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## The Man and His Work

A man sat at his desk in a dimly lit room with no windows. Lining the walls of the room were tables filled with various metal instruments. The only light in the room emanated from the sole central bulb that hung from the ceiling above the long table in the center of the room. The man was hunched over the table, and his hands were moving with surgical precision as he sewed the final pieces together.

With practiced efficiency, he tied a knot that signaled the end of his work. Normally, he would step back to admire his work with his colleague, but this time the room was silent. He turned his head over his shoulder out of habit and opened his mouth, then froze. Across from him was an open drawer with various threads and needles. Not what he was expecting. He looked back at the table and at his work, but this time he could not bring himself to admire the various whip-stitches he had sewn. The smell of chemicals lay thick in the air, but it could not cover the scent of death that permeated throughout the room.

His eyes felt warm and fuzzy, but no tears came out. The thought of trying to force out tears came to his mind but was unable to do so. An uneasy feeling rose in his chest as he stared at his work. Never before in his life had he felt as he did now. His chest was tight, his breathing was shallow, and his lungs felt like they were at their limits. That was the only time he felt lucky to be wearing the long white coat he always wore for projects like these. The looseness of his robe and the long sleeves gave him a feeling of security while also giving him room to breathe.

He took off his gloves and his mask and reached over to a cup on one of the smaller tables that stood up against the wall. His hand hovered over the cup as he stared at its contents. The liquid in the cup was completely still, which disgusted the man as he quickly retracted his

hand. He was thirsty but could not force himself to drink. His head slowly turned back to his project as he returned to the pose he had when he had finished her. Standing up with his back hunched and his hands hung limply by his sides, he stood unmoving.

The only thought he could remember from the creation process was that he must be as gentle as possible. Otherwise, he had worked like a possessed man obsessing over his creation. He stared at his work, and his work stared back. This time, instead of warm and joyful eyes, excited at the completion of a project, he was greeted with cold and lifeless ones. Although there were no physical differences between this day and one week ago, the man felt like the world was off-kilter.

He reached out his hand again, but this time to touch his work. Instead of meeting something soft and warm as he expected, his fingers touched something cold and hard with a little bit of give. He pushed his fingers in, then lifted them and saw that he had left an indent on his work. He waited for it to bounce back like it always did, but this time it did not.

He remembered how his work had spoken to him while he worked on her. She guided him through the process like she always did. She corrected his minuscule errors by telling him how she felt. Although he knew it was impossible, he could still hear her voice praising him like an echo of the past. However, the man knew personal feelings and work needed to be kept separate. Now she was his work, and this would never again change.