

JINN'S PROMISE

Written by

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Personal Writings: Jinn, the Soul Sculptor

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INT. JINN'S HOUSE - EVENING

JINN stands leaning against a wall by the front door, watching it. He is covered in torn and bettered clothing and the majority of his body appears replaced by woven metal. Jinn's remaining skin appears dry, wrinkled, and rotted from sickness.

A KNOCK comes from the door.

Jinn outstretches a hand, turning the handle and opening it. A CLOAKED FIGURE hurries in, closing the door.

CLOAKED FIGURE

Jinn, it is good to see you.

The cloaked figure pulls their hood off and discards the cloak to a hanging rack. NIXILIS, a minor demon, looks Jinn over. Jinn nods, offering Nixilis his arm. Nixilis accept it, pulling each other into a short hug.

NIXILIS

Come, tell me what is so urgent.

NIXILIS leads Jinn to the guest room of his house. Jinn follows.

INT. GUEST ROOM - EVENING

Jinn and Nixilis sit in armchairs. Jinn offers Nixilis a pint of ale. Nixilis accepts.

NIXILIS

(cautious)

I assume this has something to do with your daughter?

JINN

(nervous)

I can save her. I have a way...

Jinn looks away from Nixilis as he finishes speaking.

NIXILIS

(worried)

Then why do you sound nervous?  
Surely this would be cause for celebration?!

JINN

(sighs)

Nixilis...

NIXILIS  
 (worried)  
 What? What is wrong?

Jinn looks back at Nixilis.

JINN  
 I need you to make me a promise.

NIXILIS  
 Of course! Anything!

JINN  
 Promise me you will watch over her  
 when this is done.

Nixilis remains quiet for a moment.

NIXILIS  
 (shocked)  
 What?!

Jinn looks away from Nixilis.

NIXILIS (CONT'D)  
 (startled)  
 What have you done?

JINN  
 (shakes his head)  
 It is not what I have done, but  
 what I must do. Saving her will  
 likely cost me my life.

NIXILIS  
 (more shocked)  
 You are going to kill yourself?!

Nixilis stands up abruptly as he speaks.

JINN  
 (calm)  
 No Nixilis, I am not going to die.  
 Not physically, anyway. Every time  
 I use it... part of me just slips  
 away.

Jinn raises his hand, examining it.

JINN (CONT'D)  
 I will still be alive. Just, not  
 myself.

NIXILIS

That is no different than killing  
yourself Jinn!

Jinn lowers his hand, looking up at Nixilis.

JINN

(pleading)  
Nixilis... please...

NIXILIS

(defiant)  
No! What in the name of the gods  
are you thinking?! She is *your*  
daughter Jinn! Not mine!

Jinn stands up, stepping closer to Nixilis.

JINN

(sincere)  
Nixilis, there is no one else in  
this world that Edith or I would  
trust with the life of our  
daughter. I wish I could be there  
for her. I hope I am wrong and I  
can be. But if not...

Nixilis steps away from Jinn.

NIXILIS

For someone who desires so badly to  
save his daughter, you sure are  
quick to condemn her as an orphan.  
(Pause)  
What has happened to you Jinn?

Jinn sits back down.

JINN

I made her a promise Nixilis. I  
made them both a promise. I owe  
this to both of them.

NIXILIS

(pleading)  
Then find another way.

JINN

(snaps)  
There is no other way! Do you think  
I have not looked?! I wish there  
was a way! I wish I could hold my  
daughter again and watch her grow  
up!

(MORE)

JINN (CONT'D)

I wish I could be there when she marries someone and has a family of her own! I don't get to make that choice! There is no middle ground!

Jinn stands again, approaching Nixilis.

JINN (CONT'D)

(pleading)

Nixilis, please. Promise me...

Nixilis walks towards the door of the room. Jinn watches. Nixilis turns to face Jinn.

NIXILIS

No.

Nixilis backs away from Jinn's advance.

NIXILIS (CONT'D)

No, no I won't. You may have given up on being with your daughter again, but I am not.

Nixilis SHOVES his way past Jinn, stopping in front of the doorway to the room.

