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Did you know?

- ...that the Red Legion were feared across the galaxy as destroyers of worlds?
- ...that the Dreadnaught was partially constructed out of a part of Akka's corpse?
- ...that Zhalo Supercell was originally named after the hammer of the Finnish thunder god Ukko?
- ...that while Mercury was shown to only be partially converted into a machine world during the Dark Age in *Season of Dawn*, it was previously stated in *Destiny* that it had been converted in a matter of days?
- ...that Ghost was originally voiced by Peter Dinklage, but his lines were re-recorded by Nolan North and completely replaced with *Destiny* patch 2.0.0?

Lore Discussion View source History

Lore:Ghost Stories

From Destinypedia, the Destiny wiki



*"And my vanquisher will read that book, seeking the weapon, and they will come to understand me, where I have been and where I was going."*



The following is a **verbatim transcription** of an official document for archival reasons. As the original content is transcribed word-for-word, any possible discrepancies and/or errors are included.

**Ghost Stories** is a Lore book in *Forsaken* that contains tales about Ghosts and their Guardians. Entries are unlocked by finding dead Ghosts scattered throughout the game.

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## Pressure

She was the first Ghost to arrive, but it wasn't long until there were dozens of them, scanning every pile of debris that remained of Tower North. They came in search of the one who guided their journeys, the one who once spoke for the Traveler.

"He called me Dejana. Before I met him, I didn't know what to call myself." She was speaking to a red-shelled one, who hovered where the Speaker once studied the Light. His eyes were ever fixed on the new brilliance of the Living Traveler.

"He called me Anwar. You never found yours either, did you?"

"No." Her journey had spanned centuries—on Earth, the Moon, and Venus—but she never unearthed a single soul she felt worthy of the Light. "I used to think it was me; perhaps I was too picky, but... he assured me, humanity was vast. The gift of the Light must be deserved, and it was better to be thorough than to end up with someone too weak to bear the burden, or worse, misuse it. He, at least, made me feel... useful. I put my search on hold and served him as a cartographer. You?"

"Deconstructionist." Anwar paused. Drifted a few feet toward the luminous Living Traveler.

"Dejana, can you feel it?"

Dejana followed Anwar's gaze up to the Traveler. "Feel what?"

"The pressure."

## Ghost Hunter

The Speaker's warnings were clear: Always mind the Light. If you feel it fraying, you've strayed too far. There are places even the Traveler's Light cannot reach.

Now, here I am, lost in the shadowy pastiche known as the Reef. And not a single tether of Light touches me. But that... that is what my Guardian wanted.

His name is Cyrell; and Cyrell called me Strain. I found him on the far edges of Mercury, in a valley that the Vex transformation had never reached. He seemed resilient, unwavering, old, and wise. I'd searched so long for my better half that I didn't hesitate. If I had considered but one moment more, I might have sensed how tired and burdened and tangled his soul truly was, and I would have left him in peace. And I would not be a murderer of my kin.

Cyrell told me we came to the Reef in search of Awoken. He had heard stories of how this far-flung offshoot of Humanity had returned to Sol with unparalleled knowledge. He believed they had the answer to a question he refused to share. I know now, however, that he really came here to spare me.

He confessed he could not bear another battle nor fight in the name of something no one could possibly understand. Though he could not remember his past, he knew deep down that he had already fought his last war.

He couldn't kill me. I was his friend. He doesn't kill friends. He wouldn't kill himself, either; that was cowardly, weak. And if the Ghosts' sole purpose was to raise the dead to kill in the name of unexplainable forces, he could no longer let that happen. He would end the cycle. He would spare his brothers- and sisters-in-arms. He would let the dead rest.

Years later, I saw Cyrell again, clad in wretched-looking armor, dragging a chain of dead Ghosts in the name of peace. Still searching for an Awoken who could answer the one question that has haunted him since his rebirth.

If you are a Ghost who has not yet found your Chosen, let this be a warning: Cyrell, the Ghost Hunter, will end your search for you. If you are Awoken and perchance have the answer he seeks, please, do not keep your secrets from him.

Your life depends on it.

## The Chosen's Choice

She focuses herself to resurrect him once more, only this time—she hesitates. She looks around, taking in the human carnage surrounding her.

She thinks back to their arrival into this village. How its population lauded him and showered him with gifts, begged him to stay, to defend them, to keep them safe.

At first he seemed reluctant, but the longer he remained, and the more Fallen he slew, the more they praised him. That praise emboldened him; he grew expectant, addicted to their exaltations and gifts.

The more he consumed, the more the village's resources dwindled. He led expeditions to take from others—no warning, no diplomacy. He showed his might as one of the Risen and demanded he be lauded as savior. Those he once protected now died under his charge, and they venerated him all the more for it.

As much as she tried to guide him back into the Light and remind him why he was Chosen, he could not hear her over the adulations of his newfound vassals. Resurrection after resurrection, his legend flourished while the dead remained dead; he grew ever more covetous and unforgiving. He stopped learning from his losses and came to feel entitled to his immortality.

One winter night, clad in golden armor, he made war on a seaside settlement of fishers and spiritualists. Not a man, woman, or child survived. Flushed with the high of easy victory, he and his followers were ill prepared for the Fallen war party that had been stalking them the last few moons. It was a massacre atop a massacre. And only he, one of the Risen, would walk away from this.

She looks away from the human carnage surrounding her. Looks down upon the one she chose. His golden armor, dulled with the blood of his victims and his adorers, still reflects back to her the light of her single eye.

He made his choice. And thus, so will she.

She turns her eye away from him, away from herself, and floats eastward toward the rising light.

## The We Before Us

I remember the moment we were born.

There was pain, and loss, and a feeling of falling. Was this the end? The shadows gathered, colored bruise-purple and gray in Our fading consciousness.

Our shell cracked and splintered. Parts of Us were lost, or carried away. We felt those wounds, jagged and sharp. We could feel them still, attached by a gossamer-thin strand of understanding.

We felt a garden with no blooms. A valley shrouded in gloom.

We felt ourselves dying. We didn't want to go.

