

A BOOK OF THE EFILU LEGACY
DRAGON'S
HEIR

Glenn Parris

THE EFILU LEGACY: DRAGON'S HEIR: THE ARCHAEOLOGIST'S
TALE

Copyright © 2021 Glenn Parris. All rights reserved.

Published by Outland Entertainment LLC
3119 Gillham Road
Kansas City, MO 64109

Founder/Creative Director: Jeremy D. Mohler
Editor-in-Chief: Alana Joli Abbott

ISBN: 978-1-954255-26-5
EBOOK ISBN: 978-1-954255-24-1
Worldwide Rights
Created in the United States of America

Editor: Alana Joli Abbott
Copy editor: Scott Colby
Proofreader: Bessie Mazur
Cover Illustration: Mike Hamlett
Cover Design: Jeremy D. Mohler
Interior Layout: Mikael Brodu

The characters and events portrayed in this book are fictitious or fictitious recreations of actual historical persons. Any similarity to real persons, living or dead, is coincidental and not intended by the authors unless otherwise specified. This book or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of the publisher except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.

Printed and bound in the United States of America.

Visit outlandentertainment.com to see more, or follow us on our Facebook Page [facebook.com/outlandentertainment/](https://www.facebook.com/outlandentertainment/)

The wall of Law, long standing as surrogate for justice, offered stability impervious to change. Its fortification shines as an Efilu triumph for all to see. Still, walls are peculiar things. They keep the unwanted out while constructing a perfect prison for their creators. The Efilu forged their barrier around a treasury of sins, a weightless burden until the debt comes due. Sixty-five million years have yet to wash the Exodus's taint from the Alum. Atonement, inexorable, painful, and righteous, must reunite all the children of Fitu. For the Alum renders one inevitable constant in the universe... change.

Prophecy of Dragon

— TABLE OF CONTENTS —

Prelude — The Keepers’ Gambit.....	7
Part 1 — A Plague of Tygers and Dragons.....	11
<i>The Seat of Power</i>	<i>13</i>
1 - The Archaeologist.....	14
2 - Dance of Passion	22
3 - Exposé	46
4 - Vista	62
5 - A Season in Hell.....	72
6 - Home Search	82
7 - Backtrack.....	93
Part 2 — Eminent Domain	107
<i>Home Again</i>	<i>109</i>
Interlude: The Lord, the Crone, and the Sailor.....	111
8 - False Hope	113
9 - Modus Operandi.....	130
10 - Niches	144
11 - Flight School	153

12 - Babble	163
13 - Attacked	175
14 - Star Wars	180
15 - Seizure	191
16 - Stealth Technology	199
17 - A Rat in the Cage	214
18 - They Who Wait.....	226
19 - Superheroes	232
20 - Mourning's Solace	245
21 - Hacker	255
22 - Oracle.....	268
23 - The History Lesson	275
24 - La Cosa Nostra	289
Part 3 – Efilu Rex	303
<i>Guideposts in the Dust</i>	<i>305</i>
Interlude: The Lord, the Crone, the Sailor, and the Jing	306
25 - The Art of War	308
26 - Escape from Alcatraz	324
27 - Battle Lines.....	343
28 - Armageddon	362
29 - Salvation and Ruin	375
30 - Phoenix.....	383
31 - The Diet of Tiest	390
Epilogue	406
<i>Shepherds of Lost History.....</i>	<i>412</i>
The Abridged Jing Pen Translator	413

PRELUDE

— THE KEEPERS' GAMBIT —

Sun rays breached an indigo horizon off coastal Maine. As night retreated westward from the morning's assault, cold light failed to thaw the lingering frost. Sorensen's Tavern played errant haven to the lonely port of call jutting defiantly over Howard Cove. Brackish waters lapped barnacled piles underpinning the pier. The rickety establishment seemed to sway, humble and mostly unwanted—but then that was the point. An ordinary day at an out of the way watering hole, prowled by wayward seamen and petty criminals.

Its opened window admitted a fresh breeze, cleansing the stench of spilled beer and sour sweat wafting from the walls, tables, and floor. The whole pub seemed to doze as it recuperated from a good rabble-raising the night before. For two enigmatic patrons, inconspicuous would not suffice. They needed to be ignored.

