



Ivo khan

The kill, the hunt and the fall

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“Change is unavoidable and all is ephemeral. All there is left is here and now, the present. For how tragic this is, it gives me peace, it reveals the truth”.

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Introduction

As the legend goes, King Atte Ivarsson of Brattingsborg, king of Ivo, was a tyrant who was punished by the gods by sinking his kingdom into Ivos lake and turning his treasure into shells with a skull printed on them. A millennium later, Ivos island will suffer a new catastrophe, this time caused by the hand of a man who will exploit its land with no concern, scarring forever its landscape.

Here is the story of a man of honest intents turning into a villain, the rage of a depicted God that once loved him, the rise and fall of an empire and the tragic ephemerality of life which we dare not look in the eyes.

Chapter I- Dragon Eye

“First kill the monster, then hunt, then kill one another. It was the epitome of all that happened since primordial times.” *Roberto Calasso*

Ivo, son of Gonar the shepherd, lived in Terades, the land of god Mardok. As a young man Ivo was gentle, honest and ambitious. He prayed to the gods to give him strength, courage and a pleasant future. Every time he catch a pray, kill a goat or harvest, he will make a offering to the gods and shared the rest with those in need.

The Gods where pleased with Ivo and his sacrifices and decided to reward the young man. One day the god Zino, son of Mardok, disguised as an old man, came by Ivo while he was attending to his sheep and asked for some water. Ivo, not having water with him, asked the old man to wait there until he could return with some fresh water for him to drink. Just as promised the young man came back with a goads skin full of water and offered it to the hold man. The man thanked Ivo and asked him to accept a small gift in return for his kindness. He handed Ivo a glass ball, the size of an apple. Ivo thanked for the gift even not knowing what of use that objects could be.

The glass ball was the eye of the dragon Argi, whom the god Zino slayed in revenge for having molested his mother Manet. The dragon eye could see through the stars and show the path for fortune.

The same night Ivo sat on his bed and stared wandering why the man would give him such a strange gift, while starring into the glass ball he could somehow see something, at first some threes, hills, then entire countries. Ivo was amazed by the strange object and looked into it again. This time he could see him self on a journey, he was on a boat, sailing towards an island and the sun there was so high that the light coming out of the glass ball made it impossible for him to stair into it any longer. Ivo felt in ecstasy and that night felt a sleep with a smile on is lips.

The day after Ivo decided to follow the vision he had the previous night and took for the journey that would change his life. The voyage was long but the gods assisted him by giving him shelter and food as needed and securing free passage wherever Ivo travelled to. After some time the young man, finding himself into a boat, recognised the island he could see from aboard. It was the same island he saw in the dragon eye. He was now certain to have reached the right place and with excitement landed on the island.

What a beautiful place that was, no man foot ever touched the uncontaminated landscape, the land was rich with vegetation, birds and animals of various speeches. The waters were clear and abundant with fish and seafood of all kind. “The gods donated me the greatest gift”, said Ivo to himself. “I will make a sacrifice in their honour.”

The young man went looking for something special to give to the Gods. While gathering what he thought would please them, he stumbled on a hill, no trees or grass grown from it. At his surprise Ivo realised that the hills were entirely made of clay, but that wasn't an ordinary clay, it's colours were of the most beautiful shades of pinks, yellows, red, brown and emerald green. The young man was mesmerised by it's beauty and decided that that would have made the perfect gift for the gods. And so did he and so were the Gods pleased.

Some days passed by and by now the young man explored the island and was able to sustain himself with food and shelter. One day he found himself on top of the clay hills that he stumble on the first day he arrived in the island. He then grabbed some clay on his hands to admire its beautiful colours, just there was a vein of water coming out of the earth, the clay looked different there, as it was being wet by the water. Ivo took some of it on his hands and started to shape the clay, first at random, then slowly the shapes took more defined forms.

Ivo took some clay with him so that he could spend his evenings modelling. One night, not pleased with what he created, he threw the modelled clay into the fire that warmed him. The day after, after gathering some wood for his fire and preparing to start a new one, he found the clay he threw the night before. At his surprise the clay transformed from a plastic lump of earth into a rock hard material. He quickly recognised the potential of clay and decided to declare the island for himself in order to secure that no one other than him would have access to such a magical material.

