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Did you know?

- ...that the Ahamkara are shapeshifters?
- ...that Oryx is responsible for the Taken invasion of the Dreaming City, and the taking of Riven?
- ...that the Sword Heavy Weapon class was first introduced in *The Taken King*?
- ...that while Fallen Dregs can be seen piloting Pikes, no Cabal was ever seen piloting an Interceptor in *Destiny* until *Destiny 2*?
- ...that the Hunter Ana Bray was thought to be dead until she reappeared on Mars to investigate her past?

Lore Discussion View source History

Lore:The Man They Call Cayde

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.

**The Man They Call Cayde** is a Lore book in *Forsaken* that contains pages from Cayde-6's journal. Entries are unlocked by opening "Cayde's stash" chests during the Ace of Spades exotic quest. The journal entries contain Cayde's various thoughts and reflections, ranging from topics such as his past, to the Vanguard and the City.

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## Deal

All joking aside—maybe I've made mistakes. Maybe some more recently than others.

Hard to believe, I know, but maybe it's true. Maybe.

Here's the thing about mistakes: you learn from them. Again, this is assuming the theoretical concept of me having made some mistakes is true. So, yeah, maybe that's what I'm doing. Trying to learn from these very hypothetical slipups. Turning inward, they call it. "They" being Ikora. Eris calls it something different. Eris calls a lotta things something different.

I miss that girl.

But here I am stalling—buying time.

This ain't easy for me.

Thought it would be. Easy, I mean. Or, at least... easier than this. Thought a lot of things would be easier. Hell... Thought a lotta things about a lotta things. But maybe that's what makes me the person I am. Makes any of us part of humanity—all our big thoughts and big plans, hopes and dreams and all that squishy nonsense.

OK, fine, look: If I'm playing at honesty, and I think that's what I'm doing here, maybe those hopes and dreams are all that really matters. Just, not losing sight of them is the hard part. Life is full of those little distractions that fudge the edges, make those hopes and dreams a little blurrier.

That's the power of "maybes," I suppose—the temptation of... playing both ends against the middle.

Maybes provide... wiggle room. And I like my edges fudgy. And I looooooves me some wiggle room. But if I'm gonna stay true to this whole rambling "dear diary" how-do-ya-do business, guess what I'm sayin' is...

Guess what I'm saying is, I'm sick of "maybes." And, if I'm a straight shooter—and I'm nothing if not—then I gotta shoot straight... even when there ain't a gun in my hand.

So, let's... let's keep this between me and you, OK?

Here's the deal: My name is Cayde-6...

And this is my story.

## Call

Now, to be clear, yeah, the plan is to tell it like it is, but don't expect every little detail to play out. I'm gonna hit the important stuff, sure, but what I'm really after here is a sense of... a sense of me. Because once you understand me, you just might understand where I'm coming from, why I do the things I do, and why I've done the things I've done.

So, read between the lines if you have to, but end of the day? Everything that matters should be readily apparent. If not, you're not paying attention.

So here goes...

Us Exos are haunted.

Sounds ominous, I know, and maybe a bit of a stretch. But really, it's the best word—kinda sets the stage in a way the raw facts don't.

See, Guardians have all got past lives. But unless you returned with any definitive info on your person or in proximity (I'm looking at you, Bray), that past life, or lives, was, or were, wiped clean. Gone. Reborn in the Light and all, you become what you become.

Exos, though?

We've got ghosts in our machines. Not capital-G "open doors and know things" Ghosts. I mean, like fragments of— I don't know, pieces of something that could be memory. Whatever it is, it's enough to give us a starting point to maybe, possibly, imagine who we were before we became who we are. And then there's the dreams—but I ain't touching that with a ten-foot Arc Staff.

Me? I'm one of the lucky few. The fudgy flashes of that old Exo life weren't all I had to go on. See, the "me" that was in my life before my trusty capital-G Ghost found me kept journals, like mementos—fragments of my prior life that give me a baseline of who I was.

