

CHILDREN OF THE FLAME
SEEKERS COMPENDIUM
THE GODS' RECTIFICATION

THE FOLLOWING RECORD IS DIRECTLY FROM THE STORYTELLER

Fellow believers, you need not be a scholar to know that we are not the first to inhabit the world. We are in fact, the second. As recorded in our codex, those before us had a history at least double the length that ours is today, and they were lost in the event we know as "The Inferno" as a result of their sins. You also know that event was carried out by our three gods known as the Deliverer, the Destroyer, and the Deceiver. Scholars among us have known throughout history that our gods are not mysterious otherworldly beings, but rather humanoid creatures who inhabit the world much like we do. For all my life, I have yearned to meet our gods in the flesh so that I may learn more about them, but as many of you know, only one of the three has been willing to show himself to me. It is with great excitement I write to you today, for I can finally say this is no longer the case. On the sixth of [REDACTED], our three gods came to me to discuss the truth. As it turns out, much of our knowledge has been wrong all this time, and much more was simply missing. For instance, none of us have ever known the true names of our gods! Our Destroyer, whose true name is Florian, informed me that it took much convincing to get the Deceiver, Freya, and the Deliverer, Kerosyn, to visit me due to the sordid and despicable actions of my predecessors. Apparently, the two of them are quite playful and easygoing, and they prefer to keep unpleasant things at a distance. I do not yet know if they have changed their opinion of me or our organization, but I will not complain or beg, and I expect all of you to do the same. But despite their hesitance, they were very forthcoming with information and happy to correct our errors. From the Beginning to the End of Everything we have all new perspective, and we now know the true origins of our gods, for which I am infinitely grateful.

In the beginning, our three gods were yet to be born. In their place were a pair responsible for the creation of the world, and after them came eight children, all holding power over a different area of creation. These children were the ones responsible for the creation of humanity, the spirit people, the cycle of life, and nearly everything surrounding those things. They quickly fell victim to sin and formed their own factions, unable to agree on what is right and wrong, ushering in one of several eras of war while the original two gods remained silent. One of the children, called R██████████, withdrew from the world and spent her life recording not only history and events, but prophecies of what is yet to come, and it is these writings that fill our codex, and is the source of this information recounted by Freya. It was thousands of years of war and conflict before our gods were born, during which another three children were born too weak to hold power over creation, but still far higher than humanity could ever dream of reaching. One of these children was the infamous M██████████, responsible for many atrocities against humanity and frequently credited as the primary role model of the Second Storyteller. The warring had spread to the gods themselves and their fighting would have cataclysmic effects on the world, dramatically reshaping it. Humanity was culled to merely a fraction of what it once was, all but one of the children was killed by the one called ██████████, who we know as "The False One," leaving only him and one of the two original gods, and only during this time were our three gods born. Shockingly, they were not born as such, but rather as lowly people to regular parents just as all of us! According to Freya, the remaining two gods were growing tired of the power struggle and devised a type of game to decide who among them would take final control of the world. Freya was chosen by ██████████ as one of six "scouts," given certain godlike powers and sent to choose one spirit each. These chosen few would receive the souls and powers of some of the deceased gods, then the scouts would be responsible for training their abilities to use their powers before escorting them to a grand tournament through which the winner would challenge ██████████ for the throne of the world. Freya's

journey was to find one of the fox people, eventually leading her to Kerosyn.

Kerosyn retains no memories from before he took on his current form. He was not born with his brilliant ethereal visage, but rather as a regular, lowly fox spirit. Fortunately, during this time in his life he regularly kept a journal, which Freya holds today and read to me. Kerosyn had a harsh upbringing, never knowing his parents and unfortunately growing up during a time of great prejudice against his kind with their reputation as tricksters. He would wander from place to place searching for someone to accept him, but would always be met either by immediate hatred or a short friendship and betrayal, yet he would somehow manage to wear a smile through the wake it all. Against all odds, he writes that one day a small group of human children found him in the woods and invited him to play a game with them, making great friends with all of them. The children brought him to their home village and while the adults met him with suspicion and fear, they listened to their children and allowed him to stay. He writes that night in a rare display of contemplation that he worries about what the adults will tell their children, how long their tolerance of him will last, and even wondering what his own parents were like. After a long period with no journal entries, he writes that he's got butterflies in his stomach. For the first time, a human village has truly accepted him, and their trust in him has grown so much that they are trusting him with an important job. This village is one of the few rural settlements that survived the many wars of the gods, but not without suffering heavy damage that has left them with no tools and failing farms, causing them to rely on traveling by foot to faraway villages to trade for food. This time, Kerosyn was sent to trade. Much like a child, he writes many fantasies of what he might see in this new village, what their food might taste like among other things. His next entry is distinctly more hollow as he expresses nervousness regarding how he may be treated by the strangers, fearing that he may fail the mission. Later, he writes that his fears were confirmed as the strangers surrounded and interrogated him, even throwing stones and tools at him, but he still managed to get the food he came for. He writes