NIXILIS (CONT'D)

(looking back at Jinn)

I will make you this promise. I will find another way. I understand what you want Jinn, I do. But at least let me try where you have failed.

Jinn begins to speak, but Nixilis leaves the room. A brief moment later, the front door OPENS and then CLOSES. Jinn walks into the entrance hall.

INT. ENTRANCE HALL - NIGHT

Jinn looks at the door of his home for a moment. He proceeds to the back of the hall, ascending a flight of stairs.

INT. 2ND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jinn slowly walks through the hallway, entering his bedroom.

INT. JINN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jinn's eyes scan the room. He looks at a mirror, then above the mirror. Approaching the mirror, he takes a portrait off the wall and sits on the edge of the bed.

The portrait Jinn holds is of a woman's face, smiling. Jinn blinks.

FLASHBACK START

INT. TAVERN - DAY

A younger and shorter Jinn sits at a table in a tavern, talking with EDITH, a young woman close to his own age, dressed as a waitress.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Jinn and Edith (a little older) run out of the doors of a roadside tavern. They laugh and smile, setting off down the road with travel packs on their backs.

INT. JINN'S HOUSE - DAY

Jinn sits on a cushioned bench with Edith laying across it, her head resting against his chest. Edith is pregnant.

INT. MEDICAL ROOM - DAY

Jinn kneels beside a pale and sick looking Edith.

EDITH

Promise, promise you will protect  
her.

Jinn nods, sobbing as Edith takes her last breath.

FLASHBACK ENDS

INT. JINN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jinn cries, placing the picture back on the wall. He reaches beneath his torn clothes, revealing a glowing purple crystal flickering with life. Jinn looks at the exit of the room.

FLASHBACK STARTS

INT. JINN'S HOUSE - EVENING

Jinn enters through the doorway, placing a travel bag on the floor. MADISON runs down the hall, hugging her father.

MADISON  
(Jumps in excitement)  
Dad! I got in! I Got in!

Jinn looks up at the HANDMADE, a young woman in her 30s, standing in the door frame smiling.

HANDMADE  
She is enlisted to the Scholars  
Guild.

Jinn kneels down.

MADISON  
I am going to be a scholar! Like  
you and mom!

EXT. SCHOLAR'S GUILDHALL - EVENING

Jinn stands in a large crowd, looking up at a stage far ahead. On the stage stands several Scholar Guild officials and Madison, who looks out over the crowd with a beaming smile.

GUILD OFFICIAL  
Next, we have Madison, graduating  
top of her class with a masters in  
linguistics!

Jinn applause, joining the rest of the crowd.

INT. RUINS - EVENING

Jinn and Madison search the interior of what was once a temple. They find a sealed vault. Jinn pulls out a key, places it in the keyhole and unlocks the vault.

Inside, set on a display, is a sword still in prime condition. Madison and Jinn approach, cautious of their surroundings.

MADISON  
No traps?

JINN

The blade is no better than an average sword in the hands of anyone other than a Cascadian. Traps would just be pointless.

Madison picks up the weapon by the handle, examining the blade.

MADISON

It is still in perfect shape?!

JINN

The Cascadian smiths back then had unmatched skills in many crafts. Smithing was chief among them after magic.

Madison looks around the vault.

MADISON

There is something else. In the corner.

Madison points behind Jinn. A skeleton rests in the corner of the room, its hands grasping a book.

JINN

Well, well, what do we have here?

Jinn approaches, examining the skeleton and then the book. Carefully he removes the book. He pauses, holding the book above the skeleton.

MADISON

Let's get back to the camp. We can examine it there.

Jinn and Madison leave the vault.

INT. CAVE/STUDY ROOM

Jinn and Madison are in a small carved out room with tables and bookshelves. Jinn and Madison sit beside a table, opening the book.

MADISON

This is unlike any language I have seen before.

JINN

So you can't read it?

MADISON

Hush!

Madison grabs several other books laying around and flips through them, then focuses on a page.

MADISON (CONT'D)

It's a mix of dwarven and ancient celestial symbols. A codex of sorts as far as I can tell. We can make a translator with what we have.

