat similar, though this time it would have innards warm rather than cold. A form of internal furnace! Clever, clever, and it would be able to inhabit certain places my first one would not. It would use that fur stuff that we drew up a while ago.

So on. I sculpted and sculpted. I got lost in it. Can you blame me? The rose breeze swept over me and trees were humming and the grass was so soft, unbearably. I sculpted one that would seem, by virtue of its own fur--a thicker, lighter sort--more rotund than it really was. With this fur it would be capable of sweeping itself along the wind. I sculpted another that was a practice in tiny detail--I used my fingernails, for this one. It would work with many others and they would all form one, greater, sculpture, and live with one another in a system of holes in the earth.

I'm getting distracted. I'm sure you can see my passion. I get excited about these things. I'll skip to the important part:

Hands! That the pleasure of sculpture, ambulation of malleable mass--this cold stony smoothness under my fingers--would be mine alone had its charms. But there is only so far I can go. It wasn't meant to be anything dramatic, certainly not on the scale of everything else I had made. It was an experiment for my own pleasure, was all. I hadn't meant for it to go so far.

I sculpted it with a figure not dissimilar to its cousins, a series of appendages. The topmost, of course, centre of senses, and the sixth one shrunken, as the centre of balance would be held within its other four limbs. Two for mobility, this time (efficiency! I should be praised) two with--what else? The hands.

It was a delicate operation. I used my fingernails, again. I had to retry over and over again, but there it was.

Pardon me for feeling merciful! The world is wide and the breeze only rarely smells of roses. It is very cold. The creature was lonely, agonisingly so. It wandered, and where it settled down it would not stay long--some other invention would tear its shelter apart, or some disaster in the air or earth would rip it open, or it would simply grow bored and wretched and it would pack up and move again.

It created, of course! It was a success! Simple stuff, you know, nothing like what we do. Chipping away at a lump of stone, its own features recreated--the bumps and shapes and such of *my* design--that it had glanced in pools of water. Pure mimesis. It was at peace there and I knew then that it felt very much like me--it sat there in a field of grass unbearably soft, and the breeze cold yet smelling of roses, the sunlight very bright and warm and coiling around the shoulders and back.

And it was wretched. And its time was limited. My other creations wheeled and twisted and sung songs to one another and I decided, oh, well, give the thing a break.

I made another one. Sue me.

They replicated. That's the point! They invented. That's the point!

It's all gone a bit rotten at some points, maybe, I admit. There are many things for hands beyond clay. And their bodies are such that it takes only a puncture to blur the distinction between themselves, their own contained universe and sensation, and the world around them.

I wasn't expecting it. I am not disappointed in them. I can't be. I take the blame for this. I'll do what I need to do. And some of them, you know, do wonderful things, in many wonderful places. There are many things for hands beyond clay!

Listen: just give them a break. Right?