that he feels terrible about what happened and can't shake the feeling of dread, like everything is beginning to fall apart. Freya arrived just outside a rural village believing that her target would be there. She describes the terrible feeling she had at that moment which led her to remain on the outskirts of the village, eventually noticing that a group of brigands were beginning a raid. While she may have been able to prevent the raid, she decided to sit and watch, hoping that her target would show promise by stopping the raid themselves. The pillaging would continue for hours with no sign of her target, the inhabitants being murdered one by one and their homes and fields being set aflame, but she continued to wait and watch it burn. Later, she says, a tiny little loser came rushing out of the forest towards the burning village, and she thought that this couldn't possibly be her target. He ran into the village and slowly froze, realizing that all the people were dead. The brigands had not yet left by this point and had noticed him standing there, and as they began to move towards him, he started to step back and fell over.

Frantically, he scrambled to his feet and began to run away as the brigands gave chase while Freya continued to watch, hoping he does something interesting. They threw a spear at him which pierced his leg and pinned him to the ground, and she describes in great detail the beating he received, his cries, and other things I have chosen to omit. Ultimately he is stabbed through the chest and left to bleed out. Once the brigands were gone, she approached the "tiny little loser" and, by her description, she felt something impossible to explain and knew he was her target. She prodded his side to confirm he wasn't dead before kicking him over onto his back and tried to explain who she was and tempt him with power, but he didn't seem to hear her, so she tried using hand gestures to ask if he wanted to live. All he could say was "sorry" as his breathing stopped. She then opened the bag given to her at the start of her journey and from inside came a white butterfly, which fluttered over to the dead boy and landed on his forehead. Slowly, he was engulfed in ethereal white flames until, as she describes, his body suddenly jerked to life as he began to writhe and scream in pain, but just as suddenly as it started, it was over. He went

silent as the flames dissipated revealing his new form as we know him today, the butterfly now fluttering around him.

Kerosyn retains memory from this point on, and he describes jumping to his feet and being bewildered from how light he felt. He spent a while getting accustomed to his new body while, in his words, "some weird kitty lady was there." He says she started to run off and asked him to follow her, so he figured it would be fun to run around and did as she said. They ran faster and faster until, in his words, "it was ultra fast, I could hardly see" until they arrived in a small clearing, where she slowed down and tripped him. She tried to explain what just happened and what his responsibility is, but according to Freya, he grew visibly bored and restless, insisting that he doesn't care and just wants to run some more, so she gave up and they took off again, eventually ending up at a beautiful pond deep in the forest that captivated Kerosyn. Freya was feeling mischievous and kicked Kerosyn into the water, saying he needs to grow up a bit and learn his strength. She punched him in the stomach and taunted him, trying to get him to fight back so she could do her job. It gets to him quickly and he begins throwing wild punches which she easily ignores, taunting him for his apparent lack of skill. According to Kerosyn, something changed and his thoughts started slowing down, becoming more and more focused, then his memory blanks out for a moment. Freya fills in the blank, saying in that moment his punches quickly shifted from wild to precise, as if he jumped from a total novice to an expert in the blink of an eye. She says he then took a step back and changed his stance taking on a completely different fighting style and his attacks became engulfed in flame, creating a mesmerizing display something like a ribbon dance. She could barely keep up with him and shifted to defense, to which he responded with an immense kick to her stomach sending her hurtling into a tree and knocking the wind out of her, but for some reason he appeared frozen in place after that. Kerosyn chimes in again, describing that the blank spot in his memory ends there. He asked her if she was okay and helped her to her feet, and after she dusted herself off expressing that she's fine, he excitedly asked if they could go running again. Freya says that she lost all doubts

about Kerosyn at that moment, laughed it off and took off running through the forest with him once again.

