

BECOMING THE SKY

By **Sharkchild**

“When we are, we are nothing, and when we are nothing, we are still nothing. We are the in-between, the space unkempt, and the space unseen; we are the vast and the knowing—we are the sky.”

These were the words I read every night before I went to sleep in the hollowed helm of The Dynasty. On the ceiling their form was etched in the thickest and darkest of chirographic mediums, forever longing to be read. And so, I read—I read out loud and in the boldest of voices as to give them nothing less than their due virtue. They loved being spoken into the echoes of the chamber, in a way that let their syllables flutter freely into wandering heavens and perhaps the curious ears of a lost soul in the distant realms of the earth.

I had always been no more than a hermit, straying from one shell—one shelter—to another, looking at life as a constant battle for survival. I barely got by; I succeeded by no other means than sheer luck. I found food when I needed it and I found health when sickness became my leech. There was nothing I did or earned that sustained my lifeline; I was simply a manifestation of mass that consumed and expelled mass. I had no hopes and therefore I was never disappointed. I was a wayfarer of time and knowledge, a companion to their works as they to me were my only friends.

It was luck at first that I lived, but only until I found The Dynasty. I had quickly come to understand that the ship’s purpose had never been to sail, and consequently, my own purpose sprung forth. The ship was my shelter and also my teacher. I was its commander and it was my vessel, but not such a vessel as would normally be expected. This ship was different, and I knew it from the moment I laid my eyes upon its hull.

Before I found the ship, my life had always been steeped in misery, the sad contingency of emotional hollowness. It might have been the desolation of the world that led me to this state, but hope is not something which can be connected to despair. If it was, it would not exist, and so my hopelessness was simply by choice, perhaps a hereditary disease, passed down into my blood for no reason other than the fact that it could be.

There was only one remedy that could sustain the torture I felt. With its healing, I could feel satisfaction, and with that satisfaction I could acquire the longing and desire that kept me human. I found that losing myself within the lost memories of others gave me stability. The simple fragments of experience allowed me to escape the wretched hole of myself and live the half-real, half-imaginary life of another. There was the occasional home, where I found relics and half-degraded photo albums, but the ship, The Dynasty, was the greatest chest of memories of all. Its name alone spelled out the journeys it had been a part of. But most importantly, it had its intoxicating walls and ceilings. Each and every piece of wall and ceiling upon and within it was covered in books full of verse, all in the same dense, oil-like medium.

The language of this writing was not of any I had known to exist. When I first saw it, I was in awe at its jagged and coarse consistency. There was no fluidity to it and there was certainly no apparent form. The foreign text streaked

all surfaces, leaving less wall and ceiling than word. Only but the name of the ship was left free from the archaic authorship.

After the first few days of being with the ship, I had explored it thoroughly. There were no artifacts left of any crew or others before me. Inside the quarters' and galley's cabinets and shelves could only be found the strange writing. Even what was left of the sails was covered in the script.

At first, I saw no reason to waste time looking over the writing in hopes of any understanding. I found interest enough just gazing at the shapes, and for the time, that was enough. However, I steadily began to feel my sanity crawling away from me as hordes of time passed without the sufficient comfort of some humane object of experience. I was fascinated with the ship, but it did not at first hold the antidote of my stupor—but that would not be for long.

Slowly, over delirious weeks of being unable to detach myself from the allure of the ship, I began to see similarities in style and characters amongst the writings. Without control, I grew wickedly obsessed with uncovering some kind of meaning. Spending each minute of daylight pouring over the substance, I probed areas of my mind that previously had only remained dormant in the abstract shadows of perception. Though such an undertaking would seem foolish, I had convinced myself otherwise; I convinced myself that I, for the sake of my wellbeing, had to decipher something from the text.

It was not months, but years before I was stricken with the almighty blow of revelation. I thinned and aged, though somehow I kept enough energy to diligently pour over the contents of the ship. Then, as if there had been some magic snap of a finger, the demons of intellect descended upon me and my eyes were opened.

At last, I hungrily began to tap into the worlds beyond the words.

The language was not at all a work of letters as most advanced cultures had created; rather, this language was comprised mainly of images. Furthermore, all languages I had known of read from one side to the other, whether it being left to right, right to left, or up to down. Contrarily, this language read—or more appropriately was interpreted—from the outside in from left to in, right to in, up to in, down to in—and the in, the middle, subjugated all that previously encompassed the trail leading to itself in a vortex of vacancy. But, however confusing this might seem, the emptiness of content in the epicenter was the key and portal to the account between the pictures. For the real truths were not found in the images themselves, but in the nothingness around and between them, the voids amongst them, hence lending their knowledge to the mind of no more a toddler. The articles themselves, while following them, turned inside out, revealing an uncanny atmosphere of knowledge. Imagine a landscape of clouds, where objects and other seemingly tangible images loom in form and size, but hold no weight. Though they truly consist of nothing, they still hold mysteries of the foreign and convey or communicate the complex fabric of wisdom. In this way, I harvested epochs of understanding from a structure of writing that had no limitations.

Like a knife slices flesh, these enlightened streams of intricacy laced the palette of my mind, destroying while also reconstructing the known and the unknown. Each composition I read changed me further, imparting upon me histories of lands beyond the boundaries space. For weeks at a time, I would sleep after newly acquired comprehension boiled within the pitiful brain of my fragile body while extravagant and horrible dreams played out the course of a

tale too enormous to know. More and more I read, and further and further I came to the completion of knowledge. The more a wall or ceiling was read, the more it expanded into a nothingness of incalculable information. If this exponential knowledge had somehow been transcribed in known words to the medium of paper, it would have covered the earth more than several times over if not only then doubling, then tripling in size as it was read.

Eventually, I stopped the doses of cerebral intake and focused on the one section of the incredible masterpiece which could be limited to a set parameter. This section was the stamp of authorship, the signature of ownership over all that was the galaxy of the rapturous knowledge. It was this that I read every night before I went to sleep, whether from sight or memory. I thought—through the first hope I had since childhood—that I could beckon the haunting scribes to me by means of the repeated incantations of their name so that they could take me away from the desolate earth. This I carried on while the information I had already gleaned from the writing expanded upon itself within my mind. I laid atop the helm, in silence and reverence, until evening when I chanted the name of the writers. I did this over and over into the ages of the earth.

Years turned to decades, and decades turned to centuries, and I did not perish.

My existence wrote itself to the voids between my physical presence—the microscopic spaces amid tissue and cell, flesh and bone. The information that depicted who I was was completely replicated within the vast template of emptiness that spread through the eternity within me. My own mind subconsciously manipulated the cosmic arts of the mysterious authors in order to uphold its most natural instinct, survival. Memories, knowledge, sensation, emotion, all of them were transferred like writing to the invisible canvas of the air.

My joints and muscles quickly grew decrepit with age, leaving me without mobility in the ship's helm. Even then, I remained alive to continue my prayers without any need of food or water or any other type of sustenance. I watched as my own body degraded and decomposed. My flesh withered and scattered like dust in the winds that passed over and over again.

It was millennia before the bones of my remains had decomposed enough to free me from their imprisonment. Finally, my prayers were answered and I was nothing. I became the in-between, the space unkempt, and the space unseen; I became the vast and the knowing—I became the sky.