The journals are personal, and I keep personal close to the chest. I've shared a few pages, sure, but only with right-minded types who could find a little value in seeing the man behind the myth.

Yeah, "myth," I said it. Who are we kidding? You've heard of me. Who hasn't? Point is... I don't make a show of personal business.

First, because it's MY fuel to burn. Second, because Big Blue ain't a big fan of his Guardians poking around what they used to be—something about duty, rules, not losing sight of why we were chosen. But more than any of that... most of us "Chosen Ones" don't have the luxury of a past, so rubbing it in doesn't seem right.

Look, all I know is...

When I rejoined the land of the living, the pre-Light version of me was kind enough to lend a guiding hand. I took that hand, gave it a high five, and followed its example the best I could.

All this time later, I may not know my true purpose—I leave the big-ticket, existential questions to the Warlocks—but I know this...

My calling is to do good. Maybe not always to "be" good, ya know, but do good. There's a difference.

And if I don't always go about it in a manner that fits the textbook definitions of "hero" or "team player"—I'm looking at you, Big Blue—just know...

I might dance to my own tune, but we're all at the same hoedown...

Or something like that.

## First Stake

Made a deal with myself, long ago...

If people needed help and I could do the helping, I would—so I do.

Yeah, when that help returns a bit of loot or goodwill my way, all the better, but there's never been a cache I robbed or a stash I hid that didn't offer something to those in need. Not many people know that. Fine by me. I don't like to brag.

True, I never wanted the Vanguard's life, but that's not because I didn't see its value. Just that its value fit others better than me. Besides, few can do what I do. Hell, few would even try. I mean, come on... It's me.

The places I've been. The trouble I've seen... caused... whatever. Was a time Shiro, Andal, the crew, and me would do more good doing bad than the mightiest Titan ever dreamed.

The trails we blazed. The supplies we recovered—pilfered, filched, scammed, stole, found, uncovered, looted. We weren't the only ones, but the world outside the City got a whole lot bigger thanks to us.

Yeah, sure, I don't get out as much, but I'm fixing to change that.

Zavala won't like it—never does. Ikora will try to convince me otherwise—always does. But we've seen how precious our Light is... How fleeting. Gotta use it while we got it...

Do good. Be good. Push the limits. Take back what's ours.

And that was my first bet... All in. Day 1. I bet on myself.

I saw the edge of those dark ages. You've heard the stories. If not, look them up. Scary stuff. Real eye-opener. I've seen the City grow. And fall. And grow again—stronger. I seen the best of us, and the worst. And I'll fight to ensure we stick around long enough to see that "best" turn to better and that "worst" fade to memory.

So, yeah... I'm a loudmouth and a braggart, and I'm quick with a blade and fast on the draw. And if you need it found, fought, killed, saved, or stashed for safe keepin', few can do it better. But in the end...

I'm only good because he was good.

I like to think I learned that from myself—that the notes left by the "me-that-was-before-me" set the stage. That Five figured, back in those dark days, that Six might not turn out all that nice and end up a Seven. So that former "me" wrote me a road map to the version of him—or me—that would be a better man.

So, whatever hand I was dealt, when the bet was placed and it was time to call, no matter what—I had an Ace and a Queen up my sleeve.

Meaning I couldn't lose.

Meaning the better man would always win.

## Fold

Ever heard of Andal Brask?

Ya should've. One of the old heroes. Before Black Gardens and Hive gods and that Cabal-shaped mess we just cleaned up.

Yeah, he was... somethin'. Hunter part of the Vanguard before yours truly. More importantly...

He was my friend. A brother, even.

Andal and I used to run with one heck of a crew. This was before he got himself roped into fireteaming up with the top brass. Oh, we were legendary. Ran scouting parties looking for survivors to lead back City-side. Mapped lost sites where old tech or supplies might still be worth the salvage. Hunted plenty of Fallen. Never an easy task.

Especially in the early days.

And by "early days," I mean my early days. Lot of Guardians been around longer than me, but even in my newborn new life, the City had a lotta growing up to do. And us Guardians had a hell of a lot to learn. Trouble is, we only ever seem to learn the hard way...

