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*I wouldn't change a thing about you...*

So far up, far beyond the center of the universe above the planets in the Milky Way, Andromeda, and the other galaxies far beyond the scope of comprehension, there was not a bang. There was no sudden explosion of matter thus creating life across the span of what actually existed.

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There was neither also the waving of a mighty hand that created from the void of nothing, an Earth, and other planets, and other stars and winds of the black and other celestial phenomena not even known to any life existing at any time. Actually, there is no true theory, fact, or truth of the sudden existence of the grand universes of knowledge. There may be thousands of galaxies or there may just be a few. A large mirror in the heavens may exist of the width and height of the scroll of the universe so that all life may just be peering back at themselves through the mirror.

Perhaps there is a God that resides at the top of the universe, and that this God flushed all the planets down beneath his feet so that, in the shape of a triangle, they fell and are still falling, down and out continuously.

The single watery drop of a planet Earth floating in space is just now beginning to be discovered. There is only one thing that matters, that holds the secrets

to the life blown across the cosmos, and that is not a what but a who.

Some persons dropped the ingredients into the Milky Way Galaxy that the ancients worshiped. From these persons birthed the Pantheons of the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Mesopotamian, and other wondrous cultures of old. The Great Pyramids of Egypt are not in fact Egyptian at all as others of the same age, scale, and faded glory have been discovered beneath the oceans in Yonaguni Jima, or the soggy outline of the pyramid in South America so long forgotten. Or even the mystifying Bosnian Pyramid of the Sun. Right within sight, nobody saw the secrets of these monuments.

Atlantis – what could this city truly be of? Now the humans had a new theory: Atlantis and the Pyramids are just tiny fragments of grand cultures greater than any current culture in the world and greater than Classical Rome and Greece. These monoliths must be from cultures 10 to 20 thousand years before, so proven by their

compositions, rate of decay, and wear of age.

The earth's crust may have been completely the opposite of what current societies know. That may explain how all these wonders suddenly plunged beneath the oceans out of existence.

However, this brings the topic back to the beginning: what is the cosmos composed of and how much of the word 'celestial' truly applies to humanity and to what degree? In the Medieval Ages, the strange and unexplainable substance called Magic rose up into the hearts of the continents as an evil to be despised.

Then Magic changed into a lovely, yet still unexplainable thing only dreamed to be true through novelty. Science in the modern world cannot explain it, therefore it became a laughable, childish fantasy.

Yet, so was Atlantis, till the sunken Pyramids were found. So was the possibility of cultures so grand to outmatch current societies in every manner until the

hard, tangible evidence started reaching out to everything that had forgotten it.

In a sense, it is humanity's vanity that pushed them so far into their own glories that anything more magnanimous than what they had created could not surely exist, or have ever existed. So when humanity is forced to look into the face of a thing they do not understand, they will mock it, or banish it.

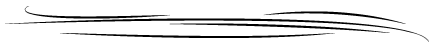
With magic, they banished it; with things of old designed without the modern technologies of this life. Humanity was threatened, belittled, offended, and would not speak of it.

Far up in the unknown chambers of space, there was a pair of silver eyes peering down at the efforts of the little blue sphere, curiously, wondering how long the bodies of matter would continue to rush around on the crusty surface. The answers of the cosmos were locked up with this person, but every so often, they decided to share a syllable of a secret with someone regardless of their rate of righteousness.

That is where the focus of the person's interest zoomed: right down to the planet, to a continent of oddly divided little pieces of land part of a larger culture yet claiming a vain independence of its own. In this place of land, mountainous and chilly as it was, lay a tiny person specially endowed by celestial goodwill, and that goodwill was something very rare and unexplainable.

Several hundred miles away there was one other person born at the same time with a gift of a similar source yet very different in execution, a gift passed down through the family's line for thousands of years.

The person peered down, touched a star with their finger and smiled. The star exploded and the particles flew off into millions of dazzling, burning pieces. And they sighed softly, "Thus begins the next journey of a great hope."



