

He fell to his knees, using the last bit of strength he possessed to question his fate. Once upon a time, we would have burned his body, helping him find the path to the Sun. But those times have since passed. Now all we do is look on, questioning when our time will come. And that is what I did, staring at his body and the others nearby him. The last remaining priests would soon appear, calling forth the strongest to help move them to the side. Perhaps they would burn their bodies. Or perhaps they won't.

I have lost friends and family. I've seen people fall and not know their names, as well as those who I knew everything about. They all fall the same. We all fall the same.

The children are crying now, terrified that they'll be next. I was once like them, now I silently count the days. Each day I write, is another day of life. The adults are now crying. It scares me to watch them do so. And so I look away, I ignore them and try to tell myself that they are celebrating death. That was what we used to do. Death used to be a good thing, a time of celebration. Now it is a reminder.

Mother told me to write, she said it'll bring me great comfort. She said I won't feel alone anymore and that it would help me cope. And so I did. I wrote everything I saw, and everything I felt. I knew I wasn't the best writer but I tried my best. I wrote as if I was to be the one who would tell our story.

Mother died. I did not write about it.

Father died soon after, and so did my cousins. Now there was only my grandparents and me. I wait for the day that we all fall. My grandparents scold me on that, they said that I shouldn't think that way. But I know they will fall to. We all wait for that day where we look to the Sun and ask him, one last time, why.

A few of us fall each day. Sometimes none of us do. But soon none of us will stand.

But the day is beginning to end, I can't write in the dark. I wait for tomorrow, to see which lives it will take. Perhaps this will be the last thing I write. Perhaps I won't wake up. But something tells me I will, and I will again write.

I no longer wish to write.

*The Last Kreani*

They were all gone.

Everyone. Was. Gone.

I feel as if I should cry, to mourn their deaths and their passing. To cry for the lives they had and the good that they had done. I should cry for the smallest of souls and for the oldest. But I no longer feel tears. Instead, I feel sad. Inside I feel destroyed, as if someone has just come by and with words, took my entire identity. But I do not feel the tears. I want to ask mother why. But mother was one of the first to go.

I remember the Sun Priests taking her and performing their procedures on her. They would take the most powerful of flowers and try to cure her. They would pray. They would even try to ask the spirit of the land. Nothing worked. And after a while, they forgot about her. I'm not mad at them though. I understand why they forgot about her. There were others who were sick, they needed help as well. And so mother was left alone. And we were told that we couldn't see her. And so mother died alone.

Father died soon after. They said it was because of heartbreak, but I wasn't the stupid child that they thought I was. I saw him spitting up blood that one day. He was hunched over and his entire body was sweating. It was scary to watch. He made me promise not to tell anyone about what I saw, but I did anyway. I was hoping they could help him. But when they got to him, he was dead. And I lost my parents.

And then I lost everyone.

There was something about being the last one. It made me wonder why. I haven't spit up blood yet. I haven't hunched over in pain. My body did not start sweating. But I knew my time was coming. The only question was when. I had seen others. Others who thought they were safe, all because they were not sick. But then, out of nowhere, they began to show the same signs. Sometimes it took days, other times a matter of minutes. Some people died in a matter of days, while others died weeks or maybe even a month later. The outcome? We all die.

There was no escaping it, I will die.

At one time, when it was silent, I thought if I should end my life. It is said that the Sun accepts a self-inflicted death, only if it is sacrificial. I did not know the words for the sacrifice, but the priests did. And the priest's books were still around. I could read them and use them. I could do it.

At one point, I had gone to the temples. They looked the same, massive temples built for the Sun. They all were square with no roofs. Glass panes stood on each wall, allowing the light to gracefully

reflect off of them, so when one was in prayer, they could feel the Sun's touch. But they were no longer filled with joyous people and priests begging for silence. The priests would be so happy now, everything was quiet.

I stood there, gripping the knife in my hands. The book was open in front of me with the words I was to speak. I remember my hands shaking and the words catching in my throat. I reminded myself that I could see everyone I loved. That I could be surrounded by love once again. There was no need for me to be here. I would soon die anyway.

But I couldn't. I was afraid.

The silence. That was the worst part, especially during the night. During the day, I had the company of the Sun. The flutter bugs would whip around and the Sun Tailed Lions would roar in the distance. But at night, there was nothing. I was left alone with my thoughts. Not even the fire would crackle.

I would sleep, and try to imagine my family and friends. I would sleep, and try to relive some of the memories. But they all ended with me waking up to reality. I yearned for death but I was too afraid to do it myself. I was afraid to die. I didn't want to leave this beautiful place we call home. But I didn't want to be alone anymore. For just one day, I wanted everything to go back to normal.

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We were people of the Sun. The Sun gave us life and hope. The Sun helped us in our day to day lives. The Sun was our savior. So why has it forsaken us? And even if he hasn't, why hasn't he helped us? A sign. Something!

I am now sick. I know the symptoms all too well. The other day I began to cough and today I coughed up blood. I don't know what stage I am in. I just know that I'm going to die and soon, join my people. A while ago, that was a calming thought. No longer alone, again with my people and the ones I love, forever at their sides.

