

The Book Of Whales

For Meow Wolf Denver: Convergence
Station

COVER

[illustration note: a living whale "swimming" through the stars]

[in Eemian] The Book Of Whales

Cover verso

[Eemian pattern]

Page 1

[illustration notes: a whale covered in ice crystals]

Freeze +12 days

A whale washed up on shore today.

It's covered in ice, and a light dusting of snow, from before the air became too cold for snow. The suns only hover near the horizon, and refuse to rise. The sea has frozen over, and it reflects the stars in a peculiar and beautiful way, Mazat and Zilin, Atzin and Yeyi.

The city has mostly disappeared under ice, and it gets thicker every day. Everyone has taken shelter in the caves to the south, but we won't last long there. I'm told another whale has washed ashore to the north.

The jungles are quiet. Is this goodbye?

[In Eemian] The Navigators tried to warn us, but we didn't listen.

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[illustration note: Eemian people beginning to process the whale]

Freeze +70 days

Whoever might be reading this, far into the future: The planet wasn't always like this.

Once, Eemia was lush, covered in flowers, warmed by three suns, and when one burned out *They* gave us the Navigators, and a dance began that required us to have one foot on the planet and one in the stars, always, to prevent a reckoning, to prevent and endless twilight, to prevent an ice age. In the midst of this dance we travelled, and we studied, and we discovered, and our society was grand, and we and the Navigators shared a bond unique in the Multiverse. *They* brought an ancient, cosmic magic

with them, and when *They* disappeared into Eemia that magic became ours, and that magic protected and fed and illuminated our way of life for centuries. Once.

The whales' blubber is good for oil. Their meat will nourish us. We can shape the ice into structures. We are returning to the city.

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[illustration note: Mechs 1 and 2 frozen in ice]

Freeze +88 days

Remember them. They are not servants. They are not machines.

They are themselves. They are one. They are individual. They are alien, magical, biological, mechanical.

The Navigators came from a corner of the past that memory can no longer find. If you were to look inside of one-beneath the metal of an unknown stellar origin, within the bones beneath, the flesh, the blood-you'd find DNA, and something else, something that defies the science that defines the Multiverse: a genetic memory, vivid and encyclopedic, containing the memories of every Navigator that's ever traversed the Multiverse and lived and died. They remember the stars and planets and every flower on Eemia. They remember the colors of their pilots' eyes. They

remember the way the nebulas sounded on the long journey to Eemia, with *They*. They remember every planet, every moon, every word whispered to them, every gesture of love. They remember the taste of the vast emptiness between stars, sharp and metallic.

And they remember Helia, the undiscovered corner of the Multiverse where so many of them disappeared with their pilots. With us.

This is in the past, now. They've stopped communicating with us. A loss worse than death.

[in Eemian] One day, they will wake, and they will tell you our secrets. Trust them, and they will trust you.

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[illustration note: half-constructed buildings made of ice]

Freeze +102 days

The days are getting darker. Whale oil lights our new homes. All around are ice structures aglow from within. We've become little constellations in the night, birds like Zillin, vortexes like Atzin. Our jungles are encased in ice, in stasis, like they're sleeping. They will wait for us. I have to keep telling myself this. The planet isn't dead. The planet is waiting. And the

Navigators? Are they waiting, too? Why won't they tell us what they're waiting for?

Melting the ice is difficult. It isn't bothered by fire. Our old magic has left us.

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[illustration note: glowing Eemian flowers]

Freeze +157 days

These are flowers that used to grow here. They glowed with an ancient magic that none of us really understood, but felt deep within. Some of them we ate, others we grew in gardens because they were beautiful. All are under ice now.

[in Eemian] Who will weep for our dead flowers?

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[illustration note: a wormhole, spires sticking out of ice]

Freeze +204 days

A boy loved his mother, and his love froze a planet. Love has this power. We have to change, as the planet changes. We must continue to love our planet. A whale's bones give shape to the whale, and then shape to our homes, our clothes, our divinations. The sacred constellations are still with us. We are

at work building some semblance of a new city, on top of the old one. The winds are a challenge. The suns have become very small in the sky. Will they never rise again? Sometimes, the ice glows, like the flowers used to. Perhaps the magic hasn't left us. Life is hard, but we are strong.

