



Isaac Birchmier
Kings

“KINGS”

[regulus]



KINGS — org., 1965, founder: Jonathan Gallance; no known criminal record, threat level: yellow; the organization has many known affiliates; the children are said to be introduced into the group at a young age; the “Kings,” as they refer to themselves, are seen by the government as a religious affiliation; their political control is unknown, though deemed to be minimal: a select few of their members are corporate owners of billion dollar companies; the “Kings” are seen to have a largely Democratic standing: a faction of members was said to have been benefactors for a hedge fund supporting the 2008 election of Barack Obama; approximately \$12.5 million of the campaign donations were submitted anonymously by leading Kings (the leads to King-members was detailed by a bank teller informant who swore secrecy to the anonymity of the donor, but being a member of the CIA, was obligated to report any suspicious donations with the potential to jeopardize the safety of the country).

Official logo is the six-beaded crown:



The symbol of the Kings was originally a minimalistic three-pronged crown, also known as a “regulus,” with three beads attached to each of the prongs and a small underlined segment beneath, as if representing a cushion to which the crown is attached. The symbol has since grown in complexity. They call their base the “Kingdom,” though the whereabouts of said Kingdom are currently unknown. They refer to the higher-ups as “Royalty.” The King of Kings is called “Rex Ultima.” They sing their songs in English. To date, there is not a single aspect of the “Kings” group that leads any Pentagon officials to believe that they offer any threat. So far as we know, the Kings are a harmless group.

The Kings’ universal symbol is promoted through the member gesture of clapping together hands and kneeling in prayer, in a state of genuflection, to represent commitment to the Kings. The moral creed of the Kingdom was written around the year of its conception, by one unnamed individual, and has since withstood the tests of time. A King is not ordained by mere application or trial, but a King must metaphysically meet every requirement set of him. If even a single genetic strand seems not to fit the archetype of the Kings, you are not accepted entry. Yet the Kings do not discriminate. All creeds and races are adopted into the Kingdom. Anyone wishing to be instituted into the Kingdom must undergo a discussion of authenticity among a group of previously-assigned Kings. The review process is intense and detailed. Anyone claiming a false identity is sheer mockery in the eyes of the Kings. For the past fifty years—ever since an inside journalist for the *Washington Post* infiltrated the Kingdom and wrote an article featured on its front page, “The KINGS of all Cults,” every member of the Kingdom went on high alert, resulting in the creation of a strenuous review process to prevent other Outsiders from invading, exposing and shedding a negative light on the Kings (“No more exposés”)—the Kings have continued this tradition of intensive background searches. The Kings are always looking for potential informants—those who have no good sentiment towards the Kingdom, whose purpose is not sabotage (called, in the Kingdom, justly, “saboteurs”) but expansion.

The Kings are an artifact group of intellectuals. They meet one another with the common opening phrase *Adversus solem ne loquitor* as their means of introduction.



Lucas Gallance performed his introductory ceremonial rites for the Kingdom when he was only eight years old. Eight. Most people need to work for decades in conducting a clean and representative portfolio to allow them a chance for application to be a King: and even after all that hard work it is very possible they are not admitted. People had to work their asses off to get to the place Lucas has managed to wind up without any effort at all, really; and to be honest, he didn't feel one bit worse for it. Thinking about all those people who stressed themselves bald, tossing and turning at night, didn't affect him in the slightest. Things were easy for him, but was this any of it his fault? No. He came from his mother's mortal womb in the soil, and his identity precluded anything else about him. He was not at all to blame for the collision and collection of particles which composed his being: the causality and brute force of genetics and influence that created and molded him like clay. (When he looked in the mirror, inspecting his face for the occasional pubescent zit, he couldn't help but see the skin cling to his face as a mask: a mask molded into creation by some Infinite Artificer of genetic material, of expansion and development through the *a posteriori* link of events — experiential — which manifested itself as momentary, in the harsh gradient of time.)

He looked in his bowl of alphabet soup and shrugged. The letters didn't form any word in particular: jumbled. He took a bite.



In a dark underground room they chant mantras. Basement-like. A color schemata of deep black and gray with a thick fog of ash, silt, and clay obscuring sight up to an inch before the face. The tones they speak in are Anglicized. Lucan can swear one of the Elder Kings has an iPod playing beneath his ceremonial robe, the cord of the headphones displaying a whiteness at the edge of his robe's neck. The Elder looks in Lucas' direction and Lucas darts his eyes away and picks up on the chant where he left off:

Far from us drive the foe we dread
And grant us Kingly peace instead,
So shall we not, with Kings for guide
Turn from the Path of Life aside.

Lucas has heard this same chant time and again for years running, and never has there been any opportunity for variation. From left to right in firing squad order are: Elder Palmrich, Elder Gallance, Elder Maycomb, Elder Smith, Elder Rainier, Elder Johnson, Elder Rice, Elder Wainaczyk, Elder Jones, Elder Ford, and there ends the line of Elders. Then, in alternating order, on a separate row, are the Younger Kings. Most of them watch, starry-eyed, expecting these same benefits of the Kingdom once they themselves—unperturbed—reach a level of influence all their own.