“ My family is not of a heritage to be pushed about as a serf! You will grant back to me that which is rightfully mine, for all these years I have served you faithfully and now you reward me with treachery? As I am devoted to Your Majesty, he must remember I have friends in high places, and that together, my friends can rise against the forces of His Excellency to strip him of his dignity and state! His Majesty owes to His lords the same as the lords owe to Him. I do not threaten, but remind His Majesty that God is my witness of injustice and God will not be mocked by the unrighteous.”

“How dare you, Sir! You will silence your treasonous statements or I shall strike at you in the manner most appropriate for a Holy Ruler!”

“Holy, Your Majesty! Not even the Pope is vain to proclaim such foolishness! There is God and God alone is Holy and Your Majesty is but a man as I. I stand by my statement. I will not comply to aid the King in his naive attempt to subdue his wife

by the deaths of the Despensers and neither, oh King, will my friends of whom I spoke!"

The king wore neither jewel nor rich embroidery, but the shimmering of polished armor and a sword sheathed at his side proclaimed to his knights around him in the open field of his confident ability to control his servants and vassals. However, the impression of control was merely a reflection and upon glancing in the mirror, the King understood his incompetence had lead England to it's current instability.

There was little he knew he could do to change the minds of Sir Brandon Alec Howard, Earl of the brush countryside of Woodway.

"How am I to look into the faces of my sons and tell them that the King wished to kill innocents for the satisfaction of a French woman? It will not be so, Sir!"

"Silence your tongue, Sir!" The king waved his hand in agitation as his men stood still at his side, watching, waiting for their King to act in a manner according to

the expectation of his office. Petulant, childish, and selfish though was their king, and he could not be insulted by a man who had more nobility, honesty, and above all, kingly manner than he.

After a minute's contemplation as how to satisfy himself at the expense of his vassal, he grinned sourly, "I banish your family to the far country beyond where you can find comfort. All your lands and wealth are the King's as of this moment. I also strip you and your family of their titles. Now begone! If I see you again, I will kill you!"

"My King—"

"Begone!" The king yelled in a rage, "Do not let my wrath befall on you!"

Howard was silent, yet unmoving. It took the King a moment to realize the man still stood near his person, and upon glancing up to see the man there, his rage was kindled. However, as he was about to yell forth a command against the Earl, Howard cut him off, "My King, what you do now is not merely unjust but it is

ungrateful. A King that despises the council of his subjects over and over, he will be despised forever. The Earl bowed as he backed up, face saddened, voice stronger in the sadness, and without malice he advised, "this will not be forgotten. I fear for His Majesty's falling to the skirts of a French woman. My family falls into poverty at the price of humility which is the source of noble hearts. I bid the King, farewell."

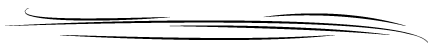
So was the last the King saw of the Earl of Woodway or his family. Their thick furs and velvets and castles of heavy stone walls kept well by the servants of the grounds were not merely evacuated, but the King, in his rage, had every bit of Woodway destroyed, stripped from the records and within a hundred years, completely forgotten as nothing but a tale in a child's book to prove a wise lesson of warning to the citizens.

No one knew what became of the Earl or his family. Surely, was the gossip, that they were devoured by the obscurity of poverty and if any family remained, was

nothing but a culmination of festering peasants in London or some other great city. Nameless and faceless with words of no value, they indeed surely had become trodden down by the harshness of life for questioning the King's grand scheme.

The truth though in this circumstance was so far incorrect that if it the citizens had been allowed to know of the fates of this noble family, they would have scoffed in disbelief.

Howard, Earl of Woodway, received a visit from the type of illustrious person that only happens once in a thousand years, yet by touching the tip of their finger to his, created vibrations in the matter beyond science as to send massive ripples through the threads of the universe for endless years. Who laughed more, the Earl, or the illustrious person, was just one of the many mysteries never to be revealed.



Grunge clung to the edges of the slippery cobblestone remnants left of sidewalks in the old side of Sway Station City. It was raining and the sun had just dipped beneath the hills of the city so that the sky was ever the darker with heavy cumulus clouds overtaking the now-festering night skies of the restless souls scurrying to and fro through the streets. Citizens returning from who knew where to the safety of their cardboard apartments scurried as fast as they could, teeth clattering, clasping the fronts of patched trench coats, to hide themselves from the evils the darkness always brought.

