

Spindly green canopies rest over the cracking, sand-pasted, and gull-excrement caked castellations of centuries past. Pillars stand defeatedly, half-buried in dunes. A fortress alone on an island. Uninhabited by simian life since eras of war and plague. Whatever purpose for it was constructed, now long lost. In Cocoçeira, the feuds and disputes that once seemed so real have been lost in the consistent sinusoidal waves of an ocean heavier than any thought, heavier than any burden. Cocoçeira has moved on where the rest of the world has gotten stuck. The land has forgotten and forgiven, taking back the constructions of humanity as recompense.

A paradise like this can only exist unexplored. Like walking through freshly lain snow, entering this lost fortress would desanctify it. The only vehicles of life capable of passing through it without wrecking its pristine nature are the crabs and beetles who can surf atop it. Its silence is a story of its own; were a more conventional story—one with actors and plot—to unfold here it would choke out the muteness and drown away the unqualifiable presence that lurks there now.

The rocks alone could serve as biographers to eons of existence, cracked and eroded now but once masoned carefully one after another by an aged man during the dawn of a new war effort. And before that, they had been nestled peacefully inside the crust of the Earth, a formation process never rushed by the impulsiveness of decision. Limestone and granite, crystalline hybrids melded together through gradual titanic forces.

Ostensibly, humans don't behave like this. Idiosyncratic and inconsistent in their desire to obey natural laws, it is not uncommon for people to repel more than they attract. It could almost be postulated as the fifth force of the universe, were it not so inconsistent and violent. People adhere to one another and then rocket apart, or find themselves spiraling around for cycles until

suddenly thrust together. The universe follows laws. People do not. They make a quarter of what they destroy, and take more than they give.

This tendency makes the few things to stand some passage of time all the more special, and the island accepted the discarded fort like a child finally getting to play with an engrossing new toy after all the big kids were finished with it.

Under and through the cobbled arches and into a room that would be secluded from the world were it not for a beam of sunlight creeping in through a hole in the foundation. The floors were caked with maddening stretches of settling dirt, and wood relinquished its stability to rot from the moist and languid air. Tucked away in the corner was a barrel, its bolting rusted and contents unknown.

When it was made, it was not a product of great artistic vision. Sixth in an order of twenty, it was filled with goods and shipped on a boat here for the residents of the fort. Perhaps an excess of goods, for near the bottom of the barrel sat a decomposing pile of rot. The time that had passed was immeasurable. What was the difference between when this land was all vents of volcanic gas, and now? Perhaps a whole colony of life took place in this barrel and what was now rot was only the end of another microcosm of existence. One might imagine the putrid stench this would cause and turn their head, but I implore you to instead consider it as natural. Today, the decomposers will get their fill as well, as they often did when the scraps of humanity were left behind. The barrel had long since been forgotten by its creator and had found a foster home beneath the palms of the lost island fortress with siblings of decay.

Once orderly walls and floors had been sanded down. The primates came and sought to create patterns, patterns from their minds. Now under new management, the fortress had fallen into chaos, where things situated themselves in alignment to simple universal rules.

Who could've known? To those who lived here, this seemed like it could have been the rest of their lives. They drank, ate, made jokes in poor taste, and laughed; not because they were especially witty or clever, but because they wanted nothing more than to have a moment of respite. There's a great paradox between how impermanent all our brief iotas of experience are, and between how long what we once did may be left behind. Like the slightest radioactive decay of otherwise stable isotopes, pieces of how lives were once lived fall apart little by little.

A deck of cards left on a table, intended to be returned to until their owner vanished. A polearm dulled from training, set aside to be sharpened later. A musket lying on a table, its firing mechanism pulled out and sitting on an oily cloth. An unbound journal with an entry half-finished; scrawled with a sloppy handwriting difficult to read but familiar to close family.

Relics left from tiny moments of life, from those who at best are now thousands of miles away and at worst no longer have any life remaining to fragment into these tiny moments.

