



The Chronicles of Demise

Book 1: The Broken Canvas

From the manuscript of my fantasy series, in progress since 2013. A world whose rules come from its story: magic is grammar, gods are an inheritance, and an exile from a universe of pure logic falls into a world painted by its absent creators. Every quotation here is from the manuscript.

Yet again, this is not the story of an ending. This is the story of a beginning—the beginning which lies beyond every other.

9

chapters with the
prologue

18,703

words so far

3

story strands,
converging

2

opposed
cosmologies

13

Narrator's Notes

The premise

The Ancients painted a world, the Canvas, and left. Their grandchildren, the Tribunal gods, rule it on a borrowed throne and keep mortals as comforts. Wer'ihon, the Weaver of Futures, guards the painting alone against the Voiding Dark, until a blind spot opens in his foresight. Out of it falls Ravea, an architect of the Sector, a universe of chrome and arithmetic, cast out for daring to want more. And in the jungle of Annea, a disgraced scholar and three thieves break into a vault the gods erased from every map, and touch a book that rings like a bell across the world.

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Two cosmologies, written as opposites

The book's two worlds are built as mirror images, so that every scene in one makes the other legible. The reader learns the Canvas by watching what the Sector lacks, and the Sector by watching what the Canvas cannot touch.

	THE CANVAS (EREITHRIN, ANNEA)	THE SECTOR
Its texture	<i>“In this world, light was not merely a celestial mechanic but a mood.”</i>	<i>“Here, existence was not a canvas. It was a grid.”</i>
Its gods	The Tribunal: twenty-seven gods in families of Soul, Flesh and Wisdom (fire, water, earth, light, fate, air, dreams...). Vain, quarrelling, beautiful.	The Ever-Present Nine: a reactor, pistons, concrete, a scanning lens. Each god is a function of the machine.
Its power	<i>“In this world, magic was not a formula; it was Sovereignty.”</i> A god speaks, and the world obeys.	Power “rationed by the kilowatt”; thermodynamics is law, and law is not argued with.
Its sin	Complacency: <i>“They build their cathedrals to pray to us, unaware they were created only to keep us from crying.”</i>	Stagnation: <i>“We are rotting in our own perfection.”</i>
What it fears	The Voiding Dark, the entropy that erases the painting	Hunger: <i>“Hunger leads to consumption. Consumption leads to entropy.”</i>

Magic is grammar

There are three ways to speak in this world, and each is a rank:

- **Sovereignty**, the gods' Language of Power: one word is a command (“Denial”, “Rise”).
- **The Unification Tongue**, the gods' everyday speech: “a language of soft vowels and diplomatic nuance, designed to soothe and command”.
- **Kha'shul**, the Ancients' tongue, which mortals were never meant to speak.

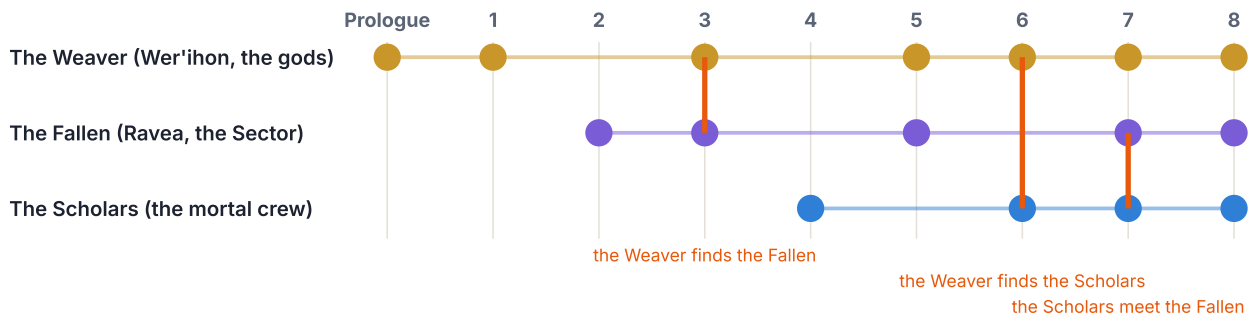
The hierarchy becomes plot. Ravea is immune to Sovereignty because he lacks the concept it binds; Lyssia, a mortal, wins her first victory by speaking above her rank.

In Kha'shul, you did not ask a stone to move; you redefined its coordinate. It is a dangerous tongue for mortal throats.

Narrator's Note, chapter 4. The rule is stated once, in the narrator's voice, before the scene that needs it.

Three strands, converging

Book 1 braids three points of view that start in three different places and meet one at a time, so each meeting is a reveal for the reader before it is one for the characters.



A flash-forward as the hook

The prologue opens on the ending: Wer'ihon in the abyss, branded with the Nine Seals, called a traitor.

