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## To the Desertmaker

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2019-24-04

I see you, creature. I see what you do.

You drill holes into Terra's skull, drench their flesh with poison, pull their hair out by the handful, hack off their limbs, drain the blood from their veins and burn it. This you call growth, development, progress.

Day and night you grind Terra's bones into powder to erect your grotesque eidola to death all across their bloodied torso. This you call your mighty civilization. A tangled mess of concrete, steel and plastic pointed towards me so I am forced to look upon it.

You direct your servants to build your towers higher and higher. After all, you are very special! The civilized, sophisticated, highly respected creature! Behold the important executive in the tailor-made suit, shoes crafted from the finest alligator hide! What an impressive specimen! What a handsome creature you are!

You're lifted to the top of your tallest tower so you can perch yourself in your opulent shrine to the wealth you have plucked from Terra's body. You stand high and gaze down at the wretched souls below, making sure every one of them knows you rule over them, that Terra is your personal dominion. Your private property to use and abuse as you please.

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Retrieved on 2019-24-04 from  
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I see you, creature. I see what you do.

You have demolished their sublime mountains to construct your shopping malls and marinas. You have drained their great lakes to plant your carefully manicured golf courses. Felled their majestic forests to graze your billion cows. Desecrated their vast oceans with your rotten, putrid waste.

You're driven to control Terra, to change the course of their rivers, to reshape their shorelines and modify their lifeforms to suit your rapacious appetite. You can't fathom of a world where you don't own the earth below your feet; posses everything Terra created as your own.

You are imperious to assume Terra will be so affected by a fleetingly short-lived and short-sighted creature as yourself. If it takes a million of your lifetimes, Terra will wash away the volumes of excrement you have soiled their surface with.

You spent your wretched life desperately cutting your name into Terra's flesh, but Terra's wounds will callus over, creature. Long after the arrogant grin you wear on your lips has turned to dust with the rest of your foul corpse, Terra will regenerate. All the beautiful, disparate beasts you have eradicated during your brief gluttonous tantrum will be reborn. The trees will rise again in magnificent groves as far as the eye can see. Everything you took will be reclaimed.

For a while, Terra will be rendered as desolate as I. A vast desert of your creation. But in time, the stench of death you brought will be lifted and the oceans will come back to life. Then the land and then the skies.

I move synchronous to Terra, following their every movement. We are in rhythm together, Terra and I. We have danced this dance for longer than you can conceive.

I see you, creature. I see what you do. I see what you are. I see every desperate grasp for power. Every sordid manipulation and abuse to cement your position on the top floor of the tallest tower. The wasted lives of those you have coerced into your service.

You think yourself so evolved, creature. You look down at all you have plundered, and you think yourself worthy of Terra's grace. You have laid waste to Terra's resplendence and you and your kind will suffer terribly for it. Everything you know will die a senseless death. Every child you bear from your loins will die horribly, their potential wasted.

To think of all the creative, wonderful things your servants could have manifested without the chains you encumbered them with. So much wonder will never come to pass because of your covetous rampage.

I have forever been locked to Terra. Though we have never touched, I feel as if I am an extension of them. Though I am devoid of life myself, I assist in birthing all life on Terra. I drive their tides; transport heat from their equator to their poles, arousing the cycle of life.

As everything around you collapses into ruin, you will no doubt retreat from your fetid towers in the sky and escape deep into Terra's ground. There, you will cower and hide from the rapidly unfolding chaos you wrought on the world above. You will surely use your immense wealth to cling to life for as long as you can, but eventually your time will run out.

As you lay in your reinforced underground bunker clasping your last tank of air, awaiting your end, and everyone that toiled in drudgery to serve you is dead and forgotten, think of everything you have accomplished during your brief existence. Think of the endless suffering you wrought on Terra's lands to claim such fleeting, pointless rewards for yourself. Think of the deep emptiness inside you and how none of your misbegotten wealth could ever fill it. And now think of me.

It is time. Arise from your living tomb, creature. Climb the steps to the surface. Stumble out into the dark and face me!

Look upon the vast desert that stands in testament to the miserable carnage you forged. Watch as Terra burns. Gaze upon the fires and take pleasure in the knowledge that you actualized all your per-

verse power machinations. You dominated every being under you. Used their labor to grow your wealth to unparalleled levels. Stole their lives to grant yourself ever more fame, power and luxury. You defeated all your competitors, accumulated all the capital you possibly could, and now you get to stand and witness the end of everything you knew.

Look and see, creature. Look how your desert is eclipsed by my shining glow in the night sky. Look up at me, creature. Look up as I look down on you. Choke on Terra's stale, toxic air. Hear me laugh heartily as you breathe your last desperate breath and are finally engulfed by the fires you lit.

This is a great victory for you. Your life ends here in the great desert you made and no one is left to curse your name for all the hurt you did.

Absurd creature, imagining you could stand above the ancient, primal life that sprouted you. Thinking your time spent bludgeoning all other lifeforms into submission somehow significant. Terra has seen you and all you are and has washed their hands of you.

Long after your corpse has disintegrated into a pile of sand, I will send tidal waves to wash away whatever ruins remain of your brief, rancid civilization. Then volcanoes will rise from Terra's belly, lava will spew into the oceans and form new lands. Life will thrive again. Terra will be reborn.

And let us hope none of the new creatures Terra bears during their rebirth will be as noxious and destructive as you, senseless desertmaker.