Through the process of reclamation, these manmade instruments were now fixtures of the Earth, bearing the mark of such in the way the dust settles atop them and organic processes proceed on whims of their own despite the lack of any taskmaster brandishing a whip.

In the natural world, one without intent, things find their own way of happening instead of relying on charts, dials, and calendars. Nearby, the wind fought to topple a wooden spire rich with leaves—but it held firmly to the ground.

In the end, the wind could only get away with a few acorns. It held them for a few brief moments as they spiraled through the air. Then, forever on the run, it dropped the acorns to the ground and sprinted to fill the space where warmth once was.

Through one of the fortress's slits which faced toward the isle's inland jungle, an oak tree curiously extended one of its many tendrils through. A hole in the ceiling provided sunlight as necessary for the leaves to remain alive. The tree rubbed against the stonemason wall abrasively, competing against it for space as it had since it was a sapling. The wall was once familiar, and blocked the wind at harsher angles. Now it was only stifling.

Perhaps that's why the branch came sniffing through the fortress slit, curious to see what stood out of view for so long. Trees weren't usually the type of life to display such a thing as curiosity, however, and so the projection of the human mind onto the world around it continues as it always has since the first neanderthals began angrily smashing rocks together to see what they would look like in pieces.

Continuing through a door ahead, one would end up in a courtyard which opens into the air and allows the dew of sun to spill and lap lazily over eroded castle walls.

Vibrant flowers adorned the edges of the yard, twisting and playing over each other carelessly in thorny bushes. It might seem odd that flowers would've been planted by those living in uneasy enough times to justify the construction of a fort; and you'd be right. These were wildflowers, who had snuck in on their own by hitching a ride through the digestive tract of a kingbird a decade or two ago.

The angel's trumpets, though silent, were all present; and they must've thought the poinsettias had a point settling down, because they grew together intertwined. The orchids were more reserved, sticking to their own corners in cliques.

All being newer arrivals into this abandoned land, they did little to mourn what came before them nor did they care or even realize this was land that had spent so much more of its existence devoid of life than covered in it. This may appear callous to us, but it was simply how the toll of time moved along.

Forgetting in a context as large as this is never a choice: it's a lack of realization. A void of understanding that there was even something to know. It stays in the weighty memories of those who stayed alive, burdened by the subtle changes in the seemingly still world, and then vanishes alongside them.

This courtyard had four doors, each leading to a different room of the small fort. One to a barracks, with mats on the ground for sleeping still disheveled from their last occupants. One to a case of stairs leading up to the watchtowers lining the corners of the structure. One to a storeroom, and the last to a room for strategists.

Of the four, three had crumbled away under the elements. Only one still stood in most of its entirety. During rainstorms, water would trickle down its walls slanting walls asymmetrically before landing down on canopies of the neighboring trees.

The war room still stood, but the maps and plans were gone. Everything of ostensible importance taken long ago. Anything left behind was deemed not worthwhile by someone, at some point, consciously or not.

Peering out into the modern world abroad, in whatever state it may appear in right now, it's likely no one remembers that Cocoçeira ever existed. Not the human lives that briefly made their stay here, and certainly not its renewed and storied existence as a condo for plants.

If records of the island exist, they are ignored—but this is all only guessing. The shroud of isolation works two ways, and where one without can't see within, one within also can't see without. Cocoçeira has been lost, and does not want to be found now that it's finally found its place back in the patient hands of the only architect who works without blueprints.

And so who was there at all that *was* aware of Cocoçeira?

From above, the moon had seen it all unfold, watching the aftermath of each day like a still frame animation stretching out thousands and hundreds of thousands of hours. Born from fragmentation off the Earth, it looks back down upon it with a sunken-eyed nostalgia. It was a very long time ago it had left, and where it in its own form had largely stayed the same the world it left behind continued to warp down the tunnel of transient properties.

