



INSANITY
LIVES
COMPANY

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When does an occupation stop feeling like a chore and more like a craving? A need for an endless routine? For me, it didn't take long at all. I have a mind full of eroded gears, and yet, still in motion. A demand for escape is merely a march out through the toneless doors of reality, but I can't do it alone. I am in search of my other half, a mind seeking another mind.

My work brings me joy. I pace through hollow hallways, echoing stairwells, and congested lounge areas, to lonely chambers spotting the many wandering minds in need of oil. It requires me to use less of my tongue and more of my pen, offering me more time to think.

I do not talk much. I observe. It is an interest of mine — studying the odd ways their brains operate. Do they think like me?

Teach me. I want to understand.

What I do is not for the faint-hearted. This profession sought me out, allowing me to witness the discomfort of those enduring session after session — examination after examination. I have observed many leave even more disoriented than when they arrived. I have seen blood. I have seen death. Yet, the gears inside customarily rotate. It takes more than a few screams to frighten a man such as myself.

They would be belted down, injected with meds, silenced with the work of the doctors' implements, but it never lasted — the silence. However, that never troubled me. It was always the stillness that guided chills throughout my bones.

From room to room, I would journey, inspecting for improvements in some while others diminished — heeding to their cries and foolish banter towards the emptiness surrounding them.

I wouldn't spend more than a few minutes with each patient until I collected all that is necessary. Except one that is. Her — my enigmatic beauty. I would lose the tempo of the ticking clock focusing on the lack of data she produced.

My sweet reflection. Why must you conceal yourself? Come out, put on a show. Let us sing to your songs of agony and despair. Be my partner in this dance of sorrow and loneliness. Allow me to gaze into your eyes layered with mystification and madness.

Nothing. As usual.

I would peek through the rectangular screen door and observe my precious do what she does best. Her golden features make her stand out in the pale space containing no windows. She wouldn't be able to tell whether it was day or night, so I would gently utter, good afternoon or good morning. She would never reply, nor would she

waste a glance. Her curls crowned her as she remained in her corner, arms strapped around her in a white garment that did her no justice. I must say it did bring out her eyes. Eyes like soil that would bring forth the most scenic flower.

My flower.

She differed from every patient I encountered. She was stagnant. Serene.

Why? Tell me your secrets, my dear — show me.

I have never entered a challenge I could not win.

But I do not want to conquer you, my dear. I want to peel you — help shed you of your former self and reveal your true nature.

My day starts and ends the same, with my soundless flower planted in the same position. In this case, as I slide open the mini door, I voice, good evening, in hopes she gets an idea that the sun is getting ready for bed.

My eyes widen to see my sweet do something miraculous, pacing back and forth as if deep in thought.

Oh what I would do to sneak into that magnificent mind of yours.

I step closer as if my body would phase through the metal doors. The steps taken make it seem as if she's gliding across the ivory tiles. A troubled angel she resembles. Pure, yet, filled with mayhem waiting to be released.

I exhale as she stiffens, her back facing me. I hesitantly fill my lungs as she begins to gaze up as if someone is calling her. Perhaps the sounds of her frantic neighbors, though, that never bothered her before.

Her right foot starts motioning out more and more until she faces me.

My love, how I've waited for this moment ever since I laid eyes on you.

Cocking her head to the side, she plays the opposite of her role, examining me. I part my lips just as she begins to move to the far left of the room, right across from her bed. Her eyes burn into me, causing me to lose track of my breathing.

I blink and wipe my brow. My vision refocuses to show I'm no longer in the hallway analyzing my dear one. I'm seated on the edge of the bed, right in front of her.

I should be panicking, yet my breathing begins to soften. She's my uneven metronome steadying my breaths.

I want to free her of that awful straight-jacket, but it didn't seem to give her discomfort.

Why so calm, my love?

With wrecked hair, filth beneath her feet, and no sense of time she stood with such poise. As a flower should.

As I reposition myself, I, for the first time catch the words that trickle off her tongue.

“Is there a question you wish to ask me?”

A voice like honey — thick and sweet.

I clear my throat. “Well, I have many —”

“No you don't. There is only one.”

Is she analyzing me?

Her face was that of a porcelain doll, left on the shelf to be forgotten.

“Ask me now or leave.”

I let out a light titter, raising a brow to the door. “How did I even get in?” I whisper, not intending for her to hear.

“You know.”

She says so little, yet, her words leave nicks on my skin.

Her eyes glance to the door as well. “Your question? I’m sure there are others to see. We mustn’t keep them waiting.”

She’s right. I have a question — one question that has been lingering on the far edge of my temple.

I stand, adjusting my coat that matches the room we’re in. I pace my way to her until I’m only but a few inches from her face. The scent of secrecy lingers in the air.

“My dear, tell me,” I hiss, “what are you thinking?”

She bares her teeth, presenting a smile that would send storms through this town and not abolish a single thing.

Her doe eyes don’t blink as they grab mine. “See for yourself.”

As she exhales, I deeply breathe her in, feeling a sensation I have never experienced before. Her mind is tainted gears stained with the hues of flower petals. Insatiable, I become.

My eyes are sealed, getting the full effect of my beauty's mentality. I quail as I feel her balmy lips press to mine. I wish to sink into her. Drown.

I come up for air in pursuit of my love.

Come back to me, my dreadful beauty.

I quickly whip around to see her glaring at me with those eyes. She's up against the glass. I gape at her new appearance as she takes a few steps back. Her arms are free, her hair curled to perfection, and she looks as if she has never set foot in grime, garbed in a white sleeve. I move up against the door and suddenly notice my hands cannot move.

I glance down to see myself wrapped in all white. All white to match the room I'm caged in. My eyes widen and shoot up to hers. I slam myself against the door, not making her flinch. She tilts her head and furrows her brows.

The corner of my mouth extends, revealing a smile that would send waves crashing down.

Good one, my love. An interesting trick. I enjoyed the show.

My sweet, she lifts her head as if to hear what I am thinking.

But you can't, can you?

I bang my forehead against the tiny glass to allow my thoughts to break through.

Can you hear me now, my love?

She remains speechless, as usual.

Hear me!

Her troubled expression makes me bang harder against the door, laughing. I laugh so loud I harmonize with my new neighbors as spit covers the glass.

It's funny, isn't it? Go on, my dear, show me how you did it!

She sighs and ruffles her hair, scribbling a black pen to white paper. I continue to laugh as her angelic hand slides the tiny door over the glass. Just as she brought along the silence, it follows at her heels.

Good morning my love — my sweet — my flower! Until next time!

After all, what is insanity without camaraderie?