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[illustration note: a mech that isn't Mech 1 or 2 in the stars]

Freeze +267 days

Sometimes I see shooting stars and I think, maybe they're us, lost Navigators and their pilots, lost to Helia. So far there have been no communications. There's a frozen lake nearby that I go out on and look up to the sky, and think about all the places we can't travel anymore.

Did we betray their trust? Their eyes have gone dark, and they have stopped appearing in our dreams. Once they trusted us, but now we are alone. Once, that trust had the power to rip apart space and time. Once, they looked into our eyes and we looked into theirs, and we saw there the beating heart of the Multiverse, and they said to us, *We will take you there*. And the ones that went never returned.

[in Eemian] They tried to warn us. As we aligned the planets and opened wormholes, they tried to warn us. Deep in space they

showed us their dreams, and their deep memories, and in them we saw a frozen planet, and bodies floating through a warm glow, like a womb, or a grave, or an ocean of time. They couldn't say no to our foolishness. They loved us too much.

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[illustration note: stars, nebulae, star dust]

Freeze +438 days

Ever since the sunlight left us, the stars are naked. There is no blanket of sky for them to hide behind. They are there for us to see them, always, every time we look up, to search for our suns. They are there to remind us of what we have lost. They are there to remind us of why we must live.

In their sleep, the Navigators have turned their faces to look at the stars, too. Do they miss them? We have stood in the frozen winds to plead with the Navigators, to yell at them, to cry on them, and still they remain silent. We are losing hope this winter will ever end.

[in Eemian] The ice is getting thicker. The air is getting colder. Will it never stop?

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[illustration note: the Cathedral being built]

Freeze +4 years

A monument to what was lost. Hope for what is yet to be found. Soon we will forget that the stars make music. We will forget what a nebula sounds like. We will forget the ribbons of dust illuminated by a faraway star. We will forget the light in the center of the Multiverse, and all who have been lost there.

But we have remembered the songs of the whales. We have remembered the light of the moons. We have remembered the protection of the stars.

Yesterday, we saw a pod of whales, swimming beneath the ice. Their eyes were like jewels. They will live, and so will we.

[in Eemian] My hands ache from the cold. But you must know these things. Please don't forget us.

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[illustration note: Mazat and Zilin constellations]

Freeze +11 years

Let me tell you about the stars in the sky.

Even as the planet changes, I can look up and see the four constellations that have for so long meant so much to our people. I feel their warmth.

In the old summer sky are the five stars of Mazat, the kleedeer: Amantys, Nevral, Floret, Zet, and Zun, his red eye that sees into the future and the past, but never the present. Mazat watched over the jungles, when there were jungles. His red eye has been watching since time long before *They* came. In the myths, when you look up at Mazat, you can see everything that ever was, except for yourself.

Zilin, the little dartbird, was lord of the spring. Iuliid, Lenetl, and Havra are Zilin's stars. Those who walked through the jungles were long wary of Zilin, who was said to disorient travellers with the beat of her wings. They said that you'd soon find yourself lost, in one of the old groves where planetary magic was strongest, magic that would turn your body into a bed of flowers while Zilin watched, eager for nectar.

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[illustration note: Atzin and Yeyi constellations]

Those that lived near the oceans looked up at the night sky and thanked Atzin for the fish and whales that sustained them, Atzin the vortex, forever churning in the southern skies, illuminated by Aca, Atzoa, Ammi, and Annet. Atzin has forever brought the rainy seasons to Eemia, until now. Perhaps now, Atzin brings the snow. The old myths are rewriting themselves for this new chapter of our history.

The last of the four cardinal constellations is Yeyi, mystical Yeyi, the three eyes, each which sees in all directions and into every dimension. Itta, Zalo, and Xala are its stars, each older than any other. Yeyi has long been the guardian of the unknown, of the farthest stars, of the lost Navigators, of everything in the Multiverse that science cannot explain. Yeyi saw *They* and the Navigators long before they came to us. Before the Navigators went silent, we often saw them looking up, into Yeyi's eyes, thinking things we would never understand.