A one-eyed sailor sulked at the window, peering absently past his moored ship to the ocean beyond. *How many more "ordinary days" are left?* His eye found the mirror behind the bar, and he considered the ordinary reflection therein. The old man mused.

It could be so nice to be a Nelky. To Blend! Completely unseen by human eyes.

"I heard that." A woman's voice chided him, so feeble as to affect a willful sotto voce. Settled in on his blindside, this woman, who appeared of Chinese extraction, nursed a teacup, freshly poured full and nested in a matching saucer, its contents yet too hot to drink. "—And it's *Melkyz* now, I hear." The very portrait of patience and sagacity, the frail figure pinched the cup handle delicately. The woman's bearing cast an air of seniority relative to her companion's.

"They're coming." The old mariner half turned toward her and winced. He snugged his moth-eaten skullcap down and warmed his hands around the steaming mug of coffee he'd set on the bar.

"Why so surprised?" asked the Chinese woman. Thin and hunchbacked, with a deep, wrinkled countenance, she perched on the seat next to him as she spoke. "We knew our diaspora would return one day." Steam rose from her tea, fogging a glass eye, as she lifted the cup to her lips. "Fortunately, we have prepared."

"Yes, we were wise to keep the Exodus Corridor clear," the sailor remarked, peering out toward the harbor. He brushed his patch down securely over his empty eye socket, one he had never bothered to fill with a prosthesis.

"Remember who we're dealing with!" The old woman's words were lost as the foghorn shook her slight frame on the stool. The horizon remained blue and clear as far north, east, and south as one could see. An intimate, telepathic query confirmed that neither she nor her companion had permitted fog to roll in this morning. She returned her attention, and one good eye, to her confidante, meeting his monocular gaze with intensity.

"Yes. We know what their response will be if they find we've been guiding Fitu's fate," the sailor said aloud when the lighthouse had finished its sound test.

The barkeep worked his way to their end of the countertop, wiping down the beer-stained wood as he hobbled. He was fat and bald, but had both his natural eyes. He gave a casual good-morning nod to the sailor, ignoring the old woman and what appeared to be idle chatter between them.

Unforced anonymity. No psychic tracks. The elderly pair remained silent for long moments until the portly man finished his brief chore and limped on his way. Here, away from the ears, eyes, and minds of any who might expose them, they could afford to contrive their plans in the old ways, casually and out loud in the midst of chaos. The two abettors indulged in delicious recklessness.

“Remnant Efilu technologies have been restored to pristine working order with marvelous creativity.” She allowed herself the smallest crease of a smile. “We must waste no time in clearing the museum. We can’t leave any traces of how we directed Jing—human—evolution.”

Layers of grime stained the sailor’s weathered face with accents of sienna deep into the wrinkles flanking his mouth. “What of our poor children?” the old man asked, displaying the first hint of any compassion between them. “We can’t save them all.”

“Nestled in the Exodus Corridor and powered up, our Jing Pen museum is sure to be detected when the Efilu return,” he said. “We must fold the edges of space-time around the remnant technology.”

She tilted her head and gazed fondly at the barkeep stacking glasses at the end of the room. “How elegantly we engineered our Toys,” she preened with more than a hint of pride. “Hewn from sterile clay, we’ve fashioned the Jing Pen to play gods to our precious Jing, shepherding a Humanity that now stands, an independent swell of fire and water in *their* image and *ours*.”

“And our fingerprints are all over them, too,” the old man retorted.

“Yes, on the Toys, but not on our Jing,” she said, her assertion rich with maternal ferocity. “We can demonstrate that the Alom crests in them without our help! What has happened once can happen again. The One venture nears fruition. Not even psychic geniuses of the Efilu Realm can *Turn* them—and that with only sixty-five million years of work.” The crone frowned. “The Jing Pen shall be Humanity’s last line of defense if the Alom flows turbulent and war comes.”

“War?” the sailor spoke in a husky whisper through gritted teeth. “War is a contest between equals. You boast of Toys wielding sixty-five-million-year-old technology.” He huffed. “Antiques. Our highland friend fears the One Experiment is on the verge of failure, at best. At worst, the Greater Society will elect to end us all.”