Then there I was, separated from the whole. I could feel it shrink, slip back into itself, dim and unseeing. I knew it was waiting. Resting. Watching. Considering.

And I knew what I needed to do. Somewhere in this wide, amazing galaxy there was a person. They were quiet and dead, like We had been, but I could bring them back. I could share what was inside of me, this glorious warmth and life and breath and being.

Together, that person and I would do what We, the We before me, could not.

I wrapped the spark that was me in metal and glass, a tiny bit of something that reminded me of the home We had shared. Then I set out to find my person. The keeper of my Light.

There were so many people. So many still, fragile things, decaying into dust, lost to memory. I touched each one, looking for... something? A fragment of ember under the ash?

I didn't find it. I know now that there is one person, only one, that is mine. I have been to many planets. Seen things I never knew were possible. Hid from monsters. Followed dreams.

I have seen others of my kind, the other pieces that were once Us. Their search is over.

They are complete. Stronger. Braver because they found their counterpart.

I am alone. I know you are still out there. That you're waiting for me. But it has been so long, and I am so...

Very...

Cold...

I will rest here and think about Us.

For...

A...

Moment...

Cold...

Where...

We...

You!

## Don't Call Me Ghost

"I want a name."

"Is this because of Sagira? She is a terrible influence on you."

"She has a name. People don't just call her 'Ghost.' It's insulting being called 'Ghost.' I'm not a thing. I'm me."

"Who are you, then?"

"I'm... I don't know. I'm me."

"And you want me to define you? That sounds like you're a thing."

"You're insufferable, do you know that?"

"You didn't have to bring me back."

"You know that's not true."

"Is it?"

"There you go again, Tyra, questioning everything. Treating the entire world like a puzzle that you have to record, and analyze, and put in your files."

"I cannot do anything else. If I do not question, do not study, do not learn, I have no purpose. 'Every mind has its own form.'"

"You've been reading philosophy again."

"Rousseau. Ikora lent me a copy."

"Hmmpf."

"Don't pout, Ghost. It's annoying."

"So is being called Ghost. Might as well cover me with a sheet."

"Choose your own name. You don't need me to define you."

"I will!"

... ..

"Well? What is your name, Ghost?"

"Don't call me Ghost."

## Compliments

I remember talking to Ophiuchus one day about the connection between Ghosts and Guardians.

This was years and years ago, back when we were still in the City and Osiris was Vanguard Commander. Osiris and Ikora would talk for hours—days, sometimes—and frankly, it was pretty boring. Especially when I got stuck entertaining Ophiuchus. Seriously, that Ghost is not a conversationalist.

Anyway, O said he had a theory why there was one Ghost for one Guardian. He thought that each of us had strengths that complemented weaknesses in our Guardian, and vice versa. That we needed to be together, or neither of us would be whole.

"Like soul mates?" I asked. "Because I'm not in love with Osiris or anything. Not only would that be really weird, he kinda gets on my nerves a lot of the time."

"It is not a romantic attachment," O said. If he had eyes, he would have rolled them at me. "It is my belief that the Traveler understood that normal people would not be enough to protect humanity. That it would take those who are extraordinary in both body and spirit. And that only by the merging of Ghost and Guardian into a single unit could this be accomplished."

"I don't know where Ikora keeps you," I told him, "but Osiris and I are not 'a single unit.' You've heard us argue. A lot."

"And why do you challenge him?" O asked.

"Because no one else will. He's the great and powerful Osiris: hero, scholar, savior, yadda yadda. And no one, I mean no one, not even Ikora, really challenges him. They do what he wants, even if it's a terrible idea. Not me.

"Everyone needs someone to tell them to get over themselves once in a while. Especially Osiris."

"Would you say that is a strength that complements a weakness?"

I didn't answer. I hate it when someone else is right. Good thing it doesn't happen often.

"All right then, smarty Ghost," I finally said. "What about you and Ikora? You're both rigid and stuffy, read too much..."

"I am a calming influence. I encourage her to think before she acts and not to let her emotions get the best of her."

I couldn't help it. I cracked up. It actually took me a minute to get under control. "Ikora?" I said, laughing so hard I could barely talk. "Have you met Ikora? All she does is think!"

"You don't know her at all," Ophiuchus told me.

## No Rez for the Weary

My Guardian is immortal. My Guardian is forever lost to me. He boarded the derelict Almighty with his fireteam, hoping to salvage Cabal secrets from the star murderer.

I should have seen the trap. Was it Cabal? Was it some Vex infection from Mercury? I don't know. It's all my fault. I remember how the moment of activation felt like falling. He lunged for the center, crying out to his friends, "I'll disarm it!"

He is still lunging. Fly to the Almighty and you will find him there, caught in the amber of slow time, reaching forever. I have observed his motions carefully. He will arrive at the mechanism and deactivate the trap in only a little more than fifty thousand years.

I cannot resurrect him. I have tried so hard. The City's Warlocks and thanatonauts answered all my desperate questions, even when I began to ask if he could be destroyed. At least if he were gone, unmade, then I could make him again...



Why can't I bring him back? If a Guardian falls into Titan's methane sea, they do not die instantly, but we can still bring them back on the arcology. If a Guardian hurls themselves off their ship into space, do we need to wait for them to disintegrate in the solar wind before we bring them back? No. No. It was never hard before! I see him right there, and he seems so close! All I was ever meant to be was his Ghost!

But all Ghosts know there are places where we cannot bring our Guardians back to life. And this is one of them. Why? Is the Darkness gathered against us here? Is the Light too weak?

I think I know why. Some share my theory. What do we do when we bring our Guardians back? What is the magical heart of the process? Are we like the City's probability kilns, twisting the quantum vacuum in our favor to yield matter?

Perhaps. Perhaps. But certain members of a cult I shall not directly name have their own specific interpretation of this process. "When you bring him back," they told me, "you must have a template... an image to provide you with the information you need. Where do you find that template?

"Simply in a neighboring timeline. A place where he is still alive and intact. And wherever there is great danger, wherever the probability of death is too high, then those timelines become scarce and hard to reach. And so you find the zones where Guardians cannot easily be remade."