The Red War. That time Crota woke up cranky and slapped around more Guardians than I can count. Twilight Gap. And all the bad that happened before my time. The Iron Lords and their tussle with SIVA. ...Six Fronts.

And those are just the headline grabbers. So many lessons learned. So many lives lost. But, in truth...

I've always felt it's the day-to-day struggles where we learn the most about the world, about ourselves. Being inside the City walls, sure, we're reminded of what we're fighting for. But outside the walls...?

It puts a face to all we've lost. Puts a reality to how far we've fallen. Abandoned roads, crumbling cities—rust and ruin, ruin and rust.

But if the City gives us reason to fight for the now, those old, dead places always give me hope for tomorrow. Rusted, broken skeletons or not... If you squint, you can see all we were and all we can be.

That's why, when Andal left the road and joined the Vanguard, me and the crew hoped he'd get the others—Osiris, Zavala, even the Speaker—to see what we saw. The City was a refuge, yeah, but if we hid too long, let all we'd lost get picked apart by pirates and warmongers, we'd lose our humanity.

Just like we lost Andal.

## Flop

I play nice with the Vanguard now, but it wasn't always that way. Not that we were enemies. We just tended to see things through a different lens.

But Andal...? Playing nice was his forte. He was always more... I think "diplomatic" is the word?

Our big play back in the day was... get the Vanguard to loosen their leash—let us explore, let us lead a new era of expansion—and the riches of the system would be ours.

"Ours" as in everybody's, of course. Though we'd get our cut.

In hindsight, we were waaay too ambitious.

Didn't see it in that light at the time. But, then again, you never do.

When Andal joined the Vanguard, he was our inside man. It was a sweet deal—he would drop intel on new stashes or Fallen movements, and Shiro and I would jump the gun, hit 'em first, claim what we could, deliver the rest to the City.

Maybe we skimmed a little off the top—nothing excessive, just a "finder's fee."

Probably shouldn't be putting all this out there for anyone to judge... What's the statute of limitations on misspent youth? Whatever... Long time ago. But it speaks to what I'm getting at...

I always tried to do right, even if I occasionally got sidetracked. Andal joining the Vanguard was a gift in some ways, a bummer in others. More importantly...

He'd made a deal, given his word—to me and to himself—when he took the Dare.

I won, he lost.

So he left the road. Joined the bigwigs up in the Vanguard. And he reminded me of a lesson I've always known, but every now and then would forget...

You give your word, you keep it.

But the longer Andal was up in that Tower, "caged"—my word, never his—the more he saw things "the Vanguard way." Looking back, he was only ever doing the right thing. Seeing him change and, in truth, grow as a Guardian and as a person...

I've never admitted this, but... I thought less of him. My best friend, my closest ally—all because he'd stuck to his word. Accepted the Dare, and even when he came up on the bad end, he never wavered from doing exactly what he said he'd do...

Join the damn Vanguard. Leave me and Shiro to have all the fun.

I thought he was a sucker.

Turns out, the only sucker was me.

## Raise

Case you can't tell, I ain't the best storyteller. I can be. Boy howdy, can I rip a yarn! Don't believe me? Ask C.C. Don't believe him? Ask the Colonel. Those two have heard things you wouldn't believe.

Just that, this...? What I'm doing here, the whole "based on a true story" thing? I can feel myself trying to talk around what I want to say, fill it with the ol' poop and circumstance. I'm trying, though. Fighting my... better angels, to get to what I need to say. And what I need to say starts with Andal.

Andal and the Dare.

My Dare. Our Dare.

The Hunters' Dare.

It's a stupid thing.

But it's an honor thing.

And it cost me my friend—I cost me my friend.

But before the Dare, we had Taniks. Hell... After the Dare we had Taniks. After my Dare we had Taniks. Always comes back to Taniks, don't it?

