

AVOIDING STORAGE

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. GATE TO THE UNDERWORLD DAY

A small booth in the middle of what appears to be a featureless gray plain. The GATEKEEPER is standing next to the booth, looking bored.

MC wanders up, looking thoughtful.

GATEKEEPER
Hail, traveler. Come over here
so that I can handle the
paperwork.

MC
What sort of stuff will you
need?

GATEKEEPER
Mm, name, reason of death...

MC
(hurridly)
Maybe it'd be best if I just
looked at the forms.

Gatekeeper pushes some papers towards MC.

MC looks through them.

MC
Seems straightforward. Out of
curiosity, what do you do here?
It doesn't seem like the sort of
post that requires a lot of
attention.

GATEKEEPER
It doesn't. But I must admit
that it allows me a chance to
indulge in a personal interest
of mine. I had to pull quite a
few favors to get a position
here.

MC
Really? Well, forgive me for my
inexperience, but, well, having
never died before...

GATEKEEPER

...You were interested in what's beyond here? Ho! You're in luck. I have an excellent collection of stories. All who pass by me leave their life stories with me. I enhance my repository with the memories of those from the other side as well!

EXT. UNDERWORLD PROPER NIGHT

A dready and nondescript area. Looks like a gray and drab mirror of the living world.

Not much happens here, there is no wind or breeze.

GATEKEEPER

(VO)

Really, I don't think I could call this Underworld much more than...oh, some elaborate holding area.

A small group of dead spirits amble by.

GATEKEEPER

(VO)

At best, I suppose you could say that people exist here because there's nowhere else to go. Living people tend to be far more interesting than the dead.

EXT. GATE TO THE UNDERWORLD DAY

Gatekeeper does a bored shrug.

MC

Do all living people pass through here?

GATEKEEPER

Well, not necessarily here, specifically. And I suppose it's possible that someone may not get found and put inside. But that'd be rare, I think.

MC looks impressed.

MC

You must really see all sorts coming through, all the same, yes? Any really neat people you've met?

Gatekeeper puffs up with pride and hauls out a heavy tome.

He locates a specific section in it and reads.

GATEKEEPER

Well...

EXT. GATE TO THE UNDERWORLD NIGHT

There's a heavy fog hanging over the scene.

A magician in robes and a pointy hat is accosting the Gatekeeper.

MAGICIAN

Hah! Well, if I can win this game, then I'm just going to leave. You can't force me into that realm!

Gatekeeper shrugs and sighs.

GATEKEEPER

I'll grant that challenging me to a game to earn your right to walk away is a rather traditional maneuver. However, could you have not picked a better time for this?

Gatekeeper motions towards a long line of spirits waiting for their turn to be processed.

MAGICIAN

Well, they're ending up exactly where they're headed. I wouldn't think it matters much when they get there, really.

GATEKEEPER

(grumpily)

Fine, fine. Get on with it, I've got a busy day ahead of me.

EXT. GATE TO THE UNDERWORLD DAY

MC stifles laughter and cuts off the Gatekeeper's narration.

MC

I would just like to point out how absolutely terrible this story is.

GATEKEEPER

...what?

Gatekeeper's countenance goes from a smug expression to a scowl of rage as the MC continues speaking.

MC

Well, there's no climax, no resolution, and no meaning to such a story. It can't be more than a self-aggrandizing narrative like that...

GATEKEEPER

Philistine! You know what? I paid a lot to be able to do this, and I'm not having some...idiot like yourself come along and talk back without any comprehension of my art!

MC bursts out laughing.

GATEKEEPER

(continued)

That does it! On my authority, you are hereby banished to wander this world! Maybe a few good millenia will teach you to better appreciate my efforts!

MC

Wha...

MC is cast backwards, and whips off into the distance at a speed almost imperceptible.

EXT. MIDDLE OF A LARGE FIELD DAY

MC is lying supine in a comfortable patch of grass.

He laughs for a moment, and resigns himself to a wry smile.

MC

Well, that certainly went a lot better than I'd expected. Touchy gatekeeper, there. Ah, I think I'll go visit some old friends...

MC hauls himself up and walks off screen, whistling a happy tune.

FADE OUT:

THE END