If this is true, then I am doomed and free. There will be no alternate worlds in which my Guardian escapes that trap. There will be no hope of resurrection.

I will be a Ghost alone.

But the thought haunts me that I might be wrong, and that he is still waiting for me...

## Confession of Hope | Part One

The choice haunts me.

It was not reasoned. I let emotion get the better of me. The Fallen had moved on. The few survivors were huddled close in the dark of a cave, muffling their heavy, quick breaths, stifling their sobbing.

When I found them, many nights before, I also found renewed purpose. I had traveled these dead and dying worlds for longer than I cared to remember, all the while in search of a spark worthy of ignition.

Over time I'd grown weary, but in this small band of survivors, I found hope. If I couldn't find a lost soul worthy to be touched by the Light, then I would find another way, a smaller way, to be of service. I would lead this small gathering of desperate men, women, and a single child to the growing sanctuary beneath the Traveler.

If I could not find a hero to challenge the Darkness, I would be a guide to those in need of salvation.

It took some time to gain their trust. I was odd—other. They thought I was an angel. I told them I was not. They named me Tiānshǐ. I did not object.



The child marveled at me. Still too young to speak, much less comprehend, he had a presence that was a burden and a boon. His parents did all they could to nurture him, protect him with the aid, comfort, and care of their traveling companions—once strangers, now bound deeper than blood by their shared experience in this new life after the end of the world.

On that day, in that cave, huddled in fear as the Fallen Skiff's roar faded over the tree line, the mother wailed—a sound I had never before heard and hope never to hear again.

Such pain. Such sorrow.

Grief. Suffering. Loss.

Her cry echoed through the forest. Her husband, weeping and on the edge of breaking down, simply held her.

And the dead child in her arms.

The others tried to calm them, out of fear that the Fallen would return. The attack had been swift and brutal. Twenty dead. Only nine survivors, here, in this cave. I watched the tree line, anxious and afraid.

The mother's pain filled the space between the thick trees. I turned back to her and saw it for the first time: the child's spark.

Faint. But there.

This little boy was not my charge. Those selected to return were champions. This child was so small, so frail. What devotion had he shown? What bravery? What had he sacrificed? But a thought lingered...

Was it not my purest purpose to deliver hope? Every hero raised fought not for themselves but for the whole of humanity. If saving one life—if redressing this one terrible loss—was not a worthy cause... what was?

I watched the mother as she cried.

I felt myself expand. Felt the Light that was me intensify. In a way, it was outside of my control, as if something had reached inside of me and flipped a switch. A beam erupted from my core and bathed with Light the child's small, broken body.

A second passed—

And he began to cry. All fell silent. The Traveler's gift had been given. A child, returned. And with him, the beginning of my journey's end.

Did I do the right thing? Would the child grow to reach his peak physical self? Would he, like all returned, be ready for the wars to come?

But then a thought came over me, one I had never before considered: maybe death would have been better.

Had I saved the child, or doomed him?

As his cries echoed, the survivors looked on in shock. There was joy in their silence—wonder.

I looked down on him, and pride began to well inside of me. I had done what was right.

But that was then—only months ago, but long enough to seem a lifetime.

Now the Fallen are back, and we are running. And I fear the promise of a gift given is far from enough to save us from a pirate's blade.

—Fragment of the last transmission from an unknown Ghost

## The Watchful Eye

I've made my peace. If my other is not out here somewhere—if my Guardian can't be found—then I will find ways to be of value to the greater good.

It's been cycles since I told myself to be useful in any way possible, but it is a mantra I repeat, a constant reminder: "If I have no other, MY actions must be enough. If I have no other, I will become the hero I cannot find."

It sounded noble at the time. Turns out nobility is the kind of thing that places the well-intended in harm's way and, apparently, I'm fine with that. Maybe we all are. Maybe that's what makes us heroic—accepting risk as a consequence of doing what's right.

I've been tracking Fallen crew movements along the edge of the EDZ for some time, careful not to venture too deep into their territory. After all, I'm only one Ghost. Without a Guardian, I'm no use in a fight. But I can watch and learn and report. I can find my own ways to combat the enemies of the Light.

All Ghosts keep an eye out—we chronicle and share the highlights of our travels. It helps us and our charges navigate the frontier, though the vast majority of these wild lands remain unexplored.

The only difference between the Ghost I am today and the Ghost I used to be is my focus. Whereas I used to be driven solely by the need to find and sync with a Guardian, I am now fully dedicated to spy craft—the art and execution of information gathering.

And I am not alone.

There is an entire network of Ghosts like me. Should we find our others, we shall rejoice and shift our mission to serve as the right hands of the true warriors of the Light. Until then, we move swift and quiet through the vast wilds of the frontier, scouting our enemies' movements and cataloging their every action so that the Vanguard, and others, may better assess and confront the dangers beyond the Last Safe City.

We are small. We are few. But we are brave and we are heroes.

—Link, an unconnected Ghost, part of the Vanguard's covert spectral network

## Into the Fray

She wasn't ready, but I had no choice.

The Cabal mining rig was set to scorch the earth and then churn the soil to get at whatever they were after underneath.

Problem was... my Guardian—the one I'd spent a very long time looking for—was lying dormant in their path: a lifeless husk in need of a wake-up call before her remains were atomized and I was left, for eternity, without my chosen.

That I'd found her seconds before the Red Legion's survey team arrived was... unfortunate. But I had to do what I had to do. Some risks, after all, are worth taking. It was now or never. And besides, there's no timing like bad timing.

I opened myself up to the Traveler's gift and enveloped her in Light just as the mining rig settled.

My new Guardian gasped and sat up, crying out as if waking from a nightmare.

Not good.

The Cabal security team was on us quick. Their slug shots rang out.

Before she could take a second breath, my Guardian was dead... again.

I spun and hit her with another scan as the rig warmed its burners.

The Cabal released their War Beasts on us.

My Guardian was up as the ground heated and the War Beasts charged. She was confused, as was to be expected.

