

## *The Darkhouse*



It was twilight now, and the sky had begun changing colour; my body illuminated in goosebumps. These kinds of settings had always made my mind begin to think in a philosophical way, and I'd always wondered why. The air was so still, the temperature, a perfect in-between of hot and cold. In the distance, I could see the lighthouse now, it felt good to be so close to it again. The setting sun bridged across the horizon, sinking into the water, preparing to hide itself through the night. Nearing the lighthouse door, I took one last look around, there seemed to be no one in sight, so with that, I made my way inside.

Upon entering, the goosebumps had gotten even more intense. The feeling I had was kind of like when you're playing hide and seek as a kid, and get excited when they can't find you – that sort of feeling. Making my way up the spiral staircase to the top, I grabbed the rail of the stairs extra tight, to get a good feel of its coolness. This coupled with the unique smell these old structures would often give off only intensified the goosebumps even

more. As I neared the very top, I looked down back where I'd come from. A fall from here would mean death, but again, this only caused the goosebumps to radiate more brightly. Continuing the ascent, the stairs eventually ran out, a ladder was all that remained. One hand at a time, I made my way to the summit.

Lifting the hatch, I climbed to my feet on the platform above. Opening one last door, I walked out into the open air and leant against the rail outside, taking in the view before me. Stars began to seep through the canvas above.

One by one, they added a little extra beauty to the picture. Until suddenly, the entire sky was alight. A show of Chinese lanterns - 'All for me?' I thought playfully - embryonic supernovae, origins of life, ancestors.

Looking into the space between the horizon and sky, I felt the gravity of nostalgia pulling me slowly. When a light in the corner of my eye suddenly grabbed my attention. A tree had begun to emerge through the surface of the water. I couldn't believe what I was seeing - impossible. It was illuminated mostly golden and green in colour, kind of like a nebula. The colours extended beyond the tree itself, reaching out beyond it, pulsating in a three-dimensional rhythmic motion. Seemingly from nowhere, a song began to play. It filled the air, it wasn't coming from any discernible direction, it was everywhere. The handle on the door next to me began to move - I moved away from it, leaning against the rail which was now behind me - and it opened. A nervous vibration rippled from within me. A figure suddenly emerged, and I could tell immediately that it was a girl. She was of average height, had longish brown hair, and was dressed in a slender white dress. But the thing that struck me as being most strange about her was, her eyes. Her eyes weren't like any I'd seen before, they were what I could only describe as being comprised of - 'pure light'. Of an intensity I never knew

existed. I found it strange that I wasn't panicked by this, in fact, her presence had made me feel completely relaxed. She then said to me softly,

"Come with me." Before turning and making her way down the ladder. I followed. I'm unsure as to why I did this so willingly, but I guess within myself, it just felt right. After reaching the bottom of the staircase she made her way through the lighthouse door, running down a sloping hill to the water's edge. Turning back, she said reassuringly, "Just a little swim, it's not far." Again, I followed without question. My curiosity was pulling me now.

Making our way through the water, we began to near the tree, the light emanating from it was incredible, it was like New Year's Eve on the surface of the water, the iridescent reflection made it so. No human words can explain, it must be experienced. An image beyond earthy colour, one that transcends human language.

It seemed like the goosebumps were helping me float now. It felt as if something inside of me was trying to escape. My skin was holding it in. "It's strange." I thought to myself, I've never felt so comfortable yet uncomfortable at the same time.

Climbing out of the water, I stood beneath the tree, I could see there were pictures on its branches, and the girl gestured for me to look at one closer, so I did. I took the one she'd pointed at and held it in my hands. Looking down, I realised it was of me as a child, but as I went on looking at it, the image began to move... a video of that particular moment in my life. I looked at her confused. And with a warm smile on her face, she said to me,

"Whenever you want to, you can come back here. I can take you. But not when you are like this." I didn't understand, but a feeling within me led me to believe that I may do soon. I reached out for more pictures, they were all of me, different parts of my life. The good days, the worst.

Days I never wanted to end, that made me wish life would go on forever, to taste something similar once again. And days that shattered me, made me wish I'd never existed.

Made me wish existence itself never existed. On those days, no matter how far inside I would look, no future worth living for could be seen. These days made me think when looking back at them, it's incredible that somehow, I'm still here.

Drowning in the nostalgia, the hand of her voice broke through the surface, pulling me out,

"And this part, this part I don't like." I looked at her confused, but holding my judgment, I waited to hear more. She took one last look at me, her expression seemed to be one of utter compassion, pure empathy. "The whole point of physical existence is that it's a testing ground of sorts. It's a part of existence used to give individual parts of a larger entity (which humans sometimes refer to as God) a chance to maintain a status of individuality. This process is complicated, all will be revealed in time, but individuals are able to do this essentially through the choices they make. There's a signature of the universal moral code attached to every single 'smallest building block' that comprises this part of existence. This is what gives people an inherent sense of right and wrong. It's also how clues are provided in the external. This too is complicated, and can evolve/change over time, but right now, we do not have the time to go into it. But you should also know that what humans refer to as God or the Universe/Multiverse, is an indescribably small part of what there actually 'is'."

She went on... "Soon, you will have to make a choice, perhaps the biggest of your life. This life..." She then turned towards the horizon, and began to walk out into the water. And as she did, the lights around us, slowly began to dim; the tree, the lighthouse, and sky. "Wait! I don't understand? What's going on!?" She began to fade into the

distance, as I shouted on after her. But not once, did she look back. The collective light of everything had almost completely gone now. Suddenly, I felt extremely cold. On the floor next to me, I noticed a picture, it was of me, one that was taken just yesterday. I picked it up. I felt sad for some reason, though I couldn't understand why. As

I went on staring at it, it began to play - like the others - but disappeared soon after, in front of my eyes, as the last of the light, fizzled out. It was at this moment, that I began to feel goosebumps surge with such force within me, stronger than before. It began to hurt. I felt myself fighting to stop it - but it did nothing.

Droplets of emotion ran down my face, my whole body writhed in pain, every muscle, exerted to its limit, but somehow, now, in my peripheral, I could just about make out the picture once again - 'The liquid was like 'her' eyes?' - at that moment, a supernova of emotion burst through my skin. Penetrated my body, ripping my entire being apart. And just like that, the darkness faded.

