

RE: I AM THE LIGHT

We are proud to welcome all our loyal staff members to NMLI. Let us take a moment to mention their importance and value...

We tried to spot whether or not it was a pre-recorded message. It felt like the morning announcement sounded both identical and slightly unique each time, so we were losing our minds trying to figure it out. My theory was that they had *multiple* recordings with little differences, and then played them at random, just to mess with us.

As usual, we remind you that no data can be introduced to, or removed from the facilities...

"Ha! Hear that? I told you the 'L' in 'facilities' had a unique ring to it! I heard the same thing in yesterday's message, too. It wasn't an 'L' sound, but more like an 'L' sound," exclaimed Markus, after which he immediately began flicking his tongue back and forth trying to recreate whatever unique instance of the letter "L" he had heard.

"Right, and I don't *disagree* that we heard the same 'L' yesterday morning, but if you recall, it sounds pretty different from the one we heard this Tuesday. So, I think my multi-recording theory still holds true," I replied as I sat back in my chair with pride.

"Whatever, we probably need to hear it a few more times just to be sure," said Markus, dismissively. "Anyways, I've got a case for you."

He put down a small stack of papers on my desk. "It's from the item recovery boys," he pat the papers, "they said they found some weird stuff at one of their thingies, and they have a few files with heavy encryption they need to crack. I know you're busy and all, but could you check it out?"

"Oh, I'm actually free today, so I'll get to it right away."

"Thank you! I've already re-assigned it to you, so you didn't have much of a choice," he added in his signature slyful tone. "It's apparently related to that 'light' task that's been going around the past few days. I think Charlene is getting a bit pissed that nobody's done anything about it." Markus made a few vague gestures with his hands that I understood nothing of, and then left for his office. I sat back with the papers in hand.

And remember, NMLI personnel must keep a lifelong non-disclosure-"agreement, and maintain all information's secrecy," I mouthed the words.

They played this message only 'cause the stuff they had stored in this place could cause a galactic war. With that level of potentially-volatile consequences, you've got to keep a tight leash on your people. The weird loyalty vibe they have in the morning announcements still freaks me out to this day. I signed up thinking it'd be cool to be

in on all the juicy drama of the universe, but it's either crazy boring, or the type of eldritch horror bullshit I hired my therapist for.

And the stuff we deal with? It's all so classified it's almost like we're living in another world. Everyone's going about their mundane days while we look for whatever inkling of truth we can cling on to. But even then, it's not like we ever make a difference. We just document it all and leave it at that. I guess when you look at the big picture, it's not so different. Our jobs just involve more files with fancy prints and 'CLASSIFIED' stamps on 'em.

...for the protection of the Earth. With that, we wish you a wonderful day!

Yeah, 'all for the greater good' and all, I suppose. I take a deep breath. Time to look over Markus' documents.