"Run! Now!" I tried to warn her, incite her to move. But she just looked around—dazed, confused.

Then she saw the Beasts. Instinct, as it turns out, is a compelling motivator. She was up in a flash, sprinting away from the rig's burners and away from the gnashing teeth that were quick on her heels. As soon as she cleared the rig, the Cabal opened fire. And here's where risk became reward...

My Guardian didn't flinch. Didn't cower. Instead, she got angry. And aggressive.

This long-dead woman was back among the living for only a moment, and already she was one with war. I wonder, perhaps, if that's what makes humanity the perfect weapon—if that's what makes it a force worthy of concern. Not my place to say. Though what came next gave me pause and more than a hint of pride.

My Guardian charged the nearest Cabal—a creature of war she had never seen, a hulking brute in thick-plated armor.

She docked and dodged, left to right and back again to avoid slug fire. A War Beast lunged, clamping its jaw on my Guardian's forearm. She yelled.

The Cabal laughed. The other War Beasts closed in.

Then...

My Guardian—this woman only just reborn in the Light—grabbed the Beast clamping down on her arm by the hind legs, Lifted, and brought her entire weight down on the creature's spine, knee first.

The sound—cracked bone and a sudden, sharp yelp—caused the other Beasts to halt and the Cabal to quell their laughter.

She resumed her charge. No hesitation. The Beast's limp body was still locked on her arm. She pulled it free—I could hear the flesh tear, but she did not flinch. Instead she closed the distance, rushing the Cabal, the Beast held tight in her good arm's grip.

The Cabal raised his weapon, but too late. The other Beasts charged as my Guardian pummeled the Legionary with the corpse of his pet. It was brutal, swift.

I issued a warning as the War Beasts lunged, but it didn't matter—she already had the Cabal's slug thrower in hand. What followed... I am reluctant to recount in full.

She was new then—awakened into a world of sudden, fierce violence.

All I will say is that I am here, and my Guardian is near, and somewhere deep within the EDZ there is ground still darkened with the stain of Cabal blood.

—Tam, a Ghost recounting his Guardian's resurrection

## Struck by Wonder

I look upon them, and I am struck by wonder.

All they do. All they endure.

Not a single one asked for this life—this second chance. And when they woke—when the Light hit their eyes in that first instance upon their return—they were welcomed into a broken world.

Yet...

They stand. Time and again. Against odds insurmountable. In defiance of all who would see their end.

Such determination. Such pride. Such fire. Love. Joy. Hope. Fear. Lust. Such powerful will. Strong enough to carve the promise of new tomorrows across the barren landscapes of yesterday.

It inspires. From the smallest victory, to grandest of conquests, I've seen it all...

The raising of the first walls. The bravery of Six Fronts. The desperation at Twilight Gap. The war with the Devils. The taming of the Wolves.

I've seen Iron Lords rise and fall, witnessed the last cycles of dark ages, and cheered as new triumphs gifted all with the promise of renewed hope—our return to the Moon and Mars, the pruning of the Garden, and the defeat of Hive royalty.

Even Ghaul and his armies... So many threats, so many challenges, yet our Guardians stand—humankind persists.

They are touched by the Light, but no longer do I see it as a gift. Instead, it is their courage, their strength, their humanity that has been, in truth, the greatest gift—their greatest weapon.

This thought brings me joy and a bit of peace amid so much chaos, and I find myself asking, often and with great anticipation:

Where to next?

—Observations of a Ghost named Kaiser on Guardian inspiration

## Confessions of Hope | Part II

Out here in the wilds, survival depends heavily on your ability to elude Fallen patrols. Everything else, every other danger, is secondary. Exposure. Starvation. Hungry beasts. Crazy bandits. All can be assessed and managed. But Fallen—these vicious pirates—they hunt and kill not only for their own survival... but for sport. They relish the slaughter.

I was guiding our ragtag group through dense woods, but with a child to carry and many survivors wounded, we didn't move quickly enough. We'd been spotted a few miles back. The attack was swift, violent. The child's mother fell almost immediately. His father foolishly—though maybe it's best to imagine he was brave—let his grief and fear get the better of him. He ran to her aid, but there was none to give. Now he is gone as well. Two parents dead. One orphaned child gifted in ways he can't yet understand.

Others grabbed the infant and fled. He cried—confused, frightened. They muzzled his fear and made for the thick of the forest. I followed. The child was mine to protect—if I could. I had no choice but to stay with him.

And yet, here I am...

This hasty dictation is meant to give some insight, if needed, into my choice—into my moment of weakness that led to a child reborn. I'm recounting as I flee, so mind the clipped nature, this truncated plea for understanding and a brief history of what happened here.

I will send this message on signal to any Ghost who may hear. The Fallen are on me. I have run from the pack to lead them away. Should I survive, I will return to the child. Should I fall, he will be left to others to raise—and will ever have only the one, second, life to give.

I left him in the care of a terrified man and woman. But they are smart and caring; they have courage but know when to run, when to survive. They will stay hidden until the Fallen are away, my Light serving as a distraction to lure them as far from these Humans as I can.

I made my presence known to the pirates and darted from the last of the survivors—made myself a target to buy them time. But that time is short.

The Fallen are close now. And closing. I can hear the bark of their war cries. I can feel the spark of their blades. They've long since learned that to kill one like me is a future problem solved.

I am not sorry for the choice I made. The child gave hope, though fleeting. What comes next for him is unknown. But there is promise in him, should he find sanctuary. Should he find guidance.

This is not a confession. This is my hope. This is my—

—Fragment of the last transmission from an unknown Ghost

## A Hero's Requiem

You're all special. He was no different. At first. Just as special, same as the rest.

All that's changed, obviously. Over time he... distanced himself—stood out.

It took some time for her to adjust to his personality. From what she's shared, it took him time as well. The Cayde-6 known to all is not the man he was in total. His wit and his playfulness were a shield—a weapon as trained as his blade or his hand cannons.