As they ran, the scent of smoke permeated the air and caused Kerosyn's mood to change from playful to vengeful as he changed course to hunt down the source. Bursting out of the forest with uncanny composure, he began searching for survivors in the new burning village they had encountered. The dead lined the paths, but a couple of children were found still alive. While bringing them to safety, Kerosyn caught sight of the brigands responsible and felt compelled to punish them. He raised a wall of flame between himself and Freya, who he told to take the children to safety herself, and this display of power scared the brigands into running. He did not allow them to escape and continuously cut them off with walls of flame, eventually trapping them in a ring of flame with him. Kerosyn grew visibly uncomfortable while explaining this to me and Freya took over for him, saying that he had lost control of himself in that moment, and the only thing that prevented him from killing them was the presence of children. The ring of flame dissipated and he appeared frozen once again as the brigands escaped. She asked him what he was doing, to which he responded with "I don't know" and took off running after the brigands, leaving a trail of fire behind him. By the time she had gotten the children to a safe place and caught up with him, the bodies of the brigands were lying beaten to death as Kerosyn was pacing anxiously, but when she called to him, he took off running again until they made their way to the brigands' encampment. At this point, Kerosyn had covered his ears apparently unwilling to relive this time in his life, truly a gentle soul. Freya continues, saying that he surrounded the entire encampment in a towering ring of fire and made his way down to the center, where he then engulfed every single building in flames all at once, leaving the people in a state of shock and awe. As they panicked, he began to viciously pick them off, which quickly devolved into total animalistic slaughter. After it was over, Kerosyn was once again frozen in place, fallen to his knees. He explained to her that he couldn't control himself and this isn't what he wanted, that he felt wrong, and even though the people he attacked were not good

people, still didn't deserve this. She responded by ensuring him that's why she's here, to prevent this from ever happening again. Freya gestures for Kerosyn to uncover his ears before continuing, saying that not a lot happened over the next several years, but Florian takes over for the first time. He explains that he had been watching the two of them ever since "that fateful day" and that what happened in that time is important in its own way. Rather than trying to train for fights or to control their powers, they simply wandered aimlessly throughout the land having a good time and deepening their relationship. They built a reputation as goodhearted pranksters, doing good deeds and getting into harmless mischief whilst Kerosyn practiced self control throughout. ██████████'s tournament was fast approaching though, and Florian knew it. As the son of M██████████n, Florian was never associated with orders of the gods, instead being taught that they are evil and the world is not worth saving so long as they remain. He learned to work from the shadows and to always gather as much knowledge as possible before taking any kind of action. He witnessed his mother be critically wounded in the crossfire of ██████████'s petty war and resolved to return the favor, but was too careless in his actions which were mistakenly attributed to his mother, who was then killed by ██████████ in retaliation, leading Florian to swear vengeance against the gods. He watched ██████████ for years, keeping careful track of his movements and plans, learning all about the tournament in the process and eventually setting out to study the participants. After learning all he needed to know of the six participants, he approached the one he thought most likely to win, Kerosyn, and shared his knowledge with him and Freya. He had begun to explain what the tournament is for but was surprised to see Freya already knew all about it, as she spent her life first in servitude to the gods and later, after confiding in ██████████ and receiving her blessing, in hiding with M██████████a, daughter of R██████████, where she learned all about the tournament and helped devise a strategy to sabotage ██████████'s plan. Both of them realized that the scales were tipping into their favor as the puzzle pieces fell together on their own and began explaining the situation to a very confused Kerosyn, who was quick

to understand and remained confident. Florian joined their journey from here on out and offered his services to them as a friend with a common enemy.

