To the Bone

certifiableGrimalkin

There was a faint sound of a piano playing in the distance. She could feel the deep bass of the chords it was currently playing in her body. It was dark. She realised her eyes had been open, and she was just seeing nothing. Actually, not fully dark. There was a fragile beam of light, coming from a corner, in...

What was she in? It felt like a really small room, or box. She had the exact space to stand there, but not much place to move her hands or feet about. She touched the wall in front of her, and felt the wood. She also felt that it was moving slightly, given pressure. She opened it, slowly letting more light pour into her abode. The light blinded her, for a moment.

When her sight adjusted to the level of light outside the box, she realised a couple of things that really shook her. One: She had bone hands. Two: Her legs were also bone. Three: She might be a skeleton.

She turned around and noticed that the thing she just came out of was a coffin. She gasped and fell over, mostly at once She touched her face, but to her, she still felt like she was her. She just looked different.

She looked around. She was in a long tunnel, with the walls lined with coffins, of which only hers was open. Over the coffins were little plaques. Hers read: "Theresa Mayflower, 1986-2020"

Her name. One of those dates was her birth year. The other was the current year. She didn't fully want to believe it, but, it seemed like the little plaque wanted to imply, she died. There were lots of others, all giving names, and dates, lining the walls.

Immediately, her thoughts went to Beatrice. Was she a skeleton now, too? Was she here with her? Where did she last remember Beatrice? She had been laying in bed with her, just before falling asleep, admiring her sleeping form, playing with her hair slightly, before enveloping her in a loving embrace.

Fuck. If she died holding Beatrice, that must have really fucked Bea up. She really hoped that wasn't the last. That she was just not remembering.

She looked at the plaques on the walls, again. She wondered, if she could find one, for Beatrice. She started walking down the tunnel.

The piano was ever present, but moving around, she couldn't seem to get any close or further away from it. She read any and all plaques she passed by. There were dates from the far past, relatively current dates, but also dates from the future in here, next to the names.

It took her a while, but eventually she stopped and looked at one of the coffins. The name wasn't right, but she was curious. The second date was 2025. She opened up the lid of the coffin. It was empty. She opened the coffin right next to it. There was a skeleton, stood up inside, lifeless

She looked at that one's date. Died AM 5778. The next one was 1805. Lifeless skeleton inside.

She wondered what happened, that she wasn't dead, like the others. Or at least, not as dead as the others. She looked around, and decided, other than Beatrice, she'd also look for someone soon to die.

It took a little while, but she found an empty coffin, with the date of 2020. She sat down, in front of the open lid, and waited. She hummed along, to the music of the piano, and passed the time by drawing shapes in the sand on the tunnel floor.

She tried to remember every feature of Beatrice's, that she could. Make sure they wouldn't escape her memory. Her deep, brown, beautiful eyes. Her wide smile. The way she tucked her hair behind her ear. She tried drawing it down. She was not really happy with the result of her drawing. She wasn't the best artist, and she didn't like the medium of sand painting. She mixed away what she had drawn, and tried again.

She was starting to get there, with the features. She didn't really know how much time had passed. Nothing was happening with the coffin, yet, but she also didn't really know when and if anything should. The piano had not stopped playing once, since she had been sitting in the sand, and drawing. She focused on the the body, more, this time. Trying to remember every one of the so oft explored crevices of Beatrice's body. Her bumps and curves. Bones and flesh.

She was pretty happy with where she was getting, with her Beatrices. Then, suddenly, in the midst of her starting another one, she heard a sucking sound. She looked towards the coffin, To see a small orb of white in the middle of it. Then, with a quiet plop and crack, the orb shot out, into the shape of a human skeleton. It sat there, lifeless, just like all the others, and looked as if it had never been anywhere else.

She picked herself up, from the ground, and dusted off sand stuck to her dress, then went to look for the one plaque she was still looking for, leaving behind a couple of Beatrice drawings in the sand.

She walked along the tunnels, along the lines of coffins

As she passed a coffin, she heard the short plop and crack she heard before. She thought it was curious, to just hear it by chance.

She walked, reading plague after plague

Trying to find the one she loved.

She walked tirelessly. She noticed she didn't exhaust in

any manner whatsoever. Perk of being a skeleton, she though.

She needed no sleep, no rest. All she did was move forward and read plagues, one by one.

Like a perfectly tuned machine. Performing her steps

She had seen so many Beatrices, already. So many Mayflowers, as well.

Her spirits rose, when she finally saw a Beatrice Mayflower, but the birth year was completely wrong. Not the right century.

She did not know how much time had passed. All she knew, was the sound of the piano, and step, step, read plaque, on repeat.

She found her. It was finally over. "Beatrice Mayflower, 1984-2071"

She fell down to her knees, seeing that number. 2071. The number meaning her time being alone here would not end, anytime soon.

She would have cried, if she was able to. She just screamed and wailed instead. She flung the coffin open, but as she expected, and against what she hoped, it was empty. She punched the sandy floor, to no achieved satisfaction.

She laid there, in the sand, for a long while.

She started to draw, again, with her finger, in the sand. She drew the house they had lived in. She drew the dog. She drew them both, in an embrace like the last one she remembered. She drew scenes from her life, that brought her happiness, and scenes that were deep embedded in her memory. The sand around her filled in lines and pictures.

Her mind filled, just like the sand. She focused on Beatrice. Her fingers started just writing out her name, and birth year, over and over, in the sand. She started moving back, to find more untouched sand to write in. It took a bit, but, eventually she was able to write it without looking, and her sight started wandering.

