1 MAXWELL

In a remote Khurevian village, my colleage Maxwell J. Grant witnessed a rather disconcerting phenomenon. Detailed in a letter he sent, he claimed that a local shaman, with the use of an altar carved from metallic stone, was able to resurrect the dead. Mine was not the only letter sent, but it was likely the only one that received a response. Max and I had worked together at the university, and I was one of the few that did not shun him as he began pursuing his more… outlandish theories.

2 REFUTE --

My reply took some time to compose, and even longer for me to find the resolve to send. I was concerned for my colleague, and for his state of mind. But my curiosity got the best of me, and as I wrote, I indulged him, if skeptically. What *had* he seen? But I reminded him to consider alternative explanations, ones that were frankly, more sensible. I ended the letter by chiding him for being swept up in local superstition and challenged him to provide proof of what he had supposedly seen.

3 CATACLYSM  
A full 4 months passed, with no reply from Max. In that time, my mind was not filled with his wild stories. I was preoccupied at home. Rebecca had been feeling ill in the weeks prior and not two days after I sent my letter, we received the prognosis. The look of despair that hung on her face before she broke down sobbing.

4 FAREWELLS --

She took it well, all things considered. I took a sabbatical from the university and we lived purposefully for a while. We drove to the coast, visiting the lighthouse her grandfather had kept and the town she had grown up in. We visited her brother, and her newborn nephew. We saw old friends and acquaintances alike. They were joyful trips, but mostly we went so she could say her goodbyes. A somber punctuating moment at the end of each trip.  
  
5 ROSES  
Rebecca got worse as we got home. I implored her to see just one more specialist, to not give up. But she refused. She didn’t think it would accomplish anything but waste precious time. I regret the fights that came after that. But I was scared, and frustrated. I squandered more time than any treatment would have given back. And then one Tuesday, I buried her in the garden, just like I had promised, right beside her beloved roses.

6 IDLE --

In our absence, Max had received my letter, and in return he had sent a package. It wasn’t weeks after I had buried Rebecca that the package arrived. I remember receiving it, bitter and empty, regarding the whole endeavor as a fool’s errand. But I had nothing but time on my hands and nothing but grief to fill it, and so I resolved to prove him wrong, if only out of melancholy spite.

7 THESIS  
Max had not been idle. He had conducted experiments, and in the package he sent, along with a piece of the altar he spoke of, were his notes. His setup was as follows:  
  
One simple dead gecko, native to the area, placed on the piece of altar stone, and another gecko, living. A precise cut with a pocketknife to completely remove the head, then drip the fresh blood onto the already dead specimen and it would produce reanimation, not only spastic but willful movement and sensation. The reanimation would be brief, somewhere in the span of approximately 90 minutes, and the blood of additional geckos, he claimed, could be subsequently used to extend the period of reanimation. I was quite convinced. Max had gone mad.

8 RESTLESS  
I found that I could not sleep. Grief haunted me, and now so did the morbid contents of Max’s notes, the detailed illustrations especially. After days of insomnia, I decided I had had enough. I would debunk his madness in earnest. I began by visiting the university, something I had not done since Rebecca’s death, with the goal of acquiring a pair of mice. Amidst a sea of condolences, a few mice were not sorely missed. Upon my return, I set up the experiment, following Max’s procedure. A dead mouse, laying still atop the piece of foreign stone, and a live one, writhing in my hand. I struggled to make a clean cut with my letter opener but it did the trick, and I had fully recreated Max’s insanity in my workshop. To my horror, and my chagrin, the dead mouse twitched, then rose, and looked at me in primal fear, then skittered into the cellar before I could grab it  
  
9 PROMISE --  
I felt a potent concoction of emotions then. Fear. Dread. Abject horror. But also Elation, and fascination. There was something here, something concrete. I scrambled, desperate to understand what I had just seen. I quickly wrote a letter to max, apologizing profusely for my prior dismissal of his theories, and informing him of my intent to immediately and thoroughly study this new, and potentially revolutionary phenomenon.

10 STUDY  
The first avenue I chose to explore was the stone itself. I sent off a small sample for spectrometry, to determine its chemical composition. As I awaited the results, I decided to repeat the experiment but alter key parameters, to see how far I could push them. I made two significant findings.  
  
First: the degree of reanimation appears to scale inverse to the mass of organic material being reanimated. Put simply, larger mice were less active, exhibited slower metabolism and decreased reaction to both positive and negative stimuli, whereas smaller reanimated mice were as vigorous and vibrant as regular living specimens.

