# “Little World”

They say that entire worlds lie beyond doors. Indeed, beyond this one lies a universe.

Blue light pulses to the rhythm of upbeat violin strings, illuminating dark, varnished wood scattered with papers. Pens lay strewn over the mess, ink leaking from the tip of one to pool over the sketch of an ever-watching eye. This encompasses only a corner of this vast galaxy.

In another, lies a cloak of the bloodiest crimson; trophy of a battle heralded by the shining blade propped atop it. The quicksilver edge is dull as rubber and the cloak is thick with dye, but no one has to know that.

A wind gentle enough that even that sword could cleave it floats in through an open window, sending the curtains fluttering. It carries with it not just the scent of citrus and jasmine, but stories- the tales of a thousand adventures. Those unearthly whispers, legends of centuries… of blood and war, of adventure and discovery, of love and fate, of breaking and healing. The breeze’s ancient ballad.

Pages flutter in the wind, anchored by the package squatting atop them. Numbers and shapes flash by in those miniscule glimpses, red ink scrawled next to every equation. Later, the clock on the bedside proclaims. There will be time to fix them later.

Voices sound; fuzzy with static and too fast for the faces they belong to on the screen. Smiles, and stuttering video of waving and peace signs, and then they’re gone. There and not in the space of a matter of seconds.

You can’t see the now-blank screen in the mirror on the wall. The mirror doesn’t show any of the surrounding space, a whole other world in itself.

Crafted of shimmering black stone similar to obsidian rather than glass and cased in a bronze serpent devouring its own tail, the image portrayed there is a far cry from familiarity. Rough-hewn stone of forgotten mountain caverns, dusted with sparkling snow and howling with vicious winter winds. Moonlight casts the space in blue and silver, and the entrance to the chamber is blacker than night itself. Stairs lay in the gloom beyond, but only a very determined or very foolish person would bother with them in the first place. Nothing is happening in the mirror, not now. Just waiting.

Perhaps waiting for the doe-eyed demon creature depicted in the wall space beside the mirror, with corkscrew horns and broken wings and too-frail bony limbs. Perhaps waiting for the furred, clawed creature with a thousand teeth, whose depiction was hidden and forgotten. Scaled back and tail on stark display, the black and gold of its coat making the blue-gray eyes pop out- or they would, if the image could be found, remembered.

But the rendering is forgotten, unseen by all eyes but the shining black of the fox. Red-gold coat shimmering and tail swishing softly, it bounds on nimble feet to gather its companions. A ragtag group, really; cats and dogs, squirrels and eagles. All with those same beady black eyes, all-seeing and ever-watching, yet not wicked. Shaggy coats dingy with age bristle in the cool of the gentle breeze.

And in the centre of the zone is seated the master of this galaxy; the god, capable of wiping the slate clean with half a thought. Literally. Beady black eyes follow her; the mirror waits, straining to catch her reflection. The breeze blows to her, whispers its stories to her; the faces and voices come and go at her control.

Blind to her omnipotence over the world, she taps a button and glimpses the words stamped over the screen.

New Zealand will remain in lockdown level three; update scheduled Monday eleventh May.

She clicks again, and the words disappear. Seven tabs lay open beneath it- emails, schoolwork, research. She ignores them all, opening a new document in Google Drive.

Her world won’t go back to the way it was before, she knows that. And it won’t stay this way for long, either.

But that doesn’t matter right now. No, right now, she’s glad for the lockdown, and glad to be encased in her little bubble of her tiny room.

Trapped endlessly in her own little world.

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