The matron peered sympathetically at the bartender. “The cerebral inhibition lobules will protect these Jing, but the poor creatures cannot engage in intimate discourse with one another—not the surface-dwellers, anyway.”

“Gray matter enrichment tricks.” The sailor’s face sagged. “Their only advantage is that the psychic inhibition field will silence *all* parties, Efilu and mammal alike. We can only hope our long-gone kindred will be baffled by the loss of innate contact long enough to make mistakes.”

The dowager gazed into the distance with firm resolution, raised her cup again, and decreed softly, “Cut ties with the Masons, the Illuminati, and all regional secret societies. They’re on their own now.” She concluded the conversation with grim, tight lips. Then she finished her tea.

— PART I —

**A PLAGUE OF
TYGERS AND DRAGONS**

THE SEAT OF POWER

Tiest, a world fashioned around a gas giant to be the Efilu capital.
It rotates stellar dimensions with purpose:
Bedrock to Alom, The River of Fate.
To nourish vast, massive, ever thirsty roots.
Tree of Ages engineered in turn to cradle an ancient city.
Not so small a place, and visible from high orbit.
This citadel serves as Seat of Power, The Round Table.
One Realm, One People, One Future.
This Eminent Domain, an elaborate monument to Efilu hubris.
An apparition,
endowed with a mystique,
and worshipped as a God.

Chapter One

— THE ARCHAEOLOGIST —

A pool of glistening gray rippled in its pedestaled basin, the gloom of the dais broken only by a solitary lamp. The vessel's shell, adorned with runes inscribed and embossed upon it, lay centered on the altar. A male figure, small compared to many of his spectators, crept out of the darkness, bearing a precious relic central to the rite.

As eldest meg of the Melkyz House of Kemith, the duty fell to the son of the dead. He raised his burden above his head, offered a silent invocation, then unwrapped the disarticulated members. Well versed in the ceremony, even profound grief did not distract the Kemithi heir apparent. He performed the revival as it had been executed time and again through millions of generations with traditional verbal chants in the Common tongue. Only discipline kept him from projecting thoughts of overwhelming grief for all to hear. The intimate, psychic projection universally employed among the species of Efilu for ages, strangely felt now too personal to share.

The power to animate the argent-jet flecked syrup, as if driven by the Alom's Fire of Life, was small consolation, given the subject.

The staging ritual culminated in the immersion of severed hands, tethered together like a pair of gloves by thick nerve fibers. Upon completion of his grim chore, the orphaned minister retreated into silent shadows. Again, he reverted to archaic verbal expression in a paradox of intimacy. The title, *Ati*, dying on his lips, he suppressed the accompanying *goodbye mother*.

Once submerged in the mercurial nectar, cold digits of still-supple flesh writhed, delicate and nearly alive. Fingers contracted, then reached out of the bowl as they spawned Vit Na's Animem—her lifetime's memory incarnate. Wrought from shimmering nano-synthetic silt, Vit Na Iku coalesced. An innocent witness, conjured to lifeless substance, knelt incomplete at the behest of the living.

Her audience settled into their seats, eager to learn details omitted from the mind-numbing records presented by the *ReQam*'s surviving crew. The mission log fully examined, though informative, satisfied not one council member. The leaders of the Efilu Greater Society, guided by laws too long held to abandon, beckoned the shadow to give her testimony. Judgement of this heir to Fitu required profound knowledge in this place where direct, intimate communication was impossible. To decide the destiny of Man, the Efilu needed more.

Instantly upon becoming sensible, Vit Na recognized the hallowed Hall of the Round Table. A spotlight highlighted her form as she rose to her feet, half-formed eye sockets already searching her surroundings. Once again, she was on Tiest, capital world of the vast Efilu Realm. Tiest, where the end began.

"Greetings, Surrogate Major," the First Impressor formally hailed her return, telepathically projecting the ritual recitation. "Speak you now on behalf of these mammalian claimants' merit."

The realization of why she was here and what was required weighed heavily on her, even during her reconstitution. Her technicraft ghost would perform as Surrogate Major on behalf of

this mammalian claimant's virtue. As a newly formed Animem, she projected the Iku oath of submission: "I rise to serve."