The God Zino heard Ivo thoughts and stated his disagreement. He said: “Ivo, why do you desire something that has already given to you? Isn't enough for you to be merely a guest of this island? Do you Ivo want to become a Khan?”

To which Ivo replied: “What do all man want? I just want it more.”

“Do you really want it? Take it!” Replied Zino, then agreed to please him, he set Ivo to a prove to see if he was honest in his intents.

Ivo had to go through the test of the mouth of truth. This was a large marble mask with a open mouth, inside the mask was the devil Mercury, which was also the protector of trade and even of cheating. Zino presented Ivo to the open mouth of Mercury, if Ivo intentions were honest he could enter his hand into the mouth and take it out unhurt, contrary his hand would be eaten.

Ivo felt distressed by this challenge as he recognised that his feeling where not pure. In order to hide his true meanings he then painted his hand with olive oil, covering in this way the taste of his impurity. Zino held Ivos hand inside the mouth for long time, but with his trick Ivo passed Zinos test and the island became his.

Chapter II- The Alchemist

While washing away the olive oil from his hands, Ivo felt amused by his clever trickery towards the god Zino and slowly started to think that if he could fool a God, he could easily do the same to any man. He started thinking how he could gain profit from the clay he discovered in the island and in short time, being a clever and ambitious man, set up a plan to produce objects of commodity. Of course he couldn't do the work by him self as this required many working hand, so he traveled to the closest village to find the solution to this. On a market day, after gathering the attention of a large crowd, he charmed a group of people to come and work for him in the island in exchange of fortune and fame. "I am the grate Alchemist!", he said, and showing a lump of soft clay in one hand and a ceramic figurine in the other said: "Only I can turn earth into stone! Because the Gods love me, they gifted me with this power, but the Gods love you too! It is the Gods that sent me here today, so that I could share my luck with you. Come with me then and you will have more than you never had. Wont you like to sleep in a warm house, or have your own mule to work your lands, wont you have new shoes for your children and fresh food on your table? Come then with me and I will show you how to live amongst the Gods."

Ivo sold his dream to many of the villagers, most of them had nothing of their own and the sound of his promises where sweet like nectar. The same day a full ship sailed to the island and Ivo didn't waist time to get them working.

The clay hills were so large that was difficult to define their size, the breeze that in the late evening came from the lake that surrounded the island, tasted of berries and wild roses. When the workers came to the hills were enchanted by the beautiful scenery, this confirming that indeed this must have been the house of Gods. Ivo came rushing towards the workers and divided them in groups of twenty. Twenty mans for digging the clay, twenty for caring it from the mines, twenty for sailing the clay into the village harbour and twenty more to transform it into hard material.

The work began and for the first ninety days seamed to be gone fine. The workers were in harmony with one other, thy were feed accordingly to theirs needs, the housing wasn't the best, but it takes time to build proper lodging, and Ivo promised that soon enough they will all have their own house. The products started selling well around the village, so well in fact, that the village next to it started buying ware, increasing in this way the production. The workers where not fast enough for the demand and Ivo decided to get to the island two-hundred more working people, a month later

400 more came, and at the end of the year there were more than 2500 workers scattered around the island.

The request for new items was so high that the shovel and hoe weren't enough for digging the clay any more, so the workers turned to use greek fire, a diabolic invention that had the power to blow the guts of earth in one stroke.

The beautiful hills soon turned into mines. The work become increasingly hard, the workers complained because they had to stay in the island for months at the time, before returning to see their families, the houses where not suited for the coming winter and they got nearly half of the money they were promised to be payed.