For the uninitiated, Taniks is a Fallen mercenary with no House but the House that pays him. Most Fallen won't deal with him. But when a Captain, or an Archon, or a Kell needs something done and their crews ain't cutting it—or, when they want a job done real hush-hush—they call Taniks.

Back in the day, me, Shiro, Andal, and a few others got on radars we'd rather stay off. The Fallen Houses put out bounties. Lotta Glimmer on our heads. Lotta Ether. Taniks took the gig. Only we didn't know. There'd been stories of a renegade Fallen dropping bodies, but nothing ever concrete, so we just brushed them off as more of the same. Nothing we couldn't handle, even on an off day.

I mean, we were all aware the Fallen were dangerous—big-time threat, each day, every day. But a solitary Fallen boogeyman, free of House, cutting down Guardians one by one? Ha, yeah right.

Until "yeah right" was standin' in front of us.

First impression... He was a big boy. Bad attitude.

Second... He was standin' over the body of Nian Ruo. Didn't know her well, but we'd done a few runs. That day was supposed to be an in-and-out'er. But then... Taniks.

Nian never got back up, and Shiro's boy Lush lost his Ghost—full-on RTL, returned to Light. Gone and done.

The whole scene was a blur. Lost our haul and hauled our butts outta there. Still not sure how we lost Taniks and his boys. Just lucky we did.

'Course, ditchin' that troublemaker wasn't the end.

Shiro and I got back, filled Andal in on the what-went-down soon as we found him. This was before his Vanguard days. He'd been running a second grab on a cache out west. Wasn't back till the next night.

We told him about Nian. Lush was freaking out about his Ghost. Couldn't blame him. Still can't.

Then we did the dumb thing.

We got cocky.

## Turn

Taniks didn't announce himself. Didn't say a word. Just laughed a few times and tried like hell to kill us all. But we knew it was him. The stories matched the story, ya know? Which meant the boogeyman had a face—the boogeyman was REAL.

We could hunt "real."

We could track "real."

We could end "real."

Andal said something like, "The hunter is about to become the hunted at the hands of the Hunters he'd hunted." I know. Don't laugh. I didn't. He was a great guy, even if his humor was... a bit... "forced" seems like a nice way to put it. But he wasn't wrong.

Lush wanted to join up—a little payback for his little Light—but we nixed that. Loved the kid, but no Ghost meant no way. Poor fella died his final death, RTL, less than a cycle later; went on a run solo, didn't tell anyone, never came back. Shiro used to spin stories about him—still does. Like he's still out there, living a life we only dream of—traveling unknown roads, digging up untold treasures.

My favorite's the one about the Rat King—how Lush joins up with a folktale, and together they fight the wars we don't see. It's just fantasy, but I like it. It's the kind of bedtime story I used to tell Ace as he was fighting off sleep, when he was here.

But he's not here.



Neither is Lush.

Neither is Andal.

And someday, neither will I.

Didn't have a Hunter Vanguard back then, what with Kauko Swiftriver finally being declared dead after two years MIA and his Dare nowhere to be found. Speaker said it was on the rest of us Hunters to figure it out.

That first night back, Andal and I were up late. Not a new thing. He drank. I drank. He got tanked. I'm a robot. And we made the pact. Dare issued and accepted.

See, there was that opening on the Vanguard, Hunter slot. We both wanted Taniks. Only one would get the killing blow, and the glory. The loser had to hang 'em up... and lock themselves away in a Tower. Leave the lonely roads to real-dealers.

We both laughed.

Wow. I wish I could hear him laugh again.

Just once.

Funny how all the cool kids leave the party too soon.

## All-In

Hey, kid.

I know I don't write you very often, ya know? But it's better than never.

Ain't easy for me to find the words. I mean, it is, I find them. But I know they're not always the right ones. Too much flash. Too much looking out for how I'm looking, not enough just telling it how it is. That's why I'm doing this, Ace. That's why you and me are having these words. Easier to say them than scrawl 'em. This way, now that I'm doing it, it feels more honest, if I'm being... Feels more true.

