

Into the Storm

A drowning sun cast its last light from the other side of the horizon. Some of its light ricocheted across the whirling clouds formed around the sun, and others formed a glaze over the ocean surface, reaching through the tall rocks, and out onto the edge of the cliffs, where Anya stood.

The pastel-orange glow gently washed over her, while an ocean breeze greeted her with a salty and earthly aroma. Peering into the fading sky, she closed her eyes and dug her bare feet into the loose ground. She was part of a symphony that evening—there was the loud crashing of the waves, the distant warbling of the gulls, a soft whistle of the winds and maybe some rustling of the leaves behind her—She stood firmly even as the winds grew strong, it was her night, her amphitheatre with the sun as it's poor conductor.

She wished she were still there. Never wanting to leave, never letting go.

It was nice.

A Brazen horn blared above and woke Anya. In a haze, she heard the speakerphone announce but couldn't understand it. She saw people getting up and leaving the carriage, so she looked at her watch—no, it wasn't her time yet. She leaned against the cold steel of her carriage hoping to go back to the dream but was interrupted by another blaring of the horn. Irritated she shifted to one of the now empty seats but it wouldn't matter, speakers were evenly placed across the train, above the horizontal window slits. No one was special.

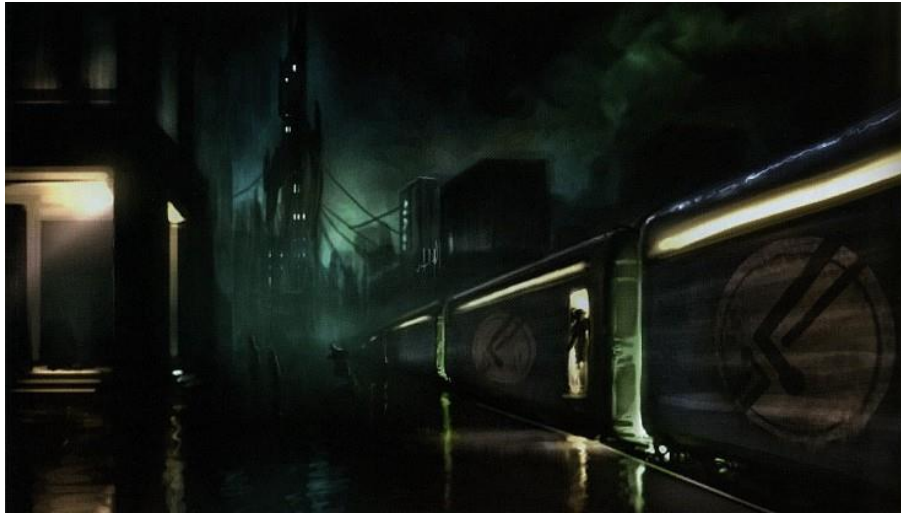
Anya had no idea where she was, or of her destination, only that *they* had asked her to exit when the digits on her watch numbered zero. Bored, stuck in her empty steel coffin and bathed in an awful low white light, she tried to yet again to go back to sleep but it wouldn't come. You can only rest so much before your body decides that's enough, life was inevitable.

“Fine”

To entertain, Anya started to count the remaining number of people waiting for their own destinations, also hoping to fall asleep. “Not enough sheeps” she muttered disdainfully. Her bored glances eventually fell to the floor, which was as dull as any other piece of that train—grey, metallic, and plain, barring of course the light strips that had guided each passenger to their seats. Besides them, there were also the passing shades of grey that fell on the floor from the top “window” slits, only punctuated by brief flashes of light, followed by loud crashes of thunder. It was raining—It always rained, all day and all night—she could always hear hard tappers of rain hitting against the metal. And for those fleeting moments, when it didn't rain, the shadows resembled canopies of trees, it reminded her of the time she spent building wooden fences with her father. Every summer come, they would go fishing and collect driftwood. She missed him.

“I wonder if the house is still there” she muttered to no one in particular but secretly hoping somebody would notice. No one talked to each other or even showed any inkling of such. How long had it been? weeks, maybe even a month, she couldn't tell—her watch was broke. Time was one commodity they all had plenty of, so why?—Was it fear? was it that they had nothing to talk about? The silence was deafening.

She wanted to go home, she wished she hadn't left.



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Another station came, and she looked at her watch again.

52

What 52? what did it mean? From the moment she had gotten on the train, her watch had shown a different number upon reaching each station, in no exact pattern. She thought her high school level math could help her figure out some rudimentary pattern, but it didn't. She doubted anyone could tell what they meant.

She reminded herself that it was of no use, and strayed into other thoughts. Didn't matter how many stations came to pass, The numbers on her watch never seemed to hit zero.

Closing her eyes yet again she tried to go back to sleep.