JINN

Then I leave that to you.

Madison gets up, grabbing several other books and scrolls and sits at a table behind Jinn. Time passes. Madison gets up again and comes up behind her father.

Madison sets a parchment before him. There is an explosion a moment later from behind. The cave trembles and the parts of the ceiling collapse.

Madison and Jinn duck to avoid the debris. The dust clears. There are echoes of fighting further in the cave network.

Jinn frantically looks for Madison, finding her buried beneath some rocks. He rushes to her side. Madison's breath is shallow and she is unconscious.

Jinn looks around, appearing hopeless. His eyes catch a dark purple crystal sitting on the floor not far from him. Frantically, Jinn grabs the crystal, then looks to Madison.

Reaching a hand out to her, Jinn closes his eyes. His breathing mellows, his shaking subsiding. The tips of his fingers glow light blue.

Madison's soul is drawn out of her body, the small bright white orb flies to the crystal Jinn holds and enters it. The crystal begins to glow.

FLASHBACK ENDS

INT. MADISON'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jinn stands in a doorway, looking down at the glowing purple crystal. He looks up, examining Madison's old room.

Jinn focuses his gaze on a bookshelf, many of the titles referring to languages. A desk sat beside it, covered in parchments.

Jinn looks back down at the crystal, then behind him down the hall. A figure made of metal but shaped like a human stood not too far away, motionless. Though cracks in its chest, another purple crystal glowed.

Jinn stairs at it. A moment later, the CONSTRUCT descends the stairs. Jinn turns his back on Madison's room and follows a moment later.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jinn descends a flight of stairs into a hallway. He walks down the hall and makes a right into another room.

INT. GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Approaching a door across from the room, Jinn opens the door to another flight of stairs. He steps back and waits. The construct from earlier walks by carrying a large wooden chest and descends the steps. Jinn follows.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Jinn and the construct descend the stairs into a dark room. Jinn sets about lighting torches. The Construct puts the chest down close to the center of the room and waits. Jinn approaches a table and puts the crystal down.

Reaching beneath his clothing, he pulls a book from a bag and places it on the table. Jinn looks back at the construct. The construct opens the chest and dumps a pile of metal on the floor.

Again, Jinn pulls another item from his bag. This time it is a single parchment. On it is a drawing of a human female figure. Jinn places it on the table and takes a deep breath.

Jinn looks down at his hands. A moment later, blue light radiates from his fingertips and vanishes. Jinn turns to face the metal pile and raises his hands.

JINN

I am sorry, old friend, but I must.

Blue light emanates from his fingers. The metal is lifted piece by piece and heats up to be cherry hot. The metal becomes warped and disfigured as Jinn reshapes it, merging pieces together to create the figure from the parchment.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Jinn circles the complete metal female figure, examining every part like it was a piece of art. Jinn comes to stand before the table again and opens the book to a page covered in text. Picking the book up in one hand, Jinn picks the crystal up in the other.

Jinn turns to face the metal construct and SIGHS. Reaching out with the crystal, he looks at the construct and places the crystal on the breastplate.

Parts of Jinn's body glow a ghostly blue, the flesh deteriorating. Jinn GROANS, but persists. The edges of his mask light up, SIZZLING as the metal FUSES with his flesh. Jinn SCREAMS in agony, shaking.

The Crystal sinks into the metal of the construct. The construct jerks, as if breaking free from ice. Both Jinn and the construct fall to the floor on their hands and knees.

Jinn and the construct breathe heavily. Jinn looks up, his eyes glowing ice blue as they meet another pair of ice, blue eyes.

JINN

Madison?

The construct catches its breath. She raises her hands, examining them, then the rest of her body.

Jinn pushed himself back up, his gaze lingered on Madison.

JINN (CONT'D)

Can you stand?

Madison struggled to push herself up. Jinn grabs her arms, pulling her up off the floor. Madison braces herself between Jinn and a beam holding up the ceiling.

A moment later, Madison let go of the beam and then Jinn, standing.

JINN (CONT'D)

Good. Good. Take it slow. The body may take some time to get used too.