Thing is—and I'm sorry it's like this, but... I can only talk to you... in my mind. In my heart... This is how one-to-one works now.

Father and son.

Cayde and his firecracker Ace.

What am I doin'?

Reality is... ain't no telling who I'm talking to. Hell... Could be me, the "me after me."

Hi, me! Lookin' good! Sorry you can't remember all you can't remember. That's just an Exo's lot in life. Though, if you are me sitting on the other side... I gotta tell ya...

I never wanted this. YOU never wanted this.

I made it real clear... To the Big Z. To Ikora. Banshee. Amanda. My pal Jimmy down at the ramen spot ...that if anyone ever finds that Deep Stone Crypt thingy—

I stop counting at six, no higher. Ya hear me? No. Higher.

Think there's just something about the number 7 that gives me the heebie-jeebies—unlucky, overrated, I don't know, just a number with bad mojo in my book. So, if you've got a 7 in tow, or above, someone's changed the game. Someone's not playing nice.

Might wanna do something about that.

If you haven't listened to the earlier files—the start of this ramble—find 'em. Hear 'em. You might not want to take lessons from an unknown reflection, but trust me... whatever kind of man you are... you can be better. Also...

There are journals. Don't call 'em a diary. A three-eyed gal with a preference for deep holes and nightmares always called 'em diaries. Don't take cues from her. Anyway...

End of the day, New Me—if that's you—you get to choose who and how you want to be. The hope is maybe I can guide you a bit, like the "me before me" did. And when you get to the part about the kid and the girl—my Ace and my Queen...

They're yours, too. By right. Because they are... all yours, a gift. And you'll be the better for it.

And, if you don't feel that thing—that soft spot in the middle of all that circuitry—when you get to them, then, if you are me... you aren't like me at all. And that means you're trouble.

The good kind, or the bad, impossible for me to know. All I can do is give you the tools to raise you right.

That goes for you, too, Ace. If you're listening.

Hell. It goes for anyone. Strangers. Old friends. New enemies...

Learn from me. Be better than me. Because I'd really hate to think whoever you are is someone I wouldn't get along with.

## River

Honor? It's tricky—means different things to different folks.

Like your word... Well, your word's your word. You GIVE it. You KEEP it. Do that, regardless of all the rest, and that's honor right there. And, let me tell ya, kid...

Honor matters. It's a weapon in its own right. And a shield. Zavala knows. Ikora knows. Saladin and Shaxx, they probably know a little too much. All the best Guardians know.

People trust your word, they'll trust you. And trust? It's hard to come by and easy to lose. Give your word. Keep your word. And when all else fails, you'll find you have friends there to pick up the slack.

Even if you don't. You find yourself all alone, odds stacked, final curtain set to drop—at least you can go out knowing you did the right thing when it was asked.

Now, don't get me wrong. The "right thing," like honor, can be a malleable concept. It shifts and bends.

I'm getting poetic here. "Waxin' Warlock," we called it. Not my intent, but sometimes I can see the value in their thinkin'—their way with words. Ah, look at that: there's another lesson...

Find value in another.

I don't have much in common with a ramrod Titan or a floofy Warlock, but that's the key.

## Showdown

Back to honor. Back to Andal.

Andal was my brother. Figuratively, but I find, more often than not, the family you unearth along the way is more real than the family you thought was the... Never mind. Andal was my brother. Period.

Taniks was the four-armed, murderin' Guardian hunter who... Yeah.

Andal and I... we made a bet. Only "bet" ain't the right word. Not among Hunters. What we did meant more. We offered a dare.

The Dare.

I to him. Him to me.

Kill Taniks or get chained to Vanguard duty. Hunt the hunter and come out on top, or wear a leash. This was our honor. Our word.

The Hunter Dare dates back to nobody-knows-when. There are all kinds of stories about the "First Dare," but there's no way to discern the truth of a thing done who-knows-when by who-knows-whom.

It was the First Dare that time a Hunter...