Florian describes to me the opponents Kerosyn faced in the tournament as a peace-loving deer person, a knowledge-seeking mouse person, a valiant wolf person, a merciless shark person, and a wise lizard person, all traits of the gods their souls were inherited from. According to him, there is always one incarnation of each in this world at any given time. Even though they may die physically, the souls of gods remain too powerful to disappear forever, even against him. Before Florian got the chance to continue his account, Kerosyn once again covered his ears. When the three arrived where the tournament was being held, Freya was taken away by Florian and restrained with the other scouts still living as [REDACTED] explained the rules to the chosen six. All fights were to end in death, and failure to kill was also to result in death. If one of the losers brought their scout with them, the scout dies with them. The last one standing would fight [REDACTED] himself, the ultimate winner receiving absolute power over all. Up first, Kerosyn and the deer. Over as quickly as it started, the deer simply forfeited and took his own life, unnerving Kerosyn. Next, Kerosyn faced the mouse where exactly the same thing happened, and Florian killed the scout. This visibly hurt Kerosyn making him frantic, leading his fight with the wolf to turn in his favor. He became frenzied by the taste of blood and viciously tore apart his final opponents, even becoming sadistic and outright frightening according to Freya and Florian, but when [REDACTED] attempted to kill him from behind, in that split second Kerosyn completely changed his demeanor, much like when he first sparred with Freya by her description. It was a display of absolute superiority by Kerosyn, [REDACTED] completely unable to touch him, though Kerosyn couldn't find an opening either. Florian and Freya began to taunt [REDACTED] from the sidelines until finally, he turned his attention to them, fatally stabbing both of them at once. Kerosyn, his ears still covered, then tells me he took that chance to grab [REDACTED] by the spine and immolate him from the inside out. He laughed maniacally as he lay burning, claiming that Kerosyn may have won

the fight but he can't lose in the end. Unbeknownst to anyone, he had secretly infused his soul with a curse of pestilence, released upon the world through his death. Kerosyn uncovers his ears. Our eyes all fixate on Kerosyn, looking strangely serene. Florian tells me that he has never heard this part of the story before, and Freya jokes that it's because they were dead at the time. Kerosyn continues, saying he was devastated and felt like he had lost everything. The last remaining god said he had won and he is free to do whatever he sees fit, and in response, he picks up Freya's body and walks away. He gave her a proper burial underneath a weeping cherry tree and sat with her for a day, then takes off wandering aimlessly through the dying world. Disappointed by how short Kerosyn's story was, Florian continues his account saying that he was resurrected by the last god, the process being particularly gruesome and traumatic for him, his body writhing and transforming into the form we know today, now containing the souls of both M██████████n and ██████████. He says that he immediately knew the situation upon regaining consciousness, and he and the last god went together to Freya's grave. The last god gave Florian a chance to lament Freya's suffering before beginning her resurrection, during which she simply burst out of the ground as she was. According to Freya, she simply felt as though she woke up, but she too seemed to know exactly what was going on and what would happen next. The three of them then began their search for Kerosyn to seal the fate of the world. Kerosyn continues, saying that he was very happy to see his friends again when they found him, and as soon as the last god asked if he was ready, he knew what to do. The last god had no need to give them any instructions, so she simply bestowed the three of them with equal portions of her power and ceased to be. Kerosyn gave Freya and Florian a short time to complete their tasks and made his way to where he needed to be. Freya and Florian ran around the dying world and selected small groups of humans and spirit people who had yet to be affected by the curse of pestilence and returned to Kerosyn. He then delivered a great speech wise beyond his disposition to the people (which he refused to repeat to me) and instructed them to stay in that one spot, and have no fear. Kerosyn, Freya and Florian then traveled to

a high cliff from which they could see all the land, and Kerosyn with a furious, yet melancholic scream, bathed all the world in flame, sparing only those who heeded his warning.

I could hardly believe what I was hearing at times during this recounting. How could we have been so wrong about so many things? How could we claim to be the only ones enlightened by the truth when our beliefs were based in lies? Not only were our three gods born to lowly flesh, but they have all experienced death and rebirth. They are not the creators of our world, nor do our previous names for them apply, they are our saviors. They do not even possess the magnitude of power we once thought, needing to combine their strength if they are to accomplish feats of creation. They are in fact more akin to ghosts than gods, and my respect for them has only deepened with this knowledge. Together, they are our messiahs, but apart, they are simply immortals who have each experienced unimaginable hardship and suffering. In addition, we have learned that before them, there was not simply one creator, but rather thirty, and indeed, many more. They still walk this world. My grandfather told me this time.

... closing our eyes... expect to... repaid for any good... of the goodness of their hearts, but because of what has been prophesied. The texts of R... have been one hundred percent accurate since they were written, so I fully believe what I have been told is correct. The End of Everything was not destined to happen once, but several times. Our world will not last forever, and we will fall just as our predecessors did. But, do not fear! Humanity continues to exist because of a chosen few, and I believe that we are that chosen few of this era. So long as we continue to act in favor of our saviors, we will be spared in the End of Everything.