The Kings are drenched in shadow as they engage in the Anglicized chant...



Following the structure of the Castle, to the automatic right of the forking path beyond the underground pulley dropped downward by the Jeeves-like pulley boy who says “Password?” then nods his head and lowers the box elevator when one of the entrenched, cloaked figures whispers “*****,” and the penguin-suited man grabs and lowers the rope with two strong hands, as Lucas Gallance and the three elders accompanying him descend into the Underground Castle.



The Kings have been busy fashioning their own future out of namesake ideologies: principally, that of royalty. Believing themselves to be Divinely Infallible (one of their Personal Solae) so as to be—in all capacities, distinctions, and forms—superior to all others around them. But there is no classism here—at least not in the material sense. The Kings rather harbor resentment and complexes of superiority towards those seen as spiritually bankrupt: the Divinely Fallible. Truly, those people standing at the bottom of the proverbial transcendental caste system (or the top of the totem pole) have no basis of greatness they may cling to. Either

they are bankrupt of spirit or have yet to sow the seed, to plant the Kingly tree, that infinite infallible seed of expansion within the Soil, allowing the Roots to cling to ground and manifest upward into ceaseless infinity.

♪ Sow the seed / Become the King



When you're a King, nothing else matters. You have lain dominion over the entire world.

The Kings consist of a crew of buckled-down intellectuals, the entire world belonging to them: they are the leaders over all material objects. Everything must be attacked from a logical standpoint. There are no "gut feelings" in the Kings. They do not believe in transcendence. The Kings are an atheistic group: they see no evidence otherwise. Nothing argues to them for the contrary.

Every weekend the Kings gather in a large collegiate room surrounded by hickory bookshelves, reclined at a giant table, smoking from bent smoking pipes and discussing politics, culture, theater, cinema, music, philosophy, science. Each member makes his respective witticism and the others chuckle heartily in response, and they continue the groundbreaking dialogue.



A singular base under the Rockies gives the Kings their resort and hiding place.

The six-pronged, six-beaded crown harbors fugitives. Beneath its sharp juts of gold-plated spike and the clamshell pearls is the polygonal head of a real leader. He sits upon his throne with a glass of wine between his fingers. Laughter resounds guttural from somewhere deep within. A person unaccustomed to the bravado of Kingship would denounce his tones as "sinister." They would cast him away, label him a miscreant, and no longer have anything to do with him.

K I N G S

The K of Kings is an unlikely letter, one not used very often in the beginnings of words. We more often see Ks used in the aftermath of a C at the word's end. The K gives it a brutalized sort

of sharpness. *Cyning* is too soft; *King* is sharp like a blade — prepared to do what it takes to rule over countries. A King doesn't back down, a King is well-educated, scholarly, a King is a true leader. Such is the K.

(Utilized anagrams.)

Asceticism is yet another function of the Kingdom.

[Here they are, a number of ants sipping from desert ponds. A shape of atmosphere trembling the cosmic belt, to the chain and ricocheting invertebrates.]



As a King all shades of the universe are in your Dominion. Names don't exist. All adjectives compose the temporal causality. All Kings are Kings, all non-Kings are non-Kings. The crowns of amethyst and ruby pearls lie upon their heads. They look forward with symmetrical proportionality. No single non-King has what it takes to dispense of the glory of Rex. The Kings have their own language of royalty. Tightly-knit champions: cult signifiers.



The Underground Castle: Acrid smoke curls through the vacuumed space of cobbled corridors. Old brick and slots for scrolls turned powder and the dust of paper melted by time, the aroma of sand. The stone floors lay littered with cobwebs... but, wait. A smidge of speaker has poked through what looks like wallpaper? An extension cord runs foot-wise, snaking, and dips under the shelf of scrolls, where the circuit breaker peeks through a gap in the wall at ground level. The wind wisps, and the overlay of fog chokes out at what seems like a hidden machine somewhere in the twisting of corridors that lead to the elden doors. The wind is starting to sound the same. There is a record scratch sound and the gusts beep in repetition. There is a large crash which upsets the settlement, and dust rains on Lucas's head as he stands staring with empty eyes at a small yellow tag in the corner of the room, wayward, which marks ARTIFICIAL COBWEBS, at a low price, for Halloween decorations.



“This whole operation ought to fall,” he said. The structures which supported and surrounded him were bound to topple, what with no care behind the composition of the material, with no faith behind its foregone cherished usefulness. Ozymandias did not weather the storm because his statue was not built for permanence. The Kings sought to build statues of the finest alloys, so that once the planet was pinpointed and blasted with a focused particle smasher; well, then that operative mold could fly through space, weaving through the stars in the cosmos. Good riddance.



“*We are a cult,*” says Jonathan Gallance, Rex Ultima, “but what group or faction is not? Catholics, Jews, British, American, Muslim... Cults! At least we’re honest about what we are! There is no hiding of this fact. Scientific terminology: in other places this would be called ‘culture,’ and the multi-“culturalists” would nod their heads in agreement. But no. Like them, we, the Kings, are a cult.

