

BOUND TO WITNESS

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There were long stretches of my life where nothing was wrong.

That was the problem.

Nothing demanded me. Nothing required a decision that could not be deferred. Days stacked neatly, one on top of the next, like paperwork filed into a drawer I never opened again. Weeks passed without friction. Months passed with just enough interruption to feel lived, never enough to feel directed.

I woke up, went where I was expected, did what was required of me, and returned home with just enough energy to convince myself I had earned the right not to want more.

I called it stability.

It is incredible what you can survive when nothing is actively hurting you.

At work, I handled information. Records. Corrections. Discrepancies. Small failures that other people did not notice until they became expensive. I was good at preventing embarrassment. I could spot an error early, fix it quietly, and leave no trace that anything had been wrong.

When something failed, it rarely traced back to me.

When something succeeded, it rarely involved me.

People trusted me with details. They did not look to me for direction. They did not ask what I wanted. They assumed, correctly, that I would not complicate things.

That felt appropriate.

I became an expert in occupying space without shaping it.

I knew when to speak and, more importantly, when not to. I noticed how quickly people filled silence with assumption. How fast uncertainty turned into authority when no one pushed back. In meetings, I watched confident wrongness win by volume alone. In friendships, I watched people ask for help they had no intention of accepting. In my own life, I watched opportunities arrive wearing the disguise of inconvenience.

I let them pass.

When you let enough things pass, you start calling it a personality trait. You build a small shrine around it. You use words like reserved and thoughtful and careful, as if waiting forever is the same thing as wisdom.

I told myself I was being responsible. That restraint was maturity. That acting too early distorted outcomes. That understanding mattered more than influence.

The truth was simpler.

Action meant consequence.

Consequence meant ownership.

If I did not act, I could always say I had not chosen.

And when nothing changed, when years rearranged themselves without producing anything that felt like momentum, I blamed God.

Not loudly. Not angrily. Not in the dramatic way people confess in stories.

I blamed Him privately, the way you blame gravity when something falls exactly the way it always does.

I prayed sometimes. Not faithfully. Not with reverence. Mostly when I felt stuck. When I felt overlooked. When I wanted life to behave like a vending machine where you insert sincerity and receive outcome.

I asked for clarity. For direction. For something unmistakable.

Nothing came.

Or worse, things came in the wrong shape. Small chances. Small invitations. Conversations that would have changed things if I had said one more sentence instead of letting the moment die politely.

I ignored them.

The absence hardened into something quieter than anger.

It became evidence.

Then I died.

Not heroically.

Not meaningfully.

The sort of death that felt consistent with the rest of my life. Unremarkable. Unattended. Slightly late.

It was not a metaphor. It was not a lesson. It was not a grand pivot.

It was simply the end of a person who had spent years practicing how to be absent while present.

When I opened my eyes, I expected judgment.

Instead, there was light.

No edges. No ground. No sky. Just a pale, steady brightness that made it impossible to tell whether time was moving. I felt intact in ways that unsettled me. No pain. No hunger. No breath required. As if my body had been simplified into a concept. Me, minus inconvenience.

That should have frightened me.

It did not.

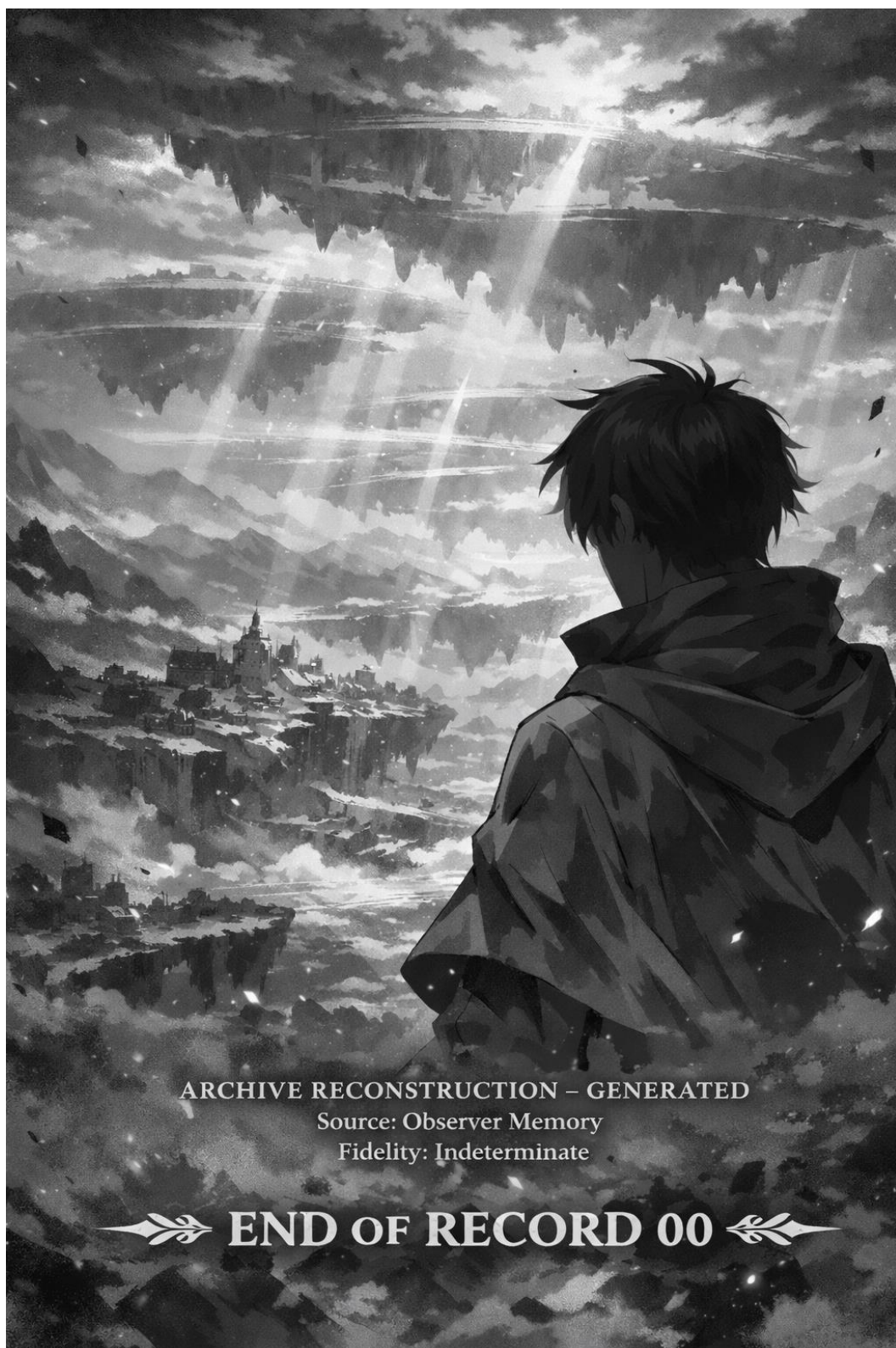
I noted it like a strange line item and moved on.

“Well,” I said. “This is either judgment or a very elaborate waiting room.”

“Neither,” a voice said. “Those both imply an ending.”

A pause.

“You have not reached one yet.”



ARCHIVE RECONSTRUCTION – GENERATED

Source: Observer Memory

Fidelity: Indeterminate

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