

Ethera's Word

Another anomaly for the records began to manifest itself before me.

13 years, 273 days, 14 hours, 2 minutes, and 40 seconds since the last one.

And still, this library remains disorganized.

Had I not been sentenced to keeping all these memories,

I would have felt some excitement.

But I felt only annoyance that a unique occasion would request more space in my head.

You are an archivist?

It speaks.

Yes. I am an archivist.

You are not willingly so?

The entity's speech seemed like neither statement nor question. Already, this exchange felt like more of a formality than a conversation.

It was humanoid in nature. Short, with snow-white skin and black dots, like freckles. Feminine. White eyelashes, dark blue eyes. Angelic in presence, but I'd seen angels. She was not one.

I am not an archivist by choice, no.

As far as I can tell, no one would be, had they a foresight as refined as their retrospection.

You do not find it convenient?

Certainly. I do.

Her clothing was exquisitely clean, and flowed in perfect symmetry. Ribbons whose color matched her eyes hung from her large sleeves.

Her lips were only slightly darker than her complexion. A once again blue, straight, vertical line streamed down from the top lip to the bottom, becoming seemingly pitch black towards the center. Likely a mark associated with her kind.

Her small lips did not move. Yet words flowed through the still air; now a current.

You do not find it poetic?

And as she spoke, the current grew. Consonants became taps in a pool of water, and vowels, the breeze forming small waves on its surface.

Indeed, there was a certain poetic quality to this moment. But, I had learned long ago that such aesthetics retain their value only so long as our exposure to them is limited.

And precisely, this overexposure would render them useless. The curiosity generated through aesthetic interest would eventually fade, and the drive to explore that which we do not understand would move on to less familiar items. At this point, it was a magic long gone.

What does it matter?

A pause.

The water, now at my ankles, completely still.

You are not happy?

I suppose, in a limited timeframe, I could have been.

Another pause. She wanted me to continue.

I wouldn't miss a single detail, and track life to the fullest. But now I find myself, as always, looking over records covering far too many lifetimes.

Once again. As if I had nearly said what she wanted to hear.

I realized how the retention of such details can ruin a soul.

Her neutral aura gave way to some emotion. With a tiny crease above her nose, she expressed something of a frown.

You would like to be corrected?

I cannot envision what that would imply.

The frown quickly faded. She formed a subtle smile. As her eyes closed, I felt the fragile breeze begin anew.

She slowly lifted her relaxed arm to her mouth and whispered something unintelligible. Her index finger froze, lightly pressed against her lips, parallel to the line on them. I assumed it was a sign for me to be quiet.

The calm water that previously wet my ankles had now climbed over me. Her sign was not to keep my silence, but to keep my breath.

The pressure increased steadily, causing a small panic. For a short moment, my mind was filled with a focus that tore my attention away from pasts revisited.

She opened her eyes, the tiny bubbles of air trapped between her eyelids now following the curvature of her skin, escaping upwards to the surface of the water.

She moved her finger delicately forward.

And as her proximity grew, I felt increasingly relaxed by the climbing pressure.

You need not hold your breath anymore.

What's going on?

Who are you?

What recollections do you have?

What does that mean, what's happening?

You do not remember?

No? Remember what?

Then you have been corrected.

What does that mean?

Though it is no longer in your nature, retain what you can of this.

It is inconvenient to go against the tides of the world.

It is not your burden to remember that which even the universe has forgotten.

What is this place?

I look around.

Golden, endless halls made of what seems like bookshelves surround me. I should find my way around here.

Could've sworn I was talking to someone just now.