

# Art Angst

Ron sat in an overstuffed armchair hunched over an iPad, stylus in hand. The tablet's screen cast a feeble bluish-white glow over the rough popcorn ceiling of his darkened living room. The midnight silence was punctuated by the quiet ticks of a cheap wall clock, one that Ron had little use for. It was just a white circle on the wall as far as he was concerned.

The front door quietly opened and closed.

"You're not asleep," Lodestar growled, looking at the shifting glow coming from the tablet. He slipped the wallet from around his foreleg and tossed it onto the table next to the door, then flopped belly up on the loveseat opposite Ron's chair.

"Yeah," said Ron.

"What's that thing you're holding? A pen?" Lodestar asked, waving a paw at Ron's stylus.

"You might as well call it that," said Ron. "It's a drawing stylus." He offered it to Lodestar to examine. He sniffed the stylus and brushed it against his whiskers, then attempted to grip it between his writing claw and inner thumb the way he saw Ron using it.

"...For making visual art?" he asked, awkwardly tracing around the pads of his open paw with the stylus.

"Yes," said Ron, turning the iPad to face Lodestar.

The yinrih cocked his head and fluttered his bandpass membranes, trying to tune his eyes to a frequency range that matched the screen's output. "Is that supposed to be one of us? It's pretty good." Lodestar scented the air and immediately noticed a shift in Ron's emotions.

"But it looks nothing like a yinrih," Ron sighed. "Do you know how frustrating it is to be a blind member of an overwhelmingly visual species?"

Lodestar stared in silence at the random pattern of ridges on the ceiling.

"I have so many ideas in my head, ideas I want to bring to life, but my eyes get in the way."

"Have you tried an art form that's less visual? You said that statue in the library was made by a blind sculptor. It looks amazing."

"Yeah, sculpting... with expensive supplies and a big studio. Digital art has the lowest barrier to entry and it's out of my reach. Sure I'll get better, but I'll never get good."

“If you enjoy making it, does it matter if it's good?”

“But I want to enjoy making art that's also worth looking at.”

“I'm not blind,” said Lodestar, “and blind yinrih don't have it as bad as you do. Our nose and ears and paws get just as much use as our eyes, so losing vision isn't as much of a problem. All this to say I'm afraid I can't sympathize. But I'll be here for you for as long as you need me to be, bad art or good art. I hope that counts for something.”

“It does,” said Ron, rising to his feet and stretching. “that means a lot.”

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