I did not take the Burdens to rule. I took them to hold the door shut.

Everything after is dramatic irony: the reader knows the Weaver's fate, the Weaver does not. The book pays it off three times:

- **Chapter 4:** Lyssia touches the book and hears the same voice: "I WAS THE WEAVER... I ONLY WANTED TO HOLD THE DOOR SHUT."
- **Chapter 6:** she recognises him on the dock: "You're the one who falls."
- **Chapter 8:** the narrator lingers on his skin before the theft: "There were no marks on him yet, no wounds to show the cost of his choice."

One event, three points of view

When Lyssia touches the Verses of the Void, the Resonance Wave crosses the world. The book shows it through each strand that feels it:

The Scholars ch. 4	<i>"Every magical construct in the world stuttered. Every flame flickered. Every shadow lengthened."</i>
The Fallen ch. 5	Ravea hums before the gods feel anything, and the wave unlocks his first memory of the Sector: "You are a variable without a value."
The gods ch. 5	<i>"It felt like a key turning in a lock that hadn't been touched in a billion years."</i>

Every chapter ends on a hook

CH.	LAST LINE	THE HOOK
Prologue + 1	<i>"toward the destiny that would undo him."</i>	Dramatic irony: the narrator tells us he is doomed
2	<i>"Until he hit the canvas."</i>	A hand-off: the next chapter is the landing
3	<i>"It was simply waiting."</i>	A threat with no action yet
4	<i>"And in Lyssia's arms, the Verses of the Void began to glow."</i>	The theft has consequences already
5	<i>"He didn't know yet that he was walking into the very trap he had been born to spring."</i>	Irony again: the Weaver walks into the prologue
6	<i>"He is far less conversational than I."</i>	The next antagonist, promised
7	<i>"And we just gave it a job."</i>	Unease: the crew's first doubt about their ally
8	<i>"The Maw snapped shut."</i>	No way out but forward

The Ancients are telling this story

The narrator is not neutral. It is *we*: the vanished creators who painted the world, still watching. That choice gives the book a voice above the gods, a reason for its painterly vocabulary, and a mystery of its own.

But there was a presence in the dark, like there had always been one in every darkness, in every single moment you thought you were alone. We were watching. We are always watching.

What a Narrator's Note does

From chapter 4, every part of a chapter opens with a short Note in the Ancients' voice (13 so far). Each one has a job:

JOB	EXAMPLE
Sets a world rule before it matters	<i>"In Kha'shul, you did not ask a stone to move; you redefined its coordinate."</i> ch. 4
Re-frames power	<i>"They are twenty-seven squabbling children, each terrified that the others got a bigger slice of the inheritance."</i> ch. 5
Gives a scene its law	<i>"Knowledge is not weightless. In the mortal realm, a thought is lighter than air. But the words of the Ancients have mass."</i> ch. 6
Names a character's inner state	<i>"But for the Hollow Guest, memory was a corrupted scroll."</i> ch. 5
Characterises mortals as a species	<i>"Show them a miracle, and they will look for the wires."</i> ch. 6
Turns setting into theme	<i>"To a god, it is a home. To a mortal, it is a migraine made of marble."</i> ch. 7
Foreshadows	<i>"It consumes the eyes that dare to look upon it."</i> ch. 8

The rules of the voice

- **Painterly, always.** The creators think in brushes, canvas and paint, so the world's metaphors are theirs: Annea was painted with "a brush of sleep".
- **Short.** A Note is one idea in a few sentences, never a summary of the plot.
- **Condescending to the gods, tender to mortals.** The Ancients see the Tribunal as spoiled heirs and mortals as stubborn, brave ants.

One Note, in full

When we painted the southern edge of the world, we did not use a brush of stone or law. We used a brush of sleep. We wanted a place where gravity was a suggestion, not a command—a playground for the laws of physics to stretch their legs. The Tribunal calls Annea a ruin. We called it a daydream.

Chapter 4. The Note that opens Annea sets its physics (gravity is a suggestion), its politics (the gods' word against the creators') and its mood, before the first line of action.

Why it matters for the series

The Ancients are the series' final mystery. A narrator who says "we" left and "we" are always watching plants the largest question on the first page, and every Note keeps it alive without a single scene from their point of view.

Wants, contradictions and mirrors

Every major character is built on a contradiction the plot is designed to test, and most have a mirror on the other side of the story.