Oh, and mind you, this was waaaaay before anyone even imagined calling themselves "Hunters" or "Titans" or "Warlocks." This was Risen days. The Chosen weren't organized back then—no code—and didn't get it, no matter how much their Ghosts talked their ears off. Back when the first ones got their spark lit, they were just as likely to be a self-involved tyrant as a decent human being.

Ask me to tell you about the "Warlords" sometime. Ha! Bunch o' newly rezzed tough guys misusing the Light like a bunch o' ignoramuses... Ignorami? Regardless... Not a fan. But who is?

Am I ramblin'? Anyway...

That first challenge of honor between those who'd one day call themselves Hunters? Was it the Tuvel Valley Jump? The Shaderunners' Sprint? The Moonlight Draw? Kuba Sul's Last Stand? The Great Scrounge Hunt? The Lesser Scrounge Hunt? No one knows. I sure as heck don't.

But which was first don't matter. They were all first. They were all the Dare to set the table and inspire other Dares. What matters is, once a Dare was offered... if it was taken—it was took. It was on you. It was in you. Not metaphysically. I'm not talking Warlock hocus-pocus. I'm talking honor.

Accepting the Dare is giving your word.

So, Andal and I, we offered, accepted, and doomed ourselves, because we didn't take into account the depths of my arrogance.

Seems my arrogance is where it always falls apart...

## Winner Take All

Taniks was a pain.

Turns out that wasn't the real problem—though it was high on the list at the time.

The real problem? The freak's STILL a pain. He ain't no Guardian, but the dude's been dead and not more times than I can track. "Died" twice by my hand alone. Second time I even looked to deliver some insurance, but he was hauled off by his goons before I could add more lead to the collection I'd deposited in his chest... and neck... and gut... and head.

But that second time don't matter. I mean, it does, sure, but the important bit here is our first go-round...

When Andal and I made our bet that wasn't a bet but really a dare... THE Dare... we were eager and ready to track Taniks and hit him with some payback. I had the good luck of finding Taniks first. Had the good luck to kill him, too. So I thought.

So we all thought.

What followed was a party. Osiris even showed up. He and the Speaker had sent Saint-14 after Taniks as well, and maybe Sainty's one hell of a Titan—but we're Hunters. No way were we losing the kill.

Looking back, I wish maybe we had.

Andal kept his word—joined the Vanguard. I tried talking him out of it. We'd made the Dare in a compromised state... Shiro and I'd just been roughed up, Nian was gone, Lush was broken—emotions were high, liquid was flowing. Andal wasn't buying it. Neither was I. Not really.

The Dare's the Dare. To back out would've been a mark—would've called Andal into question to every Hunter out there. Even to me. I never would've admitted it to him. But he'd know.

Things got a little weird between us once he joined the Vanguard. All my doing. And I missed him. Didn't like seeing one of the best rule-breakers and world-walkers anyone had ever seen bogged down with bureaucrats. But the weirdness passed... Brothers don't stay mad at brothers, that's just the way it is.

As we settled into the new norm, the good times started to roll. They kept on rolling, too...

For a while, anyway.

## Bluff

I don't play well with loss. I just don't. It's something I tend to avoid. Actively.

It's weird, but... that's where my Queen comes in. And before you make a Reef joke, or mention that witch and her Witches, or her mopey little brother... Don't.

My Queen is not THAT Queen.

My Queen is love.

My Queen is my heart.

My Queen is... hard to explain.

She is my memory of love. My understanding of it... only exists through her.

But she's not here. She's long gone. So I cling to the feeling I get when imagining her, and when I do... I am oh so content.

But it's a struggle.

We lose so much in this life. Any life. All lives, really...

But this life... This Last-Safe-City, end-of-all-things kinda life...?

Even when we win, it seems like all we do is lose.

Scratch that. I don't believe that. If there's one thing I'm not, it's a defeatist. I mean, I defeat. I definitely defeat. One might even say defeating things is my job. ONE of my jobs. One of MANY.

What's not my job is pessimism. Just not my thing. I'm a high-octane optimist and nothing but hugs. Mostly. Not always. Always gets annoying. But mostly... I'm the life of the party.