On the other hand all their work started to create a large profit for Ivo, whom grow every day more happy for fortunes and power. But he was scared that his authority wouldn't be respected, after all he never had a position of this kind or even near in his entire life. What did he know, "I am only a shepherd, and sheep follow each other", said to him self. "And when they go in the wrong direction I rely on my dog, he knows how to set them in line". And there and then he decided to select for each group of twenty workers a leader. He talked to all the workers and selected theirs leader after how feared they were by theirs fellow workers. Ivo came to pick up the most violent and ruffles of them, people that in other cases would be destine to end up in jail or have a unhonoured death. Is conclusion was that fear would be the most adequate solution to keep the workers being most productive and unmotivated for complains of any kind. The disciplinary punishment kept indeed the workers with their heads down and they never dared to question Ivo authority again.

Ivo now grow more rich and powerful and so did his ego, so much so to take him to break the promise he given to Zino the God. On the summer solstice of that year he arranged for the inauguration of his kingdom and under the star of Mercury he proclaimed himself with the new title of Khan, from that day he will be know as Ivo Khan.

Ivo Khan grow to be a manipulative and power thirsty man, he was known for his lavish parties and games, designed to keep his customers happy. In this way they will forget about his mischievous acts and kept buying the products that only the Khan, the grate Alchemist, could offer. In the same way, worried that his wealth wasn't growing as he wished, he fooled a wealthy countess to marry him, promising the love he never felt for her. The kingdom of Ivokan was built entirely on a lye, a false promise to the Gods.

Chapter III- Gods treasures

Ivo Khan was selling a dream, and surely the demand kept rising. The miners dug clay all day and all night, ships sailed the clay from one harbour to the next and in short time there was no clay left to be found. At this Ivo Khan, afraid once more to lose his treasures, called upon the Gods for help. He took a pile of gold from his chest and placed on an altar as a sacrifice to the Gods. Zino appeared to him and asked why he was there: "What now, what possibly would you want from me? Aren't you satisfied with your kingdom, aren't you happy as a Khan? And how dear you offer gold to the Gods? Gods can't use gold for nothing, as we treasure intentions more than the most valuable stone. What is that you want? I should throw you in the depths of this same lake you are standing on for having insulted my trust! I know of the trickery you played on me, and your vanity is grown above my patience".

"I know", replied Ivo Khan, "I know I mistreated your respect, and I agree, I should be punished for being so greedy and power thirsty, and sitting on the table of Gods without your invitation. But you are so mighty and merciful Zino! You can make me disappear with the blink of an eye, but your heart is as pure as the cry of a newborn baby. Listen to me now Zino, have mercy on me and help me for the last time, so that I can make up for my mistakes."

"What now", said Zino, "do you have the guts to ask me to help you? After all you did? And why should I do that?"

"You see all mighty, I want to repay for my debts, but in order to do so I need to dig more clay, but the only place where the clay can be found is under my kingdom. Would you with your majestic hand lift it for me so that I can take what I need?"

Ivo Khan's compliments pleased Zino, as the Gods love to be praised. He then accepted to help him for the last time and held the kingdom up with his bare hands. Ivo Khan hurried to dig what he could until the last piece of clay was taken. But the Khan's intention was not to repay for his misdeeds, once more he fooled the Gods. While he was engrossed with filling the last bags of clay for himself, Zino, whom can see everything, caught him red-handed and told him: "You despicable man! You have no heart or honour left in you, once more you despise me with your lies." Zino's eyes turned glowing red, "You will be damned!", shouted the God. Zino's hands started crushing the rock on which the castle was located, a violent roar was heard, and the kingdom sank into the depths and all its inhabitants perished.

Ivo Khan, seeing this happening jumped in despair on his horse and managing to take a chest of golden coins with him, escaped from the sinking kingdom.

When he found a safe spot to rest, looked into the chest to see how much he managed to save. He opened the chest and saw horrified that all coins were now turned into simple shells with a skull printed on them. He could not believe his eyes and turned the chest upside-down to see if there was any golden coins left. From the chest felt a note on a pice of cloth, on it were written these words: "What is in heaven and earth belongs to God".

Older people have survive to tell that when the waters of the lake are still and clear, it can be seen the pinnacles of the once proud kingdom. Ivo Khan, dammed by Zino, , was punished to forever go thirsty and hungry in the underworld despite being stood in a pool of water and almost within reach of a fruit tree.