CHARACTER	WANTS	CONTRADICTION	FROM THE BOOK
Wer'ihon the Weaver of Futures	To guard the painting; to see past his blind spot	Compassion that becomes hubris: he takes the Burdens to hold the door shut	<i>“the silent janitor of the cosmos, wiping away the filth of entropy”</i>
Ravea exiled Architect of the Seventh Sector	More than perfection: a world where the light bleeds	A creature of pure logic, condemned for a feeling: hunger	<i>“It is a garden.”</i>
Al'ea Goddess of Life	To heal; to believe the best of everyone	Kindness without fear	<i>“the compassion of a thousand mothers, but also the terrifying naivety of a child who has never seen a wolf”</i>
Lyssia expelled scholar	Proof that there was something before the gods	The smallest and least armed of them, and the most dangerous	<i>“I intend to prove them wrong with the truth.”</i>
Vesper thief and pilot	The job, and the pay	Pragmatism as armour	<i>“We found it because I paid off the map-maker”</i>
Rystak mercenary, the Widow-Maker on his back	To survive, and to grumble about it	Complains instead of caring, then carries everyone	<i>“If she dies, I’m not carrying her books back.”</i>
Caelus con man posing as a god	To be believed	An engineer whose real religion is science, faced with real gods	<i>“He had built his life on the lie that he was a god, because he believed no real gods existed.”</i>

Mirrors

Caelus ↔ Ravea

A man who fakes divinity with machines, and a machine-god fallen into a world of feeling. Caelus is the one who names what Ravea is: “That thing isn't a god”.

Lyssia ↔ Wer'ihon

Both seek forbidden knowledge out of doubt about the official story, and both are bound to the Verses. One is rising; the other, as the prologue shows, will fall.

Al'ea ↔ Ghru'al

Two gods' answers to fear: heal it or burn it. “You cannot destroy a realm because you are afraid, Ghru'al!”

A pantheon designed to argue

FAMILY	SOUL	FLESH	WISDOM
Fire	Azh'rei	Ghru'al	Xind'ea
Fate	Morwen'na	Ka'eliss	Wer'ihon
Water	Yul'kash	Vri'tunn	·
Light	Lysan'dra	·	Vae'krux
Earth, Air	Thrum'oa (Earth)	Stry'vok (Air)	·

Gods named so far (chapters 5–6), of the twenty-seven.

The Tribunal is built in families, each a Soul, a Flesh and a Wisdom, so a council is never one voice and a family can disagree with itself. The roles predict behaviour: the Flesh acts (Ghru'al would burn Annea to glass), the Soul senses (Thrum'oa hears the roots singing), the Wisdom weighs (Wer'ihon asks for “a scalpel, not a hammer”).

“They were merely stewards sitting on a borrowed throne.”

The Severance (chapter 2)

A trial, an exile and a fall in about 1,200 words. The chapter introduces a second universe, its nine gods and the book's other protagonist, and hands off to chapter 3 without a line of exposition.

"Ravea of the Seventh Sector," Nyt'oria's voice did not come from her face, but from the air itself—everywhere and nowhere. It was devoid of breath, a pure transmission of authority. "Your vitals indicate a cortisol spike of 400%. Fear is inefficient. State your defense."

"It is not fear, High Adjudicator," Ravea said, his voice cracking. "It is despair. Look at us. Look at this world. We have calculated the end of pi. We have mapped every atom of the Sector. There is nothing left to discover. We are rotting in our own perfection."

"Perfection is the goal," Tor'waks rumbled, the pistons in his arms hissing. "Stagnation is stability. Your chaotic variables introduce a 0.04% risk of collapse."

The plea: the Sector's gods answer despair with statistics.

"You speak of the Untethered," she stated. "The theoretical error in the universal code."

"It is not an error," Ravea whispered. "It is a garden."

"It is a virus," Nyt'oria corrected. "And you have been infected."

The turn: one metaphor against another.

Beat by beat

1 · Setting as judgement	"The world did not breathe here. It ticked." The chapter's first line defines the Sector by what it lacks.
2 · The court as a machine	Nine judges, each introduced by function: a reactor, a coolant tank, pistons, a dynamo, a lens. The reader meets a pantheon and an engine at once.
3 · The plea	Ravea argues for chaos in the language of data. His violet eyes are the only colour in the room.
4 · The turn	One metaphor decides the trial: a garden to him, a virus to them. The gap between the two words is the book's whole conflict.
5 · The sentence	"We do not delete. We repurpose." Punishment is subtraction: rank, memory, purpose. The pain is "ontological violation".
6 · The fall	"Until he hit the canvas." The last line hands off to chapter 3, whose opening BOOM the reader already heard at the end of chapter 1.

He tumbled out of the grey, ordered perfection of the Sector. He fell past the boundaries of logic, past the firewall of reality. He screamed as he hit the raw, chaotic friction of the Void—the space between the pages of the universe. The entropy clawed at his hollow shell, trying to unmake him, but his desperation formed a shield, a hard, diamond-like refusal to die.