Not that you could tell from all this woe-is-me soul baring I've been laying on thick for, what, eleven entries now? Ten? In fact, at this point, if you're still listening, you're a braver soul than I.

But, where was I? Oh, yeah...

Optimism.

I'm full of it. Amongst other things, if certain unnamed individuals are to be believed. But, yeah... Each new day we're here is one heck of a reward... Heck of a win. And we should own that. Enjoy it. Embrace it. But never take it for granted.

Heh. Had a Warlock friend who used to say, "Take it for granite." Like the rock. Like g-r-a-n-i-t-e. Smartest guy I've ever known, but maybe he wasn't, ya know? "For granite." Heh. Almost as dumb as his catchphrases.

Come on, Cayde. Stay on target...

Each new day. Helluva thing. Embrace it. Enjoy it. But never forget...

It's a hard life.

And when friends fall. When brothers fade. When your Queen... When...

When we lose the things that matter... Well, a lotta people can use that—own it. That pain. That loss. They find a way to motivate—to celebrate.

For all my charms, seeing the good in the gone ain't one.

And my Queen helps me through that. Because I believe she was something special. She was good. She had to be. And I... Yeah, I do. So damn much.

When the others I've lost along the way start to weigh me down, I think of her, and she just overwrites everything else.

That's how strong her pull is. That's how big the hole she left is... Massive. It devours.

She swallows all other bad things. Not sure it's healthy, the way I deal with loss. But it's my way. It's what works for me. And it makes me happy. Thinking of her...

Makes. Me. Happy.

And the loss fades away.

## Bad Beat

Been trying hard to give you a sense of what matters to me, but also to find a way to talk about the things that, uh... that scare me. "Thing," really—singular. And that thing is... loss. Losing. I'm a poor loser, I admit it. I run from it. Full speed. Others don't. Others accept it. But everything I said about my Queen is true; she is my shield.

She is also a lie.

I don't know when I made her up. Or better... I don't know when I decided to believe in a life I don't know and can never truly own. Was it during this life? Was my rebirth as a Guardian—or the void of everything I was before—what drove me to invent comfort? Possible. Even likely. But I'm not sure.

I do have flashes of memory of the life I had before I was a Guardian, but that's all they are, flashes—quick flickers of people and places in my dreams or in that space between a bullet and getting rezzed.

I see a woman there, and she's all I've ever known of a life long since gone. I feel love for her. Is that love a memory, or am I simply loving the memory? I've convinced myself of the former. I've concocted a truth to make myself whole.

The kid. The woman. I do not know them. They are not real.

But I wish I did. And I wish they were.

They're just the two best cards I could find to keep up my sleeve when the odds were stacked against me.

I made them real in my mind and in my heart.

I fell in love with the idea of them, and I crafted a truth that allowed me to feel.

In truth, it was selfish.

When I came to for the first time, I felt so alone. Broken. My Ghost tried to comfort me. But this life felt hollow. So I ran.

But the flashes... Like daydreams, they promised something more. Something other than suffering and war. So I clung to them. And I built my truth. And it made me a better man.

Some would dispute that fact. Some would say, "A good man who lies to himself is good only because he hides from the truth." But I disagree. I think, in this world, you need to find what is best in you and cling to it. That's all I did. I found what moved me, and I fought for it.

Without Ace, and without my Queen to listen to me, to hear me, to see me... there's no telling who I would've become.

But I know.

And I know there's a chance it wouldn't have been very nice.

So that's what I am offering to you here: a chance. Look at my life. Look at the things I've said, the things I've done. See how the promise of a simpler life and true, pure love—even if it was all just a game—see how it drove me, directed me...

Now go find your own.

I know this confession isn't as clean as you may like, but then again...

It's not a confession.

It's a warning.

Find the path to your best self and walk it. Because the alternative is a lonely road. Don't you ever forget it.

Otherwise, I may just have to come back.

And kick your ass.

See ya later, pal.

—Cayde-6

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