In the distance, stilettos clacked off cracked, burned walls of condemned buildings that, once upon a time several decades ago, enjoyed being the spotlight of being fashionable clothing stores. All that remained were broken glass windows, graffiti, the stench of bitter garbage tossed within the black shadows of yesterday's vanity.

A car rushed out from an alley with the high beams on, blinding several homeless people shivering against the side of an abandoned gas station. It sped on out of sight and all was dark once more.

Two dogs ran by and out of sight and then a pair of hushed voices could barely be heard far down the road beyond human sight in such darkness. None of the street lights worked in this unwanted cross section of the city. This was the condemned, rotting fourth of a great city the wealthy ignored and the poor quietly existed and died within.

Two people, huddling close together, young by the few outlines they produced, were wearing wool coats with hair fashioned well and leather gloves over their hands.

The one was a female, "Harry, what will we do? We can't live down here!"

"Sh, sh!" Her male companion tugged her arm closer to him, "some bum's up ahead."

They passed the homeless people sleeping on the sidewalk before risking any further discussion.

The woman couldn't withhold her worries, "But Harry, the baby! How could y--"

"Quiet, Honey! Can't you see I'm doing this for the best? Do you want to live in poverty and die young in some filthy shack?"

"Well, no b--"

"Then stop worrying. I'll take care of you, Baby. I always take care of you."

She said nothing further to his cooing, allowed him to hoist her away through the door of a building left empty for decades.

Heavy breathing; she gasped. He held her close, and she in turn held close a bundle of white that gave away their position even in this damp black. It was so cold and she couldn't stop shivering, yet said nothing as he rubbed his hands up and down her arms in a reassuring manner.

“Dan'll be here any minute. Just relax, Baby. We'll be in some money after this and we'll get far away. Far away, far away,” he said over and over to assure, “very far away and no one'll take our girl away, ok?”

“O—ok,” she shivered.

Silence heightened the cold and the mold on the ground that made it feel uneven and spongy. She nearly tripped but he caught her and then she cried a little.

That's when a new set of splashing steps approached, and then a flash light darting around the room. “Harry?”

“Dan?”

“Ah!” The light focused on them.

“Don't point that right at us, you fool!”

Dan chuckled, “Sorry, hah! Didn't mean to blind you two, just was a bit unsure if it was really y'both! Ah, it's been some time, yeah? Last time I saw you both was, well,” he trailed off with an attempt at

a smile that Harry matched with his own forlorn grin.

“None of that matters now. Here's the baby,” he grabbed the white bundle from his protesting wife to show to the man who was a bit shorter, skinnier, and older than himself.

Dan shone the flash light over her to inspect the outcome, “I see the hex worked.”

“Yes,” responded the father with a sigh. “So where's the money? That was the agreement.”

“Here.” After a few seconds of fishing, Dan pulled out a rubberbanded fist-full of bills from his right coat pocket. “Now you know at six-”

With one split second movement, Harry slapped his hand over the man's mouth, whispering, “My wife – she can't know. This won't work if she-”

“Ah,” such a down casting of Dan's mouth and narrowing of his brow proclaimed his disapproval with such

secrets, yet he cleared his throat and refrained by taking his hat off towards the mother, "Good evening, Felicia. Good evening, Harry. I don't want to hear of you both again, yeah? Get lost now, the both of you!"

He sunk into the blackness, steps fading. No flashlight now, just the horrible coldness and the wailing of the baby girl once more safely tucked in Felicia's arms.

Harry turned away from Felicia to hide his shame. It was his greed that had placed them and their child in such a condition. But he had promised never to be poor at any expense and without much talent or business savvy to boast of, he had self-justified his decision that this was the only way to take care of himself and Felicia. She must not know of what had truly just transpired with the several million transaction weight in pocket.

"Come," he hustled her suddenly back out the way they'd come in, "and see what a grand hotel room I'll get for us both!"

“W – with tea?” She smiled so innocently up at him with the purest love he'd ever known.

“Uh,” his smile dropped as his shame rose and then he buried it, “of course! Didn't I say I'd take care of you Baby?”

“Yes, you did,” she laughed, “and our sweet Valentine.”

He called a taxi and by standing out before her, was able to turn away to hide a grimace at how her ignorance burned deep in his soul.