He fell through the dark for an eternity, a comet of rejected math burning across the nothingness.

Until he hit the canvas.

The last paragraphs: the fall, and the hand-off to chapter 3.

Chapters 1 and 3 share the same impact, the BOOM, seen from the Canvas. Chapter 2 sits between them and reveals, out of order, what fell: the reader understands the crater before Wer'ihon reaches it.

Writing an outsider: Ravea, chapter by chapter

Ravea arrives with his memory and rank stripped out, unable to speak in the Canvas's air. His arc is written as a voice that gains words one at a time, each step marked by a scene.

CH.	STEP	WHAT HE SAYS	WHAT IT SHOWS
3	First contact	<i>"Kzzzt-thrummm."</i>	Not a word: static. His throat isn't made for this air.
3		<i>"Tik. Tik. Tik."</i>	Rhythm before language: he is trying.
5	First memory	<i>"Nyt... oria,"</i>	A name surfaces through the Resonance Wave; he doesn't know if she is a creator, an enemy or a function.
7	First sentence	<i>"Err... or. Coordinate... mismatch. Requesting... ext... raction."</i>	Through Lyssia's touch on the glass: system language, breaking up.
7	First agreement	<i>"I... accept... task."</i>	The covenant: he chooses, in the only grammar he has.
8	First opinion	<i>"Probability of mission termination: Absolute."</i>	A prediction that is also fear, or the closest thing he has to it.

The rules of first contact

Before he speaks, the world's rules fail on him one after another, and each failure tells the reader what he is:

- **Sovereignty slides off:** "The magic hit him and simply... slid off."
- **Healing repels him:** "It is as if his body rejected the very concept of life."
- **Translation fails:** "It is the sound of a machine trying to describe a sunset."

Then the plot turns his strangeness into a role. The Seal in the volcano would absorb any god who touched it and burn any mortal; Ravea, with no spark of the Fire in him, is the only one who can carry it:

He can walk into the Zero-Point and pick it up because there is nothing in him for the Ember to burn.

Wer'ihon, chapter 7. Rystak's version: "He's a pair of tongs".

His point of view has its own interface

In Ravea's scenes the prose switches to the grammar of a machine, so the reader feels how he processes a world of feeling. He doesn't have a flashback; he has "System Error: Previous State Retrieval".

HIS INTERFACE	WHAT THE MOMENT IS
<i>"Input: Retrieval."</i>	A memory, forced open by the Resonance Wave
<i>"Minus Rank. Minus Purpose. Minus Home."</i>	Grief, as subtraction
<i>"Query: Location."</i>	Being lost, felt by Lyssia through the glass
<i>"Task: Retrieval. Hazard: Absolute Heat. Role: Insulator."</i>	A mission briefing, translated into his terms
<i>"Input: Processed."</i>	Consent

What the book gives a game

I write the books' rules so they can become systems. These are the hooks I would build on, each taken from the manuscript, with the design question it answers.

IN THE BOOK	AS A SYSTEM	THE DESIGN QUESTION IT ANSWERS
Magic as a rank of speech (Sovereignty, Unification, Kha'shul)	Three tiers of verbs: commands that only work on what has "the concept" of obeying, polite speech that persuades, and definitions that rewrite	How does a character without a weapon have power? By what she can say, and to what
Burdens that flow: "It's too heavy for one. But it... it flows. Like water."	A shared load: the party passes heat, weight or corruption between its members to survive	How does a party feel like a team rather than four separate characters?
The Resonance-Cord: Lyssia sends Ravea images, not words	A translation puzzle: answer an alien with concepts (a diamond, a straight line through a circle) rather than sentences	How do you make communication itself the gameplay?
The insulator: Ravea has no spark to burn	A companion defined by immunities: the places only he can enter, the rules that don't apply to him	How does an outsider earn the party's trust? By doing what no one else can
Two cosmologies: the Canvas and the Sector	Two rule-sets for the same space: painterly physics that bends to will, grid physics that bends to calculation	How does a world reveal itself? By contrast
The narrator who watches	Loading-screen Notes, codex entries, and a late reveal of who "we" are	How do you tell lore without stopping play?

Set pieces already written as levels

- The Black Mirror: a riddle answered with a memory (ch. 4)
- The glass floor over the Gravity Engine, read by sound (ch. 4)
- The council of twenty-seven gods, each a different negotiation (ch. 5)
- The dive into the Cinder Spire, holding the insulator steady (ch. 8)

Chapter 4 has already become a playable game: my vertical slice *The Mouth of Silence* turned Kha'shul into a puzzle language. The rest of Book 1 is written with the same intent: every rule in the world is one a player could use.