

Last Gasp of a Rare Breed of King

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In a cold abandoned castle made of material more modern and yet far older than the usual mortar and stone is a King pacing. He's all by himself as he paces through the castle that several ages ago had people that once roamed. He just roams through his castle occasionally resting on a wall. His kingdom fell long, long ago but still the king keeps his castle and roams these sad, mostly barren halls. I've watched him for almost an eon and he is a peculiar thing.

He still sits on his dead throne on this cold distant world. He's an interesting king, the last of his kind. A non human king with a crocodilian tail, large claws, fangs, human shaped hands, and white fur over red scales. A man sized dragon that also has fur and is close to losing his mind. An age of just ruins and loneliness will do that to any beast or man. There's a lot that contributed to the loss of his species and more importantly his clan.

After all species don't just vanish in a day. This king, he watched them all vanish thanks to one disaster after another. An asteroid impact there, a plague or two here, followed by some wars one or two of which were civil wars, maybe a famine or two and then the collapse of the kingdom as it was known. When most of this happened the king was hardly seen, he chose instead to watch safely from the comfort of his distant throne. It used to sit above his planet and he'd retreat to it whenever a disaster struck his castle home. He'd give commands, direct the resources, do hands off things but ultimately the problems were solved by others while he issued orders from his satellite throne.

There are a number of different ways this destruction and extinction could have been prevented. If only help had been accepted and responsibility had been owned. There were many kingdoms from other planets and other stars that were trying and willing to help but the proud and stubborn king with a bit of apathy insisted he could do this all alone. Every attempt he tried failed and all his countermeasures subverted. For several millennia he flirted and sat on the precipice of disaster hoping by himself given his resources and knowledge it could be averted. He was wrong though and fate found new ways to make him pay.. for his hubris while he drove those that helped and cared for him away.

Those millennia of numerous hardships killed his kingdom and his empire that was still continuing to grow. He tried to help but couldn't bring himself to be more involved and all his constituents, advisors, and subjects all left him and eventually died. If there are any of these dragon people left after these many millennia they are so far in hiding somewhere in the stars. But considering everything for now I focus on watching this ancient king and the remains of his kingdom of brokenness and scars.

He makes it to the seat of his throne after all his roaming and resting through the halls. His eyes are empty of any expression and he stumbles with his tail trailing sadly behind him, taking

a seat and raking his overgrown claws. The throne he sits in is made of a material more malleable and gelatinous than metal but still stronger than steel. It's turned a noticeable dark green in color but was once bright blue back in this kingdom's golden days. While sitting he looks practically lifeless with his eyes staring off into the stars he once explored with a deadness in them, jaw slightly parted to show his brownish yellow aged fangs, his arms hanging limply while his tail and legs slump on a spot of exposed ground. He is not dead just yet but he's so old and exhausted that he's close enough to it.

Then his ears perk and since I've been watching him for so long I know what he thinks he's hearing, the echoes of laughter from when this alien palace still had life in it. The king roars in a display of impotent defiance against the long gone ghosts that only his mind perceives as there before collapsing from that small display of the little energy he has left in him. For a while after his collapse he naps before the moment I have waited and watched for finally has come. The dragon king wakes a few hours later with an expression now, one of shock and anguish as his giant foot claws clench the alien metal of the remainder of the castle floor as he wheezes. He puts a paw over his bare grey chest (though it's more like an underbelly given his physiology) as his breathing shallows and he falls onto his knees as his body fails him and his arms and legs start to go limp.

A spot of actual blue blood streams in a line down his mouth as he collapses one final time and spends the next several minutes feeling his age old body completely fail him. In his many battles and failures against disaster it is old age and a withering heart that have bested this once proud alien dragon king. It's at this point I finally step out of the shadows of the walls and mostly ruined spires of this castle to take on a form and do my job. With a last dying bit of strength the king sees me with his dwindling eyesight and says "g-grey..rey w-w...winged *ahem hack* spec..terrrr" struggling to get the words out thanks to the combination of his body shutting down and not needing to actually speak to anyone for the many, many years. Within four minutes his life finally fades leaving what I've come for behind and what I have waited, watched and even taken a form that he would recognize to collect; an especially rare soul that needs to move on.

I move my own acquired ghostly dragon hand into the chest and reach deep, severing the soul from the body and extracting it. Holding it in my new claws. It's not every day I take on an appearance that I take on a different, truly alien appearance like this, so far from my usual human look or get to extract a soul like this either. All souls are unique in some way usually through a mark but this soul is something special with it's crackling plasma-like energy ring around an orb that is shifting colors from magenta to a deep blue in a state of multi colored flux. It's truly one of a kind and in my own many eons of existence that says something. Before I can make any moves to leave the dragon king's soul stirs and I sense his confusion and his feeling of displacement rising thanks to the new way of being he is in now.

Another thing about souls is that despite having no vocal cords or mouths to speak from they can talk just not in the traditional way but through a sort of limited telepathy where they say

what they want to say but there's still a primordial layer of thought under that that can't really be heard at least not by other souls anyway. "W-winged specter! If you're here that means... oh by the Tetrenium have I finally escaped the torment of my mortal coil...can I finally move on?!" Reading that primordial layer of thought as well as his words I can sense that mixed glee and sad relief there that only I would be able to pick up even if other beings were here. "Yes, I am here to carry you to what comes next for you, who have sadly fallen to a heart attack" I say with my usual coolness that I'm supposed to have.

The alien king's secondary thought later has switched from the mix of glee and sad relief to sheer joy and if he had a body he would be crying tears of it. I prepare to leave this depressing, destitute alien castle behind me by focusing and using my claws to open the wormhole I need to get to my destination but before I can enter the king speaks again. "Oh winged specter will anyone ever think of my fallen kingdom after I'm gone? Will I be remembered even if it's in infamy?" Hmm, the answer I see is not till the passing of another age where it's barely existing ruins will be rediscovered and the second answer is it depends very much on who you ask though overall no. But I can tell this king waits for confirmation that he'll have a legacy despite ultimately failing his subjects and those close to him with very few if any left to tell the story of him or this kingdom. I simply say "a one of a kind king like you absolutely has a place in history along with your kingdom" and he starts to say "what do yo..." but i simply walk into the wormhole towards the next part of the journey into the afterlife before he can finish for I am death and there are other souls to be collected and seen.