It fell back on the coffins, and she started wondering. She stood up, and opened the lid of one of the nonempty ones. Then she took out the skeleton, or at least, tried to, as she found she could not move the bones one single bit. They were stuck in the coffin, and not matter how much force she applied, they remained motionless.

"What are you doing, Babe?", came a voice from behind her.

She turned around, to see no one there. She turned back to the skeleton, but it, as well, was unchanged.

She tried a couple more times, getting the skeleton to budge any, but, after one particular fall on her bum, decided it was not worth the effort anymore.

She looked back to where Beatrice's coffin was. She couldn't see it anymore. She had moved away quite far, writing out her name in the sand.

"Who are you looking for?" came the voice, again.

She recognised that voice. She could never forget that voice. But as she looked around in hurry, she once again found everything undisturbed, unchanged.

"Where are you, Beatrice!?" she shouted.

No answer came back. No sound was around, but the gentle tones of the distant piano. She shook her head. She must have been mistaken. Yet, she started on her way back, planting footsteps in her writing, moving towards the coffin.

It took a long while, before she arrived at Beatrice's coffin. She did not remember writing, and drawing so much. But she must have. She had passed tens, maybe hundreds of meters of her lover's name and birth year.

The coffin was open, as she had left it. It was still empty. She didn't expect anything else. She had hoped, but didn't expect. It would still take years, before she expected Beatrice to appear. What would she do, though. What could she do.

She sat down, in front of the coffin

"Rest, Tess. You've been up so long," came Beatrice's voice, again.

She shot up, and turned all the way around, but there was no one and nothing. The coffins, the plaques, the drawings in the sand, and only her footprints, all remained undisturbed.

She sat back down, and looked at the coffin. She leaned against the wall, and thought about what she had to do, now. She found her. She finally found the place. But now, this giant wall of time stood in front of her. Getting smaller, with each passing moment, but for now, seeming insurmountable.

"I'm here with you, Babe," came the voice.

If she could cry, she would. She was seeing no one. No one was here. But there was this voice, that must have been in her head, cause no one was there, and no one was answering, and she was so alone.

She had sat there, for a long time. She had walked around, aimlessly, even longer. She had tried to sleep, or at least get herself to be unconscious in some way, but she found no way to induce that. Eventually, she got back to just leaning against the wall, staring at the coffin. She was quietly humming along to the piano.

Time had passed. A lot of time had passed, with her, sitting there, humming gently. Some time had passed, with her trying to get the voice in her head to stop. A little bit of time passed, with her begging the voice to talk more. But mostly, time passed, with nothing whatsoever happening. She started counting the years, going around, and seeing what coffins weren't empty anymore.

And she still stared at the one open coffin. Beatrice's coffin.

There was a short suction noise. A short plop, and a cracking noise. And a skeleton appeared in the coffin. Beatrice appeared in the coffin.

When it arrived at her brain, what it was she was looking at, she shot up from her position, and ran into the coffin, to hug Beatrice. Only then did she notice the slightly awkward position, that the skeleton was in. And that it was not moving, with her, in the hug. That it was immobile, like all the others. That it was lifeless, like all the others. That Beatrice wasn't here with her. That she was alone, that she would be alone.

She fell over, onto the ground, and just lay there

She had considered this might happen, but she so very much hoped it wouldn't, that she just crumpled it up and threw it in a deep recess of her mind. but now it was her truth, and that was a lot harder to ignore.

She screamed. It didn't help.
She thrashed around. It didn't help.

She bit her arm, and rammed her head against the ground, and punched the sand as hard as she could, repeatedly. They all did not help.

What was she to do, now. All alone in this unending tunnel. All to accompany her being the coffins and the piano.

She got back on her feet, and started walking. Back. All the way back.

It took her a while, but, there it was. "Theresa Mayflower, 1986-2020". She opened up the coffin. It was empty. She stepped inside, and as best as she could, closed it, behind her.

Darkness enveloped her. She felt she was falling. The constant tones one the piano remained, but they intensified in volume. She started feeling warmth, coming from in front of her, and spreading throughout her body. She cried. She could feel tears flowing down her face, which surprised her. She was laying on her side. There was pressure on her chest, and on one of her arms. She heard the sounds of piano, playing from the side.

She opened her eyes. It was dark, but she could make out the contours of a person, laying against her. She could feel the contours, and she recognised them.

"Beatrice!" she shouted, through her tears, "I thought I had lost you!"

There was a grumbling in the bed, in front of her, but as soon as she heard Theresa's crying, she leaned up, and turned towards her.

"What happened, Babe?"

"There was this tunnel, and coffins, so many coffins, and I found your coffin, but you weren't in there, and I waited, for years, waited for you to arrive, but when you did, you were dead, and... Can we please turn off this music!?"

Theresa tried organising her thoughts. Beatrice took a remote from her nightstand, and pressed a button. The piano stopped.

"I was dead in a coffin, but then I wasn't?" asked Bee supportively.

"I just felt so fucking alone," cried Tess, through her tears.

Bee grabbed Tess, and hugged her, as tight as she could. "I'm here with you, Tess. You're no longer alone. It was all just a bad dream."

"I thought you were dead," Tess sobbed, "I spent years without

"I'm sorry you went through that, but, you're out, now. The dream is over. You're here with me. We're together again, and we're not going to be apart, anytime soon."

Theresa just sat there, curled up and embraced by her lover, sobbing.