This morning, we went to the frozen beaches and asked Yeyi when the winter will end. Some heard *Never*, some heard *Soon*. I heard nothing.

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[illustration note: a pod of whales, breaking through a frozen sea]

Freeze +109 years

This time of year, the whales can be found in the northern seas.

When their eyes freeze, they become like gems. When you look into them, you can see the future. You must look very hard. You must free your mind of everything else. You must trust them.

We have learned to put our trust elsewhere. We have learned to find other eyes to imbue with our dreams. We have learned to adapt the old technologies to melt the ice and shape it into this city that harbors us.

The whales in the northern seas don't want to die. But we must kill them, so that we can live. And what do I see in their frozen eyes, in the future? I see flowers.

[in Eemian] The scientists are singing again, on the ice plains. They are trying to wake the Navigators. Their voices are pure, like starlight, but they will never wake them.

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[illustration note: the complete cathedral]

Freeze +112 years

The final stone has been placed.

We gathered outside to gaze upon this achievement. Some people cried. The children sang. The scientists sent a song into the darkness, from the astral wave generator, a great organ that will send out signals into space, and perhaps into Helia itself, so far away. Behind us, the city glowed. From far away, we heard the answering song of the whales.

When we started building this monument, the planet had just changed. Today, there is no one alive who remembers the way life was before that. The scientists say there are jungles beneath the ice. I have to trust them.

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Freeze +152 years

Last night I had a dream that I was hovering above the planet, looking down on it, and beside me was the moon, and on the moon was a Navigator, and they were looking down at the planet, too. I opened my mouth to speak but found that I had no voice, but then The One On The Moon turned its great head to look at me, and in a quiet voice they said, *Time is a spiral*. When I looked back at the planet, it was green.

The scientists say that one day, the Navigators will wake. Before last night, when I looked at them, frozen on the ice plains, I felt nothing. But when I woke, I felt a loneliness so profound that there were tears on my cheeks.

Does no one realize the extent of what we have lost?

[in Eemian] This isn't the only dream I've had lately. I dreamed the entire Multiverse was shaking, and when it stopped, a great city had landed on our planet. I dreamed that my memories were not my own. I dreamed the Navigators woke. I dreamed that

flowers bloomed. What would the scientists say about this? What would they think?

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[illustration note: wild ice]

Freeze +296 years

Wild ice has destroyed the western reaches of the city.

It is a beautiful phenomenon, wild ice. It appears and disappears wildly, like a wraith or a dream. There is a sharp drop in temperature before it appears. One can feel this cold deep within. The sound of it is like a thousand mirrors shattering. It has a crystalline structure that reflects extraordinary colors.

The scientists, Kaleidogoths, they call themselves, they say that it cannot be predicted, as though it is a living thing. They say that at one time, a planetary magic protected us from such things.

That magic is gone. We must protect our cities ourselves.

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[illustration note: Kaleidogoths and the cathedral]

Freeze +478 years

This is our promise as Kaleidogoths:

We promise to decipher our past. We promise to respect our present. We promise to illuminate our future. We promise to utilize scientific methods in harmony with our ancient planetary magic. We promise to wake our jungles and our Navigators, no matter the cost, no matter the time. We promise that the realms of the stars will once again be ours, for exploration, for divination, for exaltation.

When you hear our songs in the darkness, remember our promise.

[in Eemian] We have begun to decode the Navigator's Memory Interval Wave, which could be key to gaining access to their memories. We have given ourselves completely to them, but still, they remain dark. What more can we do to gain their trust?

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[illustration note: the organ]

Freeze +607 years

There is magic in all music, from the carefully composed to the careless and improvised. Even a dying star will utter one last, transcendental song.

What meter will wake the Navigators? What harmonies must we weave?

We have found that the songs made on the astral wave generator attract the whales. They answer with their own mournful songs. We hope that it will attract the lost Navigators, who so long ago disappeared with their pilots into Helia.

Some of us are beginning to ask, is Helia real? Are our ancestors really there, waiting for us? Do the Navigators know the way?

