Behind Closed Doors

DAY 3650

Today marks the tenth year of me locking myself down in this bunker. Hooray.

I sit down on the couch in the living room with a bowl of stale cereal I’ve been saving for this anniversary. I ran out of dehydrated milk years ago, so I have to deal with eating it dry. But after ages of eating vitamins, meal supplements and whatever produce I can manage to grow, this is a welcome treat. I flick on the TV and switch it over from my computer screen to the satellite dish. Normally nothing shows up, but sometimes there’ll be a rogue signal of an episode of Cheers I don’t have downloaded. Today, however, was different. Every channel was broadcasting the same exact video of a mushy old man standing on a stage in front of a murmuring crowd.

“Todays the day folks! After ten long years, we finally get to reveal the winner of the worldwide hide and go seek competition!” The man says, arms pumping in the air, voice echoing through the loudspeakers. The crowd erupts into cheers and applause.

I laugh at the ridiculousness of this. Hide and seek competition? I don’t remember any competition like that back in 2018.

“Who will be the winner of the hundred-million-dollar grand prize? Ladies and gentlemen, I hope you’re ready! When the clock strikes noon, the curtain will fall and reveal the victor. Count it down with me, folks! Thirty… Twenty-nine…. Twenty-eight…” A giant screen above a huge curtain counted down the seconds.

“Eighteen… Seventeen… Sixteen!” The crowd continued. Something in my gut told me this wasn’t right. How is it possible I didn’t hear about this?

“Ten… Nine… Eight!” I put my bowl on the table and focused on the screen. The announcer looks so familiar, I swear I know him. But from where?

“Six… Five… Four!” My chest started knotting up. I stood up and walked closer to the TV. I had an itching feeling I knew who was under that curtain.

“Three… Two… One!” The curtain disconnected from the top and tumbled down, revealing a giant photo of me, from ten years ago. Sparks, streamers, and balloons shot out above the crowd.

“Congratulations, Mae Abbot! You have won the grand prize of one hundred million dollars!”

“God damn it! Fuck!” I scream and kick the table into the wall.

“All you have to do to claim your winnings is to come out of hiding, Mae! There will be a huge party in your honor!” The announcer shouted over the sound of the crowd’s uproar. I can’t believe I almost thought this was a genuine broadcast.

“It’s really that simple, baby girl. Just open that bunker door and step out into this nice bright sunshine.” I know why I recognize him, now. It’s been so long since I’ve seen his face that I almost couldn’t recognize him. It’s my dad.

“Open the door, Mae. See the sunlight.” His voice now cold and commanding, the crowd silent. I stare at the tv, fists clenched, a fire raging inside my chest.

After all these years, I’ve blocked them out of my mind. To forget what happened ten years ago. To ignore that constant screaming just outside the bunker. To ignore the slamming and knocking on the heavy steel door. To ignore how my friends and family are paraded around like puppets to manipulate me into going outside. How every person outside this bunker isn’t even human. They’re not the same, anymore. Ever since that day.

“MAE, OPEN THE FUCKING DOOR! OPEN THE FUCKING DOOR!” Dad shouts as loud as he can, his voice cracking and his face turning red from the strain. Spittle flies out of his mouth with every word. He shouts over the sounds of the crowd screaming the same. I cover my ears. I can’t listen to this.

“OPEN THE FUCKING DOOR! OPEN THE FUCKING DOOR! OPEN THE FU--” I punch the TV as hard as I can. The TV tumbles to the ground and goes black, but that awful sound still pours out of it. I punch and punch and punch until my knuckles are dripping with blood.

The bunker is quiet. But outside, I can still hear the screams, commanding me to open the door. Tears well up in my eyes. I curl up on the floor and sob into my blood-stained carpet.

I can’t go outside. I need to keep the door locked.

To keep the sunlight out.

DAY 4380

“Oh, child.” He said, voice deep and rumbling. “You are the last human alive. The last to ever be. Why not give in, and become one of us?”

“I’m not the last human! There’s no way! If someone like me has survived this long, surely someone else has.” I shouted. I sounded so puny and insignificant in front of his enormity.

“Child, look around you. Do you really believe there is anyone left?” He looked down towards the street and slowly gestured down with his head. I followed his gaze down. Standing on the streets surrounding my building was an enormous mob of sun touched. There had to be hundreds of thousands of them, just standing there. What if he was right?

“Do you really want to live on in a world where you are the only human? The only thing worse than being sun touched…is being alone.”

“That’s why you’re here, isn’t it?” I asked, tears starting to stream down my face. “You came down here…because you were lonely?”

He laughed a slow deep laugh.

“Maybe once I was. But now look around. This is simply the first of many worlds that will become mine.”

“I almost feel bad for you,” I said to him, anger beginning to boil up into my chest, “But then you changed everyone I’ve ever loved into monsters, so…” I clutched the [Big boi sun touched destroyer. Maybe someonthing that abosorbs light or heat (Oooh maybe the sun touched are like fire contained in melty human shaped skin sacks and it takes a lot to pierce through, but if you do then a bunch of fire and light shoots out and theres just a pile of skin on the floor. Or maybe it’s a sword like thing that can slash through them ez pz or absorb them with a cool name like like light piercer)] tighter in my hand.

“You asked me why I would want to live on in a world like this alone” I said. I slipped my bag off my shoulders and let it tumble to the ground. “I’ll do it out of spite, motherfucker.”

I jumped off the edge of the skyscraper with [thingythingy] held out in above my head and plunged it deep into **Murmur’s** biggest eye. He let out a deep, deafening roar