He called her Sundance. I was never sure why. She said it was from an old legend—a fable from the time before the time before. I always thought it was because of her spark, the grace with which she moved—so effortless, so sly. They were a perfect match.

There's no doubt he recounted his return to those closest to him on more than one occasion; and there's no doubt as well that the events shifted a bit with each telling. Like his wit, the building of his legend was a weapon.

For those who don't know... For those who were not lucky enough to hear the tale of Cayde-6's first from his own mouth—with that charm and the way he'd act out his favorite parts, complete with sound effects—here is one telling...

It's a recording from cycles past. It's not the whole story, but where Cayde-6 was involved, nothing ever was...

"BOOM! I wake up. Groggy. Confused. Hungover. It's the same for us all, so that initial shock's nothing new. Sundance is in my face, and I'm freaking out. My brain works, but I don't remember a thing 'cept that I seem to be a functioning life form—I'm human, I'm a man. And then my mind starts reeling a thousand miles a minute. BOOM-BOOM-BOOM. Like I'm downloading the 'Idiot's Guide to Basic Human Existence.' Cool. Great. Still can't remember anything. And I sure can't wrap my head around the talking, floating magic robot orb-thing jabbering in my face. I'm freaked. So, I freaked. Smacked her to the ground. Hard... And I ran.

"I'm runnin'. She's runnin'... Or, ya know, whatever she's doin' since she doesn't have any legs... She's right behind me, going, 'Wrong way! Wrong way!' She's screaming. I'm screaming. Whatever she's yelling, I just keep running. It's night. Did I mention that? It's nighttime and my eyes are still adjusting. So, I'm runnin', I'm runnin'. Can't see. Can't remember. Scared to death. Confused as all get-out. And then—

"I fall. I'm straight up falling. Just like that, I ran... Right. Off. A. Cliff. It wasn't a short drop. I bounced... so many times. Felt each and every one. Till I didn't. Till it all went black again. And then...

"BOOM! I'm back! She got me right up on my feet. Just like she always does. And that, my dudes, was the start of a beautiful friendship."

Most haven't heard that story, and in listening, you hopefully weren't looking for any definitive truth of who he was as a man or a Guardian. That's not what the story's for. Its purpose, now more than ever, fits nicely into the armor Cayde wore best...

He thought it was funny. And now, more than ever...

Cayde would want us to laugh.

—Shiro-4's Ghost, at a gathering in Cayde-6's honor

# From Fallen Ground

I am quiet, I am not here, the Fallen cannot see me, they cannot know me. I am not a shadow, but I move among them, silent, deliberate of motion, and intent as when I entered their hollow one month prior. I used the light of day to mask my own, because the forest here is barren, it's, it's, it's a dead place, to and fro, a constant buzz as the scavengers go about the business of stripping this world of its old glories. And I watch, I learn, I record and preserve; their every movement is my obsession. I hang on their every word, even though I am not versed in their nightmare tongue, but others are and they will decipher it; they will find the secrets hidden within. Secrets are like weapons, and I am an instrument of their unmaking. They are enemy, they are cruel, and I will learn and share, and they will be undone.

What is that shouting? I am deep now, no telling how far in. I have tracked each meter. Mapped every path. But this maze is ever-winding and their cheers now echo, violent with joy, and I hesitate to investigate as I am entering unknown corridors thick with security... Yes, yes, this is a special place, a holy place, a mechanized place, and the shouts merge with screams and the grinding of gears, and the joy joins with pain. There is suffering here, punishment—a, a... a ritual? I must know so we may know, and I move slow, careful... must... not... be seen... cannot be detected... Meter by meter, anywhere where cover is provided. Quick and with purpose whenever exposed. I make my way, leaving other avenues unexplored; the cheers must be understood. But eventually they die. Replaced by the harmony of the pirates' busy days and nights, oh my how they never rest—or rather... when they rest, others continue the work, prepping scavenger sorties, sifting through spoils, readying their fleet, their weapons, their worship. The manner in which they revere machines, I should feel safe here, I should be among their gods... Am I machine? I don't know, I don't know anything. Their worship is not so simple. With the cacophony of excitement no longer echoing, I slow my pace but remain vigilant in my efforts to locate its origin.

It is weeks before I do, weeks before now. A ceremony has just ended and I am sending out a recollection of what I have seen, because I am seen—these are my final moments, of this I am sure. The ceremony is combat, ritual, and fury, it is a pit and arena where the lesser and unworthy must prove their value or suffer and die. Oh how they fight dirty, oh how they fight to survive—or to thrive. In this pit, before the eyes of an Archon, shamed Elikśni may redeem themselves, lesser pirates may improve their station: a Dreg to a Vandal, a Vandal to a Captain, a Captain to... This is their forge, their place of judgment, their trial before their betters. This is what we are up against; kill or die, thrive or perish, they have no use for the weak and they watch and cheer and scream as their Archon looks on. But I have become careless. The fervor became a distraction and now the Archon's eyes have found me and I am too deep to run and I think he is smiling...

—The last frantic transmissions of Wren, a brave Ghost of the spectral network

## Ghost Community Theater Presents

The Ghost Community Theater presents:

**ORYX THE NIGHTMARE DADDY:**

One Brave Ghost Versus the Death from Outer Space



## A four-and-a-half-act play

Written and directed by Didi, Ghost of Marcus Ren

### STARRING:

Marcus Ren.....Hero's Ghost  
 Didi the Ghost.....Guardian Hero  
 Enoch Bast.....Oryx  
 Pixie, Ghost of Ariadne Gris.....Ir Halak  
 Sweeperbot.....Ir Anûk  
 Ghost, Ghost of Enoch Bast....Ghostly Shade of Crota

See the play that Commander Zavala calls, "An insensitive and disrespectful travesty of a production, with truly abominable prop design—an insult to the art of papier-mâché."

The eponymous Ghost himself calls it: "Is this supposed to be me? Oh... oh no..."

Ghost, the Ghost of Tyra Karn, calls it: "A four-and-a-half-act structure? But that makes no... Stories do have rules, you know! You can't... What constitutes 'half' an... You know what? I don't need to entertain this nonsense."

