

Watcher waved a hand over an endless void. The sun had been rising and setting steadily for days now, and with their plans, the world would soon be brimming with life.

Trees sprouted as dirt canvassed over a deep expanse of stone. Rivers and oceans formed, bringing with them fish and coral reefs. Mountains rose from the earth with peaks touching the clouds, and ravines scored into the deepest parts of the ground, exposing lava and precious minerals.

Defender sighed as they watched their sibling build a world of life from nothing. Soon, grass and flowers grew, bamboo sprung from the earth, massive spruce trees loomed over infertile soil.

"I have created a masterpiece," Watcher boasted as they looked over the world they had created. "Look. In all things, there is life - animals and crops support the small villages. Each villager has a purpose, even if it is just to spread the gossip of the town. They live in paradise, my twin. I have created something beautiful."

Defender scowled and walked over to her sibling. "Paradise is nothing, dear Watcher. They mill about in an endless circle, having nothing to fear but nothing to live for, either. Here, watch this."

Without waiting for permission, Watcher pounded a fist on the canvass and more structures appeared within the world. "Ruins, temples, and shipwrecks let the living know that something was there before them. They must do well if they do not want to be just remnants of what once was."

"But, Defender, there was nothing here before them." Watcher's protest seemed futile as Defender pounded his fist against the canvass once more. Clouds covered the sky and lightning struck. More structures and milling life, or what appeared to be life, became visible.

“Only we must know that. Look - Pillagers. They patrol the villages, keeping them within their bounds. Monsters add something to actually work for - weapons to defend themselves with, sweets to celebrate with, armor to protect their flesh. And -” *thump* “- An underworld. Half-rotted men, grunting in agony, passive until provoked. Should these living creatures behave, they have nothing to fear. Lava runs amok, fire burns endlessly. Ghosts of what was once before scream and cry, wandering aimlessly, furious at the living for being alive. Of course, there must be something to come here for...”

This time, the god waved her under the world. Gems, bright white and powerful appeared within the endless red hellscape. Fortresses holding great riches - and terror, of course - appeared. “Should the living want more power, they must come here.”

Another god - well, goddess - stepped up and wrapped her arms around the younger two. “My children, you have done well. Watcher, I know you want peace, but Defender is right to give them something to fight against. Of course, nothing is complete without a final end goal, hmm?”

She smiled and closed her eyes before humming a melodic tune. Away from the board, another realm appeared - white, an island surrounded by only darkness. On it rested a massive, beautiful dragon, protecting her only living spawn - one beautiful dark egg.

“She is always waiting. She does not mind being fought and defeated - she will always be, just waiting out of sight. The truth is, her egg will never hatch. She has never had children, she is only reborn each time she is called. She is a rite of passage - to defeat her is to move to more riches than one could ever imagine.” The Mediator hummed again and this time, far from the original island, more appeared. Impossibly high cities with resting creatures, ships that fly in the air and chests with riches beyond

belief appeared, standing tall and quiet, waiting for the chosen to come visit them.

“With your light, Watcher, and Defender’s darkness, I have given your world their end goal.” She smiled and pulled her children close.

“Of course, those who truly know us all will know that the end is merely the beginning...”