But now the thought of such thing is cold. Colder than the nights where the wind ravages the lands and the Sun hides his face, letting his sister, the Moon, out.

I was scared. Even more, I had no one to share these fears with. They festered within me and awoken senses and areas that I didn't know existed. I had never doubted the Sun before. Why would I?

Mother and Father taught me what I know. The Priests backed it up. And my hope and faith carried me the rest of the way. But now . . . now I am doubting. What if all of those stories and tales were lies? What if the Sun was nothing but a simple figure in the sky? Like the clouds and the rain or the wind. Or what if the Sun was real, but he didn't love us? If he didn't care about us and so, he watches with an uncaring eye? What if this brought him pleasure? A malevolent and wicked ruler who craved suffering and grew joyful at death?

I don't know which scared me more. I believe my thoughts were scarier than the idea. Who was I to doubt the power of the Sun? But who was I not to do such thing? Would I be sentenced to the Underworld for these thoughts? I didn't want to think them but I couldn't help it. What if everything I was ever told and believed in was a lie? That there wasn't a being that cared for us? What if we were just figures in this world? Destined to die regardless of our beliefs and faith? What if there was nothing after this? Nothing but blankness and one forever being alone?

I coughed up a bit more blood, this time it was enough to form a small puddle. I eyed it. I couldn't tell what color it was, since it was dark at the moment. But I could make out its irregular shape. The more I stared, the more the thoughts surfaced. The more I doubted, the more the tears left my eyes. I wanted my mother. I wanted my father. I wanted to hear others sing and dance and laugh and cry. I wanted to be hugged. I wanted to be kissed. I wanted to be called Little Sunshine again.

I didn't want to die.

. . .

The feeling was unworldly to say the least. I now understood how the others died. You didn't want food anymore, and when you tried to eat, you only threw it back up. Your stomach would fight it. And so food was no longer an option. Nectar didn't do much. It tasted a bit bland. We needed nectar, it was what kept us going – and so I feared for my life. But I was going to die anyway, so what did I have to fear?

My feelings towards such fate was . . . mixed. I accepted what was to come, despite the hurt and pain that I was subjected too. But I was also scared. Scared of what the afterlife would spell for me. There was the possibility that I would never see those I loved again, that this afterlife was a sham. I pondered how the Sun Priests would feel. Knowing that what they devoted their entire life to, was a lie. But there was the possibility that the other side was beautiful, just like the Priests always said.

The Priests would describe it the best they could, growing excited just from thinking of it. They described it as a place where the sun never left the sky, light always present. Sun would walk amongst his children, blessing us with sweet kisses and succulent nectar.

My eyes fluttered open and I stared out at the moon and the darkness and the desert slopes in the distance. I could feel my body growing weaker, my heart slowly losing its rhythm in my chest. I rested my head on the stone pillar behind me. All around me was peaceful. And as I continued to stare out towards the horizon I could see them. I could see my grandparents and my mother and father. They stood there, beckoning me towards them.

They whispered to me, telling me not to fear. My mother wrapped her arms around me and I could feel her warmth.

“I missed you mae,” I began, choking on my words.

“I know, but come my Little Sunshine, do not fight it.” I weakly grabbed onto her dress, clutching it as if scared that she would disappear. The tears flowed like the honey from the cactus plants, thick but never ceasing their climactic fall. They all surrounded me, placing their hands on me and coaxing me forth. And at that moment, I was ready to let go.

I knew it was only my mind, hence me still writing I suppose. But it matters not, I believe it and it's all that matters.

I know not who will find this, or if others will even search. I don't know if our sister races will wander what became of the bright Kreani, but I do hope they do. As for whoever reads this, know that we Kreani did what we could. We were proud of our accomplishments and treasured family and our neighbor. We loved the way the sun graced our skin and adored watching the Sun Tail Lion run across the desert. We steadily pursued higher knowledge and every day, pushed ourselves. I want you to know this, above anything.

Feel free to peruse our libraries, in fact I do hope you take the books. They do not deserve to collect dust, and I don't believe my people would wish that fate upon them. Take our furniture and our clothes, feel free to include it into your culture. I understand that whether I say this or not, you might do this. But I . . . I wanted to tell you this. I don't think I am the right one to speak for my people, but I seem to be the only one now. And, I do believe the Kreani would smile at the knowledge that our culture did not die with us.

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My hand feels weak, and so this is probably my last moments. I can't wait to see my father and mother. My grandparents and friends, even the Sun Priests who scolded me so many times in the past. Or, if there is nothing but darkness where I am going towards, then I guess that is okay as well. I do hope there are Lion Beards there though, I always loved to smell and watch the flowers. I even wanted to have my own garden.

I've watched all of my people die, and now, it is my turn. I once feared this, but now I welcome it. I have lost friends and family. I've seen people fall and not know their names, as well as those who I knew everything about. They all fall the same. We all fall the same.

I no longer wish, nor can I, write.

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