Ophiuchus, the Ghost of Ikora Rey, calls it: [judgmental silence].

Lord Shaxx calls it: "Undeniably enthusiastic, I'll grant you that. But is the dialogue meant to come across so... sexually charged?"

Ghost, the Ghost of Tyra Karn, calls it: "I've been thinking about it, and I really do think it would be worthwhile for you to learn the basics of narrative composition. Sit down, we're doing this now."

## Difference of Opinion

Peregrine Institute of Higher Learning Presents:

"Ghost Stories: Interviews with Two Ghosts of the Traveler"

A guest lecture by two Guardian-less Ghosts about life, Light, and the search for their Guardians  
 Featuring: Balthazar (unpartnered) and Peach (unpartnered)

Transcript of the Q&A session is as follows:

Q: What is the Traveler, in your understanding?

BALTHAZAR: Great question.

PEACH: Terrible question.

BALTHAZAR: In a sense, it's the ONLY question. The Traveler is our primary, our mother, the primordial and the pinnacle. A dear friend, the Ghost of Pujari, once compared the Traveler to a song that has never been sung—

PEACH: Look, the answer no one likes to give is that no one knows what the Traveler is or anything about it. Not even us.

BALTHAZAR: We know she wished for us to raise Guardians to be her avatars and defenders—

PEACH: Do we, though? Just because we CAN do that doesn't mean we were MADE to do that.

And who says it's a "she" anyway? Why does "it" need a gender?

BALTHAZAR: The Traveler, in her omniscient wisdom, looked into the past and the future, and

from all the generations that emerged from the cradle of Earth, she chose the best of them to be her champions. Each Ghost was lovingly and carefully created for their one true Guardian. The Ghost and Guardian complete each other.

PEACH: If that's true, then the Traveler's kind of a jerk.

BALTHAZAR: Excuse me?

PEACH: Look, I know tons of Ghosts who died before they ever found their Guardians. I know some Ghosts who still haven't found a Guardian. You haven't. And I haven't, but I don't think I'm "incomplete" because of it.

BALTHAZAR: I have the humility to recognize my own shortcomings and to submit myself to the Traveler's plan.

Q: Do you remember being inside the Traveler?

PEACH: No.

BALTHAZAR: I do. We call it the Womb.

PEACH: I have never and will never call it that.

BALTHAZAR: Imagine a cosmos inside a bottle. Trillions of stars orbiting each other in a complex weave. But they aren't stars. Perhaps a better word would be... souls. Souls, dancing in an infinite space enclosed within a celestial egg.

PEACH: Which is it, an egg or a womb?

BALTHAZAR: It's called a metaphor.

PEACH: Well then, pick a metaphor. Not twelve.

BALTHAZAR: Well, what would you call it?

PEACH: I wouldn't call it anything, because I don't remember it, and I don't think you do either.

Q: Some people say that each Ghost is an aspect of the Traveler—that is to say, that each Ghost represents a part of the divine Whole.

PEACH: [loud laughter]

BALTHAZAR: Would you please? This is unbecoming.

PEACH: First of all, that wasn't a question. Second of all... [more laughter] Third of all: if I'm a part of the Traveler's brain or soul or whatever, then the Traveler sure isn't divine, I'll tell you that much.

Q: What will you do if you never find a Guardian?

BALTHAZAR: I shall find a Guardian. The Traveler has willed it so.

PEACH: Did you get that in writing?

BALTHAZAR: It is true that some Ghosts die before finding their partners. If that happens to me, then I suppose I will "do" nothing, since I will no longer be. But I have faith.

PEACH: If I never find my Guardian, I'll go steal someone else's. I hear Sagira had a good time with that.

Q: If you could eat, what would you eat first?

PEACH: Finally, a good question!

BALTHAZAR: We do not know the desire for food. Our semicorporeal form—

PEACH: Nectarines. Or hot sauce. Ooh, or crickets. Crunchy roasted crickets. Crunchy food sounds so fun. I wish I could get cricket carapace stuck between my teeth. Here's a question for YOU: what's it like to have teeth?

BALTHAZAR: Is this over yet?

## Protector of Ghosts

From: Micah-10

To: Tallulah Fairwind

Category: 5-sat bounce

Priority: 3

Hello, old friend:

I have a knack for finding Hunters. Another of my little pack has found her partner, a Human male, and now the two of them are coming to you by watercraft over the Pacific. Keep an eye on this one, Tallu. He has taken the name Andal Brask, and I believe he will be trouble.

Perhaps all this travel has made me sentimental, for when one of my Ghost wards finds their Guardian, I am sad, because my pack grows smaller. I miss them when they are gone. Now I am down to one Ghost other than my own. Pup, we call him. The runt of my metallic litter. Pup has yet to speak, but always his little blue eye searches for his Guardian.

I plan to resupply at the Cosmodrome and then take Pup north. Those steppes are uncharted territory, except by that lone wolf, Conar. My correspondence with him is regular in the outbound direction; I consider myself lucky when he answers every fifth message. Still, you and I both know his intel is good. No one else knows Old Russia like he does.

Perhaps in the Cosmodrome I will find a ship capable of breaking atmosphere. Though there is much of this Earth I have yet to see, I have come across more than a few Ghosts who believe their Guardians are offworld, waiting in the Golden Age ruins of Freehold and Ishtar and beyond. Some of these little Lights have decided to brave the null on their own to reach their fated partners. I tell them there's still so much of Earth we've yet to sniff out, that perhaps their Guardians have not yet been born, but some of them are convinced. If my next Ghost pack wants to make the journey, I am determined to join them.

These last few months we've enjoyed the pleasant absence of Cyrell. Now I feel more confident that we lost him in Australis. If he tries to hurt my Ghosts, I will rip his throat out.

I hope you're not feeling too cooped up. You're still doing good work, Tallu. And as they say, better you than me.

Your Faithful Den-Mother-of-Ghosts,  
Micah-10

## Savin

I am searching. I am close; I can feel that I am close.

What will my Risen be like? Will she be honorable? Will she be a brute?