The ship's entire surviving crew had been dismissed, save High Commander Tur, who remained silent in the shadows, struggling against deep waves of emotions. Vit Na's revenant beauty begged his touch again. Still, his heart ached as he watched the perfect, familiar stranger. Her dark eyes locked with Tur's for a long moment of recognition, then reluctantly focused on the authors of the technology that had summoned her.

Drawing a deep breath, more out of habit than necessity, the avatar stretched phantom limb and tail. Finally, taking on the balance of her vital features, the Animem, Vit Na Iku, spoke one mind to many at the Council's command.

"I was never a prophet. The gift of prescience would have rewritten my fate were I so. These fur-mites, as we came to deride the hairy creatures ages ago, are no longer mere vermin. All evidence indicates that they are indeed descended from those little mammals we left behind during the Exodus. Whether they are natural, extant Jing or genetically engineered Jing Pen is contention for another time. I will proceed from the premise that they are Jing—banal mammalian children of Fitu."

"Turtle-spit." The anonymous telepathic expletive intimately pierced the minds of every other member of the Council in the darkened chamber.

Vit Na Iku continued without pausing. "I anticipated your objections, though I can neither hear nor address them, so bear with me, please." She paced the dais with all the grace and poise that characterized her life as the tenacious spotlight followed her.

An audible murmur underscored the telepathic protests to the Animem's suggestion, but the soul-recording was not interrupted again.

"By our reckoning, sixty-five million years is time enough for a group of species—even mammalian species—with sufficiently

advanced traits to evolve, to fill vacant niches. Some of them filled ours. The society we encountered, Humanity, now calls our Fitu 'Earth' by way of record. The key question is: do they rise to the required level of Efilu standards?"

Again, came the lone intimate mental projection: "Granted, these milk-suckers might develop sentience, even language, maybe even some rudimentary semblance of intimate communication—but gain higher awareness of the Alom stream and recognize their place in it? Never!"

"Still, they seemed to have compensated for this failing with single-species dominance, among other adaptations," the Animem continued. "We doubted that mammals could have survived the aftermath of the fragment impact when our ancestors determined that *we* could not.

"Tur and his executive staff postulated that many saprophytes and arthropods could have survived on decaying organic matter—a simple, but stable food network for small creatures. Perhaps mammals cannibalized one another, supplementing with grubs and fungi. This has been documented in cases of Jing famine on our worlds."

"They are ALL our worlds!" the dissenter interrupted again with authority, shocked that anyone could consider it otherwise projected along with the words.

Vit Na continued her report, unperturbed. "This could have sustained a diminished population until the sun emerged from its wintery sleep. The blanket of soot and cloud would have begun to clear the atmosphere in a few hundred years, allowing plant seeds to germinate again.

"These biped Jing descendants have become wickedly cunning," Vit Na Iku's thought projection almost hissed. "These...*Humans*. There are traces of the Keepers throughout this Jing empire, at least by inference, so we do suspect their handiwork. As far as we

can tell, however, they played no direct part in this mammalian evolution or engineering scheme.”

A thought rose from the dark. “Could this evolutionary mimicry be natural?”

“They could never have survived the end of the world,” drawled another mind-voice, his silhouette hidden among steely, wooden arches of the crowded hall.

“Who knows?” Vit Na shrugged. “The Si Tyen Keepers specialized in the impossible. We do know this: The Quatal had no part in the administration of the Poison. We vanquished an alien race for treachery that was not theirs. Maybe the toxin’s effect of mental dulling clouded our judgement. Maybe we just wanted the alien presence of the Quatal gone. The truth is so much more complicated; we conclude that the Poison was likely visited upon us from within our own ranks.”

At this, the discord among the Council became a clammer of minds, but Vit Na pressed on.

“I’m just an archeologist,” she projected. “One who should never have embarked on this venture, I might add. The Greater Society’s collective animated memory extends well before our departure from Fitu. We still have maps and city specifications that predate the Exodus. The crew of the *ReQam* should have *known* where to look for clean, yellow algae. What of value could I contribute?” Vit Na Iku paused, as if waiting for an answer that she could not perceive. The Animem spoke again. “As it turns out, only this: the Alom must have preordained my presence for a singular purpose—to convey an intricate knowledge of human events such as no other Efilu could. As Saymon once said, ‘Even the most humble of souls may be venerated, if the Alom’s currents so favor.’