The moon had seen Cocoçeira grow up from the ground, an amalgamation of pieces disturbed from their rest. They'd been sliced into those Euclidean shapes the ape people were so fond of, then stacked atop one another with an elaborate system of pulleys. It had seen the people come and go, the plants hover nearby waiting for their turn; it had seen rocks crumble off, it had seen the decomposers grow fat over the shifting tides of ownership.

It was just one paragraph in a swathing ocean of stories, as far as the moon was concerned. It had seen many, many things unfold.

And what of the sun, whose shift of vigilance occurred during the day? To the sun, it was an utterance of an iota of a thought of an emotion so brief that an incalculable fraction of a blink

would miss it. The great star burned inside and seethed. This path it had chosen for itself, though brilliant and great, was killing it. It tried to be bigger and bigger, and now the universal Occam's Razor that binds us was exacting its side of the bargain. Complex things break down into smaller, more stable things down to the subatomic bone.

This was absolute.

Perhaps this was why life fascinated the sun so, even if it moved so fast it couldn't be seen. It took the sun so long to notice it was ever even there that it was gone by the time it had. To us we still exist, and the sun doesn't know. But when analyzing the sun's point of view, so vast and massive, we instantly disappear like crumpled paper and the sun in eventuality becomes aware only of what once was. So tiny we were, but so, so fascinating.

Where everything else in the universe breaks down into tiny stable pieces, life built itself up through sheer accident into inferior designs; combinations that would not surely not last: a collage of chemical building blocks with no staying power. A farce of the system.

But it did this, and kept doing this. It kept building. Inevitably, these buildings would fall. But through either the first deliberate thought or instead some unbelievable, unfathomable coincidence: life found a loophole.

It knew its time was limited, but it valued how different it was. It valued that it had its own path that stood in stark contrast to vacuous reality that would only ever consume and destroy and spread apart.

When life's time was up, when every piece was supposed to melt away into the little stuff, it found a way to replicate. To propagate, to pass the torch. A chain of proxies continuing the miracle dating back to the archaebacteria.

Every time life exists, it's doomed to be ripped apart and still it fights in spite of the impossible; it merely wants to exist in a reality more rich than one without energy or light.

The impossible.

The history of impossible events begins with the existence of the first infinitely hot, infinitely dense singularity, followed by its expansion and the messy viscous layered creation of all of reality.

Then, given room for hundreds of millions of years, we arrive at the next impossibility: the creation of life. The impossible can happen, *has* happened, in blink-and-you'll-miss-it moments throughout stretches of cause and effect so large that it might seem as if we don't even exist.

But we do, despite the fact that it is impossible. And so, the impossible can happen again. It will happen again, and exists in such certainty that it can be said it already has happened again, even if these specific simian forms of ours may never live to see it. This is the only such thing as a certain hope, the hope that is always there to hold onto. The cosmologically impossible, the statistically impossible, the conceptually inconceivable and unreasonable can, and has, happened. From up here, from the point of view of the sun, possibility is an assumption—an assumption made by humans to keep our lives predictable and in check.

It is pragmatic, after all. Practical. A life spent chasing the impossible will end in destruction. It's not for people to be concerned over; it's for the sun. It's for the moon. It's for Cocoçeira.



Crashing back to Earth, burning through the atmosphere and stopping somewhere just above the lost island, you can see in its entirety. One inked marking on the hide of history, smeared with years of rainfall.

Cocoçeira is part of an elite society, a secret fellowship that holds on to this secret, the impossible secret, where it respirates quietly. Cocoçeira keeps the secret wrapped up in its cobbled walls, bound in ties of silence and purity, impossible to unwind without destroying it all and losing it.

Impossible that can happen, the impossible that has happened.

Cocoçeira for the crabs, Cocoçeira for the creator. Cocoçeira for the far seers of fiction, Cocoçeira for the sweet nectar on the breeze; Cocoçeira for the impossible.