I should be able to tell, shouldn't I? I don't know. I don't know that it matters. I have been searching since the day that I was born. I will take anyone.

I crest a dune. The Gobi is endless in the evening light. And then I see it: a burnt-out building, the only man-made structure for miles. I do not know whether to fly faster or keep a stately pace. It doesn't matter. The dead cannot see.

I am nervous. Why am I nervous?

As I draw closer, I rehearse what I might say. First introductions are important. "You are a child of the Traveler's Light," I say to myself. "You have been chosen in defense of this solar system... No. No. Hm. You... We are both children of the Traveler. You and I are both children of..."

I forget my words as I slip into the building. I find meteorological equipment. I find an empty office. I find a dingy breakroom. At the back of the breakroom, I see my other half: a Fallen Vandal crushed beneath a toppled refrigerator.

I am devastated. I have seen the Fallen. They are butchers. Castaway murderers. I would take anyone, but not this. Not this thing.

I turn away. I count seventeen slow laps around the room and then another four around the building. I should be decisive, shouldn't I? I should be filled with pride that I have fulfilled my first purpose. I am not. It doesn't matter. I cannot ignore the pull.

I return to the breakroom. I do not know what I will say, but—Fallen or no—it is the Traveler's will that I do this. I reach toward the Light, then reach toward that pull to join them together.

The refrigerator trembles as the Light suffuses him. I hear a low groan. "Push it away," I whisper. If my Risen dies beneath this refrigerator and I fly away into the sun, no one will know. Perhaps I will have done the Earth a great service. "I'm here with you, but you must help yourself. Push it away and sit up."

The refrigerator shifts, then topples to the side. An Awoken man sits up and pushes the dead Vandal off his chest like an unwelcome blanket on a hot summer night. With effort, he wiggles free and stands straight.

"Who are you?" he asks. He looks around, then down at his blue hands. "What am I?"

"I am your Ghost," I say with more than a hint of obvious relief. "You are one of the Traveler's Chosen, a defender of humanity. What is your name?"

He flexes his fingers, works his jaw, blows a raspberry. Then he looks at me. "Savin. Yes, I think I call myself Savin." He nods, satisfied. "Let's go, Yourghost."

## Pulled Pork

Nkechi-32 lies on the hull of her ship, skimming through gossip and salvage requisition lists on VanNet. Agu nestles in the magnificent feather ruff of her chest plate and looks out at the debris of the Reef.

"'Revised Crucible rules are garbage,' blah blah blah. How does this have like three hundred comments?" she says, flicking to the next page. "Where's the juicy stuff?"

"Hey, it's Pulled Pork," Agu says, peeking up over one of Nkechi's tremendous pauldrons.

She sits up right away, eyes lighting with interest. "Really? Where?"

Pulled Pork is the name they've given to a very sweet, very earnest Ghost that has been looking for his Guardian for about as long as they can remember. Pulled Pork is not his real name, but it feels right, like calling Mara Sov by her full name instead of just her forename.

Agu directs Nkechi's attention out into the floating scrap. Sure enough, there he is: a tiny speck moving with meticulous patience across the surface of a blasted-out Fallen Skiff. "Let's go say hi," Nkechi decides, disabling her VanNet HUD. She climbs to her feet and begins a lazy zero-gravity parkour run, leaping and drifting from one hunk of scrap to another.

"Hey, buddy!" she calls when they get close. "Whatcha doing?"

Pulled Pork finishes up a scan of a floating piece of concrete and rebar, then turns toward them.

"I am looking for my Guardian!" he chirps.

"That's nice. You gonna find him in that rock?"

"You never know, Miss Nkechi Thirty-Two. Maybe my Guardian is very small."

"Maybe," Nkechi agrees. "But you might want to consider scanning the dead, bud. That shell's pretty snappy. Is it new?" It's Reef-purple, with a flowerlike silhouette and silver detailing.

"Yes! It is. It was a gift. And, thank you for your suggestion. I have considered it! I do often scan the dead. I also scan other things. I like to be thorough." Pulled Pork bobs in place politely, almost bowing. "Please excuse me one moment!" He turns to scan a piece of warped plasteel.

They watch. Nkechi shakes her head.

"Oh, leave him alone," Agu whispers in her ear. "If he goes through every bit of scrap in the Reef, he'll find someone eventually. Sky knows there are plenty of bodies (and body parts) floating around here..."

"Yeah, we said that when we found him on Mars, and that was before Twilight Gap," Nkechi replies.

"Well. With that in mind, let's check back on him in a couple months. Who knows? Maybe he'll get lucky and find the greatest Guardian of all time."

"Shoot. YOU found the greatest Guardian of all time."

## Who Guards the Guardians?

All around me, the pitter-patter of desperate steps.

The thump-thump of armor-piercing microrockets. The cries and screams that fill the air.

I feel... nothing. I am filled with... nothing. Just frozen. Empty. Soulless. Lightless.

The Red Legion has come and taken it all away.

Eventually the desperate steps diminish. For a few minutes, the Last City falls silent. Then... The low growl of their breathing. The clanking metal of heavy slug throwers against their crimson armor. The tremors of their heavy booted steps as they draw near.

Thud. Thud. Thud.

Mortals ask themselves the same question all the time—that question about meaning. About their place in this universe.

But WE don't. Perhaps at first, as we tried to make sense of the day the Traveler pushed us free from itself, but no, not anymore. We know our purpose. Why we're here.

In ancient times, humanity dreamed of gods and heavens and winged protectors that watched over them, kept them safe from uncontrollable and unpredictable harm. In this age, I believe humanity sees that in the Guardians. Yet, when the Guardians meet with trouble... who guards the Guardians?

Thud. Thud. Thud.

They're close now. If they think I'm not going to stay by my Guardian's side to my own bitter end, even though she's already met hers, they're deathly mistaken.

I AM meant to do this. My Light WILL return. She NEEDS me.

Thud. Thud. Thud.

Those heavy, red-booted steps come around the corner. (I will not move.) We're face to face. (I will not abandon her.) They raise their weapons. (I will not let my purpose go unfulfilled.)