“In the Kings there is no speaking of Yiddish, no transubstantiation. We have no Palestine, no Holy Trifecta, no violent creed... But neither are we pacifists! We identify as a cult because we Kings support honesty. You see the disparate intolerance of other cults. If you shame the Crown it matters to us not. You will not see us writing vendettas ’gainst one another for depicting our Prophetic Symbol in a negative light... We are a greater cult than that. And don’t be fooled: you can notice quite easily that just because we may be hiding that we have something to hide... False! We are in hiding because *all* the geniuses are paranoid and in hiding. We *understand* the state the world is in. It’s not as if we’re an underground cult for the sake of being underground alone... There are many reasons for this. And what is this word ‘cult,’ anyhow? It seems to me to be any school of thought contrary to major acceptance... The largest number of people to believe in a certain way of thinking decides it. This is what we call ‘ethics.’ But is it really ethical?

“Man needs purpose in his life. He is a social creature. He reads books in search of like-minded people, in helping him connect the dots in his mind to reach uncategorized sections of his brain. And many are now without a home of their own. The purposeless have become the learned. And the purposeful are the purposefully ignorant. So what is it then that we do? What can be done for the majority whose interests are being consumed by the minority...? Will that working class become the ruling class, and vice-a-versa? Or can something be done about it?

“And so is established the Kings. We are the cult of the millennium. It has only been since the uprising of Christians following the Bible that a cult of genius will have been established. We are the greatest of cults. A cult relevant to the new age. Since the advent of time there has been great misinformation—*disinformation*. We are here to change that.”

The room is silent: men stifling their cries of personal passion.

“Kings are Kings. *E pluribus Rexam*. Will there be a single person not to allow us our new Kingdom? Like all cults we aim now to expand. The world once was the placemat for cults of ignorance and the absence of knowledge to build and spread. But Kings make no assumption. Kings support men of learning and improvement. Can we be toppled? Our numbers are sparse. For now the Kingdom is small. The Kingdom began by selective process.

“We Kings are intellectuals. We rival Mensa. Our academic abilities are excellent. The SAT scores, the IQ tests prove it. And why? Because we *stick together*. In these times of peril, the absolute best thing we can do is to be there for each other. All tribes, all factions, all cults, remain supporting one another. There is not a single ‘Brotherhood’ which leaves its Brothers stranded. If such were the case it would not be a Brotherhood to begin with.

“Kings speak sincerely, Kings speak honestly, Kings speak from the heart. A King does not preach: he *discusses*. Like any intellectual discussion it is not simply the man on the pedestal who knows more than the others. The reason I am up here is because I talk good. Nothing more, nothing less. But, in truth, this soapbox on which I stand is open to *all* Kings. All of you have it in you to be up here, speaking. We do not discriminate; we do not advocate

violence. If attacked we will defend ourselves, but besides that we are peaceable intellectuals. We support kinship.

“Once a King always a King. The Kingdom cannot become corrupt for Kings hold no power over one another. Each King checks, each King balances.

“So now we move forth into the new era. The Kings will no longer have such selectivity. Let it be known that we were the original few, as we expand to meet Kings across the globe!”



THE SPREADING OF THE KINGDOM



The early 2000s began the systematic expansion of the Kings. Beyond the Rocky Mountains they raised their sights, and sought a unified coalition of Kings in a Kingdom: men they could call their kin.

Lucas was assigned as an envoy to the Philippines where, as if a missionary, he sought to set up booths for the Gospel of the Kings. One of the Kings’ greatest benefactors, Richard Smith, who’d patented a “spritzer” for salad dressing cans and hairspray bottles, paid for the construction of the booth and the pamphlets and music player, while Lucas was to sit back on a hardwood chair emblazoned with a Crown on each leg, like a child at a lemonade stand, the Crown stamped into a billboard-size coating of ink. The colors were gold and white with a thick black outline. The process of manufacturing the sign was equivalent to that of the creation of license plates. The pamphlets in three stacks of 20 with a crate near Lucas’ feet were three-folded and invitational with nothing on the front but a King’s Crown. Whether or not there would be any new members to the Kings depended entirely on Lucas’ salesmanship abilities. His speeches would determine whether or not the Philippines warranted a green check or a red X on the Kings’ giant takeover map. The others who sold their respective nations on the idea of a Kingdom would get praise and notoriety... Under no circumstances was he allowed to mess this up...



The Kings were destroyed in 2024 after a Molotov bombing by disgruntled Syrians at the U.S. embassy, where the Rex Ultima was killed during an attempt of conversion. The group disbanded, all of the lesser members being incompetent in matters of leadership. Lucas Gallance moved to Moldova, where he lives in a cottage far away from humanity.



Isaac Birchmier was born in Mountain Home, Idaho and raised in Helena, Montana. He has been published in or has stories forthcoming to The Lunaris Review, Sidereal Journal, The Oval, theEEEL, Scarlet Leaf Review, The Commonline Journal, 101 Words, cattails, Theme of Absence, Eternal Remedy, Morgen Bailey's Writing Blog, Funny in Five Hundred, and Short-Story.me.