The Saligia
by Sladys Teo
Why have the both of you come?

Why? Or how?

It makes no difference.

I left my realm 200 years ago. And I asked for my wishes to be respected. The Saligia has granted me my peace thus far, and I am grateful for that.

Tell me!

SO why are the both of you here?

We have come to bring you home, Brother Wrath.

And we will not leave till we do so.

I WANTED you to come home, Wrath.

I see. And you, Pride? Why did you come looking for me?

I came because I wished to. And Lust desired company on the road. It has been a long difficult search.

BUT...

We missed you. The world needs you.

TO BE CONTINUED...
Let us pause for a moment to introduce the Saligia, a family of brothers and sisters who are physical manifestations of the metaphorical concepts of the seven cardinal sins: Lust, Pride, Wrath, Envy, Sloth, Greed and Gluttony.

Each have their own roles and responsibilities in their separate realms. Their existence in the universe has been to restrain man’s tendency to sin, to negate man’s natural vices and instincts. The Saligia are necessary interventions in this objectionable world.

The world needs them, or so they think. Man needs them to change.
The youngest of the Salmigia, Envy is vivid emerald green. Her eyes are like sunlight glistening from a knife-edge.

Greed manifests himself in a form of a skeleton. He smells of dust and the libraries of night. His eyes are dark, empty and hollow. Sometimes when you look into a mirror and feel the eyes of Greed upon you, you feel your sins of excess.

And you think.

Sloth

Fraternal twins, always seen together; Sloth and Gluttony say little, and are patient and gentle. Together, they work to dispel apathy, joylessness and the absence and insufficiency of love from people's lives.

Gluttony
Of the Saligia, Wrath is most anxious of his responsibilities, the most meticulous in their execution. He is also always cloaked.

Pride is the oldest of the Saligia.

And there is Lust.

It is unlikely that any portrait will ever do Lust justice. With her trademark piercing green eyes and sharp red lips, Lust smiles in brief flashes and smells almost of summer peaches.

Lust is everything you ever wanted. Whoever you are. Whatever you are. Everything.
You are of the Saligia.
We have responsibilities.

You are the embodiment of wrath, of anger.
You are of the Saligia.
You cannot run away.

The Saligia? The Saligia are merely patterns.
The Saligia are ideas.

The Saligia are echoes of darkness, nothing more. We have no right to play with people's lives, to order their desires and instincts.

I filled my role more than adequately over billions of years. I mediated the aggression of people. Boundless anger and aggression.

Isn't the moon just beautiful? You're too pessimistic, Wrath. Beauty is everywhere. You're just too blinded by your resistance to change to see how the world is changing in a beautiful way.

The human imagination is rigid, resistant to real change, instead adhering to familiar rules and patterns even in the face of its own destruction.

Me? Resistant to change? Aren't we all?

And we, the Saligia, are mere echoes of these patterns - greed, lust, pride, envy....
Aggression is an original, self-subsisting instinctual disposition in man.

I have been restraining this aggressive instinct for years.

That’s why we need you, Wrath. Since you left, wars have been breaking out everywhere. Men are killing one another, lives are being lost, the world is being destroyed.

We need you to make this stop.

My dear sister, wars will continue to happen even if I go back. They have taken place all this while, even when I was there.

Man’s natural aggressive instincts, the hostility of each against all and of all against each, has opposed my work and efforts since the beginning of time.

The aggressive instinct is the main representation of the Death instinct which dominates this world.

I have ceased to struggle against this instinct of destruction.

Aggression is still there, in its same old fashion.

The only difference is that man’s own destruction has nothing to do with me any longer.

It’s his;

He can make his own destruction.

It’s not my responsibility.

And it’s not my business anymore.
Things ARE changing, Wrath.

Things never change.

Oh, but they DO.

The physical world is always changing. With death comes a new life.

The Life Instinct shares world dominion with the Death Instinct, Brother Wrath.

Our existence are brief and bounded. Mortals live and die. Gods come and go. None of us will last longer than the universe.

Nothing is permanent.

Have you ever just sat back and watched the stars? Stars give the illusion of permanence, I mean, they are always there, always flashing.

We can pretend that things last, but worlds do not last. Stars and galaxies are transient, fleeting things that twinkle then vanish into the vast sky.

Everything changes.
Some things ARE changeless.

Man's sexuality has been the root of all evil from the beginning.

Lust's role has been to contain the rampant sexual desire of man.

The same argument applies to envy, aggression, greed, etc.

The seven Cardinal sins do not change.

And will not change.

That is why, we, the Saligia, have our responsibilities to curb each and every of the Cardinal sins.

Similarly, man's pride has been the most fundamental and original sin. Man's strive for instinctual, narcissistic satisfaction has created unlimited problems that we have to deal with.

Yes, you are right, pride, that the physical world may be constantly changing.

But the metaphysical world is not. Natural instincts do not. Man's desires do not change.
He's right, Pride.

Huh?

Aren't you supposed to be on my side?

The world is imbued with BOTH permanence and change.

And perhaps, man's natural instincts are changeless.

But the imperfect is our paradise.

We can engage the world, which is both changing and permanent at the same time, on our own terms.

Why give up then?
Perhaps you're just running away, Wrath.

Man's lust has indeed created content, unchanging destruction in this world.

But I've worked within the limits of how much this sexuality can or cannot change.

Do not yield, Wrath.

Man's aggression still exists, as strong as ever.

But you can accept this, and still change how things are.

Perhaps change will come at a great price.

But fear is not a reason to falter. Fear like our instincts, is always there, unchanging.
Aggression and destruction did not cease with my abandonment of my realm, no more than people would cease to lust or envy or greed should any of you abandon yours.

Perhaps it's more uncontrolled, wilder than we think it to be.

Perhaps not.

But it's no longer anyone's responsibility.

I abandoned my post, and I did NOT pass it on.

Nothing either of you say will change my mind.

Sorry, Lust. I hope you find the change you so believe in and valorize.

But it is time for me to say goodbye, just as I did 200 years ago.

Farewell, my brother.
Farewell, my sister.
It was good to see you both again.

My regards to the rest of the Saligia. I miss them like I've missed you both.

But we will not see each other again.
So he's really gone.

He left 200 years ago.

I thought he would come back to us.

So now what?

I don't know.

I know.

Yeah, let's go.

Go back to our realm and do what we've been doing for the past billion years?
the end

"Perhaps, one must change or die. And, in the end, there were perhaps limits to how much he could let himself change."

— Neil Gaiman
The Sandman