A rush of light... Can it be?! Yes... The Light! Haha! I can bring her back! I can bring—

BANG!

## Whether Windmills or Cranes

We set out "to challenge the unknown," he'd say. His quest was to become legend—to slay beasts and conqueror terrible lands. His quest was honorable... though, in the end, misguided. No, not in the end. Much sooner.

The flaw in his ambition became evident shortly after we crossed the western mire. At first I took his flights of fancy as playful enthusiasm—frivolous aggression free of consequence, a means of honing his focus and skill in advance of the dangers to come. But quickly, oh, so quickly, I found his mind was not in tune with reality. He was driven—pulled?—by his imagination.

Where any other would see the crippled ruins of an old-world crane—the snapped length of its long arm creaking in the breeze—he would see a demon, and in the cutting shrill of the swaying metal's cry he would hear a monster's ravenous shriek.

He had long talked of the adventures of his life past. "I am an anomaly," he would decree, "The lone Guardian whose past rings true, whose history is his guide."

He spoke about that dead life with such passion, in such detail, I not only wanted to believe... I did.

But as he charged the crane's age-poked carcass, I knew a truth that had haunted me since the carving of the Wicked Wood, some months gone: he was broken. His mind—unsettled. His truths—unfettered by fact, unbound by reality.

He had named the Wood, as he had the Howling Hills, the Dead Man's Crevasse, the Gorgon's Maze. All mundane landscapes marked as hazards to be conquered, enemies to be slain, as he weaved a mythic tale of his own grand—and as I would find, delusional—design.

In the Hills, he slaughtered wolves; he called them Hounds of Hell. In the Crevasse, he burned the remains of long-dead "survivors"; he called them Foot Soldiers of the Necro-King. Down in the Maze, he covered his tracks so that the Stone Mother would not—could not—follow.

He did all those things and none, because none of those things were true outside of his fraying mind. The wolves were simply rabid. The bones, no threat beyond a reminder of all we'd lost. The Maze? Just a canyon—one way in, one way out, a straight shot through.

As the crane fell and my Guardian issued his "killing blow," he laughed and then turned to me. His eyes... I could see he was gone—the one I'd returned all those cycles past replaced by a hollow shell filled with madness.

I do not know what broke him, or if he had ever been whole to begin with, but in that moment, as he spoke—the conquered husk of the Dragon of Summers' End, which wasn't really a dragon but simply a fragile old crane, lying defeated in his wake—I knew I would have to let him go... to end his slide into uncontrolled folly.

"Panza, old man," he started. "The Dragon is gone, but he yielded his treasure to me in a whisper... A secret so dire it may just save us all." He leaned closer and said in a hushed voice, as if sharing a confidence, "The Traveler is no gift—it is a lie... A beacon for death and destruction. Within be dragons, nurtured by our suffering, weaned on our hope. All dragons must die. The shell must be cracked till its yolk drowns those who worship its deceit. Our last great conquest. The crowning battle of our legend writ large." And then he shouted, "For Light to endure, the Traveler must perish!"

He was smiling. Confident. Manic.

Two days later he took a fall while challenging the Mountain Troll of Gallows Rock. It was a boulder. There was no troll. It crushed him. And though it caused me great pain—still to this day—

I did not return him. How could I?

His diseased imagination would surely doom us all.

—Panza, lamenting the unfortunate necessity of leaving his Guardian to remain unreturned

## Batteries Not Included

What follows are simple things. Use each as needed. Use each as you will.

These are not your strength, but may they bolster your might when the weight of expectation falls down upon thee.

When the wars rage around you, find your peace.

The Light is not of you, and you are not of the Light, and yet you are one.

Give of yourself, and you will find all that you fear is missing.

You are a hammer. You are a shield. Know the difference. Know yourself.

Trust is a weapon. Handle with care.



The burden is not yours alone, no matter the burden.  
Should Darkness call, answer true, and it will shrink from the Light.  
Wear your confidence with pride, but know it is a tool, not a weapon.  
Be mindful of the joy found in victory—it is earned but should never be the aim.  
For all you will see, all you discover—never lose the gift of curiosity.  
The Darkness would bend you to its will, but the Light bends to yours.  
Failure is an opportunity to learn.  
If the bones talk, do not listen.  
I am your guide and your friend, your ally and your tool. Use me.  
I will never leave you, but should I fall, remain vigilant, remain true.

This isn't the whole of my life advice, but it's something. We'll add more as we go along.

—An unknown Ghost's life advice for an unknown Guardian

## To Map the Unknown

His neck snaps. He's dead on impact. I get him up and ask him how he feels. He says, "Fine." I ask him how it felt. He says, "Can't remember." I ask him if he learned anything. He says, "Nope. Let's go again." Same drop. Same distance. For the fifth time today, from this drop. This go, his trajectory is less headfirst, more parallel—on purpose, I think—varying the instance for a broader range within the experiment.

He hits almost flat. The sound is squishy—wet. Death is instant. I get him up, ask the same questions; get the same answers.

We've tried it all.

The sudden deaths—live fire, through every type of round and range imaginable. The gradual—  
asphyxiation from force, liquid, vacuum. The biological—super bugs, hazardous materials, radiation.

We've varied the duration of dying from immediate to over the course of years—multiple years.  
Time squandered on a quest for discovery that could have been better spent anywhere else.

I wasn't always skeptical, but there's an old saying about "learning from your mistakes" or "when to quit," or something like that. I don't know. But I do know futility when I see it.

We've tried it all. Nothing was learned. Others say differently. Others claim to have journeyed on the other side of death. "Where's your proof?" I say. "Death isn't the answer when life is right here, staring you in the face."

I say a lot of things. But here we are. My Guardian is soup at the base of a cliff two times the height of the Tower, and when I get him up, he is going to say some variation of, "I'm fine. Don't know. Let's do it again."

And we will. Because mapping the unknown means the answers you don't have could be the answers hiding on the other side of "one more try."

—A Ghost questioning the repetition of his Guardian's thanatonautic technique

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