

Builders

Born from the innumerable series of loose ends that never seem to tie themselves together, their skeletal frameworks kept in bloom by the Dreamer's grace, is the parable of the builder. Many a text has drawn from its words, and theologians have quarreled endlessly over their particular interpretations of the chapter's verse. This new translation for the Crowning Age of Authority and Celestial Arcology has been undertaken in appointment from the twelfth Diachronic Assembly, so that a more faithful rendition might be made available for the use of scholarly persons in the face of spreading apocrypha.

SO IT CAME to be that Garth took his trade as a builder to the City of Simmering Veil and made his workshop there. The people of the city took to Garth quickly and asked him to build them the things they did not yet possess. Garth found there was nothing they requested that he could not fashion for them, and in their gratitude the people made his name known among their lips.

Having heard the word of the people, pilgrims came to the City of Simmering Veil from far and horizons past. The pilgrims came unto his workshop in hope that they might have their notions of assembly rewarded in true form. Garth took their requests with the ingenuity of his craft, and they were satisfied by the fabrication, and the people of the city were satisfied by reputation, and Garth was satisfied by all of this.

Over the City of Simmering Veil stood a large tower, one above all others in breadth

and height, and the Man in the Tower was known overlord of the city. It came to be that the Man in the Tower heard the people's words of praise for Garth. The Man in the Tower sent his servants to bring Garth before him, and they proclaimed the necessity in procuring an object of their master' desire. Being moved by this, Garth returned with his servants and came before the tower.

"Name what you would have me construct," proclaimed Garth, "and it shall be done." So the Man in the Tower made a request of an object of his desire, and Garth agreed, but the Man in the Tower became solemn upon the ease of his agreement. And in this dissatisfaction, the Man in the Tower made a second request, which he raised to Garth as a question toward the means by which he planned to construct the object of his desire.

It was at this request, of all the those that had been put before him, that Garth became overcome by a mighty and terrible feeling. Garth had provided the construction of many things, but he had never been asked for an explanation toward the nature of his work. The workings of the ingenuity with which he forged the desires of the people tangible was not his to interpret, and he told the Man in the Tower as such. But the Man in the Tower's eyes were gleaming now with the fire of ardency, and he beseeched Garth for a demonstration.

"Perhaps there is a way," pondered Garth, "but I would not know how to perform such a thing so with my hands."

"Could it be done by many hands in tandem?"

And Garth was confused by these words.

The Man in the Tower bound up a great number of stairs and beckoned Garth to follow. The two climbed until the sky became thick with twilight and the land beneath became as if under a shroud, and still climbed beyond to zenith of the tower. There, the Man in the Tower swept his arm across the view such that Garth saw the city from above as an image in lurid detail, and the Man in the Tower bellowed.

"Look!" he proclaimed "Look as each person makes up a part of the whole we see before us.

"See how the hewers present their rock to the masons, and see how the masons present their stone to the builders.

"A city is an engine dedicated to wholesale constitution of itself, one that demonstrates itself in its construction.

"Every component can be understood by how it intersects unto its neighbors, even while every component is itself alone and in atrophy.

"A machine that builds is a diagram. Each part contrives the whole and does so in demonstration of its process.

"Why should the logic of construction slip away like sand, when you could etch it into the mechanism itself.

"Build a machine that would perform the building, so we might watch from afar as it demonstrates this construction."

With these words, Garth descended the tower in haste, and flung the doors to his workshop open. For six days and six nights, he withdrew

into his work, and the people saw a pillar of smoke that came up from the workshop and swallowed the sky.

On the seventh day the smoke fell, and Garth returned before the Tower holding an unadorned box in his hands, which he set before the Man in the Tower. He removed its roof, and it was seen that the box held every material that might constitute the Man in the Tower's object of desire. In the space between were small clockwork instruments fit together in standstill. Garth took a thin key from the inside of his robe and wound it within a hole on the side of the box for a time. And when he stopped, the instruments of the box sprouted with vitality, and together in lockstep began to fashion the material until the box became still, and its walls fell to the ground in silence.

There at the center of the box was an object of the Man in the Tower's desire forged upon its dais. At this Garth was not satisfied, for he could not understand how it was that the box had performed with vitality, and so the Man in the Tower was not yet satisfied either. Again, Garth descended the tower, and flung the doors to his workshop open, then shut behind him. After six days and six nights he returned before the tower pushing a box even greater than the one he had held before.

He placed the second box before the Man in the Tower, and wound it using a key from his robes. They watched for a day and a night

as the second built the first inside itself. An appendage wound the first box, and the first box built an object of the Man in the Tower's desire again. But Garth was not satisfied, for he did not understand how it was that either of the boxes had performed with vitality, and so the Man in the Tower was not yet satisfied either.

The next box that Garth brought was as large as the breadth of the tower, and could not be brought inside. Its gears were meticulous brass, and the spikes that fit them together were as tall as the houses of the people. The Man in the Tower's servants raised them a viewing platform, and Garth watched with him as the teeth of its gears groaned and their interlocking bodies became tangled together for six days and six nights. The third box built the second, and the second box built the first. The first box built an object of the Man in the Tower's desire inside itself, and neither Garth nor the Man in the Tower were yet satisfied.

Garth descended the tower and took the servants with him. For sixty days and sixty nights they pieced the disparate parts that appeared from the workshop together in smoke, and when it was complete the box was so large that it could not be moved, even with their help. Garth and the Man in the Tower watched from above at the zenith of the tower. The fourth box built the third, and the third box built the second. The second box built the first, and the first box built an object of the Man in

the Tower's desire inside itself. Neither Garth nor the Man in the Tower were yet satisfied, so Garth came down from the tower.

At this point, the people had grown weary of Garth and appointed four among them to speak before him.

"You have made contrivance your teacher," spoke the first.

"And you have made scaffolding your ambition," stated the second.

"Coherence is the demand of closure," spat the third.

"And closure is yet not made from the tower," slithered the fourth.

Before Garth could answer he felt the taste of blood and copper in his mouth and heard the words of the Man in the Tower on his tongue and in his speech.

"Then the land shall be the tower, and we shall sit within its walls. We will listen to the music of its gears, and we might understand what it could be to be the builder of such a thing."

The tower grew tall above him, and the land came to be blanketed by a great entanglement of machine, stretched taut in dedication toward a chain of one object's desire. The people were made to dwell among the clockwork, and as time passed the people came to forget the designs of the city in which they once lived.

So it was that the Machine City of Deserter Ember came to be.