11 CORRELATIONS  
My second finding was that the period of reanimation seems to increase with the amount of living creatures supplied, though with some diminishing returns. One mouse was sustained, at a great cost, for 78 hours and 36 minutes. However, by the third day, the specimen became withdrawn, and I found evidence of self harm, even once observing it gnawing its own tail. On hour 64 it began slowing movement, until at approximately hour 72 it stopped moving altogether and lay dormant, and ceased breathing only a few hours later  
  
12 SPECTROMETRY --  
The results from the lab came back today while I was conducting further experiments with the mice. To my surprise, the sample is not wholly alien or novel. Where I had half expected to find a new element to name in Max’s honor, I instead found primarily lithium oxide. I’ve sent another sample to confirm, and asked a colleague in the chemistry building to discreetly procure some pure lithium oxide from the storerooms. The simplest way to verify would be to substitute the pure oxide for the altar stone.

13 DISCOVERY --  
Examining the brain tissue of the longest surviving mouse this week provided little insight. Some clotting in the frontal lobe as the result of some former internal injury perhaps? Much more exciting, however, the block of lithium oxide proved a completely viable substitute. Possibly even more potent than the altar stone, resulting in greater vitality even on the larger specimens. I presume this is due to the high purity of the material from the university storerooms as opposed to the altar stone.   
  
In addition, I’ve found that the transmission of reanimation does not require blood or any such vital fluids, as submerging both the living and dead specimens in a simple saline solution while in the presence of the oxide reproduces the phenomena quite readily.

14 FOOLS  
While my research has progressed in my home, my relationships at the university have soured. Two mice were quite a different ask from the several dozen I’d acquired, and they were beginning to ask what my intentions were for all the equipment I’d borrowed. But I don’t dare reveal my hand so early. Convincing as a demonstration would be, denial would be far too easy for a discovery so… unconventional. The soul is real and can be transmitted via saline in the presence of lithium. I’d be mocked if not fired. I won’t have everyone swoop in like vultures and complete my work. I will show the world once I can quantify it, explain every facet, prove that it exists, undeniably.  
  
15 SCALE --  
I tire of resurrection. No, not that exactly. I yearn for more. The mice all follow the same pattern, and I am learning nothing new. I’ve a plan to acquire more lithium from the storerooms, though under false pretenses. By varying the purity, I’ve managed to identify lithium itself as the reagent, and free of its oxide form, it has proven quite potent. Once I’ve acquired the key element, I shall scale up and attempt the resurrection of something that may provide some insight into the nature of the soul. Vandalizing a pet cemetery for the sake of all of humanity seems a small price to pay, as does a lost pet here or there…

16 PROTOTYPE  
I hypothesized that the lithium was acting as a sort of inert barrier to what I can only describe as the soul. The linking of the living specimen with the dead with saline provides a kind of bridge from one body to the other, and the lithium prevents that soul from dissipating. As such, I lined an old oil drum with a suspension of lithium shavings in a hydrophobic, polyurethane gel. Filling this container with saline then provides the ideal environment for what I have decided to coin “Bio-transference of the soul”. With a corpse in the drum, there came only the quite disheartening act of providing the living soul donor. A difficult, but necessary sacrifice for me personally

17 SPARKY --

The name on the collar was “Sparky” so that’s what I will refer to it as here. Initially the results were quite promising. The new apparatus I had built had allowed Sparky a full three weeks of full mobility. The body was fresh and showed full vitality and was fully animated. However, it seems that the soul cannot be fully contained and must be refilled at regular intervals. Without such sustenance, Sparky grows dull and listless, completely losing all of its liveliness

18 CONSTRUCTION  
Progress and setbacks alike find me this week. I knew the final threshold I needed to cross to fully understand what I had been studying. But it would require a great deal more lithium. Unfortunately, my raiding the storerooms for precious metals had not gone unnoticed, nor had my repeated absences and what had been described of me as “an utterly disheveled and unprofessional appearance unbecoming of our fine establishment”. No matter. I got what I needed. Their paltry squabbles mean little to me as I trace the very brushstrokes of God. Construction of the full-scale Bio-transference chamber begins tonight, and upon its conclusion, you will be returned.  
  
19 PRECAUTION --  
I’ve moved the principal subject to the basement freezer, to try to halt the decay as much as possible while I prepare. First and foremost, I must prep a preliminary experimental subject as well as a donor soul. The principal is too valuable to subject to an untested process  
  
20 SUBJECT --  
The subject seems to be doing quite well, all things considered. The process has required a great deal of grisly prep work, and more yet to come, I am sure. All of that aside however, I am overjoyed! For the subject seems to have retained most all of its mental faculties, with some small altercations in mood, though its propensity to violent outbursts and sobbing fits may have more to do with the circumstances of my study than its personality.

21 REUNITED  
The day has come at last. Tuesday again, full of symbolism and potency. Today she returns to me. The soul donor has been acquired, and everything is set. Finally, we shall be reunited.

BASS DOWN -15  
TREBLE UP +10  
PITCH DOWN 5% (FAST)  
CHANGE TEMPO 105%  
NORMALIZE  
FILTER CURVE  
NORMALIZE  
BASS DOWN -8  
TREBLE UP +4