“How pretentious I’ve always considered that proverb. Never was it my intention to make the name ‘Vit Na of Kemith’ an embarrassment to our family. I’m sorry... ‘Vit Na Iku.’”

Tur interrupted, "It's easy to forget that she's no longer among the living, from the perspective of this psychic maelstrom of input. My fellow crewmates assisted her in organizing her thoughts, hence this incongruous Animem image perspective. There was simply no time for a finer-tooled solution. Some kind of Jing interference, we suspect. May the surviving House of Kemith forgive this offense."

After a nod to the mission commander, the First Impressor urged with a calming psychic tone, "Please continue, Iku."

"What we discovered about the little furry vermin, now known as Humans, is of paramount importance," Vit Na said. "Besides the absence of intimate senses, down pelts, or tails, they have come to resemble us in most disturbing ways. They mimic our architecture and even our political structure. Without legacy artifacts from us as templates, how could this be without the tutelage of the Keepers? Ceremonial images of Si Tyen are found worldwide, inscribed with runes pronounced 'Dragon' in the dominant tongue." She vocalized the word phonetically for all to hear, the first words spoken aloud among them.

"'Dragon?'" an incredulous voice asked aloud in accompaniment to his intimate query. "Did you mean to say—'Dragon,' Iku?"

"Yes, the very name of the self-same Tyen who declined rescue at the time of the Exodus—a most damaging indictment, to be certain. If Dragon's Keepers of the Faith cult were in any way involved, we may be compelled to destroy the Jing Pen and scorch the planet. But if not..." She paused to allow the historic significance of sponsorship duty to settle over the Council. Through the haze of Animem perception, a statuesque, winged figure loomed, motionless in the shadows. Vit Na Iku could not name him, yet she knew him somehow. Even in death, she feared him, but she had an oath to fulfill.

"As we all know, what happened once, could happen again...or before."

A thought rose from murmured objections. "Are you implying that this cognate Jing branch of the Alom may have been left behind during the Exodus?" The notion hung in the air, repugnant to all present.

"Possibly," she said. "We may be obliged to invite the Jing into the Efilu Realm. They could qualify as a Lesser Society of their own; their scant numbers barely amount to six billion. Hardly a political threat to even the smallest society."

An undercurrent of protest rose again as Vit Na Iku, endearingly reminiscent of her legacy, gestured for calm. "I can only guess at the dispute breaking out among you, my sage Council-meren, but this dilemma is born of our own negligence. We have made precious few changes to our laws in sixty-five million years.

"Ironically, the Jing have a word that they use to describe a person or organization that has become obsolete or fails to remain competitive. They call them 'dinosaurs.' Coincidentally, this is also the word they use to describe fossil remains of wild animals and livestock from our time on Fitu. Their prevailing belief is that *we* all died in the wake of the fragment impact. They credit their survival to their own resourcefulness and superior genetic traits."

As if sensing the stunned silence in the room, Vit Na Iku hesitated a beat before projecting, "If we're not careful, their words will become prophetic."

The Iku visage sat on her haunches as she whisked her gaze across the room she observed only through the lens of death. The cogent portion of her testimony concluded, Vit Na spoke directly one last time. "For security purposes, I hereby impart my Animem to the Greater Society Council. In so doing, I realize my family may never see this most personal of all chronicles. Rest assured that High Commander Tur is not guilty of any coercion in this decision. This terminal choice was mine alone."

Tur shifted uncomfortably on his haunches, but kept his thoughts to himself.

“Note that there is a coded segment herein.” Somehow, her eyes found his. “As is my right, access to this portion of the Animem shall be restricted to Tur for the duration of his lifespan. The content is of a purely personal nature and of no significance to anyone else. Please convey my regrets to Clan Kemith.”

Her son glared briefly at Tur then bowed his head in acceptance of his mother’s final wishes. A violation of traditional intimacy, the entire council would now experience her life as she saw, heard and felt it, a privilege usually reserved for the immediate family and select clan.

Vit Na Iku announced, “Prepare to initiate sequence! Begin.”