Madison looked at Jinn with a blank expression.

JINN (CONT'D)

Can you speak? Madison?

Madison opened her mouth, struggled to make a noise, then stopped. She tried again, then again.

Instead of words, a painful WHISTLE filled the room, ECHOING the sounds of someone SCREAMING in AGONY.

Madison covers her mouth with her hands and remains silent, stumbling back into the support beam. Jinn remained still.

Madison tried several more times to speak.

JINN (CONT'D)

Stop!

The room fell silent. Madison froze. Jinn turned around, his grip clenching the edge of the table. The wood SPLINTERED and CRACKED from his grasp.

Jinn YELLED out, falling to his knees. His sobs deafened by the mask. No tears came from his eyes. Jinn rolled over, looking back at Madison as she stood motionless.

Jinn stands up and heads for the stairs. Madison and the other construct begin to follow.

JINN (CONT'D)

Stay.

Both Madison and the other construct stop in their tracks.

INT. GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Jinn closes the door to the basement. He waits a moment, then leaves the room.

INT. JINN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Entering the hallway again, Jinn approaches the stairs to the second level and ascends.

INT. JINN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jinn enters the room, SLAMMING the door closed. He sits on the bed, looking at the floor. The room is silent. The door to the room opens, but Jinn does not appear to notice. Nixilis enters the room.

NIXILIS

(excited)

Jinn, I found another way...

Nixilis stops talking as he looks at Jinn. Jinn sits slouched, his head bent.

NIXILIS (CONT'D)  
(shaken)  
Jinn...

Jinn quickly looks up at Nixilis.

JINN  
(Hopeful)  
You are back!

Jinn stands up, quickly approaching Nixilis.

JINN (CONT'D)  
(urgent)  
Have you found another way?

Nixilis steps back, confused.

NIXILIS  
Jinn, your daughter...

Jinn turns around, waving his hand.

JINN  
(casual)  
I must have misread something.  
Something about the process must  
not have been right.

Nixilis clenches his fist.

NIXILIS  
(raises voice)  
Not right?!

Jinn turns around to look at Nixilis.

NIXILIS (CONT'D)  
(angry)  
You turned your daughter into a  
mindless slave!

Jinn remains silent, watching Nixilis for a moment, then  
turns away.

JINN  
(casual)  
I made a mistake. It will not  
happen again.

NIXILIS  
(shock)  
Again?! Jinn once was enough!

Jinn paces back and forth in short strides.

JINN

(hopeful)

The book showed me how to make the constructs. There must then be a way to unmake them. I just need to figure out what went wrong.

NIXILIS

(yells)

Jinn stop!

Jinn freezes with his back towards Nixilis.

NIXILIS (CONT'D)

(disappointment)

Can you not hear yourself?!

Jinn turns back towards Nixilis.

JINN

You said you found another way.  
What is it?

NIXILIS

(Shakes head)

No.

Jinn remains silent, taking two steps closer to Nixilis.

JINN

Nixilis, what did you find?

Nixilis gives Jinn a defiant expression, remaining silent. Jinn outstretches his hand, SEIZING Nixilis by his throat.

Nixilis attempts to fight back. Jinn's hand glows ghostly blue. Nixilis falls to his knees, gasping for air.

JINN (CONT'D)

(calm anger)

Do not defy me Nixilis. You will not deny me the opportunity to save her.

Nixilis looks up into Jinn's glowing ghostly eyes.

NIXILIS

(Painfully struggles)

The... Dark... God...

Jinn releases Nixilis, pushing him back. Nixilis falls to the floor.

JINN  
(doubtful)  
And what does this self-righteous  
god want?

Nixilis rubs his neck, looking up at Jinn, stunned and  
frightened.

NIXILIS  
A life for a life. Aurora  
Covingston for your daughter.

Jinn raises his hand, examining it as it still glows.

JINN  
(thoughtful)  
That would be far more efficient.  
Thank you Nixilis. I will not  
forget this.

Jinn leaves. Nixilis looks up at Edith's portrait. Nixilis  
drops his gaze a moment later.

NIXILIS  
Forgive me, Edith, I had to.