

Emperor Humanus

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Emperor Humanus

By Daniel Stockman

"Listen Cantrell, if you want that Nothing to Say sound, you have to tune in drop D. After that, just let the truth flow." I entered in on Thayil giving his sage advice to Cantrell as the two let forth a cacophony of the most disgruntled yet beautifully disharmonious sonic vibrations to ever penetrate my being. Something awfully familiar filled the air of the morning, or was it morning? It was wonderfully dark with only some scant light filling out the rafters above and below. The place seemed to resemble an eternal interior of Seville Cathedral. I searched around, looking for a window, and was pleased to see the morning star: the light-bearer was steadfastly hovering in the darkened sky outside the... "Wait," I said to myself. "What is this place exactly?" Shortly after this inner query, an answer came to me in the form of a man. The answer given was in my mind and said: "This is your place, you now reside among the hidden angels." The man soon appeared before me in an impossibly ethereal fashion, long-haired, a short beard, standing 6'2 and wearing a white t-shirt with blue jeans, black shoes, and a chi-rho around his neck. "Brother, welcome" he mouthed that time. I informed him his intrusions into my mind were unsettling, and he only laughed we moved deeper inside the dimly lit sanctum. Undeniably, the place I found myself in reeked of darkened benevolence, a smell most appealing. He said "we've long been awaiting your arrival." All I could do was smile and embrace the bitter activity in my midst at the time. "You're Chris, are you not?" I asked as if not already sure. "You already know the answers to your questions," he replied, "why do you even bother asking them? You should also know that Chris is not who I truly am –it's only how you remember me." "Damn," I said, "Maybe next time I should die sooner, this fate is sublimely stupefying." "Sure it is" he grimly replied. We continued walking the black corridor lit only by faint torches on the walls. Peering down the hall, I could only see what seemed to be an infinite abyss marked out ever so slightly by this torch light. "You should know by now, brother, that you are not dead. You are quite alive, and you revel in light." His answers only served to further bewilder me. "If I am not dead, what am I doing here? I was in the middle of eking out a living on that thrice forsaken globe of God known as Earth located adrift upon the arm of Orion." "Yes, yes, of course you were, but no longer." Chris was quite matter of fact about the whole situation. As we slowly continued our walk through the eternal hall, a sudden echo of vibrations came from behind us:

"Pale in the flare light
The scared light cracks & disappears
And leads the scorched ones here
And everywhere no one cares
The fire is spreading

And no one wants to speak about it
Down in the hole
Jesus tries to crack a smile
Beneath another shovel load."

"Whoa!" I gasped in amazement, "how the hell are you fronting them when we're all the way down here now?" Chris only laughed at me again: "Search yourself and you will find the answer." Yes, it occurred to me that time and positionality in this place were merely an illusion, and the stringent physical conceptions of Earth were still helping me to make better sense of it all. Evidently, these conceptions still lingered in my mind. "See," Chris relayed, "we knew you had it in you." "It's good to see that Thayil hasn't lost his touch, his riffs are still beastly at least" I pseudo-intelligently remarked. "My friend, do not belittle his playing with such dreadful language. It is better to describe him as beautifully weeping."

"Okay fine, but do you mind explaining to me what exactly we are doing? Why are we traversing these ancient places?"

He responded: "Again, brother, you know why."

"Yes, you're right. It is my destiny to be here, to traverse the abyss of eternity with you but beyond that, why?"

"Do you remember the world friend?" We stopped our saunter, and he stared sternly through me like no one on Earth ever did.

"Yes," I replied, "How could anyone forget? It is fully suffering, sulfur, fire, and chaos with only hints of this realm's eternal light."

"Well then you should know why you are here, it is the training place of its future kings and rulers, its vindicators and paladins. We are the reapers. We walk through darkened halls of late doorways as if we are kings, like this, we chain a whisper to our faults." As these thoughts rolled around in my incorporeal form, a great despair began to overcome me. "No!" I yelled, "No. It simply cannot be. None of this is real. This is an illusion! The world, it was real, and concrete. It existed. I lived there, dined there, swam there, drove there, laughed there, fought there, forgave there, and I died there. None of these things are mine, power is not mine. This is all a delusion. This is schizophrenia, this is lunacy! There is beauty on Earth. My fellow humans were friends. I would die for them. Send me back."

"Don't you see?" he slyly questioned, "this is why you are here now, because almost everything you said is true. Friend, you are where you belong now. Do not worry for them, you request humility so know this: you are still but a student and you require much training before fulfilling your destiny as Emperor Humanus."

"Excuse me?" I uttered, "Emperor Humanus? This is not my title, nor name, nor anything I have ever craved!" Running into the abyss as far from this power as I could get, a most dreadful fear began crunching my non-existent heart. Suddenly, they started playing Circle of Power. "Great," I thought to myself, "how appropriate for the universe to be so annoyingly sardonic in my moments of intense higher dimensional paranoia." Unexpectedly, a

peaceful laugh rang down the hall. As quickly as the fear and paranoia had overwhelmed me, the voice brought comfort as a celestial cloud of love froze me in place: “Remember always that within the realm of true power resides not the ability to inflict pain and suffering, but rather the ability to alleviate it. Be now a friend of God, for you have resisted the temptation of worldly power.”