[in Eemian] Do the whales share our pain? Do they pass along stories to one another about the planet that once was? Do they remember deep sea flowers, sunlight, or the days when they weren't hunted? Their numbers are dwindling. I feel pain for them. I play my songs for them.

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[illustration note: the Time Garden]

Freeze +913 years

A lightning bolt of incredulous joy: A Navigator has woken, if only for a moment.

A young woman sang for The One In The Southern Ice and for a brief but wondrous moment its eyes opened, and a small garden bloomed in a cave, in defiance of time and physics and the ice that should have strangled it. The flowers bloomed and bloomed, and kept blooming when they should have begun to die. A song has done this, a song that came not from the old hymns but from a young and inquisitive mind, inspired by the constellations, by trust, and by love, as the whales sing, as the stars sing.

This is the first time in 913 years that this planet has seen flowers. It won't be the last.

[in Eemian] I feel a great change coming. There's disorder among the stars. The whales can feel it, too. They are restless in the sea.

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[illustration note: elements of Convergence Street, Ossuary, Numina]

Convergence +1 day

The One In The Southern Ice and The One In The Northern Ice have woken. A new timeline has begun.

We find ourselves joined by memory to the people of three worlds, three worlds with histories and cultures of their own,

in some physical phenomenon. Where other convergences have shaken themselves apart, our has settled, and become still. Though just a small part of Eemia finds itself part of this convergence, we are now overtaken with hope, and possibility. This is the first contact we had with other worlds since the Navigator age. A new Navigator age is upon us. A new age of science and research is upon us. A new age of memory is upon us.

Our planet is still frozen. But an unstoppable seismic shift has shaken Eemia to its core, and all things now seem possible. Today, we give thanks to the stars, and to the ice, and to the whales. They have sustained us for a thousand years. It's our turn to sustain them.

[in Eemian] Our memories have been shaken. Do the Navigators feel it, too? Has their genetic memory been affected? One day, they may tell us.

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[illustration note: signals going up from the cathedral into the stars, and some coming back]

Convergence +25 years

Signals have come from the stars. They are ancient, and their cosmic signatures are scarred, but they are ours. They are us. The Navigators have heard them, too. Their orrery shines bright

in the sky, and through it we can once again explore the cosmos. Little by little, we are reclaiming our history.

There's a tenuous but lyrical instability of memory here. Our old stories and histories, once thought to be at risk, have instead spread and flourished in an extraordinary way. Everyday new people arrive here, asking to help, asking to carry our memories for us, to protect our old ways and contribute to the new. The empathy that once powered the Navigators across the Multiverse has transformed our culture. Our memories blossom like our old flowers.

We stand at a crossroads: As the Navigators wake, our ability to open wormholes once again comes within grasp. We could unfreeze the planet. We could travel to Helia. We could transform our whole society. But what would a wormhole do to Convergence? It would destroy it. We would have to deconverge. There are passionate debates about this. The High Priestess herself is torn on the matter. As Kaleidogoths, is it not our entire purpose to achieve this thing? To wake our planet, to return to the stars? But then what of the empathy that has brought us here? Our new neighbors, our new allies? I have never felt such uncertainty, and I fear a rift in our society is coming. But with our tenuous memory comes an undeniable bond with each other. We will prevail, no matter the course.

And what of the consequence, the erasure of our last thousand years? What is the worth of a memory that comes from the guardian of a sleeping planet? Tonight I went to the ice plains, to see the stars, to feel the cold, to hear the whalesong that echoes off the glaciers, to watch the spell cast by the northern lights. There is joy in this, this life, this reality. It isn't our longed-for past, but it is our sacred present. To know this beauty is to feel the planet's magic. The Multiverse has given us so much. Mazat, Zilin, Atzin, and Yeyi are still here. They have not left us. They will watch over us, always.

In the absence of sunlight, we have thrived beneath the stars. The whales have thrived beneath the frozen oceans. Our songs will protect us. We must never forget.

Inside of back cover

[illustration of a pod of whales swimming between glaciers]

Back cover [encased in ice, no illustrations]